

Guide for Designing Systemic Reading Instruction and Intervention K-3

Minnesota Statute 120B.12 requires that for each child not on track to reading well by third grade, “the district shall provide reading intervention to accelerate student growth in order to reach the goal of reading at or above grade level by the end of the current grade and school year.”

Introduction

Reading proficiency develops over time, and students of all abilities need sustained and intentional reading instruction throughout their PK-12 schooling in order to be ready for college and the work place. To that end, a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) provides a framework for delivering interventions to students who require more explicit, systematic, and focused instruction to acquire the knowledge and skills represented in the Minnesota English Language Arts Standards.

This *Guide for Designing Systemic Reading Instruction and Intervention* has been created to assist schools in developing the structures necessary for a Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) and to provide quality reading instruction and intervention for students in preschool through grade three. Although MTSS can be applied to multiple content areas including behavior, this guide focuses specifically on application to reading with young learners. This resource is intended to provide guidance on best practices for reading instruction and intervention, including examples of nationally recognized and research-based instructional methods, practices that provide comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction, and intervention practices that support the academic success of all learners.

In Minnesota, MTSS is a framework of instructional design intended to support students across the continuum from lowest performing students to highest performing students with learning opportunities that accelerate growth for students behind their peers and further growth for students excelling above grade level expectations. This approach is particularly useful in designing instructional systems that build a continuum of services and supports for all students to achieve academic excellence.

“Reading is a basic tool in the living of a good life.” - Mortimer Adle

Overview

The use of research and evidence-based literacy practices is recognized as a critically important key to increasing the achievement of children and youth across in our state. Each practice is a component of instruction and intervention that has been studied and found to make a positive difference in learner outcomes (student performance or achievement). Schools that systematically select and implement research and evidence-based practices are more effective in reaching established goals. These include:

- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment aligned with the Minnesota B-12 State and Local Academic Standards and World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) standards
- Use of a multi-tiered system of support that differentiates and accelerates the learning of all consistent with MN Statute 120B.12
- Literacy leadership at all levels that builds capacity for school change through a collaborative process
- High-quality, job-embedded professional development consistent with MN Statute 122A.06
- Family and community partnerships that promote relationships between schools, families and communities and that supports positive learner outcomes

Acknowledgements

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Essential Elements of Systemic Instruction

Reading intervention programs play an important role in helping all students to become confident, skilled readers. An important part of instruction for struggling students is the use of the right intervention at the right time.

Systemic Instruction includes:

- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment aligned with the Minnesota B-12 State and Local Academic Standards and World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) standards
- Use of a multi-tiered system of support that differentiates and accelerates the learning of all consistent with MN Statute 120B.12
- Instructional leadership at all levels that builds capacity for school change through a collaborative process
- High-quality, job-embedded professional development consistent with MN Statute 122A.06
- Family and community partnerships that promote relationships between schools, families and communities and that supports positive learner outcomes

Core Instruction (Tier 1) is general instruction for all students and designed to represent on-grade level curriculum and instruction as intended for the regular language arts classroom. All students are part of core instruction. Intervention is in addition to this standards-based instruction. Students who need supplementary (Tier 2) or intensive (Tier 3) supports receive small group instruction in addition to the core instruction provided in the classroom. Most commonly in Tier 2, intervention is designed to bridge the learning gap for students who are approaching grade-level mastery. These students need additional support to reach independence in meeting literacy demands using grade-level texts through supplemented instruction in addition to core instruction. In Tier 3, instruction is designed to provide intensive intervention to students who exhibit significant difficulties and need sustained, direct instruction in small group or one-to-one settings in addition to core instruction. It is up to local districts to determine the exact number of tiers that can be sustainably supported with existing resources.

The following components of interventions are universal and essential in systemic instruction:

- Interventions are based on student need as determined by diagnostic assessment.
- Focused on specific skills and strategies requisite to making progress towards grade level standards and benchmarks.
- Provide increasing opportunities for students to engage, respond, and receive immediate feedback on performance.
- Ensure consistency of knowledge and skills being taught to students.

In order for interventions to work well (RTI Action Network, 2008), the following essential components must be in place:

- **On-going student assessment:** Universal screening tools identify students who may be at risk for not achieving grade level outcomes, diagnostic assessments inform decisions about what interventions are best for individual students, and progress monitoring provides information about a student's learning rate and level of achievement, both individually and in comparison with the peer group.
 - Use of screening, diagnostic and ongoing progress monitoring to inform the instructional content, activity, delivery, or supplemental materials and assistive technology needed to meet children's instructional needs and strengths is consistently employed.
 - Both formal and informal assessments are used to provide data that drives instruction, supports differentiation, and documents alignment of instruction to academic standards.
 - Assessments must also regularly evaluate and review systemic implementation of curricula and instructional practices by providing evidence that teachers' units and/or lesson plans show intentional planning to foster students' use of literacy and thinking skills.

