

# Considering the Role of Print-Specific Instruction within the Tier I Environment

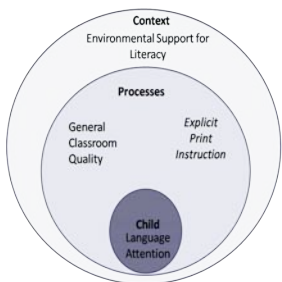
Anita S. McGinty<sup>1</sup>, Laura M. Justice<sup>2</sup>, Shayne B. Piasta<sup>2</sup>, & Joan Kaderavek<sup>3</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>University of Virginia, <sup>2</sup>The Ohio State University, <sup>3</sup>The University of Toledo

## INTRODUCTION

-The importance of explicit literacy instruction within the preschool classroom is not consistently supported (see NELP, 2008; Howes, 2009).

-Rarely are specific instructional mechanisms evaluated as part of a complex ecological system involving the classroom environment, the child and the teacher's instructional practices;

-Yet such an approach enhances the precision with which instructional effects can be understood.



## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1. To what degree does explicit print instruction independently and uniquely relate to children's print knowledge development?

RQ 2. To what extent does the association between explicit print instruction and print knowledge development vary as a function of global classroom quality?

RQ 3. To what extent does the association between explicit print instruction and print knowledge development vary as a function of children's developmental characteristics (language ability and attentional abilities)?

## PARTICIPANTS

### Teachers

- 59 teachers from Head Start, state-funded Pre-K, and private programs; Average Years teaching Preschool is 10.59 (SD = 8.97)



### Children

- 379 4-year old children (203 girls, 175 boys) randomly selected from each classroom; 87% spoke English at home



## MEASURES

### Child Outcome

**Print Knowledge:** Average of standardized scores (Z-scores) from measures of print concepts (PWPA; Justice & Ezell, 2001) and alphabet knowledge (PALS-PreK; UC; Invernizzi et al., 2004)

### Child Predictors

**Language:** Standardized ( $M = 100$ ,  $SD = 15$ ) receptive-expressive composite (*CELF-Second Edition*; Wüig, Secord, & Semel, 2004)

**Attention:** Sum of 3-items (measured on 3-point scale) from the *Child Behavior Questionnaire- Very Short Form* (see Putnam & Rothbart, 1987).

### Classroom Predictors

**Explicit print instruction:** Raw count of adult extra-textual utterances about print across 6 book reading sessions (*Fidelity Coding Checklist*; Justice, Sofka, Sutton & Zucker, 2006).

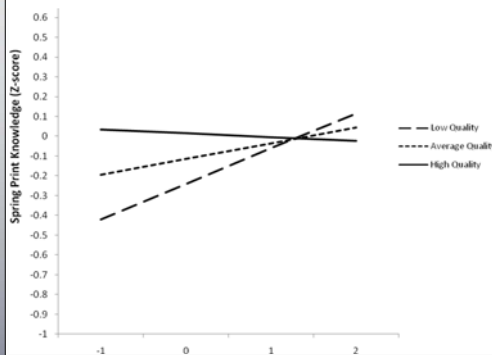
**Global classroom quality:** Average global rating of quality (7-point scale) across dimensions of Instructional, Emotional, and Organizational Support (*Classroom Assessment Scoring System- PreK*; Pianta, La Paro & Hamre, 2008)

## RESULTS

RQ 1. Does explicit print instruction relate to print knowledge outcomes?

Predictor	Independent Models Coefficient	Full model Coefficient
<b>Level 1</b>		
Language Ability	.02*	.01*
Attentional Abilities	.03*	.02*
<b>Level 2</b>		
Classroom Quality	.11*	.12*
Explicit Print Instruction	.14*	.07
Environmental Support for Print	.01	-----

RQ 2. Explicit print instruction varies by classroom quality

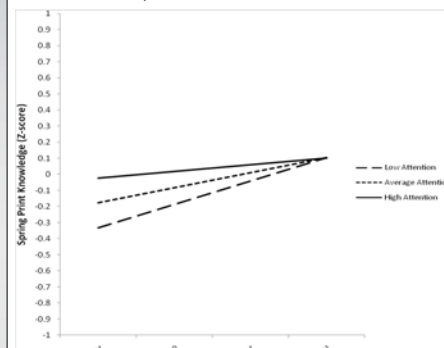


The research reported here was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R305B040049 to the University of Virginia

## RESULTS

RQ 3. Explicit print instruction varies by developmental characteristics.

No significant interaction between explicit print instruction and Language ( $p = .754$ , coefficient = .0008), but *Attention* had a significant interaction with explicit print instruction ( $p = .042$ , coefficient = -.014).



## SUMMARY

Explicit print instruction was a significant predictor of child print knowledge outcomes in low, but now high quality classrooms.

Explicit print instruction appears to be especially suited for children with weak attention skills.

## CONCLUSIONS

Explicit print instruction does not appear to be necessary to children's print knowledge learning in all contexts, but does appear to serve as a protective factor for children experience environmental and/or developmental risk.

Explicit print instruction appears to work by supporting children's attentional needs, as well as literacy learning needs, suggesting the importance of thinking broadly when examining why and how an intervention may work.