



Reading First

Overview of 2004 Site Visits

Jane Granger, M.S.

www.FCRR.org

Welcome!

Goals of presentation:

1. Highlights of data from 2004 site visits
2. How to prepare for future site visits
3. 2004 site visit process procedures

Purpose of the RF Site Visits

The purpose is to gather information on three important areas of Florida's multi-faceted Reading First Evaluation Plan:

1. schools' progress in implementing important features of their districts' RF plan,
2. district and school support for professional development and
3. teacher use of new knowledge and skills in teaching reading.

Florida's RF Grant application set forth the overall evaluation plan for RF in Florida. RF Site Visits help to fulfill one part of the overall evaluation plan for the RF project as it operates in Florida. Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) was assigned the responsibility of implementing RF Site visits.

First Steps

- An appropriate observation instrument was selected.
- Randomly selected schools in 17 districts were notified in late January about the dates and general process of the site visits.
- Site visit reviewers with expertise in reading were selected from across Florida.
- Reviewer training was developed to ensure quality collection of data.

FCRR followed several steps to accomplish our goal of implementing well organized and productive site visits.

First Steps cont.

- In February, the review team attended a 2 day reviewer training with follow-up.
- District RF Directors worked to ensure that school schedules would accommodate the site visit schedule and process.

Inter-rater reliability is important when observational data is collected; therefore, we developed and implemented training on the classroom observation instrument and site visit process for the reading experts who were selected as site visit reviewers.

We also worked closely with district RF coordinators to plan our actual school observation schedule. They were key contacts in developing a workable schedule that provided quality observation time in classrooms during the reading block.

2004 Site Visit Observation Instrument

Instructional Content Emphasis

An observation instrument used to systematically categorize and code the content of reading and language arts instruction

ICE-R
Adapted from Edmonds and Briggs (2002)

2

After reviewing several data collection instruments we selected the revised edition of the Instructional Content Emphasis ICE – R) instrument because it allows collection of data efficiently, in alignment with the major components of reading and already has validity and reliability.

This instrument is a data collection instrument, not a rating instrument. It helped reviewers code their observation notes which greatly assisted in the efficient analysis of site visit data.

ICE-R

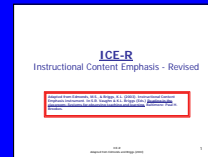
The ICE- R instrument was developed to collect data on:

- statewide reading initiatives,
- students' opportunities to learn,
- dimensions of reading content observed in classroom instruction, and
- the extent to which instruction addresses the five components of reading.



ICE Data...

- ...tells the researcher
 - What is being taught
 - How it is being taught
 - How well it is being taught
 - What is being used



What: the major dimensions of reading

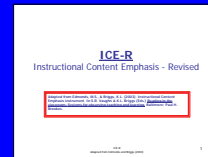
How: small group, large group

How well: are the needs of struggling readers met?

What: materials used

Coding Categories

- Four Dimensions for Descriptive Data
 - Dimension A: Main Instructional Category
 - Dimension B: Instructional Subcategory
 - Dimension C: Student Grouping
 - Dimension D: Materials



Dimension A Categories

1. Phonological Awareness
2. Alphabetic Knowledge
3. Phonics
4. Concepts of Print
5. Spelling
6. Oral Language
7. Fluency
8. Text Reading
9. Comprehension
10. Writing/ language arts

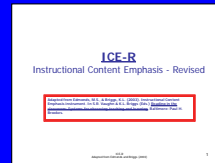
These are the 10 categories into which observers entered data. For example, an observer who saw a teacher working with a reading group in decoding strategies coded that instructional event as “4. Phonics”.

Some of these broad categories of Dimension A had sub categories. For example, Area 9, Comprehension, has 5 subcategories on the ICE-R:

1. Vocabulary
2. Prior Knowledge
3. Reading Comprehension Monitoring
4. Listening Comprehension Monitoring
5. Comprehension strategy instruction

Coding Categories (cont.)

- Additional Coding Categories
 - Instructional focus
 - Student Engagement
 - Instructional Quality



Content Emphasis: the amount of time dedicated to instruction compared to the total number of observation minutes.

Student Engagement (3-1): 3=almost all students engaged; 2=most students engaged; 1= more than half *unengaged*.

Instructional Quality (4-1): Excellent; High Average; Low Average; Weak

Examples of teacher characteristics that would qualify as high quality(4) include: using explicit, direct language; modeling examples for students; providing immediate, corrective feedback to students; and scaffolding tasks and materials to meet student needs.