NOTE: [The UPDATED PK-3 Assessment Information](#) document is available in the Reading Well by Third Grade Webpage.
- **Tiered instruction:** A multi-tiered approach is used to efficiently differentiate instruction for all students by incorporating increasing intensities of instruction, offering specific, research-based interventions matched to student needs, and additional time and instruction in addition to quality core instruction. This ensures that all students make a minimum of one year's growth in reading development, and those students who are behind their peers make more than one year's growth
 - Providing reading instruction that is purposeful and respectful. Struggling readers need engagement in tasks that are worthwhile, valuable, and matched to their instructional level during small-group instruction, individualized reading, and literacy centers.
 - Ensuring that all students receive 90-120 minutes of Tier One instruction in their classrooms with peers. Tier Two or Tier Three intervention is provided in addition to, and not in place of, this foundational instruction.
- **High quality, scientifically based classroom instruction:** All students receive high quality, research-based instruction in the general education classroom based on current research representative of the student population.
 - Curriculum is aligned and articulated horizontally and vertically within the school and district to provide a fluid transition from PreK- K, class-to-class, grade-to-grade, and school-to-school.
 - A differentiated approach to literacy instruction includes explicit instruction (direct teaching), small group instruction, and independent learning time.
 - Effective instructional principles are embedded throughout the school day and include the explicit and systematic instruction at all grade levels in:
 - oral language development (K-1)

- phonemic awareness (K-1)
 - phonics and word analysis (K-5)
 - vocabulary (K-5)
 - fluency (K-5)
 - comprehension (explicit strategy instruction and high level talk and writing about text) (K-12)
 - writing (K-12)
 - authentic speaking and listening tasks (K-12)
- **Parent involvement:** Families receive regular information about their child's progress, the instructions and interventions used, the staff who is delivering the instruction and the academic or behavioral goals for the child. Information also includes tips and strategies for supporting reading development at home.
 - Parents are informed and invited to participate in the multi-tiered intervention process as soon as their children begin supplemental instruction services.
 - **Instructional Leadership:** Individual and group leadership teams determine the practices, methods, and monitoring strategies that are in place to assure educator competency, organizational supports, and effective leadership in each site so that all student needs are met.
 - **Professional Development:** Ongoing professional development to develop and refine the implementation of a differentiated core instruction and interventions is offered to all elementary and preschool educators.
 - Effective teachers provide culturally responsive instruction by building on students' cultural strengths.
 - Responsibility is shared among all educators (e.g., general education, special education, related service personnel, ELL, Title I) for the academic progress of all students.

Scientifically-based Reading Instruction

The National Reading Panel (NRP) Report (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) identified essential elements of reading instruction for all learners from kindergarten through grade 12. Since the NRP report, research has continued to build understandings of critical components of quality instruction. The National Early Literacy Panel report, *Developing Early Literacy*, 2009 includes important information on school readiness and early literacy development for learners before age 5. These elements along with a partial list of resources, is included here to facilitate discussions and research by school districts as they develop and enhance local intervention practices to ensure that all students are reading well by the end of third grade.

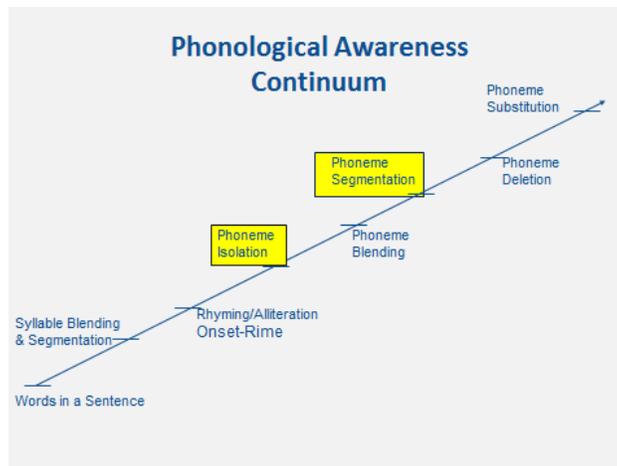
“Reading aloud with children is known to be the single most important activity for building the knowledge and skills they will eventually require for learning to read.”

~Marilyn Jager Adams

Phonemic Awareness

Phonological awareness is the umbrella for phonemic awareness. The ability of students to notice, think about, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken syllables and words. (MN Statute 122A.06)

Phonological awareness skills occur along a continuum (see below). Phonemic awareness refers to knowing that spoken words are made up of smaller parts called phonemes. Teaching phonemic awareness gives children a foundation that helps them learn to read and spell. Phonemic awareness is an auditory skill that needs to be taught explicitly, but it should only be taught 10 to 15 minutes per day. Focusing instruction on just a few types of phonemic awareness at a time produces better results. Research has found that blending and segmentation are the two critical skills that must be taught. Therefore, instruction must focus on blending and segmenting words at the phoneme, or sound level. Research has also shown that better results occur when teaching phonemic awareness in small groups.



Additional Resources:

[Literacy K-5: Phonological Awareness Resource Collection](#)

[Phonemic Awareness and the Teaching of Reading](#)

[Reading Rockets: Phonemic Awareness 101](#)

[The Importance of Phonemic Awareness in Learning to Read](#)

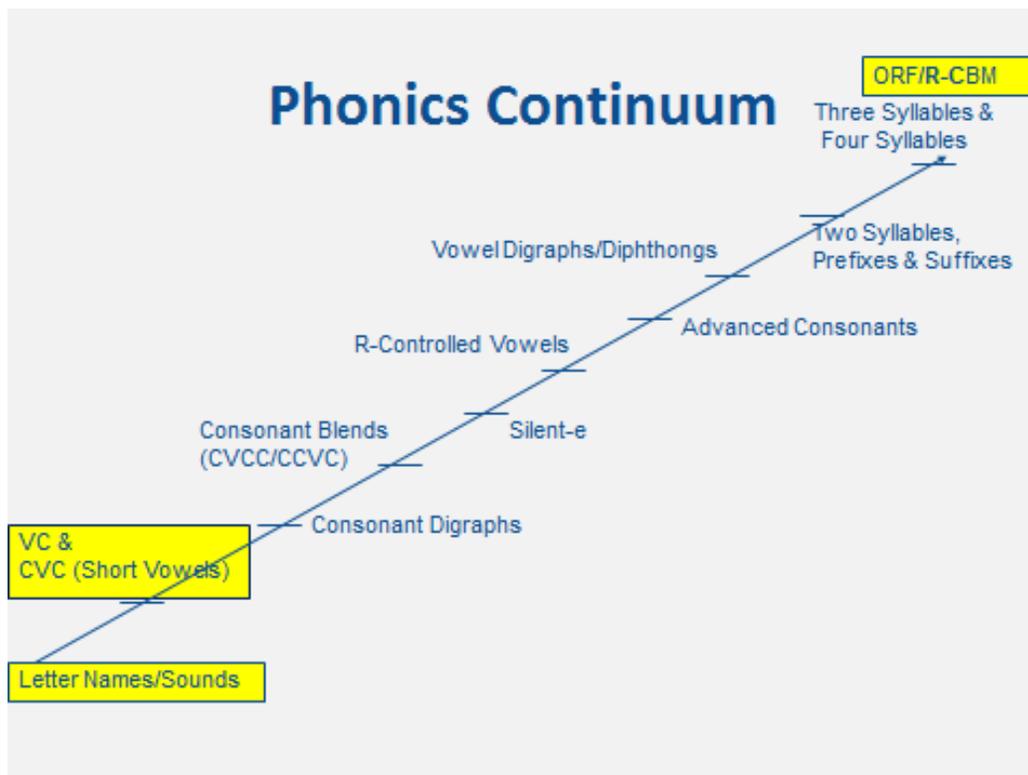
[What Are The Best Practices In Phonemic Awareness Instruction?](#)

Ellery, V. (2009). *Creating strategic readers: Techniques for developing competency in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association

Mraz, M., Padak, N., Rasinski, T. (2007). *Evidence-based instruction in reading: A professional development guide to phonemic awareness*. New York, NY: Pearson

Phonics

Phonics teaches understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken words. Phonics instruction is a way of teaching reading that stresses learning how letters correspond to sounds and how to apply this knowledge in reading and spelling. (MN Statute 122A.06) Like phonological awareness, phonics skills also occur along a continuum (see below).



Although research has shown that explicit instruction is necessary for phonics instruction, the key element for its success is providing opportunities to read decodable words (words containing previously taught sound-spelling) in context (Adams, 1990; Juel & Roper-Schneider, 1985; Stahl, Osborn, & Pearson, 1992). Blevins (2000) found that children who received explicit phonics instruction followed up by controlled-text reading (decodable text) and guided opportunities to spell words during dictation outperformed those students in decoding and spelling tasks who did not receive this type of practice. Systematic, explicit, small group or individual instruction can include making words, using words they know, analogies, minimal pairs, teaching letter patterns, building off look a-like/sound a-like words, etc.

The more effective curriculum plan ensures decoding and spelling lessons are well-linked so as to take advantage of the natural reciprocity between the various reading and language processes. Less effective curriculum plans create lessons where decoding and spelling are separate lessons, where writing activities have no relationship to reading activities. Such curriculum plans lack the coherence of supporting learners as they build skills and understanding simultaneously.

Skill-based Phonics Lessons Include:

- Repeated reading and warm-up
- Explicit instruction of sound-spelling relationship
- Blending and word-building exercises
- Reading connected decodable text
- Dictation and writing

(Blevins, 2000, Morrow et. al., 2011)

Additional Resources:

[Letters and Sounds: Principles and practice of high quality phonics](#)

[The Role of Phonics in Reading Instruction](#)

[Research Regarding Phonics](#)

[What is Reading?](#)

Beck, I. (2005) *Making Sense of Phonics: The Hows and Whys (Solving Problems in the Teaching of Literacy)* New York, NY: Heinemann Publishing

Blevins, W. (2006). *Phonics from A to Z (2nd Edition)*. New York: NY: Scholastic Teaching Strategies.

Fountas, I.C., & Pinnell, G.S. (1996). *Guided reading: Good first teaching for all children*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann



“The connection between reading speed and comprehension; a film is made up of still images flashed in rapid succession to simulate movement. Slow down the film, and the movement and meaning slows and the film's impact is diminished. Viewers won't learn as much about the film as if it were shown at normal speed. With reading the same thing can happen. When a person reads word by word, like frame by frame, they are not reading on the level of ideas. You need to read on some level that's more conversational and allows things to coalesce into ideas themselves.” - Doug Evans, Institute of Reading Development

Fluency

Fluency is the ability of students to read text with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. (MN Statute 122A.06). The NRP found that reading fluently improved the students' abilities to recognize new words; read with greater speed, accuracy, and expression; and better understand what they read. Fluency is the bridge between word recognition and comprehension.

During fluency instruction, students need to learn how to:

- Read words (in isolation and in connected text) accurately and quickly, with little attention or effort;
- Automatically recognize words (decoding); and
- Increase speed (rate) and read with expression (prosody).

When teaching fluency, teachers need to:

- Provide opportunities for oral repeated reading with support and feedback;
- Match reading texts and instruction to students' reading levels;
- Provide opportunities to read narrative and expository texts;
- Monitor students' progress in both rate and accuracy; and
- Model fluent reading practices

Additional Resources:

[Improving Student Performance: Reading](#)

[Reader's Theater Editions](#)

[Reading Fluency Assessment: What, Why, and How?](#)

[Reading Rockets Fluency Resources](#)

[What is Fluency?](#)

Allington, D. (2008). *What really matters in fluency: Research-based practices across the curriculum*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association

Rasinski, T.V. (2003). *The fluent reader: Oral reading strategies for building word recognition, fluency, and comprehension*. New York: Scholastic

Opitz, M.F., & Rasinski, T.V. (1998). *Good-bye round robin: 25 effective oral reading strategies*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

“Effective readers, even at their earliest levels, read in five to seven word phrases rather than word by word.” - Richard Allington, "What Really Matters for Struggling Readers" (2001)

Vocabulary

Vocabulary instruction helps students to recognize words and understand them. The process of teaching vocabulary requires both direct and indirect instruction, with repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items. Learning in rich contexts, incidental learning, and use of computer technology enhance the acquiring of vocabulary. (MN Statute 122A.06) The National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) determined that vocabulary instruction leads to gains in comprehension. Findings on vocabulary yielded several specific implications for teaching reading:

- Build word consciousness through wide reading and word play
- Vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly
- Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary concepts are important
- Learning happens best in rich contexts
- Connect learning to prior knowledge
- Use read aloud to expand and extend acquisition of sophisticated words

Teachers should provide explicit vocabulary instruction both as part of reading and language arts classes as well as part of content areas classes such as science and social studies. Learning specialized vocabularies contributes to the success of reading. By giving students explicit instruction in vocabulary, they learn the meaning of new words and strengthen their independent skills in constructing the meaning of text (Kamil, Borman, Dole, Kral, Salinger, & Torgesen, 2008). Teachers should teach specific words as well as clusters of words to maximize exposure and connections between multiple words encountered within a text (Pressley, 2006).

Additional Resources:

[Integrated Vocabulary Instruction: Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners](#)

[Nine Things Every Teacher Should Know About Words and Vocabulary Instruction](#)

[Put Reading First](#)

[Vocabulary Instruction and Reading Comprehension](#)

Beck, I.L., McKeown, M.G., & Kucan, L. (2008). *Creating robust vocabulary: Frequently asked questions and extended examples*. New York, NY: Guilford

Graves, M.F., & Watts-Taffe, S.M. (2002). The place of word consciousness in a research-based vocabulary program. In A.E. Farstrup & S.J. Samuels (Eds.), (2002) *What research has to say about reading instruction*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association

Graves, Michael F. (2006). *The vocabulary book: Learning and instruction*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press

Farstrup & S.J. Samuels (Eds.) (2002). *What research has to say about reading instruction* (3rd ed., pp. 140–165). Newark, DE: International Reading Association

Comprehension

Reading comprehension is an active process that requires intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader. Comprehension skills are taught explicitly by demonstrating, explaining, modeling, and implementing specific cognitive strategies to help beginning readers derive meaning through intentional, problem-solving thinking processes. (MN Statute 122A.06)

Reading comprehension is a complex process that has been analyzed in a variety of ways. The RAND Reading Study Group (2002) stated that comprehension is “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (p. 11). A common definition for educators might be that comprehension is a process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with text through a combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text, and the stance the reader takes in relationship to the text. Comprehension occurs when there is a transaction between the reader and the text (Kucer, 2001). Summarizing, comparing and contrasting, asking and answering questions, making inferences, predicting, and the like are all examples of applications of reading comprehension.

