

In Jan Hasbrouck's article in this issue of the Utah Special Educator, she describes the issues teachers face as they try to develop proficient readers. These issues include increasingly diverse populations, lack of readiness for school, and insufficient resources—including adequately trained personnel. While the first two challenges may be beyond the direct control of the educator, there are steps that can be taken to ensure adequately trained personnel. This article will describe what the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) is doing and will continue to do to address this issue. There are both federal and state mandates, including No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Reading First, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Performance Plus (SB 230) that are directing the USOE's

Development Center. Along with trainings on the Language Arts Core Curriculum, the literacy framework will be a major focus of Lynne Greenwood's trainings for district literacy specialists, principals at the Principal's Literacy Institute, and requested teacher/district trainings. This document is available at http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/lang_art/elem/k3Framework.htm.

Reading Academies. This summer, through the Reading First Grant, 850 kindergarten, 1st grade and special education teachers participated in four-day trainings on the five essential components of reading. The participants will continue to receive an additional six days of training

Meeting the Needs of All Readers— Even Nathan's



Pat Beckman, Program Specialist • Utah State Office of Education

activities in (1) providing professional development to teachers and (2) involving higher education institutes in the development of programs that reflect the results of 30 years of reading research.

It is generally understood that (1) *all students* need to be taught to read with instructional materials and practices that reflect scientifically based reading research in five critical components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; (2) effective instruction includes appropriate and regular use of assessments; and (3) when students begin to struggle there are steps that must be taken to meet their learning needs and ensure that they gain proficiency in their area(s) of skill deficits. These premises provide the foundation for the state's professional development reading initiatives, including the following:

Technical Assistance Document for Reading for Special Educators. This document was developed in response to requests from special educators for information about reading programs that reflect scientifically based research. A Reading/Literacy Task Force was formed by the USOE Special Education Services Unit to address this need. Participants included school district, university, and USOE personnel from the special education, curriculum, and Reading First departments. The document includes information on the Three-Tiered Model of instruction (to be discussed later in this article), elements and conditions of effective reading instruction, and reviews of reading assessments and supplemental and intensive reading programs. It can be accessed online at <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/sars/>.

Utah K-3 Literacy Framework for Successful Instruction and Intervention. This is a document designed to help districts and schools make appropriate choices in the areas of assessment, instructional practices for all students, and effective interventions for students who struggle in reading. Lynne Greenwood, USOE Language Arts K-6 Specialist, facilitated its development with input from district literacy leaders and representatives from higher education, USOE's Special Education Services Unit, and the Utah Personnel

Development Center throughout the school year. The Utah Personnel Development Center (UPDC) played a key role in the facilitation of the academies. Reading academies for 2nd and 3rd grade teachers will be offered the summer of 2005.

Trainings for Special Educators. A series of personnel development opportunities based on scientifically based reading research will be offered by the USOE and the UPDC throughout the school year to special education teachers. Information and specifics will be forthcoming and available on the UPDC calendar located at <http://www.updc.org>.

