



SAMPLE MATERIAL

Using Evaluation Data to Improve Instruction

Wayne County Literacy Acceleration Project, Tennessee

Topic: Preschool Language and Literacy

Practice: Teach Phonological Awareness

Wayne County established a well-defined role for its evaluators that includes communicating program evaluation data to teachers and administrators in an understandable format. Evaluators work with the project's leadership in using evaluation data to identify program areas needing improvement, plan actions to bring about change, and assess the effectiveness of these actions. The areas identified as needing evaluator assistance are presented on page six of the PowerPoint presentation, and the analyses of data, actions taken, and improvement results for each area follow.



How to Get the Most from Your Independent Evaluator



Wayne County, TN, School System
Wayne County Literacy Acceleration Project
ERF Grantee Conference
San Francisco, CA, April 4, 2007

Project Staff



- Wayne County Schools, Waynesboro, TN
 - Terry Hampton, Facilitator of Federal Projects/Grant Writer
 - Dr. Shirley Curry, Director, Early Reading First
 - Paul Coggins, Supervisor of Federal Projects
- Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN (Evaluation)
 - Dr. Dale C. Farran, Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning
 - Dr. Mark Lipsey, Director, Center for Evaluation and Research Methodology

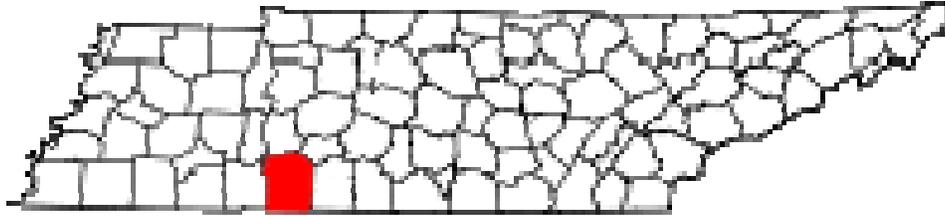
In collaboration with the Tennessee State Department of
Education and Wayne County Even Start.

Wayne County was awarded an Early Reading First Grant in
October, 2004.

Wayne County Tennessee



- Wayne County Tennessee



Wayne County Tennessee



Wayne County Tennessee



- Wayne County
 - 739 square miles
 - Second largest county in land area in TN
 - Nearly 22% of the families with children under age five are below the federal poverty level
 - 40% of the adults have not completed high school.
- Wayne County Schools
 - 2,580 students in Pre-K – twelve
 - Three elementary schools, spanning 35 mile radius
 - 13 Pre-K classrooms currently serving 280 three and four year olds



Located in Southern Middle Tennessee, 100 miles south of Nashville, and 40 miles north of Florence, Alabama

ERF Curriculum in Wayne County



- Wayne County Schools was involved in the Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research project in 2002-2005.
- Findings demonstrated that the *Bright Beginnings* curriculum showed stronger effects on Letter-Word Identification, Oral Comprehension, and Spelling than the comparison curriculum.
- *Bright Beginnings* was published by Pearson as *Opening Worlds of Learning (OWL)* and was adopted by all the preschools in ERF in Wayne County.
- Training on *OWL* was provided by Pearson with follow up training provided by Vanderbilt University staff, Pearson, and literacy consultants with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System.



Skills on Wheels



- Given the geography of the county, some children have difficulty getting to prekindergarten classrooms
- We bring the classroom to them!
 - The Skills-on-Wheels is a mobile Literacy Learning Center that travels to selected parts of Wayne County providing learning experiences for parents and children.
 - The Skills-on-Wheels is staffed with a highly qualified teacher and one educational assistant, and a Family Engagement Coordinator.
 - The Opening the World of Learning and supplementary literacy activities are implemented in the Literacy Center.
 - Skills on Wheels is also active during the summer, serving children when school is out.



Importance of Involving External Evaluator at the *Proposal* Stage



1. Evaluators were fully informed about the goals and strategies of the program developers
2. Program developers were able to gain information that would assist in the design, implementation, and expected outcomes of the Early Reading First Program
3. Evaluation measures were chosen collaboratively
4. Proposal was jointly created
5. Built on a prior partnership that developed trust between evaluators and practitioners/administrators

Evaluation Instruments



- **Child Assessments**

- **Project staff administered**

- PALS (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening): Upper and lower case letters
- IGDI (Individual Growth and Development Indicators)
 - Picture Naming, Alliteration, Rhyming

