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Kindergarten Diagnostic Toolkit

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KINDERGARTEN DIAGNOSTIC TOOLKIT

A Project

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

Master Teacher

by

Mayra Yuridia Navarro Gomez

June 2012

ABSTRACT

KINDERGARTEN DIAGNOSTIC TOOLKIT

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This project was used for multiple purposes. The first was the identification of supplemental intervention activities in attempt to treat reading difficulties. The second was the creation of a Kindergarten Diagnostic Toolkit (KDT) as a means for early detection of learning deficits. Upon completion of beginning of the year assessments and use of the KDT checklist, instructional suggestions for remediation were made with a focus on explicit/systematic alphabetic, phonemic, and decoding skills. The need for such specific diagnostic assessment of early reading skills is further required with such high stakes testing requirements. Strategies specific to early literacy skills are connected to Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) probes and Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE) assessment areas, as a means for instruction. Teachers and Intervention Specialists may use this toolkit to help form and modify small group instructional decisions. Research supporting the need for early reading intervention was utilized to supply instructional suggestions.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

With the increasing expectations for students in the primary grades and the knowledge that students' basis for education is achieved during these first crucial educational years, Early Reading Intervention (ERI) services and differentiated instruction have become necessities for kindergarten students (Vadasy, Sanders, & Peyton, 2006). Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn (2000) stress that literacy is a key component for discovery, and provides insight on information of this age. How exactly is it that schools continue to acknowledge the significance of ERI but fail to recognize the importance of targeted differentiated instruction being taught in the general education setting?

John Pikulski (1997) states that substantial research has been found related to how one can identify and treat reading problems. In contrast, details about reading processing and steps to diagnose reading deficits are absent (Pikulski, 1997; Honig et al., 2000). Based on this accumulating empirical knowledge base in ERI, schools have begun to provide more systematic code-based supplemental reading support in the primary grades, often as part of the Response to Intervention (RTI) process (Simmons et al., 2011). RTI is a system for differentiated instruction that offers provision for students at each instructional level; whether the student is currently receiving instruction at any of the three tiers, rather than waiting for students to fail (Ball & Gettinger, 2009).

Supplemental support like the RTI model can be distinguished by some common

characteristics found in the National Reading Panel (NRP) (2001). According to Rafdal, McMaster, McConnel, Fuchs, Douglas, & Fuchs,(2011), “the prognosis for struggling readers is poor unless effective reading intervention is in place early” (p. 299). The Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE) (2000) sourcebook identifies several factors that put children at risk for reading failure; however they agree that with proper instruction about 85% to 90% of students can read at grade-level. The suggested reading skills required for avoidance of reading failure as stated by NRP (2001) include, “phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension” (p. 211). Growth and remediation are possible but what assessments are used to identify success or failure and which steps must be taken to ensure proper intervention?

Early literacy and prevention of later reading difficulties are the goals of the researched based assessment; Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS) (Hall, 2006). The argument expressed by author Hall (2006) is that in order for intervention to be effective three guidelines must be followed including; periodic screening, data driven instruction, and continued monitoring. The reality is that with early reading intervention the possibility for most struggling readers to overcome such reading difficulties is conceivable. Understanding the importance of early intervention and what skills provide the basis for reading can lead to use of strategies consistent with scientifically based instruction (Hall, 2006).

DIBELS can help support the goal for reading proficiency with the implementation of concepts of print, phonemic awareness, phonics, and comprehension (Hall, 2006). Unfortunately, success for DIBELS in kindergarten is based on only four measures of the many early reading skills necessary for further reading success.

According to the DIBELS Assessment Calendar, fall benchmark assessments are not performed until the third or sometimes fourth week of school, and oftentimes students are only assessed three times a year (Hall, 2006). The implications concerning these assessment dates include that data driven decisions cannot be made for about a month (Hall, 2006). With such delayed and sometimes misconstrued results, kindergarten teachers must supplement such research based assessments with more focused skill area assessments. Again, research in the field of ERI is extensive but specific processes for diagnostic and remediation are limited.

Statement of Problem

Research data both qualitative and quantitative suggesting the importance of ERI are immense. Specific means for diagnostic assessment and instructional strategies matching such skill areas are mediocre if they even exist. As previously stated, DIBELS suggests that progress monitoring coupled with targeted instruction are key to remediation of early reading difficulties (Hall, 2006). Simmons et al., (2011) present data suggesting phonemic awareness and alphabetic knowledge are early predictors of future reading success. The DIBELS assessment, as an example, has selected six measurements which were considered most reflective of reading success. These measures include; Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Initial Sound Fluency (ISF), Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), Non-Sense Word (NSW), Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), and Word Use Fluency (WUF) (Hall, 2006). Yet, diagnostic assessments currently in place rarely observe all of the characteristics involved in early reading progressions.

The CORE Phonics and Phonological Survey on the other hand measure many alphabetic, phonological, and phonemic skills (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000).

Given the importance of early reading skills, educators have the impetus to understand that multiple strategies should be addressed prior to making decisions as to whether a child is in need for placement in the Special Education classroom or an alternative setting. RTI is a perfect example of how teachers can learn to take responsibility for students' growth or lack thereof.

Through differentiated instruction and constant progress monitoring, the process of identifying students' strengths or limitations may be reinforced but more targeted instruction is needed (Hall, 2006). Ball and Gettinger (2009) explain that through periodic progress monitoring (three times per year) early reading intervention can help predict future reading achievement including, "phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, and alphabet code (or phonics) fluency" (p. 190). Yet, teachers cannot focus instructional decisions on only three assessment measures a year. For this reason the need for a running record and diagnostic tool for early reading indicators is imperative.

Combined with a diagnostic toolkit for teachers, Rafdal et al., (2011) further suggest the application of the RTI model that requires implementation of "high-quality, evidence-based classroom instruction" (p.300). Although teachers have for years attempted to monitor student growth through professional judgment; use of specific curriculum and code based assessment or diagnostic tools for effective progress monitoring are lacking. What are some tools that contribute to this effort of constant progress monitoring and how often must students be observed? Once these tools are established what are specific strategies to address reading issues? New and experienced teachers are faced with such questions daily.

To develop effective ERI teachers must form a clear understanding of early

literacy components and State standards required at the kindergarten level. Likewise; teachers must find a way to arrange instructional approaches to provide differentiated instruction. As proposed by Honig, Diamond, and Gutlohn (2000), the ideal classroom approaches would be research-based. Combined with research-based teaching methods, educators have the need to provide ample opportunities for reading success and this can be accomplished through; a) multiple assessment tools; b) data driven instruction; c) code based and literature based reading curriculum; and finally d) consistent progress monitoring. As stated by the authors of the Open Court Reading System, students who fail to catch on to early phonemic activities should be given varied opportunities to experience the same skills (SRA, 2002). As Rafdal et al,(2011) explain, “our current educational policies and reforms are calling for research to examine the effectiveness of class wide general education curricula that works for all students” (p.299).

Meanwhile teachers can continue using instructional strategies reflective of student needs and providing data driven instruction through constant progress monitoring. This progress monitoring cannot be accomplished without a specific meaningful diagnostic measurement tool. The problem teacher’s across grade levels and specifically in kindergarten face, includes helping student’s complete state and district assessments successfully with measurement tools not reflective of specific reading competencies. When teachers find that students are lacking some pre-reading skills they oftentimes have to rely on their personal judgment to create supplementary instruction. Given the fact that lack of targeted instruction can lead to absence of skill mastery; specific steps to follow for interpretation of DIBELS, CORE surveys, and other classroom assessment data is essential. Furthermore, teachers need a way to track student

progress towards learning competencies to better create targeted ERI.

Given the limitations placed on student eligibility for additional reading instruction, teachers in the Eastern School District have a difficult time addressing specific individual student needs. The number of students being serviced for RTI's Tier II intervention is currently limited to five students. Moreover, consideration for those students at risk for reading failure most often remain in Tier II Intervention for four plus months; therefore, many students currently at risk for reading failure are not receiving appropriate reading intervention services. Consequently, teachers are struggling to get students to pass such state assessments as NWEA and DIBELS. The Eastern School District is currently using part of their Title I funds to offer Intervention services to a limited amount of students; therefore the need for a toolkit that tracks student learning is imperative.

Purpose of the Project

This project and Diagnostic Toolkit will help teachers in the Eastern School District by monitoring student learning towards Reading academic standards. This toolkit will also facilitate targeted instruction and remediation of reading deficits in the classroom setting. When it comes to forming groups for possible intervention services the data used will now be specific, rather than dependent on vague or unclear assessments. With assessments such as Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) and DIBELS being presented quarterly to students in the state of Washington, the requirement for strong reading approaches can only be further emphasized (Honig, Diamond, & Gotlohn, 2000). NWEA, a computerized assessment, is said to be aligned with Washington State standards and is used as a measurement of student abilities in comparison to a norm

group for math and reading (NWEA, 2012). The argument presented is that the majority of this assessment is based on whether students can read and comprehend text, rather than a reflection of students' true reading and math abilities (NWEA, 2012).

DIBELS is a tool that can be used to identify and target reading deficits if used through consistent progress monitoring. Yet, with so little time, this progress monitoring tool is often only used with a selected number of students who are at risk for reading difficulties based on the fall assessments (Hall, 2006). This measurement tool assesses all kindergarten students three times a year and provides a range of reading measures from LNF to PSF (Hall, 2006). In a survey conducted by Hoffman et al, (2009) DIBELS was described as an important piece for early identification of at-risk students, intervention development, and progress monitoring (Hoffman et al., 2009). The other side presented discusses DIBELS' lack of specific and focused suggestions for informed instructional change (Hoffman, Jenkins, & Dunlap, 2009). This assessment helps determine students' deficits in a broad spectrum but specific components of phonemic and phonics instructions are missing.

