

Prevention vs. Intervention

- Prevention focuses on instruction activities before a student has demonstrated reading difficulties
- Intervention focuses on instructional choices after a student has demonstrated reading difficulties

Kindergarten and First Grade Instruction as Prevention

- Numerous studies in the 1980s and 1990s examined the impact of explicit letter-sound instruction and phonological awareness instruction
 - They were compared to “business as usual” approaches
- The results were very consistent- a 50% or greater reduction in the number of struggling readers
- This body of research was reviewed by the National Reading Panel (200)
- Very little research of this sort has been published since

How Students Were Taught

- Some did whole class phonological awareness instruction on a slow, systematic trajectory throughout kindergarten
- Some did more intensive small group instruction for all students in the spring of kindergarten
- Some did it in whole or small group in first grade
- They all had very similar results
- The key was the phonological awareness and letter-sound instruction was explicit and systematic

Why These Studies Got Great Results

- Based upon information in Modules 2 and 4, it should be clear why such instruction was so successful
 - The phonological nature of alphabetic writing
 - The necessity of knowing the “code” of written language
 - How phonological skills and letter-sound skills support sight-word acquisition
- These studies prompted RTI and MTSS
- There is little evidence these elements represent current proactive

The Strength of the Results

- Average equivalent of 8 standard scores points
 - Originally represented as effect sizes
- Results did not always last after 1-2 year follow ups
- However,
 - At-risk students averaged 13 standard score point gains
 - Gains increased to an average of 20 points at the 6 months to 2 year follow ups

Module 10.1 Evidence for the Prevention of Reading Difficulties (incl. Origins of RTI)

- The data on at-risk students provides the strongest and most relevant case for prevention efforts

Implications of These Findings

- Many at-risk students can avoid reading difficulties if explicitly taught letter-sound skills and phonological awareness in kindergarten and/or first grade
- At-risk students taught by approaches that do not include these elements continue to struggle
- The gap between those with differing instruction widens over time