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Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Tier 2 Instructional Programs

Joseph Dimino, Ph.D. • September 2009

Topic: Response to Intervention in Primary Grade Reading
Practice: Systematic Skill Instruction

Highlights

- Dr. Joseph Dimino outlines the foundational reading skills appropriate at each primary grade level.
- Systematic instruction and explicit teaching strategies are important in all three tier levels.
- Dr. Dimino describes the content, instructional focus, and structure of Tier 2 interventions and discusses what schools should consider when selecting an intervention.
- Research evidence supporting systematic, explicit instruction is presented.
- Dr. Dimino explains how to structure tiered interventions and contrasts the characteristics of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions in terms of student grouping as well as frequency and amount of instruction.

About the Interviewee

Joseph Dimino, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate, Instructional Research Group. Since the early 1970s, Joseph Dimino has had experience as a general education teacher, special education teacher, administrator, behavior

consultant, and researcher. He has extensive experience working with teachers, parents, administrators, and instructional assistants in the areas of instruction and early literacy, reading comprehension strategies, and classroom and behavior management in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Dr. Dimino is a senior research associate at Instructional Research Group, in Los Alamitos, California, where he developed and conducted professional development as part of a national evaluation investigating the effectiveness of reading comprehension programs and is co-principal investigator for a study assessing the impact of Collaborative Strategic Reading on the comprehension and vocabulary skills of English language learners and English-speaking fifth graders. He is the professional development coordinator for a study investigating the impact of Teacher Study Groups on teaching practices and student vocabulary knowledge. He is also a panel member for the RtI Reading Practice Guide and researcher for the RtI Mathematics Practice Guide, published by the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/>).

He served as one of the seven professional development staff members for the National Center on Student Progress Monitoring, a technical assistance and dissemination center funded by the Office of Special Education Programs within the U.S. Department of Education.

Dr. Dimino has co-authored books in reading comprehension and early reading intervention. He has published in numerous scholarly journals, including *Elementary School Journal*, *Reading Research Quarterly*, *The Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *Educational Leadership*, *Remedial and Special Education*, *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, *Learning Disability Quarterly*, *Exceptional Children*, *The Journal of Special Education*, and *Reading and Writing Quarterly*. He has delivered papers at numerous state, national, and international conferences, including the American Educational Research Association, the Society for the Scientific Study of Reading, the National Reading Conference, the International Reading Association, the Council for Exceptional Children, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the International Association of Applied Psychology, and the European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction. He consults nationally in the areas of early literacy and reading comprehension instruction.

Full Transcript

My name is Joe Dimino. I am a senior research associate at the Instructional Research Group, in Los Alamitos, California. Systematic instruction is very important in all three tiers of the RtI [Response to Intervention] model, and when we talk about systematic instruction, we're talking about taking the skills and teaching them from the easiest to the hardest. We teach them one at a time, in isolation, and then we integrate them.

The alignment between the core reading program and Tier 2 intervention programs is really not critical. What we're looking for would be instruction that is explicit and systematic. Let's talk about a second-grade child. You have a second-grade child who is in Tier 1 instruction, but is reading on a first-grade level and so is also getting Tier 2 instruction, but getting the skills, the first-grade skills, because he is reading a year below grade level. So consequently those—let's take phonics—those skills aren't going to match, because in beginning first grade, you're going to be learning your consonants and your short vowels, whereas in second grade, you're going to be learning digraphs and diphthongs and doubling, to add *-ing* and *-ed* and things like that, so they're not going to match. The critical issue is the design of the instruction in the intervention program.

Skill Focus

The foundational reading skills in Tier 2 intervention should be phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In kindergarten, you would focus on phonemic awareness and phonics and maybe some listening comprehension. So as the child gets older, then the skills would change. So for example, in second grade, phonemic awareness is usually dropped and they add more comprehension and vocabulary. In first grade, for example, when we come to fluency, in the beginning of first grade we just teach the students the high-frequency words. These are the words that show up 75% of the time in things that they read, words like *the* and *was* and *said*, and many of those high-frequency words are words that do not follow the phonics rules or generalizations as they're taught; so they just have to look at them and recognize them and say them. In the middle of first grade, then we begin with fluency with connected text, and the reason why we do that is typically first, beginning first graders don't know how to read so you don't want to give them instruction in fluency.

Intervention Strategies

When selecting Tier 2 intervention programs, administrators should look for explicit instruction; they should look for programs where there are thinkalouds suggested, very explicit thinkalouds suggested for the teachers. There is lots of modeling, lots of guided practice before the children go into independent practice. There should be specific error correction procedures that the teacher would use with the students when they make a mistake. They should also make sure that there is mastery built in, that the students learn those skills to mastery. They want to look at the scope and sequence, and by that I mean, let's take phonemic awareness. What skills are in the phonemic awareness component? Are they complete? Are there skills missing in the phonemic awareness component, or any component, that are critical for a student learning how to read? And the last thing to look for is cumulative review. We want to make sure that those skills are consistently reviewed so that they can maintain the mastery that they achieved when they were first introduced.

Structuring Intervention

Delivery for Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction is basically the same. We want to build skills gradually, we want to use systematic instruction with teachers thinking aloud and modeling, but the difference with Tier 2 is that the pace is going to be a little bit faster than Tier 3. Also what's important in Tier 2 and Tier 3 is corrective feedback. We want to make sure that errors are corrected immediately. And also, when we consider feedback that is not corrective, it's always good to tell the students when they give you a correct answer, why it's correct. So we want just to make sure that we have really good explicit feedback.

Regarding grouping for Tier 2, six of the eleven studies that we looked at, there was one-to-one instruction, and the remaining, there were two to six students in the group. The important thing that we have to consider are the variables of intensity and duration. So for example, there was a study in first grade, there were 10 minutes of instruction for eight weeks in phonemic awareness, and there was no effect. Now we could look at those variables and say, "If you increase the time, intensity, and duration, that perhaps there would have been an effect in that study." So based on this evidence, we have recommended that the groups for Tier 2 instruction be three to four students.