Emergent Literacy in Grades 1 and 2

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Reading goes beyond the classroom and extends into the real world. Students need to familiarize themselves with print because it is part of our daily lives. Being able to connect with letters and words to gain meaningful information should become second nature, because this is one of the main ways we can communicate and relate to the world. For this reason, we believe reading should be accessible to all. Teachers have a responsibility to impart the knowledge of reading and writing to their students. In Québec, teachers are mandated to deliver quality instruction to all students, regardless of their learning profile (Hutchinson, 2014). Educational content should be delivered in the least restrictive environment for the student and adapted or modified to their individual learning needs. Once a student is flagged for having a reading difficulty, teachers must have a plan of action set in place. This preventative measure must exhaust all possible options of helping the student stay on course prior to initiating assistance from outside professionals such as educational psychologists, speech-language pathologists, and social workers, if need be.

Reading Rockets (WETA Public Broadcasting, 2015) is a website primarily designed to help parents and teachers meet the diverse needs of their struggling readers. Each of the five areas of literacy can be found on the website and are accompanied with various strategies on how to teach a specific literacy concept (e.g., phonemic awareness). This website serves as a public educational platform which shares the collective resources that are research-based. The panel of educational researchers and experts in the field of reading participate in the selection of appropriate evidence-based articles and books that highlight the effectiveness of a strategy in any particular area of literacy. These strategies provided have proven to work well with students. *Reading Rockets'* (WETA Public Broadcasting, 2015) panelists, Lynn Fuchs, Louisa

Moats, Annemarie Sullivan Palincsar, Louise Spear-Swerling, Julie Washington, and Joanna Williams, estimated that 40% of children struggle with reading and meeting developmentally appropriate benchmark standards. Both teachers and parents must participate in the early identification and intervention process, so that reading remediation can be received prior to the end of grade 3. After this time, it becomes increasingly difficult to bring the student up to speed with the rest of their peers and it is most likely that they will have a reading disability for the rest of their lives. As a result, we have synthesized and reviewed existing literature on the five areas of literacy and effective reading instruction. We have compiled a resource kit for teachers in effort to reach out to our struggling readers. We wish individual success for all our learners and it is our hope that no student falls behind. In effort to guide teachers, a research based, multimodal approach for early intervention with struggling readers is recommended.

The primary purpose of this paper is to provide elementary school teachers, more specifically those of grade 1 and 2, with a bank of strategies associated with the five areas of literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). Teachers can refer to the distinct strategies highlighted throughout this paper and resource kit. Strategies can be selected accordingly in order to cater to each individual learner in question. A secondary purpose is to provide benchmarking and progress-monitoring materials for teachers. These materials would benefit teachers as it would allow them to set goals and monitor their students' progress throughout the year.

As teachers invest more time getting to know their students according to their learning profile, they will be able to successfully select strategies to target areas of academic weakness. In the hope of helping students reach their maximum learning potential, frequent and habitual support is needed. Teachers must work towards helping students express themselves,

becoming more aware of their area of difficulty, while voicing their concerns (WETA Public Broadcasting, 2015). It is important for teachers to have a variety of strategies at their disposal, so that if one strategy is ineffective with a particular student, another one is easily accessible and can be immediately introduced.

Teachers must use a combination of benchmark, researched-based strategies, progress-monitoring, and ongoing formative assessments to ensure that all necessary steps have been taken in order to assist struggling readers. Early intervention is critical for at risk students, so that any learning gaps identified can be bridged as soon as possible. If students continue to remain stagnant, showing no signs of improvement, the gap between themselves and their chronologically-aged peers widens. Not only does this negatively affects their self-esteem and confidence, but also imprints a negative impression of school. When students carry a self-defeating attitude with them, they will grow emotionally and mentally exhausted (WETA Public Broadcasting, 2015). In essence, they will become their own worst critic and may simply refuse to attempt reading altogether. Teachers can offer moral support to students by showing empathy and discussing a time of personal challenge that they have overcome. It is equally important to keep reminding students that honing a skill requires hard work and lots of practice in order to reach a level of mastery. Teachers should encourage students by letting them know that they are pleased with their effort and progress. Ultimately, helping students cultivate a genuine love for and appreciation of reading will allow them to keep a positive outlook on school and learning as a whole. Students' motivation and attitude are equally as important as the teachers' mentorship in terms of their academic success and learning. Both parties play a big role in the learning process.

Rationale

There are an overwhelming number of diverse needs in our classrooms and teachers feel the pressure of having to adapt and modify their daily lessons to meet these individual needs. In turn, this becomes increasingly stressful due to the time constraints and the fast-paced nature of today's classroom environment. Teachers find themselves constantly struggling to stay on-task and provide the quality educational services that students require and deserve. Not enough time is allotted for the kind of detailed planning and preparations an "ideal" classroom would require. Also, there is a deficit when it comes to materials needed to prepare for such elaborate lessons, because school boards in the public sector state that they have limited funds available. Once again, this places a heavy burden on classroom teachers who continually strives to produce work of excellence and spends money from their own pockets.

In our experience as new teachers, we have noticed that there is a lack of free and effective resources, readily available to both staff and students. We both are resource teachers, or literacy coaches, for cycle-one students. We are also both passionate about helping students enjoy their educational experience, while motivating them to reach their maximum learning potentials. Every hour of the day, we enter different classrooms and assist the homeroom teacher with their most vulnerable students. This includes the learning-disabled, those with specific behavioral problems and other at-risk students. At times we work in the classroom, coteach a lesson, and evaluate students side-by-side. Many times, we use the pull-out method and work with small groups of four to six students. This allows us to provide intensive and meaningful education in regards to the student's specific area of need for 30- to 60-minute time frames.

Over the years, we have noticed that there are a number of students with serious reading difficulties and these students are having a much harder time catching up as they get older. We

feel that there is simply no time to waste when it comes to implementing effective strategies. We felt the need to develop a solid "go-to" plan of instruction and materials, especially when targeting the five areas of literacy (elaborated below). A resource kit is advantageous because it provides teachers with a guideline or springboard to initiate further language-based activities. The intention is to use these strategies or interventions with all students, but more specifically and intensively, with those who are struggling with the core English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum. We believe that early intervention is crucial as teachers aim to close the learning gap and target the specific needs of their struggling students. In order to close the learning gap for struggling readers, we feel it is crucial to benchmark students, use effective strategies, and monitor their progress over time.

Review of Previous Research

How to Reach Out to Struggling Readers

Our brains were never wired to read (Gazith, 2014). Language does not necessarily need to be taught because it is acquired naturally, whereas, reading does need to be taught because it is not a natural process. Students need to learn how to use reading strategies flexibly and simultaneously. The National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, n.d.) suggests the use of explicit or direct instruction from their teacher that includes explanations, modeling, guided practice, application, cooperative learning, and multiple strategy instruction (Mahdavi & Tensfeldt, 2013). As teachers, we realize how important it is to be knowledgeable about how the brain goes about picking up on reading and how to best respond to reading weaknesses that present themselves. It is also imperative that we go about taking the unique characteristics of our students into consideration when it comes to selecting an intervention that would be most suitable. We must also be aware of the additional factors that are included with failure to develop adequate, grade level and on-task reading skills including absenteeism, poverty, and special needs (Murphy & Hernandez, 2011).

In our experience, we have noticed that, many times, the students that have difficulties reading are also the ones who have a hard time in school in terms of their overall behavior. Every teacher can probably think of at least one student he or she felt that each day was a battle to get through with. As much as we get wrapped up into our personal feelings and how the student is exhausting to be around because of their constant need for attention, we need to be able to detach ourselves emotionally, and help the student receive the best support possible. We need to decide ahead of time that we are mentally prepared to deal with the many potential issues that could arise in our classroom. Through their case study observation of an

elementary student, Hettinger and Knapp (2001) found some characteristics that we can expect to present themselves in students experiencing reading difficulties: (a) feels defined by inability to read and stifles gifts and talents, (b) frustration by avoiding reading activities and sadness, (c) low self-esteem; failure to meet their own and other person's expectation, (d) lashing out in anger, and (e) bragging about knowledge in other areas. Although we only spend 180 days with a given classroom and time seems limited, we must not let anxiety overwhelm us. Teachers must accept the fact that a student's behaviors cannot change overnight, but there is definitely hope if we continue to be a source of support and encouragement along the way.

After the analysis of their case study and spending some time with their participant, Hettinger et al. (2001) made six suggestions that teachers can use to reach out to students experiencing reading difficulties. One, speak to students and spend some one-on-one time with them to find out more about who they are as a person and what their interests and hobbies are. Two, offer them many models of reading engagement and success. It is important to display your reading habits to the students. It is suggested that teachers share their favorite book with their students, take time to read aloud to them, and have an older child read to a younger one or a more skilled child read to a less skilled one. Three, help them find reasons to read. Teachers should have books of various literary genres and levels in their classroom to appeal to their different readers. Four, scaffold reading tasks for students. For example, McIntyre, Rightmyer, Powell, Powers, and Petrosko (2006) conducted a study within ten different schools with a focus on grade 1 students. They compared the results of two groups of struggling readers; the first in which they were exposed to much reading of connected texts and the second, in which they exposed to less reading of connected texts. It was concluded that students exposed to much reading of connected texts made more gains in reading as opposed the

other group. Moreover, during the initial phases of reading development it is essential that teachers be highly involved and offer their students lots of opportunities for guided reading practice. This can be done through the use of strategies such as repeated readings, choral or echo reading, paired reading, or assisted oral reading. In order to understand the students' needs, the teacher must work with them in small groups and give explicit as well as corrective feedback in an ample and timely manner. Later, they can be given opportunities to read to a partner or partake in a mentorship or peer tutoring program. Five, teach them about the purposes and processes of reading (Hettinger et al., 2001). Teachers can read poems and plays with students and help them find meaning in the text. Six, keep them in reading clubs. Teachers need to ensure that struggling readers remain part of the classroom discussions and do not alienate themselves. Students may make recommendations, share favorite books amongst each other, and read passages aloud to the class that they have had the chance to previously practice at home.

After consulting previous research Allington (2013) came to a few conclusions in regards to what is most important to address when working with struggling readers. A problem that Allington (2013) mentioned is that too little time is spent daily on giving struggling readers the opportunity to read successfully. Although we cannot give students the same workload as their chronologically aged peers and expect them to succeed, we can provide work of quality that challenges them to develop their current areas of weakness. This adjustment is crucial to developing their self-esteem as readers as well. The whole point of challenging students to be literate is to persuade them to read independently and, of course, be able to take pride in their verbal and written accomplishments. Students who are struggling readers are less likely to have the desire to engage in voluntary reading. Educators must consider how much time is spent on independent reading in the classroom or in groups and how effective it is or not, especially with

younger students who have reading difficulties (McIntyre et al., 2006). Close monitoring of independent reading time is critical because students may not be actually reading. This can be due to the fact that it is a difficult task and they need assistance with it to be successful. Hence, with the right amount of support or assistance and appropriate leveled text these students should be able to have success. Although we should not expect students to engage in independent reading at all times, it is important to provide them with small designated times to read a self-selected book or text throughout the day, whereby they can read for pleasurable purposes and not as a means to complete a reading comprehension test, or to find out new information (Allington, 2013). Some benefits of independent reading include development of a positive reading habit and love of books, construction of understanding of variety of texts, discovery of books that are right for them, and various ways people read (McIntyre et al., 2006). The students' voluntary reading process must not be ignored, but celebrated and embraced.

Early Intervention

We can personally attest to the great and diversified needs in our classrooms. We feel a sense of urgency to advocate for our students with special needs or learning disabilities and realize how much support they require. We have also noticed that as the students' progress throughout elementary school, the harder it is to close the gap between their chronologically age-appropriate level and their current level of functional reading. In Murphy et al.'s (2011) case study of a student teacher in a second grade classroom it was highlighted that if at risk students are not assisted regularly by a literacy coach who facilities their learning, they are more vulnerable to heading towards a downward slope, falling further and further behind their chronologically aged peers. Many times we wonder where we are lacking and what more can we do to help these students? *Canadian Literacy and Learning Network* (2015) gathered some

critical and thought provoking statistics for the educational community to reflect and take action upon. They stated that 10% of Canadians have learning disabilities and from that small percentage, 80% of them are related to reading. They also explained that every dollar that is expended on a literacy program results in a 241% return and a 1% increase in literacy rate would generate 18 million dollars in economic growth. Given these statistics, it is obvious that reading is an area to which schools need to give extra time and attention. Having the foreknowledge that the slightest investment in literacy programs results in more than double the progress, should propel the educational system to start putting their money where students need it most because they are worth it, and their learning is a precious expense that we cannot afford to lose. Why are we going around the same circle expecting a different result? It's time to change our views on reading, adjust our budgets and put investment into research based practices and of course, the students, so that they all can become lifelong readers.

"Wait to fail model." Gazith (2014), a special educator and part-time lecturer in Educational Psychology at McGill University, Québec, has gathered knowledge through individual field experience and research. Given that she has taught in special needs classrooms and has also delivered workshops for teachers and administrators on meeting the diverse needs presented in the classroom, Gazith has developed and share numerous practical strategies. She pointed out that traditionally we use the "wait to fail" model in our schools, rather than have students get the help they need at the time that a difficulty manifests itself. In kindergarten, many students may go into grade 1 without being flagged as having a potential problem. Perhaps teachers want to give them more time to adjust to being in a school setting. When students are in grade 1, the teacher begins to identify a handful of students who are falling behind. The selection process is tricky and teachers do proceed with caution when

going about assigning a label to a child. It is possible for students to find a way to convince their teachers that they are functional readers. It may be that they have strong visual memory skills and can get away with looking like they are reading. The few that are identified, thereafter, begin the process of assessment. However, there needs to be a two-year discrepancy between ability and performance, therefore, students do not receive services right away and must wait. Once these students are identified with a two-year discrepancy, an assessment is conducted and the results are shared with the school. Finally, the student receives remediation that is often out of the class and he or she misses core instruction as a result. Removal from class for remediation or support has students missing English language classes. These students need to be present in the class and require more instruction time than their peers. Unfortunately, this is not the case because students are getting remediation during or away from core instruction rather than in addition to it. Furthermore, the data to examine effectiveness of intervention is often not conducted.

"Matthew effect." The "Matthew effect" originates during early years in which students are learning to read and students who are struggling to read, read less, learn fewer vocabulary words, and lag further behind, whereas, children who break the code more easily, read more and consequently learn more through their avid reading (Mahdavi & et al., 2013). The *National Institute of Child and Health Development* (n.d.) pointed out that if students are not reading at grade level by the third grade, then the odds that they will ever read at grade level are 1:17. Moreover, by the fourth grade, two hours of specialized daily instruction is required to make some gains. It is important for students to be proficient readers by the third or fourth grade because often times reading instruction, especially, in decoding is no longer a primary focus (Baker, 2006; Mahdavi et al., 2013; Pullen, Tuckwiller, Konold, Maynard, & Coyne 2010;

Silverman, 2007). Students, at this point, are not learning how to read, but rather they are perfecting their reading skills. They are going beyond just reading the text and are now reading to learn. This problem could have been avoided if only 30 minutes of daily instruction had begun when the child was in kindergarten. These are scary and very telling statistics for school boards and teachers. We know that reading is of great importance and if these students do not get the support they need as soon as possible there will be dire consequences. These students deserve and have the right to quality education. Allington (2013) mentioned that the great news is that we have research based reading practices which could have all readers at level, by the end of grade 1. He also mentioned that the bad news is that there are not many schools actually following up on what evidence-based practices suggest. In fact, it may take up to 50 years for that research to make itself evident in the classroom. By then, who knows if new notions will come about? It certainly is a struggle for teachers to keep up with an ever-changing classroom, however, we agree that it is not a good decision to simply ignore, or refuse to implement new strategies. As we have seen in our recent three to -five years of teaching, all too often, teachers can become fixated, or comfortable with delivering instruction a certain way. This becomes problematic, because what worked for children one or two decades ago may not be able to work for this current, high tech generation of learners. We need to strive to keep current with modern times and student needs.

Every child can learn to read. Allington's (2011) review of previous literature supports that every child can be reading by first grade therefore, early intervention must start in Kindergarten and teachers must start screening students. Kindergarten teachers have the potential to address the needs of students as soon as possible and make great progress with students. Reading problems tackled in Kindergarten are just as effective as tutorial services later

on. Schools have the power to make a difference by implementing RTI interventions in their schools. The key point of early intervention is that educators must start in Kindergarten and continue support throughout the other grades.

Band-aid solution for the classroom. It is not easy to teach and help every single child to read well and at the same time be cost-efficient. For example, we resort to imploring the help of an attendant because we do not have the finances to employ more reading specialists who are skilled in facilitating reading acquisition and development. Attendants are not reading specialists and students need reading instruction to be delivered by an expert. We need to go beyond the quick fixes such as Allington (2011) and Allington (2013) stated educators often do. For instance, teachers should eliminate the use of extra workbooks, test preparations, and attendants from instructional roles. According to a study conducted by Brown, Morris and Fields (2014), the use of a tutoring model and supervised professional working in a structured tutoring context were able to effectively help struggling readers progress. Therefore, if teachers wish to place attendants in a teaching role, they must take additional time to mentor and guide them through the process. Attendants must be supervised, given adequate structure, and a thorough plan to follow which the teacher has developed. Furthermore, investing in computer, high tech software as the only means to foster reading growth and development must also be stopped (Allington, 2011). The simple truth is that research does not back up any of these as the stand alone quick fix for reading interventions.

Response to intervention (RTI). So, how can we overcome these difficulties in our classrooms for students that struggle with reading knowing the statistics and research? Teachers can either choose from one of two paths, the "wait to fail" model which we know is ineffective. Or use early intervention, which goes beyond the quick fixes and provides effective as well as

instant support for struggling students. Lipson and Wixson (2012) stated that the two main goals of early intervention or response to intervention (RTI) are (a) to take preventative measures by ensuring to focus on issuing quality literacy instruction through the use of adequate initial language skills and (b) to increase the amount of differentiation that is taking place in the classroom and offering the intensive instruction that students require. RTI requires that teachers assess everyone early on and often using research based strategies. If the teacher assesses everyone early and frequently, then they can provide just and timely tiered, effective support for all their students. Following the advice of Allington (2011), Gazith (2014), and Lipson et al. (2012), RTI is a process that enhances the general education curriculum in order to target a specific skill to improve student outcomes, monitoring all student progress, using data to make informed decisions about instructional needs and modifications, and short-term explicit instruction. Furthermore, this process allows for early intervention services. Based on student's performance on a variety of assessment measures, the information collected is used to provide ongoing support to all students and to identify those with greater challenges. Also, support is revised as necessary based on student performance. Overall, using RTI in the classroom gives students access to many levels of high quality, differentiated instruction (Pullen et al., 2010). The right instructional environment allows for students to flourish.

Response to intervention: Tiered instruction. RTI not only closes reading achievement gaps and reduces the number of students experiencing reading difficulties, but also offers high quality, expert instruction through its tiers (Allington, 2011). Tiered instruction allows for accelerated learning and learning gains (Pullen et al., 2010). There are three to -four tiers to the instructional process of RTI (Lipson et al., 2012; Gazith, 2014). In tier one, there is universal screening for all students and data were collected. Students receive differentiation, evidence-

based core instruction, remediation or enrichment, progress-monitoring, and ongoing assessments. An estimated 80% of students in the classroom fall into this particular category. This tier allows for teachers to find out the different areas of challenges and strengths. All students receive in class support and students are expected to be receptive to this support. Students that respond to this type of support make expected gains and progress with evidence-based instruction that is provided in a general classroom. Whereas, non-receptive students make little to no gain even after being taught with high quality and validated instruction. In this case, this student will need to be placed in tier two. In tier two, small groups of students who fall below benchmark standards and require intervention are included. Here, effective research based interventions are carried out and frequent progress-monitoring is done. Adjustments are made as needed based upon data. About 15% of students in the classroom fall into this category. At this point, students need to receive an additional 30 minutes, three times per week (90 minutes) on top of the core instruction that they are already receiving. In the remedial program, areas of weaknesses are worked upon in greater depth. Should problems continue to persist, the students in question will be placed into tier three intervention. In tier three, three to -five students receive intensive, individualized support from specialists or literacy coaches because they are demonstrating high risk for academic failures. About five percent of students in the classroom fall into this category. These students have not shown sufficient progress according to the benchmark target line. They need additional support of 45 minutes to an hour everyday outside of core instruction that is delivered by a specialist. Progress-monitoring continues to be a critical component. If students continue to be unreceptive, they may be flagged from the teacher for identification as potentially having special needs and an IEP must be developed. Overall, the higher you are in the tiered pyramid, the greater the individual

intervention becomes. At the same time, it also becomes more intensified and frequent. RTI requires that all students are assessed by a team who work together to identify students and provide the support needed. Teachers use high quality, research based intervention and materials. Differentiation within the classroom is critical.

Effective intervention. Woodward and Talbert-Johnson (2009) conducted a study with elementary schools students to inquire about effective reading intervention models. They highlighted the positives and negatives of students working in and outside of the classroom. It was concluded that although both intervention models are delivered differently, they can equally be of benefit to students as long as professionals collaborate and make educationally sound decisions for the student in question. Instructional decisions must be grounded on data collected. Some characteristics of an effective intervention model includes small groups that share the same level of difficulties, have daily intervention, interventions that address five areas of reading, instruction that is explicit and direct but also engaging and fast pace, feedback for students is provided, opportunities for students to respond to questions are given, and most importantly decisions are data driven. According to Gazith (2014) suggestions, teachers must keep in mind that proactive intervention must include the following (a) explicit instruction in synthetic phonics, with emphasis on fluency, (b) integrate decoding, fluency, and comprehension strategies, (c) 100% decodable text, (d) carefully constructed scope and sequence designed to prevent possible confusions, and (e) every activity taught to 100% mastery every day. Acceleration is also a central aspect in any intervention program. In order to ensure students' reading acceleration, schools must have trained teams who provide intensive literacy intervention in a small group setting as supported by Canady and Canady (2012) observation of their successful reading intervention program at Beverly Manor elementary school and Lipson et

al. (2012) research synthesis. To incorporate a model like RTI in the classroom, it is evident that teachers need support from their school team. A lot of thought and collaborations goes into making an intervention plan work successfully. Generally speaking, effective interventions include many aspects such as a system of support, coordination with core classroom instruction, more instructional opportunities, and responsive instructions which require effective activities that students are capable of performing, but also equally matched assessments on the teachers' part. (Lipson et al., 2012).

Beverley Manor elementary school. An example of a group of professionals who have already embraced this approach is Beverley Manor Elementary School in Stauton, Virginia. The results of their program stated that after four years of using early literacy teams in kindergarten and grade 1 with follow up interventions and enrichment period in grades two to -five, the school made remarkable progress. First in 2008, 24% of grade 3 students required literacy instruction as assessed by phonics awareness literacy screening (PALS), whereas, by 2011 only seven percent needed intervention. Furthermore in 2008, 79% of students were proficient readers in grade 3; whereas by 2011, 93% of students were proficient readers, by Virginia state standards. Beverley Manor Elementary School shows how a school wide implementation of early literacy intervention can be done, especially because it showed the effectiveness through their positive and substantial results.

