

A Team Approach to Data-Driven Decision-Making Literacy Instruction in Preschool Classrooms: Child Assessment and Intervention Through Classroom Team Self-Reflection

*L*isa is a special education teacher in a school district preschool that includes a mix of children with and without Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs). During instruction, four to five adults, including the classroom teacher, paraprofessionals, and special educators are present at any given time in a classroom. Lisa is concerned that her time and talents could be better used to facilitate learning objectives and monitor progress for children on her case load. Currently, Lisa's role during large group is too often crowd control, and during Center Time, she feels that there is a disconnect between the instructional activities implemented by the classroom staff and her students' needs. The district has a preschool curriculum coach that works with teachers to implement the school's literacy program within a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework. Although there is linkage between the collected preschool literacy assessments and the curriculum, Lisa would like to

find a way to become more active in the MTSS process and influence instruction. She believes this would have a positive impact for children on IEPs and for all children in the classroom.

MTSS

As in Lisa's case, many other schools around the country are getting positive responses implementing Response to Intervention (RTI) within an MTSS framework (e.g., Abbott, 2011; Ball & Trammell, 2011; Buysee & Peisner-Feinberg, 2009). RTI refers to an instructional model that is based on a student's response to instruction. RTI instruction is often divided into three tiers, namely, Tier 1 (T1) whole class instruction, Tier 2 (T2) small group intervention, and Tier 3 (T3) individualized intervention. RTI emphasizes (a)

Mary Abbott, PhD

Dynamic Measurement Group

Constance Beecher, PhD

Iowa State University

Sarah Petersen, BA

Charles R. Greenwood, PhD

Jane Atwater, PhD

University of Kansas

DOI: 10.1177/1096250615602297

<http://yec.sagepub.com>

© 2015 Division for Early Childhood

universal screening to identify children who need additional support, (b) a continuum of best-practice interventions that increase in intensity, and (c) ongoing progress monitoring (PM; Abbott et al., 2008).

MTSS is an over-arching system of support that focuses not only on student improvement, but also the resources, structures, and practices that support implementation (Batsche, 2014). At the classroom level, a team is created and may include the classroom teacher, paraprofessionals, and sometimes special education teachers and administrators. Often a classroom coach, who facilitates improved instruction of the program's goals, is involved. The classroom team works to create an action-oriented plan through data-driven decision-making (DDDM), which is a process used to make instructional decisions based on verifiable data.

The MTSS plan includes information about addressing children's academic needs and intervention progress through (a) setting instructional goals, (b) allocating appropriate resources, and (c) evaluating teacher implementation practices (Marsh, Pane, & Hamilton, 2006). Within an MTSS plan, a DDDM process helps a team of teachers and administrators use multiple data sources (e.g., assessment, teacher observations/judgments) to make instructional decisions about how to best use curricula that reflect local academic standards (Coburn & Turner, 2011). Realistic instructional goals are based on the program's personnel resources, and professional development (PD) training takes into account the specific needs of the available staff

(e.g., Abbott, 2011). Finally, when possible, an MTSS plan includes an external-to-the-classroom coach that provides classroom feedback about implementation practices (Mashburn, Downer, Hamre, Justice, & Pianta, 2010).

Critical to an MTSS plan is a well-implemented T1. A robust T1 has benefits for all students. However, it is especially advantageous to children with IEPs because children with identified, individualized, and/or intensive needs can benefit the most from strong and effective T1 instruction when compared with children who are developing typically and tend to make gains even under less than optimal instruction (Gersten et al., 2009). Failure to build a manageable high quality T1 is likely to yield fragmented and potentially ineffective implementation (Atkins-Burnett et al., 2014). What follows is a description of a DDDM framework using all classroom staff to strengthen T1 instruction.

Literacy Data-Driven Decisions (Literacy 3D, L3D)

L3D is a preschool literacy program, grounded in DDDM that was developed across two federally funded research projects (Greenwood, Abbott, Atwater, Beecher, & Petersen, 2012; Sheridan, Carta, Knoche, Abbott, & Clarke, 2011). The first project investigated different components within an MTSS model and created a DDDM tool called the Tune-Up Checklist (TUC; see Appendix A; Abbott, Knoche, Beecher, Peterson, & Payette, 2012). The TUC is a

“
An L3D goal is to . . .
enrich Tier 1 with
strategies that differentiate
instruction, increase
academic responding, and
address all children’s
academic needs.”

“
What sets L3D apart
is that all strategies are
easy to implement,
embedded during
regular instruction, and
measured within a T1
system.”

self-reflection tool that guides instructional implementation. The second project expanded the TUC to include fidelity of implementation checklists and created L3D.

