WAYNE RESA
Leading... Learning for All

Research-Based Interventions

Field Guides to RtI Prepared by
Wayne County RtI/LD Committee
2007

Table of Contents

Research-Based Interventions

Since No Child Left Behind was passed in 2001, schools have given more attention to research-based educational practices. Many teachers may question the need to rely on research-based interventions when they were trained to rely on their experiences.

> "Drawing upon personal experience is necessary and desirable in a veteran teacher, but it is not sufficient for making critical judgments about the effectiveness of an instructional strategy or curriculum. The insufficiency of personal experience becomes clear if we consider that the educational judgment—even of veteran teachers—often are in conflict. That is why we have to adjudicate conflicting knowledge claims using the scientific method." (Stanovich & Stanovicih, 2003, p. 29)

RtI requires interventions that have been validated in educational research. This requirement guarantees that instruction is based on a valid practice. When considering outcomes for students, it is important to base assumptions about the delivery of instruction on tested instructional constructs and methods.

One example of the importance of research stems from meta-analysis of reading research. There is solid support for the conclusion that systematic phonics instruction makes a bigger contribution to children's growth in reading than alternative programs providing unsystematic or no phonics instruction (National Reading Panel, 2000).

When teachers use research-based methodologies that rely on progress monitoring data, they are more inclined to think about student needs in terms of the skills they are able to teach to students. Fuchs & Fuchs (2006) described a study in which teachers using scientific methods were compared to a control group of teachers. Teachers were asked, "Why are you concerned about this student?" Progress monitoring teachers described features to the student's performance. Control group teachers cited reasons beyond their ability to intervene (for example, English Language Learner status, special education status, attention and motivation problems, or inadequate parent involvement).

"Teaching, like medicine, is an art that also can be greatly enhanced by developing a close relationship to science." —Berlinger (1987)

Teachers and Interventions

One of the core principles of RtI requires the implementation of the research-based intervention with fidelity. The effectiveness of the RtI model is contingent on the implementation of the intervention by the teacher.

Teachers will need extensive training to implement RtI with fidelity and successful results for students.

Professional development research has proven that teachers will readily adopt new practices if they know the practice will raise the achievement of their students. On-going training and coaching support will be essential to embedding interventions into the daily practice of teachers (NAADSE, 2006).

Evidence-Based Interventions

Educators will need to seek evidence of effectiveness in selecting interventions. When reviewing research, look at the quality of the study in combination with the amount of research demonstrating that the results can be replicated, especially in school settings matching your school environment. Quality studies use randomized trials or closely matched comparison groups. A checklist to use in reviewing the adequacy of evidence-based intervention research is presented on page 18.

Research-Based Reading Instruction

The most effective way to teach children to read is through instruction that includes a combination of methods (NICHD, 2000). Effective reading instruction includes teaching children to break apart and manipulate the sounds in words (phonemic awareness), teaching them that these sounds are represented by letters of the alphabet which can then be blended together to form words (phonics), having them practice what they've learned by reading aloud with guidance and feedback (guided oral reading), and applying reading comprehension strategies to guide and improve reading comprehension. Specific evidence based practices to promote reading with students in grades K – 6 are listed:

Systematic Phonics Instruction

Add Synthetic Phonics Instruction for Struggling Learners

Oral Reading

Guided Oral Reading

Vocabulary

Reading Comprehension

Computer Technology

"Professional development research has proven that teachers will readily adopt new practices if they know the practice will raise the achievement of their students."

Research-Based Reading Instruction—continued

Systematic Phonics Instruction

Teach a planned sequence of phonics elements instead of highlighting skills as they appear in text. This method is appropriate in routine classroom instruction.

Add Synthetic Phonics Instruction for Struggling Learners

Systematic Phonics Instruction in combination with Synthetic Phonics Instruction produces the greatest gains for students who are low achieving, of low socio-economic status, or learning disabled. Synthetic phonics instruction consists of teaching students to explicitly convert letters into phonemes and then blend the phonemes to form words.

Oral Reading

Oral reading is important for developing reading fluency, the ability to read with efficiency and ease. (The research does not support silent reading as intervention.)

Guided Oral Reading

Guided oral reading helps students across a wide range of grade levels to learn to recognize new words, helps them to read accurately and easily, and helps them to comprehend what they read.

