

Selecting Children for More Intensive Instruction: The GRTR and More

Jeanette McCollum & Susan Fowler

University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana

Mary McLean,

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Conference of the Division for Early Childhood

November, 2011

Washington, DC

Disclaimer

- Assessment tools and other information and materials mentioned or shown by presenters or grantees are provided as resources and examples for the viewer's convenience. Their inclusion is not intended as an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education. In addition, the instructional practices and assessments discussed or shown in this presentation is not intended to mandate, direct, or control a State's, local educational agency's, or school's specific instructional content, academic achievement system and assessments, curriculum, or program of instruction. States and local programs are free to use any instructional content, achievement system and assessments, curriculum, or program instruction that they wish, so long as the instructional materials and literacy activities meet the Early Reading First statutory requirement of being based on scientifically based reading research that supports the age-appropriate development of the language and literacy skills described in the Early Reading First statute, and are part of their approved grant application.

Session Objectives

- Provide context for considering selection of children for RTI
- Describe what we did, why & what happened
 - Using measures required by Early Reading First
 - Exploring the GRTR as an alternative measure
- General discussion of alternatives
 - What assessments? What criteria?
- Future directions
 - What other questions?



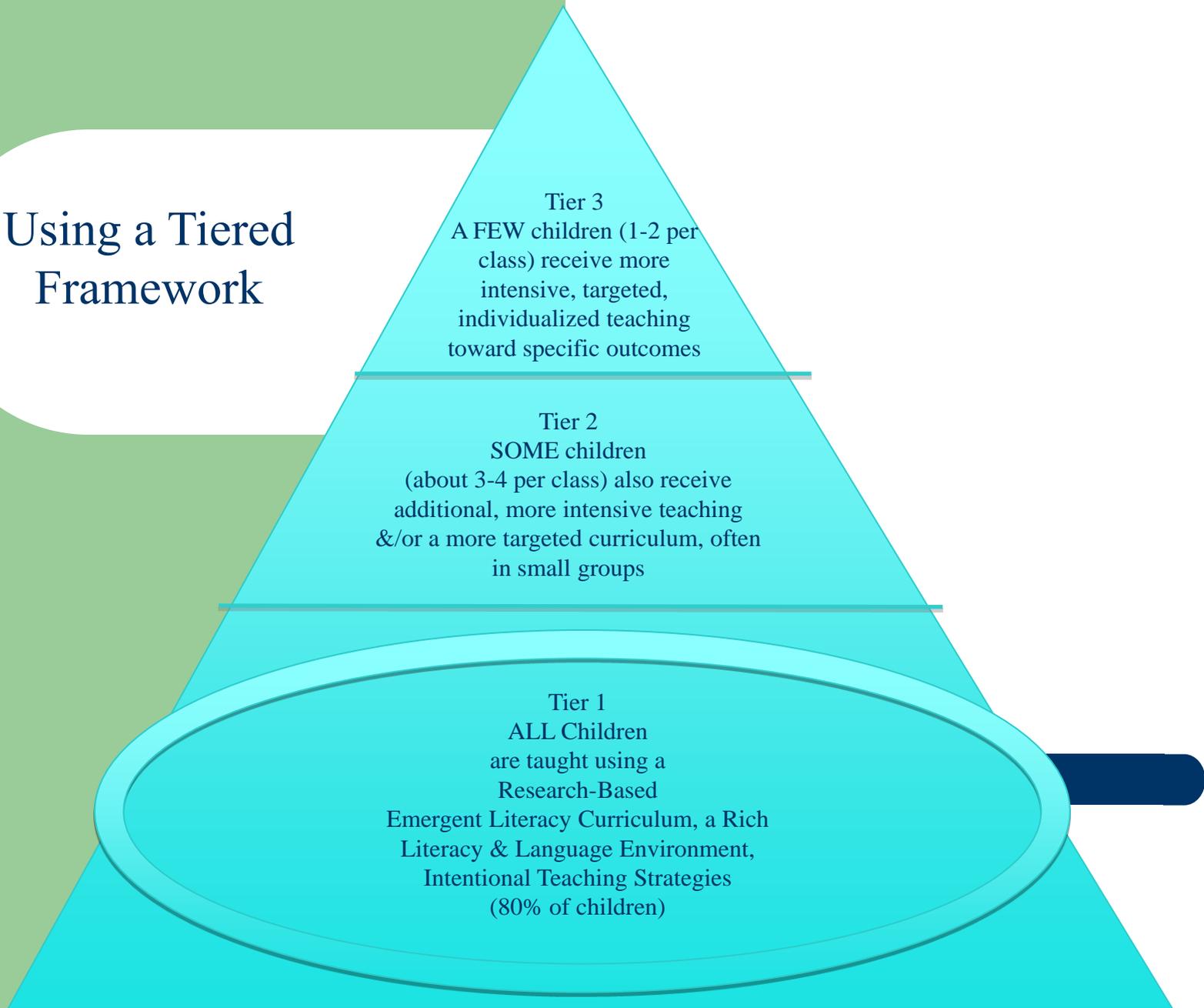
Context – RTI

Components of RTI Models

(National Center on RTI; Coleman & Buysse)

- Integrated system of ...
 - Universal screening (all children, in specified area(s) of learning)
 - Progress monitoring on specific learning outcomes
 - Multi-tiered prevention/intervention system; increasingly intense levels of instruction (core curriculum, targeted and/or more frequent intervention)
 - Data based decision-making (use of data to adjust intensity and nature of interventions)
 - Collaborative decision-making

Using a Tiered Framework



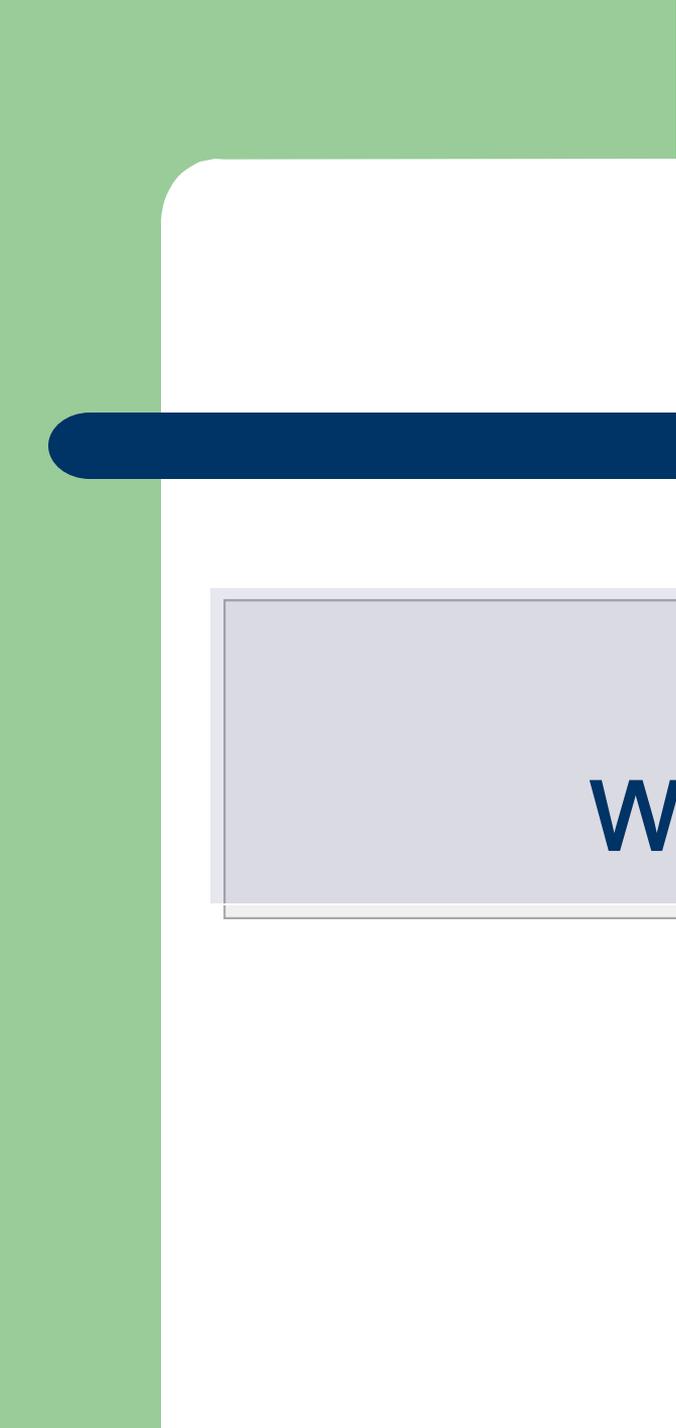
What are the issues?

- Many of the children in early childhood programs are there because they are at risk ---
 - What does this do to the percentages in the pyramid?
 - How do we select the children who MOST need extra help? How do we know if we are under- or over-selecting? Does it matter?
- When do we select? When do we start RTI?
 - Do we wait to see if they will respond to instruction when we already know they are at risk?

