The Research Behind ELLM/Plus

The ELLM/Plus curriculum design and associated learning experiences, grounded in scientific research and guided by the ELLM/Plus Performance Standards, enhance children’s knowledge, skills, and disposition towards learning. The ELLM/Plus Performance Standards are aligned with and guided by the work of:

Standards:
- Florida’s Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Standards
- Florida’s School Readiness Performance Standards for 3, 4, and 5-Year-Olds
- The Head Start Performance Standards

Guidelines:
- Guidelines from the International Reading Association
- Guidelines from the National Council of Mathematics Teachers
- Guidelines from the National Science Teachers Association
- Guidelines from the American Association for the Advancement of Science
- Guidelines from the National Council for the Social Studies
- Guidelines from the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations
- Guidelines from the National Association for the Education of Young Children;

The ELLM/Plus literacy-focused core reflects findings from key national studies of early reading development and has undergone 10 years of development and refinement. The improvement cycle is shown in Figure 1.

![Continuous Improvement Diagram]

Figure 1. ELLM/Plus Continuous Improvement

Research studying the efficacy of the literacy-focused core of ELLM/Plus addressed implementation with diverse populations, across time, and using a variety of methodologies.
Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research

In 2002 the U.S. Department of Education awarded the Florida Institute of Education at the University of North Florida (FIE) a Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research (PCER) grant to study the efficacy of ELLM. The FIE PCER study, conducted in 3 separate geographic locations across Florida, was designed to determine whether participation in ELLM classes resulted in higher posttest early literacy achievement scores for 4-year-old children than participation in classes implementing the locally accepted curricula.

ELLM was more effective than the traditional approaches in raising the early literacy achievement of 4-year-old children. Figures 1 and 2 show the comparison of the Year I ELLM and control children across two of the TERA-3 measures.

- The ELLM children’s Reading Quotient posttest score ranked above the 25th percentile and ranked 6 percentiles higher than the control children’s score.
- The ELLM children’s Alphabet scale posttest score ranked close to the 50th percentile and ranked 9 percentiles higher than the control children’s score.

The second year was designed to determine whether any higher early literacy achievement scores of ELLM children were sustained through kindergarten. Children who participated in ELLM preschool classes before entering kindergarten had higher early literacy achievement on the TERA-3 Reading Quotient and the Alphabet scales at the end of their kindergarten year.

The two studies provide evidence that supports the efficacy of ELLM in preschool classes across all measures of TERA-3 and that the higher achievement levels measured by the TERA-3 Reading Quotient and Alphabet scale are sustained at the end of the kindergarten year.

1 M. Cosgrove, C. Fountain, S. Wehry, and J. Wood with K. Kasten, Randomized Field Trial of an Early Literacy Curriculum and Instructional Support System, and M. Cosgrove, C. Fountain, K. Kasten, and S. Wehry, Examining the Sustained Effects of an Early Literacy Curriculum and Instructional Support System Using a Randomized Field Trial, papers presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting (San Francisco, April 2006 and Chicago, April 2007, respectively).

Florida Institute of Education at the University of North Florida
Head Start Evaluation 2003-2004

ELLM was implemented in 42 Head Start classes during the 2003/2004 school year in a large urban city in northeast Florida. Figure 4 shows rankings at the beginning of the year and at the end.

- The TERA-3 Reading Quotient posttest score ranked above the 25th percentile and increased 8 percentiles over the school year.
- The TERA-3 Alphabet scale posttest score ranked above the 50th percentile and showed a gain of 21 percentiles over the school year.
- The typical Head Start child recognized 40 of the upper and lowercase letters at the end of the school year.
- Additionally, almost 13% of the Head Start ELLM children recognized all 52 letters and less than
- 8% recognized fewer than 10 letters at the end of the school year.

Southwest Florida Early Literacy Partnership for Educational Success

Five agencies in a Southwest Florida county worked together to improve the quality of early education for Southwest Florida children living in surrounding low-income neighborhoods by supporting the implementation of ELLM. The children served were from rural areas and were mostly children of farm and migrant farm workers. Table 1 shows the results from the first year of the implementation.

Table 1: First Year Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Percentile Ranking: Pretest Score</th>
<th>Percentile Ranking: Posttest Score</th>
<th>Change in Percentile Ranking</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>TERA-3*</td>
<td>Reading Quotient</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alphabet</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Concepts of Print</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meaning</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<td>TOLD-P;3*</td>
<td>Listening Quotient</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Picture Vocabulary</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oral Vocabulary</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammatic Understanding</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evidence Supporting the Efficacy of ELLM/Plus

The results of these studies provide evidence of the efficacy of the literacy-focused core of ELLM/Plus. The PCER studies provide evidence that the use of ELLM in preschool classes across diverse settings improved children’s literacy and letter knowledge skills. The evaluations support the implementation of ELLM/Plus in urban centers enrolling minority children who are among the most economically disadvantaged and minority children who are also English Language Learners.

Florida Institute of Education at the University of North Florida