

Reading Instructional Goals for Older Readers (RIGOR)

Program Description

Reading Instructional Goals for Older Readers (RIGOR) is designed for English Language Learners (ELLs) who read at a pre-literate or early-grade reading level in English and/or their native language. RIGOR develops a student's language, literacy and content understanding. It is available in both English and Spanish skill bags. A skill bag contains a teacher's guide with explicit, integrated daily lessons to support the RIGOR five-step process. The components of the five-step process are the essential building blocks of academic language and literacy that Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) lack.

The five steps of RIGOR

- Step 1: Develop phonemic awareness and phonics skills.
- Step 2: Build vocabulary through seven-step instruction and practice sequence.
- Step 3: Increase reading comprehension, fluency, and content knowledge.
- Step 4: Use writing to expand and reinforce literacy.
- Step 5: Compile assessment data to inform instruction.

The program materials are arranged in two levels:

- Level One: 16 skill bags for pre-literate through first grade reading levels.
- Level Two: 16 skill bags for second grade through third grade reading levels.

Program Implementation

A minimum of seven hours per week is recommended for the RIGOR program to be most effective. This can be accomplished through a 90-minute block of English as a Second Language (ESL) or two separate daily 45-minute periods. The two 45-minute blocks can be accomplished by scheduling one period of ESL during the school day and one 45-minute block after school. Initially, teachers will be challenged to complete an entire skill bag in one week; however, this will become routine as teachers develop their expertise in the five-step process. An initial study of the RIGOR program concluded that students who participated in both Spanish and English RIGOR sessions attained the highest gains. This data confirms second language acquisition research that highlights the acceleration of learning through the primary language of second language learners.

Professional Development

Schools have two options for professional development. RIGOR program developer Dr. Margarita Calderon and her staff provide onsite professional development. A school needs ten or more teachers for onsite delivery of professional development. Schools with less than ten teachers can be clustered together for professional development at a central meeting place if necessary. Schools can choose from a menu of support services from Dr. Calderon and Associates, e.g., small group sessions, RIGOR lesson demonstration, individual coaching on the delivery of instruction, and using the RIGOR observation protocol. The professional development is designed to meet the needs of staff

working with RIGOR. Also, the Office of ELLs collaborates with Dr. Calderon to offer professional development to cohorts of schools. These sessions are three-day workshops held at a central location. These workshops are for schools starting the program as well as those using it that wish to introduce new teachers to RIGOR. For more experienced RIGOR teachers, a workshop titled “Making RIGOR More Rigorous and Creative!” will be offered.

Benchmark Education can provide onsite professional development to any number of teachers implementing the RIGOR program. Benchmark professional developers spend two days working with teachers on the components of the RIGOR program, lesson design and delivery.

Infrastructure and Cost

RIGOR accommodates a wide range of scheduling options: daily blocks of ESL instruction (45-, 60- and 90-minutes), extended day sessions and pull-out intervention classes. The program includes an e-book and Audio CD for each title in the skill bag. A classroom teacher should have appropriate equipment for these components of the program. A RIGOR classroom should not exceed a teacher student ration of 1:15. Contact a representative from Benchmark Education (see below) for specific costs. Contact Margarita Calderon and Associates (see below) for specific professional development costs.

Target Population and Model Sites

SIFE, newcomer and special education ELL classrooms have implemented RIGOR effectively to meet the needs of students who are at a pre-literate to second grade reading level in English and/or Spanish. Twenty-one schools funded by the Office of ELLs and Office of Special Education initiatives piloted the RIGOR program in 2007 – 08. Also, RIGOR was the winner of the 2008 Distinguished Achievement Award by the National Association of Educational Publishers. Contact the Office of ELLs to schedule a visit to one of the model sites implementing the RIGOR program: Academy for the New Americans (30Q235); IS 5 (24Q005); and, John Bowne High School (25Q425).

Office of ELLs liaison:

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RIGOR Contacts

Materials and professional development: Benchmark Education,
www.benchmarkeducation.com

Professional development and content presentations: Robert Low, 914.637.4993

Sales: Lois Porter Rieser, lporterrie@aol.com, 212.737.0640

Professional Development Only: Margarita Calderon & Associates, 212.600.4993