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**Preparing Classroom-Ready Teacher Candidates: Alignment of University Instructional
Materials with District Reading Curricula and Assessments**

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Abstract

This study is a step toward closing the perceived gap between the preparation of elementary educators for teaching literacy and the expectations of districts. By identifying curriculum and assessments used in cooperating districts, informed faculty can incorporate specific clinical tools into teacher preparation coursework. By providing a seamless connection between the theory, pedagogy, and practice found in the university classroom and that found in elementary classrooms, candidates become more “classroom ready”. The teacher preparation will be better prepared to provide the evidence of program outcomes required by NCATE ("what candidates know and can do"). Faculty, schools, and students will have a common knowledge base and language regarding literacy instruction and assessment.

Background

The goal of any teacher preparation program should be to provide a preservice educational experience that prepares teacher candidates in such a way that (1) they are as “classroom ready” as possible during clinical placements and student teaching; (2) they are as competent as beginning teachers can be when they enter the teaching profession; (3) they have a foundation to build upon during the induction process; and (4) districts can retain more teachers due to their increased effectiveness (Darling-Hammond et al.; 2005). According to Darling-Hammond, who has written widely about the relationship between teacher preparation, teacher quality, and teacher retention, approximately 30 percent of new teachers leave the profession in their first five years of practice, with many exiting in the first year. Each exiting teacher costs a district between \$15,000 and \$20,000 in the recruitment and training of a replacement. Studies of teacher retention demonstrate that for those teachers with stronger preparation, the number exiting the profession in the first five years is reduced to twenty percent.

There is an emerging consensus that the single most important factor for improving student performance is teacher quality, and a higher-quality teacher is particularly significant for low-performing, minority students (Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor, 2007). Furthermore, teachers who demonstrated an increase in students' academic performance were found to remain in education longer and were more likely to remain in lower-performing, urban schools (Goldhaber, Gross and Player, 2007).

In Massachusetts, a study of new teachers found that twenty percent of those entering the field as new employees received no curriculum at all upon their arrival, resulting in new teachers having to assume the responsibilities for both *what to teach* and *how to teach it*. Additionally, more than half of new teachers were confronted with curriculum that identified topics or skills they were required to teach; however, these novice teachers were not provided with materials or guidance to accomplish these tasks (Kauffman et al., 2002).

Preservice and new teachers face tremendous demands. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2005), individual teachers have an impact on student performance that is "more powerful than almost any other school resource and as influential as student background factors like poverty, language, or family status." Clearly preservice programs and faculty knowledge base must be well aligned with the host environments in which preservice candidates are placed and graduates become faculty members.

Theoretical Framework

Teachers' beliefs and practices are products of their preservice educational experiences (Pajares, 1992). In a study of technology education and social studies instruction in constructivist classrooms, Crocco (2001) found that a key factor in successfully integrating technology into teaching is directly related to what happens in teacher training. Preservice teachers require both

instruction in theory, best practices, and strategies and multiple opportunities to develop and deepen their fluency with the integration of technology into content area instruction throughout their pre-service education program (Angeli, 2004). Additionally, preservice teachers need opportunities to reflect on the what, when, how, and why of using technology as they developing content-specific, or declarative knowledge, aligned with pedagogy, or procedural knowledge (Dexter & Riedel, 2003). Without opportunities for integration of technology tools with content instruction during preservice coursework, it is unlikely that preservice teachers will do so in clinical classroom settings, student teaching, or when employed as teachers.

Researchers in educational technology report that practice with technology tools in authentic settings supports students in developing skills, enhancing understanding, promoting reflective learning, and increasing self-efficacy (Crocco , 2001; Dexter & Riedel, 2003; Jacobsen, Clifford & Friesen, 2002; Magliaro & Ezeife, 2007). However, it is important for teacher preparation faculty to collaborate with cooperating teachers and university supervisors in clinical and student teaching placement sites to align preservice instruction and associated educational tools (e.g., technology) with those tools available at host sites. Without this communication, collaboration, and alignment, teacher candidates will not realize the intended benefit.