Site Visit Process



- Site visit team met with principal to identify the randomly selected classrooms to be visited.
- Team members observed for 45 minutes in four classrooms, one per K-3 grade level.
- Another team member did informal walk-throughs in other K-3 classrooms.

So.....we are ready to do a site visit, we have the trained review team, we have scheduled the visit with the district RF contact and the principal. Here are the activities conducted during the site visit.

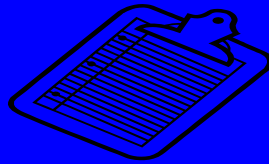
Site Visit Process



- Interviews were conducted with the principal and reading coach.
- A teacher focus group was conducted with school-selected K-3 teachers.
- At close of the site visit, a short debriefing was held with the principal.
- A written report was mailed to the principal and district RF director.

Site Visit Reports

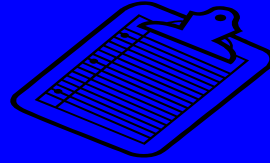
- Summarize observational data
- Provide a snapshot that, when used with other data, can provide valuable information for grant implementation
- Do not provide school ratings
- Contribute to the overall RF evaluation for Florida



This slide describes the major functions of site visit reports.

Site Visit Report Format

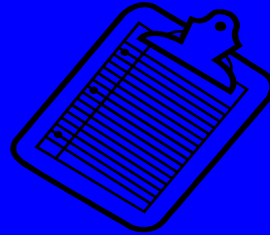
- Introduction
- School Initiatives
- School Focus
- Support for Reading
- Professional Development
- Reading First Coach
- The Reading Block
- Benefits and Challenges



These are the areas discussed in the site visit report delivered to schools and district RF contacts.

Report Format cont.

- Informal observations
- Content emphasis
- Instructional quality
- Student engagement



2004 Site Visits



- 132 classrooms in K-3 were visited.
- Average number of students per classroom was 19.
- Average length of observation was 46 minutes.
- Average length of the reading block in observed classrooms was 100 minutes.

2004 Site Visit Data: Challenges and Benefits as Identified by Principals

Challenges

- Assessments (53%)
- Scheduling Reading Block (29%)
- Lack of resources (26%)
- Resistant teachers (24%)



Benefits

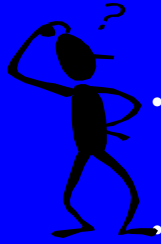
- RF Coach (100%)
- Resources (56%)
- Assessments (53%)
- Professional Development (53%)
- Reading Focus (38%)

Note that these two areas (benefits and challenges) of data are not mutually exclusive. Some principals identified one area as both a benefit and a challenge – for example assessments.

Lack of resources: refers to lack of resources in general as well as inadequate staffing and lack of funding especially in some non-title I schools (2).

Resistant teachers was identified as a challenge by both principals and coaches.

2004 Site Visit Data: Challenges and Benefits as Identified by Teachers



Challenges

- Managing the 90 minute block (67%)
- Assessments (63%)
- Implementation (58%)
- Inadequate resources (36%)

Benefits

- Reading First Coach (94%)
- Classroom resources (73%)
- Professional Development (52%)
- Assessments (48%)
- Student reading improvement (42%)



Challenges: 67% of the teacher focus group comments indicated that it was challenging to get everything accomplished during the 90 minutes - handling centers , addressing all student needs etc.,

63% of the teacher focus group comments indicated that assessments were challenging: the time for *assessments* was challenging – took time away from instructional time (42%) and *assessments* did not accurately reflect students performance (21%).

58% of the teacher focus group comments indicated that *Implementation was challenging*: problems with materials, coordinating with other teachers, organization in general.

36% of teacher focus group comments reflected that teachers felt they did not have *adequate resources/materials* to assist them in meeting student needs

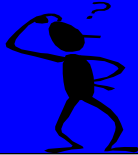
Benefits: As you can see, a great majority of the teachers’ comments indicated that the coach was a benefit.

Classroom resources include classroom libraries and core reading program materials. In the areas of assessments, teachers indicated that RF assessments greatly assisted in placement of students.

2004 Site Visit Data: Challenges and Benefits as Identified by Coaches

Challenges

- Assessments (56%)
- Lack of time to provide professional development (50%)
- Resistant teachers (38%)
- Lack of time to accomplish tasks (32%)



Benefits

- Professional Development (53%)
- Assessments (50%)
- Teacher openness to coach (41%)
- Resources (29%)



Interesting that the areas of Resistant Teachers and Teacher Openness were identified by coaches in both Challenges and Benefits; also the area of Assessments is identified as both.

