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Using Direct Instruction Programs as Intervention Programs in Grades K–3

Introduction

This article is about the use of Direct Instruction as an intervention program in schools that are using a core (basal) reading program that does not meet the instructional needs of their at-risk children. Intervention programs are used with children who are not likely to succeed in the core program.

There are many at-risk children who are not likely to succeed when placed in widely distributed core reading programs. The problems stem from the programs not being designed with the degree of explicitness needed by the at-risk child. The programs often have serious instructional design flaws. Among these problems are (a) teacher explanations that include words the child does not know and that use sentence structures that are confusing for students with limited knowledge of language, (b) the rate of introduction of new skills is too fast, and (c) sequences that can cause confusion. For example, one program introduced letter–sound correspondences in alphabetical order, resulting in the letters b and d, and m and n being introduced in near consecutive order, and (d) too little practice and review.

The intervention program is used either to replace the core program or in addition to the core program. Ideally, in the lower grades, the Direct Instruction program would serve as a replacement for the core program to avoid children being taught two programs that introduce skills in a different sequence.

The purpose of this article is to communicate important points about using Direct Instruction programs as an intervention so that children will receive the instruction necessary to bring them to and maintain them at grade-level performance. There are many children who enter school with low literacy and language skills development who, through the use of the systematic and explicit instruction in Direct Instruction programs, can be brought to grade level. This article is about using the Direct Instruction programs in a manner that will open the doors to success for at-risk children.

At the end of the article descriptions of the various Direct Instruction programs available to serve as intervention programs appear with information about each program.

Below are guidelines for the use of Direct Instruction curricula as intervention programs.

Begin the Use of Direct Instruction Early in Kindergarten

Kindergarten is a critical year for the child who is at risk because of entering school significantly behind in the development of language and literacy-related skills. Children who have a full year of Direct Instruction in kindergarten have a significantly greater chance of being able to perform successfully at grade level in future grades.

Administrators are often reluctant to place their at-risk children in intervention programs in kindergarten let alone at the beginning of kindergarten, waiting instead until the child has failed to progress in the core reading program.

This hesitation can be very problematic. If the initiation of Direct Instruction programs is delayed until midkindergarten it will be more difficult to bring the at-risk child to grade-level performance. If the initiation of Direct Instruction programs is delayed, as is often the case, until first or second grade it will be extremely difficult to bring the at-risk child to grade-level performance.

Include Teaching of Direct Instruction Language Programs

Many at-risk children enter school without the language knowledge needed to understand teacher instructions and without the vocabulary and background knowledge that will be needed for future higher-level comprehension tasks.

Teaching vocabulary, understanding of sentence structure, and background knowledge systematically and explicitly to the at-risk child is of equal importance to teaching the at-risk child to decode words and text.

Unfortunately, the language and vocabulary teaching in major core reading programs is not highly explicit and systematic. The basal programs present many skills, but few are taught thoroughly with clear teaching and sufficient practice and review.

The language components of the Direct Instruction Model are a critical element in setting children up for future success. The systematic and explicit teaching in these programs enables children to learn vocabulary and reasoning and analytical skills that serve as a foundation to prepare the children for comprehension in the later grades. Beginning these programs ideally in preschool and continuing their use throughout the primary grades is critical.

Provide Sufficient Instructional Time to Bring Children to Grade Level by the End of First Grade

Performing at grade level by the end of first grade is critically important for

the at-risk child. A study by Juel (1988) showed that the probability that a child who was a poor reader in first grade would be a poor reader in the fourth grade was a depressingly high + 0.88.

Implementations of Direct Instruction programs have been able to bring highly at-risk children to grade level by the end of first grade when sufficient reading time has been scheduled and the program has been taught well.

In order to bring the child who enters school far behind in literacy and language related knowledge to grade level standards by the end of first grade a good deal of instructional time is needed. Schools that are able to provide children in both kindergarten and first grade with a 30 minute DI reading and a 30 minute DI language period in the morning and a 30 minute DI reading and a 30 minute DI language period in the afternoon are likely to bring most at-risk children to or very near grade-level performance by the end of first grade. If it is not possible in kindergarten to provide full morning and afternoon periods, there should be at least daily morning periods for reading and language and at least a 15 minute firm up of reading later in the day.

Every day is important in closing the academic gap. Instruction in the DI programs should begin as soon as possible, ideally during the first week of the school year and be presented daily throughout the school year.

Continue Direct Instruction Programs for an Extended Period

Some schools will identify children at the beginning of the year as at risk and place them in an intervention program. The school will periodically test children during the year and remove children from intervention programs if the students show improved performance or place children in intervention pro-

grams if their performance level becomes low.

The Direct Instruction programs are not designed for such a "pull-out" system. The Direct Instruction beginning reading programs use instructional prompts such as making alterations in the appearance of letters or underlining letters that represent one sound to make learning to read initially easier. These prompts are gradually faded out during the first two levels of the reading series. If a child does not complete the first two levels of the reading pro-

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gram the potential benefit for acceleration through Direct Instruction will not be achieved. Schools should continue Direct Instruction programs for beginning readers at least until the children complete the second level of the reading program.

Direct Instruction programs can play an important role after first grade. The challenge of bringing the at-risk child who has a limited language background to grade level by the end of first grade is relatively minor compared to the challenge of keeping the at-risk child at grade level as the child progresses through the higher grades. In later grades, vocabulary, understanding of sentence structure, and general knowledge of common information play a larger role in reading. For example, understanding a simple story about a cat is quite different than understanding a story in which an inventor is dealing with a manufacturer.

The at-risk child needs to learn a much greater amount of vocabulary and general background knowledge than his peers in order to remain at grade-level performance standards. The third through sixth levels of Direct Instruction reading programs provide explicit and systematic instruction of comprehension strategies and present vocabulary and background knowledge that will prepare children for future work in science and social studies. An at-risk child's chance of remaining at grade level can be increased if the child receives a daily 90 minute period in these higher level Direct Instruction reading programs as well as the 90 minute period in the school's core program.

Rely on Assessments to Support the Use of Flexible Homogenous Small-Group Instruction

A basic requirement when using Direct Instruction programs is that students are to be placed and maintained at their instructional level. Each Direct Instruction program has a placement test to place children at their instructional level. Students are grouped with other students at the same instructional level. This homogeneous grouping, coupled with careful placement, allows children to make maximum progress since the teacher does not have to make compromises by balancing the needs of higher and lower performing children, as happens when groups have varied skill levels.

To assist in maintaining students at their instructional level, frequent in-program mastery assessments (every 5–10 lessons) are incorporated into all Direct Instruction programs. Teachers need to administer these assessments and provide the remediation exercises specified in the teacher presentation book when students fail a mastery test. Children who do not pass two consecutive mastery tests need to be identified and actions taken immediately to enable them to be successful. A first step is to analyze their perform-

ance to see if they need extra work on particular skills and plan for extra instruction. If the extra instruction does not solve the problem, the child may need to be moved to a group at a lower lesson. On the other hand, if a child is performing significantly better than the other children, the child may be moved to a group at a more advanced lesson.

Use Available Staff Efficiently

During the beginning stages of reading instruction, Direct Instruction programs need to be taught in small groups because the teacher must be able to listen to students' responses and give immediate feedback.

If a school has many children who enter their particular grade significantly below grade-level performance, the school must organize its resources very carefully in order to provide sufficient small-group instruction to enable all these children to make accelerated progress.

Schools must prioritize their discretionary funds to provide adequate staff. In many areas of the country paraprofessionals can be hired who, with adequate training, can teach small groups, providing children with second and third reading and language periods. In addition to hiring additional staff, certified nonclassroom teachers such as special education and ESL teachers should be incorporated in the overall reading program. Their schedules should be arranged so that they are dealing with groups containing appropriate numbers of children. Sometimes, in a school that is not carefully configured, you will see one teacher working with two students while another teacher is working with 10 or more children at the same level.

Classrooms should be organized so that each teacher has a realistic number of groups to teach during reading time. Teachers cannot meet children's needs when they have children at too many instructional levels.

There are a variety of ways to group and schedule children for reading and language instruction. Some schools will have a "walk to reading time" during which each classroom is arranged so that there is a realistic number of instructional groups. Some schools will organize homeroom classrooms with children grouped at the same skill level. Classrooms with lower performing children will generally have fewer children and/or have more assistance

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either from a paraprofessional or other certified teacher. Whatever system is in place, the priority must be to provide the children with the instruction they need to reach grade-level performance in reading as soon as possible.

Provide Professional Development to All Staff Teaching Direct Instruction

Teachers and paraprofessionals who teach Direct Instruction programs to at-risk children need high quality professional development.

The basic recommendation for learning how to teach Direct Instruction reading programs calls for at least a 3–5-day inservice prior to beginning to teach the programs and periodic inservices during the first years of teaching. Most of the inservice time should be devoted to practicing the skills the teacher will use in presenting the lessons.

In addition to the inservice training, in-class coaching is essential, particularly for staff teaching at-risk children. In-class coaching involves a person highly expert in teaching Direct Instruction and trained in coaching techniques working with the

teacher in the classroom. The coach models teaching techniques, observes the teacher presenting, provides suggestions on presentation techniques, and helps the teacher deal with specific problems. During the 1st year, it will be ideal if weekly coaching can be provided to teachers working with at-risk children.

Most schools that are beginning to use Direct Instruction programs will not have staff members with sufficient expertise with Direct Instruction to provide this in-class coaching. If there is not a person on staff who is expert with Direct Instruction and knowledgeable about how to coach during the first year(s) of implementing Direct Instruction, the school needs to obtain the services of an external DI expert. Schools with high numbers of at-risk children who have traditionally performed at low levels will need a great deal of coaching time. At a minimum, 1/2 to 2 days of consulting should be provided during the school year for each staff member who is teaching Direct Instruction. So if a school had 20 staff members teaching Direct Instruction programs, 30–40 days of consulting would be provided. Schools must be very careful consumers in ensuring that the consultant is highly skilled and has sufficient expertise in coaching DI programs.

Establish Goals and Monitor Progress Toward Goals

As stated previously, the goal for children who are in kindergarten or first grade should be to bring the child to grade-level performance standards by the end of first grade. For children who enter second or third grade significantly behind, the goal would be determined by the child's beginning level. For children who are essentially nonreaders, the goal might be to bring them to grade level within 2 years. For children who enter second grade reading at a mid-first-grade level or who enter third grade reading at a second-grade level, the goal would be to bring the child to grade-level status within a year.

The goals need to be translated to expectations for monthly lesson coverage in the specific Direct Instruction programs being used. During the year, the principal and grade-level teams should monitor lesson coverage and mastery test reports and take steps immediately when goals are not being reached.

Maintain A Focus on Teaching to Mastery

The instructional design underlying the construction of Direct Instruction programs is built on the assumption of mastery teaching. Mastery is achieved in a lesson when the student is able to do all the items in each exercise without error by the end of the lesson. During a lesson, the goal for a teacher is to bring all children to 100% mastery on every task. If children are not taught to mastery in early lessons, progress in later lessons will be slowed.

When teaching a Direct Instruction program more than one time a day, what the teacher does during the second period of the day should be determined by children's performance on the earlier lesson. If the children were at mastery on the lesson in the first period of the day, the teacher presents a new lesson during the second period. If the children were not at mastery on the first lesson, the teacher presents that lesson again during the next period.

