Data-Driven Decision Making
Planning for January DIBELS Data Collection

January benchmarking is right around the corner! Please make sure to schedule and notify everyone on your assessment team of your DIBELS refresher training that you have prior to benchmarking (training materials can be found on the Oregon Reading First Center website at: http://oregonreadingfirst.uoregon.edu/assess_refresher.html). This is critical to ensure that data collection is reliable. In particular, make sure that you review the scoring notations for NWF. If students are blending nonsense words, then one continuous line is used to score this type of response. If they are providing individual letter sounds, then each letter is underlined with a separate line. If students are recoding, then this should be seen in the scoring with the letter sounds read underlined and the blended word underlined.

This is also a good time to make sure that any new assessment team members attend a full training and participate with approximately 7-10 students before participating in the benchmark data collection.

Instruction
What Are Sight Words?

Many published reading programs in discussing sight words characterize them as those that are irregular (e.g., don’t follow traditional phonics rules) or are high-frequency words. However, Ehri (2005)\(^1\) asserts that, “any word that is read sufficiently often becomes a sight word that is read from memory.” An important property of sight word reading is that students no longer focus on the individual sounds and trying to blend them to form words but instead see words as single units with no pauses between word parts. As Ehri also notes, all other forms of word reading require conscious attention. “If readers attempt to decode words, to analogize, or predict words, their attention is shifted from the text to the word itself to identify it, and this disrupts comprehension, at least momentarily. It is clear that being able to read words automatically from memory is the most efficient, unobtrusive way to read words in text” (p. 170).

For Which Students is Guided Reading Appropriate?

An examination of the literature reveals that guided reading strategies are best suited for those who bring high literacy skills to the classroom. For example, Foorman et al., (1998) in a comparison of three instructional approaches – explicit and systematic instruction in letter-sound correspondences practiced in decodable text, less direct instruction in spelling patterns embedded in connected text, and implicit phonics instruction in a print-rich environment – found that students who were directly instructed in the alphabetic principle improved in word-reading skill at a significantly faster rate than those who received indirect, implicit phonics instruction. Findings also indicated that guided reading practice was most beneficial to students with higher literacy skills because they already had many of the foundational pieces in place (e.g., phonics skills) needed to practice with connected text. Similar findings were also obtained by Juel and Minden-Cupp (2000), supporting the idea that although guided reading may be beneficial for higher performing students in giving them additional practice with connected text, it is not appropriate for all students.

Effective Techniques for Additional Practice

If you are using the enhancement templates in your school, you may be familiar with the terms below. Jill Jackson uses them in a humorous way to point out how NOT to deliver effective instruction when giving additional practice. These “characters” can also be used to help teachers become more effective in Direct Instruction programs that involve signaling and choral student response.

Ms. Linger Finger – this teacher stays on a focus too long and expects the students to just “know” that she is asking them to blend the whole word. This character will, for example, keep her finger at the beginning of the word. This will result in messy responses and coat-tailing.

Perpetual Hover Crafter – this teacher doesn’t “commit” to a signal but has his hand or finger kind of hover over the top of it, rather than pointing to a specific letter or word part, for example. Again, this will result in messy responses and coat-tailing.

Speedy Gonzales – this teacher believes that “these kids know this” and so they speed right through, mostly shouting the instruction and expecting the shouting in response…somehow speeding through and shouting makes this teacher feel like the students are really doing something!
Debbie Downer – BOOOORRRRIINNGG…the template and lesson maps will be incredibly frustrating and the students will not like them nor benefit from them unless the teacher increases the enthusiasm, focus, and pacing of the lesson – sometimes just the very act of lifting her eyebrows! Is she saying, “I don’t like this and you shouldn’t either?”

Space Cadet – this teacher goes through the motions and gets the job done, but doesn’t ever really engage with the students and monitor the quality of their responses. The focus on quality of responses is what we really want to be looking for. Reminding this type of teacher that, in most cases, the quality of responses you’re getting is a direct response to the quality of instruction you’re giving and accepting.

Been There, Done That Syndrome – ho, hum (yawn); see Space Cadet and Debbie Downer and combine the two!

Individual Turn Turncoat – this teacher completely forgets individual turns and how to execute them…many times saying “But they got it!” and the coaches’ response is, “How do you really know each individual got it if you don’t do a quick check-in with them through individual turns?

