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Oregon Reading Instructional Materials and Practices Statewide Survey Executive Summary

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OREGON READING
INSTRUCTIONAL
MATERIALS AND
PRACTICES STATEWIDE
SURVEY EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY

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OREGON TEACHERS OF TEACHERS OF LITERACY
NOVEMBER 2015

SURVEY CONDUCTED BY OREGON TEACHERS OF TEACHERS OF LITERACY

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OREGON TEACHERS OF TEACHERS OF LITERACY

This study was conducted by a group of literacy teacher educators from across Oregon called Teachers of Teachers of Literacy (ToTL). In 2012 teacher educators in Oregon saw the need for statewide networking and a small group reached out to all of the state's teacher educators to develop a networking group. Currently, there are 35 ToTL members that represent 15 teacher preparation institutions in the state, plus an additional two members from outside the state that contributed statistical analyses. The state has a total of 20 teacher preparation institutions, so the ToTL membership represents 75 percent of the total number of colleges and universities that prepare teachers. ToTL has members from each geographical region of the state.

OREGON READING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND PRACTICES STATEWIDE SURVEY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABSTRACT

This study reports the results of a survey of a representative sample of 1,206 K-6 classroom and 7-12 English Language Arts teachers in Oregon to learn 1) what reading instructional materials are currently being used, 2) what reading instructional materials teachers would prefer, 3) what reading instructional materials teachers wanted to have included on the state approved materials list, and 4) what instructional practices teachers use. Results indicated that in grades K-6 basal/core reading programs were the predominant material in use, but that these teachers preferred to use trade books. The majority of grades 7-12 English Language Arts teachers reported mainly using trade books for reading instruction. Teachers wanted to use their professional judgment to make decisions about materials. When asked about revisions to the Oregon Statute 337 and the Oregon Administrative Rule 581 Division 11, only 4.5% of Oregon K-12 teachers wanted their choice limited to basal/core reading programs. All others wanted flexibility in selecting instructional materials. Overall teacher preferences for the approved instructional materials were not associated with teacher type, grade level, school context, or school Title I status.

OREGON READING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND PRACTICES STATEWIDE SURVEY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The educational policies of the past decade, especially Reading First, have had an impact on reading instruction across the country (Long & Selden, 2011). By 2007 Reading First grants impacted 10% of the public school population across the United States (USDOE, 2009). In our region, 202 schools received Reading First funds which created a “paradigm shift in reading instruction” by mandating core reading programs¹ and influencing non-Reading First schools to adopt core reading programs (Oregon State Department of Education, 2007). According to The Center on Education Policy (2006), “Reading First has affected schools and districts that [did] not participate directly in Reading First. Many districts . . . expanded Reading First instructional programs and assessment systems to non-Reading First schools” (p. 1). Although the Reading First grant program ended in 2009, the core reading programs adopted with Reading First money are still prevalent in schools. According to Dewitz, Leahy, Jones, and Sullivan (2010), core reading programs are “a staple of instruction in U.S. schools today” (p. 10).

Oregon adopted the Common Core State Standards (NGA Center for Best Practices & CCSSO, 2010) in 2012, and the direction of reading instruction began to change. Some of the shifts necessitated by the CCSS were increased amounts of informational text, reading texts with increased text complexity, and pedagogical movements towards close reading and textual analysis. Existing core reading program adoptions in districts often did not align to the CCSS and did not include sufficient informational texts, nor were there sufficient levels of text complexity and/or alignment to

¹ The term “basal” and “core reading program” are used interchangeably in this survey. “Basal reading programs were rebranded in the early 2000s into ‘core reading programs...’” (Dewitz & Jones, 2013, pp. 392-393). “Core reading programs” is the term used most often by textbook companies and the US Department of Education, yet the Oregon Revised Statute 337 and the Oregon Administrative Rule 581 Division 11 regarding textbook adoptions still use the term “basals.”

the new CCSS. As a result, teachers began to recognize that the core reading programs were insufficient to support students' attainment of CCSS goals.

