

Florida Center for Reading Research

Teaching Reading Essentials

What is Teaching Reading Essentials?

Teaching Reading Essentials (TRE) is a video-based professional development program designed to provide K-3 teachers with expert modeling of instructional techniques for teaching reading and spelling. *TRE* combines video demonstrations of authentic small group interventions with written descriptions for each lesson and coordinated professional development sessions led by Dr. Louisa Moats. The videos focus on systematic, explicit, and multisensory instruction in the key areas of phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, beginning phonics, fluency, advanced phonics, spelling, vocabulary, and comprehension. A program guide outlines the objective, materials, instructional procedure, alternative procedures, and discussion points for each demonstration. The instructional strategies presented in the program are based on the latest reading research and are in keeping with the linguistic knowledge and skills teachers need to implement effective instruction for beginning readers and intensive help for the older, struggling readers.

Teaching Reading Essentials consists of a set of five DVDs with 58 videos (3-34 minutes each) organized by area of reading accompanied by a program guide that provides additional support through detailed descriptions of the video content and instructional principles. Participants select the area of reading instruction to view on DVD then watch the introduction and the demonstration of the lesson followed by a guided discussion of the teaching strategies. Each video presents an expert teacher delivering unscripted but structured learning activities that incorporate the use of scaffolded instruction and corrective feedback. A detailed description of these instructional procedures and a list of materials are available in the guide.

In the program guide, each of the five parts provides a summary of the component of reading, why it is important to teach the component, what should be taught to students in order to develop the component skills, and how to identify who needs that area of instruction. In order to determine who needs the instruction, each part is indexed to the benchmark scores on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and a list of specific skills that may be exhibited by students who are struggling with this area of reading and writing. Informal Reading Surveys designed to identify specific weaknesses in phonological and phonemic awareness, letter names and sounds, and beginning and advanced decoding are available in the Appendix. *Teaching Reading Essentials* stresses the importance of using accurate assessment results to inform instruction.



Each part concentrates on developing a knowledge base and effective instructional routines for the components of reading. Part 1: "Teaching Letters, Sounds, and Sense" focuses on how to teach the larger segments of speech, letter knowledge, and concepts of print. Part 2: "Teaching Phoneme Awareness" emphasizes the articulatory features of speech sounds, blending and segmenting sounds, and the transition to letter-sound correspondences. Part 3: "Teaching Beginning Reading and Writing" is for students in the "partial alphabetic" stage of reading. The lessons help students develop phonics strategies for decoding words. Decodable text is used to apply word-recognition strategies, gain fluency during oral reading, and check comprehension. Part 4: "Teaching Advanced Phonics" focuses on teaching "chunks" such as different vowel patterns, multi-syllabic words, and root words with common affixes. In order for students to become fluent readers, they

need to become knowledgeable about more complex phonics patterns. These skills are taught for both reading and spelling. Part 5: "Teaching Vocabulary and Comprehension" emphasizes the importance of teaching these skills in parallel with phonological awareness and phonics instruction. Direct teaching occurs during teacher read aloud until the students are able to read. Within each of these five parts, the lessons include the objective and purpose, review of previously taught skills, format for explicitly teaching new concepts, guided practice with aligned student materials, and fluency building activities to increase rate as well as prosody. The videos, accompanying the lesson, model practical skills that are designed to be integrated with any comprehensive reading program that is aligned with scientifically based research.

The set of DVDs and the program guide are well organized and easy to use independently or as part of a professional development training. *Teaching Reading Essentials* is fully aligned with the content of the professional development program, Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS), also developed by Dr. Louisa Moats.

What processes are in place in Teaching Reading Essentials?

The goals and objectives in *Teaching Reading Essentials* are clearly defined. The overall goal is to show participants how to improve their instruction to reach the struggling reader. In order to increase the likelihood that participants will alter their current teaching practices, they have on-going access to instruction modeled by expert teachers. To implement, participants select a detailed written lesson based on their instructional objectives. Turning to the program guide, the lesson includes an introduction to deepen their knowledge of the reading process, an instructional procedure that replicates the video demonstration, and talking points to guide discussions during professional development. Presenters of the program can rely on the development of these points from video discussions Dr. Moats conducts with teachers.

Technology insures fidelity in the delivery of the content and instructional routines while the written material provides research support and guides the participant in implementing the instruction. In this way, the success of the professional development is not dependant upon the knowledge and skills of the trainer. The program is guided by recommendations of the National Reading Panel and the Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties. The video demonstrations can be viewed as often as necessary to develop expertise with delivering the instruction. Evaluation measures to determine the participant's progress in attaining the goals of the program are not provided.

Does Teaching Reading Essentials address the context in which the program will be implemented?

Teaching Reading Essentials offers flexible implementation. It can be used as a stand-alone program of quality instruction for: teachers to study independently, reading coaches at team meetings, trainers of paraprofessionals, and professional development trainers who use the demonstrations to supplement their presentations. The video discussion at the end of each part encourages participants to reflect and discuss the details of the lessons.

Research Support for Teaching Reading Essentials

Teaching Reading Essentials was published in 2006 as a professional development program based on demonstrations of expert teachers implementing

effective instructional reading strategies. While evidence of efficacy through empirical research has not been established, the content of the program is consistent with current reading research as well as with the guidelines for professional development as discussed in the Learning First Alliance's *Every Child Reading: A Professional Development guide*.

As required by the SBIR/NICHD grant that funded the development of *Teaching Reading Essentials*, an efficacy study was conducted in the 2006-2007 school year in a Colorado school district. The results of that study are being analyzed and a research report will be posted no later than December 1, 2007.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths of *Teaching Reading Essentials*:

- Its flexible implementation offers teachers access to the videos as needed for strengthening their instruction.
- The expert modeling of instruction can supplement other professional development programs.
- The professional development is appropriate for teaching older students who have not internalized and do not apply the basic phonics skills.
- Each component of reading is summarized into manageable chunks of reading then applied to explicit, small group instruction.

Weaknesses of *Teaching Reading Essentials*:

- No weaknesses noted.

Which Florida districts have implemented Teaching Reading Essentials?

Highlands
Volusia

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For More Information

<http://store.cambiumlearning.com/ProgramPage.aspx?parentId=074003189&functionID=009000008&site=sw>

References



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Important Note: FCRR Reports are prepared in response to requests from Florida school districts for review of specific reading programs. The reports are intended to be a source of information about programs that will help teachers, principals, and district personnel in their choice of materials that can be used by skilled teachers to provide effective instruction. Whether or not a program has been reviewed does not constitute endorsement or lack of endorsement by the FCRR.

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