Coaches. Beverley Manor Elementary School had allotted enrichment periods between grades two to -five (Canady et al., 2012). In effort to create a quality program, the following steps were recommended. The first thing that had to be done was to select a literacy coach who was willing to assemble a team of teachers who were able to provide literacy instruction in different classrooms. The coach must work alongside the group of appointed teachers to divide

students into groups that target specific skill areas. It is essential to include and co-ordinate with the school principal when deciding the best options as to when to schedule intervention or possibly enrichment for more advanced learners. The coach assumes responsibility for coteaching with team members at times, sharing sample lesson plans, and making classroom observations to ensure the teachers are delivering the literacy instructions effectively. The literacy coach should also organize a literacy center that offers differentiated instruction and activities. The activities provided should be organized according to reading level, thematic unit, and so on. Once the literacy team is assembled, the coach works with small groups on areas of literacy involving fluency, comprehension, and word work. Typically, for emergent readers, teacher should work on a ratio of one to five, but for more advanced learners, one to seven or one to eight is acceptable. The amount of experts required in a given classroom depends on the number of student needs. Each expert rotates in the room so that students can benefit from different instructional styles.

Literacy groups. Canady et al. (2012) then explained students should be grouped into literacy groups. Reading groups should be created which vary from three to -seven students based on a series of formal and informal reading tests (e.g., running records). As students make progress, groups can be changed into cross-grade levels. The students need a teacher in a small one-on-one setting to help them with decoding, fluency, and accuracy skills. Teachers must also ensure that the students have the chance to engage in reading practices that are at the students' level of understanding (Murphy et al., 2011). In order for intervention to be effective it must be consistent with the students' specific needs, which are linked to their assessments. All students will inevitably respond to the intervention instruction differently, and therefore, teachers must work alongside the students to discover how to best accommodate them and make adjustments to

their teaching techniques, which will most readily serve the students. Although intervention begins with core instruction, it certainly needs to be accompanied with assessments (Lipson et al., 2012).

Scheduling literacy instruction. Next, Canady et al. (2012) mentioned that schools must ensure to schedule literacy instruction into the yearly calendar. From kindergarten to grade 2, two blocks of 30 minutes reading instruction should be offered daily. The double-blocked sessions assist in gapping reading difficulties. The goal is to work towards minimizing the difficulties so that there are, hopefully, fewer students to catch up later on. The reason that early intervention is so intensified is because as students' progress throughout elementary school, it makes it increasingly difficult to find the time to provide quality intervention. Many schools have agreed in setting aside a block of time which is specifically designated for remedial assistance purposes. The problem that remains with this system is that students are often missing out on the more interesting parts of their day in the classroom. They may miss out on opportunities to engage in discussion and comprehension as well as the ability to formulate a more sophisticated vocabulary (Lipson et al., 2012). After grade 2, schools should continue to allot time for a minimum of one intervention period daily throughout grades three to -five (Canady et al., 2012). Those students who did not acquire sufficient skills would still have the chance to receive that remedial support. Those students who have received proficient skills in reading and math will receive enrichment. The main goal of enrichment is to continue to promote students and encourage them to reach a level of mastery and beyond.

Sessions and activities. Canady et al. (2012) described that in terms of time, it was broken down into morning and afternoon sessions. Morning sessions were intended to emphasize teacher-directed instructions. The afternoon sessions were geared towards student

participation, whereby focus was placed on fluency through repeated readings of leveled books, or wide-reading of new books to build reading speed, accuracy and expression. Word study can also be done. The classroom teacher is part of the literacy team and engages in follow-up activities and work based on the students evaluated needs. For instance, in a study performed by Murphy et al. (2011) during the initial assessment phase of intervention, the student teacher, Ms. Gomez, worked with the assigned group of students to help build their letter recognition, phonemic awareness and sight words recognition. During the daily, three weeks of intensive intervention, Ms. Gomez had five points of emphasis with the students: (a) sight words (a, the and, on), (b) alphabet knowledge (use a game to see who could identify the letters that were pointed to), (c) making words and writing in different modes (e.g., using magnetic letters), (d) differentiated instruction and think-pair-share (depending on their level of ability, students were able to write words, or sentences and later challenged to share it with each other and the teacher), (e) guided reading-leveled texts (adjust to their level- first pictures are shown, than individual words and sight words).

Reading programs. A good core reading program should allow opportunities for guided reading practices, but also allow for a gradual release of responsibilities from teacher to student through explicit instruction (Allington, 2013). Most reading programs also use phonics to teach a number of specific sound to letter correspondence in conjunction with providing training for fluency and sight word identification, vocabulary development, and comprehension strategies as noted in Baker's (2006) compilation of research. Out of the 153 reading programs that are currently available and marketed to teachers, only one has been reviewed as improving reading achievement. This program is called Reading Recovery. It offers a yearlong professional development opportunity for teachers to explore the inner workings of the six year old brain and

gain insights as to how they may get confused. Remediation programs such as Reading Recovery are great for struggling first grade readers, but too expensive (Allington, 2013). Other remedial programs are not readily accessible because of financial constraints and district policies (Allington, 2011; Allington, 2013). Baker (2006) conducted a study to look at four different reading programs used with struggling readers to see if it was enough to be effective with students. A secondary purpose of this study was also to see if what students knew at the end of grade 1 and compare it to what they were expected to know. These programs had students use sound to letter correspondence in kindergarten, and then reviewed intensely over a short period of time in first grade. There were programs that also presented all of the grapheme combinations representing one phoneme at a time to all students. The results showed that about 45% of students were still struggling with reading. This shows that reading programs are not the stand alone solution to helping students acquire reading skills, rather teachers need to take a central role. In other words, we cannot solely rely on a remediation program as a quick, fixer-upper. Rather, teachers need to be more skilled and knowledgeable to help student acquire these necessary reading skills. Even though, there are many phonemic awareness building programs currently on the market that have been evaluated and deemed effective, but teachers must be taught how to properly implement any of these programs prior to using them. Too many schools have adopted a flawed reading program and as a result students' knowledge of reading has been negatively impacted (Allington, 2011; Allington, 2013). Teachers must be careful to seek reputable information when it comes to developing their reading programs, and be careful to filter out programs that do not have substantial evidence which advocates for effective reading practices. *What Works Clearinghouse* is a trusted website professional can look at to search effective, research based, reading programs as suggested by Allington (2011). *Best Evidence*

Encyclopedia (Johns Hopkins University, n.d.) is also another website that lists programs that are reliable and valid.

Reading workshops. Teachers must confer with their students' one on one whenever possible, especially with the students that are struggling with reading as Porath (2014) gathered research findings. Reading workshops are similar to writers' workshop in which the teacher models reading to students with a point of focus and instruction. Then, the teacher provides students with the tools necessary to demonstrate and practice their learning. When students are reading independently, the teacher calls upon one student at a time for guided practice with particular focus on that students needs or areas of weakness. These one on one conferences must give students the opportunity to practice specific skills and demonstrate their understanding. In the study that Porath (2014) conducted, it was noted that teacher and student interactions are often stumped by the teacher, whom unknowingly, overpowering the conversation. In these conferences it is important for teachers to be self-aware and conscious. These conferences must be student centered whereby the teacher asks students direct questions, probes for elaboration, and waits for the student to join the conversation. This allows for teachers to make students thinking become more visible. As a result teachers can understand and help these students accordingly. In Porath's (2014) study, it was concluded that teachers must be subjectivizing (involving the student directly in creating understanding) and problematizing (constantly asking questions about the student). Essentially, teachers must talk less and listen more to what their students have to say. The goal is not only to help struggling readers succeed, but to also engage them in active participation of their learning.

One size does not fit all. Through their collective research and field knowledge most researcher agree that early intervention and supplemental as well as quality instruction using RTI

are key preventative measures that guarantee success for all students (Allington, 2011; Allington, 2013; Canady et al.; 2012; Gazith, 2014; Lipson, 2012; McIntyre et al., 2006; McIntyre, Jones, Powers, Newsome, Petrosko, Powell, & Bright, 2005; Murphy et al., 2011; & Woodward et al., 2009). In grades one and two, it can take as little as two weekly sessions with a reading specialist to make major improvements in reading (Allington, 2013). Their individual progress and achievement has much to do with the quality of their instruction within the time constraints that they are provided with. Teachers need to maximize their time and think about how to make the greatest impact. One size certainly does not fit all, and there is no perfect approach that is of greater significance when it comes to accelerating a student's learning (Allington, 2011). It is important that teachers engage in careful progress-monitoring and of course, demonstrate a level of expertise in teaching skills. Students need and deserve the highest quality of teacher education and the teachers need and deserve quality workshops that help them refine their skills and inform their current classroom practices (Lipson et al., 2012).

Benchmarks

Benchmark assessments are comprehensive and rigorous in nature. It is a standard that students need to meet in accordance to their age and grade level. Teachers aim to help students meet national benchmark standards. These assessments can be used to guide classroom instruction, check for reading difficulties, find out which areas of reading are affected, and make group of equal ability level.

Benchmarks are important because it provides a baseline for teachers to refer to, evaluate, and monitor students' progress. Teachers should be aware of benchmark goals because it links instruction, assessment, and learning objectives together. To help students reach benchmark goals teachers must use differentiated, or individualized instruction to monitor if skills are being

developed or to find out if more emphasis is needed. What is most important is that teachers use benchmarks as a means to set relevant goals for students and figure out how to scaffold students learning to help them achieve their goals.

DIBELS. Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (Dynamic Measurement Group, n.d.) is a complete program available online and designed to meet and assess students reading skills. Marr, Algozzine, Nicholson, and Dugan (2009) used of DIBELS in their study because it is a set of standardized, individually administered measures and has been comprehensively researched with positive reviews. It has proved to be both reliable and valid indicators for early literacy development as well as predictive of later reading proficiency. It also aids in early identification of students who are not progressing as expected. Elliott, Lee, and Tollefson (2001) conducted a study to examine the properties of DIBELS assessments and progress-monitoring. They used the assessments for students who were at risk for failure in reading and to monitor their progress in reading over time. They concluded that this evaluation tool was reliable and valid for students struggling with reading because it takes the five areas of literacy into consideration as highlighted by the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, n.d.).

The method followed in DIBELS is time-efficient and simple for both teacher and student to understand. DIBELS is able to track students who are veering off course in terms of literacy learning and provides additional reinforcement instruction to assist them to become adequate readers. At the same time, DIBELS provides tools that allow for benchmarking or progress-monitoring students so that reading deficits can be targeted at the time of onset and can be remediated rapidly. DIBELS is intended to be a positive, enjoyable experience for students and should be performed three times a year, beginning, middle and end. It is not meant to be

used as an official grading tool. DIBELS activities and assessments are made available to teachers for free and can be directly downloaded off the internet.

Developmental reading assessments (DRAs). Just as in other subjects, reading also has a set of criteria established in effort to benchmark a student. Developmental reading assessments (DRAs) are commonly used in English language classes to assess students' instructional level in reading. This type of assessments includes rubrics which helps teachers gain information on students' reading level, accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Teachers or specialists can administer this type of test. In the DRA kit, teachers have levelled books, teacher observation guides, and student booklets. Carrying out the test is fairly simple because it is intended that you read the directions right off the paper, however, it can be a tedious and long process when administering a DRA with a students who is at a fourth grade level and above. In this case, the testing can take up to an hour long per student.