Two key points emerge from this literature. First, preservice curriculum should include authentic learning experiences embedded in education coursework. Additionally, intentional and deliberate collaboration with clinical and student teaching host sites is mandatory. Without this partnership, faculty cannot ensure alignment between “tools” used in authentic curricular practice within the preservice program’s coursework and the technology tools used in schools. Similarly, Bischoff, Farris, & Henninger (1988) demonstrated that when methods courses were

concurrent and aligned with clinical or field experiences that were (1) supervised by informed and trained teachers, and (2) had an explicitly defined purpose, process, and outcomes, preservice teachers benefitted with regard to their preparedness to teach (cf. Applegate & Lasley, 1982; Coulon, 2000; Kragler & Nierenberg, 1999; McIntyre, 1983; McIntyre, Byrd, and Foxx, 1996; Zeichner, 1987).

Rationale for Present Study

We wanted to extend the findings of research in technology education to literacy education. Where research showed the efficacy of intentional and planned alignment of technology tools and learning experiences between teacher preparation programs and the hosting sites for candidates, we wanted to explore the effectiveness of this alignment in regard to core reading programs, intervention programs and techniques, and various reading assessment tools. Given current federal and state regulations, districts are required to use the three-tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) Model in the delivery of evidence-based literacy instruction to all students. As such, teacher preparation programs could become more effective and efficient in preparing students by ensuring students have authentic opportunities to apply learned literacy strategies using the tools (programs and assessments) employed by the schools that host them for clinical experiences, student teaching, and ultimately as certified educators.

Methodology

The first step in aligning the curriculum taught in teacher preparation programs with the expectations of hosting schools is to find out the expectations of those hosting and hiring schools. Therefore, we designed a survey for those school districts with three major questions in mind: first, we wanted to find out which major reading programs are being used by the districts in our area; second, we wanted to find out which reading assessments were being used and how

the data from these assessments was used at the school and classroom levels; and third, we wanted to know the type of training districts provide and what they want our candidates to know when they arrive to participate in the classrooms for both pre-professional and professional service. An online survey was developed with 4 to 6 questions in each of these three areas.

We felt it would be reasonable to expect literacy leaders and teachers to understand the reading terms found in educational materials, federal, state, and local standards, professional reading/literacy articles and documents, and curriculum and instructional materials. Our questions were guided by the glossary provided on The Florida Center for Reading Research web page (see <http://www.fcrr.org/curriculum/glossary/glossaryOfReading.pdf>). We thus asked for information regarding core reading programs, reading intervention programs, specialized programs in spelling, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and written language, and we also asked for information regarding school-wide reading strategies that are in use across all classrooms.

An understanding of the four types of assessment requisite for evidence-based reading instruction aligned with the Response to Intervention (RTI) model include: (1) universal screening; (2) progress monitoring; (3) diagnostic testing; and (4) outcome measures. These measures are all valuable data points to consider when making critical instructional decisions.

Universal screening probes (USPs) are brief, individually administered measures that provide data that informs teachers about a student's baseline performance relative to grade level expectation (Kaminski & Good, 1996). These tools have research-based evidence that they are reliably predictive of later student success. If students score below the grade level expectation on USPs, they are candidates for intervention focused on the identified skill area with concurrent progress monitoring (Howell & Nolet, 2000; Kaminski & Good, 1996).

The progress of students identified for and receiving intervention can be regularly and systematically measured using progress monitoring assessments. Progress monitoring assessments, also known as curriculum-based measurement, have been extensively researched to determine norms and percentile ranks for students across grade levels (Deno, 1985; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). When progress monitoring data are plotted over time, the student's rate of learning can be determined, which then can inform instructional decisions necessary to remediate the student to function at grade level.

Diagnostic assessments can be formal (standardized) and informal. Formal diagnostic assessments are administered by qualified, trained staff and are often lengthy and expensive to administer and interpret. These standardized tests provide a variety of scores (total scores and subskill scores, standard scores, age-level scores, grade-level scores, etc.) that are based on norms derived from extensive research. The meaning of the scores relative to the child's learning profile are interpreted by educational professionals and used to make high-stakes decisions regarding a child's educational program (Fletcher, Coulter, Reschly & Vaughn, 2004). Before the advent of RTI, formal diagnostic assessments were employed to qualify students for special education using the "discrepancy model."

