

# DOINGWHATWORKS



Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

## Conducting Universal Screening

Tri-Community Elementary School, Pennsylvania • November 2009

Topic: Response to Intervention in Primary Grade Reading  
Practice: Universal Screening

### Highlights

- This video focuses on how to set up and conduct a universal screening program in an elementary school setting.
- Nadine Hoover, literacy coach at Tri-Community Elementary, discusses the purpose, scheduling, and administration of universal screening.
- Universal screening is administered by a variety of staff members, including learning resource teachers, parents, and instructional support teachers.
- Hoover discusses the importance of providing extensive training and retraining to staff before a screener is administered to ensure fidelity among all testers.
- Hoover describes the school's three-tiered intervention groups, referred to as *skills groups*: benchmark, strategic, and intensive.
- Additional assessment and progress monitoring data is needed for students who are borderline on screening measures.
- Hoover explains how screening and other data assessment has changed instruction at this school.

## About the Site

Tri-Community Elementary School  
Steelton, PA

### Demographics

38% Black

37% White

19% Hispanic

5% Asian

1% Other

53% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtII) was introduced at Tri-Community Elementary School six years ago. Since then, the school has moved from lowest performing in the district to successfully meeting Adequate Yearly Progress targets. Strong leadership and a partnership with a regional technical assistance network have helped to sustain:

- Data-driven differentiation of instruction in the core curriculum and tiered interventions.
- A teaming structure that manages data, assesses progress, and plans interventions.
- Collaboration between special education and teaching staff.
- Instructional planning that consistently integrates explicit teaching strategies, continuous progress monitoring, and a focus on teaching to mastery.

## Full Transcript

My name is Nadine Hoover, and I am the literacy coach here at Tri-Community Elementary. My role here is to coordinate and run the reading program. I am responsible for gathering, administering all the screening throughout the year.

We basically start the second day of school to do our screening. We use pretty much anyone who is available that is not a classroom teacher, which may include a learning resources teacher, paras, instructional support teachers. We use them to help us administer our screener. To ensure accuracy with our assessments, we do extensive training and retraining before we administer our screener, and I actually do the training to make sure that there is fidelity amongst all the testers.

We give our benchmarks three times a year. They are given immediately after the students enter school in the fall. We give another one in January, and one at the end of the school year. After the data is collected, I enter the data into the computer database. And from there it is usually myself and possibly another reading

specialist; we sit down and go over the data. It prints out usually and tells us the needs of the students, but we actually go a lot deeper. We will actually use the assessment itself; we'll go back and look at each individual assessment to determine the needs of those students.

When we look at the data, we have our benchmark students. A benchmark student is a student who is reading at grade level. Even when we have a benchmark student, we still look at all their data because we have benchmark students that may have issues with comprehension. They may need some fluency work. There may be some other issues, and we do group benchmark accordingly. A strategic student is a student who is below grade level. Again, we look at their assessments. We break them down to possibly vocabulary development, fluency, decoding multisyllabic words, comprehension, and we group students according to their needs. Intensive students are students who are working well below their grade level. We will take those students and normally do more subtesting on them to see where their needs are also.

If a student is within several points of the benchmark or intensive or strategic, we look closely at them, possibly at another assessment that we might have on the student from a prior year—perhaps a state assessment or another assessment that we have given to date or perhaps an assessment that goes with the core reading program. We will look at that to see what their needs are there.

We use all kinds of data to make decisions about our students. Some of the data we use for our decision making, not only the universal screening, not only the progress monitoring, it can be a theme test from our core. It can be our state assessments. It can be leveled readers, the IRIs [Informal Reading Inventories] that we give to determine where the child is reading.

The data drives our instruction. The teachers use their data to inform them about their students and about instruction and the needs of their students. When teachers see the growth the students are making, the impact that they make by following their data, and changing their instruction to meet the needs of the students to show the growth, is the biggest impact that using the universal screener has provided for us. And as far as talking with the teachers, when we talk about a student now, it's "Bring your data."