Reading levels. Reading levels can be helpful as well as informative for teachers' instruction and materials required for students. Halladay (2012) build upon the historical reading level framework to offer insight on how educators analyze or observe reading levels in the present. The reading leveling system outlined by Halladay (2012) is extracted from Betts's Framework in 1946. This reading leveling system is intended to assess decoding and comprehension skills. It has students falling into four different levels. Level one is when students are independent readers with a 99% of word accuracy and a 90% of comprehension. Level two is an instructional level in which students have a 95%-99% of word accuracy and 75%-89% of comprehension. Level three is a level of frustration (not always related to emotions) in which students have a score below 90% in word recognition and a score below 50% in comprehension. Level four is the probable capacity level in which student have

the most difficulty and do not have any decoding or comprehension. Here, they need a text read to them. Levels one to three have students decoding the text and understanding it, whereas, in level four students are using listening comprehension skills because they have a lot of difficulties with decoding and comprehending the given text. Halladay (2012) also pointed out that the criteria for placing students in their appropriate category has been skewed due to teacher misconceptions. Four main teacher conceptions have been brought forth by Halladay (2012) in order to correct teacher's misinterpretation while providing examples through classroom context.

Assumption one: Decoding accuracy and reading comprehension are closely linked. As informative and useful benchmarks are, teachers must take into consideration four key assumptions related to reading levels (Halladay, 2012). Assumption number one is "decoding accuracy and reading comprehension are closely linked." That being said, this assumption needs to be closely examined. Using reading levels, we assume that accurate oral reading and good comprehension of students go hand in hand, however, studies have shown that a first graders' reading comprehension is strongly related to decoding skills, whereas a sixth graders comprehension is closely related to vocabulary depth. Therefore, decoding plays a larger role in comprehension for less skilled readers than more skilled readers. This means that the decoding and comprehension relationship varies according to the developmental stages of the students and their skill level. Comprehension and decoding do not always go hand in hand. Sometimes students can show strengths or weakness in decoding or comprehension, but not in both. Younger readers often have their reading levels determined by their limitations of decoding and not by their comprehension performance. As a result, teachers must think very carefully about how they determine reading levels and make proper instructional decisions, especially when

students meet either the accuracy or comprehension benchmark, but not both. Teachers must think about reasons behind students' scores and make decisions based not only on the numbers, but looking beyond those and what they actually mean.

Assumption two: Independent reading requires nearly perfect decoding accuracy. Assumption number two is "independent reading requires nearly perfect decoding accuracy." Teachers need to question how reasonable it would be to expect students to read text aloud with nearly perfect accuracy. Is it necessary for student to do so? It is far more important to value comprehension over accurate pronunciation. Teachers must be aware of the arbitrary nature of the leveling criteria. Sound and professional judgment must be exercised when deciding what "characteristics of a student's reading performance indicate proficiency and what level of proficiency is necessary for a given task" (Halladay, 2012, p. 57). Teachers should think about the purpose for having students engage with text when performing independent reading.

Assumption three: Oral reading performance is a reasonable proxy for reading behaviors. Assumption number three states that "oral reading performance is a reasonable proxy for reading behaviors." Assessments on oral reading give an overview of the way students think about or process written texts. It is important to note that there may or may not be a difference between the way students read orally and silently. Oral reading comes close to or is as similar as silent reading. Evidently, a common practice is that teachers use "oral reading assessments to match students with texts that they will read independently and in many cases, silently" (Halladay, 2012, p. 58). It is difficult to measure any aspect of silent reading besides comprehension. Therefore, most studies that compare oral and silent reading performance have found that silent reading comprehension is relative to oral reading comprehension and fluency. A close relationship exists between the students' ability to read with expression and

level of comprehension. Moreover, there is a strong positive relationship between oral reading fluency and silent reading comprehension. This relationship is even stronger in younger readers. Reading silently prior to reading orally leads to better comprehension, but not better decoding. Silent reading allows for student to improve their reading comprehension independent of decoding. Across grade levels, oral comprehension is much better than silent comprehension. Whether students read silently or orally, comprehension is equivalent. Students have comprehension of text when they read orally or to someone else. Poor readers have better oral than silent comprehension, whereas good readers show no difference at all. Given that there is an uncertain relation between the way a student reads aloud or silently, teachers should be careful when making instructional decisions based on oral reading alone. Low comprehension could be related to emphasis on speed or articulation. It is also recommended that teachers acquire information on students' abilities by introducing them to different literary genres and exposing them to a variety of modes and situations. Assessments call for combinations of silent and oral readings.

Assumption four: Certain levels of decoding and comprehension difficulty cause frustration. Assumption number four suggests that "certain levels of decoding and comprehension difficulty cause frustration." It is evident that some texts are more challenging whereas other texts are more enjoyable. The main idea that revolves around this is whether or not the degree of difficulty and enjoyment go hand in hand. Are low levels of accuracy and comprehension emotionally frustrating for readers? There is little research evidence to support this connection (frustration level versus actual emotional frustration). Students may not always be frustrated by the experience, but their comprehension may be frustrated. Factors such as interest, prior knowledge, and social considerations can either motivate or frustrate

students. More research is required to inquire about the relations between text difficulty and motivation. Again, teachers must be cautious and not assume that just because a text is challenging students will be emotionally frustrated.

Ultimately, even though benchmark assessments can provide insight into a student's' current reading ability or level, it is important that teachers go beyond the data and observe each individual reader outside of a formal, testing context. Instructional decisions on how to best cater to the individual in question should also be based on a variety of observations in response to formative or ongoing assessments.

Progress-Monitoring

Progress-monitoring is made available for students who fall slightly or greatly below benchmarks. Monitoring students' progress frequently in reading is part of an effective reading instruction plan (Romain, Millner, Moss, & Held, 2007). This can help teachers reach out to students and begin intervention from their individual zone of proximal development. This process allows for teachers to track students' learning periodically. It is a process which ensures teachers are made aware of whether students are making sufficient progress, require more intervention services, or need acceleration.

The three-tiered RTI model can be used for reading. Teachers can use progress-monitoring assessments and yielded data to make educational decisions on what approaches should be taken to best teach their learners within this framework (Romain et al., 2007). RTI is also a means for determining how frequent a progress-monitoring assessment should be administered. Students are placed in tier one, two, and three accordingly. Those receiving tier 1 intervention only need to be followed up between three to -six times a year, and those who are receiving tier two or three intervention must be followed closely, once every two

weeks. Essentially, we want to know if the students are making progress given the intervention and research based strategies teachers have been using with that particular child.

Reliable and valid. Progress-monitoring needs to be both reliable and valid. The same results need to come up over multiple trials and it must assess what is intended to be assessed. It must also be done on a frequent, perhaps, weekly basis. It is essential that the formative evaluation remains simple and inexpensive. Growth should be easily seen over a period of time when teachers progress monitor their students because this is the purpose.

Progress-monitoring tools and materials. There are many tools that teachers can use to progress monitor their students which are part of and meet the standard of the curriculum-based measurement. Websites such as those of Aimsweb, DIBELS and Edcheckup are recommended by Gazith (2014) for teachers to use in their classrooms. These types of progress-monitoring assessments offer ongoing, formative information for instructional planning. DIBELS is, especially, recommended as a tool for tier two and three interventions by Romain et al. (2007). Tier 2 involves working with students who are academically weak and at risk for failure. The students are identified via standardized testing and then, instruction is delivered in accordance to the students' specific needs. Students should be closely followed and teachers should engage in progress monitoring along the way, while making necessary adjustments as the students develop their skill overtime. Tier 3 involves a select group of 3 to 5 students who are in need of even more intense intervention. At this point, the intervention delivered is for a special needs clientele. These students will typically struggle in school, not because of lack of effort, but rather, as a result of the onset of a learning disability. The progress monitoring tools that DIBELS offers can assist teachers to identify and track which area of literacy the students are experiencing difficulty in. In terms of materials to use when progress-monitoring, teachers must

use grade-level material, depending on the student that is being worked with. If it is not a good fit for them, it is possible that the teacher will have to adjust the level which accommodates their reading level and understanding.

Progress-monitoring graphs. Teachers must not rely on gut feelings because this will not help their students. It is important to look at the progress-monitoring data or graph and see if students are progressing towards the benchmark goals. Instructional decisions for students must be based on solid evidence. Progress-monitoring assessments done with students must be plotted on a graph along with a line for the benchmark goal (Gazith, 2014). Progress-monitoring graphs are instrumental for teachers because it provides evidence on whether students are advancing towards that goal. Careful observation and reading of these graphs will allow teachers to observe if the research based strategies they are using are working or not. Instructional decisions can be made after thorough reflection.

Questions to consider. Gazith (2014) suggested that the important questions to consider for teachers are: (a) is this progress sufficient and how do we know, (b) why monitor progress, and (c) are the interventions working? If the answer to the last question is yes, then the teacher must carry on their choice of instruction and researched-based strategies. If the answer is no, the teacher must change or alter the intervention.

Ongoing Assessments

Ongoing assessment can be done for all students and can be carried out each time a new skill has been taught and new knowledge is presented (Gazith, 2014). It is important to check in to see if students have understood what has been taught. Typically, there are three types of students in the classroom when new information is introduced. There are the students who initially "get it," then the ones who think "it is too easy for me," and finally, those who think

"I'm confused and I don't have it." Ongoing assessments can be issued in the form of exit slips, diagram, answer questions, and quick check in quizzes. Throughout this whole process, teacher feedback about student learning is critical for students. The information students provide in ongoing assessment can be used to inform teaching. There are many different ways to use ongoing assessments in the classroom. The following suggestions were made by Gazith (2014) to quickly monitor students' comprehension.

Ongoing assessment examples.

1. *KWL Charts* allow students to fill out each section using the letters k, w, and l. These sections represent "what I know," "what I want to know," and "what I have learned." A similar chart that students can refer to has three different sections in which they fill out what they know, what they understand and what they are able to do (skills).

2. *Storyboards* for chapters allow for students to chart events, and facts related to the event, and what significance it has.

3. *Before and After Charts* give students the opportunity to preview something and then go back to review it after acquiring new information.

4. *Partner A and B* requires two students to pair up and learn from one another. Partner A talks for one minute summarizing what was learned while partner B listens. Next, partner B talks for one minute, summarizing what was learned as well, but cannot repeat anything that was said by partner A.

5. *Huh? and Aha!* has students either questioning what was taught because they did not understand it (huh?) or says "aha!" because they understood what was taught.

6. In *3-2-1* students write three new things they have learned, two things they are not clear about, and one way they think they can apply what they have learned.

7. For *Paraphrasing to Summarize* students must use summative phrases to paraphrase what they learned. These phrases can be "so what I'm hearing is," "the bottom line then seems to be," "let me make sure I have this right," "you are saying that," "so what the author is saying is," "in order words," and "the gist of it is."

8. *Response Cards* are different cards that student use to respond to the teacher. These cards may say things like "no," "false," "I don't understand," "my mind shut down," or "I don't know."

9. In a *Double Entry Journal* students enter what they heard and what they think. Or what they think they know or what they know they know.

10. *Hyperboles* allow student to give definitions and examples of what has been learned.