- **Evaluation staff administered**

- PPVT
- Woodcock Johnson III
 - Letter-Word Identification
 - Spelling (writing)
 - Oral Comprehension
 - Picture Vocabulary
 - Story Recall
 - Applied Problems (math)

- **Classroom Assessments**

- **Project staff administered**

- ECERS (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale)

- **Evaluation staff administered, each 2-3 times annually**

- ELLCO (Early Literacy & Language Classroom Observation)
- OWL Curriculum Implementation Form
- Narrative Record (time spent)
- Curriculum Content Checklist (content covered)
- Child Observation in Preschool (child behaviors/engagement)
- CLASS (social/emotional climate)

Roles for Grantee and Evaluator



- **Evaluator's Role**

- Assess in a timely and efficient manner (be flexible with schedule!)
- Clean, analyze and summarize data immediately
- Provide feedback to administrators quickly in an understandable format
- Communicate information to teachers in an understandable format
- Assist administrators in planning programmatic changes and/or professional development as a follow up

- **Grantee's Role**

- Facilitate access to children for assessment at sites
- Provide ready access for classroom observation by the evaluating personnel
- Provide necessary and appropriate information as requested
- Maintain confidentiality
- Keep the evaluator abreast of any changes or unusual occurrences
- Support the use of evaluation data by teachers

Formative Use of Evaluation Data



- Drives professional development activities
- Influences teaching strategies
- Used in promotion of Pre-K and recruitment of students

Examples of Evaluator Assistance



1. Outliers and low-scorers
2. Gender differences
3. Conversations between teachers and children
4. Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) scores
5. Spelling/Writing
6. Classroom management

For each example we shall tell or show the instrument that generated the data, analyze it, discuss the action taken including professional development and when possible reveal the results.

Outliers, Low-scorers and Gender



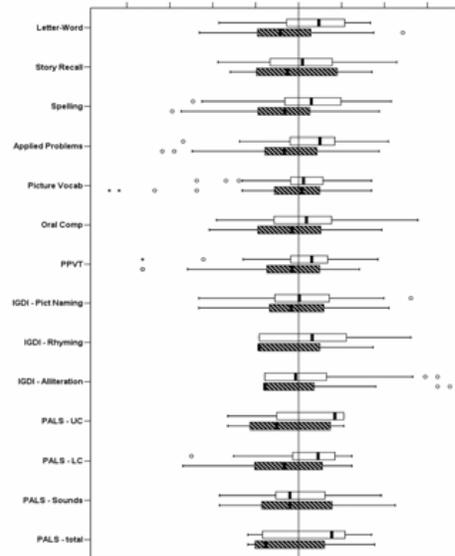
Analysis of data:

In January of 2005 thirty (30) students were defined as “low scorers” having scored less than the norm on four (4) or more of the six (6) components in the Woodcock Johnson pretest, shown as “outliers” on this chart.

In every category the average of the female scores was higher than the average of the male scores, shown in the white and striped bars on the chart.

(Data provided by Evaluator 8/5/05)

All 4-year-olds (Females = white bars; Males = striped bars)



Outliers, Low-scorers Actions, Results



- **Actions Taken**
 - Of these 30, 4 moved and 7 opted for another year of Pre-K. All of children repeating except one were boys with summer and early fall birthdays.
- **Results**
 - At the close of kindergarten year 2006, each child was assessed with the Kindergarten DIBELS and 13 of the 19 were now at Benchmark (grade level) and ready for first grade.
 - Adding these to the others that amounts to 96% of the children entering first grade were prepared according to a nationally recognized assessment.

Gender Effects: Actions, Results



• Actions Taken

- Each teacher was asked to do a paper outlining how she would approach her teaching assignment considering this information. Several did considerable research from the Internet. Then they shared their ideas.
- One teacher attended a workshop called “Real Boy” in Florence, Alabama, on October 13, 2006, conducted by Dr. William Pollock. It was billed as instructional strategies for boys. She shared with others.
- All the staff including the teacher assistants attended a workshop in February 2007 on “The Brain and Behavior” that focused on the differences in learning styles of males and females.

• Results

- Some parents have decided to postpone school enrollment of boys with late birthdays i.e. July, August and September.
- At the end of the second year of ERF, gender differences had disappeared for all assessments except Letter-Word and Spelling/Writing

Teacher-Child Conversations



• Analyses

- *OWL* Implementation Form indicated low numbers of 4-turn teacher-child conversations.
- Curriculum Content form tallied observed conversations and found a limited number and too many closed questions.