This toolkit will be utilized for kindergarten teachers as a process to identify ways to interpret assessments such as; DIBELS, CORE Surveys, and Eastern School kindergarten assessment probes. From these assessments teachers will be given a checklist to help target specific reading skills as a guide for instruction. This toolkit will address strategies and ways to create targeted intervention groups as well as a process for progress monitoring.

DIBELS is a preventive model that provides data-informed ERI procedures to avoid further reading difficulties and remediate those existent, but a more focused

assessment is needed at the kindergarten level. This KDT will keep students early pre-reading skills in mind such as; rhyming, counting syllables, and identifying differences between letters and words. The CORE suggests use of Phonics and Phonological Surveys to determine individual skill areas in need of intervention. In fact, CORE clearly states its purpose is, “not meant to replace screening and progress monitoring tests such as DIBELS or other CBM that may already be in place but can be used to augment such tests.” (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000, p. 112) These systems in combination can produce periodic progress monitoring opportunities to identify whether small group instruction strategies currently in place are the best fit for individual students or whether change to instruction is necessary (Hall, 2006). RTI and ERI call for data driven instruction; that helps all students at risk for reading failure. This project specifically addresses a measurement tool to assist teachers in the creation of targeted explicit, early reading intervention groups to ensure early reading remediation for all.

Statistics by the National Institute of Child and Health Development (NICHD), explain that if early intervention is not given, students that fall behind in reading could take four times as long for remediation (NICHD, 2007). This project will assist educators with an ongoing diagnostic tool coupled with specific targeted strategies that address such reading skills required to successfully complete the Kindergarten DIBELS probes and grade level expectations. Most importantly the KDT will report early phonemic and phonics related skills.

Students in kindergarten are required to identify phonemes, graphemes, decode, blend and segment words by the end of Kindergarten in the state of Washington. According to DIBELS (2006), by the spring benchmark testing, students shall segment

words by phonemes, identify and decode pseudo-words (make believe) and initial sounds. Students in this grade are assessed in areas of phonemic awareness and phonics skills such as, LNF, PSF, NWF and ISF. Without a focused diagnostic assessment the likelihood for all students to pass DIBELS grade level expectations is reduced. Based on these DIBELS and CORE competencies instructional recommendations for teachers will be provided.

Significance of Project

The importance of this project is that it creates a process for early diagnostic of primary literacy skills. Without such a diagnostic toolkit teachers are currently unable to create intervention groups focused on specific skill deficits. Consequently, many students are going without explicit and targeted instruction that addresses skills that are essential to their pre-reading aptitude. Knowing the power of reading and how essential it is to effectively complete the state of Washington assessments such as NWEA, teachers will now have a tool which facilitates steps to creating and determining appropriate development of reading intervention groups.

Additionally, with the number of students suffering from reading difficulties growing by the minute, ERI accompanied by targeted instructional strategies is crucial. With a nation at risk for reading failure, the reality is that about 5% of students can read at the start of school and a mere 20% to 35% find learning to read an easy process, leaving the remaining students having either extreme difficulty or are challenged to read (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000).

NRP (2000) reported that focusing on the first critical educational years by identifying methods that are consistently related to studies of reading success, teachers

can reach a larger population of students. Thus, through such focused intervention general education teachers will be creating the means for further learning and literacy development. Statistically, students from low-income homes and minority groups are the largest population of individuals at risk of academic failure (Caldwell & Ginthier, 1996). Molfese, Dilalla, & Bunce (1997) described environmental measures as the single most crucial predictor of a child's intelligence from ages 3 to 8 (Milne & Plourde, 2006). Knowing that environmental measures can undermine student success causes significant implications for low-ses students.

Groups at highest risk for reading failure are often those coming from low-income and minority homes that further delays reading comprehension given the limited pre-reading experiences often presented (Vadasy, Sanders, & Peyton, 2006). Wirth et al., (2003) found that 70% Black and 71% Hispanic students receiving free or reduced-price lunch were experiencing disproportionate rates of reading problems (Vadasy, Sanders, & Peyton, 2006). Vadasy et al.,(2006) cited that in a 2002 analysis by the U.S. Department of Education's Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, of the kindergarten students studied, socioeconomic status was greatly contributed to lower reading scores beyond any other factors (2006, p. 2). As quoted in an article by Teachers College Record (2010) "nevertheless, the magnitude of the disadvantage for low-SES students—especially in first grade stands out as a significant problem, especially when considering that these students entered school one third of a standard deviation behind their middle-SES peers" (p.1339).

Issues of socioeconomic status and low English language (ELL) homes are very much present at Eastern Elementary. Eastern Elementary has a reported demographic

group of 68.7% Hispanic (October 2009) of which 85.5% received free or reduced lunch. As of May 2011 OSPI reported that 87.5% of students belonged to Migrant or Transitional Bilingual programs. The above mentioned facts alone represent the importance of early reading intervention and the need for a continued effort to target reading instruction for all students. The numbers are staggering, but most daunting is the lack of consistency with DIBELS progress monitoring to provide all students with this consistent “dipstick” of their learning.

Currently the Eastern School District is using the Benchmark assessments for all students and only students falling under the Intensive category have additional progress monitoring. Granted, DIBELS is not assessing every component related to reading. Therefore, unless a child falls within the Intensive category he/she is not given any additional instruction. Targeted and intentional intervention can be provided given that teachers have an assessment or diagnostic toolkit to measure student progress towards early reading goals. The hope is that with this KDT, student progress towards grade level expectancies will be closely monitored and changes made to instruction accordingly.

Limitations of the Project

1. As with any study or project many limitations are to be considered. The following list of limitations should be taken into account prior to adapting this Kindergarten Diagnostic Toolkit or the Strategies addressed. Materials- given the limited funding across the nation's schools not all curriculum or programs may be available at each school
2. Student attendance- for students' benefit they must be enrolled in a Kindergarten classroom within the Eastern School District and be in attendance at the time of core and small group instruction.
3. Not all teachers will teach, assess, and monitor in the same way; therefore, the diagnostic tools, may not prove reliable to teacher's individual teaching methods. Given the time and resources not all schools can afford such small group instruction.
4. Student to teacher ratio- DIBELS (2006) suggests a 6 to 1 ratio for emergent or strategic reading groups and 3 to 1 ratio for students qualified as intensive readers.
5. Fidelity to program- no program can produce results desired without fidelity to its guidelines. Teachers must ensure proper use of the Kindergarten Diagnostic Toolkit as a means for ability grouping.
6. Assessment & Progress Monitoring (PM) - Although most strategies suggested can be of support for specific learning targets or skills, not all will be applicable given the use of DIBELS & Phonics Survey for this project. Fidelity to progress monitoring and change to program due to PM is needed to effectively target skill areas in need.
7. Time- The ideal time to present any of the suggested strategies is 20-35 minute intervals for reading intervention according to Hall (2005). If not enough time is

placed on teaching the strategy its effect could be compromised. Time is also an issue when testing students for individual skill areas; therefore, the need for highly trained individuals is imperative.

8. Maturity & Age- given the age of the participants (5 to 6 year olds) one must take into account possible student delay or lack of generalization of skills. Knowing that students learn at different rates, this program and the strategies within may not be fitted for every child.
9. Language- Student primary language may play a role in the ability to master the skills desired. Teachers must use discretion when ruling out student's language as a barrier for skill acquisition.
10. Bilingual Teacher- Having a bilingual teacher may affect results as the teacher may be able to provide assessment questions in the child's primary language.
11. This project is designed for teachers and reading coaches who wish to supplement reading instruction with specific curriculum for the researched based DIBELS assessment and CORE Kindergarten Surveys using the Kindergarten Diagnostic Toolkit for Early Intervention. Application of each program strategy is dependent on the desired outcome; therefore if looking for Phoneme Segmentation Strategies certain programs or strategies will not be applicable.

Definition of Terms

These terms are essential to a complete understanding of this project. The terms were selected based on acronyms utilized and information pertinent to the development of the Kindergarten Diagnostic Toolkit for Early Intervention.

At-risk- based on specific assessments such as DIBELS and NWEA students are

categorized based on reading proficiency. At risk students are students at risk for reading failure (NWEA, 2012).

Benchmark- Student score reflecting student having no risk for reading failure according to DIBELS scores (Hall, 2006)

Consortium of Reading Excellence (CORE) SURVEYS (Phonics & Phonological) – Part of CORE Phonics reading program this assessment provides key information on where students are lacking reading skills. CORE assesses; initial sound, letter identification, blending, segmenting of words, or rhyming.

(Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000)

DIBELS- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills: Standardized assessment, given three times a year used to progress student learning in LNF, ISF, PSF, and NWF (Hall, 2006)

ERI-Early reading intervention

Intensive- Student at risk for reading failure according to DIBELS scores (Hall, 2006)

ISF- DIBELS measurement meaning Initial Sound Fluency students are asked to

distinguish between sounds in four given pictures students must point to the word that begins with the sound prompted by test proctor and create initial sound given picture prompt (Hall, 2006)

- KDT- This abbreviation stands for the Kindergarten Diagnostic Toolkit for Early Intervention. This toolkit was created to help teachers track student learning towards reading goals.
- LNF- DIBELS measurement meaning Letter Naming Fluency child's ability to name letters from the alphabet when presented in lower and upper case given a minute time (Hall, 2006)
- NWEA- Northwest Evaluation Association Standards based assessment. Given three times a year and said to provide detailed representation of student growth and understanding (NWEA online).
- NWF- Non-Sense Word Fluency students are presented with consonant-vowel and consonant-vowel-consonant pseudo-words (make believe) that they must blend and decode (Hall, 2006)
- PALS- Paths to Achieving Literacy Success developed by researchers at Vanderbilt University a supplement for core reading curricula for general education and intervention settings (Rafdal, McConnel, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2011)
- Percentile rank- Student standing based on assessment scores whether they be NWEA or DIBELS. (Hall, 2006)
- Phonological Awareness Training for Reading- Reading program designed for students in kindergarten and first grade (McGraw-Hill Companies, 2002)
- PSF- DIBELS measurement meaning Phoneme Segmentation Fluency upon oral presentation of words students must segment words into their individual phonemes (Hall, 2006)

RTI- Response to Intervention a multi-tiered system that recognizes the importance of a preventive model for intervention to extend learning opportunities for students at risk for learning difficulties (Simmons, et al., 2011)

Strategic- Student with some risk for reading failure according to DIBELS scores (Hall, 2006)

Title I- Government agency working to ensure that students who are at risk for learning difficulties receive additional assistance (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Project Overview

Chapter one describes the current issues regarding literacy skills in the elementary grades and possible solutions to such reading problems through the support of ERI, explicit instruction, and progress monitoring. The purpose of this project is to create a diagnostic toolkit and an instructional packet containing varying strategies, which align with specific DIBELS and CORE assessment areas, to better provide reading intervention for struggling readers. The use of DIBELS indicators of student progress and CORE strands will guide the development of strategies.

Chapter two, the review of literature, provides an overview of educational issues faced throughout history. Likewise, issues of students from low social economic standing (low-ses) homes are addressed. Also included is the evolution of teaching styles and debate for best teaching practices. In addition, an explanation of the current controversy with ERI and the use of RTI as a tool to effectively monitor and adapt reading instruction according to DIBELS and CORE assessment areas. Additional research regarding the effect of low ses families in regards to reading support.

Chapter three provides a background of this project; including an overview of the procedure, development, and implementation of specific reading strategies to develop the KDT.

The fourth chapter includes a detailed written description of this project. The process and implementation of this toolkit are defined. Information regarding specific strategies and activities applicable to each DIBELS assessment skill area is also specified.

The final chapter contains a summary and conclusion of research regarding the need for a specific diagnostic assessments and targeted explicit instruction. The implications and recommendations for this project are also included within the final chapter.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter contains information related to reading education and research regarding Early Reading Intervention (ERI). Data supporting the need for ERI are also enclosed. Research concerning students reading progress and implications as regards to their social economic status (SES) is included. Also incorporated in this chapter is information on the topic of the historical debate over which reading instructional style is most effective. A section is dedicated to each reading instructional style along with research pertinent to its effectiveness. Information concerning the duty of Title I school funding, as well as Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and Consortium of Reading Excellence (CORE) assessments are included. The final section of this chapter is devoted to literature pertinent to the effect of low ses homes in regards to reading remediation.

The Struggle of the First School Institutions

Horace Mann's entrance as the Secretary for Massachusetts' Board of Education in 1837 played a significant role in the education system (Applied Research Center, 2006) Mann's vision was that all students receive a "free" public education. This would be promoted through the training of teachers and increased funding for public schools (Patton & Mondale, 2002). Mann's ideas of universal public education became ever popular with the completion of, the *Common School Journal* (Sass, 2010). Problems arose upon the initial establishment of public schools?

The public school was daunted with many issues from school conditions to literacy rates. From the question whether all students should be forced to attend public education, to issues concerning civil rights and placement of school funds; all presented significant stress for a developing educational institution. In 1791, Congress passed the Bill of Rights which under the Tenth Amendment stated, “the power delegated to the federal government are reserved to the states, respectively, or to the people. Thus, education becomes a function of the state rather than federal government” (Applied Research Center, 2006). Consequently schools and issues regarding regulations and mandates were mainly referred to the state. Yet, a solution to the question whether the state or federal government had control over educational issues continued.

Along with concerns for the effective establishment of schools came the concern for instruction styles and methods. In 1854, Horace Mann was also the first to report of the “evil” of spelling rules being taught but his method for teaching was still whole word and not phonemic (Wilson, 2005). The whole word “phonics” debate came into play around 15 years after Mann’s ideas of change (Adams, 1990).

The problem regarding school attendance was one that persisted for much time. In 1827, the state of Massachusetts passed a law requiring all towns with more than 500 families attend a school. Included in this debate was the law for mandatory attendance accepted by 16 states in 1885 (Applied Research Center, 2006). Although a temporary solution was found change and education did not come for all for many years, as with most educational issues (Patton & Mondale, 2002). In effort to transcend such educational discussions and organize schools the Department of Education was first established in 1867 (Applied Research Center, 2006).

Move the migration of families from Europe, Asia and South America many educational complications arose. In the history of United States European students were normally left at home until the age of 6 (The Story of American Education). Particularly children from rural homes would remain with their parents in the farms or factories rather than entering a formal school system (Patton & Mondale, 2002). Likewise, children from low social-economic-status homes (SES) would remain at their parent's side working in agricultural jobs. With the passing of Horace Mann's Common School Law; students were now required to attend a public school setting. Students from varying backgrounds were now required to attend school. Although mandates required attendance students from low income homes continued to suffer because of their lack of resources, and reading exposure.

Horace Mann was quoted in Spring (2012) making a declaration for education which provides graduating students an equal opportunity towards the pursuit of wealth (pg. 55). This so called pursuit of wealth has been disproportionate to minority and low-income students throughout the years. Seeking a solution to such issues, in 1889 Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr began the first kindergarten and night school adult course of study for European immigrants (Applied Research Center, 2006). "Hull House" as it was called continues offering educational services to both children and families in the state of Illinois (Applied Research Center, 2006).

With the Progressive era came the ideas of John Dewey who in 1916 wrote *Democracy and Education. An Introduction the Philosophy of Education*, and with it a call for change (Dewey, 1938). By the 20th century there was at least knowledge for different reading methods such as; alphabetic, phonetic, and whole word (Wilson, 2005).

The following fifty years were set with much research, journals and articles all defending their own opinion on “best practice” of reading mechanics but issues continued surfacing in the educational system.

Concerns for immigrant students came with much turmoil including; segregation, and civil rights issues. It was until 1946 that the landmark case Mendez vs. Westminster and the California Board of Education set that separating Mexican descent student was unconstitutional, as a precedent for the Brown vs. Board of Education trail (Applied Research Center, 2006). It is not until 1964 that the Civil Rights Act prohibiting discrimination to any student based on “race, color, sex, religion and national origin” (Applied Research Center, 2006)

With the passing of No Child Left behind Act of 2001 our country decided that all children would have an equal opportunity to curriculum instruction that is aligned to state standards. Therefore ensuring student’s the equal access and opportunity to the so called “pursuit of wealth”. Along with this act the Federal government would now provide additional money and assistance (categorical aid) to schools giving their agreement of requirements (Spring, 2012). The Fourteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution provides that all students shall get equal treatment by law, and that no one shall receive special treatment based on their “race, gender, religion, ethnicity, or wealth” (Spring, p.108). How is it that we can provide equal opportunities to education and wealth if our students are entering the school system with low pre-reading exposure?

Theories at War

William T. Stokes (2005) brings back the reading debate first initiated by Horace Mann in 1854 (The Story of American Education). Stokes (2005) is mostly concerned

with which reading method is best fit for students; a conversation in which parents, teachers, and theorists fail to form a consensus. Issues of whether reading should be taught using the basic memorization of letters or their corresponding sounds have been present since the beginning of reading education. In fact, much of the 1960's-80 were marked by the "great debate" of whether reading instruction should be taught using phonics or whole language (Stokes, 2005). Today one may see a combination of many teaching styles called the "balanced approach" (Wilson, 2005). The following is a summary of the different teaching modalities available.

Whole Word

Whole Word instruction as defined by Stokes (2005) involves using sound letter relationships but what distinguishes it from phonics is that sound and letter relationships are taught through "carefully prepared texts which would enable children to discover the relationships" (p. 3). As was taught early on, students learned by memorization of words and their word families. Whole word also involves students learning through drill and practice. With whole word instruction, students are taught to memorize a word and familiar words are identified based on the inferred knowledge of the sound (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000). Such skill examples can be found in the Consortium of Reading Excellence (CORE) Word Recognition assessment which has students memorize words through reading and writing practice. When children encounter unfamiliar words without any specific decoding rules, they generally fail to decipher the words and their meaning.

Phonics

Phonics instruction as defined by Honig, Diamond, & Gutlhn(2000), also involves the use of sound-spelling correspondences to help students identify and decode written text. This technique allows students an understanding of the alphabetic principle; which states that patterns of letters represent sounds of spoken words (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000, p. 8.2). Teaching phonics is usually through sound letter correspondences and letter sound rules upon learning phonemic awareness skills.

Such an example is the Open Court Program utilized by many schools across the country. This basal reading program developed by SRA/McGraw-Hill is designed to teach students decoding alongside of other key reading skills (2007). This program strives to teach students how to recognize individual letters, diagraphs, and diphthongs through picture correspondences and body coding. Additionally, students are taught blending, segmenting, letter identification, categorization, and deletions. Also taught are specific strategies that help decode individual words (Open Court, 2007). Research by the National Reading Panel (2009) explains that for children to benefit from phonics instruction they must have a clear understanding of how sounds work; hence, phonemic awareness (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2010). For students to build such early phonics understanding the use of phonological awareness and phonemic skills are crucial.

Phonemic Instruction

The phonemic principle is based on the idea that words are created by small units of sound (phonemes) and that those phonemes can be manipulated to form words (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000, p. 7.2). In theory once students learn to hear sounds within the alphabet, and notice regular sound/spelling correspondences; they may begin to blend

and segment words. Fuchs et al., (2001) reported lasting effects of phonological and phonemic decoding skills taught in combination (Vadasy, Sanders, & Peyton, 2006). The NRP (2010) suggests, " if children are to benefit from phonics instruction, they need phonemic awareness" (p.5).