Teachers

Teacher education. Teachers need to be well acquainted with literacy instruction in the English language, especially when teaching young students how to read. Teachers must familiarize themselves with the different areas of literacy and be knowledgeable enough in these particular areas to help struggling readers who just do not get it with regular instruction. Evidently, teachers must master the art of teaching how to read. Essentially, reading instruction encompasses a large set of skills and knowledge. There is a desperate need for effective classroom teachers. Baker (2006) highly advocated for excellent pre-service teacher education. Pre-service teachers must be better equipped to help serve their students, especially struggling readers because often times they are left to their own to figure it out. Very detailed and technical information on how to support readers in the classroom needs to be taught to pre-service teachers because it will enhance the effectiveness of instruction and increases reading success as well as experiences for students in later grades. For example, it is essential that

teachers identify and capitalize on teaching alphabetical relations as part of an early literacy curriculum, especially because students who are struggling with reading have difficulties with phonemic awareness. As a result, pre-service teachers should be provided with a variety of phonemic awareness building tasks, so that students can further progress in recognizing sound to letter correspondence. Teachers also need to receive guidance on what phonemes and graphemes should be emphasized in different grade levels (K, one, two) and be aware of the order the word skills should proceed. Teachers must review word structures with struggling readers on a regular basis with students in grade 1 and 2 and be able to detect any decoding difficulties found along the way, so they can quickly be remediated. This will serve as the foundation for their understanding of the other areas of literacy that they will encounter more in depth as they progress throughout their schooling. All of this is done to help the student develop their word recognition and comprehension skills. Teachers must also have a solid understanding on how to assess and enhance phonemic awareness for young children of different language backgrounds and varying needs because English language learners often rely on phonological structure of their first language to perceive sound and syllable structures in English. This reliance interferes with learning the English language. Overall, pre-service teachers need to have a wider awareness when it comes to teaching the English language, so they can maximize the effectiveness and expertise of their teaching and minimize the need for remedial services. It is necessary for pre-service teachers to be trained so that they understand how a child makes sense of the English language. Finally, allowing students to benefit from the expertise of their teachers and hopefully reducing the potential amount of students who struggle with reading.

Teachers' role. All the above mentioned content combined with a supportive, patient teacher who demonstrates a good attitude and positive reinforcement techniques can help the

children take pride in their work and progress. In turn, this can also motivate them towards continuing to want to read more and more, while setting new goals for themselves to achieve. Murphy et al. (2011) concluded that with the right passion, dedication, and knowledge, teachers can intervene and reverse the negative effects that stigmatize struggling readers. If we wish to have the intervention run smoothly, it is crucial that the teachers give and receive constant feedback from one another so they can be kept up to date with the students' progress or lack thereof, and decide, as a team, how to best move forward, helping the student advance academically. Teachers must be extremely clear about the expectations and outcomes they wish to achieve when it comes to working with struggling readers. Should we fail to develop an effective communication system amongst ourselves, even with the best of intentions and evidence-based programs, we can largely be a disservice to our students.

Five Areas of Literacy

The five areas of literacy are important for students to progress through and teachers to give explicit instruction on in order for students to be successful at reading. A solid literacy foundation lies in explicit and direct instruction in all five areas of literacy (Pullen et al., 2010). The first area of literacy involves phonemic awareness in which student are able to process the smallest part of language (phonemes). Here students put together, break apart and manipulate phonemes. The second area of literacy revolves around phonics in which students become aware of sounds, letters, and words. Here they decoding and learning one to one correspondence between letters and sounds. The third area is fluency, which allows for students to practice reading fluently with accuracy, rate, and expression once they are comfortable with the aforementioned literacy areas. The fourth area is vocabulary, in which students are exposed to different words and their meanings in hopes of them gaining a better understanding of the

text. This brings teachers and students to the fifth area of literacy, reading comprehension. This is the last area of literacy and it goes hand in hand with the other ones. If student have mastered the preceding four areas, then they will be able to work on understanding what they are reading. All areas of literacy work together to help students reach the ultimate goal of reading and to fully understand the meaning of any written text (Baker, 2006). The mastery of all areas of literacy allow for a student to not only be a proficient reader at his or her level, but also enjoy any given text. At this point, students can aim to read for pleasure or to learn something new.

Phonemic Awareness. Many children are exposed to letters and sounds early on in their lifetime, whether they hear it through the speech of a family member or have a children's library at home, the basis of sound and letters can begin to be formed at home, before intentional school activities are set-up for them. Some students do not have exposure to print-rich environments and therefore, lack reading readiness skills for a successful literacy development in first grade. (Baker, 2006; Puhulla, 2011; Pullen et al., 2010; Silverman, 2007). According to Gazith (2014), phonemic awareness is the ability to process the smallest part of language, hear each phoneme, blend each of the phonemes together to form words as well as segment individual phonemes found in words. This is relevant only to an alphabetic language such as English. Direct and systematic instruction on sound to letter correspondence is an effective intervention that allows for successful acquisition of literacy. Phonemic awareness is a precursor for reading success in later grades and also serves as a building block for decoding and word recognition (Baker, 2006). Word recognition skills also provides a platform for other skills required for reading proficiently such as vocabulary and concept development, fluency, and comprehension skills. Between the ages of five to -six, students will formally be taught about letters in the school system and teachers will evaluate if a student has developed phonemic

awareness. Teachers must observe if students demonstrate the ability to (a) isolate phonemes in a word, (b) blend onset and rime, (c) blend phonemes, (d) delete phonemes, and (e) manipulate phonemes (Gazith, 2014). The developmental skills related to phonemic awareness from least to most difficult are as follows: rhyming, sentence segmentation, syllable segmentation, onset and rime, blending and segmenting, and phoneme deletion and manipulation. Each of these skills needs to be taught to students and over time progress across different development skills should be made. If students are not making notable progress, they may be struggling with a range of phonological processing deficit disorders (Baker, 2006). That is, struggling with recognizing phonological elements that are represented by a more complex orthographic structure in English.

Phonemic Awareness Intervention. Students who do not possess a good sense of phonemic awareness in grade 1 and 2 may be susceptible to difficulties in reading (Saunders & Gierke, 1999). Other factors that influence overall early literacy skills include family socioeconomic status, reading practice at home, and of course, the presence of a learning difficulty. As a result, Saunders et al. (1999) provided a report of a study conducted with students in grades one and two to increase their phonemic awareness. This report also described the intervention and strategies used with these students. The intervention that was used was intended to heighten the amount of the students' language knowledge by increasing their phonemic awareness. They also reviewed solution strategies for phonemic awareness and found that early intervention may perhaps make a difference for the development and outcome of reading skills in students for grade 1 and 2, especially those that are at risk for reading failure. They recommended that phonemic awareness instruction must be used to strengthen language skills.

One way that teachers can incorporate phonemic awareness activities into their classroom is by providing students with rich language experiences that encourage them to be active in the exploration and manipulation of sounds (Saunders et al., 1999). This allow for students to attain phonemic awareness. Saunders et al. (1999) recommended an intervention of phonemic awareness activities that incorporate all the areas of the curriculum to allow students to engage with literacy throughout the day. For example, some activities include "rhyming, clapping, and body movements, singing, drawing, verbal response, and writing" (Saunders et al., 1999, p. 36). In this intervention, teachers begin the school year with rhymes and alliteration. These particular activities allow students to identity as well as match similar word patterns and start to make any sound comparison they could find. They also listen for the sounds in order to start blending them together in effort to finally make a word. While students build their knowledge of language using phonemic awareness, teachers can use picture cards, phoneme isolation and matching sound games as well as verbal wordplay. Teachers can have their students use "markers, counters, classroom literature and more verbal wordplay to increase their knowledge of identifying and counting individual sounds in words" (Saunders et al., 1999, p. 37). Via sound manipulation, teachers can reinforce skills to increase awareness of beginning, middle, and ending sounds. All throughout this phonemic awareness intervention, students would be "immersed in word play, daily stories, and phoneme manipulation using classroom word lists from the basic curriculum within each classroom" (Saunders et al., 1999, p. 37). Teachers should ensure that students continuously revisit any previously introduced concept while student move through the phonemic levels.

Saunders et al.'s (1999) study found that the majority of students that participated in the intervention (high exposure to phonemic awareness instruction and activities) as described above

had increased their knowledge of language and consequently, improved their phonemic awareness. Early intervention benefited the students because it allowed for the teacher to match their phonemic awareness instruction to their students' needs. It was detected that students had a greater control of letter and sound manipulation, as well as a better ability to sound out words due to their ability to rhyme and isolate different sounds. The most advancements were seen in the amount of syllables and phonemes counted. The intervention brought about the greatest leaps in phoneme deletion, segmentation, and sound isolation. Results also indicated that students were better able to complete oral and written tasks related to phonemic awareness. Furthermore, they also showed to have greater spelling skills than they had demonstrated in the previous two years, which ultimately, increased their confidence to engage in written related tasks. It is possible that students experienced this increase because of the modelling they received from their teacher. All participants enjoyed the activities that were created for them because students were given the opportunity to engage with tasks in a variety of ways including the use of singing, movement, games, and tongue twisters.

Teachers that are interested in implementing a phonemic awareness program in their classroom like Saunders et al. (1999) administered in their study are recommended to begin as early as possible (preschool or kindergarten) because it has the greatest impact on the students' ability to read. Tests issued at the start of the school year allow for the teachers to analyze which students are lacking literacy skill acquisition. These students can be provided with extra support from the get go in hopes of the students making progress over time. Otherwise, students who begin school with an underdeveloped sense of phonemic awareness are put at a disadvantage to their peer counterparts. Therefore, it is also critical for students to be assessed as early as possible because it allows for teachers to provide appropriate instruction for their student

profiles. Any underdeveloped or lacking skills can be addressed by the teacher and cultivated in students. Teachers need to ensure that the classroom activities are stimulating while simultaneously immersing students in verbal creativity. A variety of modalities should be used in order to enhance the learning of language. It should be fun and maintain the students' interest at the same time. Teachers should incorporate daily literature activities and be sure to expose students to different stories and rhymes. Teachers must invest time in order to prepare material needed for their instruction and students. Much of the material can be reusable, therefore, it is worth taking the time to create it. In order to work with manipulatives during teacher instruction and student activities, time must also be allocated for sufficient exposure and practice. To improve students' reading skills early grades should provide their student with phonemic awareness activities. Phonemic awareness interventions also improve spelling and writing skills. Lack of professional training in phonemic awareness may result in teachers not being able to sufficiently identify at risk students who need more language knowledge. Therefore, professional development or training for early grade teachers in levels of phonemic awareness and the usage of diagnostic tools are also essential. In order for students to learn to read, knowledge of the language is mandatory. This can be attained through strong phonemic awareness. Moreover, it also enhances the reading process for students and will be able to gain confidence in their skills and abilities. Ultimately, allowing students to not only be successful learners, but also be successful readers.

Gazith (2014) also advocated that direct and systematic instruction on sound to letter correspondence is an effective intervention and allows for successful acquisition of literacy. However, if teachers are apprehensive of beginning an intense phonemic awareness intervention, then they can easily use mini lessons and gradually work their way towards a unit

and finally, a more comprehensive program. For example, in the early grades, the use of songs can be integrated into mini lessons because they are simple and fun for both the teacher and students. Through their observation of a teacher who used songs in class to teach the different areas of literacy, Iwasaki, Rasinski, Gildren, Yileirim, and Zimmerman (2013) noticed that song lyrics are embedded with rhyme assonance and alliteration. Consequently, this allows for teachers and students to play with sounds of language and develop phonemic awareness. Song lyrics are a great way to teach word families (rimes) as well. Teachers can have students work in small groups and think of other words that link a particular word family together using songs as well. Whichever approach a teacher decides to adopt it is important that they fully invest in the process and see it through to its completion. Teachers must realize the overall importance of phonemic awareness because it serves as a foundational building block when it comes to assisting children learning how to read.

