

BYRAM HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ARMONK, NEW YORK

TEMPLATE FOR ACTION RESEARCH SUMMARY

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**Title:** Student Interviews and How They Can Be Used to Determine RTI  
Interventions in Language Arts

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**Year:** 2010-11

**School/Grade:** Wampus/Grades 3-5

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SUMMARY OF ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

**Context**

I am a Reading Specialist in the Byram Hills School District. I work at Wampus Elementary which is made up of third, fourth and fifth graders.

The students I work with are mandated to participate in the Academic Intervention Services (AIS) program for reading. Students become eligible for the AIS program based on their performance on the NYS ELA Test. Though this information helps to identify AIS students, it does not supply enough information to help choose interventions for Response to Intervention (RTI) that would be appropriate to meet these students' needs.

My goal is to use my findings from student interviews about students' strengths and weaknesses to effectively drive students' interventions.

**Action Plan**

I started my journey with the following question: How are interviews used to gather information and what information would be most valuable to target when asking interview questions?

I used information from the following sources to learn more about how others used interviews:

- Schools Attuned Program
- Habits of Mind
- Fountas and Pinnell
- Lucy Calkins
- Jim Wright

Data collection:

I met with eight students individually and used various forms of interview questions to gather data. Each student was interviewed twice.

## Results

As a result of using and revising my interviews I learned the following:

1. Specific questions are not always the best questions to use on an interview, and open-ended questions allow students to share their true reading experience.  
*For example:*
  - a. Do you have difficulty with vocabulary when you read? (Specific question.) Answers: Yes, no, I use a dictionary.
  - b. What is giving you the most difficulty when you are reading this book? (General question.) Answers: Words start on one line and finish on another line. There are too many characters to keep track of. I have difficulty remembering what happened in the book yesterday.
  - c. What type of reader are you? What types of books do you enjoy reading? (Specific question.) Answers: I am a good reader. I like to read fantasy books.
  - d. How would you describe yourself as a reader? (Open ended question.) Answers: I am a good reader because..... When I read books I like I read fast. I like books that can really happen.
2. It is important to take the time of the school year into consideration when choosing an interview.  
*For example:*

An *Initial Reading Interview* should be used in the beginning of the school year while a *Monitoring Independent Reading Interview* would be more appropriate for later in the year.
3. Interviews should have different purposes.  
*For Example:*

An *Initial Reading Interview* will give you information about a student as a whole while a *Getting to the Problem Interview* focuses on the current book a student is reading and why the student is struggling.
4. Information gathered through interviews is very helpful when meeting with parents during Parent/Teacher conferences.  
*For Example:*

Sharing student's answers to interview questions provided a clear picture of a student as a reader as well as a student's strengths and weaknesses. I was able to give more than just test results to parents and teachers.

As a result of my personal journey through Action Research I learned:

1. To expect the unexpected.  
*Journal Entry from 9/27/10:*

I had no idea what I was getting myself into but I am pleasantly surprised that I will not be spending the year reading research after research project and summarizing the results.

*Journal Entry week of 12/13/10*

Wow! When I met with the parents of students I had interviewed the parent/teacher conference was much more substantial. I shared more than numbers and test results. I was able to make suggestions that were specific for their children.

*Journal Entry from 1/4/11*

I am getting information that I didn't expect. What do I do with this information?

2. Though unrelated, a colleague's experience can help me with my own research.

*Journal Entry 3/21/11*

My math colleagues shared information from a workshop they attended. Sandy Atkins led the workshop and part of her focus was asking students the right types of questions. She focused on using *how* questions. I looked back at my interview questions and made changes.

### **Implications**

I now need to use the interview process and the information gathered to answer the following questions:

- a. How do interviews impact student performance?
- b. How do interviews help teachers select appropriate intervention strategies for their students?