Schools are currently in a transitional period between the influences of Reading First and the CCSS. Therefore, we wanted to systematically learn what reading materials are predominantly used in the state, and what instructional reading materials teachers preferred to teach from.

Research Questions

This study reports the results of the survey of teachers in Oregon and answers the following research questions:

1. What instructional materials do teachers report using to teach reading?
2. What instructional materials would teachers prefer to use to teach reading if given options?
3. What materials do teachers want to have included on the approved state instructional materials adoption list?
4. What instructional practices do teachers report using to teach reading?

Data Collection

Survey collection began on September 24, 2014 and continued until November 2, 2014 for a total of 42 days. ToTL members contacted district administrators, reading specialists, and classroom teachers through email. Since some of the districts did not have websites, we asked Educational Service Districts (ESD) to contact teachers in these districts. We also asked the Oregon Reading Association to ask local councils to distribute the survey, and we posted the survey on the Oregon Council of Teachers of English's Facebook page. We contacted teachers that we knew in our regions, and we asked the classroom teachers to share the survey with their colleagues.

1395 surveys were submitted electronically, but 189 of them were left blank, meaning the respondent clicked through the survey, but did not select responses. 1,206 surveys were usable which was 6.81 percent of the total number of teachers who would be using reading or ELA

materials in the state. Of the total number of participants, 60.3% taught in grades K-4 and 39.6% taught in grades 5-12. We were able to get responses from 162 of the 196 school districts, or 82.6%.

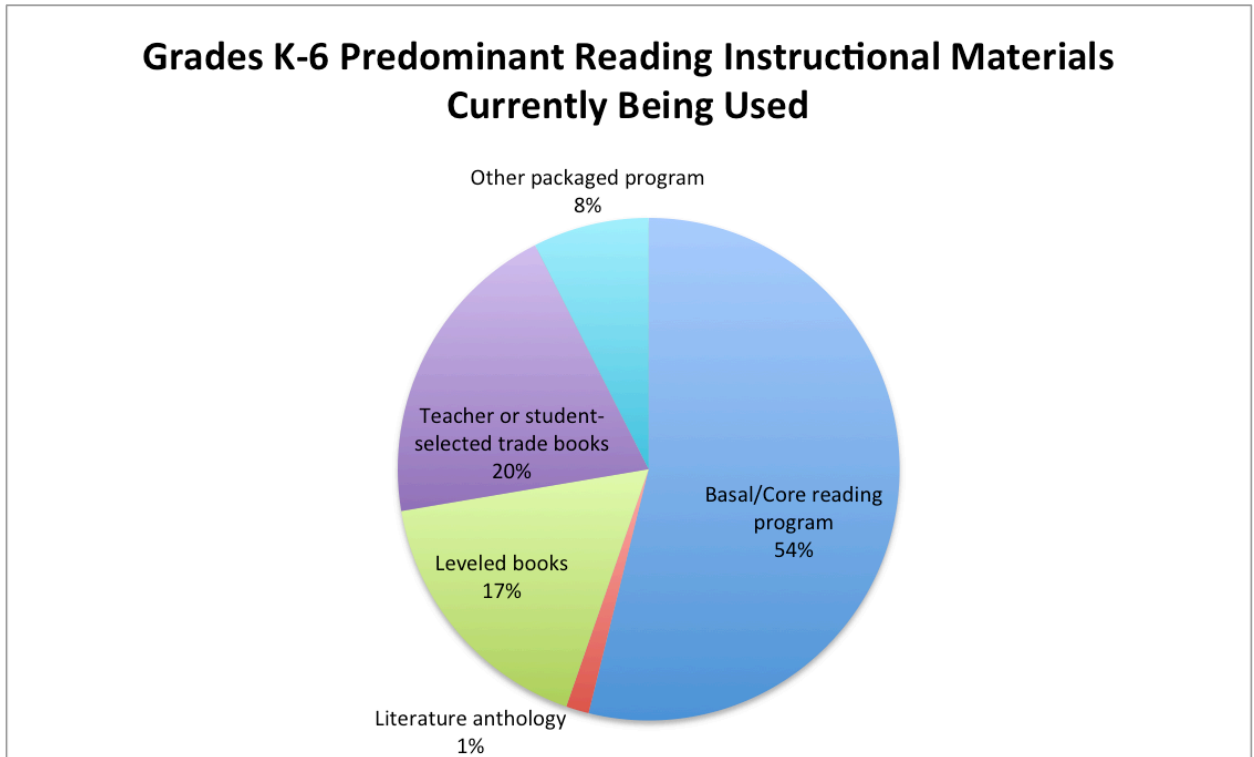
The final survey question provided participants with an opportunity to share, “Any comments you have about reading materials.” We received 365 individual responses. At the end of the survey, we asked if the participants would be interested in participating in a follow-up telephone interview. Thirty-four teachers contacted us to be interviewed. Of the 34 interview participants, 12 taught in urban areas, 12 taught in small towns, and 10 taught in rural schools. The number of years the teachers had taught ranged from 2 to 34. Teachers of all grade levels, Title 1 teachers and reading specialists were represented.