Phonics. Teachers work hard to assist students when it comes time to developing phonemic awareness, as this is "a critical aspect of emergent literacy development" (Allington, 2013, p. 522). In the beginning elementary school years, students are also developmentally ripe to learn phonics instruction (McIntyre et al., 2006). While students begin to learn the English language, teachers should be ready to implement early intervention techniques as needed so that any misconceptions or difficulties can be quickly remediated. In the English language, words are composed of letters and those letters make sounds (Gazith, 2014). Phonics instruction allows for students to understand that there is a one to one correspondence between the letter symbol and the sound that it produces. As a result, this helps students recognize words and acquire necessary skills to read accurately. It is important that this precedes the teaching of exceptions found in the English language (e.g., soft g and hard g). English is not a simple letter to sound association

system, but rather, quite complex in nature. For example, some letters or letter combinations can make the same sound (e.g., /oo/ in cook and /oo/ in moon), whereas at other times, different letters or letter combinations can make the same sound (e.g., /ow/ in cow and /ou/ in mouth). As a result, it becomes very difficult for students to understand and memorize the system along with its exceptions. Since there are far too many existing combinations to be able to memorize words, students must learn the process of decoding (Gazith, 2014). We can make learning fun by telling our students that we need to know the code to be able to unlock the combination. At first, students must be exposed to decodable, predictable text, so they develop their confidence as readers. The progression of regular word reading requires students to: (a) make each sound, (b) read the word in its entirety, (c) sight read the word, and then, (d) be able to automatically read each word.

Phonics instruction. When planning for phonics instruction, teachers should separate letters that look similar (b and d) or sound similar (e and l), as students frequently confuse these letters (Gazith, 2014). Teachers should also ensure to introduce continuous sounds first such as "mmm" and "nnn" because the letter name and letter sound and it will facilitate students in remembering the one to one correspondence. Teachers can then move on to more difficult or confusing letters. If the student is detected to have poor naming speed, then the teacher should provide students with a visual component for each sound to assist them. Teachers should model individual sounds in isolation to their students and asks students to repeat the sounds. Teachers should also review previous sounds as they introduce new sounds. Students should be taught multiple letters that can be used to form many words. This means they should be exposed to a few consonants and be introduced to one vowel at a time, so that they can acquire its distinct sound. Irregular words can be taught in a single lesson, before they appear in passages. Later,

students should be given opportunities to build fluency with these irregular words in order to reinforce the concept through extension activities. It is necessary to continuously collect data, or informally assess students to ensure that he or she is sounding out each letter and not memorizing the letters. If the child appears to be having difficulty in blending and segmenting, teachers may present each sound on a different colored block, so the child can view them as separate letters and sounds. Students should also practice the letter sounds by manipulating it in various contexts of real and nonsense words. To test if a child has acquired functional reading skills, teachers can also provide students with nonsense words to observe if they have solidified the concept of letter sounds. Allington (2013) cautioned that if too much focus is placed on nonsense words, it can impact a child's reading habits and ability to self-regulate when they go on to reading real words. To avoid misconceptions, teacher should integrate the use of real words and nonsense words so students are equally exposed to both.

Modern day phonics: Whole-to-parts instruction. Moustafa and Maldonado-Colon (1999) sought out to gain information on the process of acquiring independent reading skills. They addressed a hotly debated topic on whether students should be exposed to parts to whole (traditional phonics) or whole-to-parts (modern phonics) instruction. Although there is a debate among which type of instruction is better, Moustafa et al.'s (1999) research review indicated that researchers typically agreed upon three main points: (a) The first print words students recognize are their names and commonly occurring words such as stop. These words are presented holistically (/stop/) and not letter by letter (/s/t/o/p/). (b) Early readers can read better when text is given context, and students can directly apply their understanding, rather than being presented with words that are isolated, or out of context. And (c) Early readers have an

easier time understanding written language when they are already familiar with the language, as opposed to an unfamiliar language.

Research reviewed by Moustafa et al. (1999) on linguistic processes indicated that spoken words in the English language can be analyzed into phonemes, onset rimes, or even syllables. Therefore, if students are having difficulties with phonemes sounds or reading in general, reading can be taught using onset rimes or syllables, as this helps them become better readers. Reviewed research in cognitive processes indicated that students can make analogies between familiar and unfamiliar words when they recognize onset rimes. For example, if a student is familiar with the print version of "sm" and the sound that it makes /sm/, they are likely to pronounce new words with "sm" appropriately. Moreover, if students are familiar with the print "art" and the sound /art/, they are likely to pronounce new words with "art" appropriately as well. As an extension to these types of activities mentioned above, students will then be able to piece their word knowledge together in such a way whereby they will be able to read /sm/ and /art/ holistically as "smart."

Moustafa et al. (1999) reviewed research related to this debate and provided student centered and researched-based ways of teaching students letter-sound correspondences in particular to English and Spanish speaking students. They suggested the use of whole-to-parts phonics instruction with two phases. Whole-to-parts phonics instruction begins with the prior knowledge a reader has and continues to build upon it. At first, it reinforces a child's knowledge of being able to recognize a word in its entirety, or holistically through shared reading activities. Next, it proceeds to teach them letter-sounds associations that they are already familiar with in print words and then moves onto using that letter sound knowledge to decode and pronounce any other unfamiliar word they may encounter in a text. Typically, whole-to-

parts phonics is initiated by a teacher who either uses repetitive, predictable text with students or songs and poems as a whole class read-aloud, comprehension activity.

Using shared reading, the teacher assists the children to go through the story, and slowly points to the words that are on the page, one by one so that the students can visualize the word and make connections between spoken words and print (Moustafa et al., 1999). After the students have had the opportunity to enjoy the text through shared reading with the teacher, they should be able to remember it from memory and repeat after the teacher. Shared reading is an important step in teaching children the basis on how to read and is necessary before being able to move onto phonics lessons. At the same time, it helps students gain confidence and view themselves as readers.

Once children have progressed from shared reading practices, the teacher should allow for partner reading to take place (Moustafa et al., 1999). The teacher must serve as the model who demonstrates how students can read to each other side by side and can also show them how to take turns when engaging in reading a story, song, or poem. In effort to evaluate a student's working knowledge of the words they are speaking aloud and the words that are actually written out on the paper in front of them, teachers should circulate around the classroom while the students are reading with their partners and ask them to place their fingers under each word as they read aloud. After students are able to do one to one matching and can read without the teacher guiding them, they are ready to be introduced to whole-to-parts instruction.

To begin the whole-to-parts instruction, teachers may ask students to brainstorm words that stood out to them from the story they have read and they can be mounted on a classroom word wall (Moustafa et al., 1999). In passing, the teacher may wish to discuss grammar and vocabulary as they come up. It would be an ideal time to go over prefixes, suffixes, root words,

and compound words because they would be presented in context. The teacher and students can also point out words that begin with the same letter and assist children to make generalizations about all the words they have learned. For instance, in the Itsy Bitsy Spider song, words such as "went." "water," "washed" all begin with a "w" letter and sound. This correspondence can be highlighted on the word chart. Teachers can also highlight words that have the same letter (e.g., "g"), but different sound pronunciations using different colors (e.g., /g/ in girl and /g/ in giant) should be illustrated differently. This is the last stage of whole-to-parts phonics instruction.

The whole process from start to finish may take an average of two weeks, provided that daily instructional time is allotted for it as accounted by Moustafa et al. (1999). As students become proficient in one to one matching in daily presented stories, they will be able to read at a faster and faster pace. Moreover, as students build more vocabulary, the teacher should take them down off the word wall and assemble them on a ring. Teachers who are attempting to teach this phonics program for the first time should spend some time thinking ahead of what words they wish to place emphasis on or highlight. It is intended that students come to realize the relationship found between letters and sounds and have them take direct ownership of that knowledge as they learn and make sense of the English alphabet. Furthermore, as student become more ready for reading, teachers can focus on word families such as -ent in went or -own in down. The teacher can continue the whole to part phonics instruction as they bring shared reading to a close and begin to shift their focus towards carefully selected books for guided reading practice. After students have understood shared reading and guided reading activities and can read at an independent level, teachers can spend their time on other literacy activities.

Whole-to-parts phonics informs itself heavily on the letter-sound relationship and emphasizes it through meaningful activities such as shared and guided reading practices

(Moustafa et al., 1999). It begins with the child's initial level in terms of their understanding of the spoken English language and builds upon it (e.g., onset rimes and syllables). It teaches children about words, only after a story has been read to them, rather than being introduced as separated, or isolated without any story or poem to link it back to. Whole-to-parts instruction is similar to traditional phonics in the sense that is "explicit, systematic and extensive."

Decodable or predictable texts. Gazith (2014) suggested that opportunities should be created for students to practice sounds in textual contexts. Guided reading and decodable books are excellent text sources for teaching phonics. Using highly decodable texts are especially relevant among students who struggle with reading or students with special needs. Mesmer (2005) explained that decodable text includes those that have the letter and sound association present in the reading along with the sounds such as blends (e.g., bl, ch, sh, th) or digraphs (e.g., ee, ea, ay) that teachers have reviewed in class and recur often in the texts that they are exposed to.

Teachers have been using readability as a means to decide how difficult a text actually is, therefore, in the same sense, decodability is seen as a means to assess how difficult a word may be as they progress throughout their literacy development. Decodability is a type of scaffold available to students in effort to guide and facilitate their acquisition of literacy. Mesmer (2005) pointed out that there are two purposes to textual scaffolding: (a) it presents the students with a specific context or situation in which they can apply the letter and sound strategies they have learned and (b) the lesson focuses on and is matched to the presented text, therefore, students are pushed to concentrate on the task at hand and directly apply the strategies they have learned about letters and sounds. Moreover, decodability cannot be viewed as a long-term type of

reading scaffolding, at a certain point it needs to be removed from the equation, just like training wheels from a bicycle.

Mesmer (2005) understood that some researchers are skeptical about using highly decodable, phonics saturated reading materials and believe that students can learn how to read through other means, while other researchers believe that the use of decodable texts serves as the basis for reading. Therefore, she conducted a study where the main purpose was to observe if students who were exposed to highly decodable texts would demonstrate a better command of letter and sound information. Although both groups of students received the same type of phonics instruction, they were each given different text to read. The treatment group read highly decodable texts and the control group read less decodable. The researcher analyzed whether students who were given decodable texts of high quality were better able to use the phonics instruction they received than students who had been using less decodable texts. Students were placed into treatment and control groups and were either exposed to highly decodable text or less decodable text for a period of 14 days. Students, who were placed in the group which received highly decodable text, demonstrated a better application of letter and sound association than students who were exposed to less decodable texts. They showed to have a better reading accuracy and were reading with greater independence. An increase in accuracy can be related to the fact that students understood and were able to apply the alphabetic principle. An increase in self-confidence was also observed. This could be because students were able to match the instruction provided by the teacher and transfer it when reading decodable texts. No remarkable differences were found in the self-corrections made among the students reading the high versus low decodable texts. Overall, the results showed that having students read highly decodable texts allows them to apply greater letter and sound association during reading. Given these

results, decodable texts can be used to scaffold students learning. Teachers must ensure that the decodable texts coordinate with their phonics instruction. In the study conducted by Mesmer (2005), it was found that using phonics instruction along with decodable texts allows for struggling readers to increase their accuracy, attention to letter sound, and independence. It gives students the opportunity to practice skills taught by the teacher in an appropriate manner. However, this type of instruction and material use is not meant to be used exclusively, but rather, in conjunction with a variety of other materials.

