

Research Base

In 2015, Dr. Robert Savage, Dr. Rauno Parrila, and Dr. George Georgiou received funding from the federal government to provide Tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions to schools in Québec and Alberta. Kristy Dunn, a doctoral student, also worked with Dr. Georgiou on this project. The project involved providing PD to classroom teachers from two large school divisions in Alberta on evidence-based practices in teaching phonological awareness and phonics. At that time, the project team started developing instructional materials to be used to address reading difficulties. The effect of small-group phonological awareness and phonics intervention was amazing. In three years, of the 290 children who started the program, only 3 children remained struggling readers.

The results of this work and the feedback received from classroom teachers and special education teachers provided the foundation upon which the team then developed lesson plans to be used to teach phonological awareness and phonics to the whole classroom. In 2019, they received funding from Alberta Education to test the effects of training classroom teachers on how to implement these materials. They recruited and trained 85 Grade 1 teachers (and 1562 students) from two school divisions in Alberta. These teachers were given access to materials and lesson plans, and they closely monitored the performance of their students. From September 2019 to January 2020, the students at both school divisions (one urban and one rural) were performing within average and had improved, on average, by 7 standard points in reading (equal to a year of academic growth). Unfortunately, because the schools closed in March 2020 due to COVID-19, there was not the opportunity to re-test the students in May as was originally planned.

This research study formed the basis of the lesson plans, the scope and sequence, the target words, as well as the lesson activities included in *The Phonics Companion*.

Here two research papers from the initial study done in collaboration with Dr. Robert Savage.

Note: You can read the abstracts online but will need a subscription to Taylor & Francis Online to read the full report.

[The Effects of Teaching Complex Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondences: Evidence from a Dual Site Cluster Trial with At-Risk Grade 2 Students](#)

[Preventative Reading Interventions Teaching Direct Mapping of Graphemes in Texts and Set for Variability aid at-risk learners.](#)