

DIBELS, RTI AND KPALS

IN THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

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My school is very involved in the Response to Intervention (RTI) protocols as a means of supporting all learners. This intervention framework was brought into our school to support our students who have been classified as intensive and strategic through Dibels testing. The Dibels test is a screening test that monitors basic literacy skills. In the lower grades Dibels evaluates skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, letter identification and word decoding ability.

At the kindergarten level in my school, we are fortunate enough to have a paraprofessional who does both Tier Two and Tier Three interventions with our intensive students. A simplified explanation of “tier interventions” refers to the number of times each day the child works directly with a teacher or interventionist on basic literacy skills. This can take the form of utilizing our intervention kits (that come with the reading series we use), computer programs designed for early literacy skills and general materials in the kindergarten classroom (flashcards, whiteboards, alphabet games, etc.). The one change that I feel needs to be made is the amount of time the teacher/paraprofessional has to meet with each student individually on interventions- of course I feel the number of minutes should be increased each day.

I have been using the KPALS program for the past few years with a great amount of success. I have found it to be a very motivation program that increases student achievement on tests such as Dibels, as well raises confidence levels of the students when they are attempting to read and write in kindergarten. The Fuchs and Fuchs article (2005) did a fantastic job describing the Peer Assisted Learning Strategies program and how the program works to promote early literacy skills in young children. The way that I am attempting something new with this program is by pre-teaching the KPALS activities on my new document camera before the students break off into the peer groups. The Fuchs and Fuchs article (2005) explains the importance of active

participation by all students in order for the KPALS program to be effective in the classroom.

After reading the Unit Three articles on accommodating differences, I decided to implement the fishbowl approach when selecting students to come up and help with the KPALS review lesson. I have found this to be a successful approach because my students seem to be paying more attention in the hope of being called upon to help me practice KPALS. For my two case study students, KPALS has been a great confidence builder and has really helped them. Their “coach” during KPALS has helped model for them letter identification, rhyming words and first sound fluency strategies that they will be able to build upon as they continue to acquire knowledge this school year.