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READING RESEARCH

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CARReader Call for Manuscripts

We invite all those interested in literacy research to submit articles for publication. We request scholarly articles, grounded in theory and research that are of interest to both researchers and teachers. We invite a wide range of submissions focusing on critical issues, current research and/or instructional strategies as they relate to literacy issues on the national level and the state of Connecticut.

- · reviews of the literature
- · graduate /field studies
- · thesis statement
- · action research
- · position statements

The *CARReader* is a juried publication that is published once a year in the fall. Its contents do not necessarily reflect or imply advocacy or endorsement by CARR, its officers, or members. Inquiries and submissions should be directed to the *CARReader*, Judith Stone Moeller, by sending an email to judystone55@aol.com.

Guidelines for Publication

Publications are limited to 2800 words or fewer and must include a title, author, statement of purpose, review of the literature, methodology, summary of findings, discussion and/or recommendations, conclusions, and references. Manuscripts should be typed double-spaced with ample margins for reviewer comments. All manuscripts should be formatted using APA 6th edition. The author needs to submit both a hard copy manuscript and a diskette copy (or e-mail version) compatible with Microsoft Word 2000. To be considered for the Fall 2013 volume, the manuscript must be submitted for review before June 30, 2013.

Editor's Note
Judith Stone Moeller

This year the key literacy focus as professional teachers, specialists, and administrators is around the Common Core State Standards! We strongly believe "Children Can and Will Learn Well!" and the CCSS will ensure that high level comprehension and learning will take place within the classrooms. Using our data to inform our instructional practices, we are constantly seeking out solid research based interventions and strategies to employ within our teaching,

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) requires teachers to work more collaboratively than ever before in order to align our District Language Arts Curriculum and instruction to the CCSS. Working within a professional learning community allows us to link our inquiry studies to provide a more rigorous literacy education to our students within a classroom setting.

Response to Intervention / Scientific Research Based Intervention (RtI/SRBI) will constantly be reviewed and should be so that we as professionals continue our dialogues within our Data Teams to tighten up our instructional practices. Tightening up and keeping our instruction lazer focused on the needs of the students allow for more authentic writing and reading to be taken place that best improves the students' learning.

Middle and Secondary Education has been an area that has lacked focus over the years. Research data indicates these students' literacy performance on the High Stakes tests have flattened out since 1992. As a result of examining the results of the data, a closer focus on Middle and Secondary literacy instruction has come into play. *Deeper Reading* ...(Kelly Gallagher, 2004) strategies, and *Text Complexity* ...(Doug Fisher *et.al.* 2012) are being reviewed by curriculum specialist to ensure the texts we are having our students read have the appropriate rigor for their grade. Just as we choose mentor text from authors that best exemplify through their writing comprehension strategies to teach or author's craft to model to our students, teachers and administrators have instructional best practice leaders within their field that help guide instruction. We are all focused on the same goal- Impacting Student Learning!

The articles within this issue of the CARReader will engage you to want to learn more about the influences of the RtI/SRBI model across Connecticut and how SRBI can be used as a successful intervention model within your school. I want to thank Dr. Betsy Sisson and Dr. Diana Sisson for providing a very thorough CARR study on the SRBI influences and process along with how it can be used successfully within classrooms!

With Comprehension and vocabulary at the forefront of our instruction, Lisa Mello Handfield shares action research completed on Kindergarten Vocabulary Strategies for Tier 2 students. Middle and Secondary teachers will be interested in the comprehension strategies Adrienne Snow explains and demonstrates to our readers as she walks through examples of lessons employing the comprehension strategies. Teachers will want to try out these strategies within their classrooms; perhaps leading to an Action Research project! Dr. Ann Marie Mulready updates our members with the current discussions and rulings from our Connecticut State Board of Education. Our hope is that you will not only enjoy reading the studies as much as we have, but also be encouraged to engage in your own action research that you can share with other CARR members!

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The Connecticut Association for Reading Research is an organization of professionals who passionately advocate for widespread implementation of research-based best practices in literacy curriculum and instruction. As a special interest council of the International Reading Association and an affiliate of the Connecticut Reading Association, CARR advances the status of reading research by interpreting the research findings of others and by completing research projects related to other current and important issues. Additionally, this group initiates, sponsors, and supports legislation directed toward the improvement of literacy and the maintenance of high professional standards in the field. During this time of unprecedented educational reform in our state, CARR is working hard to present a proactive, yet sensible, view about how to approach improvement in teaching and learning in light of 21st Century literacy needs.

Lynn Erickson (2008) wrote, "As schools struggle to define a quality education, they receive conflicting messages from a society carrying multiple agendas and worldviews, which makes the job of educational change very complex" (p. 3). She suggested that five pressure groups influence the way individual schools and systems define quality - business and the world of work, state governments, social forces, media, and parents. It is these forces that merge to create the foundational beliefs of curriculum development and implementation in any given system. As the world economy becomes increasingly global, new ways of doing business are creating the need to prepare workers for jobs that require innovative ways of thinking in a technically advanced system. State governments apply pressure to districts with mandates including standards expectations and comparative evaluation processes. Social forces, including poverty, immigration, violence, and broken homes challenge schools to provide for increasingly diverse student populations. While media reports tend to emphasize stories of school failure, they also provide impetus to evaluate outdated or dysfunctional instructional models. Lastly and most personally, parent and community values shape local decisions about who will run the schools and what topics will be taught. It is CARR's job to consider and react to all of these factors in an effort to provide a strong voice for appropriate and equitable opportunities for all learners in our state.

As policymakers redefine program and personnel structures in the quest to narrow our state's achievement gap, we must urge them not to forget all that we know to be true about how children learn to read and write most effectively. While confident leaders and state-of-the-art facilities are helpful to this effort, there is an even greater need for teachers to know what to teach and to be masters of pedagogy. Lucy Calkins, Mary Ehrenworth, and Christopher Lehman (2012) have stated that the Common Core State Standards "represent the most sweeping reform of the K-12 curriculum that has ever occurred in this country. It is safe to say that across the entire history of American education, no single document will have played a more influential role over what is taught in our schools" (p. 1). As literacy leaders, we must help colleagues understand the expectations of this rich document as they design differentiated instructional strategies to provide all learners with full access to the national curriculum.

I am honored to serve as President of CARR this year. I relish the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues who value thoughtful scholarship and who share an interest in the continuous improvement of our profession.

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From Past Influences to Present Implementation to Future Implications: How SRBI Promises to Change the Way We Help Struggling Students
Principal Investigators: Dr. Diana Sisson and Dr. Betsy Sisson
Connecticut Association for Reading Research

Introduction

Connecticut's Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) stems from the national model of Response to Intervention (RtI) which is the culmination of over three decades of federal involvement in special education services in this nation. Beginning with the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act* of 1975 (later recodified as the *Individuals with Disabilities Act* or *IDEA*), legislation ensured appropriate public education for students with disabilities and access to nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures.

From the onset, however, controversy fermented due to the use of the IQ-discrepancy model as the primary diagnostic procedure. Soon after, statistics regarding eligibility criteria provided fodder for public debate over the validity of the identification process. For example, Gresham (2001) claimed that after nearly two decades of the IQ-discrepancy model no clear definition of learning disabilities existed in "policy or practice," [thus,] "findings indicate that substantial proportions of school-identified LD students – from 52 to 70 percent – fail to meet state or federal eligibility criteria" (p. 1).

While the national debate over the IQ-discrepancy model would ultimately lead to a dramatic policy change affecting both general education and special education, it was not the only deciding factor in the creation of RtI. Historical influences in the fields of psychology and literacy would coalesce to bring about a national recognition of the struggling reader, and legislative policy would follow that sought to offer the services that handicapped students would need to be successful in academic settings.

Historical Influences

The end of the nineteenth century witnessed the launch of experimental psychology into the cognitive processes of reading, and soon after leaders in the educational field delved into the pedagogical underpinnings of reading. Meanwhile, medical doctors began for the first time to diagnose students with reading difficulties – namely, reading dyslexia – a term reserved for those children who struggled to learn to read. While some schools employed trained reading specialists, private consultants provided most of this specialized tutoring outside of public school settings.

Due to the dearth of public school services, concerned parents of struggling learners organized a conference in 1963. Attended by specialists from a host of different fields, Samuel Kirk – later recognized as the father of special education – suggested the umbrella term of "learning disabilities" as a means to characterize the specific needs of these students. Marshaling their forces, they moved to influence change at the national level and lobbied for federal guarantees for a free and appropriate education for their children (Berninger, 2006).

