“Comprehension and Vocabulary Improvement among First-grade Students”

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Abstract
This study describes an evaluation of a read aloud intervention to improve comprehension and vocabulary of first-grade students. Twelve teachers were randomly assigned to an intervention or comparison condition. The study lasted 19 weeks, and the intervention focused on the systematic use of narrative and expository texts and dialogic interactions between teachers and students delivered in whole-classroom formats. Read aloud intervention lessons included before-, during-, and after-reading components and explicit instruction targeted comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. Teachers in the comparison condition implemented the same amount of read aloud instruction, focusing on strategies they believed would help their students with comprehension and vocabulary. On some, but not all, outcome measures, intervention students at low risk and high risk for language difficulties outperformed comparable students in the comparison group. Implications are discussed.

Biographical Note
Dr. David Chard is the Leon Simmons Endowed Dean of the Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development and Professor of Teaching and Learning at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Dr. Chard has been a principal investigator on several federal research projects on reading comprehension and mathematics instruction and is published widely on these and other topics. He is a member of the International Academy of Research on Learning Disabilities and former President of the Division for Research at the Council for Exceptional Children. He was a high school mathematics teacher in California, Michigan, and the U.S. Peace Corps in Lesotho, southern Africa. In July 2012, he was nominated by President Barack Obama and confirmed by the Senate to serve on the National Board of Directors of the Institute for Education Science.