Comprehension teaches specific plans or strategies that students can use to help them understand what they are reading. The National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) determined that explicit or formal instruction in the application of comprehension strategies is highly effective in enhancing understanding. The teacher generally demonstrates such strategies for students until the students are able to carry them out independently.

Explicitly teaching comprehension involves:

- An explicit description of the strategy and when and how it can be used in a variety of texts;
- Teacher and/or student modeling of the strategy in action;
- Collaborative use of the strategy in action;
- Guided practice using the strategy with gradual release of responsibility; and
- Independent use of the strategy.

Since the comprehension is the ultimate goal of effective reading, it should be included in every aspect of reading instruction throughout the MTSS process.

The NRP also identified the following ways to teach and reinforce comprehension that helped to improve strategic reading:

Comprehension monitoring, where readers learn how to be aware of their understanding of the material;

Cooperative learning, where students learn reading strategies together;

Graphic and semantic organizers, where readers make graphic representations of the material to assist comprehension;

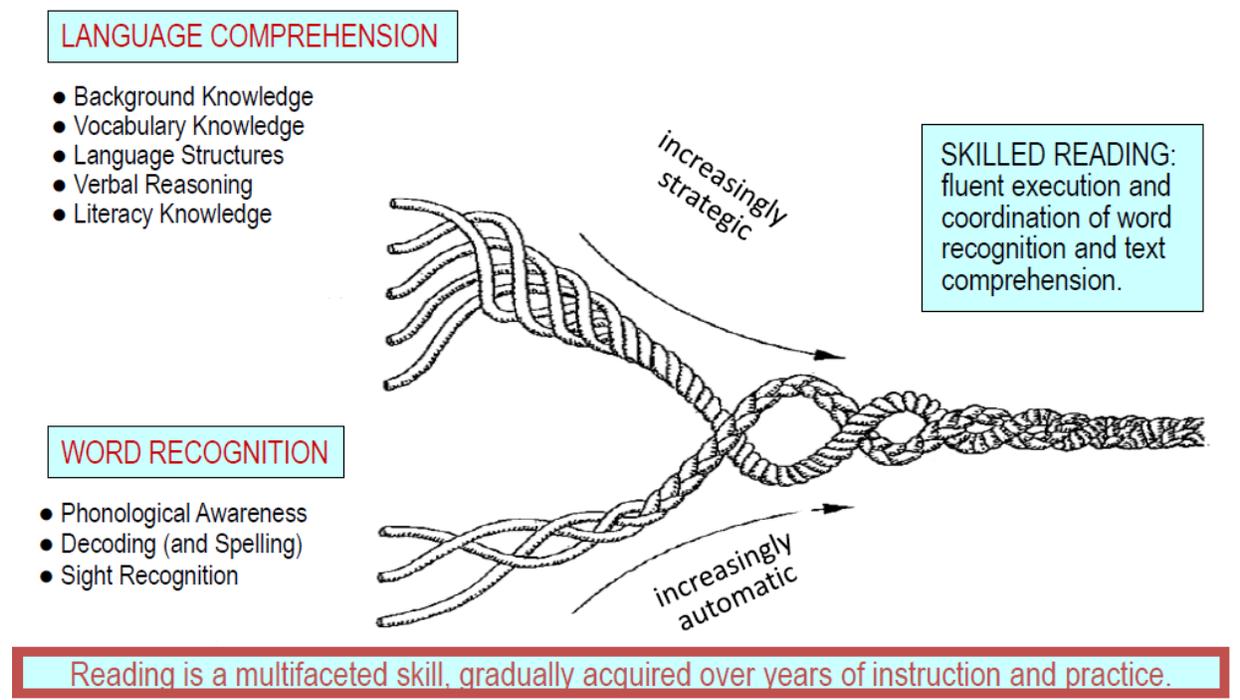
Question answering, where readers answer questions posed by the teacher and receive immediate feedback;

Question generation, where readers ask themselves questions about various aspects of the story;

Story structure, where students are taught to use the structure of the story as a means of helping them recall story content in order to answer questions about what they have read; and

Summarization, in which the reader attempts to identify and write the main or most important ideas that integrate or unite the other ideas or meanings of the text into a coherent whole.

Scarborough's "Rope" Model (Scarborough, 2001) represents how the five areas of reading discussed earlier interact with one another and how fluent reading depends on both the automaticity of word recognition and comprehension sub skills. These sub skills are like strands in a rope that become increasingly integrated as reading develops and highlights the interaction between language and literacy development.



Scarborough's "Rope" Model (Scarborough, 2001)

Additional Resources:

A.E. Farstrup & S.J. Samuels (Eds.), (2002) What research has to say about reading instruction (3rd ed.). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Owocki, G. (2003). Comprehension: Strategic instruction for K–3 students. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Pressley, M. (2000). What should comprehension instruction be the instruction of? In M.L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal, P.D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.). Handbook of reading research (Vol. 3, pp. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum

[Comprehension from the Ground Up](#)

[Higher Order Comprehension Processes in Struggling Readers](#)

[How to Teach and Assess Reading Comprehension](#)

[Improving Reading Comprehension in K-3](#)

[Reading Comprehension Overview](#)

[Reading for Understanding](#)



The National Reading Panel report of 2000 and the National Early Panel report of 2009 specified elements of scientific reading instruction such as: phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, rapid letter naming, oral language development. There is little disagreement these are critical aspects of reading acquisition. The reports also listed a number of areas of research that they felt deserved review (but that did not have the time or funding to do). There is more to consider for a well-rounded, comprehensive intervention program designed to meet the needs of all learners as research and best practices continue to evolve based on the finding of these reports, and the subsequent impact on early literacy instruction.

