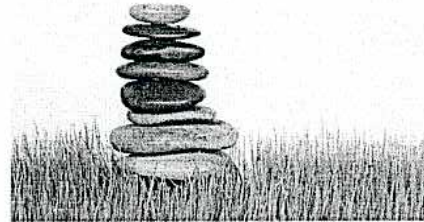


Universal Screening and the Balancing of Round Stones



Sherri Merrill, Ph.D.
Director K-12 Literacy Programs

What does it mean to "balance round stones"?



Balancing Round Stones

- *Teaching in the present **with** looking toward the future*
- *Developmentally appropriate instruction **with** early intervention*
- *Need for assessment **with** time for instruction*
- *Authentic learning tasks **with** high stakes test preparation*

Board Goal and Years to Parity

WCPSS students will demonstrate high academic growth; by 2014, all students will graduate on-time prepared to compete globally.

The National Context



2000

7000

4000



"they dont want me to get a
education i at going to be
mad at that but i am i am
going to get the educaction
no mard wat i am"

Achievement Gap...

Or

Education Debt?

Gloria Ladson-Billings

Moral Imperative

Reading is a *right*,
not a privilege.

Sense of Urgency



We cannot do
everything, but we
can do *something*.

~ Edward Everette Hale



Our Response:

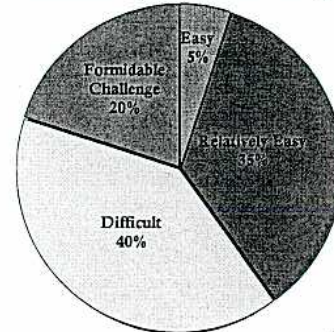
A relentless
focus on K-5
reading

Why is teaching reading so complex?

"We were never born to read. Human beings invented reading only a few thousand years ago. And with this invention, we rearranged the very organization of our brain...."

Maryanne Wolf in *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain*

One Strand of Literacy: The Journey to Reading

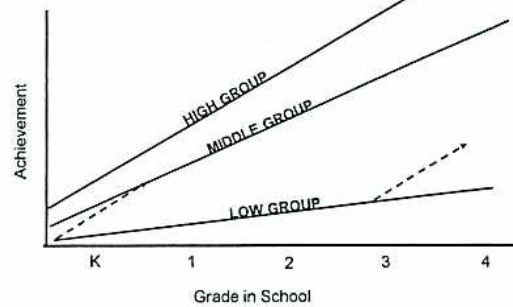


Adapted by WCPSS, 2008

Sometimes the Process Breaks Down



The Expanding Achievement Gap



According to Fenwick English...



Selecting the Right Stones: Prioritizing



Balancing Those Stones: Aligning



WCPSS Literacy Assessment: a continually evolving process

Reflecting back (with input)



Looking forward



Some Stones to Rearrange...

- Changes to KIA (postpone PAST until after instruction; 6 subtests administered mid-year and 10 end-of-year)
- Clarification: "digging deeper" assessments only for students showing risk
- Only 2 formal running records (up to level 23-24) and use of informal running records

(continued)

- Generic retelling forms; no retelling for Print Concepts or Levels 1- 6
- 3-5 Literacy Assessment no longer a stand alone assessment
- Fewer and less frequent Blue Diamond assessments, but they will be a bit longer

One Stone to Add...

Universal Screening for Reading



What is it?

- A type of assessment
- Given to *all* students
- Quick (5-9 minutes per student)
- Easy to administer (minimal training)
- Low cost
- Repeated beginning, middle, end of year
- Predictive of future performance *if* instruction is not adjusted
- Sensitive to different levels of reading development

Purpose

- To identify students at risk of reading failure without special attention
- To gain insight into group performance as well as individual performance on individual skills which are predictive of future performance
- To identify students not making acceptable progress in core curriculum

Criteria for Effective Screening

- Accurately identifies students at risk for reading failure
- Procedure is not too costly, too time consuming, or cumbersome to implement
- Students identified as at risk receive timely and effective intervention



Benefits?

- Early identification allows for **early** intervention.
- May help reduce "**overidentification**" of students for special education
- Can **catch students** who may "fall through the cracks" by compensating.



(continued)

- May help reduce "underidentification" of minority students for AG
- Provides means of **measuring growth**
– Appropriate for all levels (even level 4s)
- Provides teacher with some measure of how students are **responding to core instruction**.
- Allows for rich PLC conversations.



Cautions?

- Need to be viewed in context of other data
- Do not identify "cause" of difficulty
- Should not lead to "teaching to the screening"
- Are most reliable when multiple screenings are used

(continued)

- Will never be 100% accurate
- Should never lead to a focus on isolated skill instruction at the expense of comprehension
- Are useless unless impact instruction



Administering Screenings

- Consistency
- Efficiency
- Fidelity



Possible Approaches: In-Class Approach

- Classroom teacher (and assistant if available) set aside time to assess each child.
 - For example, 30 minutes a day for 4-5 days
 - Included in Learning and Teaching Guide



Possible Approaches: One Day School-wide Approach

- Large team of teachers, support staff, trained volunteers, and educational assistants assess whole classrooms of students in a central location
 - Takes approximately 20-30 minutes per class



Possible Approaches: Multiple Day School-wide Approach

- Core team of teachers, support staff, trained volunteers, and educational assistants go to the classrooms and assess students while others are working.



Possible Approaches: Within Grade Approach

- Grade level teachers, assistants, and trained volunteers assess all students on a grade level while the other students are engaged in an independent classroom activity.



What universal screenings do we currently recommend?

- Kindergarten – (6-7 minutes per student)
 - Letter Naming Fluency
 - Phoneme Segmentation Fluency
 - Nonsense Word Fluency
- First Grade – (6-9 minutes per student)
 - Letter Naming Fluency (only fall)
 - Phoneme Segmentation Fluency
 - Nonsense Word Fluency
 - Oral Reading Fluency (only winter and spring)

(continued)

- Second Grade – (5-7 minutes per student)
 - Nonsense Word Fluency
 - Oral Reading Fluency
- Third-Fifth Grades – (5 minutes per student)
 - Oral Reading Fluency

NOTE: Digging Deeper comes next for selected students because Universal Screenings do not tell us the cause of the problem

Source of Our Recommended Screenings

- DIBELS (Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills)
- Purpose: to sample only the critical reading skills that predict successful reading
- Does *not* attempt to assess all the skills that constitute a complete reading program
- Is simply one *tool* (must use responsibly)

An Improved, More Comprehensive Assessment System

Next Steps

- Continue professional development on universal screening tools, "digging deeper" assessments, and improved instruction (core and intervention)
- Provide copy of assessment and intervention notebook to schools
- Support schools ready to move forward with universal screening
- Collect data on universal screening in WCPSS to improve our processes

Questions?

smerritt2@wcpss.net, 850-1607