2004 Site Visit Data: RF Benefits Identified by Principals, Teachers and Coaches

- Assessments
- Resources
- Professional development



2004 Site Visit Data: RF Challenges Identified by Principals and Teachers

- *Assessments*
- Inadequate Resources
- The 90 minute reading block
 - Scheduling
 - Managing



These areas were identified as challenges by both principals and teachers. Assessment was identified as challenging by all three groups- teachers, principals and coaches.

90 minute block: scheduling – identified by principals

90 minute block: managing – identified by teachers

2004 Site Visit Data: Informal Observations

- Teachers leading small reading groups
- Literacy centers
- Paraprofessionals working with students
- Opportunities for students to read
- Word walls
- Computer based reading programs
- Core Reading Programs in use
- Classroom libraries



This is a listing of a variety of activities viewed with high frequency during the informal walkthroughs in K-3 classrooms. However, reviewers did not address the details of quality, duration, etc of these activities. There simply was not time to examine every classroom in detail. For example, we saw many language related activities implemented in centers; however, we did not analyze how well those activities aligned with the instructional needs of the students who were engaged in them.

2004 Site Visit Data Content Emphasis

Overall the average percentage of time during the observations dedicated to *instructional* activities as opposed to non-instructional was 88%.



The remaining non-instructional time was spent on activities such as behavior management, announcements, instructions, distributing materials, etc.

2004 Site Visit Data

Student Engagement

Overall the average student engagement rating during observations was 2.7 on a three point scale. High student engagement is described as when *almost all* students are actively engaged in a learning activity.



2004 Site Visit Data

Instructional Quality

Overall the average instructional quality rating during observations was 3 on a *four point* scale.

Examples of teacher characteristics that would qualify as high quality (4) include: using explicit, direct language; modeling examples for students; providing immediate, corrective feedback to students; and scaffolding tasks and materials to meet student needs.

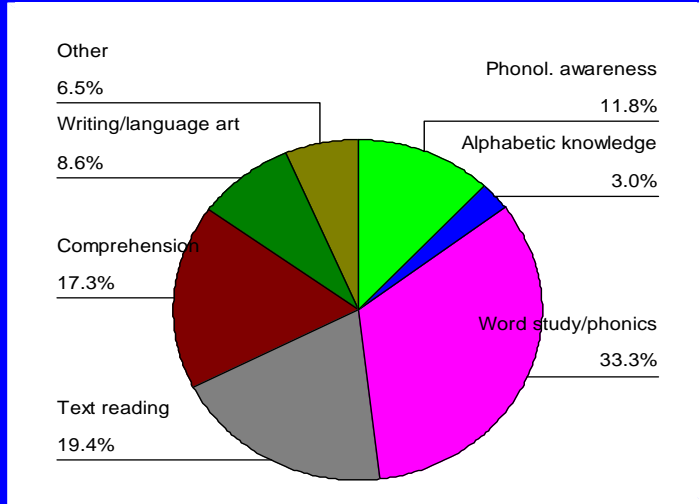


Teacher quality ratings were based on observable behavior using professional judgment, not inferences.

- The framework for thinking about teacher quality is based on the assumption that a teacher who falls into the *Excellent* category is one who addresses the needs of a struggling reader.
- A rating below the excellent rating of 4 represents the degree to which a teacher deviates from this standard.

2004 Site Visit Data:

Instructional Emphasis for Kindergarten



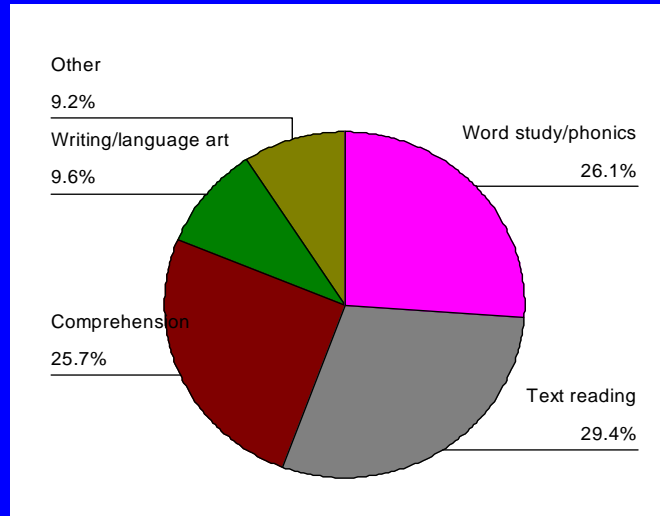
This pie chart describes the amount of time dedicated to various dimensions of reading instruction observed over all 2004 site visits at the indicated grade level. It is not meant to imply a model for how reading instruction should be allocated.