- What kind of assessments do we use?
- Are there specific assessments that are more useful for this purpose?
- Will single measures work or should we use multiple assessments?
- What criteria (scores, patterns of response) do we use to select children?

What we are trying to achieve ...

- Sensitivity – Assessments and criteria result in selection of children who really need the extra help in order to achieve (reach level expected for age) (“true positives”) – without it, they may not succeed
- Specificity – Assessments and criteria do NOT result in selection of children who really don’t need the extra help (“true negatives”)



Our Approach - What We Did in DELL-D

Early Reading First

- Federal grant program
 - U.S. Dept. of Education (3-year projects)
 - Community with high number of low-income families
 - Focus on emergent language & literacy in 3-4 year old children
 - Primary activities: Research-based literacy curriculum, classroom resources, professional development
 - Partnerships with and among community entities providing care & education to young children, including school district

Participants – Example from Year 4

- 10 classrooms, 14 groups of children – State Pre-K, Head Start, child care
- Children (241 total)
 - 162 (62%) children moving to kindergarten next year
 - 104 (64%) low income
 - 29 (18%) with IEP; additional 10 (6%) with speech-only IEP

ERF Assessment Requirements

- Assessment (screening, monitoring in emergent literacy)
 - PPVT (receptive language - minimum of twice/year)
 - PALS Pre-K (upper-case alphabet - minimum of twice/year)
- Benchmarks set by ERF
 - PPVT score of 85 or above
 - Letter naming 16-19 letters (varied)

Additional data collected in our project

Fall

- PPVT
- PALS (upper case, lower case, letter sounds; print concepts; name writing)
- IGDIs (beginning sounds, rhyme, picture naming)
- Story comprehension (state test for Kindergarten entry)
- GRTR (added Year 4)

Winter

- PALS (repeat all)
- IGDIs (repeat all)

Spring (same as fall)

Drawing on available data, we ...

- Used two criteria – had to demonstrate both:
 - PPVT (score of less than 85, or more than one standard deviation below the mean)
 - capital letters on PALS (fewer than 3 named accurately)
- Began RTI immediately after fall assessment with children going to Kindergarten in following year
- Other children – if above the criterion but little progress on monthly CBMs or winter assessment, then looked again

Why not the PPVT alone?

- PPVT < 85
 - Expect 16% (or about 3-4 children per class)
 - Instead yielded average of 31% (range 24%-38% across 4 years), or about 5-8 children per class)
 - More than would expect
 - If used alone, possible that we would be OVER-identifying children, many of whom would respond to Tier 1 and NOT need RTI
 - Practical consideration – too many children to put into one extra small group for RTI

Adding another measure

- Advantages of adding capital letters as another criterion
 - Combined “code” and “meaning”
 - Multiple assessments – more likely to identify children with most need if don’t rely solely on one measure
- Set criterion at <3
 - Knowing just a few letters predicts well to Kindergarten achievement
 - At entry to Pre-K, children wouldn’t be expected to know many letters
 - Other ERF projects were using similar criteria

What happened using the two measures together?

- Criteria
 - PPVT < 85 plus <3 capital letters (PALS)
- Results
 - Yielded average of 25% of children (range 19-34% across 4 years), or about 4-5 children per class

Year 4 example

- 26% of Kindergarten-bound children identified for RTI (about 22% in it at any one time, given turnover)
- Of 42 children in Tier 2 in the fall (3-4 per classroom)
 - 13 (31%) children “graduated” mid-year
 - 24 (57%) remained in Tier 2
 - 1 child moved to Tier 3
 - 4 moved away

Why we moved toward the GRTR

- Sustainability of RTI – simplifying the assessment and selection process so that teachers could implement it
- Characteristics of the GRTR made it a logical choice

Get Read to Read Screen (Revised)

- 25 items – brief, easy to administer
- Items selected from across areas of emergent literacy (phonological awareness, print concepts, alphabet knowledge)
- Results summarized in a variety of ways, including Performance Level
 - below average
 - average
 - above average

What we found

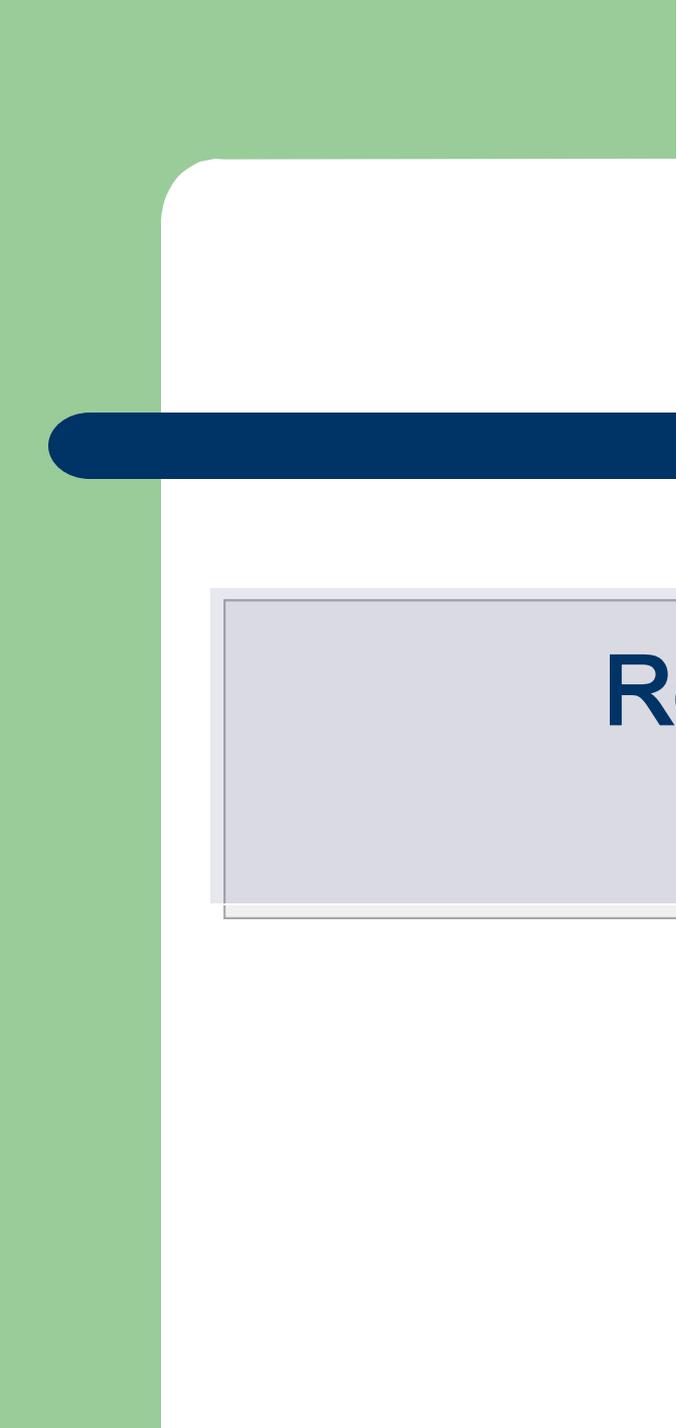
- Expectations based on GRTR information in published information
 - 25% (lowest quartile) would be “below average” in relation to age
- Number of children actually identified
 - 59% had below average performance level on the GRTR

What we did

- Added another measure
- Selected IGDI vocabulary as a measure to add to the GRTR
 - Least correlated with GRTR – added something “different”
 - Made sense to again combine “meaning” and “code”
- Explored different cut-off scores, beginning below our benchmark level of around 22-24
- Decided on a criterion of <16 words because the combination identified the same proportion of children as PPVT + capital letters (about 25%)

However ...

- The GRTR plus IGDI vocabulary criteria
 - While identifying about the same NUMBER of children as the PPVT plus capital letters ...
 - Yielded only 64% agreement in who was selected (“true positives” if we use the first set of criteria as the standard)
 - 36% of those identified with the PPVT and capital letters would have been missed (“false negatives” in comparison to the first set of criteria)

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a light green vertical bar and a dark blue horizontal bar with rounded ends.

Reactions & Discussion

What reactions to ...

- Assessments used?
- Criteria? Choosing criteria?
- The mismatch in who was selected? (Is this a problem, or is this good enough for the purpose?)
- Other comments?

What are some other alternatives?

- Which assessments?
- What criteria?

Where to from here?

- Are we identifying the right children? How do we know?
- What else do we need to know?
- How do we find out?
- What other questions do we need to ask?

Contact Information



The DELL-D Project
(Developing Early Language and Literacy in Danville)
www.dell-d.uiuc.edu



University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Special Education
61 Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820
Phone: (217) 333-4123
Fax: (217) 244-7732