



THE 2ND READING PERIOD

The Importance of Learning to Read

Reading is the most important academic skill and provides the basis for most other academic learning. Reading proficiency is the most accurate predictor of whether a student will experience academic success, graduate from high school and attend college. Students who lack reading skills are much more likely to experience academic failure, drop out of school and get into trouble with the law.

Direct Instruction and the 2nd Reading Period

The comprehensive Direct Instruction (DI) model requires a 2nd reading period each day for students who have not completed level two of the Reading Mastery program and for students whose performance is below grade level expectations. The comprehensive DI model has been shown in repeated large-scale studies to produce higher learning outcomes than competing approaches.

Effect of the 2nd Reading Period

The 2nd reading period accelerates the rate at which children learn to read fluently and accurately. In one year, students who receive a daily 2nd reading period can show gains of as much as one full grade level over the standardized-test performance of students who do not receive the 2nd reading period.

How the 2nd Reading Period Accelerates Student Learning

With a 2nd reading period, teachers are able to teach more skills per day, per week and per year. During a single period, teachers are able to teach about one lesson per day in the Reading Mastery program to average-performing children. With an additional period, many teachers are able to teach an additional lesson. A 2nd reading period also provides students with distributed practice in reading, which is an efficient way for students to master material because it requires them to recall information and apply strategies more frequently in a wider range of contexts.

How the 2nd Reading Period Helps Struggling Students

Teachers are not usually able to teach a lesson to mastery during a single period to lower performing students, who finish about 2/3rd of a lesson during a period. Consequently, these children cannot cover a full grade level of material during a single school year. With a second reading period, however, lower performing students can successfully complete a lesson a day, and by the end of Kindergarten, these children will be close to completing the first level of Reading Mastery (Grade K). Many students then complete the second level of Reading Mastery (Grade 1) and perform at or above grade level by the end of first grade.

The 2nd Reading Period and Content Areas

Fluent reading with comprehension is necessary for student success in content areas. So is background information. DI programs provide students with extensive science and social studies background knowledge. Science and social studies terminology and concepts are incorporated into the Reading Mastery DI program in levels three through six (Grade 2 through 5). Science and social studies concepts are systematically pre-taught to students, integrated into the stories and then reviewed to ensure students' retention of the material. Some schools, including City Springs Elementary in Baltimore, have used no other science program, and their students have performed outstandingly on tests of their scientific knowledge.