Across 1 year in an L3D experimental/comparison groups study, regardless of IEP status, children ($n = 120$) in the experimental group significantly outperformed the comparisons on the Preschool Early Literacy Indicators (PELI) in phonological awareness at the midpoint of the year ($t = 3.54, p < .001$) and grew at a faster rate up until the midpoint ($t = 1.94, p = .05$). In addition, the children in the experimental condition were significantly higher than comparisons on the PELI composite at the midpoint of the year ($t = 2.75, p < .05$). Children with IEPs experienced greater growth in the experimental condition in the spring than children with IEPs in the comparison group ($t = 2.55, p < .05$; Greenwood, Abbott, Beecher, Atwater, & Petersen, in review).

L3D has a T1 focus that includes all children along a continuum of academic achievement. An L3D goal is to increase a child’s opportunity to respond to prompts that promote practice and learning (Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, & Marsh, 2008). L3D does not provide specialized pull-out services but works to enrich T1 with strategies that differentiate instruction, increase academic responding, and address all children’s academic needs. Instruction is intentional and focused on a specific skill within a chosen strategy linked to program goals.

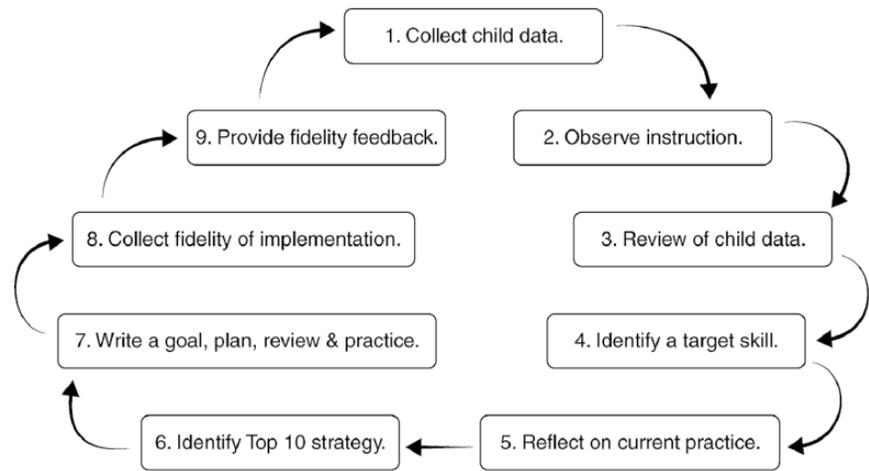
What sets L3D apart is that all strategies are easy to implement,

embedded during regular instruction, and measured within a T1 system. The level of intensity or differentiation of instruction varies across strategies so the children who are missing foundational skills required for T1 achievement are given additional practice. For example, teachers can boost academic practice by embedding “T2-like” small group instruction strategies during Center Time when small groupings naturally occur. Similarly, throughout the day during T1 transitions, members from the classroom team could conduct a series of 15-s “T3-like” interventions as needed by individual children. Although the child groupings are similar to T2 and T3 levels of instruction, the focus of skills instruction is on T1 objectives, which may be different than the skill focus traditionally thought of as part of T2 or T3. A special education professional added to the L3D classroom team could provide substantial expertise in designing and implementing these strategies that focus on T1 skills.

What also sets L3D apart from traditional interventions is the role of the coach. The coach is an external reviewer who facilitates and monitors the process and is familiar with program goals. The belief is that the emphasis on self-reflection by the classroom team brings together the expertise and experiences of talented educators. This potentially reduces the need for extensive coaching and allows for the possibility of a master/mentor teacher, administrator, or curriculum coach to serve as the classroom coach.

The four main T1 components of L3D are (a) assessment that includes screening and PM, (b)

Figure 1
Literacy 3D steps



Note. 3D = Data-Driven Decisions.

intervention from a list of Top 10 interventions, (c) the TUC self-reflection tool, and (d) a coach who observes, works with the classroom team, and collects fidelity of implementation data. Yearly, there are three to four cycles of assessment, intervention, self-reflection, and coaching.

With L3D, the classroom team typically learns to implement and embed 4 to 5 of the Top 10 strategies over the course of a school year. By the end of the last cycle, all the strategies learned throughout the year are being implemented. Figure 1 lists the steps in each cycle as follows: (a) child assessment data collection (classroom team); (b) observation of instruction (coach); (c) review of child assessment data (coach and classroom team DDDM Steps 3-7); (d) target skill identification; (e) reflection on current practice; (f) identification of Top 10 strategies; (g) intervention goal-writing, planning, and practicing; (h) implementation

fidelity data collection (coach); and (i) delivery of feedback to the classroom team (coach). Next, each step is discussed.

Step 1: Child Assessment Data Collection

The process begins with the collection of child data. During research and development, child assessment data were collected by L3D staff 4 times a year using PELI (the PELI authors, Kaminski, Abbott, Bravo Aguayo, & Good, 2012). The PELI assessment is comprised of four subtests: Alphabet Knowledge, Phonological Awareness, Vocabulary-Oral Language, and Comprehension. Activities for each skill are embedded within a developmentally appropriate storybook format designed to be engaging for preschoolers. The PELI is administered and scored in approximately 15 min and has strong evidence of reliability and

validity (Kaminski, Abbott, Bravo Aguayo, Latimer, & Good, 2014). For more information about PELI materials and training, visit <http://dibels.org/>.

