

STUDY

SPIRE Next™ **Logic Model**

ESSA Evidence Level IV

Prepared by EPS Learning

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Executive Summary

SPIRE Next is a comprehensive reading comprehension program for grades 3–8 aligned with the latest research findings in comprehension development and pedagogy. It is designed to be used once students complete Levels 1–4 of *SPIRE (Specialized Program for Individualizing Reading Excellence)*, EPS’s intensive reading intervention program. It can also be used independently of *SPIRE*, as students need support in reading comprehension.

EPS framed the study of the program with current research findings, focusing particularly on the findings of the Reading for Understanding initiative (Pearson, et. al., 2020) and how they support the offerings of the *SPIRE Next* program. This report outlines the following research foci that are the foundation of this *SPIRE Next*’s creation:

- The close read model that facilitates comprehension development through active engagement with complex texts with response prompts that include dialogical discussion and written response with the goal of applying the comprehension knowledge in new contexts.
- The use of the “gradual release of responsibility” (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) model to support the effectiveness of collective participation and application.
- Instructional supports and materials for striving readers and multilingual learners to have repeated opportunities to engage with rigorous, grade-level text for close reading with scaffolded support.
- Instructional practices and support that facilitate the development of knowledge and language facets through reading comprehension with the goal of deepening understanding and utilizing the new knowledge to apply to new contexts and situations.

Logic Model

The logic model was designed to illustrate how the *SPIRE Next* program is linked to the intended results by outlining the activities, inputs, outputs, and outcomes.

Study Design for *SPIRE Next* Evaluation

EPS Learning will conduct an ESSA Level III study to evaluate how accurately the program produces the outcomes outlined in the Logic Model. The study will answer the following questions:

1. Did the students who completed the required amount of lessons to complete the *SPIRE Next* program demonstrate an increase in proficiency scores on standardized tests?
2. Did the educators who implemented the *SPIRE Next* program increase their confidence in supporting student growth in reading?

Conclusions

This study meets ESSA Level IV (Demonstrates a Rationale) requirements specifically through the following criteria:

- Thorough logic model based on rigorous research
- ESSA Level III study planning is currently in progress

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Introduction

EPS Learning has designed a logic model for *SPIRE Next* to satisfy ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) Level IV requirements. This document has the following objectives:

1. Provide a *SPIRE Next* Logic model and the research basis behind its design
2. Outline the ESSA Level III study design draft

This document outlines how the program is designed to support all learners in having repeated opportunities to engage with rigorous, grade-level text for close reading with scaffolded support.

Research

Reading for Understanding Initiative

In 2009, The Institute of Education Sciences established the Reading for Understanding Initiative to address the stagnant and disheartening performance on the national assessments for reading (Pearson, et. al., 2020). These concerning test scores warranted an investment into a profound research initiative with the goal of broadening the understanding of the development of comprehension and the pedagogical practices needed to affect change. This initiative would include analysis of existing research in addition to procuring new research and synthesizing the findings. The IES allocated \$120 million and instituted six teams to research specific aspects of reading comprehension for grades pre-kindergarten through 12th grade (Pearson, et. al., 2020, 2020). One team was developed for researching assessments and the other five were charged with focusing on improving pedagogy and the understanding of comprehension development (National Center for Education Research). The team researching assessments, specifically, developed three major assessments to evaluate “components of Reading in K-12” and “global literacy” (Pearson, et. al., 2020, p. 68) IES’s evaluative conclusion was that “the RfU research initiative had a profound impact in the area of reading comprehension assessment” (Pearson, et. al., 2020, p. 68).

The RfU findings further extend this understanding of the role of language comprehension in reading comprehension by examining the significance of early language skills, grammatical skills, reasoning skills, academic language and the implications for teaching and learning (Pearson, et. al., 2020). Reasoning skills, academic language, problems solving and deep critical analysis are interwoven throughout the *SPIRE Next* lessons with complex text-dependent support for differentiation of interactive prompts, direct vocabulary instruction, direct instruction of critical thinking skills with scaffolded applications.

Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) Instructional Framework

The Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model is a student-centered instructional framework that suggests learning should gradually and purposefully shift from the teacher to the student (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Fisher and Frey (2008a) explain the importance of gradual release of responsibility to students by stating it “gives [them] support that they can hold on to as they take the lead—not just push them onto the path and hope they find their way” (p. 33).

SPIRE Next aligns with the GRR approach as its recursive design allows students to gradually move from understanding basics of concepts through teacher-led instruction to making thoughtful evaluation of text in a more independent manner (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983, p. 35). Also, in alignment with the GRR framework, it is key for students using *SPIRE Next* to engage in collaborative learning activities with peers in order to use academic language and comprehension skills (e.g. reflection, evaluation) in real time. Engaging in collaborative work with peers can help students understand their skill gaps and areas of growth. This key information regarding productive collaboration is highlighted by Fisher, Frey, and Nelson (2012) and Frey, Fisher, and Nelson (2013). Ultimately, teachers using *SPIRE Next* have access to structured, explicit, instruction that produces high rates of mastery as well as increased student confidence and ownership of the learning process through the GRR framework.

Fluency for Reading Proficiency

Readers must have a basic level of decoding skills (referred to as the decoding threshold) to develop the fluency necessary to progress in a meaningful way in the development of comprehension skills (Wang et. al., 2019) The simple view of reading provides a basic framework for understanding how decoding and fluency are both critical components of reading comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). Specifically, the simple view of reading – a theory “validated by over 150 scientific studies” (The Reading League [TRL], 2022, p. 17) shows us that “reading comprehension is not the sum, but the product of two components – word recognition [(i.e. decoding, phonological awareness and sight recognition)] and language comprehension [(i.e. background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, verbal reasoning, and literacy knowledge)]- such that if either one is weak, reading comprehension is diminished” (TRL, 2022, p. 17). The Reading for Understanding studies have extended our knowledge to outline the importance of assessing each component individually to distinguish challenges and identify factors contributing to comprehension (Pearson, et. al., 2020). Fluent readers read accurately and with expression, which contributes to their ability to derive meaning. *SPIRE Next* allows readers to use their already-developed decoding skills through fluency selections. These selections are provided in the genre of each lesson in the student edition of *SPIRE Next*. The continuation of the genre study allows for fluency practice and assessment in both fiction and nonfiction. Fluency progress monitoring assessments based on oral reading fluency norms to evaluate reading rate (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2017) are available for the beginning, middle and end of year to allow teachers to monitor student decoding skills and fluency while developing their vocabulary, comprehension, and background knowledge.

Language and Knowledge in Comprehension

Our understanding of the role of language and knowledge facilitating comprehension has been deepened and broadened through the synthesized findings of the Reading for Understanding (RfU) Initiative (Pearson, et. al., 2020). *SPIRE Next*'s close read gradual release model with the three-read framework of grade-level texts facilitates the development of both language and knowledge by providing scaffolded release of responsibility instructional models.

The RfU's findings highlight and extend the understanding of the reciprocal relationship between knowledge and comprehension. Language comprehension and background knowledge are continuing to develop through oral language even as students are still learning to decode words. Once students have developed foundational literacy skills, they can apply these skills to understanding text. At this "reading-to-learn stage," knowledge and comprehension skills accelerate, since less cognitive energy is devoted to phonics and fluency. The RfU findings broadened and deepened our understanding of how the role of the reader's knowledge facilitates reading comprehension. The findings indicate the need for expanding our view on the types of knowledge needed for comprehension. These cognitive actions include understanding how explanations and argumentation operate to convey meaning and the ability to determine what constitutes claims or evidence. Disciplinary knowledge is developed through oral and written discourse embedded in the close read model. *SPIRE Next* facilitates disciplinary knowledge development through the close read model, providing metacognitive modeling, text dependent dialogue and scaffolded practice.

Conventional knowledge is a key variable in comprehension processes such as inference, understanding story structure and attaining new facts or information. In conjunction with this finding the assessment research team of the RfU initiative determined that effective comprehension assessments include a measure of close reading in addition to application of knowledge gained through reading (Pearson, et. al., 2020). *SPIRE Next* provides lesson assessments as well as progress monitoring assessments to measure close reading skills and knowledge obtained from the new reading.