As stakeholders in this new field of learning disabilities continued to rally support for their cause, the framework of the RtI model that would emerge in 2004 found its beginnings in the middle of the twentieth century when behavioral analysts utilized a problem-solving paradigm to address issues in social contexts. Eventually, practitioners refined the process to include a methodology for monitoring students' responses to interventions in academic settings. Corresponding to this advancement emanated awareness that the instructional environment plays a key role in ameliorating learning problems. During the 1980s, school
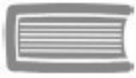
systems began to utilize tools to monitor academic progress and track student achievement. These historical influences merged with federal legislation as each new federal policy provided more advanced attempts to affect the academic achievement of all students and to use data as a barometer for school success (Wright, 2007).

Legislative Policy

As lawmakers endeavored to provide equity in the educational arena, the *Elementary and Secondary Act* of 1965 delivered the first federal legislation providing funding to public schools. Designed to address perceived social problems and eradicate poverty and its effect on the American economy, it did not consider the needs of disabled children. A decade would pass before the federal government reflected on the needs of handicapped students and with this recognition would come the advent of special education policy in the United States.

1975 – Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142).

The first significant special education legislation originated in 1975 with the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act* (*EAHCA*) which guaranteed students with disabilities a free and appropriate public education (FAPE), the least restrictive environment (LRE) for school settings, due process rights, and nondiscriminatory evaluation protocols. Subsequently, a tidal wave of students qualifying for special education services inundated American schools. Since its inception, the number of students identified as learning disabled has grown more than 300% with American schools providing special education services for more than 6 million children (Cortiella, 2008).

1977 – Final Regulations for EAHCA (PL 94-142).

Legislators approved regulations for PL 94-142 in 1977. During this time, a learning disability was defined as "a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability" (U.S. Department of Education, 1977, p. G1082). Unable, however, to reach consensus regarding diagnostic procedures for identifying students with learning disabilities, a compromise was formed which set in place a protocol that identified learning disabilities as students who demonstrated acute underachievement in comparison with IQ as measured through an intelligence test.

The use of IQ as the sole criterion as a measure for determination of learning disability led to grave concerns from the educational field (Stuebing, Barth, Weiss, & Fletcher, 2009). To begin, the ability-achievement discrepancy did not address why students may exhibit normal cognitive functioning and yet struggle in specific academic performance standards. The discrepancy model with its utilization of a standardized testing instrument also did not take into account situation-specific issues related to the individual student, including the variability of early childhood developmental experiences. Questions stemmed as well regarding those students whose ability-achievement discrepancy was not severe enough and were simply characterized as "slow learners" with no eligibility for special education services. Furthermore, clinical decisions regarding eligibility were limited to pre-determined discrepancy criteria without regard for the school psychologist's expertise (Holdnack & Weiss, 2006).

Of import is that since its inception in 1977, special education referrals increased by 200% which led to over-extensions of services in special education as well as a national concern over possible misdiagnosis (Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, & Hickman, 2003). These dramatic increases occurred, however, only in the area of learning disabilities with its use of the IQ-discrepancy formula (Holdnack & Weiss, 2006).

1990 – IDEA Amendments (PL 101-476).

After reauthorizations in 1983 and 1986, policy-makers again reauthorized *EAHCA* in 1990 and renamed it the *Individuals with Disabilities Act*, IDEA (PL 101-476). Lawmakers designed the 1990 amendments to ensure a greater diversity of services for eligible students. Founded on the concept of "zero exclusion," *IDEA* also reaffirmed that eligible students receive a free and appropriate education in public schools (Hardman, 2006).

1997 – IDEA Amendments (PL 105-17).

With the 1997 reauthorization of *IDEA* (PL 105-17), the least restrictive environment (LRE) was extended into the general classroom. In effect, the new regulations brought the work of general educators and special educators closer together in a more unified system of delivering instruction and services (Wedle, 2005). It also focused attention on interventions in regular education settings as well as the use of problem-solving models in special education settings. The discrepancy model, however, remained the national protocol for identifying learning disabilities in American classrooms and schools.

Of note, the reauthorizations of 1983, 1986, and 1990 all focused on ensuring access to education for disabled students. In contrast, the reauthorization of 1997 diverted attention from access to accountability as is illustrated in its regulations concerning interventions and problem-solving models.

2001 – No Child Left Behind Act (PL 107-110).

Part of this relentless pursuit of educational improvement stemmed from the incendiary federal report in 1983 – *A Nation at Risk* – which publicly indicted the American educational system for its failure to educate students at a level appropriate to the nation's ranking in the world marketplace. As the federal government continued to strive for increased competitiveness in inter-national markets, legislators used their reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* of 1965 to produce the *No Child Left Behind Act*. This legislation mandated that 100% of all students in American classrooms be proficient in reading and math by 2014. Schools who did not meet the pre-set adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals faced funding sanctions. As schools labored to meet the federal benchmarks through intensive test preparation and the adoption of standardized curriculum, struggling students throughout the nation continued to fail to meet the minimum competency requirements.

2004 – IDEIA Amendments (PL 108-446).

In 2004, legislators reauthorized IDEA (designated as the *Individuals with Disabilities with Education Improvement Act*, or *IDEIA*) with PL 108-446. This legislation shifted the emphasis of special education policy in a number of key aspects – from process to results, from a paradigm of failure to a model of prevention, and from a consideration of students as special education recipients first to an appreciation of their primary role in general education (Hardman, 2006). Contained within these regulations was language disallowing one single assessment to determine identification of a disability along with a declaration that states were not required to use the discrepancy formula to determine learning disabilities but were, rather, permitted to utilize a protocol that focused on a student's response to interventions that were scientific and research-based (U.S. Department of Education, 2006).

With the new model, then, states could implement targeted research-based interventions as a means to monitor students' responsiveness and subsequently determine an evaluation for a specific learning disability. The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) defined this "response to intervention" as the enactment of "high-quality instruction and interventions

matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions" (NASDSE, 2006, p. 3).

Of note, a fundamental intent of RtI was to decrease the number of students in special education by perhaps 70% (Lyon et al., 2001). Such a significant decrease in students receiving special education services would have considerable effect on the federal government as it was predicted that the national cost of special education services would soon total $80 billion annually (Burns & Gibbons, 2008) for the current 6.5 million children identified with disabilities (Collier, 2010).

Addressing these long-standing budgetary issues, *IDEIA 2004* contained three central elements: use of scientifically-based reading instruction, evaluation of how students respond to interventions, and the employment of data to inform decision making (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005). Fuchs, Fuchs, and Vaughn (2008) characterized it as having two unified goals – the identification of at-risk students who would benefit from preventive services and the provision of on-going services to LD students who are chronically unresponsive and require a more individualized approach based on data-driven instructional planning.

Emergence of Response to Intervention

On August 14, 2006, legislators introduced final regulations to accompany the 2004 reauthorization of *IDEIA* (PL 108-446). Effective October 13, 2006, this historic new education policy promised to affect significant changes in practices for both general education and special education. Soon after the federal adoption, states began to examine the RtI model and prepare organizational designs for implementation. The first step was to identify its chief components.

RtI Components

There are a number of components that typify the RtI model. They include universal screenings, multiple tiers of intervention services, progress monitoring, and data-based decision making.

Universal screenings.

Typically implemented three times (at the beginning, middle, and end) of the academic school year, universal screenings are conducted with all students and prove significant in the RtI model as they serve as the gateway for students to gain access to more intensive interventions (Mellard & Johnson, 2008).

While there is no mandate within the legislation for screenings, they do provide the "principal means for identifying early those students at risk of failure and likely to require supplemental instruction; as such, it represents a critical juncture in the service delivery continuum" (Jenkins, Hudson, & Johnson, 2007, p. 582). Wixson and Valencia (2011) contend that the intent of universal screening is to "use the assessment information as the basis for differentiating instruction so it is more responsive to students' needs and more likely to accelerate student learning" (p. 466).

Multiple tiers.

RtI, unique from traditional approaches (Barnes & Harlacher, 2008), follows an approach utilized by the public health model that employs multiple tiers of interventions with increasing intensity. It begins with primary interventions for the general population, then secondary interventions for the subset of the population who require more intensive services, and finally, tertiary interventions for those who have failed to respond to all previous treatments (Harn, Kame'enui, & Simmons, 2007; Mellard & Johnson, 2008). In a comparable fashion, RtI commonly provides three tiers of academic supports   .

Tier I encompasses the best practices implemented in the general classroom setting in which most students (80%-90%) will perform proficiently as evidenced by assessment outcomes, such as the universal screenings conducted throughout the year. Those students (10%-15%) who do not respond to the supports provided in Tier I have opportunities for targeted instruction in Tier II with a greater degree of frequency (1-2 times weekly) and intensity (small groups comprising 3-6 students). Instruction at this tier may be provided by the classroom teacher or interventionist trained to work at this level of support services. The small minority of students (1%-5%) who fail to respond in Tier I or Tier II move to Tier III with the most intensive interventions. During this time, services are provided at even greater frequency (3-5 times weekly) and with greater intensity (small groups of no more than 3 students). Fuchs and Fuchs (2006) suggest several means to increase intensity, such as by "(a) using more teacher-centered, systematic, and explicit, (e.g., scripted) instruction; (b) conducting it more frequently; (c) adding to its duration; (d) creating smaller and more homogeneous student groupings; or (e) relying on instructors with greater expertise" (p. 94).