December Enhancement Techniques

Kindergarten
- Make sure that the target sound for each week is clearly displayed as a focus in the classroom.
- Video and Template Practice: Card #5
- Observations by Coach: #1, 2, 9, 15

Grade 1
- Template Practice: Card #17
- Observations by Coach: #10, 15

Grade 2
- Template Practice: Card #17
- Observations by Coach: #10 (multi-syllabic words), 15, 16

Grade 3
- Template Practice: Card #17
- Observations by Coach: #10 (multi-syllabic words), 15, 16

New Coaches’ Corner

Have questions? Please contact Trish at (541) 346-2063 between 1:00 and 2:00 on December 12th.

How much of your time is spent in classrooms? If you find you have a hard time getting into classrooms for observations each day, ask your Regional Coordinator to help you with your coaching plan. Your RC can help you prioritize your time to be able to spend more time in classrooms supporting your teachers in delivering effective instruction.

The Oregon Reading First Center website has many resources under the Coaching Cycle link. Check it out!
Upcoming Professional Development sessions
Kindergarten Teacher Workshop (December 11, 2008)

Aligned with our project-level goal for 2008-2009, this session will focus on how teachers can provide students with the supports they need to successfully read VC and CVC words as whole units by the end of the school year. We will also discuss/review monitoring student mastery of the Core reading program skills; pre-teaching and re-teaching lessons; expectation of K student on DIBELS NWF; and some whole-group template/routine practice. We will be providing some helpful teaching tips and participants will leave with a kindergarten resource toolkit.

The afternoon session will be led by Chris Borgmeier and will focus on developing behavior support plans to be used during small group and independent work. Chris will work with teachers on how to teach, practice and provide feedback on the expected behaviors from their support plans. This session will give teachers the necessary tools to enable them to get through their small group lessons each day with minimal behavior interruptions!

Brown Bag session with Randy Sprick (December 18, 2008)

During this session, Dr. Randy Sprick will be providing participants with an introduction to classroom management and behavior support, a topic that aligns well with his work on helping teachers, principals, and other staff set up schools and classrooms that encourage student responsibility and motivation while humanely and effectively helping misbehaving students learn to behave in more responsible ways.

Horizons Training (January 9, 2009)

The morning session will be a continuation of the Horizons A/B session offered on September 23rd, focusing on later parts of the program and using data to make instructional decisions. During the afternoon Peggy will provide an overview of Horizons C/D, including appropriate placement, teaching to mastery, and using data to make instructional decisions.

Upcoming dates (see the ORFC calendar for complete listings):

12/3/08 – 12/4/08: Module 4* - Using a Core Reading Program and the 90-minute Reading Block
12/11/08 – Kindergarten Teacher’s Workshop
12/18/08 – Brown Bag with Dr. Randy Sprick.
1/9/09 – Horizons Training

* Modules are Statewide Outreach sessions

Coming Soon!

We are currently on working on posting videos to a website that can be directly accessed by staff in Oregon Reading First Center schools. Videos that we hope to post include: enhancement template videos, Anita Archer video clips, etc. Look for more information on how to access these videos next month in our January newsletter!
In Other News

Oregon Reading First Center to Conduct Progress Monitoring Equivalency Study
This winter the Oregon Reading First Center will be conducting a study to examine the equivalency of DIBELS ORF progress monitoring passages by looking at whether the order in which passages are administered affects students’ scores. This study is projected to take place from the winter DIBELS benchmark data collection through the spring benchmark data collection. More information will be sent out in the beginning of December as part of an email asking schools to participate. We hope you will join us in this exciting project!

Beacon Schools Now Accepting Visitors!
Oregon’s three Beacon Schools (Humboldt School in Portland, Jefferson Elementary in Medford, and the newly opened Lincoln Street Elementary in Hillsboro) are currently accepting visitors! If you or other schools in your district would like to visit and see implementation of the Schoolwide Reading Model, schedule a visit today! For more information, please visit the Oregon Reading First Center website at: http://oregonreadingfirst.uoregon.edu/beacon_schools.html.

Articles and Publications
As you know, much of our emphasis this year has been on the importance of NWF as part of our project-level goal to increase student automaticity in whole word reading. Although our focus hasn’t been on a particular population of students, if you are interested in NWF as an index of beginning reading ability and how NWF functions for English Learners, we recommend you read Using Nonsense Word Fluency to Predict Reading Proficiency in Kindergarten Through Second Grade for English Learners and Native English Speakers. This article is based on analyses of student data collected during Years 1-3 of the Oregon Reading First Center website at: http://oregonreadingfirst.uoregon.edu/beacon_schools.html.

References: