

As our school's demographics have changed, new challenges have been presented in reading instruction.

In the beginning of this School Improvement cycle, Cedar Rapids Elementary used the MacMillan McGraw Hill Reading Series. Each grade was taught as a single group. Phonics was identified as a weakness in using this series. Grades K-3 added Saxon Phonics. The two programs were not completely aligned in terminology used and the sequence of sound/skill introduction.

In school year 2009-2010 Ashlock templates, developed to provide more practice with Phonics skills, were added to instruction in grades 1-3 replacing Saxon Phonics.

During the school year 2010-2011, elementary teachers, Title 1 teacher, principal, superintendent and a paraprofessional attended training and evaluated core reading programs to move toward a scientifically based program which would more closely meet the needs of all students. Reading Mastery was selected and with consultation from Educational Resources Inc. was implemented in K-6 in the 2011-12 school year. Reading instruction was expanded to two ninety-minute instructional blocks: one for K-2 students, and one for 3-6 students. All students were placement tested in the spring of 2011 to determine appropriate level of instruction and grouping. Students are currently served in twelve ability level groups.

Title I interventions are scheduled at additional times and coordinated with Reading Mastery including: Corrective Reading, preteaching and reteaching lessons, ERI's supplemental Connections program for grades 1 and 2, and fluency and vocabulary practice for students needing support in upper groups. Classroom paraprofessionals assist under the direction of classroom and Title 1 teachers. May of 2013 will complete our second year of implementation.

A consultant from Educational Resources Inc. visits on-site six times per year. These visits provide assistance in observing, providing feedback and modeling for teachers and paras with their grade level groups. Data is reviewed and instructional decisions are made in conjunction with the reading coach and group instructors. Teachers have received training from Educational Resources in basic instruction, fluency building techniques, flip-flops and ask backs, teaching vowel-consonant vowel words, advanced vocabulary techniques, building background knowledge and concept words, using the Connections program, and implementing test taking skills.

Some elementary staff members worked cooperatively with Greeley/Wolbach and Spalding staff members to create grade level direct instruction packets for skills addressed on NeSA tests. Not all students are receiving Reading Mastery instruction on grade level, so this ensures that all students have worked with grade appropriate skills.

A team of elementary and junior high teachers attended Anita Archer's vocabulary training session in July 2011. Strategies have been shared at inservice days and are being implemented at third grade on up. Essential vocabulary lists are being established and tested in classes for third grade on up. These words are pretested and post tested at the beginning and end of each semester.

Direct Instruction programs for language were selected to be used in conjunction with Reading Mastery. Language for Learning is being taught in Kindergarten.

Adventures in Language was implemented in grades 1-3 in 2011-2012 and extended to grades 4-6 in 2012-2013.