Data Analysis

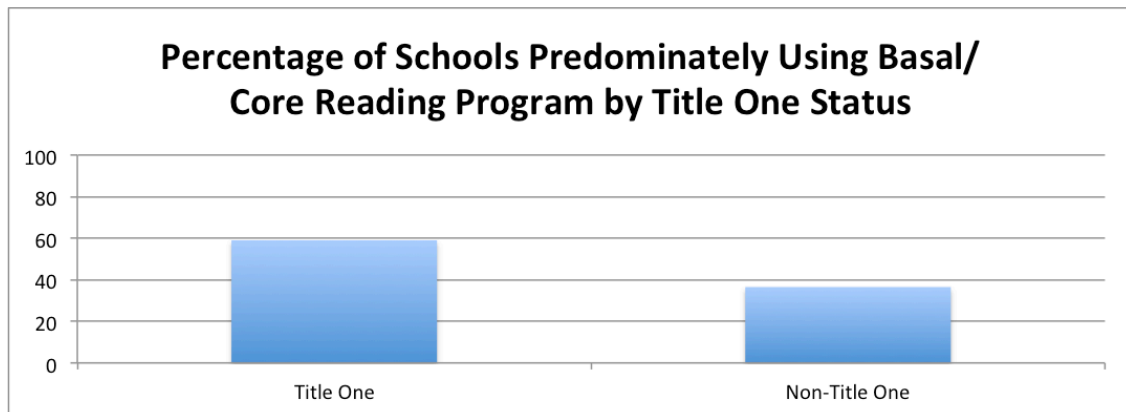
Surveys were completed online and the data was imported directly into Excel data files by SurveyMonkey, which prevented data entry errors. We calculated descriptive statistics and frequencies for each item. Then we ran cross-tabulations to identify statistically significant relationships between teacher variables (e.g., grade level, Title I status of school) and responses to items related to instructional materials and practices used and preferred instructional materials. Where at least 10% of cells in a table had expected counts less than 5, we used Fisher’s exact test to verify the significance of the contrast. In all cases where a significant difference was found from the chi-square test, the Fisher’s exact test also yielded a p -value below the significance threshold, so we report the chi-square values and corresponding p -values in the tables. To investigate the strength of statistically significant associations between teacher variables and materials used, practices used, and preferred materials, we used Cramér’s V .