Deno's cascade of services.

This tiered configuration is reminiscent of the model devised by Deno (1970) which conceptualized special education services as a "cascade" model in which increasingly smaller groups of students receive instruction with intensifying attention paid to individual needs.

Deno's cascade of services shaped special education guidelines throughout the 1970s and 1980s, but greater and greater numbers of students qualifying for special education services hampered its ultimate effect. Despite its limitations, the RtI model is similar to Deno's construct for specialized services.

The Standard Protocol Versus the Problem-Solving Approach.

The RtI tiered framework commonly adheres to one of two models – the standard treatment protocol or the problem-solving approach (Wixson, Lipson, & Johnston, 2010). Historically, each garnered support from a distinct professional group. Early interventionists in the reading field advocated for the superiority of the standard treatment protocol while behavioral psychologists promoted the more clinical problem-solving model (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003).

While elementally similar, they differ in the degree to which each provides individual interventions and the level to which they analyze the student achievement problem before implementing an intervention plan (Christ, Burns, & Ysseldyke, 2005). Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, and Young (2003) further assert by inherent principle, the standard treatment protocol will ensure quality control of the interventions while the problem-solving model will focus on individual differences and needs.

Typically used by practitioners in the field, the standard protocol provides a plan of standardized interventions for a given time with consideration given to teacher fidelity to the program. Although the ideology derived from the scientific method, the protocol itself was originally the work of Bergan in 1977 and later revised by Bergan and Kratochwill (1990). Bergen's work delineated the steps of behavioral consultation into four stages that now constitute the precepts of the standard protocol for intervention services.

The problem-solving approach, preferred by researchers and school psychologists, typifies a tailored instructional plan designed for individual students based on their needs (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2008). Similar in design to the standard protocol, the problem-solving approach diverges in its intent to provide increasingly intensive interventions that are scientifically based and data focused as nonresponsive students move up the tier continuum (Hale, Kaufman, Naglieri, & Kavale, 2006).

Haager and Mahdavi (2007) suggest that there are a number of supports that must be present in order to implement a tiered intervention framework; such as, professional development, shared focus, administrator support, logistical support, teacher support, and assessment protocols. Similarly, they argue that barriers exist that will negate the effectiveness of such a model. They point to competing educational initiatives, negative perceptions regarding teachers' roles and responsibilities in remediating reading, lack of time, inadequate training, and the absence of support structures.

Progress monitoring.

Within the RtI model, progress monitoring provides immediate feedback by assembling multiple measures of student academic achievement to "assess students' academic performance, to quantify a student rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction, and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction" (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2011, para. 1). Thus, progress monitoring should provide accurate and reliable methods to track response to interventions in order to modify intervention plans for individual students (Alber-Morgan, 2010).

Data-based decision making.

As one of the primary aspect of the RtI model is ongoing assessment, the use of data to inform decisions proves paramount in the intervention and identification process. On a continuing basis, educators utilizing the RtI model gather student information "(1) to adjust the specifics of teaching to meet individual students' needs and (2) to help students understand what they can do to keep growing as readers" (Owocki, 2010). Ultimately, the data will serve as a deciding factor in both preventive services and eligibility criteria, thereby necessitating that those in the field become expert

in the area of data maintenance, data mining, and data-driven decision making.

Opponents of RtI argue that attention should focus on the shortcomings of RtI. Namely, this model requires classroom teachers to take greater responsibility for struggling students in ways that may extend beyond their level of expertise (Collier, 2010). A deeper concern is that the RtI model identifies chronically low-achieving students – not students who are learning disabled. As an extension of these issues, while RtI lowers the number of referrals (and the corresponding staffing and resources necessitated by such referrals), transitioning students through the three tiers of intervention creates issues of delays or possible eliminations of necessary referrals. If these concerns materialize, students who should be eligible for special education will suffer from the deprivation of vital support services.

Ultimately, whether advocate or opponent of RtI, researchers in the field estimate that there will continue to be 2% to 6% of students who will fail to respond to any of the three intervention tiers – regardless of frequency or intensity of support. They predict 6% to 8% of students will qualify for special education services (Fuchs, Stecker, & Fuchs, 2008) – approximately a 50% reduction from 2004.

Constructing SRBI

In reaction to the new federal legislation, the state of Connecticut moved to analyze this paradigm shift in special education policy within the context of the state's classrooms and schools, subsequently documenting the process in its 2008 publication, *Using Scientific Research-Based Interventions: Improving Education for All Students – Connecticut's Framework for RtI.*

State Leadership Team.

The first step in the implementation process began with the development of a state leadership team whose task was to craft a state policy that adhered

to the federal law while considering the unique needs of Connecticut and its students. The team comprised delegates from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), the Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs), the State Education Resource Center (SERC), and other stakeholder educational agencies.

Roundtable discussions.

With the leadership team came roundtable discussions on RtI. Bringing together a wide range of stakeholder groups (e.g., administrators, regular and special education teachers, higher education faculty, members from the governor's office, and parents), these dialogues centered on the key components of the RtI model – 1) universal screenings, 2) progress monitoring, 3) tiered interventions, and 4) implementation. From this discourse stemmed a number of significant concepts, namely, the need for a joint effort between regular education and special education, the importance of leadership, and the necessity of professional development.

Advisory panel.

An advisory panel assembled next and focused on two main responsibilities – reviewing the literature surrounding RtI and designing an implementation framework for Connecticut's schools. During this time, the panel converted the nationally recognized name of RtI into the more personalized SRBI (scientific research-based interventions) for Connecticut. As a term used in both *NCLB* and *IDEA*, the panel proposed that such a designation would emphasize their belief in the significance of general education in the policy as well as the weight of using interventions that were scientific as well as research based.

State personnel development grants

To facilitate statewide implementation, the CSDE and SERC worked collaboratively to offer three-year grants to schools in four school districts. These school systems, Bristol, CREC, Greenwich, and Waterbury, served as model sites because of their usage of intervention services and differentiated instruction. This undertaking was to expand their work to additional schools in their systems as well as to create opportunities for collaboration with other school systems who wished to improve their educational services.

The SRBI Model

In constructing the state's SRBI model, the adhered to the nationally recognized RtI model. Tier I occurs in the general classroom, focuses on general education curriculum, must be research-based and culturally responsive, and includes a range of supports. While instruction may occur through small, flexible groups, the instructor is the general educator with collaboration from specialists. Assessments in this tier include universal screenings and formative assessments and any additional assessment tools that may be beneficial to monitor individual student performance. Data teams collaborate with classroom teachers to utilize assessment data as a means to inform instructional planning and make decisions regarding the placement of students within the three tiers.

Tier II attends to those students who have not responded to the supports provided in Tier I and offers additional services in the general education classroom or other general education settings. In this tier, students receive short-term interventions (8 to 20 weeks) for small-groups of struggling students (1:6) that are supplemental to the core curriculum. Interventionists may be any general education teacher or a specialist trained to work in this tier. Assessments during this tier concentrate on frequent progress monitoring (weekly or biweekly) to determine students' responsiveness to interventions. Data analysis

occurs in both data teams and intervention teams. During Tier III, the focus is on students who have failed to respond to supports or interventions in Tiers I and II. They continue to receive services in general education settings; however, they also receive additional short-term interventions (8 to 20 weeks) provided with a smaller group of homogeneous students (1:3) designed to be supplemental to the core curriculum. Interventionists again come from the general education field or others trained in this tier. Progress monitoring increases in frequency (twice weekly), and intervention teams continue to assess the data.

Conclusion

As schools in Connecticut continue to implement SRBI, focus must remain on the systemic reforms needed to ensure the academic well-being of Connecticut's students. The SRBI model offers the potential to affect lasting change in our schools, perhaps even to bridge the achievement gap that has plagued Connecticut for so many years. To do so, however, will require all of us to work together with a singular goal in mind – ensuring that all of our students succeed.

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Effects Of Three Vocabulary Strategies On Kindergarten Tier 2 Word Recognition

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Abstract

This action research project sought to determine the effects of three vocabulary strategies on Kindergarten Tier 2 word recognition. In a sample of convenience, 16 Kindergartners were pre-tested on their expressive and receptive knowledge of three target words with an investigator created assessment tool. Students were then assigned to small groups for a book sharing activity: Group I received incidental exposure vocabulary instruction, Group X received extended vocabulary instruction, and Groups XR and XR-R received extended instruction with re-reading vocabulary instruction. All groups read *Bon-Bon the Downtown Cow* (Appleton-Smith, 2003) and were post-tested with the same assessment tool. Overall data analysis results indicated that all groups increased their word knowledge. However, differential percentages of word recognition growth between groups, based on instructional strategies, were noted.

Introduction

In looking at the five main components (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension) of quality reading instruction, phonemic awareness and phonics are at the roots of the early levels of learning, where sounds and subsequent letters that match those sounds are being mastered. There are numerous programs and assessments that determine a child's growth and current ability in these phonological areas. However, determining a young child's oral vocabulary level, and subsequent instruction and assessment, is more difficult.

When educators delve into vocabulary acquisition, two major areas of influence become apparent for early learners. Educators need to be aware that a large part of word knowledge relies on incidental word learning. Incidental word learning stems from wide reading and rich oral language experiences, where adults have conversations with children and engage in book sharing experiences on a daily basis. Extensive reading also promotes vocabulary development as repeated exposures to words, word concepts and word contexts help widen a young child's knowledge base. However, these key components may not occur in a youngster's home or even before entering school.

Accordingly, educators also need to be cognizant of the value of direct vocabulary instruction. The school setting is where explicit instruction of vocabulary becomes most feasible. Specific word instruction relies on expanding a young child's vocabulary with skill building activities that centers on word analysis, context clues, and reference use. Also, the Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn (2003) found that intentional instruction of vocabulary items is required for specific texts and the dependence on a single vocabulary instructional method will not result in optimal learning. Rich and robust vocabulary instruction allows children to actively engage in using and thinking about word meanings and in creating relationships among words.

Under the umbrella of the effective teaching cycle, I decided to explore and implement research-based vocabulary strategies suitable for young learners and formulate an assessment tool based on specific word instruction. My action research is based on the notion that extended and repeated instruction promotes active engagement with vocabulary, which leads to improved word learning (Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2003) as my intention is to determine what vocabulary instruction method is most beneficial, at the

Kindergarten level, for increasing target word recognition.

Review Of Related Literature

Vocabulary is simply the knowledge of words and word meanings. Components of effective vocabulary instruction include incidental word learning and intentional vocabulary teaching. In the first years of school, particularly Kindergarten, teachers utilize read-alouds and book sharing to expose children to oral language. Emphasis has conventionally been placed on the visual part of each page, particularly in the use of picture books and predictable text when reading to children (Justice, Pullen & Pence, 2008). Also, word concept instruction at the lowest grades has included context-specific vocabulary and child-friendly definitions. Key vocabulary instruction strategies consisted of oral and listening language skill building such as teacher think-alouds, questioning, and summarizing.

There is an abundance of research (McGee & Schickedanz, 2007; Lane & Allen, 2010) that supports the effectiveness of rich and robust vocabulary instruction which identifies key words, builds upon an already familiar concept and then allows children to cognitively stretch beyond the original context of word acquisition. Extended instruction is teacher-directed and explicit. Such an approach includes definitional and contextual elements of word knowledge. Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items are important (Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2003). Extended, or dialogic, reading instruction is a strategy which has recently received substantial merit in research findings (Coyne, McCoach, Loftus, Zipoli & Kapp, 2009; Coyne, McCoach and Kapp, 2007).

More specifically, Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2002) promote the use of the Text Talk strategy, with selected Tier 2 vocabulary from a story, to encourage dialogic reading interactions between the teacher and students. Vocabulary instruction involves learning new words for familiar concepts, as well as learning new concepts for familiar words. Early childhood educators need to draw on the higher listening levels that children possess in the pre-literacy stages of reading development to choose vivid words and dramatic storybooks (Newton, Rasinski, & Rasinski, 2008). Educators must orally reinforce child-provided connections between words and meanings (Beck, McKeown and Kucan, 2002). Vocabulary instruction needs to be purposeful, but also flexible, in responding to the individual and egocentric thoughts that young children possess.

Methodology

Participants.

Participants were a sample of convenience from my Kindergarten classroom. There were 16 children used for this vocabulary action research project. Ten children were boys and six children were girls. Four participants were identified as remedial/intervention readers who receive daily, supplemental instruction with a Remedial Reading teacher. Fifteen students are Caucasian and one student is of African-American descent. All participants were of Christian faith. No participants received free or reduced lunches. One child is an English Language Learner, with Polish as her first language.

Intervention.

Non-remedial readers (12 students) were randomly assigned to three groups (Group I, X, or XR, which had four students each, while the four remedial readers were kept together to form their own group (Group XR-R). All groups read the book *Bon-Bon the Downtown Cow*. This book was selected because it was unfamiliar to the children and written to be a high quality, decodable text that could serve numerous instructional purposes. I also chose this book because it was not a picture book so that the children could concentrate on the oral vocabulary, and would not rely heavily on the

visual art, to tell the story. The vocabulary strategies employed during the reading the story varied:

Group I (random, non-remedial students) was given incidental exposure instruction, whereby the teacher read the book to them in a quiet, small group setting.

Group X (random, non-remedial students) were given extended instruction, whereby children received pre-reading exercises to expose them to the target words, listened for target words, had the teacher read the book to them in a quiet, small group setting and then discussed target words with post-reading exercises.

Group XR (random, non-remedial students) were given extended instruction and re-reading of text, whereby children received pre-reading exercises to expose them to the target words, listened for target words, had the teacher read the book to them in a quiet, small group setting and then discussed target words with post-reading exercises. The next day, the teacher re-read the book to them in a quiet, small group setting.

Group XR-R (remedial students) were given extended instruction and re-reading of text, whereby children received pre-reading exercises to expose them to the target words, listened for target words, had the teacher read the book to them in a quiet, small group setting and then discussed target words with post-reading exercises. The next day, the teacher re-read the book to them in a quiet, small group setting.

As part of the extended instruction vocabulary strategy (Groups X, XR and XR-R), the teacher provided oral, pre-reading activities to familiarize the children with the three target words. The participants repeated the target words and were instructed to raise their hand when they heard the words in the story. Upon hearing the words, the teacher re-read the sentence, provided a short definition for the target word and then re-read the sentence with the child-friendly definition inserted. When the story was completed, teacher-directed vocabulary activities included answering literal questions, making text to self connections and decontextualized use of the target words. The specific scripts that were followed for pre-reading vocabulary activities were adapted from research by Coyne, McCoach & Kapp (2007).

Assessments.

Through consideration of Armbruster*,* Lehr & Osborn's (2003) findings*,* which assert that specific vocabulary growth is best assessed through researcher-developed measures as they are more sensitive to gains achieved through instruction than are standardized tests, I developed my own pre-/post-instruction assessment. I chose three Tier 2 words that I believed Kindergartners would not normally encounter in their oral or receptive vocabularies. All children were asked individually by a teacher about each word, in turn. In this quiet location, each child was asked if they knew what the target word meant (EXP-DEF, Expressive definition). Each Kindergartner was prompted to answer two yes or no questions to clarify the meaning of the target word (EXP-Y/N, Expressive yes or no question). Both of these assessments parts were to provide a baseline for expressive vocabulary knowledge. Lastly, each Kindergartner was shown four pictures and asked to point to the target word. Distractors that were phonetically similar were included in this picture assessment. This assessment piece was to provide a baseline for receptive vocabulary knowledge (RECEP, Receptive definition). The specific scripts utilized for pre-/post-instruction assess-ments, and adapted from research by Coyne, McCoach and Kapp (2007).

Data Results/Analysis

Specific instructional strategies results.

In looking at post-instruction assessment data, several more and specific observations can be noted based on the instructional strategy utilized by the teacher. Group I, which received incidental exposure, showed growth in their expressive and receptive vocabulary knowledge. Simply reading a book aloud to children made measurable increases in vocabulary knowledge.

Group X, which received the extended vocabulary instruction strategy showed more than moderate gains in word knowledge. Introducing target vocabulary, discovering these vocabulary words in context and exploring words through decontextualized questions pointed to measurable increases in word knowledge.

Group XR, which received the extended vocabulary instruction strategy and a re-reading of the book, showed moderate growth in the area of word recognition. The overall percentage of pre-instruction scores for Group X and Group XR were similar. However, the overall percentage of post-instruction scores varied.

Group XR-R consisted of the remedial students who receive daily supplemental services from the Reading teacher. Overall, the gains for these students were the most modest. Better word recognition, after the vocabulary strategies of extended instruction and re-reading of the book, became apparent. Most notable was the fact that none of the students in this group could define any of the target words prior to the intervention; however, 17% could define the words during the post-instruction assessment. Providing two supportive word knowledge strategies (extended vocabulary instruction and re-reading) was the logical choice for these remedial students and these children showed growth when dual vocabulary methods were employed.

Discussion

Review of the overall post-instruction data illustrated that students had gains in word recognition skills, especially when this sample of convenience made measurable gains in orally defining target words. In addition, it is worthy of note that the overall percentage of definition knowledge growth increased greatly from 14% to 50% while the overall percentage of receptive knowledge growth increased moderately from 52% to 77%.