Whole Language

Stokes (2007) describes this not as a simple method for reading instruction but as a comprehensive philosophy of teaching. The main goal of this philosophy is coaching students through an acquisition of letter sound relationships but contrary to+ other methods it is achieved through adult modeling. The idea is that, students interact with their language through systematic instruction, and as a process of formal use of communication processes.

Merging of Theoretical Beliefs

In effort to surpass such debates of what instructional tool is best suited for students, it is suggested to return to the main goal- teaching students. Adams (1995) proposes that when teaching beginning readers, "approaches in which systematic code instruction is included along with the reading of meaningful connected text results in superior reading achievement overall, for both low-readiness and better prepared students" (p. 125). Through multiple instructional practices taught in a systematic manner teachers can find a "balanced approach" to help all children become successful readers.

The guiding principal and evidence shows that early reading intervention programs containing balanced phonemic awareness, phonological awareness and phonics instructions are predictive of reading success (Rafdal, McConnel, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2011).

Stokes (2005) writes about such issues of reading strategies, in his article *Understanding the Phonics Debate*. In fact Stokes (2005) quotes the work of Dewey and F.W. Parker both early advocates of what is now known as the progressive movement. The following helps reiterate the importance of such a varied learning perspective, “reading is thinking” as Parker announces (Stokes, 2005). The latter argument would be a sample of what whole language proponents suggest to ensure early reading, writing, and future success. His idea of learning like that of Dewey included allowing students to experience the ability to process thoughts in effort to make reading and learning for that matter meaningful.

Dewey (1938) also explains that the goal of educators is to purposefully organize instruction so that students can understand it. Systematic explicit instruction being at the heart of researched based reading instruction echoes the importance of organizing instruction and assessments to monitor student growth. Better yet, this makes complete sense when thinking in terms of teaching a specific skill such as reading. As educators begin with teaching students how to read words, they must begin by teaching the basics such as identifying the difference between letters and numbers. A teacher who fails to understand the process of reading would consequently negatively provide the pathway and means for reading skills.

Evidence suggesting the importance of Early Reading Intervention (ERI) and additional support in relation to prevention of early reading problems is vast (Pikulski, 1997; Honig et.al, 2000). The purpose of a recent study by Vadasy and colleagues (2006) identified the need for intervention for kindergarten students and the compelling evidence demonstrating the lack of preparation for reading success. In an article investigating the

effect of small group school-designed intervention versus an explicit/systematic commercial program, the statistically significant effects favored explicit/systematic instruction (Simmons, et al., 2011). The data showed that students who received code-based individual tutoring demonstrated significant advantages at end of the year reading and spelling skills (Vadasy, Sanders, & Peyton, 2006). Intervention that included explicit alphabetic, phonemic, and untimed decoding skills was shown to be effective beginning reading intervention instruction (Simmons, et al., 2011; Vadasy, Sanders, & Peyton, 2006).

Data supporting the need for early reading intervention using explicit phonemic and code-based instruction is extensive, but Simmons et al., (2011) recommends the need for a new generation of research in which school context and feasibility of implementation is understood. Based on this accumulating empirical knowledge base in early reading intervention, schools have begun to provide more systematic code-based supplemental reading support in the primary grades, often as part of the Response to Intervention (RTI) process (Simmons et al, 2011). RTI is a recent attempt to help all students learn through direct explicit instruction rather than the wait to fail model (Ball & Gettinger, 2009).

Title I and Reading Achievement

As part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the purpose of Title I is to offer at risk students a fair opportunity to high-quality education (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Closing the achievement gap of low-achieving children in poverty stricken schools and distributing resources to schools with students with highest needs are the means for accomplishment of Title I (U.S. Department of

Education, 2004). Title I intervention teachers must provide services to selected students based on academic scores rather than classroom accomplishments. In addition, Title I services are given to schools that have 40% of its population residing from low-income homes (OSPI, 2003). This school wide program requires that schools address needs of low achieving and low income students to defeat the risk of students not meeting achievement standards and as part of compensatory reading program (OSPI, 2003). A goal for the general education classroom setting is to provide all students with this same integrated and explicit instruction in phonemic and alphabetic skills (Vadasy, Sanders, & Peyton, 2006).

For a reader to become fluent he must have acquired the spoken language as a prerequisite of development the alphabetic code (Hattie, 2009). If these processes are missing, the child is unable to develop fluency in words, ideas, or stories. This and many other early cases of reading failure would indicate need for tier reading intervention. The general education teacher must provide opportunities for students to receive information in an alternate way, and ideally in a smaller group setting (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2010). Unfortunately, research replicating ERI in context of a real classroom setting is mediocre (Simmons, et al., 2011).

With the varied learning levels in classrooms and students coming from diverse cultural backgrounds; the need for early reading services has increased. From ELL students to students from low income homes, all may profit from targeted reading intervention (Hall, 2006; Simmons, et al., 2011). During ERI students with like needs are ability grouped and given targeted step-by-step instruction with hopes of bringing reading

knowledge skills and strategies to the level of successful readers, this according to the International Reading Association (2006).

Through Title I services, the reading intervention specialist can provide alternative instruction opportunities to higher need students but many students may be excluded from such opportunities. Consequently, the need for differentiated instruction within the general education setting is crucial. DIBELS and CORE surveys supplement for differentiated instruction and serve as a preventive model for indicators of progress and consequently help determine which students are at risk for reading failure.

As part of Title I services all students should receive preventive instruction for future success. With limitations being placed on the amount of students serviced by the reading intervention specialist, increased pressure should be placed on general education teachers to create alternate learning opportunities. Given the limited amount of information given by state assessments as NWEA, DIBELS, and CORE; teachers must find ways to supplement and augment learning opportunities to organize instruction.

DIBELS & CORE Skills

The following sections are dedicated to explain the kindergarten DIBELS assessments. DIBELS and CORE surveys are diagnostic tools said to help diagnose and track early reading predictors. Each skill area is defined and current research is used to exemplify its importance for ERI. The final section is dedicated to research based programs and strategies to help teach such abilities.

Letter Naming Fluency & Initial Sound Identification

Vadasy and her colleagues (2006) explain, that schools are being challenged by the demographic trends of early literacy intervention and with this integrated treatment for

alphabetic skills. The first intervention skill areas addressed by DIBELS include Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) (letter recognition as known by CORE) and Initial Sound Fluency (ISF) (consonant sounds & short vowel sounds, CORE) (Hall, S. L., 2006; Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000). These measures identify student's ability to distinguish alphabet letters and their corresponding sounds. Understanding that the alphabetic principle is a precursor skill required for all other reading components exemplifies the importance of these assessments (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000).

Initial sounds are measured by DIBELS through a series of pictures in which students should identify the beginning sound (Ball & Gettinger, 2009). The principle behind this assessment includes sound fluency that may predict later decoding skills (Hoffman, A. R., Jenkins, J. E., & Dunlap, S. K., 2009). Sound identification in CORE surveys asks that students provide as many sounds as they recognize, upon presentation of alphabet letters; vowels included in a separate assessment section (CORE).

Considering that often students may come with zero to little literacy preparation, the presentation of letter names should be presented in whole group and small group based on individual student needs. Letter naming and Sound identification remediation should be based on recognition of skill deficit. Targeted instruction followed by progress monitoring will ensure skill mastery. Honig (2000) and colleagues acclaim, that phonics instruction requires understanding of relationship between sounds (phonemes) and the spelling (graphemes).

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency

As a branch of the Phonological Awareness umbrella, phoneme segmentation fluency (PSF) is acquired upon understanding that words are made up of small units of

sound (phonemes) and that these phonemes can be broken up, combined, and manipulated to form new words (phonemic awareness). DIBELS explains PSF as the ability to segment a spoken word of up to five phonemes to individual sounds (Hall, 2006). By end of kindergarten, students are expected to segment 35 phonemes per minute (Hall, 2006). The CORE survey matching this skill asks students to count phonemes, compare word lengths, and identify phonemes represented by letters (CORE). Research shows that 80 percent to 90 percent of students with reading difficulties have difficulties' with phonological awareness. Often, lacking phonemic awareness is a critical component (Hall, 2006). Phonemic awareness skills include; sound isolation, identification, categorization, blending, segmenting, and other forms of substitution (Hall, 2006).

Phoneme awareness skills are best taught in small groups according to the NRP, the justification behind this theory is that students generally acquire phonemic awareness and learn to read while listening to classmates and teachers feedback (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2010)

Non-sense Word Fluency

Vadasy and colleagues (2006) describe DIBELS Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) and Non-sense Word Fluency (NWF) as two widely used measures to describe growth of foundational reading skills (2006). The goal for this assessment includes phoneme identification, and phoneme blending to form words (phonics). The Code-Oriented study performed by Vadasy and colleagues (2006) at the Washington Research Institute found that kindergarten students receiving instruction upon posttest scores received reading accuracy at the 32nd to 45th percentile (p. 538).

Skills Supporting Assessments

Research identifying the need for systematic/explicit instruction is vast (Hoffman, Jenkins, & Dunlap, 2009; Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000). These skills address specific DIBELS LNF, ISF, PSF, and NWF assessment components. As with the previous measures consistent progress monitoring of skills as well as assessment three times a year will give educators an insight on individual student growth (Hall, 2006)..