Vocabulary

Teach vocabulary by using a combination of methods—

- Direct instruction—apart from narrative or text
- Indirect instruction—as words are encountered in text
- Repetition and multiple exposure
- Computer technology

Reading Comprehension

Teach students a variety of techniques and systematic strategies

- Monitoring comprehension
- Using graphic and semantic organizers
- Answering questions
- Generating questions
- Recognizing story structure
- Summarizing
- Using prior knowledge
- Using mental imagery

Computer Technology

Highlighted text and word processing can improve reading.

Research-Based Math Instruction

Research on effective math instruction is based on the construct that mathematical proficiency has five intertwined strands:

- Understanding mathematics
- Computing fluently
- Applying concepts to solve problems
- Reasoning logically
- Engaging with mathematics - seeing it as sensible, useful and doable.

Teach Computation AND Concepts:

Students become more proficient when they understand the underlying concepts of math, and they understand the concepts more easily if they are skilled at computational procedures.

Teach All Strands Together:

By teaching in an integrated fashion, teachers will actually save time in the long run. They will eliminate the need to go over the same content time and again. The five strands will support one another, making learning more effective and enduring.

Calculators and Computation Fluency:

The availability of calculators has reduced the need for performing complex arithmetical calculations, but students still need to understand what is happening in those calculations. Computational fluency is often essential in solving higher-order problems.

Research-Based Writing Instruction

Effective writing programs will look very different, grade-by-grade, and will have expectations for children at each grade that are appropriate to their development as writers rather than to arbitrary standards based on tradition or how officials would like to test writing. The best writing instruction will teach students how to plan, compose, revise, and edit their own pieces of writing, all within the context of inquiry, self-assessment and self-regulation fostered by interaction with teachers and peers (Cunningham, et al, 2002).

Research-Based Classroom Instructional Practices

Researchers at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) have identified nine instructional strategies that are most likely to improve student achievement across all content areas and across all grade levels.

1. Identifying Similarities and Differences

The ability to break a concept into its similar and dissimilar characteristics allows students to understand (and often solve) complex problems by analyzing them in a more simple way. Teachers can either directly present similarities and differences, accompanied by deep discussion and inquiry, or simply ask students to identify similarities and differences on their own. While teacher-directed activities focus on identifying specific items, student-directed activities encourage variation and broaden understanding, research shows. Research also notes that graphic forms are a good way to represent similarities and differences.

Applications

- Use Venn diagrams or charts to compare and classify items.
- Engage students in comparing, classifying, and creating metaphors and analogies.

2. Summarizing and Note Taking

These skills promote greater comprehension by asking students to analyze a subject to expose what's essential and then put it in their own words. According to research, this requires substituting, deleting, and keeping some elements, as well as having an awareness of the basic structure of the information presented.

Summarizing Applications

- Provide a set of rules for creating a summary.
- When summarizing, ask students to question what is unclear, clarify those questions, and then predict what will happen next in the text.

Research shows that taking more notes is better than fewer notes; however, verbatim note taking is ineffective because it does not allow time to process the information. Teachers should encourage and give time for review and revision of notes; notes can be the best study guides for tests.

Note Taking Applications

- Use teacher-prepared notes.
- Stick to a consistent format for notes, although students can refine the notes as necessary.

Research-Based Classroom Instructional Practices

3. Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition

Effort and recognition speak to the attitudes and beliefs of students, and teachers must show the connection between effort and achievement. Research shows that although not all students realize the importance of effort, reinforcing effort and providing recognition can change beliefs to improve effort.

Reinforcing Effort Applications

- Share stories about people who succeeded by not giving up.
- Have students keep a log of their weekly efforts and achievements, reflect on it periodically, and even mathematically analyze the data.

According to research, recognition is most effective if it is contingent on the achievement of a certain standard. Also, symbolic recognition elicits better results than tangible rewards.

Providing Recognition Applications

- Find ways to personalize recognition. Give awards for individual accomplishments.
- "Pause, Prompt, Praise." If a student is struggling, pause to discuss the problem, then prompt with specific suggestions to help her improve. If the student's performance improves as a result, offer praise.

4. Homework and Practice

Homework provides students with the opportunity to extend their learning outside the classroom. However, research shows that the amount of homework assigned should vary by grade level and that parent involvement should be minimal. Teachers should explain the purpose of homework to both the student and the parent or guardian, and teachers should try to give feedback on all homework assigned.