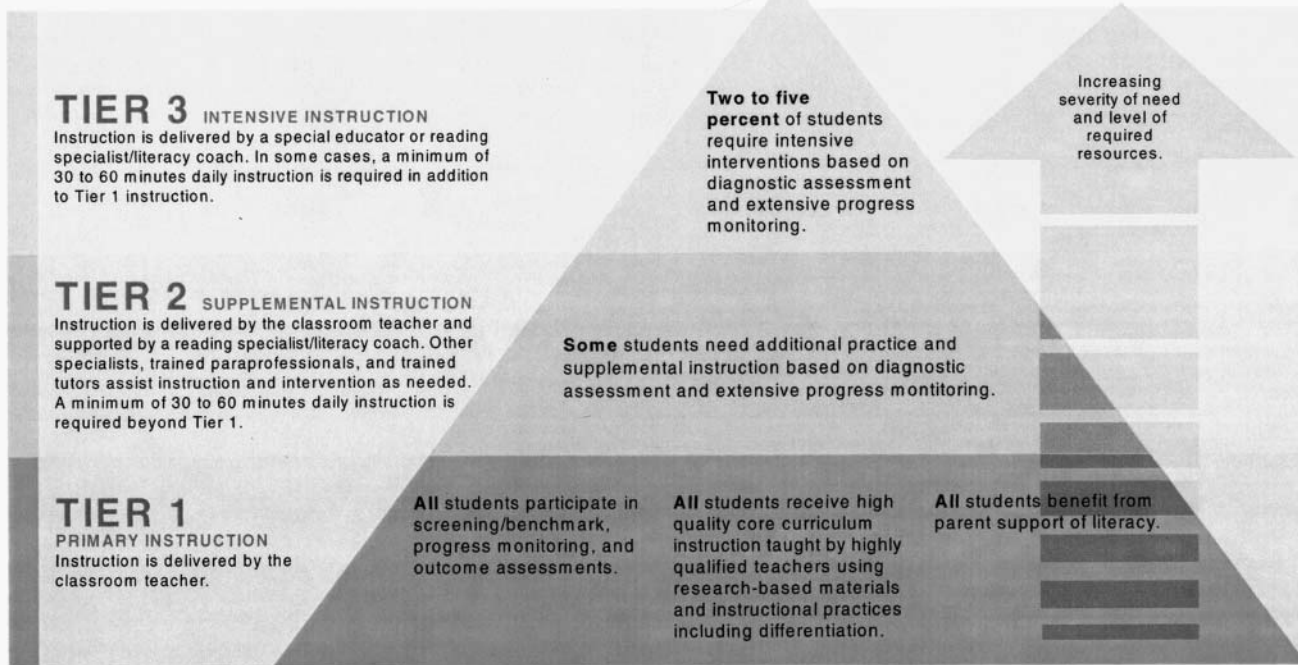
The Three-Tiered Model of Instruction

What happens to the students who participate in effective classroom reading instruction, but lag behind their peers in the development of phonemic awareness or who continue to struggle with decoding? What happens to the student who reads so slowly that comprehension is affected? What if a student struggles, but does not "qualify" for special education? Currently, under Utah State Rules and Regulations, a student must show a discrepancy between IQ and achievement in order to be eligible for special education services as a student with a specific learning disability. How does this child get help now, when it's very much needed if the child is not eligible for special education services? Early intervention is key.

It is highly possible that in the reauthorization of IDEA, when determining whether a child has a specific learning disability a school district would no longer be required to use a discrepancy formula. A team would be able to use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based interventions in determining eligibility.

Utah is being proactive on this front by providing professional development activities that include the Three-Tiered Model of instruction as it aligns with the response-to-intervention (RTI) model. All students will benefit from receiving primary instruction (Tier I), supplemental instruction

TIERED INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTION



Note: Only programs and materials that are research-based should be used.

(Tier II), or intense intervention (Tier III) designed to meet their learning needs, including those that might need specially designed instruction in special education.

The Three-Tiered Model of instruction is a solution. It is discussed in both the Utah K-3 Literacy Framework and the Technical Assistance Document for Reading for Special Educators. Utah teachers will be trained on this model (see Figure above).

I would like to share with the reader a real life situation involving my grandson, Nathan. Hopefully, it will become clear how this model could have helped him. Nathan is now a 2nd grader. He does not attend school in this state, so any remarks made here will not reflect on any Utah teacher or school.

When Nathan left first grade last year he was reading at the primer level, or about 5 months behind where he should have been reading. I know this because I assessed him myself. The only test data his teacher had on Nathan's reading abilities were the results of a screening assessment in September of 2003 and an outcome assessment given last May. Neither of these assessments reported a reading level, a fluency rate, or his ability to decode. There was no evidence of any diagnostic or progress monitoring assessments given throughout the year. He was never referred for special education; he wouldn't have qualified. To my knowledge, Nathan did not receive additional, or supplemental instruction.

I know I'm biased, but I believe that Nathan is very intelligent. He is exceptional in math and learns very quickly. I was able to spend only one week reading with him this summer and he made progress; but, of course, he was still behind. How could things have been different for Nathan if his school was using a Three-Tiered Model of instruction?

Looking at **Tier I** of the Three-Tiered Model, Nathan would have received research-based primary reading instruction that was explicit and systematic during a protected block of time. He and his classmates would

have participated in a research-based screening assessment. After a period of good instruction, Nathan, as well as other students who showed one or more needs on the screening assessment, would have participated in frequent research-based progress monitoring assessments. When it was clear that Nathan was not reaching benchmarks, this would be a signal that supplemental instruction was needed.

Supplemental instruction would have been provided in **Tier II**. The teacher would give Nathan a research-based diagnostic assessment. The information gathered would indicate the nature of the supplemental instruction he would receive. This instruction would occur in addition to Tier I instruction in groups of 3 to 5. His regular classroom teacher, a reading specialist, or special education teacher (depending on his eligibility) could have provided this instruction. Progress monitoring would have occurred every one or two weeks, and instruction would have been adjusted as a result.

Now, I'm assuming that Nathan would have benefited sufficiently from Tier II instruction and would have again participated in only Tier I instruction. However, a small percentage of children don't make sufficient progress receiving supplemental instruction in Tier II and require more intense intervention on Tier III.

If Nathan had needed **Tier III** instruction, he would have been with other students with severe reading difficulties. They would require intense and explicit instruction based on the results of weekly progress monitoring. Nathan may have required a different method or program than his peers; all students will not respond to the same teaching methods and materials. All of the students would respond, however, to instruction that is intense and systematic. This instruction could be provided through general education or special education, depending on eligibility.

I believe Nathan would have ended his first grade year reading at or above grade level if his school had implemented a Three-Tiered Model of instruction and were using research-based instructional practices. As you might expect, I'll be working closely with his second grade teacher. ■