

## A History Rooted in Research

Literacy How's evolution began in 1999 at Haskins Laboratories, when Haskins Senior Scientist Anne Fowler assisted in assembling Connecticut's Early Reading Panel. This group produced "Connecticut's Blueprint for Reading Achievement," which identified professional development required for K-grade 3 teachers to improve reading instruction.

**Early Reading Success Institute (ERSI)**, a research-to-practice feasibility study by Drs. Fowler and Susan Brady, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the Connecticut State Department of Education and the University of Rhode Island, 2000-04.

ERSI applied reading research in Kindergarten-grade 2 classrooms, trained over 30 internal and external mentors, and worked with over 200 teachers in 20 schools in Connecticut and Rhode Island. Haskins researchers and mentors developed professional development models and tools for teacher training and established three CT model schools to serve as demonstration sites.

**Mastering Reading Instruction (MRIn)**, a study of first grade reading instruction by Co-Principal Investigators, Drs. Margie Gillis and Susan Brady, funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, 2003-07.

First grade teachers' primary responsibility is to teach children to read, so MRIn focused on first grade reading instruction, studying the relationship among what a teacher knows about reading, how reading is taught in the classroom, and how students perform on a variety of reading assessment measures.

Professional development and classroom support in 37 schools in nine districts with more than 120 teachers took place over two academic years, 2004-2006. All teachers received the same professional development (PD) in phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency. Half benefited from a Haskins-trained mentor in the classroom to help translate reading research into effective instructional practice and also received a second year of PD in oral language, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Both models yielded larger gains in teachers' knowledge than often obtained. However, in-class mentor support resulted in even more substantial gains in teachers' knowledge in the two main areas of instruction (phonemic awareness and code), demonstrating the advantages of modeling, feedback, individualized support, and extra instructional time.

See [Brady, S., Gillis, M. et al. \(April 2009\). First grade teachers' knowledge of phonological awareness and code concepts: Examining gains from an intensive form of professional development and corresponding teacher attitudes. \*Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal\* 22\(4\): 425-455.](#)

**Haskins/Hartford Literacy Initiative**, a three-year project with a goal of strengthening reading in the early grades, funded by Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, 2006-09

Kindergarten-grade 2 teachers in five schools received job-embedded professional development from Haskins Literacy Specialists. Students in all three grades made significant gains from fall to spring. Kindergarten students whose teachers had the most support made the greatest gains and finished the year with the highest scores. Among grade three students whose teachers had the most support, higher percentages scored at Advanced, Goal and Proficient levels in Reading on the Connecticut Mastery Test and fewer at Basic and Below Basic than students whose teachers had less or no mentor support.