Homework Applications

- Establish a homework policy with advice-such as keeping a consistent schedule, setting, and time limit-that parents and students may not have considered.
- Indicate whether homework is for practice or preparation for upcoming units.
- Maximize the effectiveness of feedback by varying the way it is delivered.

Speed and accuracy are key indicators of the effectiveness of practice.

Practice Applications

- Assign timed quizzes for homework and have students report on their speed and accuracy.
- Focus practice on difficult concepts and set aside time to accommodate practice periods.

Research-Based Classroom Instructional Practices

5. Nonlinguistic Representations

According to research, knowledge is stored in two forms: linguistic and visual. The more students use both forms in the classroom, the more opportunity they have to achieve. Recently, use of nonlinguistic representation has proven to not only stimulate but also increase brain activity.

Applications

- Incorporate words and images using symbols to represent relationships.
- Use physical models and physical movement to represent information.

6. Cooperative Learning

Research shows that organizing students into cooperative groups yields a positive effect on overall learning. When applying cooperative learning strategies, keep groups small and don't overuse this strategy-be systematic and consistent in your approach.

Applications

- When grouping students, consider a variety of criteria, such as common experiences or interests.
- Vary group sizes and objectives.
- Design group work around the core components of cooperative learning-positive interdependence, group processing, appropriate use of social skills, face-to-face interaction, and individual and group accountability.

7. Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback

Setting objectives can provide students with a direction for their learning. Goals should not be too specific; they should be easily adaptable to students' own objectives.

Setting Objectives Applications

- Set a core goal for a unit, and then encourage students to personalize that goal by identifying areas of interest to them. Questions like "I want to know" and "I want to know more about . . ." get students thinking about their interests and actively involved in the goal-setting process.
- Use contracts to outline the specific goals that students must attain and the grade they will receive if they meet those goals.

Research shows that when feedback is frequent, informative and not punitive, it generally produces positive results.

Providing Feedback Applications

- Make sure feedback is corrective in nature; tell students how they did in relation to specific levels of knowledge. Rubrics are a great way to do this.
- Keep feedback timely and specific.
- Encourage students to lead feedback sessions.

Research-Based Classroom Instructional Practices

8. Generating and Testing Hypotheses

Research shows that a deductive approach (using a general rule to make a prediction) works best. Whether a hypothesis is induced or deduced, students should clearly explain their hypotheses and conclusions.

Applications

- Ask students to predict what would happen if an aspect of a familiar system, such as the government or transportation, were changed.
- Ask students to build something using limited resources. This task generates questions and hypotheses about what may or may not work.

9. Cues, Questions, and Advance Organizers

Cues, questions, and advance organizers help students use what they already know about a topic to enhance further learning. Research shows that these tools should be highly analytical, should focus on what is important, and are most effective when presented before a learning experience.

Applications

- Pause briefly after asking a question. Doing so will increase the depth of your students' answers.
- Vary the style of advance organizer used. Tell a story, skim a text, or create a graphic image. There are many ways to expose students to information before they "learn" it.

Source: Adapted from Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock (2001) *Classroom Instruction That Works*

Effective Instruction for English Language Learners

Current research demonstrates the RtI is effective in increasing the achievement and reducing the incidence of referrals for special education with ELL student populations. Effective instructional practices are described:

Listening

- Provide focus questions prior to beginning lessons
- Use sheltered techniques
- Include cooperative, interactive learning activities
- Implement student-centered interactive instruction
- Center Instruction around central themes that integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills

Reading

- "Front load" by tapping into student's prior knowledge and providing first-hand experience with the new ideas
- Preview in native language if possible
- Use graphic organizers
- Provide reading material at all levels related to topic of study
- Utilize read alouds
- Utilize language experience

Speaking

- Allow extra time to give students the opportunity to process information
- Ask students to paraphrase information
- Have students cluster vocabulary related to a topic

Writing

- Have students illustrate and label objects and diagrams
- Model writing through the language experience approach
- Use "Read Around Groups" so students will have an opportunity to listen to exemplary models of writing
- Encourage the use of vocabulary books

Adapted from: Ortiz, S. (2005) *Application of RtI Models with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children*

Existing Intervention Models and Systems

For teams seeking system-wide interventions that are research based, begin with a simple implementation at targeted grade levels. The most fully evolved intervention systems are at the early grade levels.