Although the L3D research team used the PELI to determine child achievement, programs implementing L3D can use other literacy and oral language assessments that target screening and PM. The assessment should include some type of benchmark or cut point that can be used to determine levels of child achievement in literacy and language skills. The assessment should also include a PM system to evaluate child growth across time. Finally, the assessment should be linked to the program's goals, objectives, and early literacy skills.

Step 2: Observation of Instruction

The coach gets to know the typical classroom instruction through an observation of teaching during the literacy portion of the day. During development, the coaches for L3D were research staff with extensive early childhood coaching experience. For the initial observation, the coach collected a Quality of Literacy Implementation Checklist (Abbott, Petersen, Payette, & Beecher, 2010). Items on the Quality Checklist mirrored desired student outcome skills measured by the PELI and teacher behaviors that increase opportunity to respond to prompts that increase practice and learning (see Appendix B). The coach observed during literacy instruction, made notes about teacher implementation of literacy and oral language activities, and filled out the checklist. This checklist was used in the fall and

spring of the school year to measure classroom progress.

For programs that implement L3D, the designated coach will conduct the observation and fill out the Quality Checklist. The school program could also choose to use an available "program specific" tool to measure quality of literacy instruction.

Step 3: Review of Child Assessment Data

In this step, the classroom team reviews individual child data results to determine children's academic levels of performance (T1, T2, T3). During L3D development, the research staff organized the meeting to complete the DDDM process (Steps 3-7). For programs that implement L3D, an administrator or coach will be required to organize the DDDM process for these steps. In each skill area, the classroom team and coach look for classroom trends across multiple data sources (e.g., outcome data, teacher notes, children's work, parent report). The team notes the areas of class-wide achievement gaps that exist for a majority of the children.

Next, the team notes individual child deficits. For L3D, this information is used to decide the needed level of differentiation during T1 instruction. In addition, this information could be used to determine T2/T3 intervention focusing on subskills that are not currently part of T1 instruction. For example, when the T1 outcome is writing one's name, a child with no letter recognition may benefit from T3 pull-out services. Although work on letter identification could continue through differentiated T1 instruction, the child may need intensive support beyond what is

possible at the T1 level. As noted in the beginning scenario, Lisa's expertise and training in assessment could be very helpful to the team to determine class-wide and individual child strengths and weakness.

Step 4: Target Skill Identification

Based on the data, the classroom team and coach select a skill (e.g., alphabet knowledge, vocabulary) where the majority of the children have significant needs or emerging skills. These skills may be linked to the early learning standards of the program. For this skill area, all classroom staff will emphasize T1 instruction that will be differentiated to meet the needs of individual children and what needs are beyond T1 instruction.

Step 5: Reflection on Current Practice

During Step 5, the classroom team begins the iterative reflection that is guided by the TUC (see Appendix A). The TUC is a checklist used to link children's scores with teacher implementation of the best practices that increase children's opportunity to practice skills and improve learning. The TUC has a list of guiding questions that are answered and discussed by the classroom team and coach. The TUC's goal is to prompt reflection about how a particular skill area can be improved using one or more Top 10 best-practice strategies. Each of the considerations in using the TUC is now described.

Content of instruction

In this section, the classroom team and coach reflect about how the skill area might need to be

narrowed. For example, most of the children may know their capital letters but not their lower case letters. Content of instruction also addresses the potential opportunities to re-teach the skill and determines any pre-skills that might need to be taught (e.g., understanding the concept of first to understand the concept of the first sound in a word). Finally, the classroom team and coach reflect on the opportunities to make concepts more concrete using physical objects to teach and reinforce conceptual information.

Opportunities to learn

In this section, the classroom team reflects on the intentionality of instruction in terms of providing child opportunities to respond and practice as well as how T1 skills opportunities are evidenced (e.g., lesson plans, listed in a detailed schedule).

Grouping for instruction

In this section, the classroom team considers if there are regrouping opportunities that could be used to better fit the skill need. For example, are there opportunities to pull children together for additional practice? Is it possible to change grouping sizes? If instruction occurs mostly in large groups, is there time in the day when small groups naturally occur (e.g., snack time)? These groupings can provide a T2 intervention setting within T1 instructional time and strengthen T1. This is especially important for children who are classified as being at the T2 or T3 level academically.

Explicitness of instruction

In this section, the classroom team is asked to discuss ways in

which instruction can be more explicit. For example, could more group or choral responding be substituted for individual responding occasions? Is it possible to infuse more opportunities for children to receive immediate, appropriate, and positive feedback about the responses they give?