Kindergarten

This chart shows that over half of the instructional time was spent in two major dimensions: word study/phonics and text reading,

Other (6.5%): If less than 5% of the total observation time was spent in a certain area, for example, oral language, it was “lumped” in the Other category.

2004 Site Visit Data:
Instructional Emphasis for First Grade



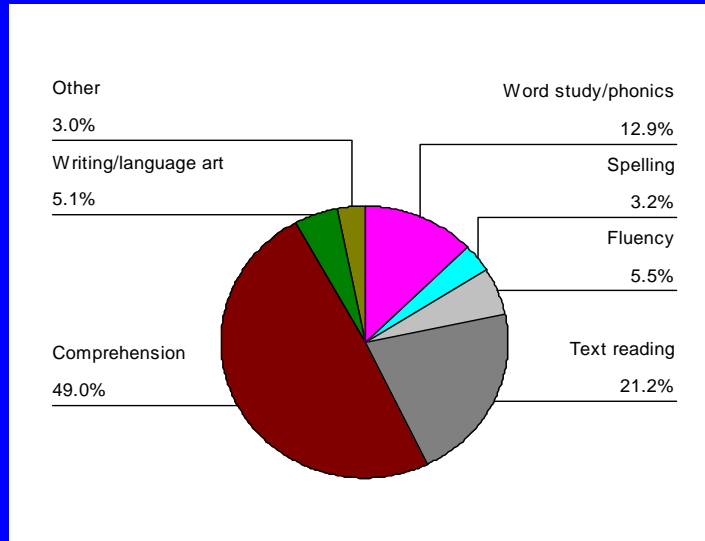
This pie chart describes the amount of time dedicated to various dimensions of reading instruction observed over all 2004 site visits at the indicated grade level. It is not meant to imply a model for how reading instruction should be allocated.

First Grade

Note that more time was given to comprehension and text reading in first grade than in kindergarten; less time was dedicated to word study/phonics. No time was observed in first grade for the areas of phonological awareness or alphabetic knowledge.

Other: concepts of print, PA, alphabetic knowledge; spelling, oral language , fluency

2004 Site Visit Data:
Instructional Emphasis for Second Grade

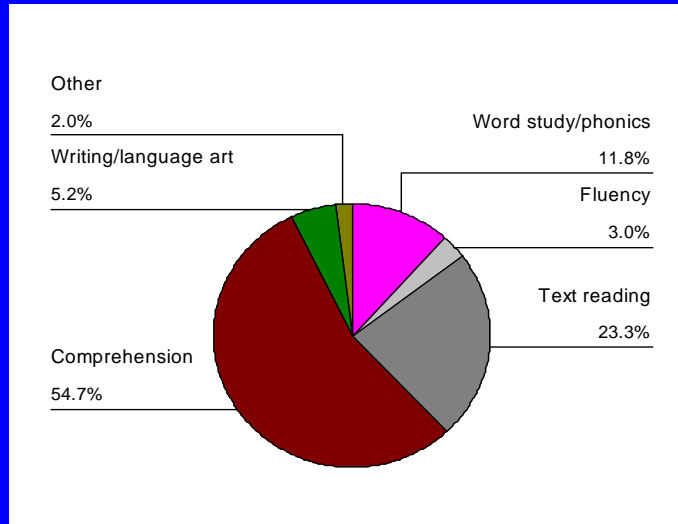


This pie chart describes the amount of time dedicated to various dimensions of reading instruction observed over all 2004 site visits at the indicated grade level. It is not meant to imply a model for how reading instruction should be allocated.

Almost half of the time observed in second grade was dedicated to comprehension. Two areas appear on this chart that did not appear before - fluency and spelling.