Findings

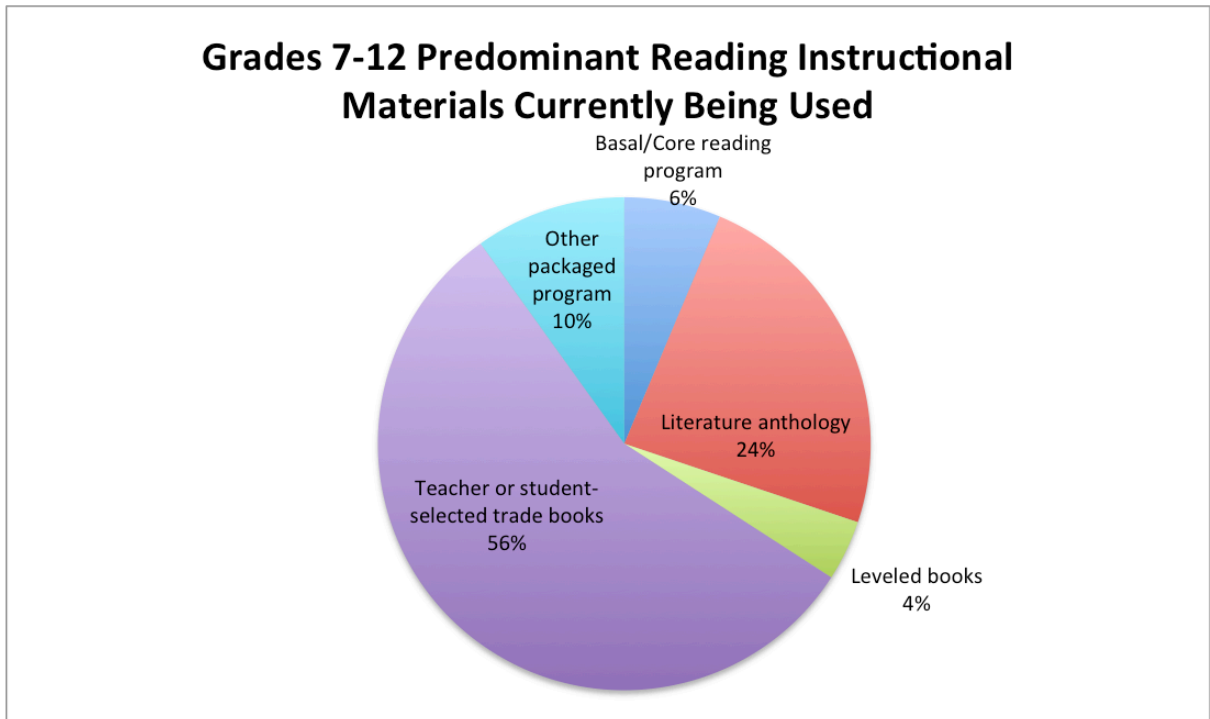
Research Question #1: What materials do teachers report using to teach reading? The majority (53.9%) of K-6 teachers reported using basal/core reading programs.



A relationship exists between the status of the school as a Title I school and the instructional materials used. Nearly 59% of teachers in Title I schools report predominately using core reading programs or other packaged programs as their primary instructional materials in reading, as compared to 36.5% of teachers in non-Title I schools.



The majority of grades 7-12 teachers (56%) reported mainly using teacher or student selected trade books as the predominant instructional materials for reading.