The goal for all these reading components includes fluency and accuracy of skills to ensure future reading success. Systematic and Explicit instruction is recommended to teach reading components. In fact, the NRP (2010) explained that phonics is best presented when in a systematic and explicit manner (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000). The Open Court (OC) Reading Curriculum program also suggests that reading instruction be broken down to skills and strategies that upon multiple teacher opportunities to model, students can process and apply to own learning (McGraw-Hill Companies, 2002). Honig et al., point out that research regarding certain explicit teaching techniques and its effectiveness suggest the need for; direct explanation, modeling, guided practice, feedback, and application (2000, p. 16.4).

In a study by Rafdal et al., (2011), students at risk for reading failure were given alphabetic instruction with Kindergarten Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (K-PALS), a class wide teacher-implemented approach. Upon pairing students the, data indicated that students who used K-PALS outperformed the controlled group on alphabetic measures (Rafdal, McConnel, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2011). The PALS program can also be utilized as a direct-instruction teaching tool. This tool allows students practice with initial sound, blending of phonemes and eventually leads to reading full passages (Rafdal, McConnel, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2011).

The OC Reading program by SRA, is an supplemental phonics program that can also help enhance early alphabetic skills. OC provides students with systematic, explicit instruction founded on literature based curriculum (Nelson, Stage, Epstein, & Pierce, 2005; McGraw-Hill Companies, 2002). With Alphabet Sound Cards and designated pictures to teach sound/ spelling relationships, OC allows students a systematic opportunity to encounter the alphabetic principle (Bereiter et al, 2002). Bereiter et al, (2002) suggests that such cards be reviewed daily to ensure mastery as antecedent for reading.

The purpose of ERI and RTI is to allow students small group intervention and additional opportunities of interaction with letter names and sounds. Hall (2007) also suggests the use of songs, matching games, and flash cards to help build LNF and ISF. Teachers can implement appropriate intervention keeping in mind a 15 to 20 minute intervention period is suggested by Hall (2006).

Many books and curricula are available for instruction in phonemic awareness skills. The "Phonological Awareness Training for Reading" by Torgesen and Bryant (1994), is an instructional program designed to teach at risk students quick 20 to 25 minute lessons (Hall, 2006, p.189). Research supporting the need for phonological awareness training is extensive, Fuchs et al (2001) reported the promising effects of decoding kindergarten intervention when implemented by general education teachers (Vadasy, Sanders, & Peyton, 2006).

Another program identified by Hall in the book *I've DIBEL'd, Now What?* (2006), is that of Teacher-Directed PALS by Mathes et al., (p. 190). This manual includes 57 lessons that can be taught either by a paraprofessional or teacher as supplemental

small or large group intervention (Hall, 2006). Students are encouraged to practice phonemic awareness skills such as; letter-sound relationships, early decoding and blending of phonemes (Hall, 2006, p. 190).

Hall (2006) suggests the use of the following systematic and explicit programs for NWF measure (p. 217). Once again, Open Court/ SRA Phonics Kit by Archer suggested by Hall (2006). Another activity suggested is a component found in the Phonological Awareness Training for Reading kit by Torgesen and Bryant (Hall, 2006). The phoneme flash card kit allows teachers to create small groups where students are guided by vowel-consonant and consonant-vowel-consonant make believe words that they practice sounding out and then blending to form the pseudo-word.

Once again the above programs and activities are simply a suggestion of ways to complement instruction. Teachers must always keep in consideration their classroom population and resources available.

The Effect of low SES families for Reading Remediation

Research proving the effect of socio economic status on cognitive ability and academic achievement is vast (Milne & Plourde, 2006; Caldwell & Ginthier, 1996; Spring, 2012). According to the U. S. Census Bureau (2003), about 28.6 million children across the United States live in poverty. Although the poverty rate among people under 18 years of age has dropped since 1999 from 16.9% to 16.2% in 2000, American children remain amongst the poorest population by age group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). Higher poverty rates associate to higher percentage of students at risk for reading failure. Unfortunately, one third of such children live in extreme poverty which equates to 50% below the poverty line (Milne & Plourde, 2006). Milne & Plourde (2006) suggest that

teachers take less time searching for correlations amongst SES and academic achievement, and more time observing which factors of low-SES students.

Social problems affecting our students from minority and low-income homes include the lack of pre-exposure to reading and parental support. "Certainly, achievement inequality rooted in socioeconomic inequality has implications for minority students, who are more likely than white students to come from low-SES families" (Teachers college record, 2010, p. 154). Likewise, a high correlation has been found in regards to achievement growth in connection to neighborhood setting, race, and income levels (Teachers college record, 2010). Musti-Rao & Cartledge (2007) discuss the importance of literacy remediation for impoverished at-risk learners and the need for explicit, systematic and intensive instruction; for they have continued to appear along with minority children as at-risk for academic failure. Also adding to this social problem is research from Bradley & Corwyn (2002) which indicates that poor families have less access to resources such as; visiting local libraries, museums, community centers, or theatrical events cited in Milne & Plourde (2006). Other problems burdening students from low-SES homes include lack of meaningful conversations, reading opportunities, or limitations placed on the type of television programs watched (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002 as cited in Milne & Plourde, 2006).

Despite all these factors affecting low-ses students' academic attainment is found by some. In the article, *Beating the odds: How bi-lingual Hispanic youth work through adversity to become high achieving students* by Hassinger and Plourde (2005) the percentage of Hispanic students attending college nearly doubled from 1975 to 1994 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004). Some attribute these students success

to "resiliency" which is a child's ability to overcome challenging circumstances and cope with such problems (Hassinger & Plourde, 2005). Other data show that factors such as strong family support, educational resources, mothers education, positive high expectations, and student characteristics attribute to student success above low-income (Hassinger & Plourde, 2005; Milne & Plourde, 2006; Thomas & Stockton, 2007). What implications do the latter factors have for practitioners and how can such data be used to ensure successful students that reach for higher education?

Multicultural Difficulties Associated with Reading Failure

When children enter a formal elementary school system they are already working at a pace which will have subsequent academic consequences for their future. Research by the Teachers College Record (2010) shows differences in learning during primary years accrue across seasons, eventually leading to significant differences for students as they enter high school. In fact statistics by the National Assessment of Educational Progress show that only 16 percent of eighth grade Hispanic students managed to pass the 1998 reading test (Hassinger & Plourde, 2005). Furthermore, research by Garcia (2001) cites that approximately 50 % of Hispanic students fail to graduate (Hassinger & Plourde, 2005). Most at risk for such epic social disadvantages are students from minority groups (Teachers college record, 2010). Cultural differences alone contribute greatly to the lack of learning for minority and English Language Learners (ELL). Similar difficulties encountered include poverty, lack of prior knowledge, and the absence of prior school readiness.

The struggle seen for years is the constant change of school population. The reality is that our schools are now a melting pot of racial or cultural groups. The

drawback from such influx of immigration is the percentage of students who enter kindergarten with a primary language other than English. Data cited by Hassinger and Plourde (2005) states that 71% of Hispanic children speak Spanish at home NCEES (2000). The percentage of students entering the kindergarten setting with prior exposure to the English language is being challenged. The ELL student population has grown rapidly and continues to grow (Focus on Effectiveness, 2005). The National Center for Educational Statistics shows that in general the population has grown 9% from 1993 to 2003, meanwhile the ELL group has grown 65%; this which presents great challenges for teachers and administrators (Cited in Focus on Effectiveness, 2005).

Recommendations and research regarding pedagogy reflective of our changing population is vast. In a list by the NICHD the recommended building blocks for both reading and writing require a child, "1) build spoken language by talking and listening, 2) learn about print and books, 3) learn sounds of spoken language (Phonological awareness) 4) learn the letters of the alphabet, and last 5) listen to books read aloud" (Armbruster L. L., 2003). Without having the language to develop or experience the previous requirements students would be at a disadvantage. Likewise, students lack of conversation skills and prior knowledge affects their ability to learn reading skills and processes necessary for academic success. How is it that we can expect our students to become readers when they enter not recognizing this new language?

As part of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Section 1001 of Title I Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged suggests, "meeting the educational needs of low-achieving children in our Nation's highest-poverty schools, limited English proficient children, migratory children, children with disabilities... and

young children in need of reading assistance"(U.S. Department of Education, 2004, Discussion section, para. 6). Hence this goal was set by the U.S. Department of Education; consequently educators must find researched based strategies, and instructional support to build effective language strategies. Some suggested strategies include; nonlinguistic representations, helping students recognize patterns, and ample opportunities for communication (Focus on Effectiveness, 2005).

Preschool or Educational Partnership for Instructing Children (EPIC) is key to early school readiness. Many students across the nation are not attending such schools due to poverty or lack of resources. In Eastern School only 14 of the 36 kindergarten students who entered for the 2011-2012 school year had any formal preschool. Poverty also plays a significant role in students' academic achievement and early preschool attendance (Teachers college record, 2010). At a social disadvantage are students from minority groups and among them Hispanic and African American students seem to have wider learning gaps in comparison to their White peers (Teachers college record, 2010). Data by the U.S. Department of Education (2005) points to only 57% of students receiving free or reduced lunch are reading at level; in comparison 81% of students not eligible exceed this level (Cited in Teachers College Record, 2010). In an effort to transcend such challenges in 1994 the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) signed by President Bill Clinton included increased funding for bilingual and immigrant education as an initiative to prevent further delays and drop-out rates (Applied Research Center, 2006) Even with such assistance both federal and state mandated the statistics continue pointing to the lack of reading success for ELL and minority students. In an Executive Summary by the National Center for Early Literacy reported that although

much research has been dedicated to early interventions and how to address learning difficulties, little research pointing to the differences in children's learning patterns, in relation to the new demographic groups (2010).

Summary

The need for early reading intervention (ERI) is further emphasized given the history of students experiencing reading failure. Also, the recent move towards Response to Intervention (RTI) supports the need for targeted early reading intervention at the classroom level.