Informal assessments are generally quicker and easier to give than formal diagnostic assessments, do not require the intensity of training, and when used with data from universal screenings give information about a student's academic weaknesses that can be used by educators to design instructional plans. These assessments are useful for creating intervention groups (RTI Tier Two) that can provide students with appropriate remediation within the general education setting (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Fuchs & Deshler, 2007). When informal assessment is combined with progress monitoring tools (described earlier), and is implemented in a reliable

and valid manner, differentiated intervention instruction can be designed and a student's response to instruction can be measured, yielding a data-driven tiered and monitored instructional delivery system.

Outcome assessments are typically group administered assessments given at the end of a unit of study, semester, or school year. Typically, results are used to report on the effectiveness of curriculum and instructional programs to school, district, and state leaders. High stakes state assessments, such as the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), Arizona Instrument to Measure Scores (AIMS), and Colorado's Student Assessment Program (CSAP) belong to this group. The data from outcome assessments are generally not specific enough to be useful for designing targeted individual student instruction; rather the data are more useful in identifying weaknesses in programming.

Finally, we wanted to learn what type of professional development the schools and districts supply for their teachers in regard to reading and assessment. We could juxtapose this with the level of knowledge they expect our student teachers and teacher applicants to have when they arrive, so that we could determine what we have to include in our teacher preparation program. We also asked for any additional input they may wish to provide regarding reading instruction and assessment.

With these definitions and understandings identified as foundational to planning and delivering effective literacy instruction, a survey was designed to gather information pertinent to literacy instruction and assessment in cooperating schools. This information would provide an opportunity to close the gap between the preparation of elementary literacy educators and the expectations of cooperating districts. By identifying curricula (core and intervention) and

assessments used in cooperating districts, informed faculty can now incorporate specific clinical tools into coursework.

An email was sent to the principals at 43 area schools, explaining how important this information was in helping us to provide candidates who meet their expectations, and asking for their assistance in gathering this information. Three weeks after the initial email, we followed up with a second email, reminding them that the survey was still available for their input, and asking them to respond if they had not yet done so. The email solicitation mentioned that the principals could respond to the survey themselves, or they could forward the survey to a knowledgeable faculty member.

Responses to questions in the first and second areas were easy to tabulate by frequency, because those responses involved names of programs and assessments. When we asked for information regarding the use of data in the schools and classrooms, and asked for input regarding the knowledge pre-professionals and professionals should have in order to thrive in their placements, the responses were more lengthy and varied. Those responses were simply tabulate and listed. There were not enough responses to analyze them for common threads, so we simply analyzed them holistically in an effort to inform our instruction. The data are presented below.

Data

After the first email was sent, we received 16 responses to our online survey. Without reviewing any of the responses, and without tabulating any responses, we sent a follow-up email. Responses to the second email brought the total online survey activity to 23 respondents, which included responses from 15 principals, 2 reading specialists, 1 superintendent, 3 language arts teachers or coaches, and 2 instructional consultants. Of these 23, there were several duplicates,

meaning that both the principal and a knowledgeable faculty member responded from the same school. In this case, the responses were integrated and counted as a single response. There were also 3 respondents who answered none of the questions on the survey, so those were simply discarded. Altogether, there were 17 overall responses -- representing a response rate of approximately 40% -- that could be used in our tabulation. None of the questions, however, had responses from more than 15 respondents. The tabulated responses often contain more responses than this, because some of the questions (i.e., assessments, reading programs) could receive multiple responses within a school.

Responses to the questions are provided in the accompanying tables (see Tables 1-10). Frequencies have been tabulated for most questions, but some respondents provided more open-ended answers, so we provide them verbatim. Responses for the final questions regarding what levels of knowledge are expected of incoming student teachers and teacher candidates are summarized in the conclusion section below.

Conclusions

Based upon the responses we received, we can conclude that most responding districts use a published reading program (see Table 1). The most common are Scott Foresman, Harcourt, and Houghton Mifflin. This suggests that our teacher preparation program should at least cover the commonalities among these programs, so that candidates are ready to use any one of them. Another common curriculum used by area schools is the guided reading format. This reading instruction format, which is not technically a “curriculum,” has been refined over the past two decades by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell, and it is based on the utilization of leveled books and small group interaction. Candidates should leave our program with a basic knowledge of the procedures of guided reading as well.