Conclusions

For me, as an educator, it was valuable to look back at the pre- and post-instruction data from this action research project to discover and analyze the levels of word knowledge in my classroom. Word knowledge can be identified on the following continuum: (a) no knowledge, (b) general sense of the word, (c) narrow, context-bound knowledge and (d) some knowledge of the word, but not being able to recall it readily enough to use it in appropriate situations and (e) rich, decontextual-ized knowledge of a word's meaning (Beck, McKeown and Omanson, 1987). This project sought to increase word knowledge and when analyzing the overall findings, the children could answer more post-instruction expressive and receptive questions correctly for the new, target words. Oral vocabulary knowledge increased regardless of type of vocabulary instruction received.

I also discovered that simply reading to children introduces vocabulary and incidental exposure can provide a context for these new words. Extended instruction also exposes children to new vocabulary and can provide a more structured format in which to absorb contextual and decontextualized concepts for these new words. The added benefit of re-reading a story, along with extended instruction, was not evident in my research. However, Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn (2003) determined that how vocabulary is assessed and evaluated can have differential effects on instruction. Further study of the statistical significance of vocabulary gains for extended instruction, with or without re-reading, versus the incidental exposure technique is in

order. Such repeated administrations or replications of this study, using the incidental exposure, extended instruction and extended instruction with re-reading strategies, could better pinpoint for teacher-researchers the effects of each.

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Connecticut Association for Reading Research

Wirth-Santoro Scholarship

for

Reading Research

The Wirth-Santoro Scholarship is a $1,000 grant established to encourage and support reading research by promising scholars. The purpose of this scholarship is to support research efforts in the area of reading instruction.

Purpose of the Scholarship

The Wirth-Santoro Scholarship is a $1,000 grant established to encourage and support advanced-studies research in reading by promising scholars. The special emphasis of this scholarship is to support research efforts in the area of reading instruction. This scholarship award has been established to honor and carry on the work in remembrance of Ethel Wirth and Ida Santoro. In honor of their dedication to literacy instruction and their commitment to the Connecticut Association for Reading Research (CARR), the excellence of the proposal will be a primary consideration in the selection process.

Eligibility

Open to doctoral students who are planning or beginning their dissertations and to university based graduate students who are embarking on their independent research studies related to literacy instruction or who have successfully completed a recent research study worthy of dissemination and recognition for excellence in the field. Applications will include a letter of nomination from a faculty sponsor who had oversight responsibilities for the research study. Applicants may apply for more than one CARR research grant program. However, applicants are limited to one research award per year.
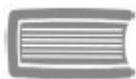
Deadline

Proposals must be submitted by January 15th.
See CARR website at http://ctreadingresearch.org for application process and directions.
Contact: Linda Kauffmann @ Linda.kauffmann@gmail.com
(Please include on subject line: CARR Wirth-Santoro Scholarship)

Connecticut Association For Reading Research
Summary Report of the Connecticut State Board of Education Meeting
(CSBE) August 9, 2012
Dr. Ann Marie Mulready

The Connecticut State Board of Education convened a special meeting to approve plans for the four turnaround schools in the Commissioner's Network—Curiale School in Bridgeport, the Academy at Milner School in Hartford, High School in the Community in New Haven, and the John Stanton School in Norwalk.

Public Participation

- Mary Galucci, a parent of children in the Windham School system, questioned the funding of the inter-district magnet school, while other schools in the system experience significant deterioration of the buildings. She related her attempts to express her concerns to Steven Adamoski, the current Special Master, without response.
- Wm Morrison, a teacher, questioned the use of CMT/CAPT data for comparing cohort achievement and evaluating teachers, noting that it violated sound statistical principles. In addition, he questioned the costs with respect to time and money.
- Tim Nolan, the chair of the Region 19 reapportionment committee and a member of Board of Education, reported on the process for adjusting the weighted scoring to determine Board representation for the towns of Mansfield, Willington, Ashford. The current system for adjusting Board representation was successful and that representation was adjusted to reflect the growing Mansfield population.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda was accepted and approved.

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Stefan Pryor reported on the general process for creating turnaround plans. Each school completed audits, determined needs, created a Turnaround Committee that included school personnel, a member of the school governance committee, a member of the Board of Education, and the superintendent. Each school is in a high priority district and performed in the lowest 10% of CMT or CAPT measures. These four schools are the first of 25 to be authorized over the next three years. Each school commits to three years of participation, with the aim of creating sustainable change within those years.

Curiale School.

Dr. Sandy Kase, Chief Administrative Officer for the Bridgeport Public Schools presented the Curiale turnaround plan. The plan includes

- An extended school day created through flexible scheduling and staggered staffing. This plan adds 88 minutes per day, resulting in an additional week in the school year.
- Extended time for core literacy and mathematics instruction.
- Partnerships with nearby community services to provide medical, dental, and psychological services.
- New core curriculum aligned with the Common Core State Standards
- Alignment of the after school, Lighthouse program, with student needs
- Increased instructional services for struggling students in literacy and mathematics

- Adoption of the UConn Gifted and Talented, School Wide, Enrichment Model
- Structured opportunities for parent engagement
- Extensive professional development and increased instructional resources
- An emphasis on early childhood
- A partnership with the Bridgeport police to provide safe corridors for children going to and from schools
- The retention of teachers rated proficient and the filling of vacancies with teachers rated as excellent

In response to questions by the Board, Dr. Kase reported that a new principal and assistant principal had been appointed, and teacher evaluations were being aligned with the new state evaluation system, Also, once impending changes were defined, most teachers have chosen to remain in the turnaround school and approximately 1/3 of the staff are teachers of color. Dr. Kase also explained that in the past the school had been hampered by poor decision making related to budgeting and that the funding provided by the State Board would help underwrite the plan while working toward sustainable change.

Milner Academy.

Kelvin Rodan, Chief of Instutional Advancement Officer, and Dr. Michael Sharp, CFO of the Jamoke Charter Management Organization, presented the plan for the Milner Academy. Jamoke, a charter group, is working with Milner to achieve the turnaround. The highlights of the proposal include,

- Strong family and community connections
- Effective leadership and faculty
- Effective use of curriculum and instruction
- Effective use of time
- Effective use of data to inform instruction

and the use of benchmarks to measure progress

- A decrease in the staffing ratio of adults to children from 12::1 to 8::1 through academic assistants
- A teacher development plan
- The overall establishment of a teacher driven school in collaboration with parents and the community
- An extended day of ½ hour for the first year and another 25 minutes in the second year, along with 12 Saturday academies, resulting in 34 extra days of instruction by the second year.

The Commissioner informed the Board that changes were required in the plan, though the changes will be established in a Memo of Understanding, between the Jamoke organization and the Hartford Public schools and subject to the Commissioner's approval. In particular revisions may be necessary for the 2013/2014, especially with respect to a collaborative method for assembling a quality faculty, staffing quality and stability, the establishment of a three year commitment by faculty, and the method for training of faculty.

In response to Board questions, the relationship between Milner and the Jamoke organization was explained as a partnership with Milner remaining as a Hartford public school. Sandra Ward, Director of Community Schools, explained that the after school program is supported by Catholic Charities and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. With respect to students with special needs, including English Language Learners, the staff serving those populations will be doubled.

With respect to benchmarks, specific SPI benchmarks will be detailed in the Memo of Understanding. The Jamoke organization will be expected to show the same rates of academic growth. Four per cent growth is expected and the goal is to outpace the state. In terms of safety, significant dollars will be invested in the physical aspects of the building, including alarms at entrances and exits, and climate control improvements for heat and cold.

Lastly, the Board questioned the replicability of the model, in particular the reduction of class size and the closing of enrollment on October 1st. Charles Jaskiewicz recommended to Chairman Taylor that language to address the variations that may occur in the population be added to the memo of understanding. A description of the responsibilities of academic assistants was requested by Chairman Taylor and Dr. Sharpe responded that they are are not paraprofessionals. They will have at least two years of college and may assist the teacher with small group instruction to provide differentiation and modeling of school expectations.

The Milner plan was approved unanimously.

High School in the Community (HSC).

The plan for the High School in the Community in New Haven, which has long been a teacher run school, will partner with the New Haven Federation of Teachers (NHFT) to take it to the next level. The plan was presented by Garth Harries, Assistant Superintendent and Dave Low, VP of NHFT.

A key component in New Haven school reform has been portfolio development in school turnaround efforts. Two additional components of the effort have been to take aggressive action in the areas where a student needs it most and to emphasize to all stakeholders that it is the school unit that matters in achievement. Other highlights of the HSC turnaround include

- The development of teacher leadership and professional community
- Shifting the academic focus to a competency based instructional model and determining what true personalized learning looks like
- Developing a deep sense of community with students and parents

With respect to teacher leadership and teacher excellence, members of the staff have attended the National Association for Academic and Teaching Excellence. All teachers must reapply to the school, 2/3 of the staff will be rehired, and the remaining 1/3 will be new. (This is substantially completed.). In order to shift the academic focus, extra time will be added to the day, resulting 11 extra days in the calendar. In addition there is work aimed at developing professional collaborative time and the school is a member of the League of Innovative Schools, a group of schools transitioning to a mastery based (vs. time spent) model.