Language challenges

For this consideration, teachers reflect on additional accommodations that can be made by all members of the classroom team with children for whom English is a second language and/or have language delays. For example, this section asks teachers to reflect on the use of visuals and key words or phrases that teachers can learn and use to facilitate understanding. This consideration provides a good opportunity for Lisa's special education training and experiences to facilitate discussion about potential T1 level accommodations.

Step 6: Identification of Top 10 Strategies

Next, the team chooses one or two strategies to implement for each TUC cycle. By the end of each year of the study, teams usually learned and implemented around five different strategies. During the creation of L3D, the research staff conducted an extensive search of intervention strategies that improved academic outcomes (Abbott, Beecher, & Petersen, 2012). From this literature search, the staff chose strategies that could be easily infused into the instructional day, were known to make instruction more systematic, and increase the opportunity to practice skills.

Table 1 provides information about (a) grouping size, (b) skills focus, (c) how long the strategy takes to implement, and (d) the core elements of the strategy. Two examples of strategies that were frequently used in L3D are now discussed.

Example 1: Transition password game

During this strategy, the classroom team identifies the many transitions during the day and assigns a skill or task to each transition. Each transition should take 2 min or less for the entire class to complete. As children transition from one activity to another, they quickly respond to a question or statement that reinforces previously taught academic content. Examples include "Tell me the first sound in your name" and "Tell me another word that begins with the first sound in your name." Every child responds and the teacher provides quick feedback.

Example 2: The pocket intervention card (PIC)

The PIC is an example of a "T3-like" individualized instruction strategy. PIC can be used during T1 instructional time and is for children that need intensive short-term practice on a T1-targeted skill that has been recently introduced or is targeted within the current theme. With PIC, content is narrowly focused, specific, and as concrete as possible. During PIC implementation, a member of the classroom team has an index card that is kept in a pocket. The card includes the prompts for the needed skill (e.g., letters in a child's name,

Table 1
Descriptions of Top 10 Instructional Strategies

Top 10 preschool instructional strategies that increase children's opportunity to respond				
Strategy	Grouping size	Skills focus	Time to complete	Core elements
1. I do it, We do it, You do it	All groups	All	30 s or less	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selects one or more appropriate vocabulary words, PA prompt, AK prompt. 2. I do it (model the task) "My word is _____." 3. We do it (go through it slowly with the whole group) "Say _____ with me." 4. You do it ("Now you say . . ."—watch and listen for correct responses; if asking individuals, instead of the whole group, implement this item with at least 3 kids) "Now you say it"/"What is this?"
2. Peer talk	Large/small group	OL Comp	15 s per round per child	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Models, if needed, with a child or another adult. 2. Asks children to share with their neighbor. 3. Listens to child responses as they share. 4. Asks for confirmation that neighbors shared appropriately (e.g., thumbs up or asks a few individuals what their neighbor shared with them).
3. LEA	Large/small group	All	1-10 min	<p>Teacher scripts what children are saying (e.g., child's drawing, teacher leading a classroom discussion about a book or class event).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduces topic: For example, "Today we are going to talk about WHEN things happened in our story. WHEN tells us about the <i>time</i> that something happens. I am going to write our observations about WHEN different things happened." 2. Asks a child a comprehension question (who, what, when, where, why, how), "Tell me about WHEN the girl went to the playground." 3. Elicits full sentence answers from the children—may need to model sentence: For example, "WHEN do I go to bed? I go to bed WHEN it is night time. Now you tell me WHEN the girl went to the playground." 4. Writes what the child says. <p>For Vocab: (Teacher elicits the vocabulary word) "What is this?" For Comp: (Once children can identify vocab word, the teacher asks a comp question about the vocab word) "What can you use ___ for?" or "Where could you find a ___?"</p>
4. Transition password game	Individual	All	10 s or less per child	<p>For Vocab: (Teacher elicits the vocabulary word) "What is this?" For Comp: (Once children can identify vocab word, the teacher asks a comp question about the vocab word) "What can you use ___ for?" or "Where could you find a ___?"</p>
5. Choral reading	Large/small group	OL, AK Comp	1-3 min	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selects a familiar book, LEA story or any print children know very well. 2. Models, if needed. 3. Teacher asks children to read with her or him. 4. Scans the group to check for participation. 5. Uses book with large print or big paper on an easel so that all can see the text. 6. Uses a warm, supportive tone and appropriate pacing.
6. PIC	Individual	All	15 s or less (5-8 times across day)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The first time the teacher presents the card, she or he provides the answer before asking any questions. The teacher shows the child the appropriate card and makes the content relevant (e.g., "This is a P. It is the first letter in your name. P is for Pat"). 2. Models the skill (e.g., says the letter name). 3. Elicits child practice (e.g., "Tell me what letter this is"). 4. Marks that the additional practice opportunity was provided on the PIC.