When we asked about reading intervention programs, the responses became much less informative (see Table 2). Some responses suggest that the same reading program that is used for instruction is used for intervention as well. Harcourt, Houghton Mifflin, Scott Foresman, Foundations, and guided reading were some examples of this. Some schools mentioned the use of published programs, including Reading Recovery, Read Naturally, Reading Mastery, and Corrective Reading, but the total list of these would be nearly unmanageable when it comes to providing instruction in these during the pre-service program. Responses also suggest that classroom teachers rely on the intervention guidelines within their reading programs, or they develop their own “home-grown” lessons to assist students in need of more intense instruction. This makes it difficult to provide candidates with the knowledge that will help them fit into an established system, but leaves the door open for them to arrive with their own knowledge of appropriate reading interventions.

We asked a more general question to ascertain what types of specialized programs are used in the areas of spelling, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and written language (see Table 4). The responses were grouped into the areas of general reading, spelling, and written language. While it appears that most schools in our area use Empowering Writers for written language instruction, a few use other workshop models. Most of the respondents refer to Read Naturally as their choice of fluency programs, and all continue to use some form of spelling program, with Cast-A-Spell and Sitton Spelling leading the list. Responses that referred to general reading programs were widely scattered, and may have been an attempt to supplement earlier responses with less frequently used intervention programs, or those used only by special education teachers.

When it came to sharing school-wide strategies that are taught in all classrooms, the responses became much more difficult to interpret (see Table 5). A strategy is a plan of action to achieve a particular goal, which may also include the intentional and targeted use of skills to reach that goal. Thus, we were somewhat alarmed to find that the most frequent responses to this question included instructional formats (guided reading, literacy circles, small groups, and readers' workshop) and skills (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary). It became apparent that the classroom teachers and principals were somewhat unaware of the meaning of strategies and strategy use, meaning it may be important for us to engage in dialogue with districts and perhaps co-plan and/or provide professional development.

We began our analysis of assessments with a question about the screening assessments that schools currently use to determine who may be in need of additional reading instruction (see Table 6). A large number of schools use the DRA, DRAII, and DRP as screening tools, which is not surprising, given the emphasis encouraged by the state education department. A large number of schools are also using DIBELS, which is also encouraging. However, there are still some misgivings in this area, because there were some responses that include writing prompts, dictation tasks, and "benchmarks in all areas", which are not directly related to assessing overall performance in reading. Also, at least two schools mentioned using the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), which is an outcome assessment, as being a screening assessment, but this test is not given until Grade 3, and the results are delivered to the school many months after the fact.

The most frequently used progress monitoring tool is the DIBELS (see Table 6). Although most of the assessments mentioned in this area yield data that might be frequent enough to monitor progress, we do not have enough information about "common formative assessments", "weekly skills and theme tests", "CMT prototypes", or "classroom monitoring" to

be able to prepare our candidates to use these in the classroom. Some respondents took our question to include progress monitoring in all content areas, so they included responses for mathematics and writing as well.

Diagnostic assessments are designed to determine the specific areas of weakness in students who have been identified as being below their expected level of performance as determined by the screening assessment. Diagnostic assessments drill deeper into the problem to determine specific areas of instruction, and their results can be used to design targeted instruction. For instance, a comprehension assessment may provide an assessment of overall reading ability, but it does not point to the underlying skill or skills that may be hindering the comprehension. Thus, the wide range of responses to this question was disquieting (see Table 7).

While running records could provide insight into some reading problems, the errors that a student makes must provide a pattern, and many underlying problems may not be detectable using this method. DIBELS assessments are primarily used for screening and progress monitoring, targeting a variety of skills including phonemic awareness, oral reading fluency, comprehension, and word use (vocabulary). The DRA is considered to be a general measure to establish baseline and mid-year and end-year outcomes, assessing accuracy, rate, prosody, and comprehension. The DRP and CMT measure reading comprehension, which does not provide insight into baser skills. Many of the other responses to this question only cover a small portion of the skills necessary to become a good reader, brining into question how these schools can provide targeted differentiated instruction. Not only are we left wondering how to prepare candidates who fit in, we are left wondering how students in these schools receive the individualized interventions that they need.

