What do we mean by all children “reading at grade level or above”?

We want students to

✦ read grade level text with a reasonable level of understanding;
✦ be able to do this fluently, so that reading the text doesn’t take an inordinate amount of time;
✦ find pleasure in reading, which means reading a book like we read books, without having to struggle with the words, and be able to focus on the meaning.
Children’s Reading Comprehension Depends on…

- how well they read the words on the page.
- how much knowledge they have and how well they think.
- their previous experiences with reading and how motivated they are to understand the text.
- the interaction between the text, reader, and larger context.
What are the most critical problems for students who struggle?
1. Extreme difficulties mastering the use of “phonics” skills as an aid to early, independent reading because of...

- difficulties with the skills of blending and analyzing the sounds in words (phonemic awareness) leading to...
- problems learning letter-sound correspondences.
Fundamentally, these problems arise from an underlying weakness or lack of talent in phonological language processing.
What is phonological awareness?

- PA is the conscious awareness of or sensitivity to the sound structure of language.
- PA includes the ability to detect, match, blend, segment, or otherwise manipulate the sounds in spoken language.
Important fact about talent in the phonological language domain:

It is like most other talents in that it is distributed **normally** in the population.
“Phonological talent” is normally distributed in the population.

Children can be strong in this talent.
"Phonological talent" is normally distributed in the population.

Children can be moderately weak in this talent and need more support.
“Phonological talent” is normally distributed in the population. Or they can have serious difficulties that probably require special interventions and a lot of extra support.
Converging research has revealed the fundamental cause of most reading problems...

…the presence of weakness in the processing of sound.

A lack of talent in language processing that is not necessarily related to a person’s IQ.
2. Slow development of the “sight vocabulary” necessary for fluent reading arising from …
   ● limited exposure to text and
   ● lack of strategies to reliably identify words in text.
So what does this mean for instruction?
Something to think about…

In our rush through the pages of the text, making sure we cover the prescribed content by the proper time in the year, we sometimes forget to ask ourselves…
...if a student hasn’t learned the content, skill, or knowledge, have we truly taught it?

Student mastery of material is key to our success in Reading First and the key to student mastery is differentiated instruction.
Differentiated Instruction

- Instruction designed to meet the needs of all students in a classroom
- A way of thinking about our students and our instruction that focuses on mastery rather than coverage
- Acknowledges not all students learn at the same rate or need the same amount of explicit detail
- Instruction that is adaptive to meet the changing needs of students
- Accomplished through ongoing assessment of students and flexible grouping strategies
What Can you Change in Your Instruction?

- Input (instruction and materials)
- Output (modality, participation)
- Rate (speed and amount)
- Support (independent vs. group, amount of scaffolding)
Differentiated Instruction

Provides adjustment in

- intensity of instruction,
- degree of explicitness,
- amount of scaffolding during guided practice, and
- amount of independent practice.
Fairness isn’t everyone getting the same.

Fairness is everyone getting what they need.
Purposes of Assessment

- Screening
- Diagnosis
- Progress Monitoring
- Achievement Outcomes
Model for Student Success

Continuous Assessment

Instruction

Instructional Planning Based on Assessment
Critical questions to ask when planning instruction are:

1. What do I want this student or group of students to know or be able to do?

2. What would be the best way to teach that to this particular child or group of children?
   - How explicit should the instruction be?
   - How much support do these students need?
   - What is the best grouping strategy for this lesson?
## Continuum of Approaches to Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explicit Instruction</th>
<th>Implicit Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teacher regulation of learning</td>
<td>student regulation of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modeling/explaining</td>
<td>facilitating</td>
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<tr>
<td>directed discovery</td>
<td>discovery</td>
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<tr>
<td>direct instruction</td>
<td>self-regulated instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part-to-whole</td>
<td>whole-to-part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>balance between part-to-whole and whole-to-part</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Mercer, Lane, Allsopp, Eisele, & Jordan (1996)
Considerations in Choosing an Instructional Approach

more explicit………………………………more implicit

student factors

The student…
• Has limited experiences with topic or skill
• Lacks prior knowledge
• Is extrinsically motivated
• Experiences initial failure

The student…
• Has abundant experiences with topic or skill
• Has a lot of prior knowledge
• Is intrinsically motivated
• Experiences early success

Adapted from Mercer, Lane, Allsopp, Eisele, & Jordan (1996)
Considerations in Choosing an Instructional Approach

more explicit........................................more implicit

curriculum factors

• The content is sequential
• Content learning or skill acquisition requires task-specific strategies
• The content or skill is complex and must be applied with a high degree of proficiency or accuracy.
• The instructional time is limited.

• The content is conceptual
• Tasks can be done through problem-solving strategies.
• Tasks can be modified or adapted to individual styles or needs and do not need to be accurate.
• The instructional time is flexible.

Adapted from Mercer, Lane, Allsopp, Eisele, & Jordan (1996)
Interventions

- For students who are struggling, who lack the necessary foundation and background knowledge for independent, self-regulated learning
- For students for whom general classroom instruction is insufficient
- For students who are either likely to or already do experience failure
The consensus view of the most important instructional features for interventions

Interventions are more effective when they:

- Provide **systematic** and **explicit** instruction on whatever component skills are deficient
- Provide a significant increase in intensity of instruction
- Provide ample opportunities for guided practice of new skills
- Provide systematic cueing of appropriate strategies in context
- Provide appropriate levels of scaffolding as children learn to apply new skills
Systematic Instruction…

…is instruction that follows a sensible order and progression that ensures that students have the prerequisite skills and knowledge they need to learn new material.

…is instruction that is coordinated and uses aligned student materials.
Coordinated Instructional Sequence

✨ Phonics:
- Students learn to connect /a/ with the vowel diagraph ai

✨ Fluency:
- Reading word lists that include words that have /a/ (spelled ai) and other previously learned letter combination sounds and syllable patterns
- Reading decodable passages with ai words using timed repeated readings

✨ Spelling & Writing
- Spelling words that include /a/ spelled ai and other letter and letter combination sounds previously learned

Kosanovich-Grek, 2004
…the power of systematic phonics instruction lies in organizing the lessons so that they reveal the logic of the alphabetic system…

Adams, 2003, p.74
...the goal of explicit instruction is one of helping children to focus their attention on the relations that matter....because one learns that to which one attends.

Adams, 2003, p.75
Explicit Instruction

As an expert reader and language user, the teacher says, “Let me show you how this works so you can do it too.

Watch me.
Let’s do it together.
Now you do it.”
The consensus view of the most important instructional features for interventions

Interventions are more effective when they:

- Provide **systematic** and **explicit** instruction on whatever component skills are deficient
- Provide a significant increase in **intensity** of instruction
A range of methods can be used to provide immediate, intensive interventions:

- Small group work with the classroom teacher
- Small group work with a reading resource teacher
- Small group work with a special education teacher
- Small group work with an aide or paraprofessional
- Individual work with computer assisted instruction
- Individual work with volunteers
- Individual work with classroom or cross age peers
Instructional Grouping

How you group depends on your goals for the lesson and the needs and strengths of your students.

If you are trying to provide more intense, more explicit, more individualized instruction, same-ability grouping is your answer.
Grouping for Effective Instruction

- **Whole Group**
  - Includes all students
  - Creates community of knowledge

- **Small Group (same ability)**
  - Meets individual student needs
  - Students have a lot of opportunities to express what they know and receive feedback
  - Teacher can adjust pacing and assure mastery

- **Small Group (mixed ability)**
  - Opportunities to work with peers
  - Teaches students to learn from and teach their peers
Grouping for Effective Instruction

✧ Pairs
- Motivates students
- Addresses social and academic needs

✧ Individual
- Meets individual needs
- Allows for more intensive instruction
- Allows for access to the general education curriculum
- Maximum opportunity for teacher to adjust pacing
Flexible Grouping

For grouping to provide differentiated instruction to work, it is critical that you...

● use a variety of grouping strategies that place kids with different levels of peers.

● assess frequently and change same-ability groups on a regular basis.

● match the number of groups to the needs of your class instead of using a predetermined, arbitrary number of groups.

● don’t use same-ability groups for other purposes or subjects.

● keep groups of students who need intense instruction small (no more than 3-4 students).

● teach students how to work in a group, in a pair, at a center, or independently and how to transition between groupings.
Considerations for Designing Effective Small-Group Instruction

- Explicit, systematic instruction driven by student needs, not by predetermined curriculum
- Emphasis on developing phonological awareness and understanding of the alphabetic principle
- Strong reading-writing connection
Considerations for Designing Effective Small-Group Instruction

- Explicit connections between skills instruction and application in purposeful reading and writing
- Frequent assessment and analysis of student performance to drive instruction
- Sensitive to individual student differences
- Delivered by the most highly-skilled professionals available
The consensus view of the most important instructional features for interventions

Interventions are more effective when they:

- Provide **systematic** and **explicit** instruction on whatever component skills are deficient.
- Provide a significant increase in **intensity** of instruction.
- Provide ample opportunities for **guided practice** of new skills and **independent practice** in applying and using those skills.
- Provide **systematic cueing** of appropriate **strategies** in context.
- Provide appropriate **levels of scaffolding** as children learn to apply new skills.
Summary: What makes differentiation successful?

The most important factor is high-quality curriculum and instruction.

Teachers can make sure that:
- curriculum is clearly focused on the information and understandings that are most important for success;
- lessons, activities, and products are designed to ensure that students understand, use, and become fluent with those essentials;
- learning is active; and
- there are successful and positive experiences in learning for each student.

(Adapted from Tomlinson, 1999)
Summary: What makes differentiation successful?

- There is no recipe for differentiation.
- It is a way of thinking about teaching and learning that values the individual and can be translated into classroom practice in many ways.
- Use of ongoing assessment that is tightly linked to instruction to reflect on your learners, modify groupings, and change your instructional methods is the best way to ensure both differentiation and success.
THANK YOU!

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