Other important components for effective intervention programs include the following:

Oral and Academic Language Development

It's important to remember that oral language development provides the foundation for literacy development. Literacy acquisition is dependent on oral language abilities and skills, as children need to use oral language to develop their powers of reasoning and observation, prediction, sequencing and other skills connected with reading. Understanding the meanings of words is critical to understanding what a child reads. Therefore, cognitive linguistic abilities are foundational for all learning. In the new MN ELA standards there is more intentional focus on the development of oral language and tracing it as it develops into language structures necessary for navigating the school setting and curriculum content. Many students in the United States who perform poorly in school have been raised in speaking, reading, and writing a non-English language or variation of English that differs from the language used by mainstream teachers and curricula (Ovando and Collier, 1998). It is possible for students with language-based performance issues to remain undetected; they have little or no accent, they turn in homework, they are well behaved, and they try hard; however, they do not make progress. They may not have had equal exposure to school-like conversations and academic support at home or they require more explicit naming of skills and practice (Zwiers and Crawford, 2011). There is significant research that illustrates the necessity to attend to the intentional language development of subgroups of students. It cannot be presumed that all students who are English Learners, Native American, African American or who come from low Socio-economic environments are missing language to engage with rigorous curriculum. However, it is worth analyzing student performance and intentional scaffolding of academic language.

Oral language is not “taught” as a separate component of a literacy program rather it is an imbedded component in all content areas and social interactions. Literacy acquisition is dependent on oral language abilities and skills, as children need to use oral language to develop their powers of reasoning and observation, prediction, sequencing and other skills connected with reading. Again the definition of oral language is the ability to understand and produce language for a particular function such as navigating social situations including school to using language for academic tasks. The components:

- Vocabulary—including words that are known and produced spontaneously, words comprehended but not produced spontaneously, and definitional vocabulary;
- Grammar—an understanding and ability to apply language rules; and
- Syntax—an understanding and ability to apply rules governing how sentences are organized.
- Pragmatics—understanding of culturally appropriate use of language.

These components must be explicitly taught with increasingly complex understanding to reach functional academic language required throughout the ELA standards . Sufficient exposure to mainstream English language is necessary but not sufficient to serve the function of academic language as Zwiers (2008) illustrates below:

- To describe complex concepts (e.g., relationships between characters, causes and effects of major events)

- Time sequence with implicit beginning or end to describe higher-order thinking processes (e. g., analyzing, evaluation, synthesizing, persuading, predicting, explaining, comparing, interpreting, inferring, implying)
- To describe abstraction relationships that cannot be pointed out or illustrated (e.g., interpretation of figurative language, nuanced meanings)

Additional Resources:

Klinger, J., Hoover, J., Baca, L, (2008). Why do English language learners struggle with reading? New York, NY: Corwin Press

Goldenberg, C., Coleman, R. (2010). Promoting academic achievement among English learners: A guide to the research. New York, NY: Corwin Press

Levey, S. Polirstok, S. (2010). Language development: Understanding language diversity in the classroom. New York, NY: SAGE Publications

[Relation between Language Experiences in Preschool Classrooms and Children's Kindergarten and Fourth-Grade Language and Reading Abilities](#)

[Robust Preschool Experience Offers Lasting Effects on Language and Literacy](#)

['Robust' link between preschool, language and literacy](#)

Reading/ Writing Connection

Teachers and researchers (Calkins, 1994; Eckhoff, 1983; Harste, Shorte, & Burke, 1988; Lancia, 1997; Tierney & Pearson, 1983) have given increased attention to the connections between reading and writing. Reading and writing are similar processes of composing meaning; practice with one contributes to the success of the other. Effective curriculum planning ensures that reading and writing, composing and comprehension, decoding and spelling lessons are well-linked so as to take advantage of the natural reciprocity between the various reading and language processes. Writing is often an effective way for learners to demonstrate comprehension and can hook kids into thinking about reading by giving them meaningful options on how to share their understanding of text.

Students who are exposed to any genres and styles of good writing are very likely to transfer these rich experiences to their own writing. Picture books can be used to acquaint children with a sense of audience, new vocabulary, and various literary devices. Reading aloud should be a daily activity in classrooms, not only for the enjoyment of hearing a good book, but to enrich the writing program. Using text as an example or catalyst for a shared writing experience can provide students with ideas for class and individual books.

Findings on the reading/writing connection identify several considerations for authentic applications in the K-3 classroom:

- interactive editing
- shared writing
- sharing the pen and collaborative writing
- guided writing about a shared experience

Additional Resources:

Dorn, L. & Jones, T. (2012). *Apprenticeship in Literacy (Second Edition): Transitions Across Reading and Writing, K-4*.

Duke, N., Caughlan, S., Juzwik, M., Martin, N. (2001) *Reading and Writing Genre with Purpose in K-8 Classrooms*.

Mermelstein, L. (2005). *Reading/Writing Connections in the K-2 Classroom: Find the Clarity and Then Blur the Lines*.

Tierney, R. J. and T. Shanahan (1991). Research on reading-writing relationships: Interactions, transactions and outcomes. *Handbook of Reading Research*, vol. 2. R. Barr, M. Kamil, P. Mosenthal and P. D. Pearson. New York, Longman. pp. 246-280.

[Effective Schools and Accomplished Teachers: Lessons about Primary-Grade Reading Instruction in Low-Income Schools](#)

[The reading-writing relationship: Seven instructional principles](#)

“It is not enough to simply teach children to read; we have to give them something worth reading. Something that will stretch their imaginations--something that will help them make sense of their own lives and encourage them to reach out toward people whose lives are quite different from their own.” - Katherine Patterson

Motivation and Engagement

Reading and choosing interesting texts that are motivating and engaging for learners is essential. Learners of all ages need easy access to a large supply of texts they can read and are interested in reading. Guthrie and Humenick completed a meta-analysis on a number of studies of classroom reading instruction and found that when classroom environments provided lots of interesting and appropriate texts, the impact on reading achievement was three times greater than the National Reading Panel found for providing systematic phonics instruction.

Teachers can help students engage in reading by encouraging choice in reading and writing and helping students set authentic purposes for reading and writing. Authentic literacy activities are those that replicate or reflect reading and writing purposes and texts that occur in the world outside of school. This can include Book Clubs, blogs, using students' questions for in-depth study, and surveying students about their reading interests and habits.

Additionally, attention to instructional practices that increase students' motivation, engagement, and self-efficacy is critical to developing readers. While intervention just to increase motivation and engagement is not recommended, consideration of relevant and meaningful learning experiences in addition to increased time for reading, talking about reading, and conferencing about reading is also part of a well-developed intervention plan.

Additional Resources:

Fink, R. (2006). Why Jane and Johnny couldn't read -- and how they learned. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Guthrie, J. T. and N. M. Humenick (2004). Motivating students to read: Evidence for classroom practices that increase motivation and achievement. *The Voice of Evidence in Reading Research*. P. McCardle and V. Chhabra. Baltimore, Paul Brookes Publishing: 329-354.

[Assessing Motivation to Read](#)

[Building Reading Stamina](#)

[Cognitive Engagement Boosts Reading Achievement](#)

[Contexts for Motivation and Engagement in Reading](#)

[The Literacy Trust Briefs](#)

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.” — Dr. Seuss, I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!



Instructional Leadership

Researchers at the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement at the University of Minnesota and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto recently completed a six-year study focused on leadership at the state, district, and school levels. Their findings concluded that leadership accounts for about one fourth of total direct and indirect effects on student learning, second only to classroom instruction; leaders have greater impact on the neediest underperforming schools; therefore, building leadership capacity in these schools should be part of any school improvement effort by strengthening district and school cultures, modifying organizational structures and building collaborative processes. Principals' influence on teachers' motivations and working conditions has more impact on student

achievement than their influence on teachers' knowledge and skills. Three specific practices were perceived by both principals and teachers to help improve instruction: focusing the school on goals and expectations for student achievement, keeping track of teachers professional development needs, and creating structures and opportunities for teachers to collaborate (Leithwood, K., Louis, K.S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2010).

Change is difficult – sometimes even painful – and there are many points along the way for plans to be derailed or abandoned. Leadership is required to help hold the vision in tough times while creating space and safety for people to operate outside their current thinking and work habits. A clear vision, consensus on values, data-based and transparent decision-making, problem-solving and feedback loops, are all necessary leadership processes if significant educational and systems change is to be achieved. Committed and skillful leadership can mean the difference between progress toward the goals rather than abandoning challenging goals in favor of “easier” targets or the “next new educational fad.”

Additional Resources:

Gupto, S. (2009). *The Instructional Leadership Toolbox: A Handbook for Improving Practice*. New York, NY: Corwin Press

Bartalo, D. (2012). *Closing the teaching gap: Coaching for instructional leaders*. New York, NY: Corwin Press

Taylor, B., Duke, N. (2011). *Catching Schools: An action guide to school-wide reading improvement*. New York, NY: Heinemann Publishing

[Effective instructional leadership: Teachers' perspectives on how principals promote teaching and learning in schools](#)

[The principal connection: What is instructional leadership?](#)

[The learning-centered principal](#)

Summary:

Because of the importance of reading, especially during the primary grades, it's important to develop and sustain systematic approaches to instruction, intervention, and assessment. Beginning at an early age, students must acquire the knowledge, skills, and strategies that will allow them to read, write, and think critically. In *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, Anderson, Heibert, Scott, and Wilkinson, (1985) stated, “Reading is a basic life skill. It is a cornerstone for a child’s success in schools, and indeed, throughout life. “Without the ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfillment and job success will be lost” (p. 1). Teachers and leaders use research-based practices to design instruction that responds to the learning needs of individual students. By aligning assessments, interventions, and instruction to better meet the needs of all learners, we ensure that students are well prepared for the demands of learning through their PK-12 experience and beyond. By implementing a multi-tiered system of support, a carefully planned sequence for instruction is available to all students and ensures student success.

More specific information on the essential elements of multi-tiered systems of support, applications of MTSS to preschool settings, and comprehensive intervention practices are included in the appendices.



Glossary:

Core Instruction: Primary instruction for all students, where students demonstrate understanding of a wide range of knowledge and skills necessary for literacy development as determined by district and state standards.

Supplemental: Differentiated instruction that is an extension of the core lesson that expands vocabulary and promotes higher level thinking.

Intervention: Academic or behavioral support above and beyond core instruction.

Data Collection and Management System: A system that provides for standardized collection, reporting and analysis of universal screening and progress monitoring data in order to guide educational planning. Data systems used for screening and progress monitoring within an Rtl model should be consistent across all three tiers and be scientifically-based.

Fidelity of Implementation: The degree to which something is implemented as designed, intended and planned. Fidelity is important at both the school level (e.g., implementation of the process) and teacher level (e.g., implementation of scientifically-based core curriculum and progress monitoring). In terms of classroom instruction, fidelity of implementation refers to the delivery of instruction in the way that it was designed to be delivered. In an Rtl model, fidelity also addresses the integrity with which screening and progress monitoring procedures are completed and interventions are implemented, as well as the manner in which an explicit decision-making model is followed. The ultimate goal of a fidelity system is to ensure that both the school process of Rtl and the classroom instruction at various tiers are implemented and delivered as intended.

Progress Monitoring: The process of regularly collecting student achievement data for use in making educational decisions. Within a three-tier intervention model using Rtl, progressively more intensive interventions and supports are coupled with more frequent progress monitoring. At Tier 1 data are collected and used as a general screening process for all students and to determine effectiveness of core instructional practices. At Tier 2 data are collected to determine the effectiveness of an intervention and determine if an instructional change is needed. At Tier 3, data are collected for the same reasons as Tier 2, but are collected on a more frequent basis so that educational decisions can be made in a more timely manner.

Scientific, Research-Based: A term used to describe practices and programs “that have been thoroughly and rigorously reviewed to determine whether they produce positive educational results in a predictable manner.” This determination is made based on “objective, external validation” (Batsche, et al., 2005)

Response to Intervention (Rti): “The practice of providing 1) high-quality instruction/intervention matched to student needs and 2) using learning rate over time and level of performance to 3) make important educational decisions.

Three-Tier Model of Support: A framework that provides for resource allocation in direct proportion to student needs by utilizing increasingly more intense instruction and interventions. Tier 1 is the foundation and consists of scientific, research-based core instructional and behavioral methodologies, practices and supports designed for all students in the general curriculum. At Tier 2, supplemental instruction and interventions are provided *in addition to core instruction* to those students for whom data suggest additional instructional support is warranted. Tier 3 consists of intensive instructional interventions provided *in addition to core instruction* with the goal of increasing an individual student’s rate of progress.

Universal Screening: A systematic process for assessment of all children within a given grade, school building, or school district on critical academic and/or social–emotional skills. Universal screening yields data to make decisions about needed enhancements in the core curriculum, instruction and/or educational environment and about which students may need additional assessment and/or supplemental or intensive intervention and instruction beyond what is provided through core programming. Universal screening tools use CBMs, are typically easy to use and administer and allow for repeated administration (i.e., at least two but preferably three times per year).

Explicit Instruction is overt teaching of the steps or processes needed to understand a construct, apply a strategy, and/or complete a task. Explicit instruction includes teacher presentation of new material, teacher modeling, and step-by-step demonstration of what is expected (worked model, teacher think-aloud), so that students can accomplish a learning task. Finally, the teacher explains when the student will use the concept or strategy and how it could look different but be the same (Murray, C. S., Coleman, M. A., Vaughn, S., Wanzek, J., & Roberts, G. 2012).

Systematic Instruction refers to breaking complex skills down into smaller, manageable “chunks” of learning then sequencing learning chunks from easy to difficult and providing scaffolding to control the level of difficulty throughout the learning process (Murray, C. S., Coleman, M. A., Vaughn, S., Wanzek, J., & Roberts, G. 2012).

Scaffolded Instruction is “the systematic sequencing of prompted content, materials, tasks, and teacher and peer support to optimize learning” (Dickson, Chard, & Simmons, 1993). Scaffolding is a process in which students are given support until they can apply new skills and strategies independently (Rosenshine & Meister, 1992).

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