Focus on the I in RtI

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Focus the I in RtI October 19, 2010

Goals and Activities for the Morning

• Focus on the role of instruction in preventing reading difficulties
• Learn about the goals of the Interactive Strategies Approach (ISA) and its potential influence on early literacy instruction
  – Future opportunities to learn to implement the ISA
• Hear from/ask questions of professionals who have experience with the ISA
• Engage in building/district level conversations regarding instruction in an RTI context.

Reading is a Complicated Process

Sam walked slowly on the way to school.
She was worried about today's math test.
While walking, she wondered how she could help her students understand place value more effectively.
Focus in the I in RTI  

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Possible origins of reading difficulty:

- Reading difficulties identified in the early primary grades are most often related to difficulties with phonological skills:
  - Phonemic awareness
  - Facility with the alphabetic code

- Both of these areas of difficulty make it difficult for the child to puzzle through unfamiliar words, thereby inhibiting the development of the child's sight vocabulary.

Possible origins of reading difficulty:

- Later and late emerging reading difficulties may be associated with:
  - Limited sight vocabulary which may be due to:
    - Unresolved difficulties with phonological skills
    - Limited experience with reading
    - Limited engagement in meaning-making while reading
    » Which makes it difficult to identify words that are not fully decodable
  - Limited knowledge and language skills which may be due to
    - Limited experience with reading
    - Limited engagement in meaning-making while reading

Instruction and intervention need to address all of the factors that influence reading comprehension.

Assessments commonly used for identifying children who are at risk for reading difficulties are apt to miss children who first demonstrate reading difficulties in the middle elementary grades and beyond.

Basic Elements of Response to Intervention approaches

Most RTI approaches involve a “tiered” approach. The number of tiers varies – but most models involve 3 tiers:

- **Tier 1** – instruction provided by classroom teacher – which, ideally, includes both whole class and differentiated small group instruction.
- **Tier 2** – small group instruction provided by a specialist.
- **Tier 3** – very small group or one-to-one instruction, provided by a specialist.

Instruction across the tiers should differ primarily in:

- The degree to which instruction is tailored to the needs of individual children.
- The amount of time children are engaged in supported reading.
- The opportunities that children have to respond and receive guidance.
- The detail of record keeping relative to individual children.
Instruction across the Tiers
- The same instructional goals should guide instruction across the tiers
- Teachers who share responsibility for teaching the same children should collaborate and coordinate their instruction (within and across grade levels)
  - Terminology
  - Key words
  - Strategies (word identification and comprehension)
  - Reading materials/topics
  - Share data (checklists of skills & strategies)

The Interactive Strategies Approach to Early Literacy Instruction
- Developed and refined across three major federally funded studies focused on reducing the incidence of early reading difficulties
- An approach, not a program
- Takes a comprehensive view of literacy development and instruction
- Relies heavily on teacher knowledge and skills to plan and deliver responsive instruction
- Places an emphasis on developing strategic, self-regulated literacy learners.

Instructional Goals of the Interactive Strategies Approach
- Motivation to Read and Write
- Alphabetic
  - Purposes and Conventions of Print
  - Phonological/phonemic Awareness
  - Letter Names
  - Letter-Sounds
  - Decoding and Encoding Skills (word reading and word writing)
- Word Learning
  - Strategic Approach to Word Learning
  - High Frequency Sight Vocabulary
- Vocabulary and Oral Language skills
- Comprehension and General Knowledge

Instruction Needs to...
- Maintain a focus on the central goal
- Be comprehensive
  - Multiple components
  - Multiple goals
- Help children to see the interconnections
- Be responsive to the needs of individuals
- Be coordinated and coherent

The Intersection of the Goals and the Components of Language Arts Instruction

A Sampling of the ISA Professional Development Content
Motivation to Read and Write

Instructional Goal: The child will develop the belief that reading and writing are enjoyable and informative activities which are not beyond his/her capabilities.

Ways to Promote Motivation to Read and Write

- Read and react to books (enjoy them).
- Treat reading and writing as a privilege (not as work).
  - “We get to…” rather than “We have to…”
- Keep the learning challenge at a moderate level.
- Convey that learning takes practice and that, with engagement, all children can learn.

Phonological Awareness

Instructional Goal: The child will have a conceptual grasp of the fact that words are made up of somewhat separable sound segments. Further, the child will be able to say individual sounds in simple words spoken by the teacher and blend separate sounds to form whole words.

General Instructional Principles Related to Phoneme Awareness

- The ability to notice and manipulate the component sounds in words develops gradually
  - Syllables
  - Onsets & rimes
  - Individual phonemes
    - Beginning sounds
    - Ending sounds
    - Middle sounds
- Stretchable sounds are easier to analyze than stop consonants
- Sorting and blending are easier than segmenting

Checklists can be used to track development and to guide instructional decision making for various aspects of literacy.

