



The Meadows Center
FOR PREVENTING EDUCATIONAL RISK



Overview of the STRIVE Model





What Is STRIVE?

The **Strategies for Reading Information and Vocabulary Effectively (STRIVE)** professional development (PD) model was developed through funding from the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. As part of this research project, a cadre of upper-elementary school teachers worked closely with researchers at The University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University to design evidence-based practices for social studies instruction in grades 4 and 5. The STRIVE PD model featuring these practices was refined through researcher-practitioner collaboration, the latest developments in reading research, and the results of pilot studies. **Several efficacy trials have reported positive outcomes in teacher quality and student vocabulary and comprehension development** as a result of participation in STRIVE PD.^{1,2,3}

Features of STRIVE Instruction

The STRIVE instructional practices occur **before, during, and after reading to support students' development of vocabulary and comprehension skills** necessary to learn new information from text. Teachers explicitly explain and model each practice, engage in guided practice with students, and provide corrective feedback. As students master new skills, teachers provide meaningful opportunities for students to use the strategies independently until the strategy use becomes habit. A unique feature of STRIVE is that students are introduced to the strategies over time across multiple social studies units, with opportunities to practice initial strategy use before being introduced to others.

Addressing the Needs of Upper-Elementary Teachers: The STRIVE PD Framework

Teachers' professional learning is at the center of STRIVE's effectiveness. As part of our collaboration with professionals at our partnering campuses, we designed a professional learning model aimed not only at developing teachers' knowledge of evidence-based strategies, but also at supporting their successful implementation **in practice**. Findings from our research indicate that **distributed PD for participating teachers yielded positive effects** on students' development of vocabulary and comprehension skills.³

Beyond the Workshop: Job-Embedded Support for Teachers

Although it is still common for educators to engage in PD through one-time, "workshop-style" sessions, research shows that this approach has little effect on teacher practice and behaviors or on student outcomes.^{4,5} For meaningful change in the classroom, educators need follow-up support that is distributed over time and that emphasizes active learning.⁶ Drawing on the research, **we designed a distributed PD model that integrates educators' reflection, problem-solving, and extended learning** about how to implement evidence-based practices.³

Distributed PD: What Is it?

We designed the STRIVE PD model to reflect current research to increase teacher knowledge with a focus on change in instructional practice, or how to implement evidence-based instructional practices with fidelity in classrooms. To achieve these goals, STRIVE PD is **distributed** over time, meaning that **an initial PD session is followed by teacher study-team meetings before delivering each new unit**. See the graphic on the following page for a visual representation of this model.

Findings from our research indicate that distributed PD for participating teachers yielded positive effects on students' development of vocabulary and comprehension skills.

STRIVE Practice		Unit 1		Unit 2		Unit 3
Background Knowledge	Initial PD		Teacher Study Team Meeting		Teacher Study Team Meeting	
Explicit Vocabulary Instruction						
Questions to Prompt Text-Based Discussion						
Gist Statements						
Summaries						
Context Clue Strategy						

The Impact of STRIVE: What Our Research Shows

STRIVE Affects Teacher Quality

Our studies showed that teachers who participated in STRIVE PD demonstrated **higher levels of instructional quality** and delivered lessons at **higher levels of fidelity** than teachers who did not participate.^{1,2,3} In one study, we found that instructional quality and fidelity were both **positively related to students' performance** on a standardized reading comprehension measure.¹ In other words, students performed better on a measure of reading comprehension when the teacher implemented the instructional practices with higher fidelity and used high-quality instructional practices like corrective feedback and adequate pacing.

STRIVE Affects Teacher Fidelity

Given the critical role that school instructional leaders play in ensuring teacher excellence and quality of instruction for students, we were particularly interested in measuring **differences between researcher-led and school-led follow-up support** for teachers. Findings from fidelity data revealed that teachers in both conditions delivered STRIVE instructional practices with the **same relatively high level of fidelity**.³ This finding provides support for PD with expert-led workshops followed by school-led teacher study team meetings, a cost-effective approach that builds school capacity, improves teacher implementation, and improves student outcomes.

STRIVE Affects Student Outcomes

Efficacy studies of the STRIVE intervention show **positive impacts on students' knowledge of social studies vocabulary and on their comprehension development**.

Study 1 (Simmons et al., 2010): Researchers examined the STRIVE PD model when teachers delivered vocabulary practices, reading comprehension practices, or "business-as-usual" instruction in social studies classes. Findings showed that students in both the vocabulary and reading comprehension groups **learned more social studies content** than those in the business-as-usual condition.

Study 2 (Swanson et al., in review): This fully powered, randomized control trial examined the efficacy of STRIVE PD. All treatment teachers received an initial workshop that researchers led. Researchers provided ongoing support to one group, and school leaders provided support to another group. The third teacher group implemented business-as-usual social studies instruction and received no PD. Students in both treatment groups outperformed their business-as-usual peers at

a statistically significant level on a measure of informational text reading comprehension (ES = 0.37 to 0.58). A statistically significant group difference in favor of the treatment groups was also detected on measures of vocabulary (ES = 1.07 to 1.08) and content knowledge (ES = 1.09 to 1.16). These effect sizes are very large. These findings provide evidence that students whose teachers participated in STRIVE PD benefited from their teacher's instruction. This finding held true whether PD was supported by researchers or school leaders.

Teachers and Students Have Positive Perceptions of STRIVE

Finally, our studies showed that teachers and students had positive perceptions of the STRIVE model. Participating teachers reported medium-high to high positive perceptions of the significance, appropriateness, and importance of STRIVE instruction.¹ Teachers reported that **students were motivated** and engaged by the STRIVE materials and instruction and that the program had a **positive influence on students' comprehension and vocabulary knowledge** in social studies.

What Teachers Are Saying About STRIVE

"Great skills for students to practice!"

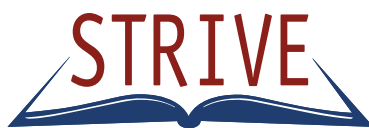
"Loving the strategies and incorporating them in other subject areas."

"My students are enjoying the STRIVE learning activities, and I can already see the difference it's making in their vocabulary and comprehension."

"I am loving this program and the kids are loving it, too. The consistency of the STRIVE lesson flow is great!"

References and Further Reading

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3. Swanson, E., Stewart, A., Stevens, E. A., Scammacca, N., Capin, P., Hamilton, B. J., Roberts, G., & Vaughn, S. (in review). Investigating the role of professional development in impacting upper elementary student reading outcomes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*.
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5. Richardson, V. (2003). The dilemmas of professional development. *The Phi Delta Kappan, 84*(5), 401–406. doi:10.1177/003172170308400515
6. Desimone, L. M. (2009). Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational Researcher, 38*(3), 181–199.



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