NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
Reach
for Reading
COMMON CORE PROGRAM

Best Practices and Routines Based on Research

Nancy Frey, Ph.D.

Deborah J. Short, Ph.D.

Lada Kratky, M.A.

Nonie K. Lesaux, Ph.D.

Sylvia Linan-Thompson, Ph.D.

Jennifer D. Turner, Ph.D.

Patricia A. Edwards, Ph.D.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC LEARNING | CENGAGE

Best Practices and Routines Based on Research

Author Monographs

Routines

Nancy Frey, Ph.D.

Reaching for the Common Core *by Nancy Frey*

The adoption of the Common Core State Standards raises the bar for reading instruction in elementary schools. Their purpose, developed in partnership with the National Governors Association in 2010, was to articulate a set of standards that are fewer in number, clearer in explanation, and higher in rigor. The standards have resonated with educators and curriculum developers nationwide, and have also presented a challenge: How best to staircase literacy learning in order to meet the college- and career-ready goals articulated throughout? Elementary school is the first step on that staircase, and educators need comprehensive curriculum that addresses the shifts in practice that the CCSS require. These shifts, while significant, are not insurmountable. The *Reach for Reading* program was designed with these shifts in mind.

Shift #1: More Informational Text

The standards prod us to examine text types used across the day. While narrative still dominates in the primary grades, by fourth grade it should be a 50/50 split between narrative and informational. While this figure needs to be considered across the day, not only in the reading/language arts block, it is equally important to consider how texts are used. Duke's (2000) finding that a scant 3.6 minutes a day was devoted to informational text reading in first grade classrooms sounded an alarm for educators. While there has been more attention in the last decade to increased use of informational texts, Yopp and Yopp's (2012) analysis of teaching practices with pre-school through third grade teachers found that 77 percent of the titles they identified as ones used for read alouds were narrative. Among those informational texts, 85 percent were from the sciences (mostly life science), and only 12 percent were related to social studies content.

Reach for Reading prepares children for the world of informational texts. Readings in the physical and life sciences, as well as engineering, abound. As well, many are dedicated to social studies concepts, including geography, history, and economics. Each grade level averages 60 percent informational text, ensuring that students are apprenticed to the specific content reading demands. Importantly, decodable texts, an essential component of a comprehensive reading program, perform double duty. Nearly 75 percent of these readers are nonfiction, and thereby contribute to the learner's knowledge while growing their competence in foundational reading behaviors. In other words, they are learning to read and reading to learn simultaneously.

These decodable texts afford students with experiences building their text and visual literacy skills. Students don't just read about flamingos; they see photographs of the birds in labeled diagrams. The standards stress the integration of knowledge through relationships between text and visual information, and these decodable readers make it possible to seamlessly integrate all.

Shift #2: Shared Responsibility for Literacy Across Content Areas

A second shift is the distributed responsibility for literacy development across the curriculum. The core standards describe reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language development across content areas. Effective teachers are attentive to literacy demands across the day, and seek opportunities to integrate. *Reach for Reading* makes it possible with its attention to engaging reading units that build background knowledge for science and social studies instruction.

Many of these address content that is otherwise challenging to fit into a busy school day. Kindergartners learn about technology and engineering in the *Then and Now* unit. Fifth grade students learn about principles of economics in the *One Idea* unit.

Yet all of this is accomplished without losing sight of the primary mission: to teach students to read, write, speak, and listen using academic language. These grade level content connections allow for reinforcement of important literacy skills while assuring that content knowledge isn't detached from the rest of the learning day.

Shift #3: An Emphasis on Academic Language and Vocabulary

Academic language takes center stage within the core standards. More than simply memorizing a list of vocabulary words, the standards require that students learn how to solve for unknown words by encouraging them to look inside and outside of words: through structural analysis, contextual analysis, and using resources (Frey & Fisher, 2009). Vocabulary is further addressed regarding selection. General academic words and phrases appear more frequently in texts than in everyday speech, and "represent the subtle and precise ways to say relatively simple things" (CCSSO, 2010, p. 33). Domain-specific words and phrases refer to those associated with a discipline. Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2008) call these Tier 2 (general academic) and Tier 3 (domain-specific) words.

The *Reach for Reading* program is filled with routines for teaching general academic and domain-specific words and phrases. Students are introduced to both in the Student Anthology using strong visuals and text. Domain-specific Key Words are linked to science and social studies concepts to support English learners in building academic knowledge and skills. Consistent routines for integrating the use of these words in reading, writing, speaking, and listening abound. These include sentence frames to scaffold students' use in speaking and writing, as well as the Power Writing routine that links writing fluency with academic language.

Additionally, "In Other Words" is a scaffolded text feature that appears on the pages of the readings. For example, while fourth graders read about underwater kingdoms, they utilize annotated secondary text that expands their definitional understanding of the terms *reef, chemicals,* and *outer skeleton*. These scaffolds help make content accessible and help reinforce the further development of vocabulary that must occur through wide reading.

Shift #4: Increased Text Complexity

Classrooms need a range of texts. Some are used for read alouds and shared readings, while others are used for close reading or independent reading. Still others are leveled texts for use in small group reading instruction. The texts should provide a staircase such that students reach expected complexity levels as outlined in the CCSS. Understanding what makes a text complex is critical for teaching students to read and understand rigorous selections. There are at least three ways to consider text complexity: quantitatively, qualitatively, and based on the task readers will be expected to complete (Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2012). Quantitative factors are numeric scores that rely on word choice, sentence length, and syllables, used in a range of different formulas. As such, they provide a good estimation of complexity. However, quantitative measures do not provide enough information about what made the text complex. As well, they are not suitable for evaluating texts used at Kindergarten and first grade, or in poetry.

Qualitative factors, such as levels of meaning, organization, structure, language conventions, and knowledge demands provide teachers with more information about what they can teach using a specific text. The third factor focuses on the task required of the students as they read the text. Undoubtedly, asking students to independently read a text makes it harder. Teacher-led and peer-led tasks allows for increased complexity due to the collaborative nature of the task.

Three dimensions of text complexity ▶

Reach for Reading provides teachers with a wide selection of texts, including an anthology and a classroom library. These texts were specifically selected because they are worthy of students' time and because they provide the staircase that students desperately need to become sophisticated thinkers and readers. *Reach for Reading* provides teachers with authentic literature and non-fiction as well as the instructional support to ensure that teacher-led and peer-led tasks result in deep understanding. Each topic contains four leveled readers such that students at all levels have content to share with each other. The instructional support provides students opportunities to read and reread, which allows them to synthesize across texts.

Shift #5: Text-dependent Questions

Simply stated, some questions require that students have actually read the text, while others do not. Unfortunately, valuable classroom instructional time can be lost when students are asked questions that encourage them to move away from the text rather than back to it. Text-dependent questions should result in rereading and deep discussions about what the text really means. Sometimes, it's appropriate to ask a general understanding question in which students need to understand the gist of the text. Other times it's appropriate to ask about key details that are critical to understanding the perspective of the author. In addition, there are times when vocabulary questions or text structure questions are valuable. For example, the teacher may ask a question that provides students an opportunity to practice using context clues or morphology. Further, questions can encourage students to consider the author's purpose or to make inferences. These questions require a deep understanding of the text itself and may involve further re-reading to identify clues that the author has provided. In this way, students begin to read like detectives, looking for clues as they read. Finally, there are questions that require that students form an opinion, and support it with evidence from the text. In doing so, they can compare information across texts.

In *Reach for Reading*, texts are read and reread with different aspects of the text highlighted based on the questions asked. In addition, we provide an entire page to "respond and extend" students' thinking about the text. This allows students to think critically about what they have read and provides them with time and space to respond, using evidence that they have gathered from the text. Finally, we use comprehension questions to ensure that students have thoroughly understood the text before moving on. If students fail to grasp the meaning of the text, we provide teachers with ideas about reteaching and skills development.

Shift #6: Argumentation and Text-based Evidence

Argumentation is a critical skill that students must develop if they are going to be successful in college, career, and life. Unlike arguing, argumentation has rules for engagement. In general, these rules include presenting a claim, providing evidence for that claim, offering counterclaims, and agreeing and disagreeing with others, while supplying evidence from the text. In elementary school classrooms, argumentation is opinion-based. Students must learn to clarify their opinions and to support their opinions with facts and evidence. This requires much more than simply noticing the difference between a fact and opinion; it requires that students provide evidence for their opinions.

In *Reach for Reading*, students are provided with specific learning tasks that develop their understanding of argumentation. These begin with the Big Questions (BQ) for each unit, which are designed to spark inquiry, discussion, and debate using information from all the readings: anthology, decodable texts, and leveled libraries. These questions allow children to take the knowledge, insights, and information from what they read to build into BQ discussions over the course of the unit. Returning to those questions again and again and having to mine those texts for perspectives and information that form and shape perspectives on those BQs provides a good foothold for argumentation.

Lessons also focus on students' development of opinions, and how they can find evidence to support them. For instance, an interactive whiteboard lesson material profiles the National Geographic explorer Mike Fay's work preserving the redwood forests of California. The teacher can project examples of student opinion writing about this piece of informational text, highlighting passages that offer evidence, reasoning, and the author's opinion.

The language of opinion is integrated into the program such that students become proficient with the range of interactions necessary to forward an opinion and then agree or disagree with the opinions of others. Using language frames for discussion and writing, students experience how academic language is utilized to forward conversation in speech and on paper. As students learn the academic language of opinion, they also develop the thinking required of argumentation. When that happens, they're ready to write persuasive pieces.

Conclusion

The core standards require shifts in literacy practices as it relates to access and use of informational texts across the day. Students also need to use academic language in speaking and listening, as well as reading and writing. These shifts represent a change in how it is that we prepare learners for their post-secondary lives. By staircasing their literacy experiences from the beginning, we can foster the kind of achievement we have long aspired to. With *Reach for Reading*, it is within reach.

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Patricia A. Edwards, Ph.D.

Understanding and Reaching Your Students

by Patricia A. Edwards

You may have made your initial decision to become a teacher because of your love of a particular discipline or your admiration for an inspiring role model. Although many teachers give these as reasons for the attraction of a career in education, most remain in the profession because they enjoy being with their students (Olsen, 2008, Zeichner, 2003).

The Millenial Classroom

Today, you can expect a class to consist of a complex mixture of students with varying ability levels, ethnic backgrounds, family situations, maturity levels, and school experiences. You can also expect that, while these differences can create a rich experience for all of your students, they can also present many challenges throughout the year. According to Danridge (1998), "The heart of schooling beats in the classroom. It is the place where students and teachers interact." If the way we teach is guided by the needs of developing students, it will re-shape not only our classroom practices but also our classroom environments. A classroom can be viewed as a kind of "aquarium," containing the ideas, ethics, attitudes and life of all its inhabitants. Looking into the aquarium, we often believe that the reality of life within is obvious (Edwards, Pleasants & Franklin, 1999). What we sometimes fail to realize is that there can be many types of "fish" within an aquarium that are not equally equipped to survive in the environment provided for them. A teacher's lack of ability to change the environment in which the students "swim," can become problematic for the students, the teacher, and ultimately the parents (Edwards, Pleasants, & Franklin, 1999). To create a student-centered environment, a teacher first must understand the students, their families, and their learning and language backgrounds.

Although teachers may often wish for classes composed entirely of motivated students who are capable of performing well all the time, most teachers know that teaching is a challenging job with many unique frustrations. The rewards of teaching, however, are innumerable. When you look at your class roster, remind yourself that every one of your students deserves the best instruction you can deliver every day and develop confidence in your abilities to deliver that kind of instruction. A teacher's confidence grows with understanding of the various environmental issues that appear in the classroom aquarium.

While teachers encounter struggling students on a daily basis, the reasons some students "get it," while others seem completely "at sea" are among the great mysteries of teaching. While you may not always unravel the mystery, you can employ effective instructional approaches that can help you inspire and lead students to learn, especially those who struggle with increasingly demanding standards-based curriculum and content. The following key strategies can positively affect the success of struggling students.

Build Student Motivation and Confidence

Among the many difficulties a teacher faces, the variety of reasons for students' lack of motivation is one of the most challenging. Determining which cause applies to a given student can be a daunting task (Mendler, 2009). With a little patience, some conventional and unconventional thinking, and a lot of perseverance, however, a teacher can identify and implement ways to encourage and inspire students to become more motivated. Erica Belcher, *eHow* contributor, (2011) provides a list of instructions for motivating students.

- **Enhance access.** To help students feel welcome, create a classroom atmosphere that emphasizes effort instead of achievement. Encourage participation and risk-taking by showing students that the classroom is a safe place that honors all thinking, including thinking that leads to incorrect answers. *National Geographic Reach for Reading* offers several tools that help the teacher accomplish this. For example, every unit begins by activating prior knowledge about a topic (Share What You Know) and each day begins with an activity that suggests a bridge to accessing the content for the day (Warm-Up).

- **Obtain information.** Identify causes of the lack in motivation. Problems at home, at school, or both may distract the student's attention. Psychological or mental issues may hinder the student's ability to grasp the information or stay focused. To counteract these and other causes, the affective and metacognitive assessments provided for *Reach for Reading* may help you target specific topics or genres that will motivate reluctant readers.

- **Remain positive.** Show that you care for each student. To establish effective rapport with students, share your own struggles and mistakes as a student. Encourage students to share personal goals and plans for the future. As part of the Small Group Reading or Leveled Reading time *Reach for Reading* provides guidelines for student-teacher conferences that can help you demonstrate your interest in the student's goals and challenges.

- **Recognize results.** To help increase the student's self-esteem, reward positive behaviors instead of criticizing the student's efforts. Continue rewarding positive behaviors to encourage the student to repeat this behavior. In *Reach for Reading*, the Check and Reteach feature that accompanies every lesson for a specific learning objective suggests effective strategies for revisiting the concept; the Differentiate features that are provided for every day suggest effective alternative approaches to reach students who have learning or language differences.

- **Model embracing learning challenges.** Maintain high levels of energy and enthusiasm while presenting information. Teacher scripting in *Reach for Reading* models positive attitudes toward challenging concepts. To demonstrate that learning and building literacy is a lifelong process, share aloud your own thinking and learning challenges. Teach problem-solving skills and encourage the student to self-evaluate and self-monitor progress. In *Reach for Reading*, explicit steps in reading and writing lessons and Language Frames provide support for expressing ideas and concepts. To develop students' confidence, offer choices of activity such as those suggested for each Unit Project.

Connect with Family and Community

Parents and families have very direct and lasting impacts on a student's learning and development of social competence. Research indicates that family engagement leads to student achievement. When parents are involved, students achieve more, exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior, and feel more comfortable in new settings (Edwards, McMillon & Turner, 2010; Edwards, 2009, Epstein, 2001).

Today, family structures are markedly different than they were even a decade ago. A student's principal caretakers may include grandparents, aunts and uncles, or other guardians. In this economy, many students' caretakers devote a great deal of time to working two jobs or seeking other income sources; they may both attend school and work full time; they may be single parents or raising their children with help from other family members (Edwards, 2009).

Regardless of the specific family structure, you and the family members have something in common; you both want the very best for the student. To be effective, however, you must understand the dynamics of various family structures before deciding how to approach a situation in interaction with family members. The following key strategies can help you develop effective family involvement with students' learning.

- **Communicate in a variety of ways.** Use the *Reach for Reading* Family Newsletters (available in 7 languages) to reach out to families and make connections between the home and the classroom at the start of each unit. Draw upon the knowledge and strengths of individual family members to communicate in relevant ways. For example, identify the family's preferred method of communication. Many millennial parents respond more quickly and effectively to email and text messages than to letters or phone calls.

- **Develop trust.** Consistent and frequent communication is the key to building trust among family members. Be dependable: initiate communication with family members, follow through, and reach out when you say you will. A positive response from the family is more likely when the members perceive that they can depend on the teacher to communicate regularly and consistently.

- **Focus on the student's education.** Each family is unique and each will react in its own way to feedback about the student. Many times families are struggling with a variety of life issues. Keep your conversations with family members focused on issues that affect the student's academic progress and suggest other resources for discussion of unrelated issues and concerns.

- **Collect parent stories.** According to Vandergrift & Greene (1992), "every parent has his or own story to tell." Coles (1989) further contends that "one's response to a story is just as revealing as the story itself." Encourage family members to select anecdotes and personal observations from their own individual consciousnesses to give teachers access to complicated social, emotional, and educational issues that can help to unravel for teachers the mysteries around their student's literacy learning (Edwards, Pleasants & Franklin, 1999).

- **Include a third party.** Sometimes a conversation may benefit from additional perspectives. Invite another teacher to a parent-teacher conference or a scheduled meeting with the parent to assist with effective communication. Encourage family members to bring with them a spouse, another caretaker, or someone else with pertinent information or insight.

- **Continue communication.** Communicate with the family routinely, whether things are going well or problems arise. This can play an important role in maintaining trust and helping motivate the student. Use the Strengths and Needs Summary provided with *Reach for Reading* to clarify the student's progress. Express appreciation as progress is made and encourage family members to continue their support of the student's efforts. To promote a continuing relationship with family members, thank them frequently for their participation in the student's education.

Utilize Language and Cultural Differences

Today's classrooms are rich in diversity of language and cultural backgrounds as well as unique learning styles and abilities. To motivate and connect with the diverse learners in your classroom, you may need to utilize a variety of approaches. The Differentiate features provided for every day of instruction in *Reach for Reading* model a broad spectrum of specific lesson adaptations to meet the unique learning needs of students in these categories: English Learners, Below Level, Above Level, and Special Needs. Following are some more general approaches for working with students with specific cultural and learning needs.

Tips for Working with African-American Students

While there are many strategies that are effective with all students, there are also some that are particularly successful in teaching African-American students (Lazar, Edwards & McMillon, 2012; Lewis, 2010, Gay, 2000, Ladson-Billing, 2000, 1994). Here are a few methods to try:

- **Respect culture.** Giving students opportunities to learn by integrating their cultures into the school culture is a good approach. Be attentive to and express genuine concern about all aspects of the student's life.

- **Teach rules.** Neither excuse nor scold students for not knowing rules of behavior and/or language. Teachers can help students become successful in the classroom by taking the time to teach rules. It is important to clarify expectations, provide support, and insist on compliance with the rules.

- **Support collaboration.** Challenging students to improve their reading skills and giving them the support they need to achieve academic success builds self-esteem along with cognitive development. Structuring your classroom to encourage working together and sharing ideas also creates a cooperative atmosphere that supports each student in becoming a more confident learner.

- **Integrate culturally relevant literature.** Using culturally relevant literature is a key to a culturally relevant approach. African-American students need to read, write about, and discuss literature with which they are able to make text-to-self connections. Students benefit most from instruction that integrates culturally relevant materials with explicit strategy and concept instruction.

- **Build academic language.** For students who experience language problems that inhibit their academic language development, provide instruction in conventional English language patterns and support for the student's process of transition to mastery. The Language Frames in *Reach for Reading* provide models that teachers can use to teach conventional language patterns.

Individual and small group instruction, using a variety of materials and instructional strategies, can support academic vocabulary development. For instance, a key ingredient to word recognition is the student's awareness of language rhythm and patterns. Rap music, which developed in African-American culture, is a type of language play that can be used to enhance instruction. Traditional clap routines can also be used to develop pattern recognition. Word repetition activities facilitate the acquisition of new words. Rhyming can be used as a tool to help students make connections among words. In each unit, *Reach for Reading* provides vocabulary strategy lessons that develop such understandings as the similarities among words and use of what students know about one word to figure out meanings of similar or related words.

Tips for Working with English Language Learners

The backgrounds, skills, and past experiences of English language learners may be very different from those of other students in your classroom. Students who come to the United States from a country in which they attended school regularly bring with them literacy skills and content knowledge in another language, some of which can be applied to English. Other students may come from situations in which there was little, if any, opportunity for consistent schooling (Li & Edwards, 2010; Cary, 2007; Freeman, Freeman & Mercuri, 2002; Freeman & Freeman, 2000). Students' home backgrounds may differ as well. Some students will come from very low-income families; the parents of some of these, however, may have been highly educated in their home countries, and may have once held professional positions. The resources and needs that individual students bring are therefore likely to vary widely.

The first step in determining an appropriate instructional approach for a given student is to discover details about the student's

background and current situation. As for any of your students, understanding the skills, needs, resources the student brings will help you to plan instructional goals and to build a classroom environment that will enhance the student's learning. *Reach for Reading* provides a series of monographs that explain perspectives, strategies, and suggestions to help you work with English learners. The presence of English language learners in your class can serve as a valuable resource, aid the learning process for all of your students, and improve language skills and cross-cultural understanding for the entire class.

While a wide variety of subject-specific strategies can be used to improve English learners' success, the following checklist offers proven strategies for any classroom (Nutta, Mokhtari & Strebel, 2012; Herrell & Jordan, 2012). These strategies are integrated into *Reach for Reading* throughout the Teacher's Edition.

- **Use visual aids.** Visual aids give visual cues that may help clarify meaning and solidify learning. Visual aids should be clear and reproduced for English learners, whenever possible.

- **Use hands-on activities.** Where appropriate, hands-on activities help English learners connect with content concepts. Processes that can be experienced or observed make learning more concrete.

- **Provide sufficient wait time.** English learners may need additional time to formulate their answers in English. Some may still be translating their first language into English; others may need time to find the appropriate words. Pause after asking a question so that all students, including English proficient students, have time to formulate responses before answering.

- **Model spoken language.** Refrain from correcting your students' spoken language. Instead, model the proper usage in a restatement. For example, if a student says, "No understand," you might respond with, "Oh, you don't understand." If a student asks directly for correction, provide the correct language pattern slowly and clearly.

- **Provide lesson outlines.** Teacher-prepared outlines or notes can help English learners follow along in class. Alternately, you may ask another student to share notes with the English learner. You may also choose to provide information about the teaching plan and objectives to support English learners in following the lesson.

- **Teach pre-reading strategies.** Directly teach reading strategies that will enhance English learners' reading skills. Skimming, scanning, and even outlining chapters in the textbook are excellent pre-reading strategies that can help students preview material prior to reading. English learners can also benefit from other strategies, such as predicting chapter content from headings, creating vocabulary lists, writing responses, and summarizing. *Reach for Reading* suggests a pre-reading strategy for each major selection.

- **Respect the silent phase.** Most second language learners experience a silent phase as part of the learning process. Forcing a

student to speak may cause embarrassment or self-consciousness. While the intention may be to provide extra practice, this approach is more likely to be counterproductive.

In addition, it is important to support English learners in using their knowledge of their first languages to help develop understanding of English. For example, cognates with which students are familiar can help them understand and retain understanding of both academic and content area vocabulary. *Reach for Reading* provides lists of appropriate Spanish-language cognates for words taught in each unit.

See also "Enrich instruction with technology" section below.

Tips for Working with Hispanic Students

Instruction must specifically address the unique needs of Hispanic students who come from a variety of cultures (Tharp, Estrada, Dalton, & Yamauchi, 2000). Researchers suggest five research-based practices that, while valuable for most English learners, have been particularly successful for teaching Hispanic students (Padron, Waxman, & Rivera (2002; Waxman, Padrón, & Arnold, 2001). The practices described below are integrated into *Reach for Reading* in each unit.

