



VPI Information Brief 1

Overview

Introduction

LSU was awarded a one-year grant to support development of the Validated Practices Initiative (VPI) in Louisiana. That included development of research summaries on effective teaching and learning practices for Louisiana students across content areas. Throughout the remainder of our direct involvement in this project, you will be able to read and shape these documents – we call them VPI Information Briefs – as we post and archive them on the VPI website <http://www.validatedpractices.com>. You can help us and your professional colleagues across the state by providing ongoing feedback either through e-mail or by participating in our Discussion Board <http://www.validatedpractices.com/flexiforums/login.cfm?fid=0>. We encourage you to get involved in the dissemination and implementation of validated inclusive instructional practices by reading our work, critiquing our work, contributing your own ideas, and, most importantly, applying validated instructional practices in your classroom and evaluating your own efforts.

Rationale

In developing a model for the presentation of the VPI Information Briefs, we wanted our products to be brief and informational. We also wanted, as often as possible, for our products to be of immediate use by teachers and other school-based practitioners who are working with children and adolescents on a daily basis. As much

as possible, we want you to be able to read the document in one sitting and “see” enough specificity embedded within the article to enable you to implement the targeted strategy, technique, or principle in an inclusive classroom setting. While admittedly this is a lofty goal, we will publish them expecting you the reader to provide us with constructive feedback. Using this approach, we hope for these briefs to become living documents, with feedback addressing such issues as level of detail provided about technique, the types of settings and / or students with whom the techniques are appropriate, and the perceived reasons for that success or failure. Understand, though, that it will not always be possible to be sufficiently explicit. For example, in our VPI Information Brief on early math screening and progress monitoring, there is not the level of specificity needed in 2006 in order to provide teachers support to successfully implement a screening and progress monitoring plan. Researchers, however, are developing and piloting systems that could be available in the near future, though, so we thought it important to make the information available even though it is not in as explicit a form as we – and you – might like.

In developing this presentation model, we believe that it is imperative that our products be associated with improved student outcomes. Therefore, underlying all of the content in the VPI Information Briefs is a research base that supports the described use of the technique or approach. But again, we

want these VPI Information Briefs to be springboards for data-driven instructional decision making. Therefore, when you choose to implement a strategy or technique, make sure to establish a baseline of performance so that you can determine whether or not your implementation of the strategy is having positive impacts on achievement for the students you serve. While the research behind our evidence-based recommendations is important, it is critical that the strategies are beneficial to the students you teach.

Finally, in creating a presentation model, we needed a structure that was familiar to Louisiana teachers. Research in teaching and learning has long held that new information is best learned when it is “hooked” to old learning. The familiar structure we have chosen is the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching. The system is immediately relevant to teachers, administrators, and other school personnel because it is used as the basis for the evaluation of instruction. Equally important, the system has a firm empirical foundation. The instructional principles that are introduced are based on decades-old as well as ongoing research into specific practices that improve the academic outcomes of students.

In summary, the VPI Information Briefs are designed to be short, explicit, research-based, and interactive. We want the VPI Information Brief to be a tool that facilitates an ongoing discussion statewide around the issue of effectively and efficiently improving student outcomes.

Overall Look

Each VPI Information Brief will be two pages in length and include the following:

- Title, which will describe the strategy, technique, or approach;
- Real world scenario, designed to allow the reader to see what is prompting the suggested use of the chosen strategy, technique, or approach;
- Discussion of a specific instructional strategy, technique, or approach in relationship to its evidence base;
- Selected references; and
- A series of questions to prompt the reader to reflect on his or her own content knowledge and / or teaching skills and to contribute to a statewide discussion of the topic.

How Can You Help?

Educators across Louisiana can help us by reading the documents, providing feedback through our Discussion Board, implementing the strategies and gathering data on the effectiveness of your attempts, and providing us with topics to research. Check out our list of topics, choose one, read it, log in, and comment today. For more information on how to become a registered user or suggest a future topic, contact us at vpi@lsu.edu. Teach well!