Introduction

Welcome to the video overview of the Tier I Classroom. My name is Kristi Santi, Professor of Special Populations at the University of Houston. I am a team member of the UH AIIPaT Model Demonstration Project and want to take a moment to give a shout-out to the other team members. The goal of this session is to describe the ways in which teachers can think about organizing active learning in mixed delivery modes in a Tier I Classroom to improve learning outcomes for all students.

Concept: The Tier I Classroom

The image titled "Welcome to the Ground Floor: Tier 1" provides a visual representation of the levels of instruction teachers can provide in general education for students with dyslexia or related reading difficulties, arranged to illustrate different levels of focus and intensity. Let's break down the concepts conveyed in this image.

Chalkboards Representing Levels of Interventions

1) **Wooden Door Symbolism**

    Entry Point: The door symbolizes the access point to the tiered classroom where everyone is welcome and equitable outcomes begin in reading instruction.

    Key Characteristics of Tier 1 Interventions:

    Typically Developing: Addresses the needs of students typically developing in their reading abilities.

    Specific Area of Need: Tailored to target specific areas where students may need additional, temporary support.

    Above Proficient: Includes strategies for students performing above grade level and may require enrichment.

    Below Proficient: Provides support for students performing below grade level, ensuring they receive the necessary interventions to improve their reading skills.

2) **Whole Group Instruction: ALL**:

    Description: This level provides a consistent foundation of literacy skills and strategies to all students, ensuring everyone has access to the same core content.

    Focus: This approach promotes inclusivity and community by allowing students to engage in shared reading experiences, discussions, and activities, which can foster a sense of belonging and collaboration.

    Purpose: Whole group instruction also allows teachers to model reading strategies, demonstrate fluency, and introduce new concepts or texts that all students can explore together. By starting with whole-group instruction, teachers can set clear expectations and create a cohesive learning environment, before moving on to more targeted or individualized interventions based on students' specific needs.

3) **Meaning-Focused**:

    Description: This level emphasizes the importance of deriving meaning from what they read rather than just focusing on decoding words or phonics.

    Focus: Emphasizes teaching strategies such as making predictions, asking questions, summarizing, and connecting the text to prior knowledge.

    Purpose: The purpose is to help students engage with the text on a deeper level, fostering a love for reading and improving their ability to interpret and analyze written material. This type of instruction is crucial for developing critical thinking skills and ensuring that students can effectively comprehend and use information from their reading in various contexts and content areas.

4) **Code-Focused**:

    Description: Code-focused instruction for teaching reading is essential for helping students develop the foundational skills necessary for decoding words.

    Focus: This approach emphasizes the understanding and application of phonics, phonemic awareness, letter-sound relationships, and word recognition.

    Purpose: The primary purpose of code-focused instruction is to equip students with the ability to break down words into their component sounds, blend these sounds together, and recognize common patterns within words. This skill set is crucial for fluent reading and is particularly beneficial for students who struggle

with reading difficulties, such as dyslexia. By mastering these basic decoding skills, students can read more accurately and effortlessly, enhancing their ability to comprehend and engage with more complex texts. Code-focused instruction serves as a building block that supports all other aspects of reading development.

5) **Enrichment**:

   Description: Designed to challenge and extend the abilities of students who have already mastered basic reading skills and are performing above grade level.

   Focus: This helps prevent boredom and disengagement among advanced readers by keeping them motivated and intellectually stimulated. By offering enrichment, teachers can ensure that all students are continually growing and challenged according to their individual abilities and interests.

   Purpose: The purpose of enrichment instruction is to provide these students with opportunities to delve deeper into texts, explore advanced concepts, and engage in higher-order thinking activities. This type of instruction can include analyzing complex literature, conducting research projects, and participating in discussions that require critical thinking and interpretation. Enrichment activities foster a love for reading by allowing students to pursue their interests and explore topics in greater depth.

Implications for Educators

The implications for educators based on the Tier I Classroom model are significant. This tiered approach enables teachers to differentiate instruction effectively, ensuring that all students receive appropriate support regardless of their reading abilities. By providing a consistent foundation through whole-group instruction and gradually increasing the focus and intensity of small-group instruction, educators can address the diverse needs of their students. Meaning-focused and code-focused instructions are crucial for developing comprehension and decoding skills, while enrichment activities keep advanced readers engaged and challenged. This model also emphasizes continuous monitoring of student progress, allowing teachers to adjust their methods and interventions based on data, fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Closing

The "Welcome to the Ground Floor: Tier 1" image illustrates a tiered approach to reading instruction in a Tier I general education classroom. This tiered model allows educators to differentiate instruction, monitor progress, and ensure inclusive education, providing appropriate support for students with diverse reading abilities.

References

Agarwal, P. K., & Bain, P.M. (2019). *Powerful Teaching: Unleash the Science of Learning*. Jossey-Bass ISBN 978-1119521846.

Brown, P.C., Roediger III, H.L., & McDaniel, M.A. (2014). *Make it stick: The science of successful learning*. London, England: Harvard University Press. ISBN: 0674729013.

Bryk, A.S., Gomez, L.M., Grunow, A., & LeMathieu, P.G. (2015). *Learning to improve: How America's schools can get better at getting better*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press. ISBN: 1612507913.

Burkins, J., & Yates, K (2021). *Shifting the balance: Six ways to bring the science of reading into the balanced literacy classroom*. Stenhouse Publishers, ISBN: 978-1781625-315106.

Cunningham, A.E., & Zibulsky, J. (2013). *Book Smart: How to develop and support successful, motivated readers*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0199843930.

Dehaene, S. (2010). *Reading in the brain: The new science of how we read*. Penguin Book. ISBN: 978-014-311805-3.

Lemov, D., McCleary, S., Solomon, H., & Woolway, E. (2023). *Teach Like a Champion Field Guide 3.0: A Practical Resource to Make the 63 Techniques Your Own* (3rd Ed.) Jossey-Bass. ISBN 978-1119903659.

Seidenberg, M. (2018). *Language at the speed of sight: How we read, why so many can't, and what can be done about it*. Basic Books: NY. ISBN: 1541617150.

Weinstein, Y., Sumaracki, M., & Caviglioi, O. (2018). *Understanding How We Learn: A Visual Guide*. Routledge. ISBN 978-1138561724.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by Design*. (2nd Ed.). Association for Supervision and Curriculum. ISBN 978-146600350.

Wong, H.K., & Wong, R.T. (2018). *THE First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher*, 5th Edition (Book & DVD) (5th ed.). Harry K. Wong Publications. ISBN 978-9076423386.