When we asked schools to tell us about the outcome measures they use, we received almost the same responses that we received for progress monitoring (see Table 8). The CMT was mentioned by 3 schools, and the DIBELS, DRA, and DRP was mentioned by several others. Although these could be outcome measures, it is not suggested that schools use the same measure for all four types of assessment. One school even suggested that we refer to their answers for Universal and Progress Monitoring. The most disconcerting responses on this question were that 3 schools had no idea what we meant by outcome assessments, providing additional evidence that there is a lack of common vocabulary and understanding among educational professionals already in the field.

The results from our question on data use within the school (Table 9) suggest that there is agreement about the use of data gathered from all of these assessments. Most of the respondents use similar language about using it for flexible grouping and designing targeted instruction. The responses to our question regarding data use within the classroom are similar (see Table 10). It must be pointed out, however, that the persons responding to these two questions included very few classroom teachers, so we would expect the responses to be similar and may or may not reflect actual classroom practice. Furthermore, given the lack of understanding of the four types of assessment, this may or may not be a signal that data analysis and utilization was the first step in a holistic understanding of the response to intervention model.

We also asked schools to provide information about the professional development that they provide for their faculty. Most of the responses to this question suggested that districts are providing professional development that targets the specific programs or assessments used within their districts. Only one respondent mentioned follow-up coaching and observation as part

of their overall approach. Several respondents mentioned training that was directly related to the reading program in use.

Finally, we asked the respondents to share their expectations about what incoming student teachers and student teachers should know about reading instruction. While most of the responses were quite vague, such as “understand learning at the developmental level” and “be intelligent, articulate, [and] willing to learn”, some of them were more specific. The responses that were more specific about the information candidates must know about teaching reading would put our candidates above the norm of the responses to our previous questions. And while some schools prefer that candidates be able to “analyze student data and make instructional decisions/modification based on it”, others “expect teachers to be able to teach using the readers’ workshop and guided reading model using leveled books immediately”. This is a wide disparity in expectations, because one of these is at the skill-level end of the spectrum, while the other is at the comprehension-only end of the spectrum.

Discussion

We set out to identify the curriculum and assessments that are in use in the districts and schools in which our pre-service teachers are likely to be placed and/or ultimately hired. We wanted to do so in order to build instruction into our courses and prepare our candidates to be classroom-ready. The more closely we could align our instruction with the needs of the schools and districts, the more likely our candidates would be to hit the ground running and fit into the culture of those schools.

What we found is that there are a number of schools that use published reading programs, and given the commonalities among these programs, we feel confident in preparing our candidates to use any or all of them. We also found, however, that some schools use a shotgun

approach to reading instruction, and much of the instruction seems to be left to the whims and preferences of individual faculty. We found much the same when it came to reading assessment. If we hold to the notion that the principals and reading specialists are the instructional leaders in these schools, there is a dangerous lack of understanding of the assessment process as outlined by the reading experts at such institutions as The Florida Center for Reading Research. These local leaders seem to possess the correct philosophy when it comes to analyzing and using data at the school and classroom levels, but given their lack of understanding of the underlying assessments, the execution of this philosophy is in doubt. Their use of the language in this regard suggests an improved understanding of the response to intervention model of reading instruction, but relatively stagnant reading scores on the Connecticut Mastery Test (cf. <http://solutions1.emetric.net/cmtpublic/Default.aspx>) imply that this declarative understanding has not yet resulted in improved reading instruction at the classroom level. More importantly, this declarative understanding seems not to have transferred to a deep understanding of the iterative process of using assessment to drive instruction.

We are left with a conundrum. We are asked to prepare candidates who can fulfill districts' expectations of an incoming teacher, but we have found that the hosting districts are in dire need of professional development in reading assessment and instruction as well. We are left to wonder whether we should focus our efforts on the professionals already in the field, or to focus our efforts on candidates who will know more than their hosting schools. We wonder how well those candidates will be accepted into the cultural milieu if they point out the problems with the status quo and make suggestions for improvement immediately upon their arrival.