Despite the lack of consensus over which strategies or programs are best suited for reading instruction, data continues, supporting the use of targeted, explicit instruction. Also highly encouraged is the use of multiple strategies and teaching methods (Stokes, 2005). Furthermore, the NICHD panel found that wide variety of intervention opportunities improved a child's early literacy skills (Shanahan & Lonigan, 2010). Additional research points to code-oriented interventions with a focus on phonology, print conventions, and shared book reading for language development (Shanahan & Lonigan, 2010).

In an effort to transcend such high stakes testing pressure and requirements, practitioners are using varying teaching modalities to ensure proper remediation. Targeted, explicit instruction entails a clear understanding of the reading process especially in schools where students come from such varied home environments. "As schools continue adopting evidence based programs and the RTI model, it is equally essential that teachers find supplemental interventions to address the needs of at risk kindergartners" (Simmons et al, 2011, p.197).

CHAPTER III

CONSTRUCTION OF PROJECT

Researchers have identified skills predictive of reading success. Among those, phonological awareness (PA) and phonics are greatly attributed to reading achievement (Rafdal, McConnel, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2011). For this reason the use of strategies and programs responsive to spoken language and decoding skills will produce rich learning opportunities for students. The National Reading Panel (2000) also recommends such early reading programs include a balanced approach of PA and phonics instruction (International Reading Association, 2000). When children are learning to read, they will encounter many obstacles and for this reason instruction must be explicit, intentional, and targeted (Dole, 2004; Hall, 2006; Simmons, et al., 2011)

As stated by Adams (1995), reading instruction cannot be broken up into particular processes, but must include all components working together. Like a puzzle, reading instruction needs all pieces fitted together to support one another, keeping individual student needs in mind and not generalizing learning to all. For this reason creating small group opportunities will help students learn to read through varying modalities.

Data show that students who can successfully acquire these precursor reading skills can become fluent readers (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000). Finding productive ways to adapt instruction without dull repetitive instruction is the job of a resourceful teacher. Having a process or checklist to track early reading development is an ideal way to view student learning.

Project Procedure

For the creation of this project the early reading skills from Consortium of Reading Excellence (CORE), specifically the Phonological Awareness Survey (PAS) and Phonics Inventory, as well as the DIBELS kindergarten skill areas were identified. Also included were the kindergarten Eastern School District class assessments which are reflective of state of Washington standards. Assessments were organized in order of occurrence and hierarchy to help teachers identify skills required for kindergarten completion.

The second step included the careful organization of skill areas according to natural presentation of reading skills and, in unison, aligned to standards including; Concepts of Print, Phonological Awareness, Decoding and Word Recognition, Phonics Inventory, Beginning Decoding, and Core Curriculum Comprehension Skills (Navarro, 2012). Comprehension and text presentation skills are acquired through the Open Court Reading curriculum.

The third step involved finding the goal for students to successfully master kindergarten DIBELS expectations. The expectations were defined and then the Kindergarten Diagnostic Toolkit (KDT) was formed according to which process teachers should use to target reading intervention groups.

The subsequent step in the KDT includes things to remember when creating small groups and a Class Summary for Progress Monitoring that helps organize instructional strategies and evidence of mastery. The final step involved including some highly stimulating research based activities to teach specific DIBELS standards.

This KDT includes suggested programs and implementation of specific strategies was created to ensure the proper presentation of skills. Ideally, upon testing students at the beginning of the year deficits would be identified using the KDT. Student skills that are mastered would be checked off and teachers would focus small group instruction on subsequent skills yet to be mastered.

Project Development

The initiation of this project came from the desire to develop teaching strategies that could help address specific early literacy skills taught at the kindergarten level without having to rely solely in district and state assessments. The importance of developing specific strategies linked to pre-reading components are enhanced with such high stakes testing requirements. Knowledge of the potential growth acquired by students when presenting targeted instruction influenced the decision to design pre-reading teaching strategies and a diagnostic checklist linked to the assessment components found in kindergarten DIBELS, CORE Phonics Survey, Eastern Kindergarten Assessments as well as the state of Washington standards. While many studies indicate direct instruction works best for children, having alternative teaching opportunities is likely to promote productive reading remediation during small group instruction.

Project Implementation

The identification of student needs would be facilitated with the use of the Kindergarten Diagnostic Toolkit checklist. Used in combination, these assessments along with teacher referrals, will allow the general education teacher and reading intervention specialist to form reading groups. A selected amount of students at highest risk for reading failure would receive alternative intervention from the reading specialists. The

teacher would take the remaining students not placed in intervention and create a focused intervention group to target their individual needs. After checking skills mastered from KDT, skill deficits would be addressed using the Class Summary for Progress Monitoring worksheet. The goal for mastery of skill would be selected and Class Summary for Progress Monitoring completed to ensure targeted reading instruction. Strategies used would be recorded, followed by progress monitoring.

The skills taught would be coupled with consistent progress monitoring to identify student growth as suggestion by both DIBELS and RTI (Hall, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). In the fall students would begin learning skills such as letter identification and initial sound fluency and would progressively work their way towards phoneme segmentation and blending of VC and CVC words. Instruction would be delivered dependent on skill level taught to small groups. Data would drive change of instruction style to ensure student mastery of skills.

As presented by Nelson et al., (2005), “children who received the pre-reading intervention showed statistically significant gains in their phonological awareness, word reading and letter naming speed skills (p.41). Data show that students who can successfully acquire these precursor reading skills can become fluent readers (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000).

Once a skill is taught, assessed, and evidence of mastery is shown, new groups would be the focus of instruction based on highest risk for reading failure. Ensuring the remediation of early literacy skills through a balanced instructional teaching approach is the goal of the KDT. Ball and Gettinger (2009) explain that through periodic progress monitoring (three times per year) early reading intervention can help predict future

reading achievement including, "phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, and alphabet code (or phonics) fluency" (p. 190). Using the KDT and progress monitoring with more consistency may allow for remediation of early literacy skills and ensure a positive future for students at risk for reading failure.

CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Kindergarten Diagnostic Toolkit (KDT) is a process from which teachers may periodically assess student mastery towards early reading skills. This project includes specific areas of phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, and concepts of print. Only 5 to 6 students scoring under the 25 percentile in NWEA reading would be admitted into an alternative reading program with the reading specialist based on the Eastern School requirements. Teachers can provide alternate small group intervention for children at risk for reading failure.

Upon beginning of the year assessments, teachers can enter relevant data into the KDT and track student progress. Teachers would check off each specific reading area mastered. The areas not checked off would be used to help target and create small groups.

The following step includes creating ability groups. The presentation of strategies or programs particular to each skill learning deficit would be agreed upon. If a child is missing a skill the teacher may see it through the KDT and then take action through small group instruction. The first piece included in the KDT packet includes the KDT Direction piece. This KDT Direction piece includes steps 1 and 2 in KDT that describe the diagnostic inventory and ways in which teachers can create small group intervention time. A detailed list of student assessment dates and suggested use is included. The last piece included in this section is a breakdown of each assessment and their goals.

Step 3 and 4 of the KDT describe the assessment expectations in clear, measurable goals. The final step contains the process for implementation of KDT and the

actual toolkit. This toolkit is also broken up into 4 sections. The sections presiding include; a description of how to form groups, use of KDT, toolkit checklist, considerations, and additional progress monitoring resources.

Skills will be taught to mastery and then progress monitored to ensure generalization of skill using the Class Summary for progress monitoring page found in KDT. Teachers can also utilize this worksheet to progress monitor particular intensive or strategic groups. Upon alternative presentation of skill area teacher can progress monitor students and consequently provide more focused instructional strategies.

This project also includes DIBELS Strategies to Build Confident Readers. These strategies work hand in hand with the skills specific to kindergarten DIBELS assessment. These activities were placed in the Strategies to Build Confident Readers Packet. An explanation of strategy or program was given as well as price and contact information. Variations for strategies were also incorporated.

Having both the opportunity to learn pre-reading skills through structured curriculum and code oriented instruction will allow for multiple evidence-based instructions, a theme of the response to intervention (RTI) model. Wilson (2005) explains that because child readiness varies teachers should carefully plan and organize intervention without forcing inappropriate treatment.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Most research currently demonstrates the need for early reading intervention (ERI) that is both systematic and explicit (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2010; Core Knowledge Foundation, 2011). The Response to Intervention (RTI) model as an approach for identifying students at risk for reading failure is also a systematic process for progress monitoring (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). RTI currently helps teachers “(a) collect data about student performance, and (b) enables teachers to respond with well-targeted instruction and individualized support as soon as delays are evident” (Ball & Gettinger, 2009, p. 115) The problem kindergarten teachers are faced with includes not having a focused checklist to track student mastery of early literacy skills. Also concerning is the fact many students in the Eastern School are under serviced. Currently, only five students are given additional services for reading remediation by the intervention specialist; therefore a high number of students are left without focused intervention services.

Teaching how to relate letters and sounds, breaking spoken words into individual sounds, or teaching students how to blend sounds to form words are qualities of effective systematic phonics instruction (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2010). Explicit instruction suggested by the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) consists of “alphabetic knowledge, phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, and the reading of text” (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2010).

With the increasing expectations for students and continued research proving the need for early reading intervention the need for a running record or diagnostic toolkit of

early reading indicators is imperative. Likewise, a process for periodic progress monitoring can further evaluate children's growth without having to wait for assessments which only diagnose students three times a year.

