

# Exceptional Programs for Exceptional Learners Monthly Newsletter

## Get the Most Bang for Your Buck—Part 2: Phonics

### Teacher goal for this month:

*Utilize best practice*

### BEST PRACTICE

There are many instructional strategies that have been researched thoroughly and been found to be very effective. Progress Monitoring is a scientifically based practice that is used to assess students academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.

When progress monitoring is used in conjunction with graphing, it helps teachers instructionally, is motivating to students, and is easy for parents to see progress. "Just the act of progress monitoring has an effect size of 0.7", Deb McVey. If the information gathered from the progress monitoring is used, there is an even higher effect size.

Why would we not implement this practice to ensure greater success? The special education elementary teachers in Caney, Independence and Coffeyville are using progress monitoring. Thanks for your effort on this initiative!

The October newsletter discussed the research conducted by the National Reading Panel. That research around the five big areas of reading has impacted the Kansas State Standards and should be effecting the instruction you as teachers provide to your students.

Phonemic Awareness was the first big area of reading that was discussed in the October newsletter and in the Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read. Phonics is the second essential area of reading.

"Phonics instruction teaches children the relationships between the letters of written language and the individual sounds of spoken language. It uses these relationships to read and write words."

Best practice related to phonics instruction:

- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is more effective than non-systematic or no phonics instruction. Systematic and explicit instruction is the "direct teaching of a set of letter-sound relationships in a clearly defined sequence."
- Is most effective when introduced early.
- Phonics instruction should not be an entire reading program for beginning readers. Phonics is only one of the five big areas of reading.

Good phonics instruction (direct and systematic) improves word recognition and spelling, improves reading comprehension, and is particularly beneficial for children who are having difficulty learning to read and who are

at risk for developing future reading problems.

Phonics Progress Monitoring tools are:

DIBELS Letter Naming Fluency\*

DIBELS Nonsense Word Fluency\*

AIMS web Letter Naming Fluency\*

AIMS web Letter Sound Fluency

AIMS web Nonsense Word Fluency

Kansas Reading Academy Quick Phonics Screener

Phonics Diagnostic Tools:

Words Their Way Inventories

The Nonsense Word Test\*

\*Items can be found in Progress Monitoring notebook compiled by Tri-County team.

## RESULTS NOW—Achieving Unprecedented Improvements in Teaching and Learning

**"The question is not, Is it possible to educate all children well? but rather, Do we want to do it badly enough?"**

-Deborah Meier

As educators, our ultimate goal is student success. The book Results Now... is an excellent book that I challenge you all to read. It will change how and what you teach; it has already changed what I will be looking for in classrooms. The research compiled in this book comes from many sources, one being

a book most of us are familiar with—Classroom Strategies That Work by Marzano, Pickering and Pollock.

Evaluate your current practices:

Do you have a Crayola Curriculum? (Ask me more or read the book.)

How much time do you devote to actual reading in the class?

How much time do you devote to actual writing (and teaching writing skills) in class?

Do you post the standard and skill the students will be focusing on for that lesson?

Do you use short term assessments to look at how to make student improvements?

Do you work in effective teams with your colleagues?

Challenge yourself!

