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Frequently Asked Questions About Reading Instruction

Developed by the Curriculum Review Team

1. What is systematic instruction?
2. What is direct instruction?
3. Aren't scripted lessons for inexperienced or uncreative teachers?
4. Why is it important to have a 90 minute reading block?
5. May students go to another class for intervention during the 90 minute block?
6. How do we prioritize what to teach when the Core Reading Program offers so much?
7. What is the best use of an extra adult in the room during the 90 minute block?
8. During the 90 minute reading block, should I follow the sequence of student materials in the Reading Program or choose stories as they seem appropriate for our thematic units?
9. Is writing permitted and what type of writing activities can be included during the 90 minute block?
10. What do you mean by flexible small group instruction?
11. How can I keep teaching my small group when the students in centers complete their activity and start misbehaving?
12. What is a good way to build vocabulary skills?
13. What can I do to help my students read more fluently?
14. What is the difference between Core, Supplemental, and Intervention instruction?
15. What materials should I use for targeted instruction for my struggling students?
16. What exactly is meant by immediate intensive intervention (iii), or 'triple i'?
17. What can we use for intervention when third grade students are not successful with the Comprehensive Core Reading Program?

Q. 14. What is the difference between Core, Supplemental, and Intervention instruction?

A. Core Instruction is instruction provided to all students in the class, and it is usually guided by a comprehensive core reading program. Part of the core instruction is usually provided to the class whole, and part is provided during the small group, differentiated instruction period. Although instruction is differentiated by student need during the small group period, materials and lesson procedures from the core program can frequently be used to provide reteaching, or additional teaching to students according to their needs.

Supplemental Instruction is instruction that goes beyond that provided by the comprehensive program because the core program does not provide enough instruction or practice in a key area to meet the needs of the students in a particular classroom or school. For example, teachers in a school may observe that their comprehensive core program does not provide enough instruction in vocabulary, or in phonics, to adequately meet the needs of the majority of their students. They then select a supplemental program in these areas to strengthen the initial instruction and practice provided to all students.

Intervention Instruction is provided only to students who are lagging behind their classmates in the development of critical reading skills. This instruction will usually be guided by a specific intervention program that focuses on one or more of the key areas of reading development. This type of instruction is needed by only a relatively small minority of students in a class. In some cases, students in 2nd or 3rd grade may have lagged so far behind grade level development of reading skills that very little content from the grade level comprehensive core program is suitable for them. In these cases, students may need to receive instruction guided by a comprehensive intervention program that is specifically designed to meet their specific needs while at the same time accelerating their growth toward grade level reading ability.

Q. 15. What materials should I use for targeted instruction for my struggling students?

A. Targeted Supplemental Reading Programs (TSRP) and Targeted Intervention Reading Programs (TIRP) provide instruction in one or more areas of reading skill. They are intended for flexible use to provide extra instruction for all students, or in more intensive interventions to meet the needs of specific students such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension. If students in second or third grade are so far below grade level in their reading skills that very little of the instruction and practice supported by the comprehensive core program is appropriate for them, they may be more effectively served in a group or classroom that receives instruction guided by a targeted intervention program.

Q. 16. What exactly is meant by immediate intensive intervention (iii), or 'triple i'?

A. Immediate intensive intervention is specifically designed and customized instruction for homogeneous small group or one-on-one reading instruction. It is considered "immediate" because it should be provided as soon as the teacher becomes aware that a student is lagging seriously behind in the development

one or more critical reading skills. It involves systematic and explicit instruction that specifically address the student's deficiency in a component skill, and it also involves more frequent progress monitoring on target skills to ensure adequate progress. Immediate, intensive interventions can be provided by the classroom teacher, a reading resource or special education teacher, or a well-trained and supervised paraprofessional. They can be provided both within and outside of the 90 minute reading block. For example, during the small group instructional period within the 90 minute block, a reading resource teacher could provide an intensive intervention to one small group of students, while the classroom teacher was providing differentiated instruction to another group of students, and the rest of the students were working at independent reading centers. One key to success for intensive intervention is that they must increase the instructional intensity available to the child. To do this, intensive intervention should be offered every day in as small a group as possible, and they should be delivered by a skilled instructor. For more information about organizing and delivering immediate intensive intervention within a school, please see A Principal's Guide to Intensive Reading Interventions for Struggling Readers in Reading First Schools by Joseph Torgesen:

<http://www.fcrr.org/staffpresentations/Publication1a.pdf> (PDF)

Q. 17. What can we use for intervention when third grade students are not successful with Comprehensive Core Reading Program?

- A.** Comprehensive Intervention Reading Programs (CIRP) are intended to replace the core reading programs for students who are reading one or more years below grade level, and who are struggling with a broad range of reading skills. Comprehensive Intervention Programs include instructional content based on the five essential components of reading instruction integrated into a coherent instructional design. A coherent design includes explicit instructional strategies, coordinated instructional sequences, ample practice opportunities, and aligned student materials. Comprehensive Intervention Reading Programs provide instruction that is more intensive, explicit, systematic, and more motivating than instruction students have previously received. These programs also provide more frequent assessments of student progress and more systematic review in order to insure proper pacing of instruction and mastery of all instructional components. If the CIRP is used as a replacement for the Core Reading Program, the CIRP must be taught by a highly knowledgeable teacher with a relatively small group of students.

References

