

OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

Preparing children for school
success through high-quality
early education.



North Carolina Early Learning Programs: Sustaining Impact

Select Committee on Education Strategy and
Practice

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The overall effect of a strong pre-kindergarten program as determined by multiple longitudinal studies:

- Higher achievement test scores
- Reduced special education identification and grade repetition
- Increased high school graduation
- Reduced behavior problems, delinquency, and crime
- Increased employment with higher earnings and reduced welfare dependency

As a result, the economic return on investment has been determined to be up to \$16 for every dollar invested.

Specific to state-funded pre-k in NC:

- Children at greatest risk exhibit greater growth over time in language and literacy skills, math skills, and general knowledge.
- Children gain a foundational knowledge which prepares them to develop more advanced reading and math skills in elementary school.
- MAF helps to lessen the achievement gap for poor children in both math and reading performance, and such early pre-k experiences can have a lasting effect into the elementary school years.
- MAF significantly reduces the likelihood that children will be placed in special education or retained in a grade prior to and including third grade, academically benefiting students and resulting in considerable cost savings to school districts.

Fadeout: Can this finding be ignored?

- Multiple studies have shown the convergence of test scores between children who attended pre-k and their peers who did not.
- Other studies show some former pre-k students continue to see benefits while others do not.
- In the Vanderbilt study of the Tennessee Voluntary Pre-K Program, by third grade, children who had experienced the pre-k program were in some cases doing worse than children who did not experience the program.



Fadeout



Positive
long-term
outcomes



Mitigating Fadeout

- How can pre-k gains be leveraged, not lost?
 - Quality of pre-k program
 - Program Quality – structural features that are pre-conditions for success
 - Process Quality – what occurs in the classroom, e.g. teacher/child interactions
 - Strengthening of the educational continuum through Grade 3
 - True alignment of standards, curriculum, instructional practices with an emphasis on process quality that is supportive of growth and development across multiple domains

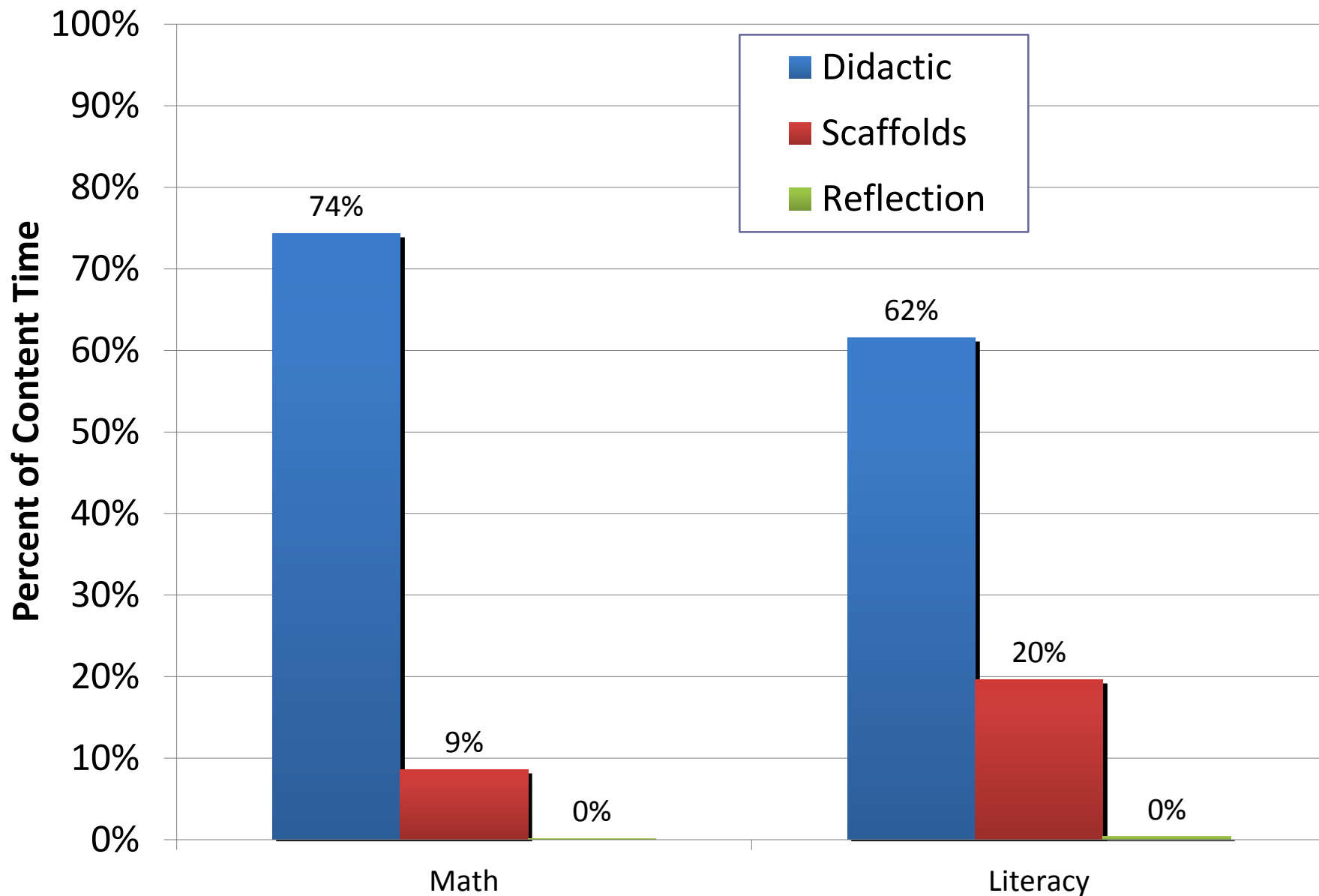
Average Ratings of Interactions in Pre-K - 3rd Classrooms



Source: Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, *Measuring and Improving Teacher-Student Interactions in PK-12 Settings to Enhance Students' Learning* (Charlottesville, Virginia: Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, 2011).

Snapshot Teaching Approaches by Content

Typical Data (national)



Achievement
gaps exist early

High quality
early education
helps to prepare
children for
school success

To leverage
gains made in
pre-k programs,
sustained
attention to
high quality
learning
experiences is
necessary

There is
evidence that
the quality of
elementary
classrooms
can/should be
strengthened

Achievement
gaps are fairly
stable from 3rd
grade going
forward

P – 3 Continuum

Early Care and
Education (0-5)

Full Day
Kindergarten

First Grade

Second
Grade

Third Grade

Components of a Strong P – 3 Continuum

Effective
leaders/teachers

High-quality
instruction

Meaningful
assessment

Support for
social/emotional
development

Engaged families
and community

Effective
transitions

Horizontal
alignment
(within grade)

Vertical
Alignment
(across grade)



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction :: Office of Early Learning (Pre-K – Grade 3)

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