(continued)

Table 1
(continued)

Top 10 preschool instructional strategies that increase children's opportunity to respond				
Strategy	Grouping size	Skills focus	Time to complete	Core elements
7. IDEAS	Small group	OL Comp	5 min	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chooses one (or more) appropriate vocabulary words from a theme or book. Uses IDEAS to present the vocabulary 2. Identifies the word and then does an "I do it, We do it, You do it" routine. 3. Defines the word with a simple sentence. 4. Explains further (i.e., tells what it does, what it is used for, examples, etc.). 5. Asks comprehension questions (e.g., "Who uses a ___?" or "Where could you find a ___?"). 6. Says it again; has the children repeat.
8. Sign in	Individual	AK, PA	15 s or less per child	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least one area has been designated as a place where kids can sign in with their name. Centers, arrival, lunch choices, and so on. 2. Has a method for how children will sign in. (e.g., premade name cards, writing on laminated sheet, using stamps, writing their own name—can be differentiated to suite children's skills). 3. Quickly reviews the sign-in procedures with the children as needed. 4. Reinforces appropriate use of sign-in procedures as needed.
9. Learning quests	Large/small group	All	5-10 min	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chooses letters or words or objects or concept that represent current focus (e.g., tiny vs. enormous, things that start with "p," things about fire safety, the letter p). 2. The letters/objects/concept objects have been hidden around the room/school/playground. 3. Gives instructions about how to play the game. 4. Children look for letters/objects/concept objects and note discovery (e.g., draw, tell peer, check off a picture list). 5. Teacher elicits name/description of the target word/letter/sound/concept.
10. Interactive writing	All		Varies with activity	<p>Teacher uses a specific writing activity, such as name writing, and uses participatory thinking about writing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher elicits and allows for child participation in the "writing thought process" about the relationship between print, sounds and letters. For example, beginning sounds ("If I am writing <i>dog</i> what letter should I start with?") or punctuation ("What do I need at the end of my sentence?") or high use words ("Can you find the word <i>Apple</i> in the room and write it on your paper?").

Note. Unique core elements are noted. All strategies also include the following elements. *Prior to activity:* Has materials ready. *During Activity:* Conducts intervention during the pre-determined scheduled time of day. Explains the task/selects appropriate skill. *After Student Response:* Provides immediate positive feedback (confirm and/or more modeling as needed). Extends understandings with at least two children. PA = phonological awareness; AK = alphabet knowledge; OL = Vocabulary/Language; LEA = Language Experience Approach; Comp = comprehension; vocab = vocabulary; PIC = Pocket Intervention Card; IDEAS = Identify, Define, Explain, Ask, Say.

two to three pictures of the themed vocabulary). Five to 10 times a day, a member of the classroom team very quickly (15 s or less) models the answer for the child and has the child repeat the answer ("This is the letter M. What is this letter?").

Once the child becomes familiar with the material, the teacher asks the child about the material, and the child gets further practice by responding. This process is continued until the child has completely mastered the targeted

material. The teacher puts a tally mark on the card each time that content is presented or reviewed. This gives the classroom team data indicating how many repetitions it takes for the child to learn content, which can also be used as a data source for recommending special services.

Step 7: Intervention Goal-Writing, Planning, and Practicing

During this step, guidelines for implementation are established. Each of the Top 10 strategies includes a document listing the “core elements” that define key steps of the intervention. This document is also used as a fidelity of Implementation Checklist. Non-core elements can be modified to suit each classroom’s needs. First, the classroom team and coach write an expanded goal. This goal helps the classroom team monitor implementation of the intervention. An example of a goal is,

At least three times a day during transitions, the team will use the *Transition Password Game* to differentiate and reinforce phonological awareness skills introduced during circle time. Successful implementation will be measured by data on the fidelity of implementation and child scores on the PELL.

During planning, the classroom team makes a determination about the specific roles and tasks that are assigned to each member of the classroom staff. For example, a materials list is created, and someone from the classroom team is assigned to make materials. The times of day that the intervention

will occur and the details about which classroom team member will complete which tasks are assigned and reviewed. The coach conducts a PD session with the classroom team to practice the intervention steps listed on the Fidelity Checklist until all members of the classroom team clearly understand how and when the intervention will be implemented. These plans are listed in the lesson plan in a manner that can be posted so that a substitute teacher entering the classroom can carry out the strategy. Finally, during planning, the coach and classroom team decide on a pre-set day and time for a fidelity of implementation observation.

Step 8: Implementation Fidelity Data Collection

During the development of L3D, research staff observed the classroom team. For programs that implement L3D, the designated coach that made the initial classroom observation will observe the intervention and fill out the strategy-specific Fidelity of Implementation Checklist (see Appendix C). Every time the coach observes, fidelity is collected for each selected implemented strategy. For example, if across the year the classroom team had decided to implement 5 of the Top 10 strategies, the coach would collect five different Fidelity Checklists. Each checklist is stand-alone. Each core element is rated by the coach. Ratings are tallied, and the percentage is calculated. The classroom team is expected to score an 85% or better on the core elements of the strategy.