Mastery based learning begins with emphasis on core skills and the student report card will identify performance as Mastery, Exemplary Mastery and Not Yet Mastered. Instead of a four year model, the attainment of skills will be individually managed and at the end of a module students will defend their learning. Once they can defend the learning, credit is assigned and they move on to the next module. The final phase is a capstone project that may include mentoring by outside mentors. Graduation is dependent on completion of the curriculum, not the time spent, and the student may graduate whenever the requirements have been met.

A family outreach specialist and a health professional will be hired to increase community and family involvement and to support the physical and mental health of the students.

The motion to approve the plan was approved.

John Stanton School.

The plan for the Stanton school was presented by Abby Dolliver, superintendent of the Norwich Public Schools, and Tom St George, a middle school social studies teacher.

Turnaround support from the state will help with the search for talented staff already in progress. In addition, support for the classroom teacher will be provided by the presence of two other adults in each classroom in an effort to provide more individualized attention, since the size of the building limits the ability to reduce

class size substantially. Administrative support will also be provided through the addition of 092 certified personnel.

Instructional time will be increased by 300 hours in 3 years, beginning with an additional hour in the school day this year. In September and October, the extra hour will be used for extensive professional development and the students will have additional instructional time beginning in November.

A summer program will offer differentiated intervention and an accelerated academy for students. New Family liaison positions will be added to meet the needs of non English speaking families. More deliberate partnerships with community child and family agencies, including the after school program, will be established to meet student and family social and emotional needs.

The process for developing this plan was not limited to Stanton School stakeholders, but all district faculties were invited to meetings, including the CEA representative, to contribute to the brain storming process.

In response to questions, Dolliver noted that 50% of the staff has changed and that Teaching Residents will serve to support the teachers on a rotating basis. The Resident may not be a certified teacher, but will be a part of the bargaining unit.

The motion to approve the John Stanton turnaround plan was passed.

Theresa Hopkins-Staten noted that there were common themes in all the plans--leadership, safety, and cultural competency. She asked the Commissioner whether or not the State Department of Education was working to address these issues across all these schools. Commissioner noted that the turnaround process was structured around seven categories. Based on these categories there will be ways to address the recurring themes and Michelle Rosato and Charlene Russell-Tucker are leading staff to address those.

Other Business

In other business, the Board approved the permanent appointment of Diane Ullman as the Chief Talent Officer.

Paul Vallas and Bob Trefry, Interim Superintendent and Board Chair, respectively, reported on the status of the Bridgeport Schools, currently operating with state oversight.

The process of change in the Bridgeport district began with assessing the needs of the district, as perceived by all the stakeholders in the district. Three specific goals were established to be accomplished within the year of oversight.

- Close the budget deficit and establish a financial plan to provide stability
- Establish a long term school improvement and close the achievement gap
- Build the human infrastructure

Through city support, the forgivable loan, outside agencies in kind services, and budget cuts, the deficit was closed without significant staff losses--only 9 teachers lost jobs. The size of the central office was reduced by a third. A comprehensive PK-12 school instructional audit resulted in a strongly aligned PK-12 curriculum and investments have been made in books and materials.

The Board and the Commissioner praised the progress and the meeting was adjourned.
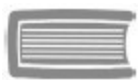
The Literacy Looking-Glass
Adrienne Chasteen Snow
CARR Secondary Reading Chair,
Secondary Reading Department Chair, Enfield Public Schools,
Adjunct Instructor, CCSU Reading and Language Arts Department, and
Adjunct Instructor, Asnuntuck CC, English Department

"Take care of the sense and the sounds will take care of themselves."
— Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through The Looking Glass*

If only reading were truly that easy for our students! We could spend our Reading Intervention students' time (a mere three-quarters of an hour for my students) working on the "sense": meta-cognition, vocabulary, and the process of creating meaning as readers make their way through a text. Knowing, meanwhile, that the "sounds": the word analysis, the automaticity, and the prosody would just naturally happen. Such a lovely fantasy; but we know that "literacy" doesn't quite work that way.

Indeed, my secondary level Reading Intervention students come with a variety of issues, from lack of schema to difficulty inferring. And it is rare that a student needs only a "quick fix". Instead, it is the Interventionist's job to accelerate learning; to use data and progress monitoring in conjunction with a knowledge base from years of study in the field of Reading to help each student be a competent reader. I like to think of my end goal as one of ensuring that my students will be, as the RAND study described, (Snow, 2002) skillful adult readers. They will have the skills necessary to read a great mix of materials for a variety of purposes with adequate to good comprehension. Probably the most talked about hot topic goal is to make the student, as the Common Core State Standards (C.C.S.S., 2010) put it, college and career ready. Quite the task, yet I feel it is one we can face with confidence and strength knowing we have the skills, strategies, and tools, to push forward.

The ideas presented in Mesmer, Cunningham, & Heibert's (2012) work challenge me to think about a model of text complexity for the upper grades. In the essay, the authors search for a framework to support the heavy emphasis on text complexity brought on by CCSS.

How would a secondary level model differ from the model for the early grades? The model used by the researchers, developed by the RAND Reading Study Group (Snow, 2002), is most intriguing in that it combines four variables: the reader, the activity, and the text, surrounded by the sociocultural context. I can see this applying to the middle and high school struggling readers that I work with and am curious how the pieces of the components of the individual text might differ. Word, Syntax, and Discourse Structures are the breakdown of individual text in this model, all of which apply beyond the initial phase of learning to read and thus secondary reading. I see the need for more emphasis to be put on vocabulary development (the syntax of this model) and explicit understandings about text (the discourse structures) might need to be weighted heavier than the word component if we were apply this model to our secondary students.

The CCSS brings with it two key focus areas for Reading Teachers, Language Arts Consultants, Literacy Coaches, and other educational specialists whose responsibilities lie primarily in the area of preparing students to be the most literate individuals possible: close reading of text and text-dependent questions. I have spent the past few years trying to implement S.R.B.I. with fidelity and diagnosing the specifics of a student's reading abilities; then using that diagnosis to identify strengths and weaknesses that I will use to plan intervention.

From the outside close reading of text and text-dependent questions seem like such higher order tasks and thus so far above my instruction. Yet, I realize that I do use the text as the center of instruction and questioning, either my own or those developed by the students. I feel that by using a collection of strategies I have found to be especially successful with secondary level students, my students are tiptoeing towards close reading of text.

A discovery as I worked on some Units of Study for my school district this Summer, was that my units for Reading Intervention are meant to repeat and be delivered in a student-based level of depth, differing from the Language Arts exemplars put out by the state that are structured to be delivered in 20-30 days. By examining the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium's English Language Arts Item and Task Specifications, we can see that students are asked to go beyond multiple choice questions to include constructed response and performance tasks that measure critical thinking and problem solving. We see a leveling of the types of thinking that students will be asked to do on the Cognitive Rigor Matrix, a correlation between Webb's Depth of Thinking and Bloom's Type of Thinking.

The pressure is on those of us who work with secondary level students. With college and career readiness a tangible goal, we must plan, develop, and work with intent and purpose (just as we teach our students to). The following strategies will be ones that I will continue to implement in an effort to make my past practice match up with the more rigorous standards of the Common Core. I am careful to choose strategies that can be used across content areas and become a repertoire that can be applied in many reading contexts, not just my Reading class. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list, rather one that I will refer to as the school year progresses and to which I can look for research-based methods to reach my students. As always, the Gradual Release of Responsibility model is the framework on which I tack my instruction. I scaffold using Think Alouds as I move through the strategy itself, guide students in activating their schemas, and set an authentic

purpose for reading. To illustrate I will use "Crime and Punishment" (Smith, 2012), an article about the recent action of the Supreme Court that struck down mandatory life without parole for juveniles.

List/Group/Label

This strategy helps and challenges students prepare to read an instructional level text by sorting and categorizing words and terms they will read about before they engage with the text (Readence, Moore, & Rickelman, 2000).

For example, if I am going to have my students read "Crime and Punishment", I would give them the words parole, mandatory, rehabilitation, culpability, capacity, horrific, heinous, susceptible, and ebb and ask them to sort them into at least 2 categories. We would discuss their ideas and brainstorm what our reading for the day would be about. By activating their background knowledge in this way, they are preparing to set a purpose for their reading and read actively.

Anticipation Guide:

Encourages active reading, the Anticipation Guide (Herber & Herber,1993) consistently works with my secon-dary students who love to share their ideas and opinions. I use statements from or related to the content of the text with which students can agree or disagree and state their reasoning both before and after reading.