For early reading intervention, refer to Witt's STEEP: Information System to Enhance Student Learning (**http://www.isteep.com/**) which provides comprehensive step-by-step guidance. For more scientifically-based interventions, the following web-based resources will provide further detail of the instruction for students: **http://www.gosbr.net/**

Research-based interventions have been assembled on the Intervention Central website hosted by Jim Wright, School Psychologist in Syracuse, New York. See the following link: **http://www.interventioncentral.org/**

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Documenting the Intervention Plan and Fidelity of Implementation

All achievement systems require record-keeping. When implementing RtI, schools will need to document:

- Progress monitoring data
  - — Data management systems
- Intervention Dates
- Intervention Plans
  - — Written
  - — Measurable
  - — Specific description of instruction
  - — Linked to specific probes or measures of learning
- Fidelity of Implementation of the Intervention
  - — Documented classroom visits
  - — Checklists
  - — Affidavits
  - — Refer to classroom and group data over time: if the student group is improving, quality instruction/intervention is occuring

Sample Instructional Planning Form

Learning Target: _____

Student: _____ **Teacher:** _____ **Date:** _____

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES		MATERIALS/ RESOURCES	ARRANGEMENTS	TIME	DATA RECORD
Content	Delivery				
Vocabulary	*Teacher-led reading*	*Dolch List*	*Small Group 6:1*	*10 min.*	*Correctly identify words in isolation.*
Oral Fluency Practice	*Reading Partner*	*Supplemental Reader*	*1:1*	*10 min.*	*Record number of sessions, text, reading accuracy samples.*

Plymouth-Canton Community Schools
Response to Intervention Form

Student _____ **School** _____ **Grade** _____ **Date** _____

Progress Codes: 1=Exceeded Outcome • 2=Met Outcome • 3=In Process • 4=Outcome Not Met

Desired Educational Outcome: Improvement in...	Barrier to Problem Resolution	Intervention/Support	Start Date	End Date	Progress Code
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

Describe classroom environment, including seating placement, class size and available technology.

Does this student have difficulty achieving curriculum standards? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, indicate which standards.

Describe baseline data used to determine current achievement. Attach data summary, if appropriate.

What evaluation method and/or data was used to determine progress?

Summarize student response to the interventions.

Teacher: _____

Revised: 01.10.07 Accomdate Pro ©2007 Data Impact Software, L.L.C. web: dataimpactsoftware.com

Instructional Intervention Documentation Sheet

Student:	Teacher:	Date:
Student ID:	School:	Referral Date:
Grade:	Intervention Start Date:	Intervention Review Date:
What is the referring concern? (State in specific and measurable terms.)		
What data supports the existence of the problem? (Baseline data)		
What is the goal? (To be stated in specific and measurable terms)		
Describe the intervention to be attempted.		
List specific objectives of this intervention.	Describe the activities for each objective involved.	List the specific measure of progress.
Conducted By:	Name:	Position:
Time Span:	Start Date:	End Date:

Instructional Intervention Documentation Sheet—continued

Schedule for Delivery of Intervention

Number of contacts:

Length of contacts:

Interval between sessions (e.g., Daily, Number of Days)

Resources/Materials/Approach:

Number of students in intervention group:

How will the implementation of the intervention be monitored?

Progress Monitoring Checks to be Completed:

Frequency of Progress Monitoring:

Evaluation of success of intervention. Attach data charts from intervention. (Select from below).

☐ Planned intervention was successful in meeting child's needs. This intervention will be continued in the current setting. Date ☐	☐ Planned intervention was successful in meeting child's needs. This intervention will be continued in the current setting. Date ☐	☐ Planned intervention was successful in meeting child's needs. This intervention will be continued in the current setting. Date ☐
Signatures:		

