

Project Summary / Structured Abstract

(a) Title

Title: Scaling Targeted Reading Instruction (TRI) to Serve Students Impacted by COVID-19: Digital Implementation of an Effective Reading Intervention

Network Role: Product Team

(b) Project Summary

Purpose: This project will train school-based staff who provide supplemental reading instruction (e.g., tutors or paraeducators, as preferred and/or utilized by districts) to use Targeted Reading Instruction (TRI). To scale TRI as an effective response to COVID-19, this project will adapt TRI as a digital application (“TRI App”) to build foundational reading, oral language, fluency, and comprehension skills of students not yet meeting grade-level benchmarks on school progress monitoring measures.

Project Activities: This project will develop the TRI App based on an existing prototype, pilot and refine the TRI App through an iterative development process, evaluate the TRI App using a quasi-experimental design, and conduct market research to determine the best approaches to scaling the TRI App to become a widely-used reading intervention.

Products: Products include a fully developed and operationalized digital application and corresponding professional development for school staff providing supplemental instruction for students reading below grade level. Additionally, manuscripts, reports, and presentations to key school and district stakeholders, policymakers, families, and researchers will be delivered to share study findings.

(c) Structured Abstract

Setting: Twenty-five elementary schools in Florida and North Carolina.

Sample: Participants are K-3 students reading below grade level ($N = 900$) and the school staff providing them with supplemental instruction ($N = 50$). Students will be identified through the districts’ progress monitoring tools as needing supplemental reading instruction. Districts representing families who are socioeconomically, ethnically, and racially diverse will be recruited.

Intervention: TRI has been evaluated through IES-funded randomized controlled trials and is one of only a few reading programs that has shown significant impacts on alphabets, reading comprehension, and fluency for early elementary students. In this project, tutors will receive virtual training and coaching to use the TRI App. At the initial training, tutors learn diagnostic strategies for teaching students by watching training videos, observing coach modeling, practicing the activities with one another, and using TRI App activities and strategies with children. A TRI literacy coach provides virtual coaching sessions to provide real-time feedback as a TRI tutor teaches a lesson using the TRI App. TRI literacy coaches emphasize tutors’ use of data when designing TRI lessons, rapidly building tutor capacity to serve students using data-based decision making. The minimum core components of TRI include the following: (1) Content (tutors will use TRI App activities, strategies, and books to focus on sounds, decoding, word meaning, fluency, and comprehension using real words and texts); (2) Lesson delivery (tutors will structure and pace TRI App lessons to

guide students efficiently and rapidly through scope and sequence); and (3) Matched instruction (tutors will make instructional decisions diagnostically matched to each individual student based on assessments and TRI App performance).

Research Design and Methods: Using a quasi-experimental design, schools with tutors using the TRI App will be matched to other schools in the same district that do not offer the TRI App. School-level data will be collected from each state and district to create a set of matching variables.

Control Condition: Students in non-TRI App schools will experience business as usual supplemental reading instruction, allowing for estimation of the added value of the TRI App over and above current instructional practices for students reading below grade level.

Key Measures: Impact measures are district-administered progress monitoring assessments for K-3 students and third grade reading tests for third grade students. Fidelity measures will be embedded into the TRI App to assess tutor intervention implementation and coaching. Market research and corresponding process measures (e.g., focus groups, interviews, surveys) will inform developing, refining, and scaling the TRI App.

Data Analytic Strategy: An intent-to-treat (ITT) analytic approach will estimate treatment effects on student outcomes. Analyses will involve hierarchical linear models to account for the nesting of students and tutors in schools. Additional analyses will compare evaluation students in 2023-24 to pre-pandemic students in 2018-19 to examine growth trajectories for the different cohorts.

Cost Analysis: An embedded cost analysis study will determine the start-up and annual maintenance costs for materials and time/effort of the TRI App. Costs will be estimated using the ingredients approach such as personnel, training, facilities, materials, and technology.

Related IES Projects: [National Research Center on Rural Education Support](#) (R305A040056); [The Targeted Reading Intervention: A Web-Based Professional Development Program Targeting K-1 Classroom Teachers and Their Struggling Readers](#) (R305A100654); [Investigating the Efficacy of a Web-Based Early Reading Intervention Professional Development Program for K-1 English Learners](#) (R305A160255); [An Effectiveness Replication of Targeted Reading Instruction: Investigating Long-Term Student and Teacher Impacts](#) (R305R210007)