For example, with the article "Crime and Punishment" I would use the statements:

- There are some truly horrible crimes committed by 17-year olds, and those crimes deserve life without parole.
- Young people are more susceptible to peer pressure than adults and their personalities are not fully formed, making them less morally culpable and more capable of change.
- To make a decision to lock up a person for the rest of his life on the basis of

something he has done when he's 13 just doesn't make sense.

Text Coding

A way to mark one's metacognition based on Chris Tovani's (2000) work, Text Coding helps students to keep track of their own thinking during reading. Students mark the text and record what they are thinking either in the margins (if it is their copy) or on post-it notes (if I need it back). Some codes I use are:

Symbol	Meaning
V	Visualize or make a picture in my head.
P	Predict
I	Infer
T-T	Text-to-text connection
T-W	Text-to-world connection
?	Question: I wonder; I don't understand; or Puzzles me
+	New information (clarify)
X	I disagree

Using Context Clues

I will often use a Think Aloud to model this strategy for my students. Using explicit instruction, students learn to use signal words in conjunction with a variety of context clues to find the meaning of Tier 2 words and/or Academic Vocabulary that can be used in multiple content areas. We tend to encounter mostly the Example-Illustration type and the Logic/Inference type of context clues (Vacca, 2002) in our secondary-level readings.

For example, for the article "Crime and Punishment" I would use a Think Aloud to model my thought process as I figure out the word "ebb" using the Synonym type of Context Clue with the sentences, "Nearly as suddenly, violent crime began to ebb across the country. The reasons for the drop-off are debated." I would explain that drop-off is used as a synonym to ebb and that by recognizing the difficult word ebb and then paying special attention to the text immediately after it, I could find a word that means about the same thing.

QAR (Question Answer Relationships)

By identifying the type of questions they are being asked, Taffy Raphael's strategy (Raphael, 1982) helps students have a better idea of what their answers might be. We talk about Right There, Think and Search, Author and Me and On My Own as the types of questions and that the answers come from the reader "In my head", the text "In the book", or a combination of the reader and the text (Inference).

The article "Crime and Punishment" could lead to questions such as:

> **Right There:** What are the two harshest sentences that the Supreme Court has whittled away over the past decade?
> **Think and Search:** How does the issue of human rights affect adolescent criminals?
> **Author and Me:** Use the text and your life experiences to agree or disagree with professor William Otis who says there is little doubt that one reason for the decline in violent crime is that "the people who have been committing these crimes are now in jail".
> **On My Own:** Rebecca Falcon faults her choice of friends as a key component in making one of the worst decisions of her life. How important are friends in your decision making process?

SQUARE

SQUARE (Herczog & Porter, 2010) is an acronym that I like to use with nonfiction articles. I let students choose four out of the six letters to complete in partnerships or triads. I find it

encourages higher-order thinking and problem solving.

Summarize- Identify and paraphrase the most important points in the text.
Question- Ask clarifying questions about the text to uncover points that are unclear.
Use- Use the information in a meaningful way by providing an example.
Apply- Use the concept in a new situation; make a connection to a current event.
Review- Reflect on your new interpretation by reviewing information from the text.
Express- Demonstrate your understanding in a creative way.

For example, with "Crime and Punishment", students might act out the opinions of some of the Supreme Court justices that are highlighted in the article as the "Express". They might research the case of one of the nine prisoners in Connecticut serving life without parole for crimes they committed when they were 17 or younger as the "Use".

Use Graphic Organizers with Informational Text

Recognizing text structure is a powerful a key to comprehension; an especially important step in understanding the process of writing an effective summary (Armbruster, Anderson, & Ostertag, 1987). Use graphic organizers to plot and organize:

Problem/Solution
Cause/Effect
Chronological Order
Sequence
Compare/Contrast
Main Idea and Details

The article "Crime and Punishment" follows the Main Idea and Details text structure and I would ask students to identify which text structure it best fits into and then plot the Main Idea and Details into either a web or a triangle

shaped template to demonstrate understanding.

Comprehension Strategies

Because my end goal is for my students not to need me, I use the Reciprocal Teaching (Brown & Palinscar, 1987) model as the underpinnings of my comprehension strategy instruction. I analyze the reading material and consider the learner(s) in order to plan an explicit focus on one or more of the following:

Previewing
Skimming/Scanning/Searching
Fixing-Up/Monitoring/Clarifying
Predicting
Visualizing
Questioning
Inferring
Analyzing/Evaluating/Making Connections
Organizing
Information/Summarizing/Visually
Representing

With the article "Crime and Punishment", Visualizing would be a very effective strategy to focus on. Asking students to make a mental image of a mistake they have made going incredibly wrong and imaging the most serious consequences being applied to such, would help students to be able to Infer how Rebecca Falcon feels and Analyze, Evaluate, and Make Connections to the situation for over 2,000 people whose dire mistake when they were the same age led to life without parole.

RAT (Read Around the Text)

RAT is a strategy that encourages students to examine the whole text before just jumping in and reading. It is a series of six prompts that guides the reader to really notice those text features that will allow students to activate their background knowledge, make predictions, and set a purpose for reading. The steps are:

1. Look at the pictures. What ideas are being presented?
2. Look at the captions and read them.
3. Look at the maps, charts, and graphs. Discuss what information they present.
4. Look at the titles and headings. What is the big idea?
5. Read the first and last lines of each paragraph for more information.
6. Ask questions. Give yourself a reason to read.

DRTA (The Directed Reading Thinking Activity)

The steps developed by Russell Stauffer (1969) of activating schema, finding connections to what they know, making predictions, and setting purposes for reading are all a build up to my focus this year- using information in the text to form ideas and make arguments. Writing responses will be an extra step that I will incorporate to help them meet the more rigorous reading standards set by the CCSS.

With "Crime and Punishment" I would use List, Group, Label to activate schema, Visualizing to find connections to what they know, and the RAT strategy to guide students in making predictions and setting purposes for reading.

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CARR Goals

Professional Development
To enhance and improve the professional development of reading and language arts educators in Connecticut

Advocacy
To provide leadership in support of research, policy, and practice that improves reading instruction and supports the best interests of all learners and reading professionals

Partnerships
To form partnerships with other organizations including universities and local agencies that share our goal of promoting literacy

Research
To encourage and support research at all levels of reading and language arts education to promote informed decision making by reading professionals, policymakers, and the public

Global Literacy Development
To identify and support leadership and significant state, national, and international issues

Ten Top Reasons to Become a Member of
Connecticut Association for Reading Research (CARR)

- Be a Member of the Country's Only Research Special Interest Council

- Become an Advocate for Literacy promoting best practice and cutting edge, scientifically based research

- Be Eligible for Research Grants to improve instruction and student achievement

- Read the peer-reviewed research based *CARReader* in order to support best practice and improve student achievement

- Receive Legislative Updates on Literacy

- Support Cutting Edge Research in Connecticut

- Experience the Fall Session With the IRA President or IRA Board Member

- Engage in a State-Wide Networking System

- Access National Speakers regarding a variety of aspects of Literacy

- Attend the Spring Research Breakfast Symposium celebrating the current CARR Literacy research

SHADOW WILL QUELL THE DAY
By Toni Chadwell, Grade 8

Alone, solemn at a celebration;

A devouring void lies in wait.

A predator, you'll hear it roar;

it rumbles through the earth.

Sweet escape is nonexistent—

It hides in a veil of stars,

like the lion hides in the brush.

Its agents stalk behind,

Like guardian devils.

That boundless black vacuum of space

will quiet the world sometime—

when the dark comes out.

So hold love close, and laugh and fight,

before your brief lives fade to night.

Thomas Edison Middle School
Teacher advisor: Mr. Joseph Whiting

MUSTAFAR
By Brian Chen

On Mustafar, there is lava.

Red-hot, viscous, molten rock.

Acrid-tasting smog

Suffocates the

Feeble

Flickering

Sun.

On Mustafar, there is fire.

Embers spray

Like horizontal raindrops.

Droids expire

In fiery splooshes

As their azure repulsorlifts

Wink out.

And their casings

Melt like

marshmallow in bantha milk.

On Mustafar, there are ashes.

The charred limbs of Anakin

Rest on the obsidian beach

After being

Sliced off by Obi-Wan

In their vicious duel.

Lifeless Separatists sprawl inert on the ground

With still glowing-streaks and holes still smoking.

East Lyme Middle School
Teacher advisor: Mrs. Brouillard

I AM FROM…
By Emily Williams, Grade 8

I am from…

Many genres of books overflowing from my mouse-sized bookcase onto the floor swallowing my room in one gulp,

Abercrombie, Hollister, and Aeropostale shirts and shorts lying as neat as if they were in a clothing store in my lime green closet organizers,

My "reading corner" with the eye-popping magenta butterfly chair and the five-colored rainbow lamp where I spend my weeknights,

The many mismatched, different colored dance shoes scattered in my plain black dance bag and scattered throughout my room and "all that jazz,"

Neatly nestled knickknacks in the corner of the kitchen (my backpack, violin, and gym bag) in which I plop down my possessions with a "thud" every day after school.