Going beyond phonics. Allington (2013) mentioned that predictable reading books are equally as effective, and that teachers must not only focus on decoding when it comes analyzing if a child can read well. Moreover, it is encouraged to allow student to use invented spelling in the classroom. This is a good idea so teachers can examine if the students have linked together the letter-sound relationship and if it has become meaningful to them as early readers and writers. At the same time, teachers should be working on other skills. For example, when teaching reading, comprehension should also be explored and made explicit. It is important to assign a name to a particular strategy when it is being used, so the students can refer to that strategy on their own when the teacher is not present. For instance, one strategy we both use in the classroom is “fish mouth” which helps students understand that in order to read a text they must start by getting their mouth ready to say the first sound. Another strategy for reading that we have named is called “chunky monkey” in which students have to chunk words or find familiar small words or sounds within a difficult word. This will help students figure out what the word it is and how it is read. These strategies are taught to students by teachers through explicit instruction and the strategy is specific, so that when students are reading independently and have difficulty, they can refer to it without having the teacher present. As we have seen,

there is no one decoding method that has shown to be especially noteworthy over another one. Teachers must keep this in mind when selecting a phonics program they wish to follow, that there is no one miracle program that will mold the students into becoming excellent readers. As teachers, we must continue to challenge ourselves to look for the best possible way to reach each child and have a bank of strategies ready to implement at any given moment. If one strategy does not work, we have to be ready to pull out another one and use it in its place. Students should also have a bank of strategies and be taught that if one strategy does not work for them, then they should try and use another.

Fluency. Fluency is the ability to demonstrate and maintain appropriate rate, expression and accuracy when reading, with little to no effort (Gazith, 2014; Marcell & Ferraro, 2013). It is important for students to maintain a constant flow as they read, so that less emphasis is placed on decoding a text and more concentration can be placed on the actual interpretation of what the text signifies. As teachers, we acknowledge that without adequate fluency, reading is neither pleasant nor interesting. One of our main goals is to help our students become fluent, proficient readers in the English language because their fluency serves as a link between recognizing the words on the paper in front of them and comprehending what the text is attempting to communicate to its audience.

Issues with fluency. Marcell et al.'s (2013) review of research and classroom accounts have brought them to conclude that using one minute fluency timed reading passages may be setting our struggling readers back. The original design and intention was to serve as a means to progress monitor students through the quantitative data collected over time in regards to fluency, rate and accuracy. Teachers would be able to use these passages as a quick check to observe if students have made progression. Somewhere along the way, the message has been misconstrued,

and all the hype centered around fluency reading became synonymous among students with "race reading." In order for it to be considered an authentic fluency assessment, students have to also be able to demonstrate comprehension. The goal of the reading passage is that they are able to read "*with* and *for* meaning." Rather than focusing on pre-reading and post-reading skills of the fluency passage, such as previewing the text, making predictions, retelling the story in their own words, students became fixated on how fast they read and if they have managed to beat their previous score. Moreover, students skipped straight through their punctuation and did not bother to use intonation, or expression when reading.

Fluency strategies. Marcel et al.'s (2013) proposed the use of a fluency development lesson (FDL). This strategy makes reading feel less competitive. These can take place over several hours, days or weeks. First, students are introduced with a short poetry passage, then they engage in read alouds and discussions. Next, students must engage in choral readings (to help with fluency) and paired readings (for students to calculate individual rate scores), word studies and home practice, performance and final re-reading. Marcel et al.'s (2013) tweaked the FDL to suit the needs of their students. Their students were introduced to a super-hero intervention plan (listed below).

Marr et al. (2011) and Marr et al. (2009) both performed studies to inquire the effectiveness of class wide peer tutoring and peer assisted tutoring. They concluded that this was an effective strategy to develop student fluency. By using this strategy in the classroom, the teacher has the opportunity to offer meaningful feedback to the students as they actively take on the roles of the tutor and tutee. Sometimes students may feel intimidated to practice reading aloud in front of their teacher or their classmates, therefore, this method allows for more privacy and one-on-one practice.

In order to assist emerging readers, we must provide opportunities to practice both repetitive and different types of texts to allow for sufficient challenge (Gazith, 2014). In effort to make a deliberate transition from simply decoding words to fluently reading a sentence or passage, Khun (2006) suggested the use of three fluency related intervention strategies (repeated reading, wide reading and listening only). These strategies also include the use of expressive and prosodic reading in unison with accuracy. After working with three groups of grade 2 students, Khun's (2006) results indicated that the three implemented fluency strategies were each effective in developing different skills (e.g., comprehension and word recognition). It is important to note that fluency is more than simply being able to read words across a paper properly and quickly. Students must be able to assign expression to those words and use prosody. This means they must adjust their pitch and intonation. For instance, "Go now! vs. Go now?" apply stress and emphasis on words, use of stressed and unstressed syllables, as well as adjusting tempo and rate. All are equally important to consider whether or not a reader is fluent.

The first strategy mentioned is repeated reading which involves the students echo reading the text after the teacher (Khun, 2006). After having read through the text, students should be placed into pairs, whereby they can take turns reading small passages or entire pages. They can read it a second time, but this time around the students should read aloud all the parts that their partner read to them in the first round. Students can, then, share a passage from the text that they had practiced in their group and feel confident about reading aloud to their classmates. The second strategy highlighted is wide-reading or non-repetitive reading which draws from both echo and choral reading. Typically, students will read two different stories, one using echo reading and one using choral reading. In wide reading, it is important to keep materials new and interesting for the students, so they are exposed to a greater variety of words and ideas. The third

fluency strategy is called listening only. The teacher reads books aloud to the students in an expressive and engaging manner, so that proper oral reading could be modeled for the students. In Khun's (2006) study, students were placed into different groups (e.g., repeated reading, wide reading and listening only) and results indicated that the students placed in repeated and non-repeated reading groups performed better at the correct amount of words read per minute than students in the "listen only" group. In terms of reading comprehension, students in the wide-reading category performed better.

Super-hero fluency instruction. So how can we make reading educational, yet entertaining at the same time? How can we entice students to read for the right reasons, and not competitively? Marcell et al. (2013) encouraged the use of rhyme passages as a means to develop fluency. For example, poetry has a great "rhythm" to the English language. Showing students how to re-read poetry gives students an appreciation for the structures and features of the text. The pattern or predictability of the repetitive reading, as well as the rate and pace of the text assists in helping students with their reading skills. Marcell et al. (2013) set out to make fluency instruction more enjoyable for students and hoped they would be able to internalize all the features and strategies associated with fluency. They aimed to help students adjust their overall rate, pace, as well as being able to add expression to their reading, make connections to the text and summarize what they have read. As a result, a super-hero intervention plan was created and presented to the students and the superheroes were on a mission to conquer fluency once and for all and teach them what "real" reading was all about. Poetry Power Man was introduced to promote overall rate, expression, and accuracy, whereas his opponent was Robot Reader, who tried to get students to read as robots. Super Scooper swooped in to assist with phrasing techniques and aimed to have oral reading to sound more like carrying out a

conversation or speaking with another person. His biggest nemesis was Choppy Boy, who wanted students to chop their words as they read. Expression Man jumped in to help students read with appropriate intonation and expression, ensuring that the students' voices went up or down when needed. He faced off with Flat Man who wanted students to read with a flat, boring voice. Captain Comprehension helped navigate the students towards reading for comprehension through being able to summarize and connect. He squared off with Alien Dude who wanted to leave the student confused and puzzled about the words they read, so that making sense or meaning from the text was almost impossible. Marcell et al. (2013) found that implementing the super-hero intervention plan made students more motivated because they associated their learning with something fun.

How to integrate super-hero fluency instruction. In order to effectively integrate this specific, type of fluency practice in the classroom, teachers must set up a reading fluency routine (Marcell et al., 2013). First, have students read the poem aloud with the class. Then, have them read individually and track the amount of time it took to read the poem their own. Have students take the poem home for practice. Once students have had the opportunity to practice at home, they can work on it in class using the super-hero intervention plan for improving fluency. This requires students to focus on one particular aspect of fluency per day until they have mastered each one. Choppy or broken up reading is tiresome for the both reader and listener, but most importantly, it hinders the reader's ability to extract meaning from and enjoy reading the text (Marr et al., 2011). The first practice involves Super Scooper taking on Choppy Boy, in which students read the poem over again and scoop two to four words together, so it sounds like they are speaking. Practice two consists of Expression Man taking on Flat man. Students read the poem over again and focus on their voices going up and down at appropriate times to avoid

sounding boring. The third practice involves Captain Comprehension going against Alien Dude, in which students identify if there are any tricky or difficult words and, then, make a connection to the poem. Every time students defeat an enemy of fluency, they can cross it out on their worksheet and circle the super-hero they have mastered. Basically, the final battle would consist of Poetry Power Man defeating Robot Reader. Teachers should have students read the poem one final time with appropriate rate (not to fast or slow) and recount their words per minute. The intent is that students' fluency skills develop by the end of this exercise, without having the added pressure to perform in front of the teacher or other peers. This process allows for students to self-evaluate and challenge themselves to become fluent readers.

Exposing students to different modes of fluency. Students are able to practice fluency through different modes that are engaging and fun. Aside from using fluency passages, repetitive readings, and poetry in the classroom, teachers are also encouraged to use readers' theater scripts and catchy, age-appropriate song lyrics. For example, Iwasaki et al. (2013) highly recommended the use of song integration for fluency because it allows for a natural way to pay attention to rhymes; it involves repeated reading, and is fun for students as they are practicing. This helps stimulate students' creativity and allows them to integrate drama and creativity at the same time. Students can recall familiar song lyrics or lines from a script that they already have knowledge of to enhance fluency. Exposing students to passages, or artistic pieces that they are familiar with alleviates a lot of the stress associated in regards to their area of weakness, in this case, that would be fluency. Since students may already know the text by heart, they will be more comfortable with it. With more ease and concentration, students will also be able to visualize, interpret, and follow along with the words written on the paper. We believe that the greater exposure the students have when it comes to the different mediums in

which they can exercise fluency, the better their chances of reading with ease and success. We need to encourage our non-fluent, emerging readers to do their very best and make them aware of how proud we are of the effort they are putting into their work.

Vocabulary. Early grade teachers focus a lot on phonemic awareness and phonics, so much so, that they rarely have time to get to vocabulary instruction (Pullen et al., 2010). The reason consists of the students' primary focus and effort being placed on decoding a text, therefore, vocabulary acquisition is put on the back burner. Educators should not wait for students to learn how to read independently before integrating vocabulary in their lesson. Puhulla's study (2010) consisted of an intervention using storybooks to enhance vocabulary as an integral part of the curriculum rather than presenting words in isolation. There were two groups that were created for this study; one group received explicit instruction on selected book vocabulary whereas the other group received vocabulary instruction in the context of the read alouds only. It was found that explicit instruction on selected book vocabulary was an effective approach because students in this group outperformed their peers from the other group on storybook vocabulary measure. Moreover, waiting to tackle vocabulary before or after students are reading independently does not make any difference (Puhulla, 2011). Therefore, there should be an emphasis on vocabulary and it should be integral part of reading regardless of what grade or stage students are at. Many areas of literacy go hand in hand, in this case vocabulary and comprehension (Gazith, 2014; Pullen et al., 2010). Researchers found that low reading comprehension scores are a result of the absence of, or poor skills in fluency and vocabulary (Pullen et al., 2010). Moore, Hammond, and Fetherston, (2014), Puhulla (2011), and Silverman (2007) specifically pointed through their review of research out that the knowledge of vocabulary positively influences reading comprehension. Therefore, it has been demonstrated

that a bidirectional relationship exists between vocabulary and comprehension. As a matter of fact, vocabulary knowledge is known to also be a predictor for academic outcomes (Moore, et al., 2014) and knowledge of vocabulary is a predictor for later reading achievement (Pullen et al., 2010).