Each *SPIRE Next* lesson begins with vocabulary instruction of the words within a context with metacognitive instruction and discourse. Students have multiple exposures to new words within the text, in discussions, and writing prompts to assure attainment. Each lesson focuses on two vocabulary skills. This vocabulary focus is key for students to develop comprehension skills. The word knowledge a student has when encountering a text provides the framework for new learning and comprehension (Catts, 2022). *SPIRE Next* strategically and logically incorporates the background knowledge required for building new knowledge.

In addition, vocabulary think-alouds are strategically placed throughout the lessons to model how good readers actively think about vocabulary while reading. Students gain critical skills for determining meaning of unknown words with repeated exposure to modeling followed by recursive opportunities for scaffolded application and practice. This dialogical approach of the program encourages students to have meaningful discussions and to use the words in context, enabling them to grasp a deep meaning and versatile use of each word. Students develop the tools for determining meanings of unknown words through vocabulary think-alouds and morphological instruction embedded into the *SPIRE Next* close read lessons.

Close Reads for Active Text Engagement and Collaboration

Rather than delivering isolated comprehension skill instruction, RfU revealed the importance of using the close read model where students actively engage with complex texts to extract meaning (Pearson et. al., 2020). This active engagement includes working collaboratively and engaging in rich, text-centered dialogical discussions to extend and deepen understanding. Effective comprehension instruction should provide opportunities for learners to apply knowledge learned through reading and discussions to analyze other contexts and problems to provide explanations and solutions. The RfU findings indicate that the most effective interventions incorporate collaborative discussions and work groups that utilize the close read approach with complex texts (Pearson, et. al., 2020). These practices work best for all students, especially for at-risk or multilingual learners (Fisher et al, 2012). The goal is to deconstruct or dig deeply into texts to establish and extend thinking to apply the new knowledge to new contexts or conditions.

Summary

In summary, *SPIRE Next* is a premier solution to developing students' reading comprehension skills through "direct reading instruction, scaffolded practice, and close reading strategies" (EPS Learning). The program is specifically named *SPIRE Next* as it is intended to follow *SPIRE Level 4*, at which time students should have crossed the decoding threshold. When used in correct progression with *SPIRE*, educators can effectively develop students' decoding skills, monitor and improve fluency while building comprehension and vocabulary skills. This ultimately will result in an overall improvement of reading skills, leading students to proficiency.

Logic Model

Problem statement: Over half of public and private school students in America are not proficient in reading by the end of Grade 4 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). In addition to proficient decoding skills, students need to learn how to engage with complex texts and think critically to derive deep meaning. Educators often grapple with limited planning time and the organization and knowledge of effective instructional strategies to address the complexity of reading for comprehension. *SPIRE Next* serves as one solution to these challenges by providing teachers with a timesaving, structured, and evidence-based reading comprehension program that gives access to differentiated instruction for all students in grades 3–8.

Inputs

- Three-read framework with rich, complex, grade-appropriate, rigorous texts
- Standard-aligned skill instruction through close reading tasks
- Comprehension instruction designed in the gradual release model
- Complete fluency lesson passages
- Fluency assessment
- Multi Lingual Learner (MLL) supports
- Grade level complex texts in a variety of genres with scaffolded support for at-risk readers, on grade level and above
- Explicit instruction in tier 2 and 3 vocabulary
- Fluency builder passages
- Respond-to-text writing prompts
- Graphic organizers
- Close reading worksheets

District Provides

- Teachers and staff to implement *SPIRE Next*
- Access to *SPIRE Next* materials through purchase
- Concentrated ELA instructional time

Participants

- Students Grades 3–8, including at-risk readers and MLL students,
- Educators, including reading interventionists, tutors and instructional coaches
- School and district administrators

Participants	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
Students	<p>Engage in purposed-focused multiple readings of the text</p> <p>Participates in text focused collaborative peer interactions with immediate feedback</p> <p>Complete close reading worksheet or graphic organizer</p> <p>Responds to close read prompts in writing or by interacting with the texts</p> <p>Participates in close read discussion using sentence starters</p> <p>Complete quizzes and summative assessments</p>	<p>Number of completed close read lessons</p> <p>Number of fluency activities completed</p> <p>Performance on fluency assessments</p> <p>Number of close reading worksheets and graphic organizers completed</p> <p>Performance on quizzes and summative assessments</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <p>Students received direct explicit instruction in close read lessons to derive meaning from texts</p> <p>Students participate in three read close read lessons</p> <p>Students begin to think deeply about the selected text</p> <p>Educators receive high quality professional development</p> <p>Educators will deliver evidence-based comprehension instruction through the gradual release model</p> <p>Intermediate</p> <p>Students gain deeper comprehension of selected texts</p> <p>Students uncover multiple layers of meaning in selected texts</p> <p>Students apply comprehensions skills taught</p> <p>Educators will spend less time gathering materials and planning close read lessons and more time teaching.</p> <p>Long Term</p> <p>Students increase proficiency scores on standardized testing</p> <p>Students demonstrate adequate growth on standardized tests.</p> <p>Students accumulate comprehension skill knowledge</p> <p>Students read independently for deep understanding</p> <p>Students become more fluent readers</p> <p>Students gain confidence as readers and deepen their comprehension of complex grade-appropriate texts</p> <p>Educators will integrate best instructional practices in literacy and comprehension in content areas.</p>
Educators	<p>Administer pre and post-test for progress monitoring</p> <p>Implement three read close read lessons using the gradual release model</p> <p>Provide reading comprehension skill instruction directly and explicitly</p> <p>Provide corrective strategy in diagnostic prescriptive model</p> <p>Scaffold instruction for critical thinking</p>	<p>Total number of students participating in <i>SPIRE Next</i> program</p> <p>Total number of completed lessons</p> <p>Total number of fluency activities and assessments completed</p> <p>Student progress from pre and post text</p>	<p>Long Term</p> <p>Students increase proficiency scores on standardized testing</p> <p>Students demonstrate adequate growth on standardized tests.</p> <p>Students accumulate comprehension skill knowledge</p> <p>Students read independently for deep understanding</p> <p>Students become more fluent readers</p> <p>Students gain confidence as readers and deepen their comprehension of complex grade-appropriate texts</p> <p>Educators will integrate best instructional practices in literacy and comprehension in content areas.</p>
Administrators	<p>Support educators in implementing <i>SPIRE Next</i> with appropriate scheduling and professional development</p> <p>Work with educators to monitor student progress and analyze comparative data to make necessary adjustments</p> <p>Coordinate professional development opportunities and common planning times to support</p>	<p>Number of lesson quizzes</p> <p>Students' growth from baseline reading measure</p> <p>Number of professional learning opportunities provided</p>	<p>Long Term</p> <p>Students increase proficiency scores on standardized testing</p> <p>Students demonstrate adequate growth on standardized tests.</p> <p>Students accumulate comprehension skill knowledge</p> <p>Students read independently for deep understanding</p> <p>Students become more fluent readers</p> <p>Students gain confidence as readers and deepen their comprehension of complex grade-appropriate texts</p> <p>Educators will integrate best instructional practices in literacy and comprehension in content areas.</p>

Logic Model Components

SPIRE Next Logic Model Components. *SPIRE Next* includes evidence-based materials and practices into their program, including:

- Close read lessons constructed with the three-read framework in the gradual release model utilizing complex, level-appropriate texts with standard-aligned skill instruction,
- A teacher's manual with annotated guide that provides the instructional support needed to help students achieve mastery of reading comprehension,
- Assessments for progress monitoring in fluency and comprehension,
- Fluency activities with lesson aligned genres,
- Additional supports for at-risk learners and multilingual learners, scaffolded practice using close read worksheets and graphic organizers,
- Text Complexity Measures that details aspects of each selections' readability,
- Recursive exposure and guided practice with skill instruction in comprehension, language comprehension and knowledge base development



Conclusion

EPS Learning will reach grades 3 through 8 students, educators, interventionists, coaches, school and district administrators. Using these program resources, the participants can engage with *SPIRE Next* in the activities listed above. EPS can examine the extent to which core activities were delivered and participants were reached by examining the quantifiable outputs associated with each of the participants.

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