If a teacher finds that a group consistently cannot complete one entire lesson in one period, the children are probably not at a mastery level (assuming the teacher is presenting the program with fidelity). If the students do not finish the lesson in the first period, it is usually more efficient to restart the next lesson from the beginning. This procedure gives the children additional practice with the skills that slowed the pace in the morning and is more conducive to developing mastery than taking two periods to do the tasks in one lesson.

Establish an Intensive Program for Second and Third Graders

Children who enter second or third grade performing significantly below grade level are highly at risk for failure in their school career, particularly if they come from low-income homes.

A child who cannot read grade-level materials with at least 85–90% accuracy is a child who can be classified as significantly behind. Core reading programs are not designed for children who enter a grade level significantly behind. Most core reading programs

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will have components entitled "intervention" programs. However, these intervention components do not provide a systematic teaching of skills from previous grades, but instead just provide extra practice on skills being taught in that grade level.

If children who are significantly behind in second and third grade are to catch up, they need to be (a) placed in a program designed to accelerate students through the most important elements of reading instruction, (b) placed and maintained at their instructional level for all instruction, and (c) receive sufficient instructional time to make more than a year's progress during a school year.

There are several Direct Instruction programs that can be used to accelerate older children through the beginning reading levels. In order to make needed progress the children should receive at least two full small-group reading periods daily in these Direct Instruction reading programs. For children who are further behind, a third

period for firming up skills and working on fluency should also be provided.

References

Juel, C. (1988). Learning to read and write: A longitudinal study of 54 children from first through fourth grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 80,* 437–447.

Overview of How Direct Instruction Programs Can Be Used as Intervention Programs

Reading Mastery Classic

- The *Reading Mastery Classic* programs are derived from the original *Reading Mastery* program. There are two levels of *Reading Mastery Classic*, Level I and Level II. There is also a Fast Cycle program which presents the content of Levels I and II in just 1 school year.

- When students complete *Reading Mastery Classic* Level II they will be able to read the text in beginning to mid-second grade basal programs with a high degree of accuracy and with fluency of at least 60 words or more per minute. Finishing *Reading Mastery II* by the end of first grade will make it highly likely that a child will score at or above grade level on standardized tests and be prepared for success in second grade. (Remember, this is the goal for all children.)

- *Reading Mastery Classic* is the program that is most appropriate to use if reading instruction begins in kindergarten and the goal is to bring children to grade-level performance by the end of first grade.

- If *Reading Mastery Classic* is begun in first grade all efforts should be made to have children complete Levels I and II by the end of first grade. For the more at-risk child, this will require two full 30 minute reading periods a day taught by a highly skilled teacher.

- The *Reading Mastery Classic Fast Cycle* program can be used with nonread-

ers in any grade who can pass the placement test for it. Fast Cycle is a good program to use with children who enter second or third grade as basically nonreaders. For second and third graders who are reading at a mid-first-grade level, the teacher can use Fast Cycle; the teacher should follow the procedures for placing mid-year entry students. This placement procedure tests children on mastery tests from the program so that the teacher can begin instruction at the appropriate lesson for the student.

Language Programs

The *Language for Learning* program, the *Language for Thinking* program, and the *Language for Writing* program, formerly called *DISTAR Language I, II, and III*, play a critical role in preparing children for success in learning to read and in preparing children with foundational skills that will help them with more complex comprehension tasks in later grades.

The *Language for Learning* and the *Language for Thinking* programs are oral programs that require no reading by students. *Language for Learning* teaches foundational language concepts and vocabulary that children need in order to understand teacher explanations and follow instructions. It also teaches a great deal of common information and how to analyze statements and make predictions from statements. *Language for Thinking* teaches important analytical and deductive reasoning skills and expands on vocabulary teaching from the earlier level. *Language for Writing* requires the children to read at a mid-second-grade level and teaches the use of grammatical and syntactical elements involved in written communication.

