Contemporary Approaches to Intervention:

*Wilson Fundations*

*Special thanks to Rhymes Stabler, Katie Reilly and Andrew Angeles*

**Background:** Fundations is based on the Orton-Gillingham Principles of reading instruction and the Wilson Reading Program which both focus on multi-sensory instruction to increase literacy. Wilson *Fundations* can be used for whole class instruction (called Tier 1) or an early intervention program for students with scores in the lowest 30% of the class range (Tier 2), as determined by screening and reading diagnostic exams. Tier 1 instruction is intended as a general literacy program and Fundations will focus on Tier 2 instruction. Tier 2 Instruction is an early intervention approach provided to at-risk students in need of strategic intervention and conducted in a small group setting by the classroom teacher or interventionist.

**Population:** Wilson Fundations is intended for students, 2nd grade through adult who have not mastered fundamental skills for reading.

**Description:** A general education teacher, reading specialist, SLP, or intervention personnel can administer Fundations within a school or at home. No training is required, but obtaining a certificate in Fundations from Wilson is recommended. If *Fundations* is provided in a Tier 1, whole-class setting, the intervention consists of “double dose” Fundations lessons for 30 minutes, 3-5 times per week. If *Fundations* is not provided in a Tier 1, whole-class setting, the intervention includes the Fundations standard lesson (30 minutes daily) plus “double dose” lesson (30 minutes 3-5 times per week) for a total of four to five hours of intervention per week.

Fundations targets several different fundamental areas of reading:

- **Phonemic awareness:** Identification and practice of: Initial, final and medial phonemes; phonemic segmentation & manipulation; syllable awareness, word awareness.
  - “Tapping” to provide physical representation of the sounds to practice phonemic segmentation and blending.
  - Connect thumb to index, middle, then ring finger to “pull” the letter-sounds together.
  - “Scoop” multiple letters which produce only one sound.

- **Phonics (sound system) & Word Study (total word structure):** Drilling letter-to-sound and sound-to-letter to provide explicit instruction of how to blend sounds into words using explicit instruction of the six syllable types for total word structure.
  - “a- apple-/a/” “b-ball-/bl/”
  - Explicit instruction of the six syllable types according to Fundations.

- **Fluency:** To develop quick word recognition, prosody (pitch, volume, tone) and expression.
  - Practice high-frequency words in timed exercises with word lists in order to help students reach words per minute reading goals.

- **Vocabulary:** Word of the day, flashcards, student notebooks with alphabetized vocabulary entries.

- **Spelling:** Two-way practice of reading (decoding) and spelling (encoding); utilizes gel boards and magnetic building boards.

- **Comprehension strategies:** Storytime; retelling and visualization; choral and echo reading.

**Cost:** $355 for Fundations teacher materials, $44 per student for materials
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<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<td>● Cumulative and sequential program (systemic, with emphasis on mastery)</td>
<td>● Limited focus on reading comprehension</td>
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<td>● Emphasizes fine and gross motor memory learning through handwriting exercises</td>
<td>● Integration of curricular materials makes Fundations difficult to use without whole kit</td>
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<td>● Utilizes tactile manipulatives and “tapping” (kinesthetic feedback) of sounds to support phonological awareness</td>
<td>● It may be hard to integrate new students into the program since it builds on itself</td>
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<td>● A complete program that is ready to use and prepared for teachers that follows Common Core State Standards</td>
<td>● Structured program does not allow much room to tailor intervention to the child’s specific needs</td>
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<td>● Access to Intervention Placement Inventory and Progress Monitoring Kit</td>
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**Empirical Evidence:** While Wilson provides many examples for support, RTI Action network also reported that Public School 380 in Brooklyn, NY, improved student outcomes and reduced unnecessary referrals to special education by establishing an RTI framework using Wilson Fundations in Tiers 1 and 2. As of July 2010, no studies have met the What Works Clearinghouse standards to enable them to draw conclusions on the effectiveness of the Fundations program on students with learning disabilities. For example, some studies did not have equal experimental and control groups.

**For more information and training:**
Wilson Fundations Website: www.fundations.com

**Resources:**
www.orton-gillingham.com

**Sources:**