Alabama Reading Initiative

Intervention Module:
A Professional Learning Module

Outcomes:
1. Participants will explain the characteristics of effective intervention.
2. Participants will describe the connection between formative assessment and intervention.
What?

1. What do we do when students are not yet ready for independent practice?
   - Teachers must intervene early and often to provide students more opportunities to practice needed skills and/or strategies so that students will be skillful readers of grade level materials.
   - Teachers must provide instruction that goes beyond the ordinary.
   - Teachers must target the knowledge and skills that have the highest impact on learning to read.
   - Teachers must collaborate with all professionals who are responsible for the child’s education to coordinate high quality materials and literacy experiences.

2. What is reading intervention?
   - Intervention is provided to students who may need to receive additional instruction that is designed to meet their specific needs while at the same time accelerating their growth toward grade level expectations.
   - Intervention is the practice of providing high quality instruction matched to student needs which is determined by daily, in-the-moment formative assessments.
   - Reading intervention is differentiated instructional strategies proven successful through scientific research in producing high success rates for most students. (Response to Instruction: Alabama’s Core Support for All Students)
   - Intervention is diagnostic and focused instruction on specific academic standards.

Why?

Why do I need to intervene?
   - Keith Stanovich, a psychologist who has done extensive research on reading and language disabilities, coined the term “Matthew Effects”. The “Matthew Effects” refers to the idea that in reading, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. When children fail at early reading and writing, they read less than their classmates who are stronger readers. And when children do not receive adequate intervention, they read less – and learn less from reading – than skillful readers. As a consequence they do not gain vocabulary, background knowledge, and information about how reading material is structured. In short, the word-rich get richer, while the word-poor get poorer. Early success in acquiring reading skills usually leads to later success in reading as the learner grows, while failing to learn to read before the 3rd or 4th year of school may be indicative of life-long learning problems with learning new skills.
   - We will never teach all our students to read if we do not teach our students who have the greatest difficulties to read. Getting to 100% literacy requires going through the bottom 20%. (Reading First Technical Manual: A Quality Brief)
   - The Alabama Commission on Higher Education shows that 33% of college-bound high school graduates in Alabama must take remedial classes when they enroll in in-state colleges and universities. (October 2013)
When?

- The goal of intervention is to respond quickly to students who may be at risk of not meeting standards and get them back on track.
- Intervention instruction usually focuses on one or more key areas of literacy development and is typically provided for a short duration.
- Intervention efforts must be coordinated across instructional settings (e.g. during reading, science, math, history).
- Intervention instruction may include an additional scheduled period of time during the school.

How?

- Teachers provide explicit and systematic instruction in intervention using the Gradual Release of Responsibility.
  - **Explicit instruction** is teacher directed, clearly stated, distinctly illustrated (not merely implied or ambiguous), and capable of clarifying key points; teachers
    - tell students what they are expected to learn
    - model what is expected using clear examples that make sense to students
    - provide guidance as students practice: acknowledge successful application, provide corrective feedback, offer additional examples/explanations, prompt problem solving and deeper levels of understanding
    - promote independent application: gradually withdraw support, monitor use in various contexts, provide students with tools that serve as reminders (e.g., ABC charts, word walls, list of word-solving strategies, list of comprehension strategies)
  - **Systematic instruction** is orderly, planned, and gradually builds from basic elements to more subtle and complex structures.

- Research confirms that small group is the most powerful organization for reading intervention.
  - Struggling readers need more time in small group instruction than their peers.
  - Struggling readers need more opportunities to participate in smaller groups (3-5 students) than their peers.
  - Teachers group and regroup students flexibly based on frequent progress monitoring.
  - Teachers should make decisions about grouping based on the instructional purposes and the needs of the learners.

- Highly skilled instruction for struggling readers is extremely focused, concentrated, energetic, and emotional; teachers are persistent and relentless in adjusting instruction to assure student success.
  - Teachers provide differentiated instruction based on assessment results and adapt instruction to meet students' needs.
  - Effective teachers recognize that one size doesn’t fit all and are ready to adapt instruction – both content and method.
- Teachers provide explicit and systematic instruction with lots of practice – with and without teacher support and feedback, including cumulative practice over time (students should not infer what they are supposed to learn).
- Teachers provide opportunities to apply skills and strategies in reading and writing meaningful text with teacher support. Students need to be taught what to do when they get to the “hard work”.
- Teachers monitor student progress regularly and reteach as necessary.

(RTI Network Website – Carolyn A. Denton, Children’s Learning Institute, University of Texas Health Science Center, Houston)
An Instructional Framework for Reading Intervention

Students in need of reading intervention benefit from a comprehensive and balanced classroom literacy program. These struggling readers also need additional small group time in which they are provided with instruction that targets knowledge and skills that have the highest impact on learning to read and that is attuned to their specific reading difficulties.

What instructional components are most critical to include in the additional reading instruction for struggling readers? Most research-based intervention programs integrate variations of three common components: rereading familiar text, focusing on words, and guided reading of new text. Teachers can use these components to plan and implement highly specialized instruction that matches the needs of individual struggling readers. The needs of the learners should guide the amount of emphasis given to each component. In appropriate proportions and in the hands of a skillful teacher, this instructional framework can lead struggling readers to the accuracy, automaticity, fluency, active building of meaning, and self-regulation that are characteristic of skillful readers.

Rereading Familiar Text
What? Students reread previously read text.
Why? Students develop accuracy, automaticity, and fluency; as students reread, they have opportunities to refine and self-regulate the building of meaning and to develop confidence and motivation.

Focusing on Words
What? Teachers use various research-based instructional procedures as they provide explicit and systematic decoding instruction that matches the needs of the students. This instruction typically includes reading and writing words and/or sentences. (See note below.) This component may occur before and/or after Guided Reading of New Text. Areas of focus include the following:
- phonemic awareness
- letter-sound correspondences
- spelling patterns (e.g., “ight) and syllable patterns (e.g., CV, CVC)
- morphemes (e.g., prefixes, suffixes, base/root words)
- high frequency words
- strategies for figuring out unfamiliar words (includes chunking “big” words)

Why? Students develop the knowledge, skills, strategies, and self-regulating behaviors needed to read with accuracy and automaticity and to figure out unfamiliar words rapidly and efficiently. This component enables students to develop the fluency of skillful readers so that they can devote their attention to building meaning.

Guided Reading of New Text
What? Teachers support students in building meaning and solving problems as students read unfamiliar text at increasingly challenging levels. Support is provided before, during, and after reading as required by the learner.

Why? Students become more adept at orchestrating the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to engage in active building of meaning and self-regulation, and they develop the motivation needed to activate and sustain this process.

Note: Writing is not a specific component of this framework, but it is embedded within Focusing on Words. Ideally, students apply their evolving knowledge and skills as they engage in reading and writing across the curriculum.