Conclusions

This project investigated the need for early reading intervention as a predictor of reading remediation in kindergarten. Furthermore, this project found research regarding the use of the DIBELS diagnostic assessment. Given that these assessments are used only three times a year for students, who fall under the strategic or benchmark category, further research was made to create a diagnostic toolkit containing all necessary early literacy components. The components suggested as skills predictive of future reading achievement were; phonemic awareness, alphabetic knowledge and phonics instruction (Ball & Gettinger, 2009; Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2010). The RTI model was also identified along with Title I services to ensure all students success in reading.

With the creation of a Kindergarten Diagnostic Toolkit (KDT), it was found that such early phonological, phonemic and phonics skills can be tracked as predictors of future reading capacities. Teachers who use this toolkit will find that it is consistent with many components found in Washington State Standards, Phonics and Phonological Awareness Survey, as well as the DIBELS assessment measures. KDT was made possible for teachers who wish to measure student growth with consistency, without having to wait for state assessments like NWEA and DIBELS, which only occur three times a year.

It is no longer appropriate to wait for students to fail and fall further behind and it is the duty of educators to ensure students gain skills necessary for early reading competencies (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2010).

The knowledge that an increasing amount of students arrive at school and especially to kindergarten lacking alphabetic and phonemic skills is overwhelming. Understanding that such lack of pre-reading exposure places students further behind their peers and at risk for reading failure is vital. Additionally, students from low-income and minority families such as nearly 80 percent of students in Eastern School suffer from little reading experience (OSPI, 2010). The goal of educators is to challenge such demographic trends and provide differentiated instruction, constant progress monitoring, and early reading intervention.

As Dewey (1938) proposes, one must take the time to really analyze the problem and what it is that lies at the root of it. Ball and Gettinger (2009) reported that children who are poor readers at the end of elementary most likely failed to show typical progression in early literacy skills while in kindergarten and first grade (p.189). Rafdal et al, (2011) report research by Morrocco (2001) and Torgesen (1998) demonstrating that reading problems affect all areas of learning and that this may be increasingly challenging to remediate. Consequently, early identification of reading difficulties and intervention is imperative. With this diagnostic toolkit teachers should be given the tools to monitor student growth and react based on progress or lack thereof.

Implications

Although this project was created to closely align with the DIBELS kindergarten assessments, many other early literacy skills were included to account for CORE Phonics

and Phonological Awareness Surveys. Ideally the Kindergarten Diagnostic Toolkit would be reflective of state standards and expectations for further alignment.

DIBELS skills were emphasized because of the population and common agreement of use by the Eastern School District. Upon further research, Eastern School District may change its policy on its use. Further research could prove that Letter Naming Fluency, Initial Sound Fluency, Non-sense Word Fluency, and Phoneme Segmentation Fluency may not be appropriate determinates of early reading success. Progress monitoring is suggested on a weekly basis for students who fall within the Strategic or Intensive group as per DIBELS (Hoffman, A. R., Jenkins, J. E., & Dunlap, S. K., 2009). Future research and feasibility of including time constraints may change the time between progress monitoring.

Recommendations

Finding a balance is vital to life in general but in teaching reading, a balance between instructional methods and curriculum is recommended. Finding what works for each student is similar to finding the key to a new lock; students are individuals and therefore will respond distinctly to each strategy. Using this KDT can help guide small group instruction. Remembering that students must feel safe in their environment is essential to testing results. Also recommended is that students are continuously assessed by the same person to avoid testing bias.

When producing small group instruction strategies not all students will understand the concept being taught; therefore, presenting material in multiple formats is suggested. Also, ruling out language issues or developmental delays is crucial for progress monitoring and use of KDT. Research by Lyon, Shaywitz, & Shaywitz (2003) has shown

that deficits in phonological awareness have been linked to reading disabilities; therefore, being aware of lack of student growth is just as crucial as targeted instruction (Hogan, 2005).

Knowing that many students begin school lacking alphabetic and phonemic skills places them further behind their peers. Likewise, the knowledge that most at risk for reading failure are students from low SES and ELL or minority students is critical (Milne & Plourde, 2006). Students from low-income and minority families often suffer from little reading experience (OSPI, 2010). Providing alternate opportunities' for instruction presentation and working with parents is crucial for reading remediation (Ball & Gettinger, 2009; NRP, 2006). Research showing successful low income and minority students has found connections among; availability to resources, high expectations, safe learning environment and strong mentors (Milne & Plourde, 2006; Hassinger & Plourde, 2005; Teachers college record, 2010). Another important recommendation is that teachers take time to examine their specific state standards to further align learning targets. As a final recommendation, teachers should seek to make the KDT work for their classroom and students; like no two teachers teach in the same manner, no two students will learn from the same skill presentation.

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APPENDIX

KINDERGARTEN DIAGNOSTIC TOOLKIT

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Kindergarten Diagnostic Toolkit Directions Packet

Eastern School District

By: Mayra Y. Navarro Gomez

Purpose: The purpose of this process is to help kindergarten teachers identify specific skill areas of need, form targeted intervention groups, and provide reference for student progress based on DIBELS and CORE performance expectations.

Step 1: How do I determine what skill area to work on with what students? How can this be accomplished in a small group setting or Intervention block?

An assessment tool such as DIBELS is an option to view a general area of student need but a diagnostic tool is required in order to identify the target skill and pinpoint the means for small group instruction and/or intervention block. The following list is divided up by diagnostic tool. Progress monitoring and use of assessment should be used as needed according to specific student weakness.

Addressing deficits or skill areas with students can be accomplished during center time. If this time is not allotted the next option is to provide small group opportunities during individual reading time.

As a caution for all, the below mentioned guidelines are only intended as a suggestion and not as part of a district decision. Please implement and use with discretion and students' specific needs in mind. Suggested assessment for learning in order of occurrence:

What?	Who?	When?
Kindergarten Assessment	→ All	→ Monthly

DIBELS Assessment	→ All	→ Fall, Winter, Spring
Phonological Awareness Survey	→ All	→ Fall
	→ As needed	→ until skill is met
Phonics Inventory→	→ As needed	→ As needed

Step 2: How do I know what these assessments measure? How can they help guide my small group instruction?

The sections below are divided upon the assessments for reading with the DIBELS goals in mind. Please note that skill areas were selected based upon the above mentioned assessments. These sections should help guide small group instruction.

Kindergarten Class Assessment Goals

- Names 26 letter names in lowercase format
- Names 26 letter names in uppercase format
- Names 26 letter sounds
- Reads 34 grade level sight words with fluency
- Identifies and produces initial sound in words when given oral prompt
- Identifies two rhyming words when given oral prompt
- Segments two and three phoneme words
- Blends vowel consonant (VC) and consonant vowel consonant CVC words
- Interacts during read-aloud and book conversations
- Retells stories

DIBELS Goals

- SWBAT correctly name 40 per minute letters when presented at random by May. Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)
- SWBAT correctly identify 25 initial sounds in picture prompts or when given word orally by January. Initial Sound Fluency (ISF)
- SWBAT correctly blend 25 sounds in nonsense words by May. Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)
- SWBAT recognize and segment 35 sounds in words by individual phonemes when given a word orally with 100% accuracy by May. Phoneme segmentation Fluency (PSF) (Hall, 2006)

Phonics Survey & Phonological Awareness Survey Goals

- Notices and discriminates rhyme
- Notices and discriminates alliteration
- Notices and discriminates smaller and smaller units of sound
- Identifies and names 26 letter
- Uses letter-sound knowledge to write CVC's

Step 3: Where should my students be? How are these components matching up with the DIBELS expectations?

We all know that students' goals and learning targets should be clearly visible for student learning. This toolkit creates a connection between specific evidence of student learning, DIBELS goals, and the survey skill areas. This is all done in hopes to create more targeted reading groups and instruction.

Please note that components selected were based on Washington State Grade Level Expectations and a direct correlation between Core survey skill areas is implied.

Step 4: Things to Remember: The above process was used to develop this toolkit based on Eastern School District Objectives and expectations.

Kindergarten Diagnostic Toolkit (KDT)

Project by Mayra Y. Navarro Gomez

Purpose: This document is intended to provide kindergarten teachers with a starting point for identifying target skills. It should only be used to assist teachers in determining specific skills to teach during small group instruction.

STEP 1: How do I determine the specific skill to target during small group instruction or intervention block?

A diagnostic inventory is required to identify the target skill that will be addressed in small group instruction and/or intervention block. The following is a list of diagnostic inventories by reading component. Assessment should be given as needed to define specific student weaknesses.

The sequence of diagnostic tools below is only a suggested guideline. Teacher discretion must be used when deciding which tools to administer to which students and in which order.

Kindergarten: Eastern Kindergarten Assessments → DIBELS Assessment →
Phonological Awareness Survey → Phonics Inventory

STEP 2: How do I use the data from each instrument to guide instruction?

The following sections indicate the specific steps to follow when interpreting data from the individual assessments. The sections are divided by strand; Concepts of print, phonological and phonemic awareness, decoding and word recognition, phonics inventory, beginning decoding and Core Curriculum

Comprehension skills. Use these directions as a guide when planning targeted instruction for your student(s).

Kindergarten Diagnostic Toolkit for Early Intervention

Student Name: _____ Teacher: _____

Concepts of Print Skills

Place a check in the box ONLY if the student has established the skill.

Established = based on multiple testing student has maintained skill.

- Identifies parts of a book (title, cover, and back)
- Identifies purpose of an Author and Illustrator
- Uses and understands Directionality
- Distinguish Letters from Words
- Identify Letters, Words, and Sentences
- Match Oral words to Print
- Recognize and Name all Letters (upper/lower case)
- Recognize and name 40 letters per minute when presented at random (Hall, 2006).

Begin targeted instruction with the first box that is not checked.

Move to each subsequent skill as the student masters the previous skill.

Phonological Awareness Survey Assessed Skills

Place a check in the box ONLY if the student receives a score of Established.

