

Supporting High School Struggling Readers in Guided Instruction: Transfer of Elementary Pedagogies

Professional Learning

- Professional learning that supports teachers' growth also fosters educational improvement¹ and enhances student achievement²
- Building on teachers' existing professional knowledge and working collaboratively to support their self-directed professional growth are important aspects of professional learning³
- Guided reading and small group instruction are typically elementary instructional practices⁴, however their implementation into high school classrooms may be able to support struggling readers
- Guided reading involves a teacher working with a small group of students who have similar reading interests, needs, and levels, assisting them in improving their literacy practices as they work with more challenging texts⁵
- Using levelled books and differentiated instruction, the teacher scaffolds readers to engage with texts⁵

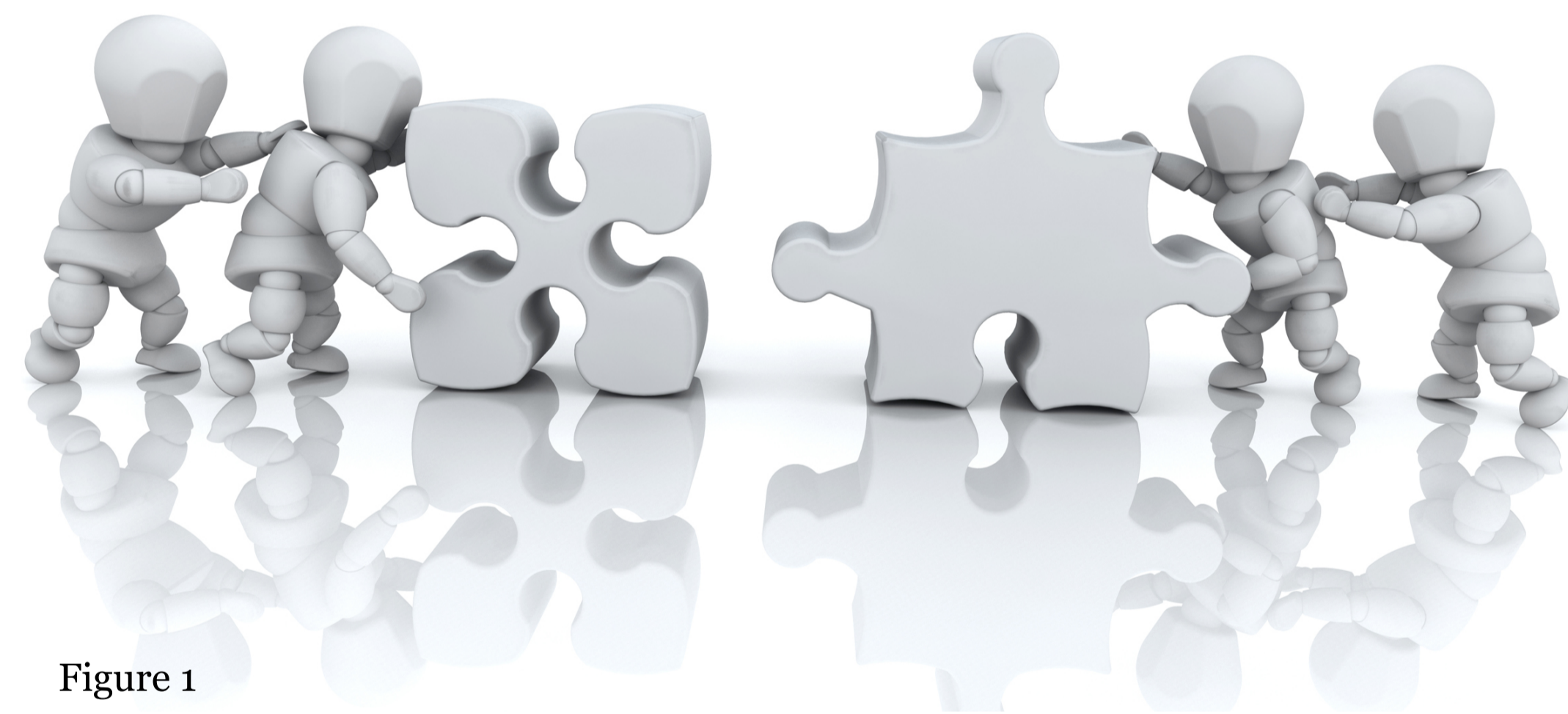


Figure 1

The Current Study

- This study is part of a larger research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) that is exploring professional learning through coaching, in Ontario School Board professional learning initiatives
- This study focuses on one aspect of a Resilient Readers project

Research Question

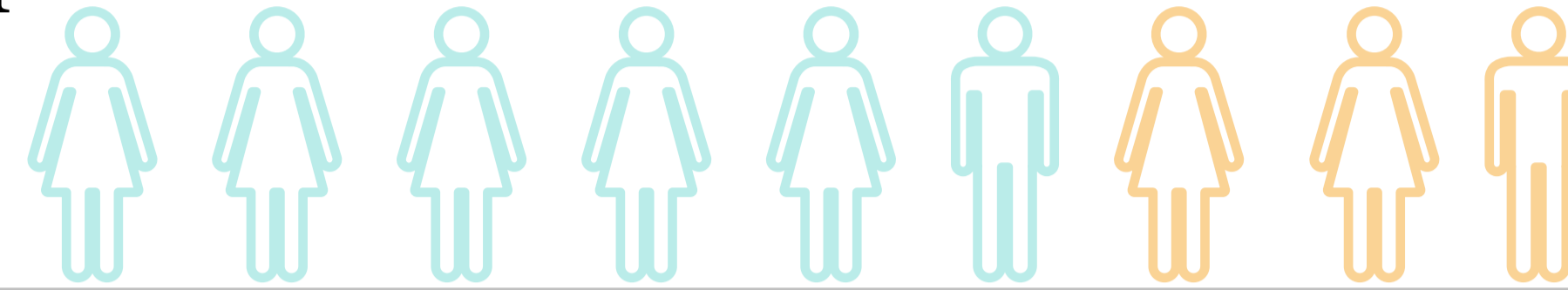
What do teachers and coaches perceive to be the effects of implementing small group guided reading in High School English classes?

Methods

- Interpretive qualitative case study
- Six high school English teachers were coached in the implementation of guided reading and small group instruction in locally developed (Applied) English courses

Participants

- Six secondary school English teachers
- Three coaches who supported these teachers' implementation of new practices



Data Collection



Field Notes

- Scribed as open-ended notes, collected during:
 - ▶ Professional learning meetings
 - ▶ Conference calls
 - ▶ Webinars
 - ▶ Coaching interactions
 - ▶ Classroom instructional observations
- Artifacts were gathered when available, and included:
 - ▶ Handouts
 - ▶ Resources
 - ▶ PowerPoint Presentations



Interviews

- Five of the six teacher participants were interviewed; their question prompts probed:
 - ▶ Overall impressions of the professional learning project
 - ▶ Their own growth as a function of coaches' practices
- Three coach participants were interviewed; their question prompts probed:
 - ▶ Professional background
 - ▶ Their practice as coaches
 - ▶ Their professional learning in the coach role

Results

- While several themes were extracted, this presentation will focus on the theme of metacognition

1 Students' Metacognition

- Students demonstrated many skills associated with metacognition during guided instruction; they were able to:
 - ▶ Use active listening strategies while engaging with peers
 - ▶ Reflect on their learning
 - ▶ Evaluate and analyze the reading strategies they used, increasing their comprehension
 - ▶ Talk meaningfully about their reading during guided instruction
 - ▶ Ask questions that demonstrated their ability to think about their reading strategies

2 Teachers' Enhanced Practice

- Coaching, co-planning, teacher reflection and discussion about metacognition prompted teachers to assist students to use metacognitive strategies in their small group discussions and guided reading groups
- The teachers were surprised at their own ability to be adept at promoting metacognition in the classroom as well as their students' abilities to incorporate metacognitive strategies

“ [Teacher A] is more comfortable with metacognition and how to get students to reflect on their learning. They are asking questions when they are reading with him that demonstrate whether they are inferring or making connections...[Teacher A] is more aware of how to teach it explicitly now and he really has slowed his teaching down
~Literacy Coach, January 18 2017

“ [The coach] notes that their big revelation is that teachers' beliefs have shifted from seeing the students as struggling to now being resilient. They are now focusing on not just comprehension strategies but also why the strategy works and when it works
~Researcher Observation, May 10 2017

Discussion & Implications

- Intermediate grade teachers (i.e., Grades 7-10) might benefit from implementing these practices into their teaching in attempts to prepare struggling students to be more self-regulated, metacognitively aware learners
- High school teachers might use these findings to further target struggling readers through practices with which their students are already familiar
- Coaches in other school districts might support these pedagogies with high school teachers; they are versatile and can be integrated into many subject areas including English and/or discipline specific reading (e.g., history, science, etc.)

References

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- ² Elish-Piper, L., L'Allier, S. K. (2011). Examining the relationship between literacy coaching and student reading gains in grades K-3. *Elementary School Journal*, 112(1), 83-106.
- ³ Stover, K., Kissel, B., Haag, K. & Shoniker, R. (2011). Differentiated coaching: Fostering reflection with teachers. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(7), 498-509.
- ⁴ Fountas & Pinnell. (2001). *Guiding readers and writers, grades 3-6: Teaching comprehension, genre, and content literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- ⁵ Fountas, I.C., & Pinnell, G.S. (2012). Guided reading: The romance and the reality. *The Reading Teacher*, 66(4), 268-284.
- Figure 1. Ben-Avraham, Y. (2011, May 18). Solving jigsaw puzzle [digital image]. Retrieved from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/epublicist/8718123610/>