Language for Learning ideally would begin in preschool and no later than kindergarten. *Language for Thinking* is used following *Language for Learning.*

The placement test, progress-monitoring assessments, and a skipping schedule allow the teacher to differentiate instruction based on students' initial level and performance during the school year.

A supplementary component entitled *Español to English* is available for use with children who speak only Spanish when they begin school.

Language for Learning and *Language for Thinking* can also be used with children in second through fourth grade who enter school with no or very little knowledge of English. The programs are not designed to serve as a full pro-

> ## Language for Learning
> *teaches foundational language concepts and vocabulary that children need in order to understand teacher explanations and follow instructions.*

gram to teach English to non-English speakers but can play a very important part.

The *Reasoning and Writing* Series consists of six levels. The first two levels, *Reasoning and Writing A and B,* are primarily oral programs that provide practice in applying language concepts and include a teacher story read aloud component that teaches story grammar elements. These programs can begin once children complete *Language for Learning.* The programs each have 70 lessons, and both can be completed in 1 year.

Reading Mastery Plus

Reading Mastery Plus is a comprehensive kindergarten through sixth grade core reading series. The program incorporates lessons from *Reading Mastery Classic* Levels I and II, *Reading Mastery* Levels III–VI, *Language for Learning, Language for Thinking,* and *Reasoning and Writing.*

The sequence in which *Reading Mastery Plus* teaches beginning reading skills is different from that in the *Reading Mastery Classic* programs. The *Reading Mastery Plus* kindergarten level does not begin teaching word reading as early as *Reading Mastery Classic* Level I. The *Reading Mastery Plus* kindergarten level teaches letter names, phonemic awareness skills, and language concepts during its first 100 lessons. Word reading is not introduced until Lesson 101 of *Reading Mastery Plus* kindergarten. The 50 lessons of word reading in the kindergarten level of *Reading Mastery Plus* (Lessons 101–150) are basically the same lessons as are in the first 50 lessons of *Reading Mastery Classic* Level I.

Reading Mastery Plus kindergarten also includes teacher presentation books that include most of the *Language for Learning* program and some story grammar exercises from *Reasoning and Writing A.* These language lessons are to be taught concurrently with the reading related content.

Reading Mastery Plus Levels I and II include the remaining lessons from *Reading Mastery Classic* Levels I and II and 50 extra new lessons that appear at the end of *Reading Mastery Plus* Level II. When students complete *Reading Mastery II* they will be able to read beginning third-grade text; their reading skills will be somewhat more advanced than children who complete *Reading Mastery Classic II.*

Reading Mastery Plus Levels III–VI are basically the same programs that have been published as *Reading Mastery. Reading Mastery III* and *IV* include a great deal of science and social studies information and are designed to teach children how to learn through reading. *Reading Mastery V* and *VI* are literature programs; selections include poems, short stories, and novels.

- In some states, *Reading Mastery Plus* has been selected as one of the state's adopted programs for Reading First. Some users of *Reading Mastery Classic* have expressed con-

cerns about *Reading Mastery Plus* not beginning actual word reading instruction early in kindergarten. However, schools that want to begin teaching actual word reading earlier in kindergarten than is done with the regular sequence of *Reading Mastery Plus* can do so. The publisher has prepared a booklet entitled, "Reading Supplement—Level K." This booklet provides directions for reorganizing the sequence of *Reading Mastery Plus* kindergarten lessons so that actual word reading instruction begins early in the school year. Blackline masters with workbook pages to replace existing worksheets are included in the booklet. The directions for making these modifications are somewhat complex. Teachers will need support in implementing the altered sequence. The teacher would use materials from the *Reading Mastery Plus* kindergarten level and from Level I during kindergarten.

- The *Reading Mastery Plus* kindergarten level would be appropriate to use as is with kindergarten children who speak little or no English upon entering kindergarten. It can also be used in preschool with at-risk populations.