I am from…

The dozens of trees that touch the sky in my backyard which I climbed until we discovered poison ivy laces through them,

Soft, fluffy grass that surrounds my yard where I perform cartwheels and attempt a no-handed aerial cartwheel unsuccessfully,

A flashy red real fire hydrant (that is not connected to any pipes) my dad installed which is the burial site for my dead beta fish, Rosie,

Many colored flowers I occasionally help to maintain that make me smile so wide it's a wonder my smile fits on my face at all.

 My "secret garden" where when I was younger, deer we occasionally saw were giants (because I was so small).

I am from…

The "island" in the cul-de-sac in the middle of my street where I frolic and help my 7-year-old brother learn to catch baseballs for his team,

A trail at the bottom of the hill, in which I run the length of it multiple times a week and discovered that my brother rides his bike slower than molasses in January,

My friend's old house down the street where we used to slip-and-slide in the summer and where we would play every day, no matter which house,

Across the street at my neighbor's house where she runs a "haunted garage" every Halloween that I help create to turn little kids into excited bunny rabbits hopping up and down while racing through over and over again.
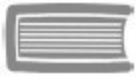

I am from…

Marvelous Mom and darling Dad,

Annoying but cute and adorable little Jackson,

Loving Aunt Lynne,

Crazy Uncle Steve,

Unbelievable Uncle Tom who we all think was switched at birth,

And lovable but forgetful Grandma Rose.

I am from…

"Emmy please play with me!!!!" –Jackson,

"Can you pick this stuff up off of the floor???" –Mom,

"I had to walk home for lunch, through the rain and snow, but never got my tomato soup from the cafeteria during school!" –Grandma with her back stories,

"Put the book down!!!!!!" –Mom when I read during mealtimes,

"Can you stop dancing and bumping into stuff?? You are going to knock down my legos and Star Wars guys!!" –Jackson during his "play time."

I am from…

Homemade potato and onion pierogies on rare occasions or family events made and shaped by hand from Grandma Rose,

Taco nights whenever we have the opportunity to visit my grandparents on Cape Cod,

"Pizza and Movie Night" Fridays with my favorite red pepper and pepperoni pizza burning my mouth off because it is so spicy,

Delicious homemade vegetable minestrone soup with an original recipe my mom invented,

Making my first carrot cake on Easter, where it's supposed to be as easy as pie, but it took my brother and me approximately two hours to make one cake.

I am from…

In my room dancing and trying out tricks with the door closed prohibiting my brother from entering,

Hiding in the basement when my brother is going crazy upstairs on the main floor, trying to escape the madness,

Having no diary, but constantly reliving memories in my head, because my head is like a movie, very vivid but accurate, almost photogenic,

Under my covers with the fluffy cotton and wool comforter, with the many sequined and rainbow-dotty pillow underneath my head, with my book and my iPod touch listening to Katy Perry and Maroon 5 all by myself, in my own wonderland.

Irving A. Robbins Middle School
Teacher advisor: Mrs. Frascadore

I AM FROM…
By Juan Russo, Grade 8

I am from…

    The television tuning into terrific shows and channels,
The fridge humming its monotonous melody while freezing my food,
The Samsungs and the Blackberry ringing so abruptly I jump from one floor to the next,
Picture frames, clinging to the wall so as to not fall with a crash,
The pencil sharpener, sagging like a fat man's belly, because I neglect to empty it.

I am from…

    Miniature bushes in the yard with thorns so sharp, I'm worried I'll lose a digit,
The flowers my mom planted that my soccer ball always somehow manages to save from experiencing longevity,
The power line pole, a tall beam I sometimes try to run up.
The seemingly eternal mud muddle that never fails to surprise me with an artistic, glistening coat of brown on my foot.

I am from…

    Grey or black Honda, Civic, or Toyota sedans, always waiting patiently in their owners' driveways,
Loud sound waves coming from the oversized motor of the blue Dodge truck a block from my house in the morning,
Clusters of hills my poor size-lacking calf muscles hate me for when I bike up one,
Neighbors' dogs who always use my bathroom—oh, pardon me—I mean lawn.

I am from…

    Uncle Silvio, the man who is as smart as a chemist, yet physically skilled like a black belt,
Great Aunt Mercedes, who is nicer than even the cooking of my godmother, Anna,
My cousin, Gonzalo, who is as funny as a comedian at times, and—according to girls—as hot as
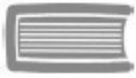
a chili pepper.

Mauro, my cousin who has mood swings so fast, I need a radar gun to keep track of his state of temperament.

I am from…

"Early bird catches the worm!"
"The apple doesn't fall far from the tree,"
"It's a dog-eat-dog world,"
"Success takes hard work,"
"What a small world!"

I am from…

Pizza, the food I eat on Friday nights that I long to hold in my fingers, just to burn a blister on my lip,
Empanadas that are the highlight of the occasional nights my mom makes them on,
The steaks my dad grills that seem as juicy as pineapples,
Gnocchi Day, the beloved, monthly Italian pasta holiday that must hate my family for forgetting about it so much,
Extremely occasional pork roasts, with gray smoke and mouth-watering smells emitting from the cooking box.
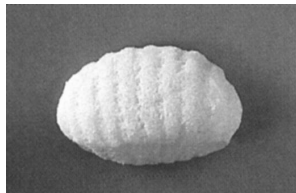
I am from…

The junk-but-not-junk-to-me desk drawer that's so fit to burst; I'm worried it will explode,
The black, creaky, and dusty drawer in my nightstand,

The drawer under my bed that is as long as a dinner table,
The bookshelf that holds the books, mangas, and manga profile books that are gold to me.


……This is where I am from.

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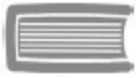
Freedom vs. Equality
by Alex King, Grade 8

Democracy:

In Democracy, everything represents freedom.

In Democracy, you get what you earn.

Nothing is free, everything is worked for.

We want to help others.

Freedom is safe.

Different opportunities for people that work for them.

Greater responsibilities and higher status is earned by citizens who can lead.

Elections are made.

People have rights.

Different medical benefits for different jobs.

Land is bought and owned.

Everything is fair.

The people are the government.

The government is limited to the decision of the people.

There are opportunities.

During times of war, you volunteer or get drafted.

Provide for the people, not the government. Support global democracy.

Communism:

In Communism, everything represents equality.

In Communism, you get what you need.

Everything is distributed fairly.

We influence others to use our form of government.

Freedom is dangerous.

Education is equal for everyone.

Responsibility and higher status is given to chosen citizens

One leader is chosen.

People don't need speech; the government represents their own interests.

Same medical treatment and insurance for all jobs.

Land is shared and given to the less fortunate.

Everything is fair.

The government is the people.

The government rules the people and their decisions.

You get what you need and stay what you are.

During the war you are forced to join in order to protect your government.

Provide for the government, not the people. Support global communism.

Glorify freedom.   Glorify equality.

Communism is a lie.   Democracy is dangerous.

Memorial Middle School
Teacher advisor: Ms. Anita Dunn

CARR Events, Grants & Scholarships

Events

October TBA, 2012:   IRA Board Member, The Hawthorne Inn, Berlin, CT- 5:00-6:30 pm

October 3-4, 2012:   CRA Conference: The Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cromwell, CT- 8:00- 4:00 pm

March TBA 2013:   Kelly Gallagher, Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, CT- 5:00-6:30 pm

April 1-20, 2013:   CARR Poetry Contest- open to all Middle Schools in all CT Districts/Schools

May TBA 2013:   Celebration of CARR research and Poetry Contest winners, Angelo's Restaurant, West Hartford, CT- 8:00-11:30 am

Research and scholarship grant recipients must **submit an article on their research for publication in the** *CARReader*. For further particulars on either of these grants, please contact Linda Kauffmann: Linda.Kauffmann@gmail.com.

Beverly Pearson Memorial
Teacher Action-Research Mini-Grant
Awards up to $600

Teachers, literacy consultants, literacy specialists, or administrators who are current members of CARR and are interested in conducting action-research in the area of literacy may submit a proposal not to exceed $600.00. It is expected that these proposals will be scholarly and based on scientific principles of quality research. The purpose of this project ultimately will be to disseminate to CARR members action- research that is grounded in theory and practice.

For more information and applications, please visit the CARR website at:
http://ctreadingresearch.org
Contact: Linda Kauffmann at Linda.kauffmann@gmail.com
(**Please include on subject line**: CARR Scholarship/Action-Research)

Visit our web site ctreadingresearch.org for the most recent information.