STUDENT READING SUCCESS Through RESEARCH and COLLABORATION
The Iowa Reading Research Center is at the forefront of research designed with student outcomes in mind, creating innovative instructional methods, and assessing students’ literacy performance. We are here with professional learning for educators on how to use evidence-based practices in their classrooms, and for families who are seeking additional literacy learning support for their children.

**Literacy Research**

Our research identifies effective ways to teach and assess literacy skills. In response to an increased emphasis placed on student writing performance, much of our recent work has focused on identifying areas where writing instructional practices and assessment methods can be refined and improved.

- **We partnered with the Council Bluffs CSD to evaluate the writing performance of students in Grades 7–11 using IRRC-developed writing scoring rubrics. Findings indicated that interim writing assessments evaluated by teachers could help guide writing instruction.**
- **We developed writing prompts and scoring rubrics for Grades 1–6 in collaboration with the Marshalltown CSD. These materials were used to study how predictive interim writing assessments were of student proficiency and how they could be used to plan writing instruction.**
- **We evaluated the summer reading growth of Council Bluffs CSD students entering Grades 1–5 in the fall. The results will inform how district leaders can continue helping students and teachers overcome literacy challenges resulting from pandemic-related school closures.**

**eLearning**

By completing our eLearning modules developed by IRRC literacy experts, educators receive professional learning anytime and anywhere. eLearning covers literacy instructional methods and other relevant topics. In 2021, we released two new modules and updated a third. We also launched Digital Varied Practice Reading, our first eLearning platform for students.

- **The new Teaching Students to Map Phonemes to Graphemes module shows how to teach the early literacy skills of pronouncing letters and letter combinations that make up sounds in words. Students must master this before they can sound out words and become proficient readers.**
- **The new Using Text Structures to Understand and Summarize Text module covers a seven-step instructional approach to teach students to recognize text structures authors use. This can help students better comprehend the text. Graphic organizers for each text structure are also introduced.**
- **Digital Varied Practice Reading (VPR) allows schools to teach using the reading fluency instructional method for Grades 1–5 with their students able to access all materials through an online platform. Teachers can track students’ progress. The eLearning VPR module was updated with interactive enhancements.**

**Support for Reading Disabilities**

Part of our mission to improve the literacy skills of all students involves assisting students with dyslexia and other reading disabilities. Initiatives involving the IRRC resulting from 2020’s dyslexia legislation began this year, including the dyslexia specialist endorsement program and Iowa Dyslexia Board.

- **The first group of educators was selected for the IRRC-coordinated dyslexia specialist endorsement program. The program prepares educators to distinguish dyslexia from other learning disabilities, facilitate accommodations, and offer other supports.**
- **More families than ever took advantage of our free assistive technology consultation appointments, with a 195% increase in appointments. Families can meet with us in-person or virtually to learn about devices and software to help their children with reading disabilities complete academic and everyday tasks.**
- **The Iowa Dyslexia Board was established, with our Director Dr. Deborah K. Reed representing the IRRC. The board meets to oversee implementation of dyslexia instruction in the state and provide recommendations for continued improvement of such instruction.**
Teacher preparation students and families earned dyslexia training certification via IRRC eLearning (+10% from 2020)

1,939

Students participated in IRRC research and evaluation studies

3,451

Educators completed an eLearning module

1,939

Teacher preparation students and families earned dyslexia training certification via IRRC eLearning (+10% from 2020)

333,018

Views of our blog posts (+34% from 2020)

116,410

Times IRRC online materials for families & educators were accessed (+111% from 2020)