It is important to make sure that fidelity is consistently

“
The L3D program integrates child assessment, Top 10 strategies, the TUC self-reflection tool, and coaching within a recurring system that is designed to enhance early literacy and language T1 instruction.
”

measured. When more than one coach in the program is collecting fidelity (e.g., peer coaching in which several lead teachers act in the role of coach), coaches need to become reliable. This is accomplished by comparing the percentage agreement from the fidelity totals. Percentage agreement should be 90% or greater.

Step 9: Delivery of Feedback to Classroom Team

During the development of L3D, research staff observed the classroom team. For programs that implement L3D, the coach conducts a short meeting that provides feedback to the classroom team and helps the team understand the strengths and weaknesses of their implementation. The fidelity of implementation is used not only to document that the intervention is being implemented properly but also to provide suggestions about how instruction could be strengthened or modified. For example, perhaps the strategy needs to be implemented during another part of the instructional day or a by a different person, or perhaps a different strategy needs to be chosen for the few children who have not acquired the skill. Additional feedback can be provided verbally or in writing. The coach continues to observe and provide feedback to teachers until the team reaches 85% fidelity.

Discussion

The L3D program integrates child assessment, Top 10 strategies, the TUC self-reflection tool, and coaching within a recurring system that is designed to enhance early literacy and

language T1 instruction. The unique aspects of L3D address four vulnerable areas of MTSS implementation as follows: (a) teacher PD, (b) modifying MTSS to meet the unique needs and resources of school environments, (c) implementing intervention into a crowded instructional day, and (d) installing checks and balances that keep the system efficient and moving forward.

First, as noted by Atkins-Burnett et al. (2014) and others, in an MTSS system, the T1 team must be masters at assessment collection, determining the best interventions, and implementing the chosen interventions. In line with adult learning, the collective knowledge of the T1 team, including special education staff, emphasizes active staff involvement in self-reflection and planning with coach support. This facilitates team mastery of MTSS components. The integrated, built-in supports guide the process of assessment and implementation of intervention strategies within a repeating self-reflection structure that is tied to program goals.

Second, in terms of available T1 school staff, L3D is sensitive to the extensive variability that is found within preschool settings. The program is flexible in that the school team determines the best configuration of school staff to meet the unique needs of the school environment. For example, some schools may have full-time literacy coaches available while other schools may decide that a peer coaching approach is more appropriate (Mashburn et al., 2010). This flexibility within a systematic process helps to make child improvement possible because school teams understand the unique characteristics of their programs.

Third, during many different discussions with teachers, we have learned that often there is little to no room in the day to add complicated curricula or instructional procedures that require major changes in teacher behavior. The TUC takes about an hour for the classroom team to complete, and another 15 to 20 min of follow-up and feedback time. This small amount of focused contemplation and organizing results in intentional and consistent T1 implementation of simple strategies that systematically increase response opportunities and improve achievement.

Finally, the L3D program has built-in system-checks for both the child through PM and for the teachers through fidelity of implementation and coaching feedback. Continued PM with assessments such as PELI allows the classroom team to continue to make data-driven instructional decisions. This continued evaluation helps to encourage greater differentiated instruction that improve outcomes for all children (Gersten et al., 2009). Use of Fidelity Checklists ensures that teachers are appropriately implementing T1 strategies that increase child achievement. External coaching provides input by an informed professional who is not part of the

everyday teaching team. These checks and balances keep the cycle of assessment, TUC self-reflection, and intervention moving forward with the appropriate level of child instruction and intervention.

Lisa's New Role

With L3D, Lisa's role in the classroom becomes much more active. For example, Lisa's depth of knowledge about assessment and intervention significantly contributes to data collection, self-reflection with the TUC, choosing intervention, and small group and individual instruction within T1. Every day, she works with her team members within the classroom to differentiate instruction and increase opportunity to practice skills and subskills by taking responsibility for teaching strategies such as the Transition Password Game and PIC. When special education teachers such as Lisa are given the opportunity to become more active in planning and implementing effective strategies, MTSS models are improved. This gives all children an increased opportunity to respond and receive appropriate differentiated instruction that results in significant and measurable improved outcomes.