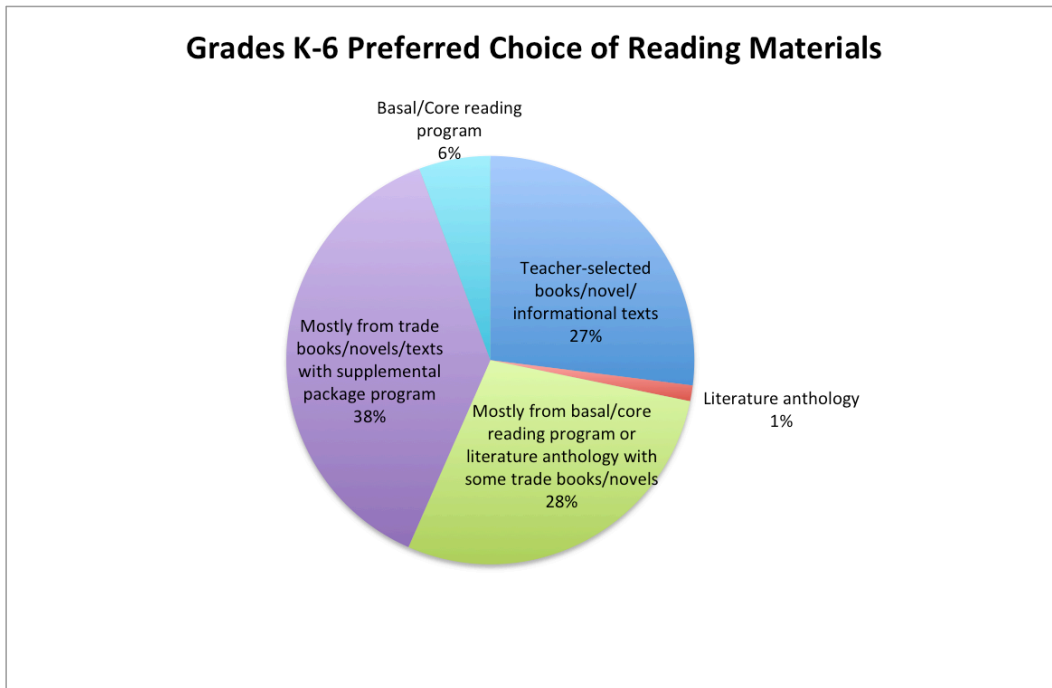


Fifty-eight percent of K-12 teachers used trade books to supplement their reading instructional materials. K-6 teachers were most likely to supplement their reading instruction with leveled books (64.2%), followed by trade books (chapter books/novels/informational texts) (57.2%). Grades 7-12 teachers were most likely to supplement their reading instruction with trade books (61.1%), followed by Internet texts (58.1%).

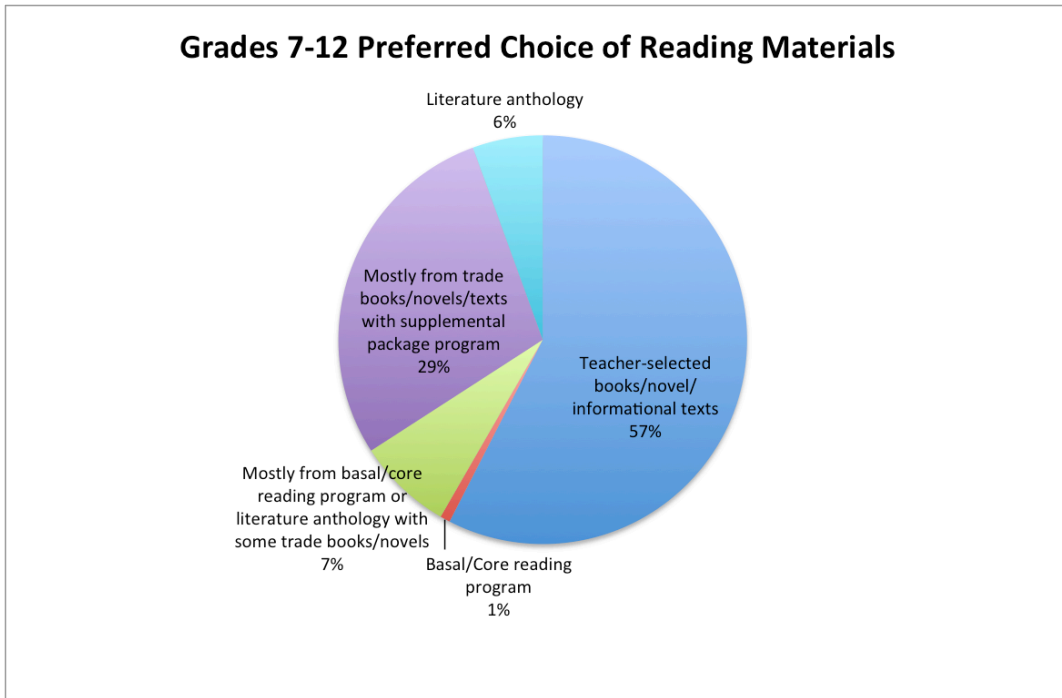
Research Question #2: What materials would teachers prefer to use to teach reading if given options?

