

Math Success with DMTI

RETHINKING MATH CURRICULUM: CORE VS. INTERVENTIONS

In today's edition, we explore:

- The Distinct Roles of Core and Intervention Math Curricula
- Why Core Curriculum Alone Isn't Enough
- Research-Based Strategies for Effective Integration

Educators!

This week, we are focusing on the critical distinction between core and intervention math curricula- an essential topic for ensuring all students achieve mathematical success. Decades of research show that while a strong core curriculum lays the foundation for grade-level learning, targeted intervention is vital for supporting students who need additional help. Understanding how these two approaches work together is key to closing persistent achievement gaps and boosting overall math performance.

Understanding Core vs. Intervention Curriculum

A high-quality **core math curriculum** provides comprehensive, standards-based instruction for all students. Its components include clear content standards, coherent instructional sequences, mathematical practice standards, formative and summative assessments, differentiation strategies, and real-world application tasks (Akkus, 2016; CCSSO, 2022). However, research and classroom experience confirm that even the best core programs cannot reach every learner; some students will inevitably need more targeted, individualized support.

Intervention curriculum is designed for those students. It offers focused, supplemental instruction-often in small groups or one-on-one settings-using evidence-based strategies like enactive (hands-on), iconic (visual), and symbolic (abstract) models, problem-solving, and computation fluency (Frontiers in Education, 2023). The most effective interventions supplement, rather than replace, core instruction, ensuring students continue to access grade-level content while receiving the support they need.

Key Strategies for Integrating Core and Intervention

Research highlights several strategies for creating a seamless bridge between core and intervention curricula:

- **Invest in Teacher Expertise:** Ongoing, content-focused professional development deepens teachers' conceptual understanding and equips them to effectively implement core and intervention curricula.
- **Use Data to Target Support:** Regular formative assessments help identify students who need intervention and monitor their progress.

- **Align Instructional Practices:** To reinforce learning, ensure that vocabulary, models, and teaching approaches are consistent across core and intervention settings.
- **Supplement, Do not Supplant:** Use intervention time to build on core lessons, not to replace them, so students do not miss essential grade-level instruction.

Classroom Tips

- **Early Identification:** Use formative assessments and classroom observations to identify students who need additional support as early as possible.
- **Flexible Grouping:** Provide intervention in small, flexible groups that can change as students' needs evolve.
- **Enactive to Iconic to Symbolic Models:** To deepen conceptual understanding, incorporate manipulatives, visual models, and interactive activities in core and intervention settings.
- **Collaborative Unit Planning:** Regularly collaborate with classroom teachers, interventionists, and instructional coaches to align goals and strategies.

How are you bridging core and intervention in your classroom?

Email us at mathsuccess@dmhti.org to share your strategies and insights for future newsletters!

Keep developing mathematical thinking!

MORE INFORMATION

This is a quick summary of this topic, but if you want to download and read the research overview or watch the video, go to **Research Overviews** at dmtinstitute.com/research

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