Given the wide range of expectations voiced in our final questions, we are in doubt that we can satisfy the needs of all of the schools that we surveyed. We do know that it will be

extremely difficult to provide candidates who can pass the interviews for certain of those schools. For instance, one principal stated, “I won’t hire a classroom teacher who hasn’t demonstrated expertise in elementary reading instruction during the interview and during the observation of a sample lesson.” But this same principal defined expertise in the younger grades as having “a great deal of experience with running records, miscue analysis, and the DRA.” Do we begin our instruction with our candidates or with their hosting schools?

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TABLE 1: Please name the CORE READING PROGRAMS used in the general education classrooms in your district

Core Reading Program	# of Responses
Scott Foresman Reading Street (P-5)	3
Harcourt Trophies	3
Foundations (K-3)	1
Harcourt	2
Houghton Mifflin	2
Guided Reading	1
Making Meaning	1
Leveled text using Fountas & Pinnell and DRA for leveling – multiple copies for guided reading and single copy books for “book shopping”	
We do not utilize a core reading program. We use a variety of leveled text including decodable text. For direct phonics instruction the grade K-2 use the Foundations program. All grade levels implement Nancy Boyle’s strategies for metacognition and comprehension. The upper grade levels also instruct non-fiction text strategies through Heinemann	
Balanced Literacy approach students are assessed and instructed on their instructional level, students read independently on their independent level and students are read to from books that would be on their frustrational level. Kindergarten students are instructed using Literacy How through Haskins Lab	

TABLE 2: Please name the **READING INTERVENTION PROGRAMS** used in your district

Intervention Program/Materials	# of Responses
Reading Mastery	4
Corrective Reading	4
Read Naturally	3
Foundations by Wilson (K-3)	2
Scott Foresman Sidewalks	2
Lexia	2
A-Z leveled texts	1
Great Leaps materials	1
The Six Minute Solution – fluency text	1
Just Words (4-5)	1
Reading Recovery	1
Form of Reading Recovery	1
Home grown tutoring lessons	1
Reading room – SLC program	1
SRA Materials	1
ERI	1
Harcourt Intervention	1
Houghton Mifflin	1
SOAR	1
“Linda Mood”	1
High Noon	1
AVENUES	1
Words Their Way	1
Quick Reads	1
Wright Group Early reading Intervention	1
Early Reading Inventory	1
TLC	1
Merrell	1
READ (our own guided reading intensive program)	1
START	1
Guided Reading (Plus each grade has different interventions depending on the data)	1
For students who need interventions, in the lower level they are provided with “double dose” of Foundations, and remedial reading instruction. In the upper levels the students will receive pull-out instruction with the Foundations program. Those who are struggling with fluency receive direct instruction and practice with the Read Naturally software program.	
Pearson – My Sidewalks Differentiated instruction for below level readers from Reading Street Road to by Blachman and Tangel	
F&P Leveled Literacy Intervention – Blue Quick Reads	
Early Intervention Program – modeled on Reading Recovery Phonemic Awareness scope and sequence aligned with F&P K phonics program and “Touch Cues” a school designed letter sound recognition program	
Trophies has an intervention series. Students also work with Reading Teachers	

TABLE 3: Please name the **SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS** used in your district to address Spelling, Vocabulary, Fluency, Comprehension, and Written Language

General Reading	# of Responses
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Running Head: **Preparing Classroom-Ready Teacher Candidates**

Fundations	2
Wilson Reading Program	2
Lexia for PA	2
Saxon Phonics	1
Quick Reads	1
Six Minute Solution	1
High Frequency Word Lists	1
Reading Mastery (SRA)	1
Corrective Reading (SRA)	1
Daily Five Café	1
Special Education Services	1
Heavily rely on Fountas & Pinnell’s Reader’s Workshop/Guided Reading model	1
REWARDS Program Option – Reading Options for Achievement – Let’s Read Options	1
Spelling Programs	# of Responses
Cast a Spell	4
Sitton Spelling	3
Fundations	2
Just Words	2
Words Their Way	1
Gantz Spelling	1
Scott Foresman Spelling	1
Zaner Bloser	1
Fluency Programs	# of Responses
Read Naturally	5
Fluency First (Wright Group)	1
Written Language Programs	# of Responses
Empowering Writers	7
Columbia Writing program	1
That’s a Great Answer – Nancy Boyles	1
Lucy Calkins writing program	1

TABLE 4: What SCHOOL-WIDE READING STRATEGIES are common to all classrooms?