- Listens for sounds
- Identifies Rhyming words
- Recognize words in sentences
- Counts syllables in words
- Identifying Initial Sounds at a rate of 25 sounds per minute by January (Hall, 2006).
- Identifying Final Sounds
- Matching Initial Sounds
- Matching Final Sounds
- Blending Onset/Rime
- Blending Compound Words
- Blending 2 Syllable Words
- Blending 3 Phoneme Words
- Blending 4 Phoneme Words
- Segmenting 3 Phoneme Words
- Segmenting 3 Phoneme Words
- Segmenting 2 and 3 Phoneme Words with a rate of 35 phonemes per minute by June (Hall, 2006).

Begin targeted instruction with the first box that is not checked.

Move to each subsequent skill as the student masters the previous skill. The skills listed above are in a systematic and sequenced order.

Decoding and Word Recognition Fluency

Place a check in the box ONLY if the student receives all possible points indicated on the scoring guide established by Eastern School District common assessments.

- Match sounds to spellings
- Recognize 34 grade level sight words
- Recognize and produce Short vowel sounds
- Recognize and produce Long Vowel Sounds
- Identify and produce short vowel sounds with a fluency of 40 sounds per minute by end of the year (Hall, 2006).

Begin targeted instruction with the first box that is not checked.

Move to each subsequent skill as the student masters the previous skill. The skills listed above are in a systematic and sequenced order (hierarchy).

Phonics Inventory Assessed Skills

Place a check in the box ONLY if the student receives all possible points indicated on the scoring guide.

- Consonants
- Digraphs
- Blends and Short Vowels
- Short Vowels in CVC
- Silent "e"
- Vowel Digraphs
- Diphthongs

Begin targeted instruction with the first box that is not checked.

The skills listed above are in a systematic and sequenced order (hierarchy).

Beginning Decoding Inventory Assessed Skills

Place a check in the box ONLY if the student receives all or a majority of the possible points indicated on the scoring guide.

- Sight Words

Begin targeted instruction with the first box that is not checked.

The skills listed are in a systematic and sequenced order (hierarchy).

- Initial & Final Consonants
- Short Vowels
- Digraphs
- Blends
- Words in Context
- Nonsense Words

Core Curriculum Comprehension Skills checklist

Below is a general list of comprehension skills found in the core curriculum. Place a check in the box if the student has shown acceptable evidence of understanding through core common assessments discussed above. Comprehension skills work simultaneously in the readers mind.

- Identifies Information from Stories
 - Who, What, When, Where, Why Questions
 - Identifies Character, Setting, Events, Problem, Solution
- Tells the Main Idea of a Story or Other text
- Uses Prior Knowledge to Assist with Understanding
- Retells and Summarizes a Story or Text
 - Retells a story including characters, setting, and important events
 - Retells the correct sequence of events
 - Summarizes the main idea of a text
- Makes Predictions
- Draws Conclusions
- Distinguishes Fact/Opinion, Cause/Effect

Use the information from this list to determine the targeted skill(s) for instruction.

- Answers Inferential and Evaluative Questions
- Makes Connections
- Self-Monitors

STEP 3: Things to remember: Flexible groups (20 minute block) may change as students master specific skills and move on.

- It is important to use progress monitoring data sheet to determine ongoing instructional focus and group adjustments.
- Tier II & III must be progressed monitored weekly as outlined by DIBELS guidelines. Progress monitoring should be a direct reflection of the instruction delivered to master targeted skills. If no progress is recorded instruction method or strategy should be changed.

Class Summary for Progress Monitoring

Grade: _____ Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Strategic Group

Targeted Skill: _____

Assessment Used: _____

Goal for % of Mastery

Insert Dates of Progress Monitoring

Name	Baseline Score								% of Mastery

Additional Comments:

Adapted from (Diagnostic Toolkits, 2008)

Strategies Packet

This project is designed for Kindergarten teachers and reading coaches who wish to find specific curriculum or strategies for the researched based assessment DIBELS. Application of each program/strategy is dependent on the desired outcome whether; Initial Sound Fluency, Letter Naming Fluency, Non-Sense Word Fluency, or Phoneme Segmentation Fluency.

1. Initial Sound Fluency Strategies and Programs

Recommended strategies include:

- Open Court sound card flash cards

Directions and implementation recommendation:

The Open Court sound cards can be used to reinforce letter sound connections by having students practice in as a whole group or in small group. Student leader usually student who knows most sounds will present a card to peer. If the child is able to say sound the card is kept. The objective is that students acquire the most cards possible.

The leader or teacher must approve and model correct sound production.

Using the Open Court body coding is suggested for letter/sound correspondence retention.

- PALS and K-Pals Teacher Directed PALS: Paths to Achieving Literacy Success

Directions and implementation recommendation:

The PALS series begins by presenting students individual sounds such as /i/ and simultaneously presents students with sight words. Teacher or Intervention Specialist would use PALS to practice sound fluency and beginning blending of sounds to form CV and CVC words. This program should be used in small group for students who have a general understanding of letter/sound correspondences. Students who are able to produce at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the alphabet sounds can begin using PALS with teacher's direction.

This game needs of a teacher for modeling and directions.

- Around the Class with Picture Cards

Directions and implementation recommendation:

Teacher presents game in whole group or small group by giving children 5 cards with random pictures on them. Students play in small teams by taking turns going around placing one of their cards in center of table. The team members state the picture and the student calls out the first sound. If the team agrees on the answer the child may get rid of card. If the team disagrees the child will keep the card and hopefully obtain clues from others picture cards to distinguish the correct sound. The objective is for the children to name all 5 of their picture cards to win the game. This game would be introduced a month or two after students were taught initial sound skill to help students' maintain skill and mastery.

Small group adaptations include presenting students with less cards or repeating sounds within the small group. Teacher guidance is necessary.

2. Letter Naming Fluency LNF

Recommended strategies include:

- ABC Fact Fluency Sheet

Directions and implementation recommendation:

Using the attached worksheet teacher encourages students to practice stating all the letters they know. Using a minute timer to ensure fluency teacher selects students who have already mastered most letter names.

This game is perfect for transition time and as an incentive for students who come to the carpet first. The teacher writes students name on sticky note and sets one minute on the timer, the student's goal is to name as many letters as he/she knows and that they only score the child needs to beat is his own. Teacher provides 3 seconds for letter recognition and then gives child letter name. Upon time completion the teacher has child count correctly named letters and writes number on sticky note along with date. The next time child is selected for Fact Fluency new score is recorded. The excitement and desire for even the lowest of our learners is inspiring.

This activity is meant for use in whole group but can be adapted by creating a Fact Fluency Sheet for multiple students. The objective of this game is creating fluency in letter recognition.

- Open Court sound flash cards

Directions and implementation recommendation:

The Open Court sound cards can be used to reinforce letter sound connections by having students practice as a whole group or in small group. Student leader (usually student who knows most letter names) will present a card to peer. If the child is able to say the cards name, the card is kept. The objective is that students acquire the most cards possible.

The leader or teacher must approve and model correct letter name production, using the Open Court body coding is suggested for letter/sound correspondence retention.

- Alphabet Bean Bags

Directions and implementation recommendation:

Alphabet Bean Bags may be purchased or created using fabric letters and colored fabric. Two sets of each letter are needed for this game. The objective of this game is to have students practice producing letter names. Students each obtain a letter and practice producing sound by finding the partner pillow. Once they find their partner they practice the letter and sound name. Students then move on to find a new group to whom they must describe letter and it's corresponding sound.

This game is modeled and taught through whole group activities.

3. Phoneme Segmentation Fluency PSF

Recommended strategies include:

- Phonological Awareness Training for Reading

Teacher Directed PALS: Paths to Achieving Literacy Success

The PALS series begins by presenting students individual sounds such as /i/ and simultaneously presents students with sight words. Teacher or Intervention Specialist would use PALS to practice sound fluency and beginning blending of sounds to form CV and CVC words. This program should be used in small group for students who have a general understanding of letter/sound correspondences. Students how are able to produce at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the alphabet sounds can begin using PALS with teacher's direction.

This game needs of a teacher for modeling and directions.

4. Non-Sense Word Fluency NWF

Recommended strategies include:

- Phonological Awareness Training for Reading
- Teacher Directed PALS: Paths to Achieving Literacy Success

The PALS series begins by presenting students individual sounds such as /i/ and simultaneously presents students with sight words. Teacher or Intervention Specialist would use PALS to practice sound fluency and beginning blending of sounds to form CV and CVC words. This program should be used in small group for students who have a general understanding of letter/sound correspondences.

Students who are able to produce at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the alphabet sounds can begin using PALS with teacher's direction.

This game needs of a teacher for modeling and directions.

Product Information

<p>OPEN COURT SOUND AND PICTURE CARDS</p> <p>By Anita Archer, James Flood, Diane Lapp, And Linda Lungren</p>	<p>SRA McGRAW HILL</p> <p>www.sraonline.com, ISBN 0-07602-132-7</p> <p>\$630 for grade level phonics kit.</p>
<p>(PALS)PATHWAYS TO ACHIEVING LITERACY SUCCESS</p>	<p>www.sraonline.com</p>
<p>PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS PACKET</p> <p>By Joseph Torgesen and Brian Bryant</p>	<p>ProED, 1994</p> <p>1-800-897-3202, www.proedinc.com, \$139</p>
<p>TEACHER-DIRECTED PALS:PATHS TO ACHIEVING LITEARCY SUCCESS</p> <p>By Patricia Mathes, Jill Howard ALlor, Joseph K. Torgesen, and Shelley H. Allen</p>	<p>Sorpris West, 2001</p> <p>1-800-547-6747, www.sopriswest.com, \$29.95</p>