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Repeated Reading—A Culturally Responsive Approach

In our previous email, we talked about identifying research-based and evidence-based interventions and identifying how we could modify the interventions to make them culturally relevant. I explained that I would begin our discussion on instruction and interventions with *repeated reading*. I explained that, the best reading strategy is to simply get students to read; students need to practice reading.

In his book, *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell talks about the importance of practicing and putting in hours and hours of rehearsal. The overall concept of his book is that there is no such thing as overnight success and that stars are not born, but are made. Essentially, he discusses how groups such as the Beatles, and individuals such as Bill Gates, have achieved success. He placed emphases on practice. In his book, he coined the 10,000-hour rule, which explains that people will become competent and successful in the “thing” they desire success only when they apply themselves and practice for hours and hours. This is also true of reading. One of the main reasons students struggle with reading is because many of them do not read; they do not put the hours in. Also, when they read books, they read just to get the assignment done, rather than reading aesthetically—for the joy and fun in reading.

In this newsletter, I will discuss the instructional strategy, *repeated reading*, and discuss how we could make this reading activity culturally relevant for students who embrace values that are associated with traditional African American culture.

Repeated Reading—A Culturally Responsive Approach

Repeated reading is a process of having students read the same book or excerpt from a book repeatedly, for at least three to five times. The goal is to decrease the number of errors each time the student reads the book or excerpt. Usually when students read, teachers



document the amount of words read correctly per reading passage, and corrects students when they misread a word (error correction).

Question:

Now, how could teachers modify this evidence-based strategy to make it relevant to students who embrace characteristics that are associated with African American culture?

Answer:

One way is to make this experience as communalistic as possible. To do this, teachers could create a class climate where students are encouraged to depend on each other for success in the classroom. With this, teachers could create a “family-like environment,” in which learning is not just about memorizing facts, but rather, it is a process where students and teachers work interpedently to help each other meet a common goal—together. Within this classroom, teachers and students praise one another, help one another, and encourage one another to work at their highest potential.

Repeated reading fits perfectly within this classroom climate in that educators could create groups in which students could work together to increase each other’s reading skills and reduce errors. The goal for each group could be to help each other read better and reduce errors.

The Process

Educators could create groups of 3 students in which (1) one student is assigned to read, the (2) second student could engage in “Listening While Reading (LWR)—in which he or she follows along in his or her own book while student 1 reads (LWR is also an evidence-based strategy that we will discuss later), and the (3) third member of the group could be the “recorder” in which he or she could record the errors that were made while student 1 reads aloud.



If the student, who reads aloud, makes a reading error, the student who is engaging in LWR could correct the student immediately, and the recorder could jot the misread word down on a piece of paper.

After the first student reads the passage, he/she and the two other students could review the misread words (errors), practice those words, and switch roles—in which the student who “listened” while reading could become the actual reader, the student who read could become the recorder, and the student recorder could listen while reading. Within this process, it is important that students encourage each

other and praise each other for reducing their errors. High fives and daps are encouraged!

To praise each other and celebrate success, students could dance or engage in other movement expressive behaviors to demonstrate their excitement for their reading progress (affective engagement).



Checklist to implement this activity

1. Discuss with the classroom the importance of depending on one another to increase reading skills—create communalistic environment
2. Collect baseline data to identify current reading fluency data (CBM probes)
3. Create a chart of student scores (baseline data)
4. Create small groups and allow students to name their group
5. Implement culturally relevant strategy
6. Determine the effectiveness of the intervention by PROGRESS MONITORING—after one week (or two weeks) of implementation
7. Chart scores to identify progress from this intervention
8. Determine if the intervention was effective at improving words per minute

Progress monitoring is key to identify if the intervention is effective at increasing reading fluency skills.