

DOINGWHATWORKS



Presentation

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Differentiation Within the Kindergarten Core

Tri-Community Elementary School, Pennsylvania • November 2009

Topic: Response to Intervention in Primary Grade Reading
Practice: Progress Monitoring and Differentiation

Highlights

- How to differentiate within core instruction
- Lynne Carney, kindergarten teacher, who conducts half of her instruction with the entire class and the other half in small groups
- Demonstration of teaching sequencing skills through a variety of explicit strategies, such as modeling and thinkalouds
- An example of how Carney teaches vocabulary and differentiates instruction for English language learners
- Ways to check for understanding throughout a lesson
- Reteaching through more intensive one-on-one instruction and additional instruction during an extended-day program

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

Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome to Differentiation Within the Kindergarten Core.

Slide 2: Introducing Lynn Carney

My name is Lynn Carney, and I'm a kindergarten teacher at Tri-Community Elementary. All my students have different needs, and they are all at different stages of their cognitive, social, and emotional development. I plan for differentiation in my lessons. About 50% of my instructional delivery is to the entire class. The other 50% of my instruction is conducted in smaller groups.

Slide 3: Sequencing lesson

My lesson yesterday was on sequencing and why it is important to a story. So we did a little exercise where we had to place some picture cards in the correct order. I conducted thinkalouds both by modeling them

myself and by having the students model thinkalouds. We went ahead after the lesson was over and I had picture cards that I had put out of order, and what I needed the students to do was help me put them in the correct order. I had them support their reasons also as they sequenced the story.

Slide 4: Teaching vocabulary

And once the students were successful with that just very basic introduction to sequencing and what it means, I went on to introduce the vocabulary that was going to be used in the story that we were going to do, which was called "Caps for Sale." I also did some acting out of position words like *in front* or *behind* or *left* and *right* because those were some of the directional words that were going to be used in the story. For a reading lesson, I don't assume anything; I make sure that all vocabulary is taught.

Slide 5: Differentiation for English learners

I have tremendous variety in my classroom as far as the children's language background. Of 15 students I have eight ESL students. So for my ESL students, I had vocabulary pictures and sequencing pictures for them. And for my kinesthetic learners, they need a lot of movement, so they would be the students like in the lesson that I did on sequencing that I had bring up pictures to place in order.

Slide 6: Varied strategies

I provide additional support for some of my students by using proximity. Those students that have a difficult time attending or comprehending, I might have them sit closer to me while I instruct. I also have an ESL aide for a short period of time, and I ask her to sit close to the non-English-speaking students and she might repeat the question to them that I have asked.

Slide 7: Check for understanding

I always build in ways to check for understanding. I'm constantly asking questions and challenging the students to support their answers by asking, "Why do you think that?" or "How do you know?" I'm able to determine if they've grasped or comprehended a subject, and it gives me feedback as to how my lesson is going by their responses. I differentiate by types of questions I ask. For the ESL students I ask very literal questions because they are still learning the English language, but as they progress throughout the year and have a stronger base of the English language, I raise those questions to higher-order thinking skills.

Slide 8: Reteaching

I provide extra help or reteaching after I feel confident that the lesson has been scaffolded. First I teach the concept, then we practice it together, and I'm constantly observing when we are practicing it together. At the time it comes for them to practice it on their own, I've already made a mental note of which students I need to key in on that were having a little bit more trouble with the concept. I would go to those children and check for understanding and make sure that they are grasping the concept. If not, then I can do more one-on-one work with them in order for them to be successful.

Slide 9: Extended day

Children that teachers have noticed that are struggling, they have qualified for what's called an extended day and they are here for an extra hour after school. We provide lunch for them and then, once again, they are in a smaller-group setting reteaching the same skills that they get in their homogeneous skills group lesson. If there's another way that we can reteach or spend some extra one-on-one time in a smaller-group setting, the children benefit from it greatly.

Slide 10: Learn More

To learn more about Differentiation Within the Kindergarten Core, please explore the additional resources on the Doing What Works website.