- **Be culturally responsive.** For Hispanic students whose experiences and everyday living may not be parallel to typical experiences in the United States school environment, culturally-responsive teaching can make new subject matter and everyday lessons relevant and significant. It increases the transfer of school-taught knowledge to real-life situations and exposes students to knowledge about other individuals or cultural groups (Rivera & Zehler, 1991). This approach includes acknowledgment of the legitimacy of cultural and ethnic heritages, building bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences, use of strategies that connect various learning styles, and incorporation of multicultural information, resources, and materials (Gay, 2000).

- **Use cooperative learning.** With cooperative learning strategies, students work together to accomplish specific tasks and activities. This enables students to maximize and stimulate their own learning as well as that of others in the group (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). Opportunities to discuss and defend their ideas help students reach understandings of sophisticated

concepts. This teaching practice is student-centered and creates interdependence among students and the teacher (Rivera & Zehler, 1991).

- **Conduct instructional conversations.** An instructional conversation is an extended discourse between the teacher and students in an area that has educational value as well as relevance for the students. These conversations can be initiated by students to develop their language and complex thinking skills and to guide them in their learning processes (Tharp et al., 2000). Opportunities for extended discourse satisfy an important principle of second language learning (Christian, 1995).

- **Use cognitively-guided instruction.** Cognitively-guided instruction emphasizes learning strategies that enhance students' metacognitive development. It focuses on the direct teaching and modeling of cognitive learning strategies and giving students opportunities to practice them. Through explicit instruction, students learn how to monitor their own learning by tapping various strategies to accelerate their acquisition of English or academic content (Waxman, Padrón, & Knight, 1991). One example of effective cognitively-guided instruction is reciprocal teaching, a procedure in which students are instructed in four specific reading comprehension-monitoring strategies: (1) summarizing, (2) self-questioning, (3) clarifying, and (4) predicting.

- **Enrich instruction with technology.** Technology-enriched instruction is student-centered, incorporating active student roles in their own learning. When using multi-media and other technology, the role of the teacher shifts from delivering knowledge to facilitating learning (Padrón & Waxman, 1999). Web-based picture libraries can promote students' comprehension in content-area classrooms (e.g., science and mathematics). Multi-media materials can facilitate auditory skill development by integrating visual presentations with sound and animation (Bermúdez & Palumbo, 1994). Digitized texts, such as *Reach for Reading's* Comprehension Coach, are also effective tools that allow students to request pronunciations and definitions for unfamiliar words, and ask questions. Technology-enriched instruction also helps students connect learning in the classroom to real-life situations, thereby creating a meaningful context for teaching and learning (Means & Olson, 1994). It allows students to connect classroom instruction that may be beyond their everyday experiences via rich and interactive media that may be more familiar to them.

Tips for Working with Students with Special Needs

Special needs is a very broad term that encompasses a wide range of learning conditions. In years past, special needs students were segregated in separate classrooms or centers, where they had little contact with the general school population. This practice ended with the passage of Public Law 94-142, which mandated that students be educated in the "least restrictive environment"—that is, that students with special needs be mainstreamed to the greatest possible extent (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001, Turnbull, Turnbull, Stowe, & Wilcox, 2000). Because of this law, students who have special needs are now frequently part of everyday classroom life. In today's classroom, you can expect to have many types of special needs students in your classes, from students who need only slight accommodations to help them learn to students with severe disabilities that require more complex adaptations. Your success in handling this challenge depends on your attitude. Along with having a positive attitude, the following general strategies can help you effectively address the unique learning issues of students with special needs (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001, Turnbull, Turnbull, Stowe, & Wilcox, 2000). Specific types of strategies are integrated into *Reach for Reading* Differentiate features throughout each unit.

- **Use the resources available to you.** Study students' permanent records in order to understand the instructional strategies that have worked well in past years. As soon as possible, contact the special education staff to whom the students in your class are assigned so that you can learn the specific strategies that will help them learn successfully. Some of the other adults who can help you learn about your students are parents, the school nurse, counselors, previous teachers, and the library staff.

- **Understand your students' limitations.** Although some teachers think students with disabilities that are not as obvious as others just need to try harder, trying very hard is not enough to create success for many of these students. Students who do not understand the work or who need extra help will not be successful, no matter how much effort they put forth. To support these students' learning, the teacher must utilize a variety of teaching approaches and present content material in a variety of ways that help the students overcome their limitations.

- **Be proactive.** Make sure you understand each student's specific disabilities and the required accommodations. Your special education resource staff can help you identify students' specific limitations and strategies that can help them succeed.

- **Give your best effort.** Work closely with the special education staff at your school to help you modify your instruction to meet the needs of every learner in your class. Give this special instruction your best effort and your special needs students will gain more than many would expect.

- **Accept responsibility.** Continue to educate yourself about how to work well with your special needs students by reading professional literature, researching relevant Web sites, attending workshops, observing special education staff as they work with students, and applying recommendations of your special education staff.

- **Be sensitive to and anticipate students' needs.** Seat students with special needs where they can see and hear you without distractions. Provide appropriate levels of exposure to noise and activity levels of the classroom. You may need to shield some special needs students from stimulation; for others, you may need to provide more stimulation, such as frequent redirection or task assignments.

- **Discuss students' concerns with them.** Make it easy for your special needs students to communicate with you. Even young students can often tell you a great deal about how they learn best and what activities help them master the material.

Tips for Working with Various Learning Styles

There is no right or wrong way to learn; a variety of methods work in unique ways for a variety of learners. The key to better learning is to evaluate each student's learning process and use techniques that will contribute most to the student's learning.

Howard Gardner's work in the realm of multiple intelligences has had a profound impact on thinking and practice in education (Gardner, 1999, 1993, 1983). Gardner identified seven distinct intelligences. According to Gardner's theory, "we are all able to know the world through language, logical-mathematical analysis, spatial representation, musical thinking, and the use of the body to solve problems or to make things, an understanding of other individuals, and an understanding of ourselves. Where individuals differ is in the strength of these intelligences — the so-called profile of intelligences — and in the ways in which such intelligences are invoked and combined to carry out different tasks, solve diverse problems, and progress in various domains."

Gardner's Multiple
Intelligences ▶

Understanding learning styles can help you create more inclusive classrooms where everyone has a chance to succeed. For instance, a student who prefers to listen quietly or a visual learner who is uncomfortable with speaking can be at a disadvantage when a portion of a student's progress and/or grade are based on oral participation in class. Effective teachers understand this and use a variety of methods to promote and evaluate student learning. Following are some basic tips about how to teach effectively in a diverse learning environment (Nieto, 2010a; 2010b; Nieto & Bode, 2008).

- **Recognize individuality.** Having a "color-blind" classroom is neither possible nor beneficial. Trying to do so inevitably privileges a particular perspective (usually that of the teacher) and fails to recognize the experiences and needs of the learners. It is preferable to use strategies that recognize and capitalize on diversity.

- **Appreciate individuality.** While generalizations sensitize us to important attributes students share, it is essential to recognize and celebrate that each individual student has unique values, perspectives, experiences, and needs. An effective teacher appreciates the unique contributions each learning style has to offer and expresses that appreciation to students.

- **Acknowledge one's own individuality.** Being aware of our own individualities allows us to develop a more inclusive teaching style that can benefit all our students.

Every unit of *Reach for Reading* concludes with a project about the unit's Big Question (Share Your Ideas) that honors various learning styles by offering a variety of means for students to use to expresstheir ideas.

Tips for Working with Students Who Change Schools Mid-Year

Since families move from school to school more frequently today than in the past, students often are dealing with more stress within the home and the school community. When a student suddenly leaves with no explanation, other students may become frightened. Students who leave a current school experience anxiety and other stresses as well. Although you have little control over a student's move, there is much you can do to help all students in a class cope with the change. (Edwards, 2009, Popp, 2004). Below are some suggestions for addressing this situation:

- **Prepare for the change.** Before a student leaves, encourage classmates who have moved to share their experiences and explain their feelings about entering a new school.

- **Address the feelings.** If you know in advance that a student is moving, ask the student to share questions about the new school. You can then request answers from the receiving school and share the answers with the student.

- **Ease the transition.** You can send letters from a student's current classmates to the student's new school to greet the student upon arrival. You can also send a profile sheet about the transitioning student to the receiving teacher. This allows the new teacher to make the initial greeting meaningful and personal for the student.

    When a new student enters your classroom, encourage the student to ask questions and invite other students to help answer the questions. Assign an appropriate classmate "buddy" to ease the new student's feelings of isolation and confusion.

Conclusion

Teachers have responsibilities to ensure that all their students have equal opportunities to achieve to the best of their abilities. If instruction reflects the cultural and linguistic practices and values of only one group of students, then the other students are denied equal opportunities to learn. Daily contact with students provides teachers with unique opportunities to either further the status quo or make a difference that will impact not only the achievement but also the lives of their students. Indeed, teachers must recognize their "power" and use it wisely in teaching other people's children (Delpit, 1995;1988). Although the curriculum may be dictated by the school system, teachers teach it. Where the curriculum falls short in addressing the needs of all students, teachers must provide bridges; when a system fails to honor cultural and linguistic differences, teachers must demonstrate understanding and support. *Reach for Reading* provides materials and examples that engage in practices and demonstrate values that include, rather than exclude, students from a variety of backgrounds. By doing so, *Reach for Reading* enables teachers to fulfill their responsibilities to all their students.

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Jennifer D. Turner, Ph.D.

Deborah J. Short, Ph.D.

Building Comprehension for All Students

by Jennifer D. Turner and Deborah J. Short

As teachers, we have all worked with students who can read any text placed in front of them, but they simply can't comprehend what they've read. When we see these students struggle, it reminds us that comprehension is more than just reading a text; when students comprehend they are able to make meaning from the text, and equally important, they are able to critically think about and transform those meanings for their own purposes (Au, 2006; Hammerberg, 2004).

Why don't all students "get" comprehension?

There are a number of reasons why students may have difficulty with reading comprehension. Some readers do not have some of the "basic building blocks" of comprehension, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. Students of non-English language backgrounds may also have to learn our alphabet system. Such skills are the vital foundation for constructing meaning from texts.

Some students have started to develop these foundational skills but struggle in other ways. They may decode words successfully but not know the meaning of an unfamiliar word, or they know an alternate meaning for a multiple-meaning word. They may not have the background schema to activate key concepts or themes in a text. Without broader vocabulary and background knowledge, students struggle to comprehend what they read.

Other readers may not have acquired comprehension strategies because they had limited access to explicit strategy instruction. In today's schools, this may sound a bit unbelievable, but it does happen. Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are often placed in low-level reading and writing groups which over-emphasize beginning skills. Although some students may need these skills, a problem occurs when instruction in these groups overemphasizes literal recall and other lower-level skills, and at the expense of building higher-order thinking skills and teaching comprehension strategies (Au, 2006).

A related and equally significant impediment happens when teachers do not believe that students of color are capable of building and using complex comprehension strategies (Hammerberg, 2004). By waiting too long for introduce comprehension strategies to students, we do them academic harm as they get further and further behind their grade-level peers.

Finally, some students, especially those who have severe reading difficulties or have been placed in special education, may need additional scaffolding to acquire comprehension processes and strategies. Some may need additional in-class support, while others might need targeted interventions.

What can teachers do to promote comprehension for all students?

Many students benefit from an explicit approach to teaching comprehension strategies, including clear teacher modeling and explanation, extensive practice and feedback, and opportunities for application across a variety of literary and informational texts that span topics across the content areas (Pearson & Duke, 2002; Duffy, 2009; Villaume & Brabham, 2002).

▲ Decodable texts and authentic literature selections provide literary and informational texts that span the content areas.

According to Fisher, Lapp, and Frey (2011), comprehension is dependent upon the interaction of four sets of critical variables:

- reader variables
- text variables
- educational-context variables
- teacher variables.

We would add a fifth set as well, support variables—oral and written discourse supports for making meaning of text.

To consider, plan, and implement effective comprehension instruction, teachers need to become *orchestrators* (Turner, 2005). Orchestrators carefully and thoughtfully bring together these five variables in ways that support students' comprehension and develop their lifelong love of literacy. Finding and using appropriate materials can assist teachers and students in this endeavor.

Reader Variables

No two readers are the same. Children enter our classrooms with a variety of backgrounds as literacy learners. They have different strengths in reading and writing, different genre preferences and interests, and different areas of challenge. All of our students have their own cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and participate in a multitude of literacy practices embedded within their families, friendship networks, and communities (Au, 2006; Turner & Hoeltzel, 2011). Research shows that comprehension instruction is most effective when it is responsive to the varying needs and interests of individual readers and builds upon their cultural and linguistic resources (Au, 2006; Hammerberg, 2004).

Fortunately, *Reach for Reading* can help teachers to learn more about their students and use that knowledge to their pedagogical advantage. First of all, the units and lessons feature high-quality fiction and informational texts that reflect the diversity in our classrooms. In these pages, students read about people and places within a wide variety of cultural, racial, ethnic, and global communities. Primary languages are often incorporated into the selections in ways that affirm students' linguistic backgrounds, and multiethnic characters and storylines build on students' cultural knowledge (Moll, 1992). As children discuss these varied texts, make personal connections, and share their family and community experiences, teachers gain insights about their students' cultural backgrounds.

Second, affective diagnostic assessments in the *Reach for Reading* program, such as interest surveys, also provide multiple opportunities for teachers to gather information about students' reading preferences in and out of school. All of this information can help teachers to be more responsive to the diverse strengths and needs of their students.

Text Variables

Increasing literacy demands of the workplace and a globalized society require that our children know how to consume, comprehend, and critique the texts they encounter in their schools, their families, their friendship networks, and their communities (Au, 2006). Now more than ever, students need to start learning to read a wide range of texts and then reading to learn from them. The Common Core Standards as well as the National Assessment of Educational Progress put a premium on different genres.

Students therefore benefit not only from exposure to various text types but also to explicit instruction in genre study and in selecting appropriate comprehension strategies according to the genre. This type of instruction helps students anticipate the type of information to be delivered and offers schema for constructing meaning.

Reach for Reading offers students a wide variety of fiction and nonfiction texts. While children from all cultures enter our schools with knowledge of narrative, because story-telling is a universal experience, not all children have been exposed to informational and expository text, or poems and biographies for that matter. Yet we know that the ability to make meaning from all types of text is critical for success in school. *Reach for Reading* highlights a wealth of genres including realistic fiction, science articles, photo essays, poetry, folktales, and digital texts (e.g., blogs). Students are given tools for attacking these types of text, first recognizing unique features of the genres and then applying step-by-step comprehension strategies in guided, then increasingly independent, ways.

▲ Students are given tools for working with informational and literary texts.

▲ Anthologies and libraries feature a diverse array of literature and informational texts.

Educational-Context Variables

Comprehension should be woven into all aspects of classroom life. Teachers must be purposeful about the "creation of the social contexts and situations that shape children's cognition" (Smolkin & Donovan, 2002). Whether teachers are working with the whole class, in small groups, or one on one, comprehension is a key literacy goal. This is easier said than done, given limitations on instructional time and the daily distractions that arise. *Reach for Reading* provides teachers with numerous research-based practices, such as cooperative learning strategies, small group and learning station resources, and technology-oriented activities that maximize instructional time, address learning styles, and facilitate deeper understanding of texts.

Highly-motivating classroom communities are designed with active, inquisitive children in mind. To become strategic readers, students need multiple opportunities to interact with peers and meaningfully respond to tasks that support text comprehension. Just as students need practice reading and making meaning of texts from different genres, they also need to respond to a range of literal, inferential, and critical thinking questions. *Reach for Reading* includes engaging learning activities that help students to build the kind of comprehension competencies emphasized on standardized tests (e.g., stating the main idea, making inferences) as well as more authentic tasks that encourage students to apply and extend their critical thinking skills and communicative skills.

Teacher Variables

Teachers play a significant role in developing skilled readers "who actively read and automatically construct meaning as they read" (Fisher, Lapp, & Frey, 2011, p. 259). Although there is no "magic bullet" for teaching comprehension, the gradual release of responsibility model is a useful framework. Fisher, Lapp, and Frey (2011) outline five critical steps within this model:

1. Establishing Purpose
2. Teacher Modeling
3. Guided Instruction
4. Productive Group Work
5. Independent Student Practice

Through these steps, teachers build skilled readers by explicitly modeling comprehension strategies and coaching students to collaboratively practice using strategies with a variety of texts. Then they step away to allow students to independently apply strategies.

Reach for Reading is built upon this model of systematic instruction, with units and individual lessons designed to support the release of responsibility from teacher to students through multiple opportunities for practice, feedback, and the "trying out" of new skills. By focusing instruction on one strategy over the course of a unit, students spend time "getting good" at each strategy. Strategies that arise naturally out of the text's demands are consistently included to ensure strategies are employed in the service of reading comprehension.

Support Variables

While much of this monograph has focused on the process of reading, research shows us that investing time in student-generated oral and written discourse can support the development of comprehension skills (Cazden, 2001; Holliday, 1994; Saunders & Goldenberg, 2007). By creating structured opportunities for students to engage in academic talk and academic writing, we can build their reasoning skills, their background knowledge, their vocabulary, and their ability to use discourse markers and subject area registers to share ideas and relate experiences. Talking about a text before, during, and after reading it builds comprehension. Talking with partners lets students confirm or clarify their emerging understandings of a piece of text. Writing about a text gives students time to reflect on what they read and convey their impressions, formulate an argument, or condense details into a summary.

One major support that *Reach for Reading* provides is explicit teaching with language frames. Sentence starters and other types of language frames help students articulate their thoughts, orally or in writing. When a student wants to give an opinion, the program helps them say not only "I believe that…" or "I disagree because…" but increases the sophistication of the discourse, showing them other options such as "In my opinion, _____ should _____" and "_____ claims _____ but I found that _____." These language frames offer students ways of thinking about and applying higher-order comprehension processes and reading strategies. As they learn to use them, they will also learn to recognize and comprehend them when encountered in text.

Conclusion

We know that young learners do not always learn at the same rate as their classmates. And when reading and language arts instruction are considered, we know that some skills and language domains may develop more rapidly than others. We also know that our students enter our classrooms with varying reading abilities already in place—some accelerated, some on grade-level, some below-level, and some having no success yet. Our job as educators is to help all students become skillful readers. We do that best by knowing our students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, topics they might be interested in reading about, skills they have acquired, and those they need more instruction and practice on.

The *National Geographic Reach for Reading* program gives us tools to make our work with young learners more effective, more meaningful to them, and more fun overall. Students learn to read and learn how to talk about and write about what they have read. If we do our jobs well, students will be on the path to a lifelong love of reading.

For **research citations** see page R19.

Sylvia Linan-Thompson, Ph.D.

Lada Kratky

Building Foundational Skills

by Sylvia Linan-Thompson and Lada Kratky

Learning to read can be a very easy one for some students, while for others, reading will be one of the most difficult tasks they will undertake. Typically, a classroom is made up of students with varying strengths and backgrounds, and the teacher will have to orchestrate instruction to meet the needs of all.

The report of the National Reading Panel in 2000 identified five key components of reading instruction: phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. These components are inter-dependent and mastering them all will lead to reading success. The foundational skills—phonological awareness and decoding skills—are critical for reading success.

Foundational skills do not, however, function in isolation. As students are building foundational skills, they must also attend to word meaning and comprehension. Strong instruction in foundational skills and consistent connections of these skills to all areas of reading is a key to building long-term reading success.

Phonological awareness

Phonological awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate sounds in words. It is an essential skill for emergent readers: children must be able to distinguish sounds in words before they can link the sound to the letters that represent them. Explicit instruction in phonemic awareness improves students' reading (National Reading Panel, 2000). For very young learners with little awareness of the sounds they articulate when speaking, Yopp (2000) recommends starting with activities that focus on rhyme. Playful poems and chants, as well as songs, will naturally engage young learners and encourage them to focus on sounds in words.

Nine Flamingos

Nine flamingos, nine flamingos
Like to dine,
Right on time.
Legs of pink and white,
Fishing for a bite.
In a line,
Mighty fine.

◄ Sing with Me Phonics Songs engage students with rhymes.

Phonological awareness then continues developing sound awareness tasks like isolating and substituting initial, medial, and final sounds, as well as segmenting and counting sounds in words. These activities, at the phoneme level, are the most predictive of later reading success.

Through activities at the phoneme level, children begin to recognize the sequence of sounds in a given word. An effective way for learners to develop this skill is through Elkonin—or sound—boxes. Elkonin was a Russian psychologist who devised the practice of showing a picture and a series of boxes corresponding to the number of sounds in the word the picture represents. The task of the learner is to say the word slowly while pushing a chip into each box as its corresponding sound is being said. By this method, the learner becomes aware quite graphically of the initial, medial, and final sound in a word. Eventually, children will be able to segment words without the support of the Elkonin boxes.

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Children's phonemic awareness skills will continue to develop as they acquire knowledge of the alphabet. Phonemic awareness begins but does not fully develop until children learn to read and spell. It is learning the correspondence between sounds and printed letters that allows children to develop and automatize the full representation of sounds (Goswami, 2006).

Phonics

Explicit and systematic phonics instruction is an essential part of a successful classroom reading program (National Reading Panel, 2000). Phonics instruction teaches students sound-symbol correspondence and then teaches to blend sounds to decode words. To read, children must learn to map sounds to print. As they learn grapheme-phoneme correspondences, children are building an alphabetic schemata, or map, into which they fit and store the letter/sound relations they encounter.

National Geographic Reach for Reading includes consistent routines for phonics. Using these routines, children are taught first to blend using the sound-by-sound blending routine; additional routines (vowel-first blending, whole word blending) are included for children needing additional support. Consistent, systematic classroom routines are provided to help students acquire knowledge and automaticity in reading and spelling words.

Typical English texts include a large number of High Frequency Words. These are common words that appear very frequently and are often phonetically irregular, such as *a, are, one, of,* and *the.* Children must learn to read these words, as well as write them. To achieve this most efficiently, students use a High Frequency Word routine and a variety of review and practice games that provide multiple opportunities to read as well as write those words.

After learning and practicing phonics skills and High Frequency Words in individual words and sentences, children read the Read On Your Own Books, which have decodable informational texts and stories. Accurate reading of words is only the first step in efficient reading. In order to develop automatic recognition of words, students must have multiple exposures to words in a variety of contexts. Read On Your Own Books have been designed with the idea that children can learn content even as they are learning to read, debunking the traditional thinking that in kindergarten through second grade, students learn to read, and not until third grade do they start to read to learn content.

Research shows children love science, and the books in this program abound with science stories, illustrated with outstanding National Geographic photographs. Children practice new phonics skills as they learn all about animal look-alikes, animals huge and small, bodies, fins and stripes, and so many other wonders of nature and culture.

Read On Your Own Books are not simplistic decodable texts. They present grade-level science and social studies concepts, topics that relate to real life, and texts that are worth reading and are interesting to students. Beginning readers read for meaning and are then asked to think about their reading. They give opinions, hold discussions, ask questions, and answer them. With National Geographic photographs, texts can be both decodable and content-rich.

In third grade and beyond, the Common Core Standards indicate that students have acquired most foundational phonological awareness, decoding, and spelling skills. In *Reach for Reading*, Daily Spelling and Word Work helps reinforce and build automaticity for all learners. Additionally, resources are provided for older learners who may need to build any prerequisite skills. An intervention kit, *Reach into Phonics* for grades three through five, provides age-appropriate lessons and texts to build foundational reading skills. To help students transition from the primary grades to this more rigorous intermediate-level expectation, additional games and activities are provided in the grade three Teacher's Edition for daily phonics intervention.

Fluency and comprehension

All children should learn to read accurately and without effort. Fluent reading, the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and prosody, is essential to reading comprehension. Students' oral reading provides insight into their fluency. If they are still developing decoding skills, their reading will be labored as they sound out words, and their reading of text may resemble reading a list of unrelated words—reading in a monotone.

If students pause appropriately, use correct phrasing, or change their intonation and expression in response to the text, they may not need fluency practice. Furthermore, we can usually assume that they understand what they are reading. Their response to the text is a reflection of their processing of the text as they read. These students may not need additional fluency practice. However, to be sure, assess students' oral reading fluency to ensure they are meeting grade-level benchmarks. Oral reading assessments focus on accuracy, rate, and comprehension to reinforce the importance of reading to understand, rather than simply calling out words.

▲ Oral reading assessments include resources for measuring accuracy, rate, and comprehension.

Reach for Reading has high-interest books at various reading levels to ensure that students have numerous opportunities to read text at their independent levels. Additionally, there are several activities every week that focus on building fluency in addition to activities that build decoding skills, language, and automaticity for students that also need that support. Consistent fluency practice routines and practice passages provide support for building fluency and comprehension. The Comprehension Coach is an interactive software resource that provides a risk-free and private individualized opportunity for repeated reading. Literature selections from the anthology and Read On Your Own decodable books are included in the program. Students can read silently or listen to a model of the selection being read fluently. They can also record and listen to their own reading of the selection. After reading a section, the software automatically calculates and graphs their reading rate in words correct per minute

(WCPM). This frequent and individualized opportunity for repeated readings helps students build fluency in a risk-free environment. The inclusion of rich texts and comprehension questions supports the connection between smooth reading and understanding.

▲ Speech recognition technology is built into the online Comprehension Coach so individual students can record multiple readings and track improvement in their words correct per minute (WCPM).

Conclusion

It is important to see the five components of reading instruction as being interdependent, and that mastering them will lead to reading success. Through poems and chants, students are naturally engaged, focus on sounds in words, and learn that words are made up of a sequence of sounds and that you can manipulate those sounds. Through explicit phonics instruction and multiple exposures to words in a variety of contexts, students learn to read accurately and without effort. Students are given engaging, content-rich text to help them continue to learn to read by reading for information. Fluent reading is essential to reading comprehension, and providing reading material that is worth reading and high interest to students will ensure that they read for meaning and think about what they are reading.

For **research citations** see page R19.

Nancy Frey, Ph.D.

Developing Young Writers *by Nancy Frey*

The ability to read and write to convey information, provoke thought, and inspire others has long been considered a hallmark of an educated person (Manguel, 1996). More importantly, reading and writing are tools for empowerment—they provide a voice and a forum for those who would otherwise be silent (Freire, 2000). The importance of being heard, both verbally and through writing, is especially vital.

Writing instruction across dimensions

Writing instruction has lagged behind reading instruction in both its scope as well as its depth. While educators recognize that reading requires carefully crafted experiences to promote phonemic awareness, mapping sounds onto letters, building vocabulary knowledge, and fostering comprehension across longer pieces of text, writing lacks the same fine-grained approach. Writing instruction has been confabulated with causing writing (Cutler & Graham, 2008; Gilbert & Graham, 2010), with comparatively little attention dedicated to building skills, establishing a variety of purposes for writing, and building motivation for doing so. Even worse, writing occurs infrequently and for short durations, leaving students without the stamina they need to engage in sustained writing.

Reach for Reading seeks to alter the way writing occurs in the classroom by promoting instruction across dimensions. Dimensions include project-based writing and writing in response to authentic questions; writing to reinforce comprehension; developing writing fluency; and building writing skills.

First and foremost, the need to write begins on the first page of the unit when a true purpose is established. Students confront meaningful Big Questions such as "When do harmless things become harmful?" as they explore the world of insects and competition for habitats. Students also write daily in lessons that focus on specific skills. They learn about the grammar of the language through writing as well, and incorporate vocabulary and grammar in generative sentences. Importantly, they build their writing fluency through daily power writing. Weekly project writing allows students to answer these Big Questions across a variety of genres and forms as they apply their knowledge of conventions and build their capacity to engage in skilled production. Taken together, these instructional components consolidate to form systematic, scaffolded writing instruction that mirrors the purposeful teaching of reading. Let's look further at the research base on programmatic implications of each of these principles.

Motivating writers with Big Questions

As with all people, children are spurred to discovery by questions that require investigation. Ask a child "What is the difference between then and now?" and then give her the resources and experiences she will need to address the topic, and wonderful things can occur. She might learn about how communication technologies have changed, but the need to communicate has not. She can compare and contrast similarities and differences between past and present, view a video about invention, and develop visual literacy skills to examine photographs and illustrations of transportation across time. The question can even spur on investigation about space exploration and changes that have occurred as women have become astronauts and scientists. This is intriguing content for anyone. And, in *Reach for Reading*, the content is presented in a way that is accessible to young students. With information, ideas, and opinions swimming in her imagination, the student can use writing as a natural outlet for sharing with an audience.

Motivation in writing is essential in the development of this complex skill. Young writers are motivated to write when they have an audience and purpose (Wilson, 2008). As well, knowledge of content and writing forms has been found to have a significant positive impact on the writing performance (Olinghouse & Graham, 2009). It is also significant that even primary writers find self-expression to be a motivation for writing in school (Nolen, 2007).

The spirit of inquiry in *Reach for Reading* serves as a catalyst for spurring the act of writing. But the willingness to write can be muted by a lack of skill. Therefore, writing instruction needs to be scaffolded to build competence and confidence.

Scaffolded instruction builds writing skills

Scaffolded instruction is a principle of teaching dating back to the early 20th century. Vygotsky's (1938/1978) observations of the interactions of children who were learning together gave him insight into the possibilities of what could occur when a competent other (teacher or peer) was present to offer support. Over time, Vygotsky's insights about a learner's zone of proximal development were reinterpreted as the teacher practice of scaffolding (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Scaffolding in turn has been further explained in reading as a gradual release of responsibility model of instruction (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). More recently, this model has been expanded for reading and writing instruction to include a collaborative learning phase where students engage in productive group work in the company of peers (Fisher & Frey, 2007, 2008).

Effective teachers deliver writing lessons designed to scaffold student learning using a gradual release of responsibility model of instruction (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Scaffolded instruction in writing includes opportunities for students to witness the act of writing by their teacher while he or she uses a think aloud approach to explain the decision-making used by a writer (Davey, 1983). *Reach for Reading* provides examples of modeled writing to support teachers as they implement scaffolded writing instruction.

Think Aloud	Write
I'm going to write about the Great Wall of China. When I visualize *the wall, I think about its stone walls. They are bumpy and remind me of a tortoise's shell, so I'll make that a simile.*	The Great Wall has stone walls that are as bumpy as tortoise shells.
The wall is long and twists like a snake. I'll make that a metaphor.	The wall is a snake. It twists through the mountains.

At various times, students also benefit from writing together through the guided instruction offered by interactive writing. In addition, students regularly experience skill-building exercises such as generative sentences, daily writing skills, power writing, and close examination and replication of writing models (Fisher & Frey, 2007). Schleppegrell and Go (2007) examined the writing of fourth and fifth grade English learners who had generated lists of possible academic language and vocabulary prior to writing and found that the young writers utilized these lists to strengthen the structure and content of their writing. In addition, the children whose teachers used writing models were able to transfer these linguistic structures effectively.

Daily writing builds fluency

Systematic building of writing skills within a supportive environment that includes scaffolded instruction is essential if students are to become accomplished writers. However, the issue of writing fluency is also critical to their development. As with reading instruction, where it is understood that a steady daily diet of texts nourishes young readers and contributes to fluency, so it is with writing. In addition to the scaffolded writing instruction noted above, additional daily writing instructional activities are provided in *Reach for Reading* including power writing, generative sentences, and daily writing skills.

Power writing (Fearn & Farnan, 2001; Fisher & Frey, 2007) builds the writing stamina of young writers. These brief, timed writing events encourage children to put their ideas down on paper in order to build writing fluency. Students are encouraged to write for both volume, and with effort, for a minute at a time and then count words and circle errors. This can be repeated, and students can chart their best result to gauge their own progress over time. By engaging in these short timed writing exercises, students build stamina similar to results of daily training for a physical activity. In addition, students can track their own growth, set goals, and discuss their progress with their teacher. All of these practices are found to be essential for maintaining motivation (Bong, 2009).

Power Writing

Have students write as much as they can as well as they can in one minute about the word *power*.

For **Writing Routine 1,** *see page BP47.*

The purpose of generative writing is to draw the student's attention to several key features of effective writing, including vocabulary, syntax, and semantic meaning (Fisher & Frey, 2007). Inspired by the work of Fearn and Farnan (2001) on given word writing, students are challenged to incorporate a vocabulary word or specific part of speech into a sentence. Unlike convention writing exercises, several conditions are provided to constrain their work. For instance, students might be instructed to use the word *weather* in the third position in a sentence that is at least seven words in length. Responses include the following:

- The cold *weather* caused me to go back to get a coat.
- I like *weather* that brings sunshine after a rainstorm.
- Meteorologists study *weather* so they can make predictions.

The attention to position and length causes the writer to simultaneously consider the grammatical and semantic elements required, giving them a time to consolidate this knowledge authentically. By integrating grammar instruction into a progression of more extended writing, students move from learning basic skills in isolation toward making decisions about grammar at its point of use.

Daily Writing Skills provide focused instruction, practice, application, and assessment resources that target specific skills such as using transitions or supporting ideas with sufficient and relevant details. These focused activities help develop the craft of writing to support students as they participate in extended writing projects.

Writing projects extend writing opportunities

The view that recognizes that writing is a social act, not just a strictly cognitive one (e.g., Au, 1997; Dyson, 1989) is a central tenet of *Reach for Reading*. These social acts are fueled by the conversations that occur between writers. The weekly writing projects in the program capitalize on the interaction of oral language development and writing development. Students regularly experience research-based instructional routines that invite them to compose orally in the company of their peers (Lapp, Flood, & Tinajero, 1994). They meet to discuss their writing with peer responders who are supported with language frames to shape their collegial discussions.

Time is devoted at the end of each week to publish and share their writing with an audience, thereby further reinforcing the purpose of the writing as a way to answer a compelling question. These writing projects do double duty, as each spotlights a writing trait as well as a format or genre. These projects provide further opportunity to consolidate complex writing behaviors, develop self-awareness, and build community in the classroom. After all, isn't that what writing is for?

While writing is often viewed as an independent activity, the research on the importance of collaboration before and after writing is compelling. Writing is ultimately about audience, so conversation and response is integral to the process. As noted earlier, writers typically begin to compose orally before they put pencil to paper. Therefore, it is essential for young writers to convey their own ideas, listen to the ideas of others, and dialogue about both. Children also need opportunities to discuss what they have written with fellow writers in order to obtain peer responses. Students meet the authors of many of the readings in the *Reach for Reading* program and learn how these professionals approach their craft. These author conversations are intended to model the kind of thinking that writers of all ages engage in.

Conclusion

The act of writing is far too important to leave to chance. We know that merely "causing" writing through writing prompts is not enough. Young writers must be taught about the structures and conventions of the language, as well as the craft. Purposeful attention to building the fluency, content knowledge, and art of writing are woven together into a compelling program. Using a scaffolded approach to writing instruction, children learn not only what and how to write, but most importantly, why we write. In discovering the art of writing, they also discover themselves.

Nonie K. Lesaux, Ph.D.

Beyond the Word List: Comprehensive Vocabulary Instruction *by Nonie K. Lesaux*

Across generations of schooling, vocabulary instruction has started with a list of words—often words from a particular story. And in many classrooms, to teach these words, a familiar scene unfolds: the teacher introduces the words and posts the list. As part of this vocabulary instruction, students might match words with their dictionary definitions, and, at some point, they might read a story containing the words and answer a set of comprehension questions. After these kinds of instructional activities, it's often time for assessment.

In this traditional scenario, the time and attention devoted to vocabulary learning are limited. But to meet the needs of today's readers, and the literacy demands that are part of today's Common Core Standards, research tells us that this instructional paradigm is going to have to shift. We need to focus more carefully on the words we're choosing to teach, reconsider the duration and overall approach to vocabulary instruction, and investigate the types of opportunities we're giving our students to learn any given word.

For all learners, vocabulary and reading comprehension have a reciprocal relationship—while greater vocabulary leads to greater comprehension, better comprehension also leads to learning more vocabulary words (Stanovich, 2008). Yet vocabulary learning is an enormous task; in order to be academically successful, students must leave high school with a working understanding of about 50,000 words. And at the core of the role of vocabulary in reading comprehension is the relationship between vocabulary and a child's knowledge about the world—their background knowledge.

Thinking about vocabulary instruction as a vehicle to building up a child's background and conceptual knowledge, though, has major implications for how we go about the instructional task (Heibert, 2005). And that means a paradigm shift—in at least four ways. We need to

- focus on the words that matter most
- use a deep, interactive approach to build word knowledge
- follow research-based routines
- build strategies for word learning.

Focus on the words that matter most

We can't possibly teach students the roughly 50,000 words they need to know to be academically successful—we just don't have the time. So we need to make sure that we're making the absolute most of that time. That means a focus on building up students' vocabulary and background knowledge for reading success in *all* content areas.

As in the opening scenario, traditional vocabulary instruction practice tends to focus on low-frequency or rare words, or to focus on the concrete nouns that are part of children's everyday lives (e.g., *furniture, foods)* (Heibert, 2005). But these words can be relatively unimportant when we stack them up against all of the words that our students need to know. To be effective, we must more strategic about the words we are teaching as part of vocabulary instruction.

In every classroom, we can focus on the words students need to be academically successful and then use them as a platform for a number of important learning goals, including 1) increasing academic talk (e.g., dialogue, debate); 2) promoting more strategic reading of narrative and informational text; and 3) supporting students' research and inquiry—all skills that make up what we call "advanced literacy" and all key anchors of the Common Core Standards. We call these words *high-utility, academic* words (e.g., *analyze, characteristic, observe*) because if learned deeply, they support overall academic success, not just the comprehension of a specific text or reading lesson. They are words that show up far more in print than they do in conversation, even between educated adults.

A focus on academic words is especially important when teaching students with underdeveloped vocabularies, who need to know them in order to access the content-specific words they encounter. In *Reach for Reading*, we have been very strategic about what words are taught during the precious instructional time spent on vocabulary instruction (high-utility, academic words).

Use a deep, interactive approach to build word knowledge

Knowing a word is not an all-or-nothing affair—we all have *degrees* of knowledge of any given word. Degrees of knowledge range from no knowledge at all to a general sense of the word, all the way to an understanding of the abstract concept that underlies the word. As is the case for many students in today's classrooms, we might understand a word when *someone else* uses it in a specific context, but we don't use the word in our own writing or speaking, and we might struggle with its meaning when we come across it in print when we are reading on our own and don't have the benefit of interaction with another person. And this compromises our comprehension in that instance. But for many of our students, lack of deep word knowledge compromises not just their reading comprehension, but their academic success. These students have *some* understanding of a whole lot of words—but it's not accumulating for academic success.

The goal of vocabulary instruction, then, is for students to gain an understanding of the concept that a word represents, to acquire its multiple meanings, to understand its relationship to other words, and to understand how it is used figuratively or metaphorically. But getting to deep knowledge of a word takes time and a much more interactive, comprehensive approach than what has been standard in our classrooms. This means an instructional plan that builds in opportunities to learn these words over an extended period of time, providing multiple exposures across the lesson cycle, and in different ways—drawing on and developing students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

Word learning must be anchored in rich content. Students need to learn *how* to think about language and how words work—and this takes time and multiple opportunities across different instructional contexts. It especially means the benefit of discussion and dialogue to clarify one's knowledge and grapple with new learning. And there is consensus that this deeper, more sustained approach to vocabulary instruction means focusing on fewer words. This contrasts with the more common practice of teaching a large number of words starting with a list or workbook, a practice that might get us to Friday's vocabulary test but not to deep knowledge that is maintained over the long-term.

Reach for Reading includes academic and content words that are very tightly connected to content under study—to build up background knowledge. Students using *Reach for Reading* gain multiple exposures to each word and are given myriad opportunities to hear, read, and use the word in reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Follow research-based routines

In spite of the fact that gaps in reading performance are often associated with gaps in vocabulary knowledge, instruction in this area occurs infrequently and inconsistently in most classrooms across the U.S. and Canada (Foorman et al. 2001,: Lesaux et al., 2006; Scott, Jamieson-Noel, & Asselin, 2003; Watts, 1995). Estimates suggest that in kindergarten through second grade classrooms, only between 10 percent and 28 percent of academic time focuses on explicit instruction to support oral language development; by the middle school years, this number is about 10 percent. And when it does happen, much of this vocabulary instruction is what we would call "incidental" in nature. Instruction is often not part of a long-term plan, nor does it provide students with multiple, varied opportunities.

Take, for example, what research finds to be one of the most common scenarios for vocabulary instruction: The class is gathered around for a read aloud and the teacher starts reading. As she moves through the pages, she comes across a word that she is fairly certain many of the students will not know. She stops, provides a definition (with example) for the word, in passing, and continues through the pages. In this way, the students are really only exposed to the word once, and there is just one teaching method (i.e., a verbal explanation). This instruction is not part of a long-term plan, nor does it provide students with multiple, varied opportunities as part of a comprehensive routine to build up deep knowledge. Whether deep teaching and learning has occurred is questionable, even unlikely; we know from important research on vocabulary instruction, especially that which focuses on the number of exposures, across contexts, that a child needs to learn a word, that a much more planful, comprehensive approach is needed.

Guided by a long-term plan for vocabulary learning, *Reach for Reading* features a weekly research-based vocabulary instructional routine. The routine recognizes the importance of repetition in deliberate and strategic ways to provide students with multiple, varied exposures to the words (and their concepts) and to practice their word learning. Across the cycle, instructional tasks draw on and develop students reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

▲ My Vocabulary Notebook is a digital resource to support the Reach for Reading vocabulary routines.

Build strategies for word learning

As mentioned earlier, we can't possibly "cover" all the words students need to learn for academic success. But while reading, students constantly come up against words that they don't know—and readers need tools to figure out the meaning these words. Therefore, as part of deep, interactive vocabulary instruction, we need to equip students with strategies to try to figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word they encounter while reading. Without these tools, readers might skip the words repeatedly and potentially lose overall meaning, or they may get "stuck" on those words and lose their train of thought that is central to the meaning-making process. What the students do at a crossroads while reading depends in large part on the word-learning strategies they have in their toolkits.

To become advanced readers, students need to be able to pull apart an unfamiliar word (e.g., *is there a root or suffix that might help to signal its meaning?*), dig deeply enough to find a helpful context clue (e.g., *does something in the prior paragraph signal what this might mean?*), think of a related word that looks the same (e.g., *is it a cognate?*), or think about when they heard the word prior to this reading (e.g., *what is the connection to background knowledge?*). With direct and explicit teaching of word-learning strategies, students are better able to work through more challenging text and get closer to that goal of acquiring the thousands of words needed for academic success.

Instruction in word-learning strategies is systematic and incorporated into the instructional pathway presented in *Reach for Reading*. Students connect strategies to key words and have multiple opportunities to apply word-learning strategies.

Conclusion

Research finds that well-developed vocabulary knowledge—the often specialized and sophisticated language of text—is an important tool for making meaning while reading. It is also a common source of weakness for students who don't understand deeply the text they've read, even when they might have read it fluently. In fact, these same students might answer a set of literal comprehension questions accurately, but when they move to more complex literacy tasks—including drawing inferences, producing a written composition, and engaging in academic debate and dialogue—lack of deep vocabulary knowledge impedes performance.

To equip today's readers with the advanced literacy skills that are needed for post-secondary success (and full participation in society) and that are part of today's Common Core Standards, research tells us that there are key shifts to instructional paradigm for promoting word learning. Within our literacy blocks and across classrooms, we need to focus more carefully on the words we're choosing to teach, reconsider the duration and overall approach to vocabulary instruction, and investigate the types of opportunities we're giving our students to learn any given word.

▲ Instruction and practice in word-learning strategies equip students to extend vocabulary beyond the words taught in *Reach for Reading*.

For **research citations** see page R19.

Nonie K. Lesaux, Ph.D.

Academic Talk: A Key to Literacy *by Nonie K. Lesaux*

To develop stronger readers in classrooms across the country, we need more productive noise—the sounds of students talking and working together on academic tasks. Talk is, in fact, one of the most crucial tools in the classroom to promote critical reading and thinking. Consider the following statistics that clearly demonstrate we must strengthen our reading instruction for *all* students:

- On one International Student Assessment, only 30 percent and 12 percent of U.S. students scored in the highest category on the reading and problem solving sections, respectively (Wagner, 2008).
- According to the National Center on Education Statistics, over 40 percent of students in community colleges and 20 percent of students in four-year institutions require remedial instruction (NCES 2004b).
- Educators in colleges and universities, including elite institutions, report a steady decline in students' critical thinking, reading, and writing skills (Baum & Ma, 2007).

So why focus on academic talk? Well, we know that reading words is necessary to support comprehension, but it's only a first step. While the reader must be able to successfully decode, he or she must also recognize the meaning of the words themselves and especially the concepts those words represent. To do this, the reader draws on his or her background knowledge, constantly applying what he or she already knows about the text's topic while making his or her way through the word-covered pages. But if the words or the topic are completely unfamiliar or just too difficult to grasp independently, then sounding out the words may look like "reading," but it is simply an exercise, unsupportive of learning.

The specialized, sophisticated language and abstract ideas featured in text prove challenging for many readers—not just those who are struggling. In fact, we may have a false sense of security that students who reach proficiency in early grades are inoculated against later difficulties and destined for success.

The following guiding principles will help teachers design effective academic language instruction to promote students' academic reading and writing skills:

- Provide daily opportunities for academic talk.
- Go beyond comprehension questions.
- Facilitate rich discussion.
- Connect academic talk to academic writing.

Provide daily opportunities for academic talk

Despite national calls for instructional frameworks that focus on *Reading, Writing, Listening,* and *Speaking,* and although talk is one of the most powerful tools for comprehending and analyzing text, research tells us very clearly that speaking is the neglected standard. For hundreds of years, students have been taught to listen quietly as the teacher talked, so that they would learn; still today teachers dominate classroom talk (Cazden, 1988; Heath, 1978; Snow, Tabors, & Dickinson, 2001). When attention to developing oral language does occur in most classrooms, it tends to be in preschool and kindergarten. So, ironically, as the texts and the language needed for academic success become more difficult, less instructional time, if any, is devoted to academic talk and oral language development. For students to succeed as readers and writers, we need to focus on developing their sophisticated language skills.

And if speaking is the neglected standard, listening is the misunderstood standard. *Passive* listening, like following directions, is the norm. *Active* listening is needed. Teachers can help students develop *active* listening and speaking skills through structured dialogue and debate activities that center on rich concepts. These practices also build the reasoning skills and background knowledge that are at the core of strong reading and writing.

Reach for Reading is designed to infuse reading time with significant opportunities for students to develop their academic speaking and listening skills. In every unit, and across the lesson cycle, students are presented with

- Big Questions that focus on interesting cross-curricular topics to talk about
- interesting ways to engage in academic discussion (cooperative learning structures, book discussion groups, and more).

By placing academic talk at the core of good literacy instruction, *Reach for Reading* not only builds students' speaking skills, but their active listening skills also. Teachers are guided to support students to participate in academic talk effectively with structured opportunities to do so.

BIG Question — *What is so amazing about plants?*

◄ Big questions provide interesting, cross-curricular topics for reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Talk Together

◄ Cooperative learning and partner work facilitate active engagement involving every student.

Go beyond comprehension questions

When students are given opportunities to speak during reading instruction, they most often answer low-level questions with one or two word replies, and usually during the whole-group lesson. Consider the read-aloud: the teacher reads a story, pausing every now and again to pose a question to the group. Some students raise their hands, and the teacher calls on one to respond. This practice is widespread. Researchers have found that questions about the here and now or questions with answers easily found in text are used between 50 percent and 80 percent of the time in classrooms (Watson & Young, 1986; Zwiers, 2008). But these questions serve primarily one purpose—to evaluate students' understanding about something relatively concrete and literal. It's our strongest readers who can engage effectively with the question-answer format. Overall, however, very few students benefit from this.

To promote academic talk, we can't just have whole-group settings, and we can't rely almost exclusively upon teacher questioning as our tool to do so. Effective instructional practices to promote academic talk in the service of reading comprehension and writing development focus very seriously on *dialogue*—engaging conversation about rich topics and ideas featured in text—in order for students to develop their ideas and informed opinions.

When they engage in academic talk, students make claims and justify them with evidence, articulate causes and effects, compare ideas. They work as a whole class and in pairs or small groups. Students may have roles to play so they consider perspectives other than their own, or they may share opinions and work to build consensus. In classrooms focused on academic talk for improved literacy, teachers model good academic discussions. Teachers might also work with students on turn-taking or constructive disagreement with another's opinion.

In *Reach for Reading*, instruction to broaden academic talk centers on a Big Question featured in every unit and is anchored in rich text, which is key to building comprehension skills. Instruction draws significantly on the teacher's and students' personal connections to topics. At the end of each unit and throughout the course of study, students take a stance and debate a point of view, or do some research as part of a collaborative project, and report out to their peers as experts. In conjunction with a high-quality literature and nonfiction selections, students pose questions and find answers or apply their knowledge to new situations.

In structured discussions, we ask students to learn from their peers by observing and listening, exposing them to rich and engaging text that features academic language. *Reach for Reading* also teaches and provides repeated exposures to cross-curricular and academic language registers and vocabulary words to improve their academic language skills. The scaffolded instruction on language frames moves students from forming basic sentences to making comparisons, giving opinions, and justifying choices to their peers. Students pull together their emerging skills and practice academic talk in all of the unit projects as well. Overall, the instruction is dynamic and engaging. It qualifies as much more than basic communication and prepares students for the rigorous academic environments in middle school, high school, and beyond. Academic language frames scaffold students to promote participation at all levels.

Facilitate rich discussion

If our students are going to advance to the next level, they need to actively construct their own knowledge. This means we need a paradigm shift in the role and actions of the teacher. If students are to deeply understand new texts and topics and generate new conceptual knowledge, lessons need to be designed accordingly. This means much less stand-and-deliver or step-by-step instruction to show students how produce the "right" answers, and more lessons designed around an open-ended question or big idea, connected to a long-term plan for content learning, and student collaboration. As a facilitator of students' own active learning, the teacher leads discussions on topics and texts. She is skilled at managing the process of inquiry—which doesn't always go in the direction planned—and, over time, supports students' unpacking of difficult text and big ideas (Goldenberg, 1992).

Reach for Reading supports this shift in roles through the gradual release of responsibility. Its design was guided by the principle that teachers are facilitators of student learning, guiding students on how to construct their own knowledge through in-depth interactions with text and abstract ideas. For this reason, the program supports teachers in leading fertile discussions about big ideas. Teachers model what good conversations look like and how one builds on the ideas of others. Rich discussion is fostered by enabling students at all levels to engage with authentic fiction and nonfiction texts that extend social studies and science questions beyond the shared reading in the anthology. After reading, heterogeneous groups meet to share and compare knowledge and insights gained from the different books. Cross-text sharing enables students to apply reading in authentic ways in a context that facilitates contributions by all participants.

▲ Students at varied reading levels explore different content-rich texts and novels. Heterogeneous groups share and compare thematically-related books creating an authentic context for academic discussion.

The *Reach for Reading* teacher's edition offers effective whole-group and small-group lessons to increase academic talk in our classrooms, encouraging teachers to take advantage of built-in opportunities for peer scaffolding to push students forward, while paying careful attention to groupings. Every unit features numerous occasions for teachers to foster academic language, including the end-of-unit collaborative projects that focus on the Big Questions.

Connect academic talk to academic writing

Recent research is very clear that writing is a significant weakness for many students in our classrooms. For example, in a recent study in urban middle schools, participating teachers agreed that writing a paragraph is a difficult exercise for 6th graders (Kelley, Lesaux, Kieffer & Faller, 2010). How does increasing academic talk relate to promoting students' writing skills? It does so at least three ways:

1. Effective pre-writing work begins with teacher direction and modeling and encourages structured academic talk as students generate and organize ideas with the help of a classmate.

2. Effective writing assignments provide a platform for developing students' academic language skills; when students can accurately use new vocabulary or sentence structures in writing, clearly they have a sound understanding of the meaning and mechanics.

3. When writing instruction is embedded into the overall unit of study, and therefore linked to texts, it's another chance to have students grapple with academic language. Students gain the scaffolded support they need to generate and organize ideas, incorporate appropriate academic words and sentences, and move from notes or a graphic organizer to a flowing paragraph.

The *Reach for Reading* writing approach provides opportunities for increased academic talk and peer-learning. This is especially the case during the prewriting and editing phases when students share ideas with a partner and when students edit each other's work and learn how to give feedback constructively. In addition, all writing instruction is embedded in the unit of study and connects to rich text, providing further opportunities to develop academic language.

Language Frames	
Tell Your Ideas	**Respond to Ideas**
• Something in nature I know about is _____ .	• How would you turn_____ into a tall tale ?
• One tall tale I know is _____ . I could write something like that .	• _____ sounds funny. What will make your tale different?
• The problem could be _____ .	• What will _____ do to solve the problem?

Conclusion

If we are to support all students' literacy development, prevent reading difficulties, and close achievement gaps, our classrooms should be filled with academic talk—talk that centers on big ideas and complex concepts worthy of discussion and debate and is engaging for our students. To do this we need to increase student talk and decrease teacher talk (Cazden, 2001; Fisher, Frey, & Rothenberg, 2008; McIntyre, Kyle & Moore, 2006; Saunders & Goldenberg, 1992). We need to expand teachers' repertoires to go beyond questioning to get students speaking. The dialogue that promotes reading comprehension and writing skills engages students to work and think together about a complex problem, to see others' viewpoints, and to better understand the knowledge and experiences they bring to the issue.

For **research citations** see page R19.

Deborah J. Short, Ph.D.

Jennifer D. Turner, Ph.D.

Reaching Your Reading Potential

by Deborah J. Short and Jennifer D. Turner

Our classrooms are very diverse across a range of variables: income, culture, first language background, learning styles, and more. Children enter our classrooms with different early literacy backgrounds—strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing, varied personal experiences that could be activated as prior knowledge, ranges of vocabulary knowledge, Roman or other alphabetic/graphic systems, and perspectives on print. Even with similar backgrounds, students learn to read at different rates.

Nonetheless, all students have the potential to be effective readers, writers, and thinkers. They need more than basic skills instruction to reach their potential, however. They benefit from meaningful, generative activities that ask them to analyze and apply what they are learning, make connections and compare ideas, solve problems, and create new products. The call for college and career readiness standards now being instantiated in many state standards and for deeper learning (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011) demonstrate that many educators are ready to shift away from rote learning and standardized testing of facts to promote instruction that can lead students to be successful in school and beyond.

While the thought of high school graduation may be far from the average first or third grader's mind, these thoughts should be front and center in their teachers' minds. We want all students to start on the path to postsecondary learning and we want to give them critical tools to move forward. Unfortunately, many students from lower income or language minority families are not in classrooms that focus on challenging, creative learning (Au, 2006; Snow, Griffin & Burns, 2005; Edwards, McMillon & Turner, 2010). Sadly, research has shown that these classrooms often focus on basic skills instruction with decontextualized worksheets and memorization drills. If these students start to struggle with reading, they receive more of the same, perhaps with more intensity. This is not a winning solution.

Reach for Reading has been designed to break this cycle. It provides rich, robust instruction for all students with relevant and engaging literature that gives students satisfaction when they reach the conclusion of a story, article, or poem. Moreover, the series has connected reading instruction to the content areas—giving students tools to access the content and fostering higher-level reading skills across all subjects encountered during the school day.

Differentiated instruction is the underpinning of all lesson activities. As we discuss below, whether the class is working on vocabulary, post reading responses, unit projects, or another task, *Reach for Reading* gives teachers multiple approaches for delivering new knowledge to the students and for enticing the students to practice and apply that knowledge.

Content-based reading

How will *Reach for Reading* move students along the pathway to reading success? The move begins with content-based units centered around a Big Question that connect to science or social studies. These are not questions with simple, factual answers, but questions that require both facts and analysis. Students can think about questions the way one might in the real world, a college course, or a workplace. The Big Question thread is pulled through the unit. *Reach for Reading* holds fast to the thematic plan and addresses grade-level content standards in addition to foundational skills development, grade-level reading, and language arts standards.

Oral language

Big Questions are written to promote academic talk among students, giving them an opportunity to consider the topic from their personal perspectives and read the selections. But if we want to generate more productive talk in classrooms, we also have to ensure students have the skills and knowledge to participate in academic discussions (Fisher, Frey & Rothenberg, 2008).

To facilitate academic talk, *Reach for Reading* involves students in a range of vocabulary development activities focusing on subject-specific words and general academic words which have been carefully selected to convey conceptual knowledge. Lessons incorporate many opportunities for students to learn and practice using the words through discussions, sketches, brief writing tasks, role plays, and hands-on activities. Technology supports learning with resources including online photographs, video clips, and a student's own personal vocabulary notebook.

Linking discussion with reading and writing strengthens all skills. *Reach for Reading* systematically taps all language domains for student activities. For instance, oral language practice is not just fluency work. We know that competent readers can talk about what they have read, make predictions as to what will happen next in a story, and express an opinion about a character or action. Yet to do so orally, they must have structure for their utterances.

Many students have rich oral language backgrounds, but they may not have developed the academic language proficiencies that advance literacy and content learning in schools. So students will benefit from *Reach for Reading's* academic language frames. According to the purpose of their statements, students learn how to start a sentence or how to organize their thoughts effectively. Teachers can help students make statements with increasing levels of sophistication, too, so their oral language development grows. Plus, these academic language frames help with reading and writing. Structures students use orally they learn to recognize in print and employ in writing.

Language Frames

- ❓ I wonder _____ .
- 👁 I read _____ .
  So _____ .
- 💭 Now I wonder _____ .

Authentic literature libraries and anthology selections

While the Big Question can whet the students' appetite for reading, good literature seals the deal. *Reach for Reading* includes Caldecott and Newbury winners as well as National Geographic exclusive articles and interviews with scientists and explorers. The rich multicultural selections and the assortment of genres entice the students. When they have something in front of them that they want to read, they are motivated to learn how to read well. And *Reach for Reading's* leveled libraries will help ensure that students have access to high-interest fiction and nonfiction texts at their appropriate reading levels. Pre-reading supports, such as video clips from National Geographic and summaries of the selections in multiple languages, coupled with the vocabulary development work, set the stage for reading success.

If students struggle with comprehension, differentiation is available, particularly with flexible reading groups that can accommodate varied reading levels, English language proficiency, and genre preferences. Some of the supports built into *Reach for Reading* include specialized collections of leveled readers. One set has thematically linked books for each unit at different reading levels. Another set has content-related readers for independent reading and fluency work. Young learners can partner read with Read with Me Big Books. For students who are working on decoding, Read On Your Own decodable texts are also included.

- ☐ *The Great Wall of China*
- BL *Sitti's Secrets*
- BL *Miss Rumphius*
- OL *Everest: The Climb*, Part 1
- AL *The Cay*, Part 1

Explicit, systematic instruction and assessment

Furthermore, the building blocks for reading, phonemic awareness and phonics, are present in the grade-level books. In the primary grades students experience daily lessons on these elements. In the upper grades for the small percentage of students who still need help decoding or for the recent immigrant students new to English, a supplementary kit, *Reach into Phonics*, is available. At any grade, online phonics games can supplement the regular instruction. Teachers have flexibility in choosing the amount of support to provide students based on their needs.

Explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies, another critical piece of the reading puzzle, is also present throughout the units. With step-by-step instructions and practice with a portion of the selection to be read, students experience a consistent introduction to each strategy. These strategies are the focus of the comprehension checks while they read texts at their level and the post-reading activities that link the topics to the Big Question.

Reach for Reading offers teachers and students multiple ways of demonstrating understanding. Students respond to reading through writing activities designed for their reading and language proficiency levels. *Reach for Reading's* informal assessment tools, including running records and comprehension strategy checklists, help teachers to monitor students' progress and tailor instruction to meet their needs on a daily basis, while unit tests and projects allow teachers to gauge their learning over time.

A major concern for all teachers is what to do when children struggle. What if they can't read well despite one's best efforts? Before moving students to intensive interventions, we encourage teachers to try the monitoring and reteaching techniques built into *Reach for Reading*. Students can use online games, Comprehension Coach, and other technology resources for extended practice.

An extensive array of scaffolding features helps teachers to readjust instructional tasks so that students are challenged at the appropriate level. Cooperative learning activities anchor each lesson so that students support one another as they are learning the subject matter, and practice their oral language skills as they interact verbally. Additionally, on-the-page text supports, including Before You Move On and In Other Words, scaffold students' vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Writing activities are designed to guide students through the process of authoring and editing texts in print (e.g., stories, essays) and online formats (e.g., blogs, emails).

Conclusion

By 2050, demographers predict the U.S. population will be majority-minority. In many of our school districts, this trend has become a reality. We have to reach all our students with core reading instruction that will move below-level students to on-grade level and on-grade level students up to an advanced level. Our advanced readers, who may be in these classrooms as well, need to be challenged so they make progress, too. With *Reach for Reading* we will help all students—below-level, on-level, and above-level—become better readers, writers, and thinkers.

For **research citations** see page R19.

Sylvia Linan-Thompson, Ph.D.

Monitoring Progress to Reach Reading Goals

by Sylvia Linan-Thompson

In today's heterogeneous classroom, monitoring progress is more important than ever. Research has long shown that teachers need to use assessment data to inform their instructional planning and decision making (Afflerbach, 2007; Edwards, Turner, & Mokhtari, 2008). With today's focus on Response to Intervention, or RtI, this principle of using assessment to inform instruction has been more formally defined and organized in a system to help connect this critical research finding to the complex logistics of classroom teaching. Response to Intervention (RtI) describes a framework that promotes the use of successive cycles of assessment, instruction, and decision-making as a means for preventing the development of learning difficulties.

Multi-tier instruction

The cycle begins with benchmarking. The data provides the teacher with information about students' reading skills. All students receive core reading instruction or Tier 1. The classroom teacher provides the first tier of instruction to all students. This does not mean that all students get the same instruction, however. In this first tier, instruction is differentiated and scaffolded, and flexible grouping is used to maximize learning.

Students who do not meet benchmark are also provided Tier 2 instruction, and their progress is monitored with formative assessments. Assessments are used on a regular basis. If students have made adequate progress and meet benchmark, they exit from Tier 2 instruction. If they have not made adequate progress, they continue to receive Tier 2 instruction in addition to Tier 1. In most models, the first two tiers of instruction are provided in the general education classroom. The second tier of instruction is provided to students, usually 15–20 percent, who do not meet grade-level benchmarks. Targeted instruction meant to "catch them up" is delivered to these students in small, homogeneous groups.

Students who continue to exhibit difficulty in acquiring reading skills after one or two cycles of Tier 2 receive Tier 3 instruction. While there might be some variation in terms of the length of Tier 2 or who provides instruction, the sequence is standard. The third tier is the most intense. Because very few students (5–7 percent) need this level of instruction, students receive instruction in groups of one to three students. In many models, the third tier of instruction is provided outside the classroom

Characteristics of effective Tier 1 instruction

Tier 1 reading instruction and core reading instruction are synonymous. For Tier 1 to be effective for all students, attention must be paid to both the content and delivery of instruction. Furthermore, it has to meet the literacy needs of all the students in the class. To accomplish this, *Reach for Reading* has ensured that the instruction is explicit and systematic, is differentiated, and that there are sufficient materials to ensure that all students have multiple opportunities to read every day regardless of their reading level.

There is consensus in the research field about what constitutes effective reading instruction. Effective reading instruction builds students foundational reading and decoding skills, develops their vocabulary knowledge, teaches strategies and builds knowledge needed to comprehend and analyze text, and focuses on fluency instruction that includes increased exposure to vocabulary and print (National Reading Panel, 2000). *Reach for Reading* includes instruction in all of these areas with interactive and integrated lessons.

Additionally, because *Reach for Reading* is built around content area topics, students as early as first grade are engaged with both narrative and expository text and acquire not only new content but also the vocabulary, language, and text structures associated with a variety of texts. This enables students to apply core reading knowledge in all subjects throughout the school day.

The content of instruction is only one part of effective instruction. *How* instruction is delivered is equally important. Well-delivered and supported instruction helps to create a safe environment in which students can acquire new knowledge. The lessons in *Reach for Reading* are structured to provide several layers of support. The first level is the structure of the lessons. They provide a clear introduction, with modeling to make the task explicit for children. Guided practice is included so the teacher can ensure that children learn the task, and then there is independent practice to solidify learning. Additionally, guidance in providing corrective feedback and opportunities to check for understanding are included.

Differentiation and Tier 1 instruction

As noted earlier, Tier 1 instruction includes differentiation. To become successful readers, students need opportunities to read different types of text every day. To ensure all students have access to text they can read during Tier 1 instruction, the *Reach for Reading* program gives students a variety of reading resources. The rich, authentic literature and informational texts in the student anthologies are scaffolded with on-page supports, frequent comprehension checks, and pre- and post-reading activities that build skills, strategies, background knowledge, and vocabulary to support all learners. In addition, a range of leveled reading options are available for small group reading. In addition to providing reading practice, content-based reading at varied levels builds students' content knowledge and allows them to participate in and contribute to discussions.

◄ Scaffolded anthology selections provide an entry point for all learners in Tier 1.

▲ Differentiated small group reading—with Explorer Collection books and trade books—matches readers and texts over a range of reading levels.

Finally, across lessons, flexible grouping formats are used to provide students with additional opportunities to practice what they are learning. Homogeneous and heterogeneous small group formats are used in addition to purposeful pairing as appropriate for the learning objective.

Multiple measures

Frequent assessments are critical to monitoring progress and identifying opportunities for reteaching for all students. A variety of assessment tools, including both formal tests and embedded informal assessments, are provided to gauge student progress and identify students who may require reteaching or students who would benefit from additional practice to build automaticity. Using a range of measures is critical to capture the multi-dimensional range of skills required to read, write, listen, and speak.

▲ In addition to formal assessments at the end of each week, every tested skill includes point-of-use ideas for informal monitoring of progress and reteaching.

Providing Tier 2 instruction

Who needs Tier 2 instruction? Students who do not meet benchmarks benefit from Tier 2 instruction. There are a variety of factors that inhibit students' reading progress including

- limited early literacy experiences
- lack of instruction or practice
- failure to develop phonemic awareness
- failure to develop the alphabetic principle
- failure to master basic decoding skills
- ability to read accurately but not automatically
- very slow learning.

When planning Tier 2 instruction, use data to determine what students need and group them homogenously. When children can't decode, we focus on basic word-level skills and ensure that students learn the skills needed to read words. They need to know letter sounds, how to map those sounds to letters, and blend them to read words. They also need to practice reading the words until they can read them automatically. It is also important to ensure that students are also learning language. Building students' listening and speaking vocabulary will also help them in reading words automatically. When words are known well, both the pronunciation and meaning are accessed automatically.

Reach for Reading has several components that can be used to support these students as they develop the code, including routines and resources for reteaching foundational skills identified for the early grades. For intermediate grades, a complete phonics intervention kit, *Reach into Phonics*, is provided for students who struggle with foundational reading skills. In addition, a range of digital resources provide opportunities for repeated practice for automaticity development.

▲ Comprehension Coach and *Reach into Phonics*

When children can decode but are not fluent, Tier 2 instruction focuses on building fluency in text reading. But children who are not fluent may also need to develop language and automaticity. They also need opportunities to read text at their independent reading level.

For this group of children, the *Reach for Reading* trade books are a valuable resource. Materials in the program's leveled library extend to reach students who are two years below the grade-level reading targets. These books can be used to provide students practice reading at their independent level while they build content knowledge. Further, there are several opportunities for students to practice additional independent reading. Time is allotted in pacing for the leveled library for teacher work with Tier 2 students and to conduct conferences with all students.

BL Below Level
BL Below Level
OL On Level
AL Above Level

Some children will develop adequate decoding and fluency skills but will not comprehend what they read. These students need to learn to monitor their comprehension and to use comprehension strategies. However, to understand text, students must also know the meaning of the majority of the words they are reading:

- Pacing includes reading and rereading texts to enable the students to read once for literal comprehension and then read a second time to deepen comprehension.
- Background knowledge and vocabulary lists are provided for anthology and library reading to help students at all levels.
- Writing options provide options for all students to respond to reading in level-appropriate ways.

Building students' background also aids in comprehension. The words we can associate with topics we know about and the depth of our knowledge of specific topics facilitate our understanding of texts on those topics. Therefore exposure to a wide range of topics provides students with opportunities to develop vocabulary associated with various topics in an engaging and embedded context and thereby build their world knowledge in the process.

Conclusion

It is not enough for us to assess for accountability purposes. Teachers not only need to know how to collect pertinent data on students' learning and development, but to use it in an easy-to-implement way to make appropriate instructional decisions about grouping, reteaching, and more. The range of measures, teaching resources, and reteaching resources in *Reach for Reading* help teachers respond to individual needs and grow as capable and confident readers, writers, listeners, and speakers.

For **research citations** see page R19.

Lada Kratky

Jennifer D. Turner, Ph.D.

Orchestrating Instruction *by Lada Kratky and Jennifer D. Turner*

Our classrooms are made up of students with a variety of interests, strengths, and personalities. Some are shy while others are outspoken; some are afraid to take risks, while some are bold; some have been read to, others have never held a book. In the classroom, one of the challenges a teacher faces is grouping these diverse personalities in such a way that they will all flourish. It has been shown that small group instruction is more effective for students than simply doing whole group instruction during the entire day (Taylor, Pearson, Clark & Walpole, 2000). And so, how do we group students?

We know that the best literacy teachers don't simply organize their instruction; they *orchestrate* learning within their classrooms (Turner, 2005). Heilman and his colleagues (2002) note that "Implementing reading instruction in a class requires careful orchestration of time, materials, and instruction to satisfy the needs of individual children" (p. 508). This means that teachers must be thoughtful and purposeful as they make grouping decisions.

Reading groups

Although there are many grouping formats that teachers may use for reading instruction in their classrooms, we focus on two primary types—homogeneous groups and heterogeneous groups. Homogeneous groups are formed when students of similar reading levels come together to read a text. The purpose of homogeneous reading groups is to provide explicit instruction to groups of four to six students at their instructional levels (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; 2001) and to scaffold students' understanding of texts (Frey & Fisher 2010). Importantly, homogeneous groups should not be static, or students will remain in the same reading group for the entire year (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Iaquinta, 2006). Rather, homogeneous groupings must be flexible and allow for individual growth and continued challenges.

Heterogeneous groups are formed with students of varying strengths, needs, and interests as readers. According to Heilman et al (2002), heterogeneous groups "have the potential to increase students' academic engaged time and achievement by promoting active learning, with students talking and working together rather than passively listening" (p. 502).

Which grouping format is best? A primary consideration for making this decision is identifying the task at hand, and the question becomes if students should be placed in homogenous or heterogeneous groups to provide the best setting for the given task.

When learning and practicing a skill, students will work best when grouped with others of similar skill levels. Instructional levels are determined by observation of student strengths. Reading means deriving meaning from print. To that end, teachers should be aware if students are purely decoding or if they are using phonics and language skills to arrive at meaning. Teachers of emergent readers, in addition, should be aware if students control concepts of print, have letter knowledge, and can identify High Frequency Words. The best tool for assessing student strengths in reading is the running record.

Running records

In *An Observation Survey,* Marie Clay (2000) states that running records help teacher in

- the evaluation of text difficulty
- the grouping of children
- the acceleration of a child
- monitoring the progress of children
- observing particular difficulties in particular children.

A running record of student performance can be carried out with any introduced text and at any time. It consists of following the student's reading by making markings, which will be used to analyze strengths and difficulties. The teacher jots down a tick, or check mark, for each word read correctly. A miscue is recorded. If a child corrects an error, the correction is recorded as well. A struggling reader should be observed frequently in order to track his or her progress and inform his or her instruction. On-level readers can be observed on a regular basis.

▲ Oral reading assessments provide running records of reading progress. Measures are provided for accuracy, rate, and comprehension.

Flexible grouping

Using running record scores and other measures, the teacher will create homogeneous reading groups. Reading groups are formed to provide explicit instruction to a group of four to six students at their instructional levels. These groupings must be flexible and allow for individual growth and continued challenges.

The most important and continual consideration has to be that groupings are flexible. Students grow at different speeds. Flexible groupings are essential to avoid frustration and keep kids engaged by keeping them appropriately challenged and meeting individual needs. Running records and conferences must become part of routine and constant observations of each student's growth, which will guide continual and necessary adjustments between groups.

As Iaquinta (2006) observes, flexible groups "avoid the traditional problems of grouping, because teachers change the composition of groups regularly to accommodate the different learning paths of readers" (p. 414). In order to maintain flexibly, it is necessary to assess students' strengths and needs on an ongoing basis. Thus, constant observation of each student's growth, as well as periodic adjustments within groups, are vital in order to allow each student to advance at his or her own rate.

▲ Leveled books provide opportunities for students to explore science and social studies content and apply reading skills and strategies at their individual instructional levels.

Once groups are formed, there are a variety of different instructional approaches that classrooms take to implement small group reading. Guided reading involves teacher-supported discussions in small groups (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Literature circles are heterogeneous, student-lead groups of four or six children who read the same book. They prepare for discussion by taking on particular role e.g. Discussion Director, Connector, Illustrator. (Daniels, 2002). Many other reading routines exist and can be effective once groups are formed. Regardless of the format used, homogeneous group reading is just a first step in reading. It's also important to have students share and extend learning through heterogeneous group discussions.

After students work with texts at their level, *Reach for Reading* provides the opportunity for all students to share the knowledge gained about the different stories and informational texts they have read through heterogeneous group discussions. The "Connect Across Texts" part of the small group and leveled reading routines provides opportunities for all learners to transform facts and ideas gleaned from their books into knowledge, ideas, and opinions about the core content topics and questions that form the center of each unit.

Selecting the right book

Among the many baskets of books that are made available in a classroom, students will find books that are easy for them, those that are at instructional level, and those that are difficult. It is important to know which books are appropriate for each learner. Fountas and Pinnell say, "Easy readers…allow children to focus on the meaning and enjoy humor and suspense. [They] give children "mileage" as readers and build confidence." However, it is not enough for children to just read easy texts.

Instructional-level books are those that allow readers to learn more and progress little steps at a time. They provide practice of known strategies and go a step beyond, allowing for fluent reading and opportunities to problem solve. Hard texts will more than likely discourage the reader. The reading will be choppy, punctuation will be ignored, perhaps there will be sounding out of individual letters, all of which will result in little or no comprehension and the message that reading is difficult and frustrating.

Reach for Reading provides a large range of texts to meet the diverse levels of today's heterogeneous classrooms for every one of the

- 32 content-based decodable readers are provided in the primary grades
- over 100 thematically-connected trade books carefully selected to span across the range of below-level, on-level, and above-level readers
- 64 Explorer Books featuring articles from *National Geographic Explorer* magazine written at two different reading levels.

Grouping for cooperative learning

Generally speaking, when involved in cooperative learning activities, heterogeneous groupings will engage students most effectively. These groups mix language abilities as well as personalities in order to combine talkers with non-talkers, the shy with the bold. The purpose of this type of grouping is to share ideas, discuss, talk, brainstorm, or build together. By having heterogeneous grouping, talkers become role models, and non-speakers slowly build up enough confidence to speak. These activities allow students to learn from each other as they work together.

The teacher is the most informed person with regards to student strengths in language and participation and is the best person to match up different students for mutual benefit and growth. *National Geographic Reach for Reading* offers a wide range of cooperative learning activities. An example of such an activity is "Corners." Each of the four corners of the classroom is assigned one aspect of a discussion. At their seats, students think and write about one of those aspects. Then they go to the corresponding corner to discuss their ideas. At the end, one student from each group shares the thoughts of the group with the class.

Corners

1's   3's

2's   4's

Cooperation, discussions, listening to others' opinions and sharing of ideas are behaviors that are desirable and have to be learned. When students work together in heterogeneous groups, those behaviors can be nurtured and made to develop.

Independent reading

In addition to selecting texts according to students' reading levels, teachers should also select texts based on students' interests and preferences. For example, students generally choose the book that they would like to read during independent reading time. Teachers may also encourage students to select topics of interest in science and social studies and support students in using a wide range of informational texts, which promotes content learning and literacy development (Bergoff & Egawa, 1991). Finally, recent research suggests that students respond enthusiastically to texts that mirror their cultural, linguistic, or ethnic backgrounds, and teachers should select books which are relevant to students' lives and interests outside of school (Louie, 2006; Turner & Kim, 2005).

▲ Affective and metacognitive assessments are provided at NGReach.com.

Independent reading time is a time in the day for readers just to explore reading. Whereas leveled reading takes place in homogeneous groups and texts are selected primarily for their appropriate instructional level, independent reading can happen when students are grouped heterogeneously and texts are selected based on personal interests of the reader. Book baskets are leveled, so students can select easy or instructional-level texts and read to each other. In addition, students can explore book baskets that might contain selections to entice diverse interests. These might be catalogs, how-to manuals, magazines on motorcycles, cars or airplanes, cookbooks, or any other type of texts that might not otherwise be available to students. It is exploration time, a time readers confirm the fact that reading is fun.

Conclusion

Small group instruction has been proven to be most effective when teaching students of different backgrounds and strengths. In activities where the focus is learning a skill, such as reading, homogeneous groups are more efficient because they group students by ability and instruction is aimed at each specific ability level. Constant observation of student participation and progress is required for teachers to be informed about their students. Finally, it is important for teachers to remember that small group instruction is critical, but it is just one part of a balanced literacy program. Small group instruction provides opportunities for students to work closely with their peers and with texts, yet it should not be the only instructional feature of the literacy block. Participating in small instructional groups, as well as accessing literacy events within the whole community (e.g., read alouds, shared writing experiences) and opportunities to read independently, enhance children's development as critical readers, writers, talkers, and thinkers.

Nancy Frey, Ph.D.

Using Technology to Foster Learning for a New Century *by Nancy Frey*

Peer over the shoulder of an elementary-aged child who is working on a computer and prepare to be amazed and a little intimidated. The children in today's classrooms have never known a time when the Internet did not exist and have been raised in an environment where information is just as likely to be presented digitally as it is in print. When confronted with an interesting question, they are as likely to turn to a computer, or other device with a Web browser, as they are to look in a book. This shift in learning is not confined to school-aged children. Increasingly, teachers of these same students have themselves experienced curriculum development as a process that occurs within digital spaces.

Professional organizations have united in their calls for a 21st century approach to education that broadens our approach to teaching, learning, and literacy. The International Reading Association in 2009 called for literacy curriculum that emphasizes use of print and digital technologies in learning, and further stated "students have the right to… teachers who use ICTs (information and communication technologies) skillfully for teaching and learning effectively" (IRA, 2009). The Partnership for 21st Century Learning Skills, a consortium of education and business organizations, states that the 21st century content must include "global awareness, financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, and health and wellness awareness" (Partnership for 21st Century Learning Skills, 2009). The digital divide still exists, and there is enormous disparity in access to technology in homes, classrooms, and communities. A survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation reported that schools play a key role in providing access to those students who lack access to technology in their homes and communities (Rideout, Foehr & Roberts, 2010).

However, the development of 21st century learners who are also learning to be literate is complex. Hobbs (2010), in her testimony to the United States Congress, noted that there are three kinds of possible risks: *content risks* that expose students to harmful material; *contact risks* that may result in online harassment or bullying; and *conduct risks* that include misrepresentation and misinformation. The troubling nature of access to 21st century learning experiences is confounded by access to hardware that is connected to the Internet.

According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, access to broadband is significantly lower in poorer households, among Hispanics, and in homes where English learners live, and that the rate of access has declined in the last several years among this population due to cost (2008).

The fact is that preparation of students for learning in a new century means that the curriculum they use must focus on building the types of critical literacy needed for global communication. It presents a unique challenge for elementary educators who need to balance the development of the kinds of skills needed for becoming digitally literate with the very real concerns about shielding young children from risk.

Reach for Reading is designed to build students' capacity for learning with technology, and to support teachers' efforts in utilizing technology in a safe environment. In addition, the curriculum design of the program accentuates the content knowledge needed by 21st century learners.

Literacy 2.0: learning in the 21st century

Literacy and learning in the 21st century is shifting from an emphasis on the tools (e.g., computers, smartphones, podcasts, networks) to processes. In other words, we know that the tools teachers and students use will continue to change at breathtaking speed. In fact, it is likely that by the time you read this white paper, there will be new tools that did not exist when it was written. Instead, educators understand that the focus needs to shift to the processes used by learners when utilizing technologies. All learners need the following technology literacy skills (Frey, Fisher, & Gonzalez, 2010). Students must be able to

- search and find information
- use information
- create information
- share information.

Reach for Reading is designed to promote searching for information across both print-based and digital texts through online reading experiences focused on topics and issues that impact the social, biological, and physical world. Students view video clips to build their background knowledge and listen to both the teacher and others to build their language skills. They use information from printed texts and digital texts to formulate answers from an inquiry-based curriculum. The Digital Library provides a media-rich search resource and access to National Geographic texts, videos, and images is available online.

▲ In addition to traditional printed texts in anthologies, Big Books, and trade books, interactive texts are designed for whole-class reading.

Each day, students create information through writing. Importantly, writing genres include those needed for digital communication, such as writing emails and blogs. Many of the writing projects utilize Magazine Maker which focuses students on using technology to produce writing. The digital nature of these resources brings the most current information about the world to the classroom. As always, students are consistently challenged to be discriminating consumers of information.

◄ Students create writing projects using the Magazine Maker.

MAGAZINE MAKER

Social learning in the 21st century

Noted literacy researcher Paul Gee (2007) states that learning is socially constructed between people and requires them to probe, hypothesize, reprobe, and rethink and that this occurs in both face-to-face and digital environments. The Web 2.0 revolution has made digital spaces interactive, and people expect to be able to dialogue, confer, and debate on any topic of interest. Whether in a classroom or a digital environment, students need the skills to ask questions, form opinions, ask more questions, and draw conclusions. Therefore, a curriculum designed to prepare 21st century learners must include ample opportunities for students to converse with their peers, ask questions, disagree, and formulate their own opinions.

In *Reach for Reading*, communication is located at the heart of the program. Students engage daily in verbal and written discourse about ideas and information that impact their local communities and the world at large. Rest assured that these environments are constructed to reduce the content, contact, and conduct risks that might otherwise lead to restriction of such experiences due to these concerns.

Reading and writing in the 21st century

Leu et al. (2009) state that the "self-directed text construction" of online reading experiences represents a shift from traditional print-based literacy. Students in an online environment move freely between texts to form understandings. Students need ample experiences with moving among a group of texts in order to develop the ability to synthesize information. Therefore, each unit in *Reach for Reading* is organized around a Big Question that prompts students to move among a set of informational and narrative texts to construct understanding.

The Big Questions are designed to defy easy answers, and learners are prompted to use both their background knowledge and what they have learned from their readings to draw conclusions and formulate answers. Research activities in the program include traditional print-based research and online research. This organization encourages students to engage in the kinds of nonlinear multi-text explorations needed when reading and researching online.

◄ Web research activities help students use synthesis skills using printed resources in the program and text and media resources online.

Communication in the 21st century

Both on- and offline experiences are necessary for students to become thoroughly literate in the 21st century. *Reach for Reading* emphasizes the communication and collaboration skills necessary for students to engage in these practices in both face-to-face and digital environments. In particular, the language frames present in every lesson cause students to focus on both the academic language and academic vocabulary needed in verbal and written communication. As Leu and colleagues (2009) note, "[o]nline reading and writing are so closely connected it is not possible to separate them; we read online as authors and write online as readers" (p. 266). The ability to do so requires that learners are immersed in the rich oral and written dialogue with others that is critical for online learning.

Digital resources like phonics games, vocabulary games, and the Comprehension Coach provide options for additional practice.

Conclusion

It is imperative that we prepare students for their future as members of a global community where information is shared, produced, and understood across space and people. It is clear that the challenge is great, especially because the past decades have taught us that we are not able to predict the tools they will be using as adults. Rather, our best approach is to ensure that students know how to communicate and collaborate with one another in both face-to-face and digital environments. They must be provided with daily opportunities to read, write, speak, listen, and view using many kinds of visual and written texts. Students must become increasingly comfortable searching for information, storing it, sharing it, producing it, and presenting it to a variety of audiences. Learners who are able to do these things are well prepared for a new century.

Let's not forget literacy learning!

Reading, writing, and communicating in digital environments is essential for learners in a new century, but let's not forget that our primary job is to induct children into the world of literacy. Therefore, the resources available to the teachers of these students must be similarly cutting edge. Because the *Reach for Reading* program features both print and digital tools, teachers are able to draw from a rich catalog of materials that would otherwise be prohibitively large to store in a classroom. These include instructional support tools such as online letter cards that can be manipulated to form words for use in phonics instruction, vocabulary cards that bring meaning to life when providing reading comprehension instruction, and graphic organizers that make it easy to show students how information is sequenced during writing instruction.

Even better, digital resources make it even easier to provide the necessary alternative materials needed for Tier 2 Response to Intervention programs to supplement quality core instruction. In the past, students who struggled to read and write often did so because their teachers were not able to supply them with enough repetition and practice of skills. However, the digital resources make it possible to provide struggling students with meaningful reteaching and practice opportunities to accelerate their progress.

Research Basis: Phonological awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate sounds in words. It is an essential skill for emergent readers: children must be able to distinguish sounds in words before they can link the sounds to the letters that represent them. Explicit instruction in phonological awareness significantly improves children's reading (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Phonological Awareness Routine 1

Match, Identify, and Isolate Sounds

Purpose: Children listen to beginning, middle, or ending sounds in pairs of words to determine whether the sounds are the same or different. They identify the sound that is the same in a set of three words. Then they isolate the sound in a single word. If children need additional instruction in hearing sounds in words, use **Phonological Awareness Routine 12** on BP31.

1. **Match Sounds** Begin by telling children they will listen for sounds in words. Then have children listen as you say two words with the same beginning (middle, ending) sound. Ask children if the two words have the same beginning (middle, ending) sound: *Are the beginning sounds the same?*

2. **Match and Distinguish Sounds** Continue with other sets of words, some of which do *not* share the same beginning (middle, ending) sounds.

3. **Identify Matching Sounds** Say three words that only share their beginning (middle, ending) sounds. Ask children to say the one sound that is the same in all three words. Continue with other sets of words.

4. **Isolate Sounds** Ask children to listen for the beginning (middle, ending) sound of a word. Say the word slowly, and have children repeat it. Then have children say the beginning (middle, ending) sound in the word.

Phonological Awareness Routine 2

Blend Sounds

Purpose: Children blend sounds to make words.

1. **Listen to Sounds** Tell children that you will say a word slowly and then they will say it quickly. Say the word, sound by sound, holding each continuous sound for a few seconds. (The following consonant sounds are continuous: /f/, /h/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /r/, /s/, /v/, /w/, /y/, /z/.)

2. **Use Sound Boxes** Tell children that for every sound they say, they will put one chip in one sound box. Have children repeat the word sound by sound with you as you model how to put chips in the sound boxes to show each sound. Then model how to blend the sounds to say the word fast. Begin by pointing to the first box. Loop your finger below each chip or box as you say each sound: */s/ /ă/ /t/. What's the word? sat.* Sweep your finger quickly under the boxes as children repeat the word.

3. **Blend Sounds** Have children clear the chips from their boxes. Say the next word sound by sound, holding continuant sounds. Have children put a chip in their sound boxes for each new sound. Then have children blend sounds to say the word. Repeat for remaining words. If children make an error, ask them to try again. If they repeat the error, provide corrective feedback. (See **Corrective Feedback Routine 1** on BP36.)

/s/   /ă/   /t/

sat

Phonological Awareness Routine 3

Segment Sounds

Purpose: Children segment a word into individual sounds.

1. **Use Sound Boxes** Display sound boxes and tell children that the boxes will help them say a word slowly. Explain that they will say a new sound each time you point to a new sound box.

2. **Listen to a Model** Say a word. Model how to say it slowly, switching to each new sound as you place a coin or chip on the next sound box. Say the word again together slowly, cueing children for each new sound by switching to the next sound box. Have children repeat.

3. **Segment Sounds** Say the next word. Have children say the word slowly as they point to the sound boxes. Repeat for the remaining examples.

/s/   /ă/   /t/

4. **Count Sounds** Have children say the word again slowly and put chips in sound boxes to show the sounds. Ask them to count sounds by counting the chips.

Phonological Awareness Routine 4

Add Sounds

Purpose: Children add sounds to words to make new words.

1. **Say a Word** Begin by telling children they will add a sound to a word to make a new word. Say a word that can have a sound added to the beginning or end to make a new word. Have children say the word with you.

2. **Listen to a Model** Identify the added sound, and tell where it will be added. Model how to say the new word slowly and then fast: *Listen to this word:* hi. *Let's add /d/ to the end of* hi: hi, */d/,* hide. *What's the word? hide.* Have children repeat the new word with you.

3. **Add Sounds** Say another word and have children repeat it. Identify the sound to add, and where to add it. Have children say the new word along with you, slowly and then fast. Repeat the steps with another word and sound, but let children say the new word on their own. Continue with the remaining examples.

Phonological Awareness Routine 5

Delete Sounds

Purpose: Children delete sounds from words to make new words.

1. **Say a Word** Begin by telling children that they will take a sound away from a word to make a new word. Then say a word that can have a sound deleted from the beginning or end to make a new word. Have children say the word with you.

2. **Listen to a Model** Identify the sound to take away, and tell where to take it from (beginning, end). Model how to segment the sound and say the remaining word: *Listen to this word:* tear. *Let's take away the beginning sound /t/ from* tear: /t/ear. *What word is left?* ear. Have children say the new word with you.

4. **Delete Sounds** Say another word and have children repeat it. Identify the sound to take away, and tell where it is taken from (beginning, end). Have children say the sound and new word along with you, and repeat the new word. Repeat, having children segment the sound and say the new word on their own. Continue with the remaining examples.

Phonological Awareness Routine 6

Substitute Sounds

Purpose: Children substitute sounds to make new words.

1. **Listen to a Model** Tell children they will add a sound to a word to make a new word. Use sound boxes and chips to model changing the beginning (middle, ending) sound in a word. Say a word, and repeat it slowly, having children place a chip for each sound in a box: *Listen to this word:* pan. *Say it slowly with me:* /p/ /ă/ /n/. *Now say it again slowly. Put a chip in a sound box every time you say a new sound.* Identify the beginning (middle, ending) sound in the word. Have children say the sound as they point to the sound box: *The beginning sound is* /p/. *Point to the box for /p/.*

2. **Substitute Sounds** Have children change the sound: *Now change the /p/ in* pan *to /v/. What word is it? van* Have children say the word slowly and then quickly as they point to the chips in the sounds boxes. Repeat with remaining words.

Phonological Awareness Routine 7

Count Syllables

Purpose: Children count the number of syllables in words.

1. **Say a Word** Tell (or remind) children that words can have one or many syllables. Give examples. Then tell children that they are going to clap each syllable in a word. Say the first word.

2. **Clap Syllables** Repeat the word slowly, clapping out (or tapping) the syllables. Have children repeat the word as they tap or clap the syllables with you.

3. **Count Syllables** As you say the word again, have children place in a row one block or square of paper for each syllable. Then have them count the syllables in the word by counting the blocks or squares. Continue clapping and counting syllables in other words.

Phonological Awareness Routine 8

Combine Syllables

Purpose: Children combine syllables to make words.

1. **Listen to a Word** Tell (or remind) children that words can have one or many syllables. Give examples. Then tell children that they are going to put syllables together to make a word. Say a word, syllable by syllable.

2. **Blend Syllables** Ask children to blend the syllables to say the word quickly. Say another word, syllable by syllable. Ask children to say the word. Repeat for remaining examples.

Best Practices

Streamline Instructional Language Young children beginning formal instruction, or beginning formal instruction in English, may enter school with little knowledge of the language of instruction. Provide simple, clear explanations or directives that can be easily understood by all children.

Model and Guide Practice Model each task, including questions and responses. Then have children complete the task along with you by echoing or chiming in. Finally, have children complete the task on their own. Listen for errors and provide immediate feedback. See **Corrective Feedback Routine 1** on BP36.

Phonological Awareness Routine 9

Segment Syllables
Purpose: Children divide a word into syllables.

1. **Listen to a Word** Tell children they are going to say each syllable in a word. Say a word.

2. **Segment Syllables** Say the word again, clapping (or tapping) as you say each syllable. Have children tap or clap as they say each syllable with you. Say a new word, and have children clap (or tap) as they say each syllable. Repeat with remaining examples.

Phonological Awareness Routine 10

Delete Syllables
Purpose: Children delete syllables from a word.

1. **Listen to a Word** Tell children they are going to listen to a word and take away one of the syllables. Say the word. Have children repeat the word.

2. **Delete Syllables** Say: *Listen to this word and clap the syllables:* pencil. (pen-cil) *Now say only the first syllable.* (pen) Repeat with remaining examples.

pen-cil

pen

Phonological Awareness Routine 11

Substitute Syllables
Purpose: Children substitute syllables in a word.

1. **Listen to a Word** Tell children they are going to listen to a word and change one of the syllables. Say the word. Have children repeat the word.

2. **Substitute Syllables** Say: *Listen to this word and clap the syllables:* bigger. *Now change the final syllable* ger *to* gest. *What is the new word?* (biggest) Repeat with remaining examples.

Phonological Awareness Routine 12

Hear and Identify Sounds in Words
Purpose: Children say a word slowly and identify the beginning or ending sound.

1. **Listen to Sounds** Show children a picture of an object whose name has three sounds, and whose initial sound is continuous. Under the picture show a three-box grid. Using three chips, demonstrate saying the word slowly, while moving a chip into each corresponding box. Have the children repeat the word while moving each chip, matching each sound with the corresponding sound box.

2. **Identify Initial Sound** Have the children say the word again slowly while pointing to the corresponding sound boxes. Point to the first box and ask: *What sound do you hear at the beginning of _____?* Have the children start saying the word again and identify the initial sound.

3. **Identify Final Sound** Have children say the word again slowly while pointing to the corresponding sound boxes. As they finish saying the word, have them listen to that final sound. Point to that last box and ask: *What sound do you hear at the end of _____?*

/s/   /k/

Research Basis: Explicit instruction in phonics helps children understand the alphabetic principal—that patterns of letters in written words represent the sounds in spoken words. This principal is the foundational skill of reading and lays the framework for children to decode and comprehend successfully as they progress in their reading development. Instruction should be systematic and include six core components: phonemic awareness warm-up, explicit instruction in sound/spelling relationships, practice blending, application to decodable text, dictation and spelling, and word work. (National Reading Panel, 2000; CORE Reading Sourcebook, 2000.) Effective practice also includes immediate feedback on errors and reteaching for those children who need additional support.

Decoding Routine 1

Sound-by-Sound Blending

Purpose: Children listen for the target sound in words, associate the sound and its spelling(s), and blend words with the target sound/spelling.

Step 1 Develop Phonological Awareness

1. **Listen for Sounds** Provide examples of words with the target sound in the initial, final, and medial positions. (Note that some positions may not be applicable with all elements.)

2. **Identify Sounds** Say a series of words, some with the target sound and some without. Have students respond to indicate when they hear the target sound.

Step 2 Introduce Sound/Spelling Card

1. **Name the Picture** Cover all non-target spellings on the **Sound/Spelling Card** before beginning the lesson. Display the picture-only side of the **Sound/Spelling Card**. Name the picture and have children repeat it three times.

2. **Say the Sound** Say the target sound, and have children repeat it three times.

3. **Say the Spellings** Turn the **Sound/Spelling Card** over. Point to and name the spelling(s) for the sound. Have children repeat the spelling three times.

4. **Identify Examples** Give examples of words with the sound/spelling in various positions.

Step 3 Blend Sound-by-Sound

1. **Identify Sound/Spelling(s)** Write the spelling of the first sound in the word. Point to the spelling and say the sound. Point to the spelling again and have children say the sound. (Note that in some cases, such as soft *c* or *g*, the initial sound is unknown until the subsequent vowel is added. Explain to children why you are not saying the sound yet.)

2. **Blend Sounds** Write the spelling of the second sound and repeat the procedure. If the second sound is a vowel, blend the first sound with the vowel sound as you sweep your hand beneath the two spellings. (Note that in CVC*e* words, the sound of the vowel depends on the silent *e*, so write a space and the silent *e* as part of the vowel pattern in this step.)

4. **Continue Identifying and Blending Sounds** Write the spelling of the next sound, and continue the procedure until the word is complete. When you have written the complete word, sweep your hand below the word. Have children blend the sounds and read the word.

6. **Repeat for More Words** Repeat the procedure for other words. Point out variations in the pattern during this step and have children blend several words with each variation.

Decoding Routine 2

Vowel-First Blending

Purpose: Children who have difficulty blending and reading words use vowel-first blending to focus on a word's vowel sound before blending the whole word.

1. **Identify the Vowel Spelling** Write the spelling for the word's vowel sound. Point to the vowel spelling and say the sound. Have children repeat the sound.

2. **Identify Sound/Spelling(s) Before the Vowel** Explain that you will write the letters that come before the vowel sound. Explain that you will remember to say the vowel sound when you blend the word. Write the spelling for the first sound(s) in the word. Point to the spelling and say the sound. Have children repeat the sound.

4. **Blend the Word** Blend the word through the vowel sound, sweeping your hand below the letters. Have children repeat the sounds.

5. **Identify Sound/Spelling(s) After the Vowel** Write any remaining spellings that follow the vowel. Point to each spelling and say the sound. Have children repeat each sound.

6. **Blend the Word** Blend the whole word as you sweep your hand below the letters. Have children blend the sounds and read the word.

a
c
ca →
/a/
/k/
/k/ /a/
cat →
/k/ /a/ /t/

Best Practices

Select a Blending Routine Each blending routine has an important role in instruction. For many children, sound-by-sound blending instruction helps them understand the alphabetic principal that links letter patterns and sounds. If children struggle with sound-by-sound blending, use the vowel-first blending routine to help them identify the vowel sound before they blend each word. Once children have mastered sound-by-sound blending, they should begin to read whole words and further develop structural analysis decoding strategies that focus on word patterns and word structure.

Decoding Routine 3

Continuous Blending

Purpose: Children use this routine as they move on from sound-by-sound blending.

1. **Listen to a Model** Write the word. Sweep your hand below the letters and blend the sounds, stretching out the word. Then say the whole word naturally.

3. **Blend the Whole Word** Have children blend the word in the same way.

c a t

Decoding Routine 4
Read Decodable Text
Purpose: Children engage in repeated readings of materials at their instructional level to decode words in context, develop fluency, and build comprehension.

First Read   Whisper Read

1. **Read Aloud** Have children read the first page aloud quietly. Monitor children as they read, and listen for errors. If children make errors, ask them to try again, or ask if what they read made sense. If children don't self-correct, then provide corrective feedback. (See **Corrective Feedback Routine 2** on BP36.) Then ask children to reread the sentences. If necessary, pronounce non-decodable Story Words for students.

2. **Summarize** After children read, summarize the common errors you identified. Reteach the related **Sound/Spelling Cards**.

3. **Repeat** Have children continue reading. Repeat Steps 1 and 2.

4. **Discuss Decoding Strategies** Have children show you the hard words they found in the selection and tell how they used the **Read New Words** strategy to figure out those words.

Second Read   Partner Reading

1. **Read Aloud** Assign partners. If children struggled in the first read, have those children read aloud with you. Have children take turns reading aloud a sentence or a page. Monitor children as they read, and listen for misread words. If children make errors, ask them to try again, or ask if what they read made sense. If children don't self-correct, then provide corrective feedback. (See **Corrective Feedback Routine 2** on BP36.) Then ask children to reread the sentences.

2. **Summarize** After children read, summarize the common errors you identified. Use the related **Sound/Spelling Cards** to reteach.

Read New Words

1. Look at the letters. Think about the sounds for the letters.
   j
   ge
   gi_
   _dge

2. Look for the word parts you know.
   jump**ing**
   word part

3. Blend the sounds to read the word.
   jumping

4. Check your understanding.
   Is this a word I know?
   Does the word make sense?
   What else can I try?

Sing with Me Phonics Song Book page 6

3. **Repeat** Have partners continue reading. Repeat the procedure.

Third Read   Choral Reading

1. **Read Aloud** Explain that you will be reading together as a group. Read the text aloud with children.

2. **Practice Fluent Reading** Model reading with appropriate pronunciation, rate, and expression. Encourage children to echo two sentences, and listen to assess their phrasing. When children have successfully read the decodable text several times, assess their understanding with appropriate comprehension questions.

Dictation Routine 1

Sound-by-Sound Spelling

Purpose: Children segment sounds to spell words with the target sound/spelling.

1. **Review Sound/Spelling** Review the target **Sound/Spelling Card**. Tell children that they will be spelling words with (identify sound).

2. **Say the Word** Say the first word.

3. **Segment Sounds and Identify Sound/Spellings** Model how to segment the sounds in the word. Have children say the first sound in the word, match the sound to a **Sound/Spelling Card**, and identify the spelling.

5. **Write Spelling** Have children repeat the spelling and then write it. Repeat for the remaining sound/spellings in the word.

6. **Check and Correct Spelling** Write the word. Have children check their spelling. If a word is misspelled, children should circle it and write it correctly.

Dictation Routine 2

Whole Word Spelling

Purpose: Children spell words to write sentences with the target sound/spelling.

1. **Say a Sentence** Have children listen as you read the sentence.

2. **Spell Words** As you read the sentence slowly several times, have children write it. Remind children to use the Word Wall for help with high frequency words.

3. **Check and Correct Spelling** Write the sentence. Have children check their spelling. Children should circle any misspelled words and write them correctly.

Word Work Routine 1

Word Building

Purpose: Children use **Letter Cards**, magnetic boards and tiles, or **Write-On/Wipe-Off Boards** to build and transform words. In the beginning of the year, you may want to limit the number of **Letter Cards** children work with at once.

1. **Build a Word** Say a word and ask children to make or spell it. Children should say the word slowly and place or write the spelling for each sound they hear.

2. **Self- Check** Circulate and check for accuracy. Then display the word and ask children to self-check.

Word Work Routine 2

Word Sorts

Purpose: Children sort words into categories based on sound and/or spelling patterns.

1. **Prepare** Create word sort charts by drawing column lines on blank paper and making copies. Distribute and have children write key words or sort categories at the top of each column.

2. **Sort Words** Provide a word list or have children choose words to sort into the categories. Children write each word in the appropriate column.

3. **Read Words Aloud** Have children read each group of words aloud. Ask them to tell what is the same about the words in each group.

Variations: Children can sort **Phonics Picture Cards** by beginning, ending, or middle sound. They can sort words by sound or by spelling pattern. Once children are familiar with sorting, they can do open sorts. In an open sort, children decide how to group the words.

Corrective Feedback Routine 1

Phonological Awareness

Purpose: Children receive immediate feedback on errors made during phonological awareness instruction.

1. **Correct the Error** Pause the activity when you hear the error. Demonstrate the correct task and/or answer. *Listen to this word:* mine. *Now I'll say the word slowly:* /m// ī/ /n/.

2. **Check Understanding** Have children repeat the task on their own.

Corrective Feedback Routine 2

Phonics

Purpose: Children receive immediate feedback on errors made during phonics instruction.

1. **Correct the Error** Say the correct word: (Point to word.) *The word is mat.* If you are working on letter/sound correspondences, say the correct sound for the target letter: (Point to letter a.) *This says /ă/.* Use the **Sound/Spelling Card** to point out the correct sound/spelling.

2. **Model** Demonstrate how to blend sounds to read the word. Point to the first letter to begin, and loop under each letter as you blend. Say: *I will say the sounds.* /m/ /ă/ /t/. *What's the word? mat.*

3. **Guide Practice** Have children sound out the word with you, going sound by sound. Again, point to the first letter to begin, and loop under each letter as you blend. Say: *Say the sounds with me.* /m/ /ă/ /t/. *What's the word? mat.*

4. **Check Understanding** Have children sound out the word. Then ask them to say the word.

5. **Reinforce Learning** Have children go back and reread the text containing the target word.

Reteaching Routine 1

Phonics/Decoding & Spelling

Purpose: Children review the target sound/spelling, and read and write words with that sound/spelling.

1. **Display the Word** Display a word with the target phonics element or word structure.

2. **Say the Word** Identify the word for students and ask them to repeat it.

3. **Read the Word** Point to the target phonics element or word structure. Identify the target letter(s) and sound(s). Ask children to repeat the target letter(s) and sound(s). Then display more words with the target element. Point to the letter(s) and ask: *What is the letter? What is the sound?*

4. **Scaffold the Spelling** Say the word, and use it in a sentence. Have students repeat the word. Ask them to say the first sound and write its spelling, referring to the **Sound/Spelling Cards** as necessary. Repeat for remaining sounds. Then write the word, and have students compare it to their spelling. If children spelled the word incorrectly, have them circle it and write it correctly.

Reteaching Routine 2

Phonics

Purpose: Children contrast long and short vowel sounds and identify corresponding spelling patterns.

1. **Contrast Long and Short Vowel Sounds** Have children repeat the target sounds. Then read pairs of words with contrasting vowel sounds: cap/cape. *Which one has the long vowel sound for the letter a?* (cape) Repeat with additional words.

2. **Use Word Patterns to Decode Words** Post and read aloud pairs of contrasting words such as tap/tape, cap/cape, pin/pine, hid/hide. Have children use the spelling patterns to identify the sound of the vowel. Ask: *How many vowels are in* hid? (one) *In* hide? (two). *What kind of letter comes after the vowel in* hid? (a consonant) *In* hide? (a consonant). *Are there any other letters in* hid? (no) *In* hide? (yes, one) *Is the vowel long or short in* hid? (short) Repeat for other sets of words.

Best Practices

Self-Correction Opportunities to self-correct are important for English language learners. When children make errors, give them an opportunity to correct themselves by cueing them to the error. For example, point to the word and say: *Something tricked you. Try that again.* If children repeat the error, pause the activity and provide immediate feedback, following the routines at left.

High Frequency Words Routine 1

Introduce High Frequency Words

Purpose: Use the Learn New Words routine on **Sing with Me Phonics Songs** page 7 to introduce high frequency words to children.

1. **Look at the Word** Display the word on the board or whiteboard and have students look at it carefully.

2. **Listen to the Word** Pronounce the word.

3. **Listen and Think** Pronounce the word in a sentence, and explain what it means. Example: *The moon is very far from Earth.* Far *means a long way away.*

4. **Say It** Have students say the word aloud.

5. **Spell It** Have students spell the word chorally.

6. **Say It** Have students say the word again.

7. **Use It in a Sentence** Use the word in sentences. Encourage students to make up sentences and to have a discussion using the word.

Sing with Me Phonics Song Book page 7

High Frequency Words Routine 2

Reteach High Frequency Words

Purpose: Reteach high frequency words.

Group children who did not master the high frequency words. Reteach about five words at a time. Display words on **Word Builder** or in the **Pocket Chart** with **Letter Cards**.

Use **Word Builder** to display words or sentences with the high frequency words.

1. **Look at the Word** Display the word.
   Say: *Look at the word.*

2. **Listen to the Word** Tell children: *Listen to the word.* Then point to the word as you say it. Have students repeat the word.

3. **Discuss Meaning** Use the word in a sentence and discuss its meaning.

4. **Say the Word** Point out known sound/spellings. Have children say the word.

5. **Spell the Word** Have children spell the word as you display each letter. Point to each letter again and have children spell the word.

6. **Write the Word** Then ask children to say the word on their own and write it.

Activities for Daily High Frequency Word Practice

Whole Group Practice: Word Wall

Post Words
After introducing new High Frequency Words, post the **High Frequency Word Cards** cut from the **Practice Masters** (see the Practice Master section of each Teacher's Edition) on a classroom Word Wall. Organize words by the sound of the first letter.

Sound Sort
Children take turns saying a sound, other children name the words on the Wall that start with that sound.

Random Reading
Point to words at random and have children read them aloud. Increase the pace as children gain familiarity with the words.

Word Sorts
Have children sort words by beginning letter, numbers of letters, rhymes, rimes, onsets, vowel sounds, or other categories.

Create Sentences
Post sentences with High Frequency Words. Read them aloud or have volunteers read them. Underline the high frequency word and have children place the matching High Frequency Word card in the Pocket Chart.

I am a mother.	mother
I am his mother.	his
I have a mother.	have
I have a sister, too.	too
My sister has a mother and a sister.	has
Find the mother and her son.	find

Whole Group Games

Word Clues
Spell words from the Word Wall one letter at a time. Pause after placing each letter, give a clue to the word, and see if students can guess the word you are spelling. Children can respond with the correct answer orally, in writing, or by holding up individual **Word Cards**. Continue adding letters and clues until children guess the word. Clues can include number of letters, meanings, antonyms or synonyms, or sentence frames. This activity can be done with **Word Builder** or with **Letter Cards** in a pocket chart.

> It has three letters.
> It begins with *n*.
> It rhymes with *blue.*
> It completes the sentence:
> *I want to buy some
> _____ shoes.*

> *new*

Bop!
Organize children into two teams in front of the Word Wall. Give the first child on each team a cardboard tube. Read a word. The first child to bop the word with the tube spells and reads the word to score a point for that team. Play continues until all children have had a turn.

Build, Mix, Fix
Write or display a High Frequency Word. Have children build the word with **Letter Cards**. After all children have spelled the word, have them mix up their letters. Cover the displayed word and have children fix their word by putting the letters back in the correct order. Uncover the word and have children check and correct their work. Then chant the word's spelling. Continue with remaining words.

Toss and Spell
Use a bean bag and sit in a circle. The first child says a High Frequency Word and its first letter, and tosses the bean bag to next child. That child says the next letter. Tossing continues until word is complete. The child who says last letter also uses the word in an oral sentence.

Wordo

Create Wordo grids boards by drawing a grid like the one below and making copies. Distribute Wordo grids and game chips. (Depending on the number of words you are using, you may want to fill extra spaces with stars to show that they are bonus spaces.) Have children write the target words in random order on the Wordo grid. Shuffle the **High Frequency Word Cards** for the same set of words. As you call out each word, chant the spelling together and have children mark their boards. The first child to mark a 4-word row horizontally, vertically, or diagonally says "Wordo!" and play begins again.

a[ ]d	be	need	next
☆☆☆	to[ ]er	here	come
full	found	t[ ]	☆☆☆
☆☆☆	walk	☆☆☆	w[ ]e

Hopscotch

Make a hopscotch grid on the classroom floor with tape. Choose a Word Wall word and write one letter in each box of the hopscotch and the whole word at the top. Students hop and say each letter to spell the word and the say the word at the end. Repeat for additional words.

Bang!

Place **High Frequency Word Cards** and three or four cards that say Bang! in a container. Have a small group of children pass the container and choose a card. If they can read the word and use it in a sentence, they get to keep the card. If they get a Bang! Card, they return all of their cards to the container.

Clues and Choose

Lay several **High Frequency Word Cards** face up on the floor. Have a small group of children sit in a circle around the cards. One child mentally chooses a word and gives a clue about it: *This word begins with a* b. The child can continue to give clues until another child is the first to touch the correct card. He or she gets to give the next set of clues.

Guess the Missing Word

Write sentences with the target High Frequency Words. Cover up the target word in each with a stick-on note. Work with a small group of children. Have children guess the word with no letters showing. Write 5 reasonable guesses out to the side. Uncover the onset and cross out any guesses that are eliminated. Make additional guesses if necessary. Show the whole word and help children confirm which guess makes sense and has the right letters.

Memory or Matching

Create two of each target **High Frequency Word Card** (see the Practice Master section of each Teacher's Edition). Partners lay the cards face down and take turns turning up two cards. If the cards match, the child keeps the cards. If the cards don't match, the child turns the cards face down again and play continues. When all cards are matched up the child with the most pairs wins.

Word Hunt

Partners or small groups find words from the list in their reading selections or in print around the school or classroom.

Flashcard Routine

Use **High Frequency Word Cards** as flashcards. Show each card and have children read the word. If children can read the word easily the card goes in their pile. If they have trouble you keep the card. Review the tricky words in your pile at the end of the activity. (This game can be played one-on-one, with small groups, or as a whole group.)

Reading

Research Basis: Research shows that close reading is "at the heart of understanding and enjoying complex works of literature." (Common Core State Standards, 2010, page 3). The practice of close reading includes four fundamental characteristics (Beers & Probst, 2012; Coleman, 2011; Frey et al., 2012; Hinchman & Moore, in press; Lapp et al., 2012)—short, rigorous texts, multiple readings of target texts, academic discussion, and a focus on text evidence.

Close Reading Routine

Purpose: Students engage in attentive reading of complex literature and informational text to gain confidence as readers who can actively figure out key ideas and details, appreciate craft, and integrate ideas and knowledge.

Students also annotate texts. Annotation is a critical step in analyzing text evidence, key ideas, details, and trapping understanding of the text. Annotated texts should be used to generate writing about the texts and the Big Question throughout the unit. Before you begin the lesson, be sure to have highlighters and markers available to record annotations and answers.

1. **Read for understanding.** The purpose of the first reading is to help students form initial understandings of the key ideas and details in the text.

   - Download the appropriate **Display** of the complex text and the **Practice Master** files from **NGReach.com**. (The complex text appears on the **Display** as well as on the first **Practice Master** for each unit.) Distribute the corresponding printed **Practice Masters**.

   - Project the **Display** on a board or on paper.

   - Explain that you will read aloud an excerpt, or section, from a longer work of fiction or nonfiction. Encourage students to follow along as you read the complex text aloud.

   - After you have read the selection, ask a volunteer to identify the genre. Have students use a thumbs-up to indicate whether they agree or disagree. Then invite other volunteers to identify the text characteristics that helped them identify the genre.

   - Project the second page of the **Practice Master**. Read aloud item 1 and ask students to discuss with a partner. Then ask volunteers to share their responses with the class. Help students compose a group topic statement by leading them through two steps:

     1. Identify the topic: *The topic is _____.*
     2. Compose a topic-plus-comment: *This text mostly tells about _____ and (how/when) _____.*

   - Record the group topic statement on the projected **Practice Master** as students write it on their **Practice Masters**.

Complex Text Display located on NGReach.com

2. **Reread, analyze, and annotate.** The purpose of the second reading is to help students deepen their understandings of (a) the author's meaning and (b) the author's use of craft and structure to communicate meaning.

   • Read items 2 and 3 aloud, one part at a time. Prompt students to reread the Complex Text, focusing on identifying text evidence that will help them answer the questions. Have students who need extra support take turns rereading the text aloud with their partner.

   • Elicit answers from students. Model how to annotate the text as students answer.

     —Circle key words and/or words that confuse students.

     —Underline key or confusing phrases or sentences.

     —Write questions and comments in the margins.

     —Use exclamations for things that surprise students.

   • As students grow more accustomed to the routine, allow students time to annotate their texts during their partner discussions. Then ask for volunteers to share their annotations.

3. **Connect to the Big Question.**

   • Read the Big Question and then reread the text aloud, asking students to think about how the text relates to the Big Question as you read.

   • Ask partners to discuss how the text helps them answer the Big Question. Remind students to cite evidence from the text as they discuss. Have students use what they discussed with their partners to answer item 4 on the **Practice Master**.

4. **Reread and wrap-up.** As you continue through the unit, support students as they connect the complex text to other texts in the unit. As part of the Unit Wrap-Up lesson, do the following:

   • Have students read the text independently, using the **Practice Master**.

   • To encourage divergent answers, ask partners to compare the complex text to the other readings in the unit. Remind students to cite evidence from the text as they discuss it.

Complex Text Practice Master located on NGReach.com

Research Basis: When readers engage with a text more actively, they comprehend it more deeply (Harvey, 2000). Marking a text is one method for facilitating this deeper, more active comprehension. Teachers can more effectively model abstract thinking processes by annotating as they think aloud. Students can then have focused opportunities to follow the teacher model by adding their own highlights and making their own notes about questions, important parts, opinions, connections, and so on. Annotating texts is a strategy that not only supports retention and synthesis of information, but can also be used by teachers to provide insights into students' thinking (Harvey, et al. 1996).

Mark-Up Text Routine

Purpose: Having students interact with text reinforces their comprehension and acquisition of reading skills.

1. **Preview the text.** Download the appropriate **Mark-Up Model** file from NGReach.com.

   - If you are working on an interactive whiteboard, ensure that the appropriate interactive whiteboard software is installed on your computer. Then download the Notebook file for a SMART™ board or Flipchart file for a Promethean board.
   - If you use a computer and projector, you can project the PDF file onto a board or paper where students can mark up the text.
   - If you use an overhead projector, copy the PDF file pages onto acetate to create transparencies. Project them onto a board or paper for students to mark.
   - Preview the lesson to see what tools you will need for the **Mark-Up Model**. For example, on an interactive whiteboard, make sure that the highlighters are set to the colors needed for the close reading.

2. **Read aloud the Mark-Up Model.** Display the lesson and read the selection text aloud.

3. **Conduct the close reading.** Involve students in a variety of ways:

   - Assign a different student to mark each step of the lesson.
   - Have one set of partners mark up one screen and then have different partners mark the next.
   - Assign highlighter colors to different students. Have the class offer answers while the student with the appropriate color makes the marks.
   - Have the student marking the text choose the next student to mark the text.

   Regularly remind the class to copy the marks onto their **Practice Masters** to serve as a model for their independent work.

Mark-Up Text Routine, continued

4. **Have students mark the Mark-Up Reading.** Have students read the remaining **Mark-Up Reading** on the **Practice Masters** independently. Then have them work with partners to follow the model and mark up the reading.

5. **Close the Mark-Up Model file.** If you are using the Notebook or Flipchart file, choose how to close the file.

   • To save the marks the students made during the lesson, save the file with a different name.

   • Close the file without saving to keep an unmarked version of the file.

   If you need a clean file for future lessons, download it from **NGReach.com**.

6. **Review students' notes.** Look through the **Mark-Up Reading** to determine if students comprehend the skill. If students are highlighting too much text or the wrong text, offer the **Reteaching Masters** that align with the skill.

   For more technical assistance, see the user guide on **NGReach.com**.

Find **Mark-Up Reading** Masters and a technology guide here.

Find **Mark-Up Model** files and an interactive whiteboard user guide here.

Practice Master

Reading

Research Basis: Research has shown that repeated reading of texts at an appropriate instructional level can increase reading fluency for students who struggle with reading (Chard et al. 2002; Dowhower 1987; Kuhn & Stahl 2003; O'Shea et al. 1985; Samuels 1979), and that it can enhance comprehension (Daly & Martens 1994; Dowhower 1987; Freeland et al. 2000).

Fluency Routine 1

Choral or Echo Reading/Marking the Text

1. **Select a passage.** Choose an appropriate text and provide copies for students. Keep passages short and use a variety of texts: narrative, expository, poems, songs, student writing. Choose text that is motivating.
2. **Provide a model.** Have students listen to a fluent reading of the text. This can be read aloud by the teacher or a recorded version. Use the fluency models provided on the selection recordings audio CD or in MP3 format at **NGReach.com**.
3. **Have students mark the text.** As they listen to the model, have students mark the reader's phrasing (/ for a short pause; // for a longer pause) or intonation (rising or falling inflections) on a copy of the text.
4. **Have students read the text.** Students can echo or choral read the text with you, following markings for phrasing and intonation. Coach phrasing and intonation as needed.
5. **Have students do repeated readings.** Have partners practice reading the same text in its unmarked version until they can read it fluently.

Fluency Routine 2

Paired Reading

1. **Select a passage.** Choose an appropriate text and provide copies for participants. Paired reading works best with a selection that contains strong emotions.
2. **Establish pairs.** Pairs can be peer-to-peer or student-adult groupings. Note that performance tends to be better when students read aloud to an adult as opposed to a peer.
3. **Read alternate sentences.** Have partners alternate reading sentences, checking each other's readings as they go.
4. **Monitor fluency.** Encourage students to attend to prosody (phrasing, expression, and intonation).

Fluency Routine 3

Recording and Tracking ▮ Comprehension Coach

1. **Read and record.** Have students use the Comprehension Coach to record and analyze their readings.
2. **Re-record as needed.** Encourage students to repeat their recording until they are satisfied with their reading and rate.
3. **Note progress.** Have students note their accuracy and rate as measured by the Comprehension Coach. They should see increases in both rate and accuracy over time.

Fluency Routine 4

Timed Reading ▮ Comprehension Coach

Use this technique to help students develop an appropriate reading rate with good accuracy. Research suggests this technique is highly motivational if students have a clear target for words read correct per minute (WCPM) and then chart their progress.

1. **Read and record.** Have students use the Comprehension Coach to record their readings. The Comprehension Coach encourages students to read carefully and thoughtfully, repairing miscues, thinking about vocabulary, and actively comprehending.

2. **Graph results.** Have students record their WCPM on a graph or chart each time they use the Comprehension Coach.

Reading Fluency Graph

Research Basis: Research demonstrates the importance of teachers providing support for decoding and comprehension as children read text at their instructional level. Working with leveled text helps children negotiate increasingly difficult texts. (Pinnell & Fountas 1996)

In addition, learning to make connections through reading and discussion further enhances and expands children's growing understanding of the world and of specific content areas. By comparing, contrasting, and integrating information from various sources on a common concept, children learn to evaluate information and information sources as well as learn to adjust their thinking and understanding based on continuing input.

Leveled Reading Routine 1

Purpose: Guide and support children as they read texts at their instructional reading level and to provide children with varying viewpoints on a wide range of subject areas.

Introduce

1. **Choose and assign books.** Review the Teaching Resources provided for each Unit. Select eight books for each child to read over the course of the four-week unit. A wide range of difficulty levels (Fountas & Pinnell) are provided as well as various approaches to the unit concept to help match student interest.

2. **Introduce books.** Work with children reading the same book to introduce the book. Use the Teaching Resources on LR1-LR12 for specific instruction tailored to each book. Providing time for previewing and preparing to read, allows children time to activate their prior knowledge of the topic and to identify possible challenges to their reading.

3. **Introduce story words.** Preview any story words that are listed for each book. Since children will be reading at their instructional levels, pre-teaching story-specific words will help ensure their understanding of the text as a whole.

4. **Establish a Weekly Reading Plan for Children.** Establish a schedule children will follow throughout the year. Avoiding any confusion about procedure will allow children to concentrate completely on their reading.

   - DAY 1: Read book 1 independently
   - DAY 2: Reread book 1 with a partner who has read the same book. Discuss the book and complete the graphic organizer together.
   - DAY 3: Read book 2 independently.
   - DAY 4: Reread book 2 with a partner who has read the same book. Discuss the book and complete the graphic organizer together.
   - DAY 5: Discuss books in small group with children who have read different books.

Leveled Reading Routine 2

Read and Integrate Ideas

1. **Have children read independently.** Allow time for children to read each book independently to acquaint themselves with the text. They can read silently, whisper read, or read aloud. As they read, circulate and have individuals read selected passages aloud for you. Encourage children to self-correct by asking questions such as: *Did that make sense? You said_____. Does that sound right?*

2. **Have homogenous pairs reread and discuss.** Pair children who have read the same book, and have them reread the book together. Encourage children to read pages to each other. Remind children to listen respectfully as their partner reads.

   After reading, have children discuss what they have read and use the graphic organizers provided on LR13-LR15 for the book to help them organize their ideas and solidify understanding.

3. **Monitor partner's discussions.** As partners discuss their book, prompt them to show you where in the book they gathered the information to complete their graphic organizers. Use the build comprehension questions in the **Teaching Resources** on LR1-LR12 to check for understanding. In addition, encourage children to point out information in the text that stood out for them such as sections they found very interesting, confusing, or that contradicts or confirms their prior understandings of the concepts.

4. **Have children self-assess.** Distribute the **Reader Reflections Assessment Master** on LR19. Have children evaluate their ability to read on their own. Point out that good readers always monitor their own reading and know when they understand what they are reading and when they don't.

5. **Provide writing options**. Have each child complete a writing option from the **Teaching Resources** from LR1-LR12. Allowing children a variety of ways to convey their understanding will help solidify their knowledge and allow you different methods of gauging their understanding.

Leveled Reading Routine 3

Connect Across Texts

6. **Form heterogeneous discussion groups**. Group children of mixed ability levels into clusters of four, representing different combinations of books. This will allow children to access the books they did not or could not read. In addition, children will be comparing ideas, understandings, and reactions as well information.

7. **Introduce the activity.** Write the Big Question. Have children use the designated **Practice Master** to record notes or draw a picture to help them remember what their classmates say about their books. Children presenting summaries benefit from the exercise of condensing the information they learned and presenting key points. Children listening to a summary can add the knowledge to their growing understanding of the concept at as well as make decisions about how the new knowledge fits into their view of the concept. Assessment tools are provided for noting and recording children's ability to participate and learn from concept-based discussions.

Leveled Reading Routine 4

Conduct Conferences

8. **Assess reading.** Have each child read aloud from his or her book.

   - Listen for miscues and assess fluency using the **Oral Reading Assessments.**
   - Ascertain children's understanding of the connection between the book and the Big Question for the unit.
   - Have children restate the Big Question.
   - Have children point out examples in their books.
   - Encourage children to respond in their own words.
   - Use **Reading Strategy Rubrics** to assess the student's use of the reading strategies.

9. **Assess writing.** Use each student's response to the chosen writing option to assess their writing and further asses their understanding of the content. Pay particular attention to the grammar, spelling, and writing skills being addressed in the daily lessons to see if children are transferring these skills to all of their writing. Review these skills with children when necessary.

10. **Plan intervention or acceleration.** Plan for reteaching (**Reteaching Masters**) or acceleration based on the outcome of the book conference. Use the Recommended Books on page LR12 to guide children in choosing further books to read.

Research Basis: Research confirms the importance of all students being exposed to grade-level text for concept and vocabulary development. These routines provide support for students who are not yet able to read grade-level selections on their own. Listening to a recording of the selection provides the most support.

Echo reading has been shown to contribute to the reading growth of low-achieving readers (Mathes et al 2001). Echo reading, choral reading, and paired or partner reading provide increasingly lower levels of support and encourage students to develop toward independent reading of grade-level text. In addition, the added comprehension focus that teachers provide before, during, and after reading provide additional opportunity to rehearse reading skills and strategies. Observe students as they read, with the goal of providing the lowest level of support that will enable students to access the text being read.

Learning Station Routine 1

Listening Center

1. **Choose a space.** A good space is a quiet corner, where students using the center will not be distracted or disturb others.

2. **Gather resources.** Resources can include CD players, headphones, books recorded onto a computer, audio CD, or other electronic device, and one or more copies of books students will listen to. You may also want to provide response sheets, pencils and markers, and baskets to hold books and materials.

3. **Assign text.** Students can listen to books on their own or in groups, depending on interest and reading level. Encourage students to follow along in the text as they listen.

4. **Provide ways to respond.** Have students illustrate their favorite part of the story, complete a response sheet, write about what they heard, or respond in some other way.

Learning Station Routine 2

Echo Reading

1. **Select a text.** The text can be a complete selection or a portion of text. Passages for echo reading are best when they are short and motivating for students.

2. **Select students.** Echo reading can be used with a small group or an individual student. It is most appropriate for students who are not yet able to process the text on their own but can track the print as you read aloud and as they repeat the sentences after you.

3. **Have students listen and repeat.** The teacher reads a sentence aloud, modeling good intonation and rhythm. Students then read the sentence aloud following the teacher's model. Encourage students to track the print as they listen and repeat.

4. **Correct errors.** The teacher provides immediate feedback to correct student mistakes.

5. **Have students reread.** After reading aloud with the teacher, have students reread the text in pairs until they can read it fluently.

Learning Station Routine 3

Choral Reading

1. **Select a text.** The text can be a complete selection or a portion of a text. Passages for choral reading are best when they are short and motivating for students. Predictable text works well for choral reading.

2. **Select students.** Choral reading is most appropriate for students who are hesitant to read aloud independently but can join in reading the text in unison with other students with the teacher leading. Choral reading helps build students' motivation, confidence, and fluency.

3. **Read the text aloud first.** Model fluent reading and good intonation.

4. **Read the text in unison with students.** Have all students in the group read the passage aloud in unison with you. Encourage them to use good intonation.

5. **Have students reread.** After reading with the teacher, have students reread the text in pairs until they can read it fluently.

Learning Station Routine 4

Paired Reading

1. **Select a text or portion of text.** Passages for paired reading are best when they include strong emotions or dialogue.

2. **Pair students.** You may wish to pair students of similar reading ability, or pair a higher level reader with a lower level reader.

3. **Explain the procedure.** Tell students if you want them to:
   - Read the passage aloud in unison.
   - Take turns with each person reading a sentence, paragraph, or page.
   - Have one student listen while the other reads.

4. **Model error correction.** Demonstrate how students should support each other by rereading misread words, and asking for and giving help when needed.

5. **Encourage fluent reading.** Partners should practice good prosody (phrasing, expression, and intonation) as they read.

6. **Encourage discussion.** Have the reader pause at the end of a paragraph of section. The listener can then summarize or make a connection. Pairs can ask each other questions about what was read, such as:
   - *What was your favorite part of the story?*
   - *What was your page about?*
   - *Were there any parts that were hard to read?*

Research Basis: Within a good instructional program, independent reading can help students develop fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and background knowledge. However, reading independently is not a substitute for key skill instruction in decoding, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. Teachers can support students as independent readers by assisting with book selection and encouraging students to share information about what they have read (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998).

Independent Reading Routine

Purpose: Support students in making effective and successful use of independent reading time.

1. **Select topics.** Provide a rich collection of books to choose from. Books may include known texts, classroom favorites, or picture books. Support students in selecting books of interest for independent reading. Discussing books in advance with individual students or groups can motivate readers and help them determine what they want to read. Use the Leveled Reading Books at a Glance on LR1 and the Recommended Books list on LR12 of every Teacher's Edition for book suggestions.

2. **Share.** Bring students together to share their reading experiences. Students who have read different books can summarize what they read, and share what they found most interesting in their reading. Students who have read the same or similar books can share what they have learned about the topic and what more they would like to learn.

3. **Extend.** Encourage students to extend their understanding of the book with an activity such as one of the following:
   - Draw a picture about something related to the book.
   - Create a short play or pantomime based on the book.

Use the **Leveled Book Finder** to find more books.

Vocabulary

Research Basis: Decades of research have confirmed the important role that vocabulary plays in reading comprehension and in students' overall academic success (Hiebert & Kamil 2005). Immersing students in rich and varied language experiences permits them to learn words through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In this view of robust, explicit instruction, vocabulary is introduced using consistent, predictable routines (Beck et al. 2002).

Vocabulary Routine 1

Introduce the Words

Purpose: Students engage in learning concepts and acquire background knowledge as they learn new key words and develop a deeper understanding of the words.

1. **Pronounce the word.**   Model the pronunciation of the key word and point to the accompanying picture; have students pronounce the word.

2. **Rate the word.**   Have children give a thumbs up if they know the word or a thumbs down if they do not.

   I know the word.   **I don't know the word.**

   Ask: *What do you know about this word?* Encourage students to share their ideas about the word.

3. **Define the word.**
   Use a student-friendly definition to explain the meaning. (Definitions are provided in the Picture Dictionary at the back of the Anthology.)

4. **Elaborate.**   Generate discussion of the word. Use one or more of the following strategies:
   - Relate the word to your personal experience.
   - Encourage students to use the word as they talk about their own experience.
   - Using questions or comments, motivate students to engage in discussion about the word. Extended discussion will help all students understand the word and how it is used.
   - Point out word parts and spelling patterns that will help students recognize the word.
   - Challenge students to connect the word across content areas.
   - Post the words on the Word Wall.

• time

Seven o'clock is the **time** we wake up.

Post the words on a word wall.
   - Reserve a section of the classroom wall or bulletin board for the Word Wall.
   - As new vocabulary is introduced, write the words on cards and add them to the wall. Words can be arranged in random order, or alphabetically, by similar topic, or in other ways as you choose.
   - Tell students that they will add definitions, sentences, drawings, and more to the word wall as they learn more about each word.
   - Periodically have students read the Word Wall or portions of it chorally. Encourage students to tell about how they have used the words in class or outside of school.

Vocabulary Routine 2

Expand Word Knowledge

Purpose: Students use graphic organizers, illustrations, and writing to expand their knowledge of the meaning and usage of new words.

1. **Form pairs.** Explain that each pair will become experts on one vocabulary word.

2. **Display the graphic organizer.** Use the graphic organizer or three-dimensional graphic organizer specified in the Teacher's Edition lesson, or another graphic organizer from the examples in Vocabulary Routine 4.

3. **Select a key word.** Display the vocabulary word and model for students how to locate information about the word and complete the graphic organizer.
   - Find the word in the Picture Dictionary in the Anthology or in another dictionary and read the information about the word.
   - Write the word.
   - Add a definition, context sentence, and picture.

Word home	Picture
Word in Context My home is at 123 Main Street.	Definition a place to live

4-Corner Vocabulary

4. **Assign key words.** Assign a word to each student pair and have them create a similar graphic organizer for their word.

Have children add words to **My Vocabulary Notebook.**

Vocabulary, continued

Vocabulary Routine 3

Share Word Knowledge

Purpose: Students deepen word knowledge by sharing their deeper understandings of words for which they have become class experts.

1. **Form pairs.** Pair each student with a partner who studied a different vocabulary word for Vocabulary Routine 2 (Expand Word Knowledge).

2. **Share.** Partners take turns reading to each other their graphic organizers from Vocabulary Routine 2.

3. **Discuss.** Partners discuss and create sentences using both vocabulary words. If needed give students sentence starters.

4. **Write.** Students write their sentences in their journals and draw a line under each vocabulary word.

5. **Repeat.** Repeat steps 1–4 above until each student has a journal entry for each vocabulary word.

Word Map

> Student 1: My word is food.
>
> Student 2: The word I studied is energy.
>
> Student 1: Let's make a sentence using both words.
>
> Student 2: How about, "Food gives me energy."

Vocabulary Routine 4

Review, Extend, or Reteach Vocabulary

Purpose: Provide instruction and practice with vocabulary words and other important words used in classroom directions and discussion.

1. **Display the word.** Write the word on the board or chart paper.

2. **Display the graphic organizer.** Use the graphic organizer specified in the Teacher's Edition or select another graphic organizer from those shown below.

3. **Model.** Create the graphic organizer.

4. **Involve students.** Talk with children about the word in a large or small group. Add information about the word to the graphic organizer. Information can include a picture, examples and non-examples. Have children use the graphic organizers to talk about the word and concept.

Three-Dimensional Graphic Organizers

Portrait

Window Graphic

Upright

Fold-Up Tab

Three-Quarter Book

Vocabulary, continued

Other Graphic Organizers

Word Web

Word Web of Examples

Semantic Web

Word Map

Word	Definition	My Example
strategy	a plan	my football team's plan to win

Example Chart

Vocabulary Routine 5

Text-Talk Read Aloud

Purpose: The text-talk method teaches text-specific vocabulary after a selection has been read aloud to students.

1. **Display the key words.**

2. **Read aloud.** As you read, pause to provide a short explanation of each key word as you come to it. For example, if you are teaching the word *because* you might say: *You can use the word* because *when you are giving a reason for something. For example, I hope I catch the bus today after school, because I don't want to be late.*

3. **Elaborate meanings.** After reading, activate prior knowledge: *What do you know about this word?* Explain the meanings of the key words more fully, using the steps of Vocabulary Routine 1.

4. **Discuss.** Create discussion prompts that encourage students to use the words together. For example, for the word *because,* you may display the following frame and ask students to use the word as they tell about an upcoming weekend activity, holiday, or school event.

   I hope _____ because _____ .

5. **Extend.** Encourage students to think about and use the key words at other times in classroom discussion, and in their lives beyond the classroom. Invite them to tell about how they have used the target words outside of class and to tell about how they have heard friends and family use the target words.

> Farfallina stayed on the ground <u>because</u> Marcel couldn't climb. In other words, the <u>reason</u> was to allow Marcel to find her.

Farfallina wanted to play.
"I'll hide and you find me," she said.
Farfallina hid under a fern close to the ground because she knew that Marcel couldn't climb.

8

"Now I'll hide," said Marcel when he found her.
And he hid right behind the tree because he knew that Farfallina moved slowly.

9

Vocabulary Routine 6

Reteaching Vocabulary

Purpose: Review or reteach vocabulary that has been previously introduced.

1. **Form groups.** Group students who did not master vocabulary, or who will benefit from reviewing the words. Follow the following steps for each word to be retaught or reviewed.

2. **Focus on the key word.** Point out the word on the Picture Dictionary page of the Anthology.

3. **Pronounce the word.** Say the word and have students repeat it after you.

4. **Teach the meaning.** Read the definition of the word, and then elaborate the meaning using different words and giving additional examples. For example, for the phrase *extended family* you might say: *Extended family are people like aunts, cousins, and grandparents. Extended family members might live nearby or far away. Your parents, brothers, and sisters are not extended family members.*

5. **Make connections.** Discuss with students when they might use the word. Model an example. Then have students use Think, Pair, Share (PD61) to make connections.

6. W**rite and remember.** Have students record each word on a separate page in their journals. Ask them what they note about the word's sounds and spelling. Then have them do one or more of the following:

   - Make a Word Map to help them remember the word. (See Word Map, page PD50).
   - Make a drawing to illustrate the word's meaning.
   - Write a definition.
   - Write a context sentence.
   - Write the translation of the word in their home language. Go to **NGReach.com** to find translations of vocabulary words in seven languages.

Picture Dictionary in Student Anthology

Activities for Daily Vocabulary Practice

Purpose: These routines can be used to give students additional experience in a variety of contexts with vocabulary introduced during lessons.

Whole Group Games

Vocabulary Bingo

1. **Distribute cards.** Hand out Bingo cards. *(Go to **NGReach.com** to access templates).*

2. **Fill out cards.** Have students write the key words in random order on the card.

3. **Give clues.** Provide oral clues or questions about the key words. For example, for the word *produce* you might say: *This word means to make or give.*

4. **Mark the words.** Have students place a marker on each word as they identify it.

5. **Bingo!** When a student has a complete row of markers, he or she calls, "Bingo." Ask the student to review his or her answers and pair answers with the clues.

Name _____ Date _____

Vocabulary: Apply Word Knowledge

Vocabulary Bingo

1. Write one Key Word in each leaf.
2. Listen to the clues. Find the Key Word and use a marker to cover it.
3. Say "Bingo" when you have four markers in a row.

Students should write a Key Word on each leaf.

For use with TE p. T165b   3.6   Unit 3 | Life in the Soil

Stump the Expert

1. **Name the expert.** Designate one student to be the expert.

2. **Challenge the expert.** Another student (the stumper) presents a definition. The expert has 10 seconds to produce the term.

3. **Continue the challenges.** If the expert responds accurately, the next stumper offers a challenge. This continues until the expert is stumped or answers a set number of challenges and earns applause.

4. **Name a new expert.** The student who stumps the expert becomes the new expert.

Whole Group Activities

Yes or No?

1. **Ask questions.** Pose yes or no questions using two vocabulary words. You or your students can make up the questions. For example, the following questions might be asked using words to do with plants: *Do* roots *grow in the* soil? *Are* blossoms *a* characteristic *of rose plants?*

2. **Students respond.** Students can respond orally, in writing, or they can use thumbs up or thumbs down. Have students compare responses and pair their answers with the clue. Remind students to use complete sentences and restate the question. For example: *Yes, roots grow in the soil.*

Around the World

1. **Choose a traveler.** A student designated as the traveler moves from his or her seat to stand by a neighboring student, the challenger.

2. **Provide a definition.** The teacher gives the traveler and the challenger a definition; whoever responds first with the correct word becomes the new traveler and challenges a new student.

3. **Continue the challenge.** A traveler who continues to respond first and returns to his or her own seat has gone "around the world."

Rivet

1. **Select a key word.** For this variation of the game Hangman, choose a key word.

2. **Write a blank for each letter.** On the board, write a blank for each letter of the word. For example, for *ecosystem,* write _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ .

3. **Fill in letters one by one.** Fill in the blanks one letter at a time: e c o _ _ _ _ _ _ .

4. **Have students guess the word.** Pause briefly after you write each letter. Encourage the class to guess the word.

5. **Complete the word.** When someone identifies the word correctly, have that student fill in the remaining blanks.

Vocabulary, continued

Small Group Games

Picture It

1. **Write the words.** Display several vocabulary words.

2. **Group students.** Arrange students in small groups, each with chart paper and a marker.

3. **Teams plan.** Have each group:
   - Choose a key word (without telling what the word is)
   - Decide how they can show the word's meaning in a drawing
   - Choose one member of the group who will create the drawing.

4. **Students create drawings.** Call on a group, and allow the drawer 15 to 30 seconds to complete the picture.

5. **Students identify the word.** Have other groups talk quietly about the picture. When they agree on the key word, they designate one member to raise his or her hand and give their answer.

6. **Award points.** When a group guesses the key word correctly, award 1 point to the group and have that group's drawer take the next turn. Continue until one group has collected 3 points.

Small Group Activities

Multiple Key Word Skit

1. **Group students.** Organize students in small groups and give each group a list of five or more vocabulary words.

2. **Brainstorm.** Allow time for groups to brainstorm how the words relate to each other and to create a skit with dialogue that includes all the words.

3. **Discuss.** After students present their skits, discuss with them which skit was most original, most humorous, or used the words most accurately.

Vocabulary Concentration

1. **Prepare pairs of cards.** Write each key word on two cards or slips of paper.

2. **Spread the cards.** Turn the cards over and spread them randomly on a table.

3. **Students look for matches.** Students take turns turning over two cards. When a student turns over two cards that have same word, he or she keeps the cards.

4. **The winner!** The student with the most cards is the winner.

Word Sorts

1. **Students write words.** Have students write the words on index cards or strips of paper, one word per card or strip.

2. **Establish categories.** For a closed sort, provide the category of how the words should be sorted, such as:
   - Related meanings or concepts
   - Synonyms
   - Part of speech
   - Connotation
   - Formal or informal
   - Spelling patterns
   - Words with multiple meanings
   - Words with Spanish cognates

   For an open sort, have students work together to determine the sort categories.

3. **Explain sorts.** When students have sorted the words, have them explain their sorts. Have them create a chart or web to record the word relationships they found.

4. **Sort again.** Have students sort the words again using different categories. Have them record the information in a graphic organizer.

Fruit	Vegetable
banana	lettuce
apple	onion
orange	corn

Round	Not Round
tomato	milk
apple	banana
onion	rice
orange	bread
	beans
	corn
	cheese

Word Poems

1. **Concrete Poems.** Students draw a meaningful shape or object and write words along the outline of the shape, so words look like the physical shape. For example, a student may draw a volcano and along the outline write: *lava, magma, cone, flow, ash, erupt.*

2. **Diamante Poems.** Diamante Poems are 7 lines long. To begin, have students think of two words that are opposites (antonyms).
   - Line 1: Write a noun
   - Line 2: Add two adjectives that describe line 1
   - Line 3: Add three action verbs that relate to line 1
   - Line 4: Add two nouns that relate to line 1, and two nouns that relate to line 7
   - Line 5: Add three action verbs that relate to line 7
   - Line 6: Add two adjectives that describe line 7
   - Line 7: Write a noun that is the opposite of or contrasts with line 1

3. **Cinquain Poems.** Cinquain poems have different patterns. Have students complete the pattern below with a key word.
   - Line 1: A noun
   - Line 2: Two adjectives
   - Line 3: Three related words ending in –ing
   - Line 4: A related phrase
   - Line 5: Another word for the noun

Research: Research shows that expert writers write longer strings of words before stopping to think than less skilled writers. Power writing practice helps students learn to get their words down on paper quickly. It also helps them overcome the tendency to stall before starting to write (Fisher & Frey 2007). While power writing can focus on any word or concept, this routine is most effective when key words and ideas relate to the topic or theme of a unit.

Writing Routine 1

Power Writing

Purpose: Develop students' writing fluency; provide an opportunity for students to record their progress in writing fluency.

1. **Display a word or picture.** Choose a word or picture that will be motivating for students to write about. Invite them to think about the word or picture and what they know about the word or concept. Activate prior knowledge or experiences: *What do you think of when you hear/see_____?*

2. **Set the timer.** The timer is usually set for one minute. In some cases you may want to vary the amount of time.

3. **Have students write.** Ask students to write as much as they can, as well as they can in one minute.

4. **Check work.** Have students check their spelling and grammar and circle any mistakes.

5. **Count words.** Have students count the number of words they wrote and record the number on their papers.

6. **Repeat the procedure.** If time allows, have students create more than one passage. Repeat steps 2–5 one or two times.

7. **Record results.** Have students record their best result and create a writing fluency graph. Over time, the graph will show students' growth in fluency and help motivate their progress as writers.

8. **Adjust the time.** To develop fluency further, vary the amount of writing time from 30 seconds to two minutes or more in separate Power Writing sessions.

Writing Fluency Graph

Number of Words vs. Date

Date	Number of Words
9/10	12.5
10/6	20
11/15	17.5
12/15	25
1/20	27.5

Best Practices

Differentiate Routines When doing the Power Writing each day, provide differentiated support for students of different levels. Allow below level students to write a list of single words. Say: *Write all the words you know.* On-level students can write one or two sentences. Challenge above level students to write several sentences in a paragraph.

Writing Routine 2

Modeled Writing

Purpose: Model the process of composing to help students learn the writing process, writing strategies and writer's craft.

1. **Model thinking about the first sentence.** Think aloud as you decide what you will include in your first sentence.

2. **Write the first sentence.** Read aloud what you have written.

3. **Continue thinking aloud as you write.** Think aloud to model how you plan and write additional sentences.

4. **Involve students.** Encourage students to to help write additional sentences. Discuss their ideas with them, and add the new ideas to the writing as appropriate.

Think Aloud	Write
I want to tell about some new puppies that were born last week. I'll write a news article to tell about the puppies. I'll begin by telling the most important facts.	Last week, six new puppies were born on Davis Street.
Next I'll tell what the puppies looked like.	The puppies were brown and white and had soft fur. Their eyes were closed.
What else do you think people will want to know about the puppies?	They were born under the porch of the Marino's house. Mrs. Marino fixed a bed for the puppies and their mother in the hall.

Puppies Born

Last week, six new puppies were born on Davis Street. The puppies were brown and white and had soft fur. Their eyes were closed. They were born under the porch at the Marino's house. Mrs. Marino fixed a bed for the puppies and their mother in the hall. Mrs. Marino said she would look for new homes for the puppies in a few weeks.

Research: Expert writers make many decisions as they write. Students may not understand all of the decisions involved. Interactive writing makes these decisions part of the conversation between teacher and students. It also demonstrates for students how expert writers think about word choice and constantly review to maintain syntax and meaning as they write (Fisher & Frey 2007).

Writing Routine 3

Interactive Writing

Purpose: Scaffold students to turn collaborative oral composition into written form.

1. **Establish a purpose.** Discuss with students the purpose and audience you will be writing for. For example: *Let's write a letter to Mayor Wheeler to thank her for visiting our class last week.*

2. **Talk through the text.** Lead a discussion with students about how to word each sentence, and then support individual students as they write letters or entire words in sentences on the board or chart paper. For example: *How will we begin our letter? . . . Good, Alana, let's start with* Dear Mayor Wheeler: *Can you come up and write that for us?* Continue the discussion having different members of the class take turns writing.

3. **Problem solving.** Use questions or prompts to help students solve problems as they write. For example: *So far this sentence says:* Thank you for coming to . . . *What did we say comes next in the sentence? . . . That's right, Duwayne, next we're going to write* Lincoln School. . . . *Can you come up and write the next word? What letter does* Lincoln *begin with?*

4. **Reread frequently.** Reread the entire message after each word is added. This will help students see how each word fits into the overall process.

Dear Mayor Wheeler:
    Thank you for coming to Lincoln School to tell us about your job. We think you really like being the Mayor. We are sorry you don't get to ride on fire trucks.
    Yesterday there was a cat on the playground. We think she was lost. Can you help us find a home for her?

Thank you,
Mrs. Bonilla's Class

Writing Routine 4

Independent Writing

Purpose: Provide support to help students achieve success as independent writers.

1. **Provide appropriate writing prompts.** Make sure that writing prompts are motivating and appropriate. Prompts should:
   - Encourage a variety of responses
   - Allow for a range of writing abilities
   - Be appropriate for the writers' experiences
   - Include topics that interest students

2. **Use RAFTs.** Have students use the RAFT structure to make sure writing assignments have a clear purpose and authenticity. Students should understand their Role, Audience, Form, and Topic before they begin to write. Here is a sample RAFT:

   Role: A student who wants to clean up a vacant lot.

   Audience: Neighbors who could help clean up the lot.

   Form: An email message

   Topic: Please come on Saturday to help clean up the lot.

3. **Support peer response.** Teach students how to be effective peer reviewers of each others' writing. Strategies may include:
   - Use the language frames to scaffold conversation.
   - Encourage writers to invite responses from peers, but don't compel them.
   - Encourage students to talk with each other as readers, not as critics. If something makes them laugh, or feel sad, or catches their interest, they should tell the writer so. If something isn't clear, they should tell that, too. However, details of word choice, organization, sentence structure, etc. are best dealt with in teacher-student conferences.

4. **Conference.** Confer with students about their writing. Conferences should be short and focused. Include the following steps:
   - **Inquiry:** Ask about, the topic, how the work is coming, and areas of difficulty.
   - **Decision:** Based on student responses, decide on the focus for the conference.
   - **Instruction:** Choose a point for teaching. This may be any of the writing traits, writer's craft, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Refer to records of student performance on grammar, revising and editing, and spelling lessons and assessments. Writing traits rubrics for conferences are provided in the Assessment section of each Teacher's Edition.
   - **Recording:** Record anecdotal notes of the conference for follow-up. Include next steps for the writer.

Writing Routine 5

Student Journals

- **Set up journals.** Journals can take many forms. You may wish to have students keep a journal with separate sections for vocabulary, language, grammar, and writing. Or students can just add cumulatively to their journals as they learn. In either case, encourage students to decorate their journals and maintain them with care.

- **Coach.** Observe students as they write and look for opportunities to coach them with spelling, word skills, strategies, and their thinking about topics and Big Questions.

- **Review journals.** Have students review their journals with you at conference time. Reviewing their work over time helps students recall what they've learned and see how they have progressed. It can also help you focus on areas where a student may need reteaching or additional support.

Best Practices

Journaling is a good way to help students move from note taking and assigned writing to writing independently. Lessons in *National Geographic Reach for Reading* include many opportunities for students to make notes about vocabulary, language, and grammar, and to write in response to their reading or their thoughts about Big Questions. Journals help students remember what they have learned and see their progress over time.

Cooperative Learning

Research Basis: Cooperative learning routines take advantage of classroom diversity and make it a vital resource for helping all students acquire challenging academic content and language. These routines promote active engagement and social motivation for all students. For English language learners, they also create opportunities for purposeful communication. Regular use of such routines has been shown to be effective (Johnson & Johnson 1986; Kagan 1986; Slavin 1988).

Purpose: These routines provide consistent opportunities for students to work together and learn from one another.

STRUCTURE & GRAPHIC	DESCRIPTION	BENEFITS & PURPOSE
CORNERS	• Corners of the classroom are designated for focused discussion of four aspects of a topic. • Students individually think and write about the topic for a short time. • Students group into the corner of their choice and discuss the topic. • At least one student from each corner shares about the corner discussion.	• By "voting" with their feet, students literally take a position about a topic. • Focused discussion develops deeper thought about a topic. • Students experience many valid points of view about a topic.
FISHBOWL	• Part of a group sits in a close circle, facing inward; the other part of the group sits in a larger circle around them. • Students on the inside discuss a topic while those outside listen for new information and/or evaluate the discussion according to pre-established criteria. • Groups reverse positions.	• Focused listening enhances knowledge acquisition and listening skills. • Peer evaluation supports development of specific discussion skills. • Identification of criteria for evaluation promotes self-monitoring.
INSIDE-OUTSIDE CIRCLE	• Students stand in concentric circles facing each other. • Students in the outside circle ask questions; those inside answer. • On a signal, students rotate to create new partnerships. • On another signal, students trade inside/outside roles.	• Talking one-on-one with a variety of partners gives risk-free practice in speaking skills. • Interactions can be structured to focus on specific speaking skills. • Students practice both speaking and active listening.
JIGSAW	• Group students evenly into "expert" groups. • Expert groups study one topic or aspect of a topic in depth. • Regroup students so that each new group has at least one member from each expert group. • Experts report on their study. Other students learn from the experts.	• Becoming an expert provides in-depth understanding in one aspect of study. • Learning from peers provides breadth of understanding of over-arching concepts.

STRUCTURE & GRAPHIC	DESCRIPTION	BENEFITS & PURPOSE
NUMBERED HEADS TOGETHER	• Students number off within each group. • Teacher prompts or gives a directive. • Students think individually about the topic. • Groups discuss the topic so that any member of the group can report for the group. • Teacher calls a number and the student from each group with that number reports for the group.	• Group discussion of topics provides each student with language and concept understanding. • Random recitation provides an opportunity for evaluation of both individual and group progress.
ROUNDTABLE	• Seat students around a table in groups of four. • Teacher asks a question with many possible answers. • Each student around the table answers the question a different way.	• Encouraging elaboration creates appreciation for diversity of opinion and thought. • Eliciting multiple answers enhances language fluency.
TEAM WORD WEBBING	• Provide each team with a single large piece of paper. Give each student a different colored marker. • Teacher assigns a topic for a web. • Each student adds to the part of the web nearest to him/her. • On a signal, students rotate the paper and each student adds to the nearest part again.	• Individual input to a group product ensures participation by all students. • By shifting point of view, students develop broad and in-depth understanding of concepts.
THINK, PAIR, SHARE	• Students think about a topic suggested by the teacher. • Pairs discuss the topic. • Students individually share information with the class.	• The opportunity for self-talk during the individual think time allows the student to formulate thoughts before speaking. • Discussion with a partner reduces performance anxiety and enhances understanding.
THREE-STEP INTERVIEW	• Students form pairs. • Student A interviews student B about a topic. • Partners reverse roles. • Student A shares with the class information from student B; then B shares information from student A.	• Interviewing supports language acquisition by providing scripts for expression. • Responding provides opportunities for structured self-expression.
MIX AND MATCH	• Prepare cards that can be matched as pairs, such as a word and its definition. • Hand one card to each student. • Students mingle and talk about their cards. • Teacher calls "Match," and each student finds the partner whose card matches with his or her own. Students exchange cards and mingle again.	• The mixing process encourages students to have multiple conversations with an academic focus. • Discussions provide each student with language and concept understanding. • Cards can be traded, so students don't know who their partner is until the end.

a — Start on the green dot and make a circle. Touch the middle line and the bottom line as you go all the way around to where you started. Continue up to the middle line and then down to the bottom line. Stop. That's small *a*. Now try it on your own.

b — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Now go back up over your line almost to the middle line. Then, make one little belly from the middle line to the bottom line. That's small *b*. Now try it on your own.

c — Start on the green dot and go around in a circle. Touch the middle line and the bottom line as you curve round and around. Stop a little above the bottom line. That's small *c*. Now try it on your own.

d — Start on the green dot and curve up to the middle line, then go round and around. Make a circle. Continue up to the top line and then trace over your line all the way down to the bottom line. Stop. That's small *d*. Now try it on your own.

e — Start on the green dot and go across. Follow the arrow. Then, circle up and around, touching the middle line and the bottom line. Curve up a little bit at the end. Stop. That's small *e*. Now try it on your own.

f — Start on the green dot and curve up. Touch the top line, then go around and down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot and go across the middle line. Stop. That's small *f*. Now try it on your own.

g — Start on the green dot and curve up. Touch the middle line, then go round and around to make a circle. Continue up to the middle line and then go down below the bottom line and curve up to make a little hook. That's small *g*. Now try it on your own.

h — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go back over your line almost to the middle line, curve up, touch the middle line, and then go down to the bottom line. Stop. That's small *h*. Now try it on your own.

i — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot. Stop. That's small *i*. Now try it on your own.

j — Start on the green dot and go down below the bottom line and curve up to make a little hook. Then go to the purple dot. Stop. That's a small *j*. Now try it on your own.

k — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot. Go down at a slant and touch your first line, then slant down to the bottom line. Stop. That's a small *k*. Now try it on your own.

l — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Stop. That's small *l*. Now try it on your own.

m — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go back over your line almost to the green dot, curve up and around and go down to the bottom line. Go back up, around, and down to the bottom line one more time. Stop. That's small *m*. Now try it on your own.

n — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go back over your line almost to the green dot, curve up, touch the middle line, and then go down to the bottom line. Stop. That's small *n*. Now try it on your own.

o — Start on the green dot and make a little circle. Touch the middle line and the bottom line and curve round and around all the way back to where you started. Stop. That's small *o*. Now try it on your own.

p — Start on the green dot and go below the bottom line. Go back over your line almost to the green dot, curve up and around to make a circle. First touch the middle line and then the bottom line. That's small *p*. Now try it on your own.

q — Start on the green dot and make a circle. Touch the middle line and the bottom line as you go around and back to the green dot. Continue up to the middle line and then go down below the bottom line, and make a little tail. Stop. That's a small *q*. Now try it on your own.

r — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Trace over your line again. Just before you reach the middle line, curve up and make a hook. Stop. That's a small *r*. Now try it on your own.

s — Start on the green dot and curve up, touch the middle line, then go round and around. Touch the bottom line, then curve up a little more. Stop. That's small *s*. Now try it on your own.

t — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot and go across the middle line. Stop. That's small *t*. Now try it on your own.

u — Start on the green dot and go down. Curve around, touch the bottom line, and curve back up to the middle line. Trace over your line again as you go back down to the bottom line. Stop. That's small *u*. Now try it on your own.

v — Start on the green dot and slant down to the bottom line. Then slant up to the middle line. Stop. That's small *v*. Now try it on your own.

w — Start on the green dot and slant down to the bottom line. Now slant up to the middle line, back down to the bottom line, and then back up again. Stop at the middle line. That's small *w*. Now try it on your own.

x — Start on the green dot and slant down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot. Slant down to the bottom line. Stop. That's small *x*. Now try it on your own.

y — Start on the green dot and slant down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot and then slant down. Touch your first line, then continue down below the bottom line. Stop. That's small *y*. Now try it on your own.

z — Start on the green dot and go across the middle line Slant down to the bottom line, and then go across the bottom line. Stop. That's small *z*. Now try it on your own.

A — Start on the green dot and slant down. Follow the green arrow to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot and slant down to the bottom line. Go to the gold dot and go across. Make sure you touch both of your lines. Stop. That's capital *A*. Now try it on your own.

B — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot and make two big round bellies. Make one belly down to the middle line, and then another to the bottom line. Stop. That's capital *B*. Now try it on your own.

C — Start on the green dot and go around in a circle. Touch the top line and the bottom line as you curve round and around. Stop a little above the bottom line. That's capital *C*. Now try it on your own.

D — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot. Go round and around. Follow the purple arrow. Go all the way down to your first line. Stop. That's capital *D*. Now try it on your own.

E — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot and go across the top line. Go to the gold dot and go across the middle line. Then, go to the red dot and go across the bottom line. Stop. That's capital *E*. Now try it on your own.

F — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot and go across the top line. Go to the gold dot and go across the middle line. Stop. That's capital *F*. Now try it on your own.

G — Start on the green dot and curve up. Touch the top line. Then curve round and around, almost making a circle. Stop at the middle line. Now go across. Stop. That's capital *G*. Now try it on your own.

H — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot and go down to the bottom again. Go to the gold dot and go across the middle line until you touch your other line. Stop. That's capital *H*. Now try it on your own.

I — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot and go across the top line to make a little roof. Then go to the gold dot and go across the bottom line to make the floor. Stop. That's capital *I*. Now try it on your own.

J — Start on the green dot and go down. Just before you get to the bottom line, curve around, touch the bottom line, and curve up to make a little hook. Stop. That's capital *J*. Now try it on your own.

K — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot. Go down at a slant and touch your first line, then slant down to the bottom line. Stop. That's capital *K*. Now try it on your own.

L — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Then go across the bottom line. Stop. That's capital *L*. Now try it on your own.

M — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot and slant down to the bottom line. Slant up to the top line, and then go straight down again. Stop. That's capital *M*. Now try it on your own.

N — Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot and slant down to the bottom line. Now go straight up to the top line. Stop. That's capital *N*. Now try it on your own.

O Start on the green dot and make a big circle. Touch the top line and the bottom line and curve round and around all the way back to where you started. Stop. That's capital *O*. Now try it on your own.

P Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot and make one belly around to the middle line. Make sure you touch your first line. Stop. That's capital *P*. Now try it on your own.

Q Start on the green dot and make a circle. Touch the top line and the bottom line as you go around, back to the green dot. Go to the purple dot. Make a short line; follow the purple arrow. Stop. That's capital *Q*. Now try it on your own.

R Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot and make one belly down to the middle line. Make sure you touch your first line. Now slant down to the bottom line. Stop. That's capital *R*. Now try it on your own.

S Start on the green dot and curve up, touch the top line, then go round and around. Touch the bottom line, then curve up a little more. Stop. That's capital *S*. Now try it on your own.

T Start on the green dot and go down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot and go across the top line. Stop. That's capital *T*. Now try it on your own.

U Start on the green dot and go down. Curve around, touch the bottom line, and curve back up to the top line. Stop. That's capital *U*. Now try it on your own.

V Start on the green dot and slant down to the bottom line. Continue and slant up all the way to the top line. Stop. That's capital *V*. Now try it on your own.

W Start on the green dot and slant down to the bottom line. Now slant up to the top line, back down to the bottom line, and finally, slant up again, all the way to the top line. Stop. That's capital *W*. Now try it on your own.

X Start on the green dot and slant down to the bottom line. Go to the purple dot. Slant down to the bottom line. Stop. That's capital *X*. Now try it on your own.

Y Start on the green dot and slant down to the middle line. Then slant up to the top line. Go to the purple dot. Go down to the bottom line. Stop. That's capital *Y*. Now try it on your own.

Z Start on the green dot and go across the top line. Slant down to the bottom line, and then go across the bottom line. Stop. That's capital *Z*. Now try it on your own.

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