

A UTILIZATION-FOCUSED EVALUATION OF THE PATHWAYS TO READING PROGRAM

Susan Powers

Dr. Sandy Hutchinson, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Recognizing that reading is a gateway skill for further learning many districts are seeking programs that address early reading intervention and remediation of reading. There is a need for reading instruction to address student literacy in a deliberate manner, address professional development needs in a comprehensive, continuing way, and bring measurable improvement in reading achievement. District personnel want evidence that a method generates results before allocating funds in ever-tightening budgets.

The focus of this study is the Pathway to Reading program. The purpose of this study was to conduct a Utilization-Focused Evaluation of the Pathways to Reading program. Utilization-Focused Evaluations provide program stakeholders a process in which to select the model, methods and uses for the evaluation. The study sought to evaluate perceptions of participants implementing the Pathways to Reading program in their districts. Further, the study sought to gain insights from teachers and administrators on how to improve the reading instruction model of professional development, implementation, and student learning.

Data show the program to be a very specific, complete program to address the teaching of foundational skills in grades K-2 with excellent support for teachers via on-site visits and access to knowledgeable trainers. Further findings identified ways program authors could expand the program content to include lessons for higher students, and reading comprehension component.