Intervention Team Fidelity Checklist

Student _____ **School** _____ **Grade** _____ **Date** _____

1. The baseline data in the area(s) of concern was described in specific, measurable terms meaningful for the intervention?	Yes	No
2. The goal(s) for the student were described in measurable terms on the written intervention plan?	Yes	No
3. A method for measuring progress toward the goal was described in writing?	Yes	No
4. An intervention to improve student performance was designed in the form of a written intervention plan?	Yes	No
5. At least one person is assigned to SUPPORT the teacher in implementing the intervention plan?	Yes	No
6. The teacher was provided the time, materials, and training to implement the intervention plan?	Yes	No
7. An implementation integrity measure is available for checking how the intervention was implemented?	Yes	No
8. The parent of the student receiving intervention is aware and has the opportunity to be involved in the intervention process?	Yes	No
9. A date for the review of the intervention plan and progress monitoring data was specified in writing?	Yes	No
10. The student was in attendance in school and engaged in the intervention activities?	Yes	No
11. All parties followed the written intervention plan? If no, describe how the instruction deviated from the intervention plan.	Yes	No

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Rigorous Evidence Checklist (USDOE)

Checklist to use in evaluating whether an intervention is backed by rigorous evidence

Step 1. Is the intervention supported by "strong" evidence of effectiveness?

A. The quality of evidence needed to establish "strong" evidence: randomized controlled trials that are well-designed and implemented. The following are key items to look for in assessing whether a trial is well-designed and implemented.

Key items to look for in the study's description of the intervention and the random assignment process

- The study should clearly describe the intervention, including: (i) who administered it, who received it, and what it cost; (ii) how the intervention differed from what the control group received; and (iii) the logic of how the intervention is supposed to affect outcomes
- Be alert to any indication that the random assignment process may have been compromised.
- The study should provide data showing that there are no systematic differences between the intervention and control groups prior to the intervention

Key items to look for in the study's collection of outcome data

- The study should use outcome measures that are "valid"—i.e., that accurately measure the true outcomes that the intervention is designed to affect
- The percent of study participants that the study has lost track of when collecting outcome data should be small, and should not differ between the intervention and control groups
- The study should collect and report outcome data even for those members of the intervention group who do not participate in or complete the intervention
- The study should preferably obtain data on long-term outcomes of the intervention, so that you can judge whether the intervention's effects were sustained over time

Key items to look for in the study's reporting of results

- If the study makes a claim that the intervention is effective, it should report (i) the size of the effect, and (ii) statistical tests showing the effect is unlikely to be the result of chance
- A study's claim that the intervention's effect on a subgroup (e.g., Hispanic students) is different than its effect on the overall population in the study should be treated with caution
- The study should report the intervention's effects on all the outcomes that the study measured, not just those for which there is a positive effect.

B. Quantity of evidence needed to establish "strong" evidence of effectiveness

- The intervention should be demonstrated effective, through well-designed randomized controlled trials, in more than one site of implementation;
- These sites should be typical school or community settings, such as public school classrooms taught by regular teachers; and
- The trials should demonstrate the intervention's effectiveness in school settings similar to yours, before you can be confident it will work in your schools/classrooms.

Step 2. If the intervention is not supported by "strong" evidence, is it nevertheless supported by "possible" evidence of effectiveness?

This is a judgment call that depends, for example, on the extent of the flaws in the randomized trials of the intervention and the quality of any nonrandomized studies that have been done. The following are a few factors to consider in making these judgments.

A. Circumstances in which a comparison-group study can constitute "possible" evidence:

- The study's intervention and comparison groups should be very closely matched in academic achievement levels, demographics, and other characteristics prior to the intervention
- The comparison group should not be comprised of individuals who had the option to participate in the intervention but declined
- The study should preferably choose the intervention/comparison groups and outcome measures "prospectively" - i.e., before the intervention is administered
- The study should meet the checklist items listed above for a well-designed randomized controlled trial (other than the item concerning the random assignment process). That is, the study should use valid outcome measures, report tests for statistical significance, and so on

B. Studies that do not meet the threshold for "possible" evidence of effectiveness include: (i) pre-post studies (p. 2); (ii) comparison-group studies in which the intervention and comparison groups are not well-matched; and (iii) "meta-analyses" that combine the results of individual studies which do not themselves meet the threshold for "possible" evidence

Step 3. If the intervention is backed by neither "strong" nor "possible" evidence, one may conclude that it is not supported by meaningful evidence of effectiveness.

Source: U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (2003) I*dentifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported By Rigorous Evidence: A User Friendly Guide* http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/rigorousevid/index.html

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