Read Works
Pilot Study Brief

PRODUCT INFO

Product name: ReadWorks

Product description: ReadWorks is a nonprofit organization that aims to leverage learning sciences research in support of its mission to improve teacher effectiveness in reading comprehension instruction and address national gaps in student reading achievement (NAEP, 2015). ReadWorks provides free resources to K-12 teachers, including a library of curated nonfiction and literary articles, reading comprehension and vocabulary curricular supports, assessments, and teacher resources.

Learning focus: K-3 Reading

Teacher training: ReadWorks provides professional development through email newsletters with teacher tips, guidance within the website, and occasional webinars.

Device specifications: ReadWorks requires Internet and device access for students and teachers for full digital use. Teachers can alternatively print or project content.

Cost: ReadWorks is free for schools, teachers, and students to use.

DISTRICT CONTEXT

District demographics: The schools involved in this pilot were located in the Midwest. The three schools ranged in size from about 400 to 750 students and were predominantly comprised of White students (about 75 to 80 percent), with about 10 to 15 percent of students at each school identifying as Black and Hispanic. At two of the schools, about 25 percent of students were eligible for free and reduced price lunches, whereas one of the schools only had 1.4 percent low-income students.

About 15 percent of students across the schools have IEPs and about 5 to 10 percent of students are English Learners.

Pilot demographics: The teachers we talked with work at Midwestern public elementary schools in grades K-3, with one teacher having transitioned to the role of reading specialist. A distinguishing characteristic of these teachers is that they are all enthusiastic and on the leading edge of using technology as a teaching tool.

PILOT GOAL

ReadWorks' goal for seeking a partnership grant was to infuse the latest research on learner variability into their platform design to better support the full diversity of learners.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Duration: 2017-18 School Year

Implementation model: Teachers can assign articles to their students in ReadWorks. Students can read the articles with the various supports provided on the ReadWorks digital platform and answer questions on the platform.

Data collected: We interviewed the 3 involved teachers twice; the interviews in September 2017 primarily explored these teachers' use of ReadWorks' original teacher-facing platform in the previous school year, and the interviews

in December 2017 centered on their use of the student-facing platform in the current school year [Note: Two of the teachers had used the student-facing platform some in the prior year, but the majority of their ReadWorks' use was with the teacher-facing platform]. As ReadWorks has continually added features to the student-facing platform, we focused on assessing which features the teachers had noticed and used and discussed features that are likely to be added in the near-term. We also asked these teachers about ReadWorks' impact on their students, specifically how the platform might have helped learners with different needs.

FINDINGS

Actual implementation model: The product was implemented as planned with one variation: teachers printed some articles on paper and had students answer the questions on the website, for several reasons, including being able to quickly see the data.

Educator engagement: All three teachers used ReadWorks on a weekly basis over the course of the Fall Semester.

Educator satisfaction: Teachers reported that they value the extensive library that ReadWorks offers because of the range of articles provided and the ease in finding articles on similar topics for learners at different reading levels, allowing for personalizing the level of the article to the student while maintaining a cohesive classroom experience. Also, the teachers noted how the audio supports led to greater

inclusivity because all of their students could come together to discuss the content that they may have accessed in different ways. Finally, at the time of our interviews, the student choice features, including text magnification, had only recently gone live on the platform, but teachers were enthusiastic about their potential reach for further supporting diverse learners.

Student engagement: Teachers reported positive student reactions and engagement, including improved attitudes toward reading comprehension activities.

Student satisfaction: The new digital reading platform provided a student interface that teachers can individualize quickly and easily. In turn, the students seemed to also feel confident using the platform; they knew they would be able to do what was being asked of them with supports, if needed.

OUTCOME

Educators were satisfied with the product's addition of new supports for learners with diverse needs and plan to continue to use ReadWorks in their classrooms.

See the full report at: https://digitalpromise.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ReadWorks-v1r2-1.pdf.

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