- *Reading Mastery Plus* Levels I and II can be used to accelerate the performance of children who enter first grade without previous reading instruction. A booklet in the *Reading Mastery Plus* Level I kit entitled "Fast Start" is used to present the lessons taught in kindergarten to children who have not had previous reading instruction. Thereafter, the teacher presents the regular lessons from Level I of *Reading Mastery Plus* and then Level II. The children's progress can be accelerated by teaching two periods a day so that children can complete all of Level I of *Reading Mastery Plus* and at least two thirds of *Reading Mastery Plus* Level II by the end of first grade.

- *Reading Mastery Plus* Levels III–VI focus on comprehension skills. To be at a strong grade-level perform-

ance, an at-risk child should complete *Reading Mastery III* in second grade, *Reading Mastery IV* in third grade, *Reading Mastery V* in fourth grade, and *Reading Mastery VI* in fifth grade. Each lesson requires a total of 90 minutes. Children can be accelerated by presenting two reading periods a day if they need to finish more than a lesson a day to reach grade-level standards.

Horizons

The *Horizons* series includes four levels: Levels A, B, A/B, and C/D.

Horizons uses a different approach than *Reading Mastery* for teaching beginning reading.

Reading Mastery uses a modified orthography, introducing 40 symbols

> Horizons A/B *is appropriate for ESL students in Grades 3 and higher who are reading below a second-grade level and who have some, but limited, knowledge of English.*

with each symbol representing one sound (26 of these symbols are individual letters, 5 are vowels with a line above them to indicate the long sound of the vowel, and 9 are combinations of letters joined together). With this modified orthography, nearly all words can be read by blending the sounds for symbols in a left to right progression. The modified orthography is faded during the second level of *Reading Mastery*.

Horizons uses a traditional orthography. Prompts are used initially to make it possible for children to read words in which each letter does not represent its most common sound. Letter combinations such as ee, ea, ai, ou, and th are underlined. Some letters are writ-

ten in blue. A blue letter tells the reader that that letter makes no sound, and another letter in the word says its name. For example, in the word meat, the letter combination *ea* would be underlined and the letter a written in blue indicating that the *a* is silent and the *e* says its name (m<u>ea</u>t.)

Horizons A is not appropriate for the at-risk child who enters kindergarten or first grade with little literacy or language knowledge. It is appropriate for use with first graders who have learned most letter names in kindergarten and who can readily follow instructions in English.

Horizons B is a continuation of *Horizons A.* When students complete *Horizons B* they will be able to read beginning third-grade text; their reading skills will be somewhat more advanced than children who complete *Reading Mastery Classic II.*

Horizons A/B is an accelerated program that teaches the content of *Horizons* Levels A and B in 1 school year. *Horizons A/B* was designed to accelerate the performance of first graders who enter school with more advanced literacy-related skills. *Horizons A/B* can also be used with children in Grades 3 and higher who are nonreaders or who read at or below an early second-grade level. For children who are reading at a mid-first through early second-grade level, the teacher needs to follow placement directions to ensure that the student is placed at the appropriate lesson.

Horizons A/B is appropriate for ESL students in Grades 3 and higher who are reading below a second-grade level and who have some, but limited, knowledge of English. There are many pictures in the stories that provide a means for vocabulary development.

Horizons Level C/D is an accelerated program that covers the content of *Reading Mastery III* and *IV* in 1 year. *Horizons C/D* was originally designed for high performing second or third graders. *Horizons C/D* can also be used with students who are behind in

Grades 4 and above. *Horizons C/D* would be appropriate for fourth, fifth, or sixth graders who can read beginning third-grade level text at a rate of about 90 words per minute with high accuracy (95%) and who have done well on comprehension exercises in earlier programs. Children with weaker language and comprehension skills would be more appropriately placed in *Reading Mastery III*.

