

APPENDIX 4B

Accountability First and Just Read Case Study

Though many instructional approaches align under one of these two contrasting philosophies, common examples might be Accountability First and Teachers' College Reading and Writing Project. Accountability First was a federally mandated, scripted program that was implemented by training the trainer at the state level, who then trained district leaders and school leaders so that information eventually trickled down to teachers. The focus of the program was on using a prescribed set of instructional materials and practices to generate data about student progress that could be used to hold teachers, coaches, and schools accountable for growth. This emphasis on compliance with prescribed instructional methods and assessments of reading skills for accountability purposes is a clear example of the Accountability First philosophy in action.

By contrast, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project is an example of the Just Read philosophy. The project advocates an approach, not a program, and is implemented by training teachers or teacher leaders individually to respond to students (information about instruction flows from the child up, rather than from the state down). Training for coaches was a later addition to the program's offerings, and training aimed at district- or state-level administrators doesn't exist. The focus of the program is on individual teachers identifying and addressing individual students' needs by watching their reading/writing in action during one-to-one conferences and delivering unscripted, individualized instruction at the point of need. This emphasis on the processes, rather than the outcomes, of reading and writing is a clear example of the Just Read philosophy in action.

To examine which philosophy (or combination) underlies instructional efforts in your building, list some of the features of your current approach and then sort them into the columns below. Though there are likely to be some practices in each column, where are the majority? Where would you like them to be for this year in your setting?

Accountability First	Just Read
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop proficient readers to raise test scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop students' love of books and reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Systemic reforms to raise achievement (state-down)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with one child at a time to promote his or her development as a reader (child-up)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reliance on standards-aligned curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reliance on authentic literature

Reflection Questions

- How do school and district leaders pressure you to teach reading?
- To what degree is your instruction controlled by standards, textbooks, and pacing guides?
- To what extent is your instruction individualized to match students' needs?
- What types of instructional materials do you rely on?
- What types of texts do students read in your classroom? Why?
- How do you assess students' growth as readers?