• Actions

- July 17 -19, 2005, the Facilitators were sent to Charlotte Mecklenburg for training in “Effective Communication with Pre-K children.”
- On July 28, 2005, we held an intensive “Effective Conversations Training” workshop with the entire Pre-K staff including bus drivers.
- Evaluators were asked to videotape teachers during small group instruction and whole group story reading in Fall, 2006
 - Evaluator developed a “viewing rubric” for reviewing tapes focused on conversational turns
 - All teachers were sent a copy of their own videotapes and the viewing rubric in December, 2006

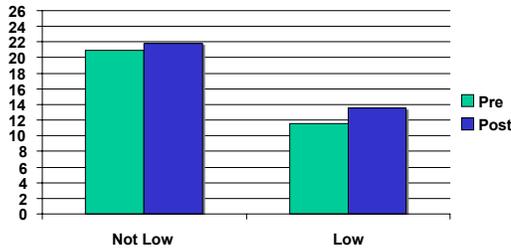
• Results

- Classroom observational data being collected and under analysis

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)



ERF pre-post scores on PALS, 1st cohort (2004-05)



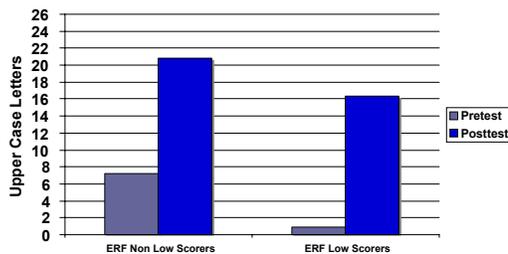
Compares low scorers to not low scorers

- **Analyses**
 - Children not making the desired progress in PALS
- **Actions Taken**
 - In March of 2005 we had a workshop for all staff termed “Alphabet Recognition – Phonemic Awareness.” This was new vocabulary for many and it was evident many did not readily know the phonemes.
 - In April of 2005 the director conducted a special workshop with all staff on phonemes allowing for individual oral practice.
 - On May 2 Dr. Carol Thigpen returned for a workshop on “Print Environment – Phonological Awareness.”

PALS Results



ERF pre-post scores on PALS, 2nd cohort (2005-06)



Compares low scorers to not low scorers

- **Results**
 - PALS scores rose from an average of 18 upper case letters in 2004-2005 to 20 in 2005-2006
 - 73% of the children could recognize 16 or more capital letters at the end of the year.

Spelling (Writing)



- **Analyses:**
 - WJ III Spelling subtest for younger children measures early writing
 - Our children scored lower on Spelling than any other measure at pretest
 - In 2004-05, ERF children made little progress on Spelling
- **Actions:**
 - In June 2005 the Director and one teacher attended a Summer Institute at Vanderbilt University on Scaffolded Writing. The instructors were the national acclaimed author Dr. Debbie Leong and Dr. Debora Rowe.
 - In July of 2005 the teacher from Wayne County conducted workshops for the entire staff regarding Scaffolded Writing.
 - In January 2006 Dr. Rowe came to Wayne County and conducted a hands-on workshop on spelling/writing for all Pre-K staff.
 - ELLCO observations were reported back to each teacher individually
- **Results:**
 - Data from 2005-06 assessments indicated that the second ERF cohort made significant gains in Spelling across the year.

Classroom Management



- **Analyses**
 - Informal feedback from evaluation team classroom observers indicated concerns about the management skills of a few teachers
 - Child Observation in Preschool analyses showed differences among teachers in the use of time out and in the amount of child disruption
- **Actions:**
 - A Wayne County outstanding teacher did a workshop on “ ‘I’ Statements” in July 2006 that focused on how to relieve the pressure “you” brings on as it ignites the defense mechanisms
 - Joan Benson, Regional Director of Head Start, on July 24, 2006, conducted training labeled “Classroom Management through Room Arrangement.”
 - On August 11, 2006, Dr. Sheryl Margolis conducted a day-long workshop for all staff on “Positive Classroom Management.”
 - In February 2007 the teacher assistants had a special session with Dr. Beth Corman centered on expected behavior from 3 and 4 year-olds.
 - The Evaluators located and implemented a new classroom observation measure (CLASS) focused specifically on the social and emotional climate of classrooms.
- **Results**
 - To come!

Conclusion



*How to have an effective
relationship with your
evaluator--*

1. Work together **early**
2. Work together **often**
3. Be responsive to each other **throughout**
4. **TRUST** each other