Learning About Letter Sounds

Instructional Goal: Children should be able to associate the most common sounds of the individual letters with their printed representations.
How Does Knowledge of Letter Sounds Develop?

• Three possibilities
  – Derived from letter names
  – Deduced from reading and writing experience
  – Learned through explicit instruction

Perspective Taking with Vowels

• Children who don’t yet know the conventional spellings for the short vowel sounds make predictable substitutions.
  – They substitute the vowel whose name sounds most like the short vowel sound they are attempting to spell.
  – Sound Spelling the word log –
    Video:38 (Kindergarten, Small Group, Spring)

Important Points re: Letter-Sound Knowledge

• Being fluent with letter–sounds allows children to more easily figure out unfamiliar printed words.
• Children often rely on letter names to help them remember letter sounds.
  – Teachers are often confused by the children’s very logical errors.
  – HRH
• Many children need explicit instruction on letter sounds.
  – Keywords can help them remember letter sounds, especially if the keywords are the same across settings.
• Engagement in reading and writing helps to reinforce and extend children’s letter-sound knowledge.

Word Learning

• In order to comprehend written material, the reader needs to be able to read most of the words with relative ease.
  – Effortless word identification allows the reader to devote most of her attention to constructing the meaning of the text.
• A reader’s sight vocabulary consists of the words that she can read effortlessly (at sight).

Strategic Word Learning and the Development of Sight Vocabulary

Instructional Goal: The child will develop flexibility and independence in applying a variety of strategies to identify and learn unfamiliar words encountered in text.

The goal of teaching children word identification strategies is to help them develop a Self Teaching Mechanism.

This helps them to learn new words and more about words each time they read.

My Shadow Clip (1:27)
(First Grade, 1-1 Intervention, April)
ISA Strategy List

- Check the pictures.
- Think about the sounds in the word.
- Think of words that might make sense.
- Look for word families or other parts you know.
- Read past the puzzling word. Do back to the beginning of the sentence and start again.
- Try different pronunciations for some of the letters, especially the vowel(s).
- Break the word into smaller parts.

Vocabulary and Oral Language

Instructional Goal: The child will learn the meanings of new words encountered in instructional interactions and will be able to use the words conversationally. Further, the child’s ability to understand and use more complex grammatical structures will improve.

The Link between Vocabulary and Comprehension

- Numerous studies demonstrate that vocabulary measured in kindergarten or pre-kindergarten is a good predictor of reading comprehension performance in middle elementary school.
- The number of words a child understands in first grade is a fairly good predictor of the child’s reading comprehension in 11th grade.
  – Cunningham & Stanovich (1997).

Reading Aloud to Children Provides a Powerful Context for Vocabulary Instruction

- Children’s literature typically contains many rich, useful words to explore.
- Teachers need to be sensitive to which words are likely to be unfamiliar to children.
- Literature provides a reason for learning new words.

Vocabulary and Oral Language

- Reading and Writing are language skills
  – Oral language is the foundation
- Vocabulary development should be a focus of instruction from the earliest grades.
  – Words selected for explicit instruction should be highly useful.
  – To insure that new words become part of the child’s active (usable) vocabulary, the words need to be revisited often.
  – To extend children’s oral language skills, they need to be engaged in multiple ways of using oral language to accomplish a variety of goals and purposes.

Comprehension and General Knowledge at the Primary Level

Instructional Goal: The child will develop comprehension skills and strategies that will enhance his/her ability to construct the meaning of and learn from texts heard or read.
To Develop Strong Comprehenders

- Address the general abilities and attitudes that influence comprehension:
  - General language abilities.
  - Accurate and automatic identification of most of the words in the text.
  - Engagement in the reading process.
  - General knowledge, schemas, and topic specific knowledge, familiarity with text structure.

Engagement in the reading process is promoted by:

- Modeling a variety of comprehension strategies.
- Encouraging open discussions of texts read.
- Thinking through texts collaboratively.
- Modeling enthusiasm and interest in the texts.

Knowledge development is promoted through:

- Reading thematically-related, information rich texts.
- Scaffolding children’s understanding of information rich texts.

Priorities for Planning Instruction in an RTI context

- Knowledgeable teachers
- Instruction that is
  - Responsive
  - Coherent
  - Collaborative
- Informative (informal & formal) assessments
- Begin as early as potential difficulties are apparent
  - Kindergarten intervention

What is the most critical component of an RTI Process?

Effective Instruction!

To learn more about ISA/RTI professional development opportunities, go to:

http://www.albany.edu/crsc/

Note: Panelists will not necessarily speak for their districts.