K-12 teachers preferred using books, novels, and informational texts they selected (33.8%) or trade books with supplemental packaged materials (35.7%) when given options for selecting instructional materials. Few teachers prefer primarily using a core program (4.6%) or literature anthology (2.2%) for their reading instruction.

Only 5.6% of K-6 teachers reported wanting to teach primarily from a basal/core reading program. K-6 teachers reported a preference for using trade books with supplemental packaged materials (37.8%), and teacher-selected books, novels, and informational texts (30%) when given options for selecting instructional reading materials.



Only 2.2% of grades 7-12 teachers reported wanting to teach primarily from a literature anthology. Grades 7-12 teachers preferred teaching from teacher-selected books/novels/informational texts (33.8%) and trade books/novels/texts with a supplemental packaged program (35.7%) when given options for selecting instructional reading materials.



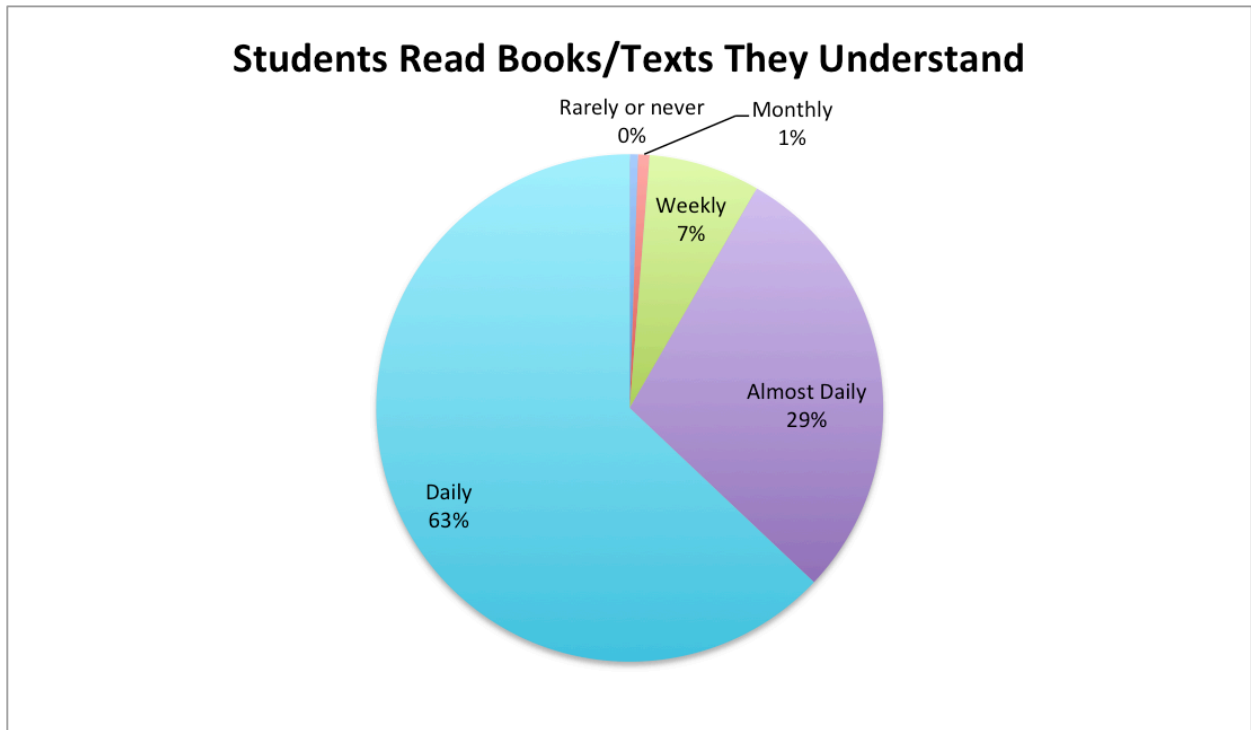
Research Question #3: What materials do teachers want to have included on the approved state instructional materials adoption list?