Appendix A

Tune-Up Checklist

Tune-Up Checklist

Date Goal Complete: _____

Teachers: _____ Coach: _____ Date: _____

School: _____ Area of need: PA AK V/OL COMP

Reflection questions

Circle one Notes

Content of instruction

Is there a specific skill within the area of need to be targeted? YES NO _____

Is there an established classroom routine to teach this skill? YES NO _____

Is there an opportunity to re-teach the skill? YES NO _____

Is there a pre-skill that the children need to learn? YES NO _____

Can instruction be more concrete with physical objects incorporated? YES NO _____

Opportunities to learn

Does lesson plan/instruction provide many opportunities to respond? YES NO _____

Can the skill be emphasized during another part of the day? YES NO _____

Are transitions being utilized as learning opportunities? YES NO _____

Is there specific instructional planning for Center Time? YES NO _____

Are small groups being utilized to teach this skill? YES NO _____

Grouping for instruction

Are children grouped appropriately for instruction? YES NO _____

Can grouping sizes be changed? YES NO _____

Explicitness of instruction

Is it possible to include more I do it; We do it; You do it? YES NO _____

Can child response be changed (choral and group responding)? YES NO _____

Are there opportunities to better monitor accuracy of child responses and then provide immediate, appropriate, and positive feedback? YES NO _____

LC considerations

Is there strong enough emphasis of LC strategies throughout the day? YES NO _____

Can children be regrouped to better fit their LC need? YES NO _____

Are there specific key words/phases that the teacher can learn and use to facilitate understanding? YES NO _____

Goal: _____

Plan for preparing/gathering needed materials:

Prep due date: _____

Check in dates fine tuning: _____

Target date: _____

Fidelity: _____

Date completed: _____

Modifications:

Data sources used to identify the target area and notes on progress toward goal:

Note progress toward goal:

Attach strategy steps on next page

Note. LC = Language Challenge; PA = phonological awareness; AK = alphabet knowledge; OL = Vocabulary/Language; COMP = comprehension.

Appendix B

Literacy 3D Quality of Literacy Implementation Checklist

Teacher: _____ Other adults: _____

Date: _____ School: _____ Observer: _____

Parts of day observed: _____ Duration: _____

Teacher behavior (Scoring: 0 = *does not do*, 1 = *does on limited basis*, 2 = *fully implements*, N/A)

1. It is apparent that the teacher has supplies needed for the day's lessons ready when the lesson begins.
2. EL and writing-related activities and/or materials are included in every open center, and the teacher lets the children know what is available to them.
3. In large/small group, it is evident that the teacher has a specific plan for developing OL and uses specific strategies to increase opportunities to respond while remaining flexible to follow the child's lead when new vocabulary or concepts arise.
Plan examples: Present new vocabulary, talk about illustrations, and listen to a song to learn something new.
Strategy examples: Infuse new vocabulary, extend conversations, ask open-ended questions, and encourage theme-based exploration.
4. In Centers, teachers use specific strategies that increase children's opportunities to respond to extend the use of OL (similar to those listed above or by presenting materials or play suggestions that encourage use of OL) while following children's lead.
5. It is evident that the teacher has a specific plan related to developing alphabet knowledge (e.g., teacher works with students on letter identification).
6. It is evident that the teacher has a specific plan related to developing phonological awareness (e.g., teachers clap syllables with children).
7. Throughout the day, teacher positively encourages children to participate small group or individualized writing and/or alphabet practice (ABC) use.
8. The teacher and students practice by using group responding (2 + children respond at a time).
9. The teacher provides modeling for EL and OL skill development (I do it).
10. The teacher provides guided practice for EL and OL skill development (We do it).
11. The teacher provides opportunity for independent practice for EL and OL skill development (You do it).
12. Instruction is differentiated for EL and OL skill development by having either a variety of activities for variable grouping or different forms of the same activity for ability grouping.
13. Throughout the day, the teacher elicits prior knowledge to help children make connections between new content and concepts and activities that they are familiar with.
14. The transitions run efficiently and smoothly, and are executed in less than 2 min.
15. The teacher uses ELL/LC strategies (simple language, slower rate of speech, reduce amount of information, encourages use of child's first language, uses gestures and provides visual cues, gestures).
16. The teacher uses positive reinforcement and appropriate classroom behavior management techniques.

Total _____ / _____ %

Other adults' behavior (Scoring: 0 = *does not do*, 1 = *does on limited basis*, 2 = *fully implements*, N/A)

1. Extend conversations and reinforce vocabulary with students.
2. Positively encourage children to participate writing or ABC use.
3. Use evidence-based learning strategies.
4. The transitions run efficiently and smoothly and are executed in less than 2 min.
5. Use positive reinforcement and appropriate classroom behavior management techniques.

Total _____ / _____ %

Student behavior (Scoring based on % of students: 0 = *less than 25%*, 1 = *25%-75%*, 2 = *more than 75%*)

1. Students participate in classroom activities.
2. Students chose to engage in activities or talk related to academic content (EL, OL, Math). _____ / _____
3. Students are responsive to the teacher(s) (e.g., respond positively to requests, suggestions, etc.). _____ %

Overall Classroom Quality Score (Teacher + Other Adults): _____ + _____ = _____ / _____ = _____ %

Note. 3D = Data-Driven Decisions; EL = early literacy; OL = oral language; ELL = English Language Learner; LC = Language Challenge Total.

