Evaluation: The SIPPS® program
(Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words)

Field-Test Study

Snapshot
One school, West Sacramento, CA
- 200 students, grade 2–6
- 62% Hispanic
- 93% free/reduced lunch
- 33% ELL students

Background
SIPPS—Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words is a state-of-the-art decoding intervention program for struggling readers in grades K–12; it is also used as a basic instructional program at grades K–3. Developed by Professor John Shefelbine of California State University at Sacramento, SIPPS is designed to help students develop word recognition skills efficiently and effectively.

Evaluation data
Effects of the SIPPS program on decoding ability were evaluated using fall and spring scores on the Slosson Oral Reading Test. During this two-year study, English-speaking students gained an average of 1.6 grade levels in decoding ability each year after seven months of SIPPS implementation. This is more than twice the growth that would be expected over a seven-month period. Spanish-speaking bilingual students showed even greater growth. They gained an average of 2.6 grade levels in decoding ability each year, almost four times expected growth. These findings are illustrated below in Figure 1.
Comparison study

Snapshot
Two SIPPS program schools, one with a large ELL, low-income population, and two matched comparison schools, in Napa, CA
- A total of 547 students, grades 1–3

Evaluation data
This comparison study involved two program schools (one of which served large numbers of Hispanic and socioeconomically disadvantaged students) and two matched comparison schools in Napa, CA. Students in grades 1–3 were assessed in the fall, prior to the beginning of instruction in reading, and again in the spring, after seven months of instruction. Students who received SIPPS instruction showed significantly greater gains in decoding (approximately four more months of growth in grade-equivalent scores on the Slosson Oral Reading Test) than comparison students, whose teachers used Saxon Phonics and other state-adopted phonics materials. The differences were greatest for the school with a large Hispanic, low-income population, relative to its matched comparison school. These findings are illustrated in Figure 2. Also, the gains in decoding from SIPPS instruction were greater for Spanish-speaking English Language Learners than for English-speaking students. These findings are illustrated in Figure 3. The greater gains SIPPS yielded were not only statistically significant, but substantial—equivalent to what would be expected if program students had experienced four additional months of decoding instruction than comparison students.

![Figure 1. Growth in Grade-Equivalent Decoding Scores After Seven Months of SIPPS](image-url)
Figure 2. Growth in Grade-Equivalent Decoding Scores After Seven Months of SIPPS Instruction vs. Alternative Phonics Instruction

Figure 3. Gains in Decoding from Pretest to Posttest on the Slosson Oral Reading Test for English-Speaking and Spanish-Speaking Students, Napa, CA, 2001–2002