Overall teachers want access to a variety of instructional materials. Only 8.3% want the Oregon Revised Statute 337 and the Oregon Administrative Rule 581 Division 11 governing the approved state textbook adoption instructional materials list to continue allowing only basal/core reading programs. 82.7% want to allow supplemental materials (digital and/or print). 66.0% want to allow intervention programs. 52.7% want to allow Open Educational Resources (OER) (free digital texts). 62.6% want to allow new materials developed between review cycles.

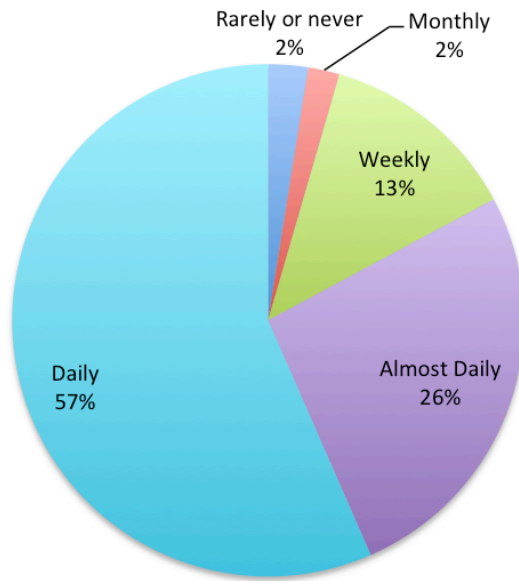
Research Question #4: What instructional practices do teachers report using to teach reading?

Teachers use research-based practices either daily or almost daily. Overall, the practices that occur daily or almost daily by teachers in the sample were students reading books/texts they understand (91.6%), students listening to an adult read aloud (82.8%), students spending more time reading connected texts than on

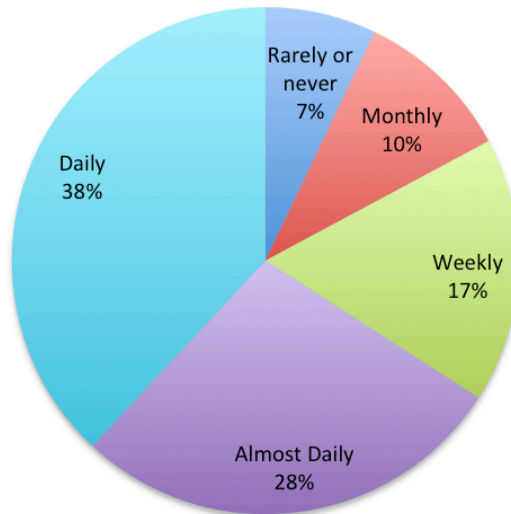
reading-related activities (81.8%), independent reading time for students (79.8%), and students reading self-selected materials (77.2%). Students talk with their peers about their reading daily or almost daily in 70.7% of classrooms. Most teachers (65.9%) indicated that they use picture books, novels, or informational texts in their teaching daily or almost daily.