Appendix C

Fidelity of Implementation Checklist for the Transition Password Game

Teacher	Others	
Fidelity of Implementation for Transition Password Game		
___	___	Has materials ready
___	___	Conducts the intervention during the pre-determined scheduled
___	___	Tells the children what the password game is
___	___	Models as needed
___	___	A. Asks the child a question
___	___	B. Provides immediate, positive feedback (confirmation or the correct answer)
___	___	C. Extends for at least two children and for more as time allows.
___	___	D. Allows the child to transition to the next activity
___	___	Carries out the strategy with ___ children in ___ min (2 = yes, 0 = no)
T: ___/___		Others: ___/___

Note. 2 = consistently implemented, 1 = partially implemented/developing, 0 = not observed; N/A = not applicable/not needed.

Authors' Note

This study was supported by U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (H327A110052), and U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Educational Sciences (R324A090075). You may reach Mary Abbott by e-mail at mabbott@dibels.org.

References

- Abbott, M. (2011). A research-to-practice view of an early literacy PD model. *NHSA Dialog: A Research-to-Practice Journal for the Early Childhood Field*, 14, 327-331.
- Abbott, M., Beecher, C. C., & Petersen, S. (2012). *Report on research-based early literacy strategies* (internal document). Kansas City: University of Kansas.
- Abbott, M., Knoche, L., Beecher, C. C., Petersen, S., & Payette, C. (2012). *The Tune-Up Checklist*. Kansas City: University of Kansas.
- Abbott, M., Petersen, S., Payette, C., & Beecher, C. (2010). *Quality of Literacy Implementation Checklists. Literacy 3D*. Kansas City: University of Kansas.
- Abbott, M., Wills, H., Kamps, D., Greenwood, C. R., Dawson-Bannister, H., Kaufman, J., & Fillingim, D. (2008). The Kansas Reading and Behavior Center's K-3 prevention model. In C. Greenwood, T. Kratochwill, & M. Clements (Eds.), *Schoolwide prevention models: Lessons learned in elementary schools* (pp. 215-265). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Atkins-Burnett, S., Monahan, S., Akers, L., Carta, J., Wasik B. A., & Boller, K. (2014). *Tailored teaching: Teachers' use of ongoing child assessment to individualize instruction* (Vol. I). Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Ball, C. R., & Trammell, B. A. (2011). Response-to-intervention in high-risk preschools: Critical issues for implementation. *Psychology in the Schools*, 48, 502-512.

- Batsche, G. (2014). Multi-tiered system of supports for inclusive schools. In J. McLenskey, N. L., Waldron, F. Spooner, & B. Algozzine (Eds.), *Handbook of effective, inclusive schools: Research and practice* (pp. 183-196). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Buysee, V., & Peisner-Feinberg, E. (2009). Recognition & response: Implementation sites in Florida and Maryland. In M. R. Coleman, F. P. Roth, & T. West (Eds.) *Roadmap to pre-K RTI: Applying response to intervention in preschool settings* (pp. 9-10). New York, NY: National Center for Learning Disabilities.
- Coburn, C. E., & Turner, E. O. (2011). Research on data use: A framework and analysis. *Measurement: Interdisciplinary Research and Perspective*, 9, 173-206.
- Conroy, M. A., Sutherland, K. S., Snyder, A. L., & Marsh, S. (2008). Class-wide interventions: Effective instruction makes a difference. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 40(6), 24-30.
- Gersten, R., Compton, D., Connor, C. M., Dimino, J., Santoro, L., Linan-Thompson, S., & Tilly, W. D. (2009). *Assisting students struggling with reading: Response to intervention and multi-tier intervention for reading in the primary grades: A practice guide* (NCEE 2009-4045). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
- Greenwood, C. R., Abbott, M., Beecher, C., Atwater, J., & Petersen, S. (in review). *Teachers' literacy-focused practice: Development of a preschool teacher coaching intervention*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Greenwood, C. R., Abbott, M., Atwater, J., Beecher, C., & Petersen, S. (2012). *Pre-K EBASS Efficacy Study OSEP funded*. Kansas City: University of Kansas.
- Kaminski, R. A., Abbott, M., Bravo Aguayo, K., & Good, R. H. (2012). *Preschool Early Literacy Indicators*. Eugene, OR: Dynamic Measurement Group.
- Kaminski, R. A., Abbott, M., Bravo Aguayo, K., Latimer, R., & Good, R. H. (2014). The preschool early literacy indicators: Validity and benchmark goals. *Education Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 34, 71-82.
- Marsh, J. A., Pane, J. F., & Hamilton, L. S. (2006). *Making sense of data-driven decision making in education: Evidence from recent RAND research*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- Mashburn, A. J., Downer, J. T., Hamre, B. K., Justice, L. M., & Pianta, R. C. (2010). Consultation for teachers and children's language and literacy development during pre-kindergarten. *Applied Developmental Science*, 14, 179-196.
- Sheridan, S. M., Carta, J., Knoche, L. L., Abbott, M., & Clarke, B. (2011). *IES Pre3T annual performance report*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska.