An Instructional Shift from Teacher Practice to Student Learning

By Ann H. Leon | Categories: SIPPS, Teaching Tips, Implementation

Supporting teacher learning from year one to year two of implementation has sparked many invigorating conversations. We notice that the first year of an implementation primarily focuses on the teacher learning of the program, materials, and shifts in pedagogy. As teachers become familiar with using the SIPPS program, the focus can then shift from teacher practice to student learning. Below are seven parallel points to consider.

Reflect on your practice and consider: Is your SIPPS instruction focused on teacher practice or student learning?

Shift from Teacher Practice-Observations of Early Implementation of the SIPPS Program:

1. **Scheduling:** The SIPPS program is taught at a time when the teacher or grade level can fit it into the instructional day. The master schedule dictates when SIPPS can fit in.
2. **Teachers:** The number of teachers teaching SIPPS dictates how many SIPPS groups there are in the school/grade level and the number of students in each group.
3. **Grouping:** Students are grouped based on the placement assessment, but group configuration and size and not intentional. Once the groups are formed, they remain for the duration of the year.
4. **Instructional Shift:** The teacher learns the SIPPS routines but continues to teach the lesson components based on previous practice, knowledge, and experiences. The teacher attempts to use corrective feedback as a way to “fix” or give students the information.
5. **Resources:** SIPPS resources (i.e. spelling-sound wall cards, irregular syllable chart, sight word wall or dictionary) are posted on the walls, or copied for students, but may not be visible to all students, or often not used.
6. **Application:** Students don't seem to or are not supported to transfer their SIPPS learning into general reading and writing as quickly or efficiently.
7. **Reading:** Individualized Daily Reading (IDR) is a time for students to read independently, but without much interaction with the teacher.

To Student Learning-Transitions Necessary to Implementing the SIPPS Program:

1. **Scheduling:** SIPPS instruction is scheduled at a time when the maximum number of the teaching staff can be involved and student learning is optimal for acceleration. What are the advantages to having all grade levels teach the SIPPS program at the same time? What advantages do we have when SIPPS instruction is scheduled in a staggered time frame? How do we meet the needs of all our students, not just the students of one class?
2. **Teachers:** The placement assessment data dictate the number of teachers (general and special education teachers along with paraprofessionals) needed to teach SIPPS groups. Who are the staffing resources that we have at our school that can support
the SIPPS groups? Who have we not considered?

3. **Grouping:** Assessment data is used to group students for optimal grouping, pacing, and learning. Generally 6-8 students are grouped together, based on the need for similar instruction in phonics and sight words. Regrouping is available as needed based on the Mastery Tests. What difference would group size have on student learning as compared to the year before? Do we have the resources to regroup students based on the mastery tests? How do we address the needs of students in general and special education? Can we consider them together regardless of classifications?

4. **Instructional Shift:** The teacher learns and understands the rationale of the lesson routines, uses the routines as intended, and pays close attention to using correction routines when students require the support to be successful. The teacher uses the corrective routines to scaffold learning to support “training the brain” to develop students’ independence. How does our understanding affect the use of explicit direct instruction to meet the needs of our students? How do we make instructional decisions based on the responses (success/challenges) of our students? Are the routines clear, consistent, and concise, without teacher chatter? Are our students growing more independent as a result of our instructional practices through the SIPPS program? What evidence do I have that students are able to read to text independently and fluently (automaticity + accuracy + prosody)?

5. **Resources:** SIPPS resources (i.e. spelling-sound cards, irregular syllable charts) are intentionally referenced as part of the correction routine, and pointed out to students to use during reading and writing. Are the students familiar enough with the resources to use them independently when needed, especially during independent writing time? Are the students taking responsibility for their reading and writing skills through the use of resources? Do the students have access to the SIPPS resources across the day?

6. **Application:** Teachers purposefully speak of the importance of using the SIPPS strategies and resources during the rest of the school day in all content areas, when students read and write. Do we intentionally speak about the application of the way the brain reads by using the SIPPS strategies throughout the day?

7. **Reading:** Individualized Daily Reading (IDR) is a scheduled time for independent reading each day; it’s a time where the teacher actively confers with students about what they are reading. Are we consistent in scheduling IDR daily? Do we show students that we are interested in them as readers on a daily basis? How are we intentionally coaching students to independence as we confer?

Asking reflective questions to focus on the learning of our students helps our instruction to be clear and focused. Our goal is to help students to apply what they are learning through SIPPS to be independent and fluent readers so they can make sense of texts that increase in complexity year after year.

Lets revisit our reflection question: Is your SIPPS instruction focused on teacher practice or student learning? Based on our considerations, where might you need to shift practice? What supports might you need to make the shift happen?