



Data Study for Exploring Reading

Howard County, Maryland



Overview and Challenge

Many school districts across the nation find it challenging to integrate critical thinking and 21st century skills into reading intervention to provide students with the rigor needed to succeed academically and become proficient readers.

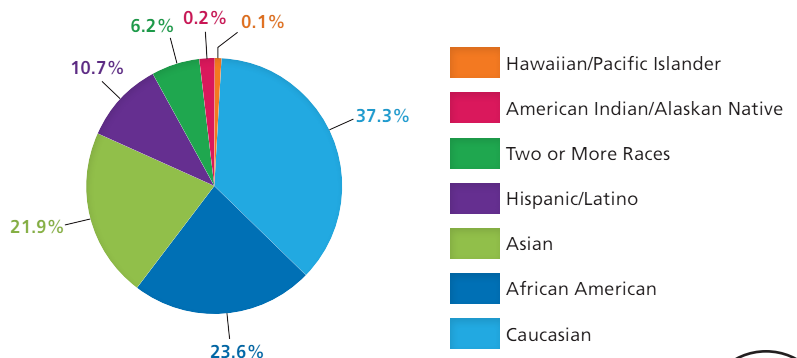
During the 2017–2018 school year, Maryland’s Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) was facing this same challenge. Teacher Created Materials partnered with Howard County Public Schools to implement *Exploring Reading*, a year-long intervention curriculum. Selected reading specialists and intervention students piloted the curriculum at ten different elementary schools.

Exploring Reading provides 30 minutes of daily reading intervention for a full year. Ongoing professional development, lesson plans, and student resources were provided to the participating reading specialists and site administrators to support this implementation.

Howard County Public School System Demographics

Enrollment

- Elementary (K–5): 24,978
- Free/Reduced Lunch: 22.1%
- Limited English Proficient: 5.1%
- Special Education: 8.8%



Program

In order to meet high standards and comprehend rigorous reading materials, students need different levels of support for digging deeper into texts. Reading challenging material helps students build robust reading skills (Shanahan, Fisher, and Frey 2012). Teachers can help students develop the reading skills they need to encounter any text by arming them with proven comprehension strategies, scaffolded instruction, and a range of texts.

Exploring Reading is a strategic, year-long intervention curriculum that provides students with a variety of texts to support a wide range of reading experiences. It helps students learn to:

- Master essential reading strategies
- Integrate strategies to successfully comprehend complex fiction and nonfiction text
- Apply strategies across a wide range of text types and lengths
- Make abstract connections across content areas and genres



Flexible components in each *Exploring Reading* kit, grades K–6, include:

- Variety of high-interest text
 - ◆ 8 nonfiction leveled readers (6 copies each)
 - ◆ 24 text cards (6 copies each)
 - ◆ 2 novels
- Teacher's Guide
- Best Practices Guide
- Student Guided Practice Book
- Assessment Guide
- Comprehension Strategy Posters
- Digital resources

Implementation

The goal of the *Exploring Reading* implementation was to purposefully build students' reading comprehension skills through 30 minutes of daily, scaffolded instruction.

The curriculum was piloted with 52 select students across grades 2–5 at ten different elementary school sites in HCPSS. At each school site, participating students received targeted instruction from the school's reading specialist. On average, students completed between 2 and 4 units of instruction during the course of the pilot.

Scores from the assessments in *Exploring Reading* as well as Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading levels were used to measure students' progress and evaluate growth.

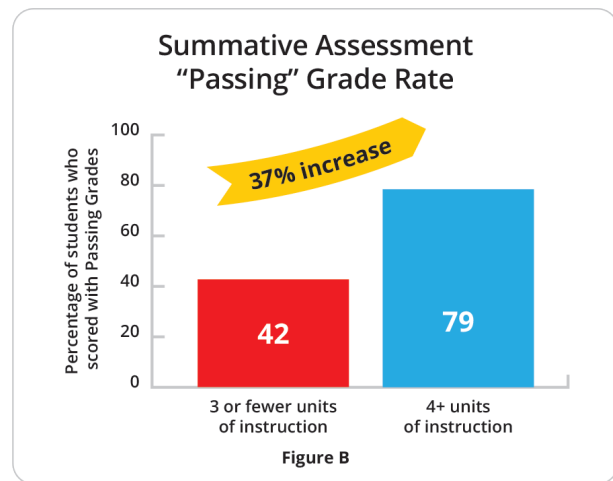
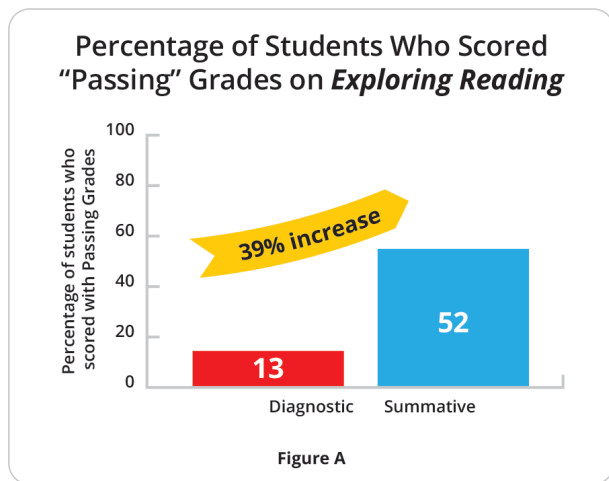


Results

At the start of the program, 13% of students scored a passing grade on the Diagnostic Assessment from the *Exploring Reading* curriculum. At the conclusion of the implementation, 52% of students scored a passing grade, an increase of 39%. (See figure A.)

Furthermore, students who were taught 3 or fewer units of instruction had a passing rate of 42%, while students who received 4 or more units of instruction had a passing rate of 79%. Thus, the more time spent using the curriculum the higher the likelihood of student improvement. (See figure B.)

Due to the success of the curriculum, HCPSS is implementing *Exploring Reading* across all 43 elementary campuses for the 2018–2019 school year.



Testimonials

All of the students and reading specialists were enthusiastic about *Exploring Reading* and felt it had many positive effects.

"The materials are high quality, engaging, and ready to go. I liked the explicit modeling and teaching of the strategies. I also liked the varied ways students interact with each other, and the culturally responsive strategies included. Students LOVED the text cards."
– Reading Specialist,
Fulton Elementary

"I thought the reading materials were both relevant and engaging for the students. Current news topics and age-appropriate themes allowed for the students to make connections to themselves and their community."
– Reading Specialist,
Guilford Elementary

"The overall organization of the curriculum made it easy to follow and helped the students to create a routine so that they quickly knew the expectations as well. My students are excited to be continuing the program next year."
– Reading Specialist,
Forest Ridge Elementary

"The *Exploring Reading* program improved my understanding and teaching of comprehension strategies. The sentence frames were especially helpful when ELLs needed to speak (in full sentences) and write a clear, accurate response."
– Reading Specialist,
Worthington Elementary

"By using the strategies [in *Exploring Reading*] there was a high carry over to the classroom. The classroom teacher saw improvements in students' daily reading assignments as well as an increase in their assessment scores."
– Reading Specialist,
Veterans Elementary



Our Mission

Teacher Created Materials develops innovative and imaginative educational materials and services for students worldwide. Everything we do is created *by teachers for teachers* and students to make teaching more effective and learning more fun.

To Create a World ⁱⁿ which
Children Love to Learn!

Contact Us

For more information on *Exploring Reading* and any of our other standards-based resources, please visit us at www.tcmpub.com.

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Reference Cited

Shanahan, Timothy, Douglas Fisher, and Nancy Frey. 2012. "The Challenge of Challenging Text." *Educational Leadership* 69 (6): 58–63.