Funnix

Funnix is a computer-based program available on CD. *Funnix* presents virtually the same lessons as in *Horizons* Levels A and B in a computerized format. *Funnix* lessons include all the elements of *Horizons*: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. There are two levels: *Beginning Funnix,* which includes 120 lessons, and *Funnix 2,* which includes 100 lessons.

Funnix can be used as an intervention program for children in first through fifth grades who are reading at or below an early second-grade level. *Funnix* requires that an adult or older student be seated with the child as the child goes through the lessons. *Funnix* can be used with small groups of students as well as individual children. For more information on *Funnix*, see www.funnix.com

Journeys

Journeys is a kindergarten through third grade reading series that incorporates *Horizons A and B*, *Reading Mastery III*, *Language for Learning*, and *Reasoning and Writing*. Similar to *Reading Mastery Plus,* the first 100 lessons of the *Journeys* kindergarten level teaches letter names, language skills, and phonemic awareness skills but not word reading. Word reading is introduced in the last fourth of the *Journeys* kindergarten level. Unlike *Reading Mastery Plus*, there is not a means for beginning word reading earlier in kindergarten.

Levels I and II of *Journeys* are basically the same as *Horizons A* and *B* with 30 additional new lessons at the end of Level II. The third-grade level is basically the same as *Reading Mastery Plus* Level III.

Journeys Levels I and II can be used to accelerate the performance of children who enter first grade without previous reading instruction. A booklet in the *Journeys* Level I kit entitled "Quick Start" is used to present the lessons taught in kindergarten to children who have not had previous reading instruction. Thereafter, the teacher presents the regular lessons from Level I of *Journey*s and then Level II. The chil-

> **Corrective Reading** *is a reading series designed for students in Grades 4 through high school who did not master the content of decoding instruction in the earlier grades.*

dren's progress can also be accelerated by teaching two periods a day so that children can complete all of Level I of *Journeys* and at least two thirds of *Journeys* Level II by the end of first grade.

Corrective Reading

Corrective Reading is a reading series designed for students in Grades 4 through high school who did not master the content of decoding instruction in the earlier grades.

There are a series of four decoding modules and a coordinated series of four comprehension modules.

Decoding Modules: There are four decoding modules. Decoding A, B-1, B-2, and C. Decoding A is a 65-lesson program designed for children who are reading at an early first-grade level; Decoding B-1, which also contains 65-lessons, is for children reading at a late first-grade level. Decoding B-1 is designed to be used with children who

have developed serious confusions about the relationship between letters and sounds and who overuse context and underuse letter–sound relationships to figure out words. Decoding B-2 is a 65-lesson program for children reading at a beginning third-grade level. The 65 lessons present the decoding skills generally taught during third grade. Decoding C is a 125-lesson program that teaches the decoding skills taught in late elementary grades.

For children who enter third grade reading below a low second-grade level, it is possible to use either Decoding A or B-1; however, use of *Horizons A/B* or *Reading Mastery Fast Cycle* often is more appropriate because the content of stories in *Corrective Reading* is targeted to older students, and the first lesson of Decoding B-1 includes stories designed specifically for the confused older reader.

For third-grade children who speak little English, use of *Horizons A/B* or *Reading Mastery Fast Cycle* is more appropriate than the use of Levels A or B-1 of the *Corrective Reading* Series.

Decoding B-2 can be used during the last half of third grade with students who are still reading at around a beginning third-grade level. While the story content in *Corrective Reading* was designed for older students, Decoding B-2 can be used to more fully prepare children for fourth-grade text if there is limited time left in the school year.

The Comprehension modules teach very sophisticated comprehension skills. The first level, Comprehension A, is an oral program that does not require students to do any written tasks. The remainder of the comprehension modules include written exercises. Use of the comprehension modules would begin with children at a fourth-grade level or higher.

With the exception of *Funnix*, available at www.funnix.com, the aforementioned programs are published by SRA/McGraw-Hill. For more information visit www.sra4kids.com *ADI*