Other: Concepts of print, PA, oral language development

2004 Site Visit Data
Instructional Emphasis for Third Grade



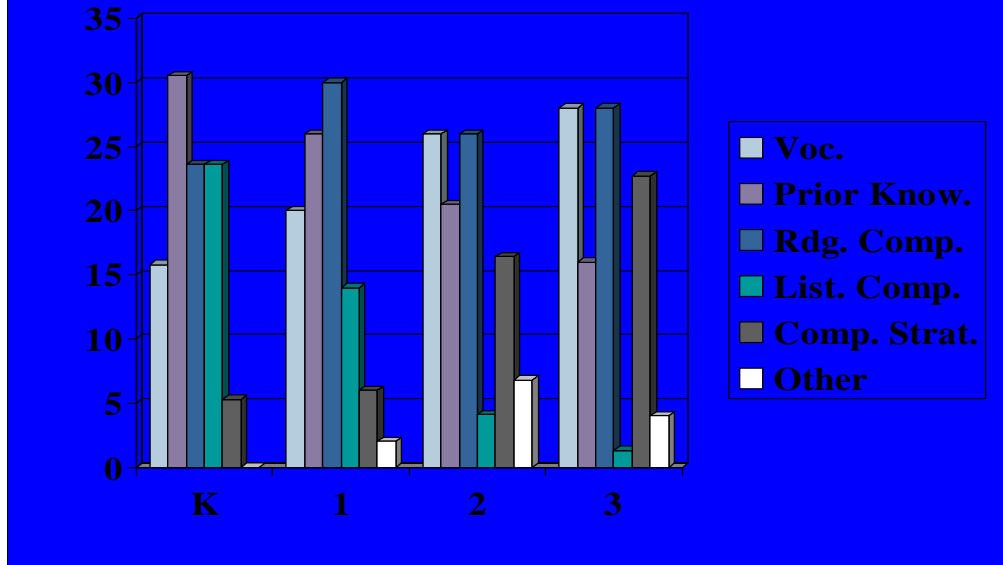
This pie chart describes the amount of time dedicated to various dimensions of reading instruction observed over all 2004 site visits at the indicated grade level. It is not meant to imply a model for how reading instruction should be allocated.

Again, we see an increase in comprehension activities. Fluency decreased a bit in third grade observations.

Other: concepts of print, spelling, oral language development

We see a good shift from word study activities in K-1 to comprehension and reading activities in 2-3 grades.

Comprehension



This graph breaks down the broad dimension of comprehension into its subcategories which are listed in box to the right of the bar graph.

Note:

The frequency of certain activities **increased** from K – 3 grade. Activities involving **vocabulary** instruction occupied about 16% of the comprehension activities observed in kindergarten; in first grade it increased to 20%, in second grade to 26% and in third grade to 28%.

Activities involving **comprehension strategy instruction and or use** occupied about 5% of the comprehension activities observed in kindergarten; in first grade it increased to 6%, in second grade to 16% and in third grade to 23%.

The frequency of certain activities **decreased** from K – 3 grade.

Activities involving **listening comprehension monitoring (focus on comprehending text read aloud – students do not have a copy of text)** instruction occupied about 23% of the comprehension activities observed in kindergarten; in first grade it decreased to 14%, in second grade to 4% and in third grade to 1%.

Activities involving **prior knowledge/predicting** occupied about 30% of the comprehension activities observed in kindergarten; in first grade it decreased to 26%, in second grade to 20% and in third grade to 16%.

Preparation for 2005 Site Visits

Concentrate on implementing high quality instruction:

- Using Core Reading Program
- Differentiating instruction
- Using data to drive instruction
- Using data to drive professional development



Now that you know more about 2004 site visits, you probably are thinking, what if my school is selected for a RF site visit.....So what can a school do to prepare for a RF site visit?

The bottom line is to teach reading according to RF guidelines as indicated on this slide.

Preparation cont.

Examine what teachers are doing differently for students who are “in the red.”

- intensity of instruction
- resources
- differentiating instruction
- organizing instruction



Preparation cont.

Conduct informal classroom walkthroughs regularly.

- Principal, AP, RF Coach
- District personnel
- Regional RF Coordinator



(See Core Reading Program for walkthrough checklists)

Preparation cont.

The reading coach and principal should:

- identify early implementers who can model for other teachers.
- identify resisters who would benefit from observing other teachers.
- participate in grade level team meetings to help teachers focus on student reading needs.



Success = Pressure + Support



During this first year of RF, many felt as though they were climbing a steep mountain. However, the climb was not solo and not without support. We have both the challenge to reach the summit but also have the necessary supports.....resources, personnel, focus, professional development, data, etc. to help us achieve the summit which is ultimately student reading success.

Success