Schoolwide Strategies	# of Responses
Guided reading based on leveled groups	5
Retelling	3
Phonemic awareness	3
Fluency	3
Comprehension	3
Phonics	3
Small group	3
Vocabulary	2
Visualizing	2
Comprehension strategies as outlined by Comprehension Guide from the state.	2
Readers' Workshop	2
Decoding strategies	2
Previewing text	2
Daily SSR	2
Literacy Circles	2
Whole group	2
Daily Instruction in leveled text Dedicated time for reading practice	2
Daily Read Alouds and Shared	2
Houghton Mifflin Reading Program	2
Using context clues to make meaning, picture, and/or text clues	2
Predicting	1
Summarizing	1
Questioning	1
Making connections	1
Graphic organizers	1
Common Print Level Strategies allowing student choice or leveled text	1
Daily reading practice required for homework	1
Picture walk.	1
Students who are struggling work with the reading teachers.	1
Reading Journals	1
Getting your mouth ready	1
Looking for familiar chunks in unfamiliar words	1
Think alouds	1
Fab Five	1
Sheltered Instruction	1
Differentiated Instruction (Tier 1, 2, 3)	1
Learning Centers	1
Best practice strategies such as QAR, SQRRR, mapping, use of graphic organizers, journaling, TTQA, read-respond, connections read-alouds, think pair share	1
Nancy Boyles reading strategies: make connections, picture, wonder, predict, notice and figure out. Pieces of Story Grammar Marker	1
All use the cueing systems	1
Running Records	1

TABLE 5: What UNIVERSAL SCREENING ASSESSMENTS do you use in your school?

Universal Screening Measures	# of Responses
DIBELS	5
DRA	3

Running Head: **Preparing Classroom-Ready Teacher Candidates**

DRAII	3
DRP	3
CMT	2
Running Records	2
Common Comprehension Assessment	1
EDL II	1
Writing Prompts	1
Kindergarten Literacy Profile	1
Reading program assessments	1
Dictation	1
Letter recognition	1
Sound recognition	1
Harcourt Assessments	1
LAS	1
MIST	1
Benchmarks in all areas	1
School Wide – Writing Prompts, DRA, DRP	1
K – Marie Clays letter recognition, concepts about print, vocab, dictation tasks, phonemic awareness assessment	1
Grade 1 – Sight Word lists, Core Spelling Word Lists, Clay Dictation Tasks, Phonological Awareness Assessment	1
We use a version of Dibels, published by IDEAL consulting services, which incorporates all Dibels subtests in grades K-3, in addition to an AimsWeb subtest that assesses comprehension, called Maze. We also use common formative assessments, in grades 2-5, focused on comprehension, which mimic the reading comprehension portion of the CMT and help to drive instruction.	1

TABLE 6: What PROGRESS MONITORING ASSESSMENTS do you use in your school?

Progress Monitoring Assessments	# of Responses
DIBELS	7
Common Formative Assessments	4
Running Records	3
Weekly Skills and Theme Tests	1
Math Benchmarks	1
DRA	1
DRP	1
CMT prototypes	1
Classroom monitoring	1
Quick reads	1
DRAII (2)	2
Easy CBM	1
LAS	1
Math Unit tests We are in the process of creating grade level CFA's (Common Formative Assessments). We have purchased an online program called Blue Ribbon Assessment which has a bank of assessment question and premade assessments for grades 1-6. Our writing prompts, Guided Reading Leveled Instruction data, weekly spelling assessments.	1
We have begun using Progress Monitoring Assessments, using Dibles and also through our Foundations program.	1
Same as Universal. We give most of these assessments in fall/winter/spring to monitor progress	1

TABLE 7: What DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS do you use in your school?