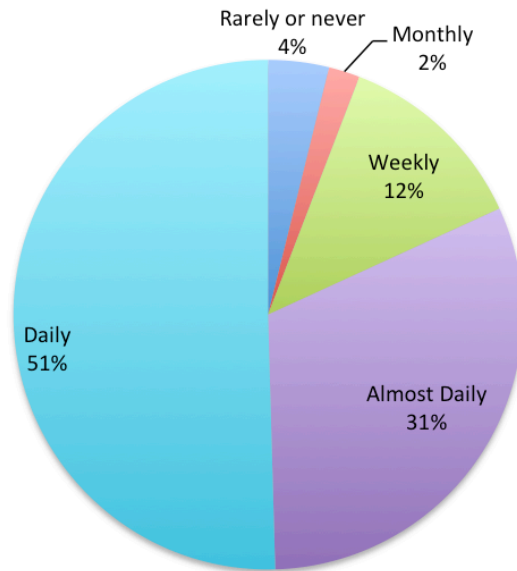
Students Listen to an Adult Read Aloud



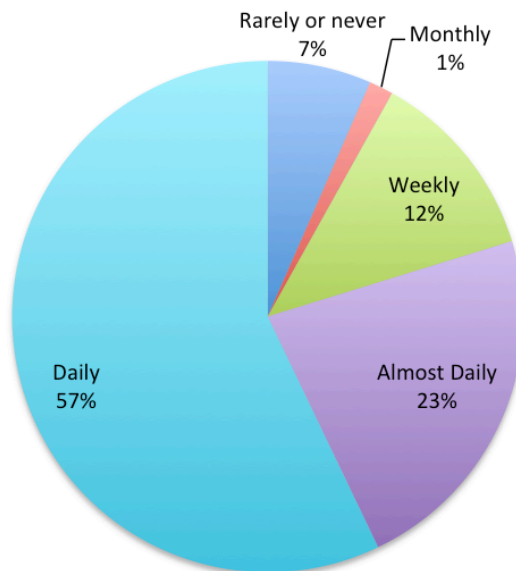
Students Receive Instruction from Picture Books/Trade Books/Chapter Books or Novels



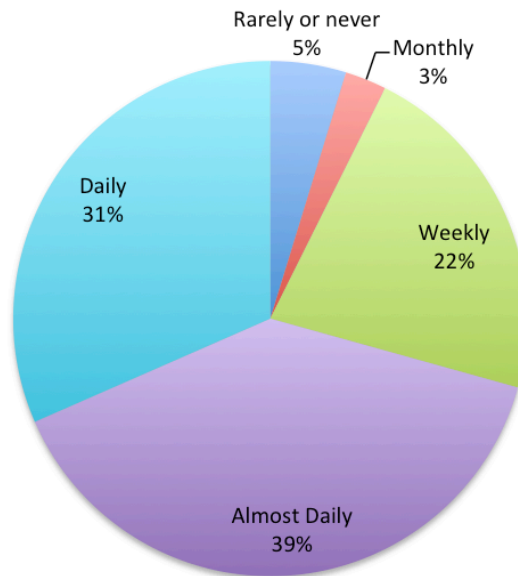
Students Spend Time Reading Connected Text Rather Than Reading-Related Activities



Students Have Independent Reading Time During the School Day



Students Talk with Peers about Their Reading in Small Groups or Partner Discussions



Recommendations

1. Teachers should have agency to access a variety of instructional materials based on their classroom context.
2. Teachers should use their professional expertise to select and implement instructional materials.
3. The Oregon Revised Statute 337 and the Oregon Administrative Rule 581 Division 11 should reflect the important role of teacher expertise in employing instructional materials.

The new process of selection of instructional materials should encourage the adoption of additional materials including digital materials, open educational materials and materials created by schools, districts and states; minimize and/or remove barriers to publishers to encourage maximum participation of material submissions; create a new process to identify high quality instructional materials; and create new review criteria for Oregon districts.

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