Diagnostic Assessments	# of Responses
Running Records	5
DIBELS	4
DRA II	3
DRA	2
DRA Word Analysis	1
DRA II/EDL II	1
DRP	1
Fountas & Pinnell Reading Assessment	1
QRI	1
CTOPP	1
Blue ribbon in reading and math, Foundations Unit Assessments, Growing with Math Unit Assessments	1
Comprehension CMT-like Assessments	1
Concepts about Print	1
Sight word assessment	1
Letter ID	1
Woodcock	1
LAS LINKS	1
Scott Foresman reading program	1
Easy CBM	1
CMT (Connecticut mastery Test)	1
MIST	1
CFA's (Common Formative Assessments)	1
Phonics assessment, but diagnostic information gleaned from DRA and Kindergarten Literacy Profile	1
Special Education uses a variety of assessments but their main one is the Woodcock Johnson	1

TABLE 8: What OUTCOME ASSESSMENTS for reading do you use in your school?

Outcome Assessments	# of Responses
CMT	3
DIBELS	2
DRA II	2
DRA	2
DRP	1
District Benchmarks	1
Exit standards in reading in grades 3-5.	1
See Universal and Progress Monitoring	1
MIST (now CBAS, state computer assessment for Grades 3-4)	1
Not sure what is meant here	2
Not sure what you mean – as all of our assessments provide outcome data. We meet in grade level data teams to analyze formative and summative assessments, develop strategies for instruction and plan targeted interventions	1

TABLE 9: How are the READING DATA used in your school?

Data Use In Schools
To form groups for instruction in the classroom and at tier 2 and 3 levels. Data is used to monitor growth, evaluate instruction and curriculum as well as to determine an individual's response to instruction and change or modify instructional focus in intervention groups.
Data is reviewed and analyzed by administration, classroom teachers, and specialists who participate in a form of data-driven decision making to look at data and make instructional decisions based on the needs of students
At the school data team level to monitor progress, make professional development and curricular decision, to compare progress to previous years & cohorts.
Data is analyzed bi-monthly-monthly to look at the effectiveness of instruction. Student instruction refocuses to address student learning needs as evidenced by the data.
During bi-weekly Literacy team meetings to adjust grouping and instruction. During monthly data teams to set goals, adjust groupings and instruction.
Determine Flexible Groupings. Determine interventions and strategies. Determine and Math Lab focused individual or small group instruction Data Teams
Data Teams progress monitor and analyze
Data is used to group/remediate/advise instructional practices/place students into tiers
Grade level data wall determines who will receive TIER 2 & 3 intervention, also determines extra help others will receive during the intervention time – example in first grade one group of students are receiving help with decoding words and the other group Words Their Way. Second and third grade – TIER 2 & 3 receive their interventions determined by the data – and some other students have an opportunity to work on fluency during the intervention time
Reading data is reviewed and analyzed to identify students needing reading intervention services. The following are teams that regularly review reading data: Literacy Team, Instructional Data Teams, School Data Teams, Reading Teachers
To determine level of support from the reading department

TABLE 10: How are READING DATA used in individual classrooms?

Data Use In Classrooms
To determine the level of text to use for instruction as well as the focus of instruction
Reading data is used by classroom teachers to form small, flexible groups based on common needs. The frequency and intensity with which teachers work with students is determined by the severity of students' needs.
At grade levels data team level to plan lessons, develop guided reading groups, and recommend students for tutoring/small group additional instruction.
Classroom teachers, reading teachers, resource teachers and administration make decision regarding student instruction as determined by assessment data.
To monitor student progress, adjust instruction and work with teaching partner to determine groupings if cross class grouping is done.
Determine Flexible Grouping and Tier II interventions Teachers use data analysis from grade level teams to inform instructional practices
Place children into guided groups and then RTI tiers for interventions
The guided reading group is determined each week by the data and what specific skill the students might need to work on
To inform instruction and to provide info for classroom grouping.
Data is used in the classrooms to: Determine program effectiveness, Adjust instruction when necessary, Identify students requiring reading intervention, Report progress to parents, Discussions at grade level data teams, Displayed on data walls.