Types of vocabulary knowledge. There are four types of vocabulary knowledge that students need to master: expressive, receptive, morphemic, and contextual (Gazith, 2014). Expressive vocabulary consists of students being able to say the word, use it, know what it means, and explain it to someone else. Receptive vocabulary allows for students to understand a word that is being read or spoken. Morphemic vocabulary is when students know the meaning of a word and learn strategies to decipher meaning (e.g., prefix, suffix). Contextual vocabulary allows for the student to read the sentence for meaning (Gazith, 2014; Kindle, 2009; Mahdavi et al., 2011). Students must have sufficient exposure to the different branches of vocabulary. It is the teachers responsibility to ensure that in their vocabulary instruction, they have touched upon the various branches and students have had the opportunity to experience, use, and learn new words.

Using read alouds. Students learn words in two stages, one being fast mapping and two being extending mapping (Kindle, 2009). In fast mapping students are able to make a connection between a word and a tentative meaning, whereas, in extended mapping students achieve complete knowledge of the word. Teachers aim to have their students acquire latter. Read alouds provide the opportunity for teachers to mediate learning of vocabulary for students. As a result, read alouds that incorporate vocabulary instruction help students bridge the gap between fast and extended mapping. Furthermore, vocabulary development depends on oral language experiences in which students are exposed to new vocabulary constantly (Pullen et al.,

2010). Not all students come from backgrounds that have exposed them to rich vocabulary experiences. Consequently, if the vocabulary knowledge is not already presented in students' oral language communication, they will not be able to make use of or properly apply it when they encounter vocabulary across different texts. Reading is the best way to develop vocabulary because texts are rich in language, as opposed to common everyday speech, which sometimes lacks in depth (e.g., detailed descriptions). Just listening to reading has a positive influence on students' vocabulary acquisition. Imagine how much students can acquire through direct instruction in read alouds. When students are orally presented with rich vocabulary and are able to recognize it, it is likely that this will also help them with decoding that same word when found in the text (Moore et al., 2014).

Kindle (2009), Mahdavi et al., 2013; Pullen et al. (2010), Moore et al. (2014), Puhulla (2011), and Silverman (2007) highly supported the use of a read-aloud context to effectively integrate vocabulary instruction. This process builds upon oral language and early literacy skills. Books are a source of rich vocabulary and read alouds provide students with a context to learn word meanings and helps develop vocabulary. It is important to teach students words across multiple contexts and the different meanings that the same word can have, depending on how it is used in a sentence (Gazith, 2014; Kindle, 2009; Pullen et al., 2010; Puhulla, 2011; Silverman, 2007). Students are limited in their independent reading because they are using predictable, or repetitive, decodable text which, unfortunately, limits them to the introduction of new vocabulary (Kindle, 2009; Puhulla, 2011; Mahdavi et al., 2011). Therefore, read alouds can be used to fill in the gap and expose children to books that are embedded with rich vocabulary (unfamiliar words and descriptive language). Read alouds and learning of words occur simultaneously. While the teachers are reading, they may stop to elaborate on a particular word

by providing an explanation, demonstration, or example for the students. The slightest explanation of a word in context of a supportive text can be enough to help students make connections between the new word and its meaning. When the teacher uses repeated reading, it also enhances word learning and provides students with the opportunity to revise as well as refine their knowledge of new words (Kindle, 2009; Moore et al., 2014).

Tiered vocabulary instruction. Vocabulary instruction with read alouds must be carefully thought out. In advance, teachers have to select appropriate books, identify words for instruction, and strategies to facilitate students' learning of the words (Kindle, 2009). For read alouds, teachers usually pick books that are engaging, which in turn motivates students, as well as draws their attention to new words. Moore et al. (2014) explained that teaching words and their meanings take time and different words require different levels of attention. Tiered instruction during read alouds facilitates this process (Kindle, 2009; Puhulla, 2011; Pullen et al., 2010; Moore et al., 2014; Silverman, 2007). In whole group read alouds, teachers use tier two words and draw students attention to them. These words are less common in everyday conversations and appear often in written language. These types of words are also perfect for instruction during read alouds. Tier three words are simple words that students come across in everyday language, whereas, tier three words are typically, academic and taught within content area instruction. Therefore, read alouds use only tier two words in teacher instruction. Pullen et al. (2010) and Silverman (2007) supported the idea of using tiered vocabulary instruction as it proved to be quite effective in read alouds. Furthermore, Puhulla (2011) conducted a study to see if instructional methods used in tier two was effective in teaching students sophisticated vocabulary and if the instructional methods used would help close the gap between the students that were identified for at risk in failure for reading versus average achieving students. The

studies' results indicated that students that received tier two instruction scored much better than those who did not get this type of instruction.

Levels of instructions for vocabulary. Puhulla (2011) concluded that students require explicit word instruction and the opportunity to practice and use those words in different contexts. These experiences presented to students, by the teacher, are powerful and greatly beneficial. Through Kindle's (2009) study of vocabulary development during read alouds, it was found that teachers had three levels of instruction (incidental exposure, embedded, and focused) for vocabulary. Incidental exposure is when the teachers have discussions before, during, and after reading and they are trying to infuse rich vocabulary in their discussion. Embedded instruction is when the attention is drawn to word meaning with less than four teacher and student exchanges. Focused instruction is used when target words are deemed important to the comprehension of story or it is difficult to communicate the word meaning. Teachers' instruction varied depending on its intent.

Vocabulary instruction strategies. The teacher's styles of interactions during read alouds are very important to vocabulary growth. High-quality read alouds have teacher mediation in which teachers that are effective weave questions and comments into their read alouds. They create conversations among themselves, the students, and the text. Word learning is facilitated when teachers use a variety of strategies such as elaboration, naming, questioning, labeling and so on. Active involvement of students is more effective in the context of discussion, as opposed to simply asking questions to them. Demonstrating vocabulary acquisition strategies to students and allowing them to practice them is very effective (Puhulla, 2011). Kindle (2009) found that teachers used nine specific and helpful strategies in their instruction to help develop vocabulary knowledge through read alouds.

Strategy one includes questioning. It occurs when teachers come across a word that they think may be unfamiliar to students and stop to ask about it (Kindle, 2009). Usually this happens at the beginning of an instructional exchange. The question is repeated a few times to give students a chance to formulate a response. It also helps to phonologically represent the new word, which is linked to word learning. Questioning is also used to assess the students' existing knowledge of the word and whether they have effectively understood and used provided context clues. Here, teachers may or may not provide a definition and ask students to give them the word that matches. It is a difficult strategy because students may give some incorrect responses before reaching the correct answer. Strategy two involves providing the definition. This allows teachers to choose whether or not they want to give the word definition. Explanations should be made simple for students to easily understand. The use of the word may be discussed here too. Strategy three consists of providing synonyms. Synonyms are quite popularly used to reinforce word meaning. Here, teachers repeat the sentence, but replace the target word with a synonym. Strategy four requires providing examples. It is when words are explained by giving examples. Students can learn the target word when it is related to words or concepts that they are already familiar with. Teachers can help students make their own connection and ask for examples of where or how they have heard this word being used. Teachers can also ask them to recall of a situation that this word may be used in. Strategy five revolves around clarifications and corrections. Guidance plays a key role in this strategy. Sometimes students may have misconceptions or partial understanding; as a result teachers must correct or clarify their students' responses. Strategy six includes issuing extensions. Some definitions students provide may be correct, but too simple, therefore teachers must extend the definition and provide students with additional information that may build on the students' response. Strategy seven

consists of labelling, which is often used with picture books in read alouds. Here, teachers name something that is unfamiliar to the students and points to the illustration connected to the word. Student can connect the word to the picture or vice versa. This allows for no interruptions when the teacher is reading and word meaning is enhanced because students have visual image support. Strategy eight involves the use of imagery. Teachers use their facial expressions, sounds, and physical movements to demonstrate word meanings. Sometimes books may not have enough pictures, therefore, teachers unknowingly use imagery as expressive reading. This also facilitates students' word learning. Imagery is used to enhance students understanding of a text without having to disturb the flow of the story. Sometimes imagery is used after discussion to reinforce something that was already defined. Imagery is more of an integral part of instruction. It is also used by students when they understand the word meaning and are able to apply the meaning. Lastly, strategy nine revolves around using multiple strategies in unison.

Vocabulary instruction studies. Most teachers use more than one strategy in their read aloud instruction. Questioning was however, the most popular in Kindle's (2009) study. Many of the strategies found in Kindle's (2009) study have also been shown to be effective in other related studies (Pullen et al., 2010; Moore et al., 2014; Silverman, 2007). Pullen et al. (2010) pointed out that it is necessary for students to have active engagement in read alouds. This means that students should be interacting with the rich context and dialogue that read alouds bring about. Students should explore the words in multiple contexts and receive information about the word as well as how to use the word. These experiences will allow for students to process and retain vocabulary taught. Silverman (2007) furthered this idea by providing the results from two studies done by comparing three different instructional approaches (contextual, analytical, and anchored instruction). Contextual instruction allows for the teacher to teach the

words in context to students. This is the most commonly used instruction, but the authors explored which specific combination would be the most effective between contextual and analytical or contextual and anchored. Analytical instruction allows for semantic analysis of a word in context. Anchored instruction is when written and spoken words are given attention. Silverman (2007) specifically looked at taught words and children's learning of those words as well as effects of instruction. Even though all of these instructional approaches were effective during read alouds for vocabulary acquisition, the most optimal approach would be to use both contextual and analytical in combination. Words should be analyzed in many contexts. Read alouds allow for teachers to target decoding and vocabulary knowledge at the same time. Moore et al. (2014) who also supported the idea of using contextual and analytical instruction for vocabulary in read alouds attempted to further this research by looking at whether teaching less words in more depth was more effective than teaching more words in less depth. It was concluded that teaching less words in more depth was a much more effective way to have students acquire and retain rich vocabulary.

Incorporating read alouds. Kindle (2009) and Moore et al. (2014) suggested that in order to incorporate this type of vocabulary instruction teacher follow a checklist. First, preview and proactively choose appropriate texts. Second, have words for instruction pre-made and prepared for use. Third, select and use strategies to teach unfamiliar words. Finally, teachers should always have a plan B should instruction not go according to plan. Teachers should always ensure to have words placed around the classroom (e.g., word of the day, word wall, and theme words). Teachers have to engage their students in discussions before, after, and during the reading. Read alouds are an interactive way for teachers and students to be actively engaged with a text and vocabulary. However, teachers must take into consideration that read alouds are

not only used for or limited to vocabulary instruction. Books can be used for others areas of literacy and vocabulary can be taught through other means as well. All teachers and the group of students they have are different; therefore, teachers must use what best works for them and their students.

Using songs. The more students read the better readers they become. So, the question becomes how can we increase time spent on reading? By using reading across different mediums! For example, songs are a wonderful medium to teach reading to students because many children enjoy music, therefore, they will be engaged in the presented lesson. Using music in the classroom can allow for many teachable moments and opportunities. For instance, students can be given the lyrics to a popular song and they can visually track the lyrics that are in front of them. Although they may not be reading the words, they are presented with a visual representation of the words and are seeing them in context. Iwasaki et al. (2013) strongly supported the use of songs in helping to build phonemic awareness and fluency, but it has been shown to predominantly helps with vocabulary acquisition. Proficient reading and word study is a huge part of song instruction. Teachers can use songs as an instructional tool to teach beginning readers in a fun, motivating, and engaging way. Regular repeated singing and reading of songs results in greater reading achievement. Lyrics are easy to learn and sing which gives students the opportunity to refine as well as practice their reading skills while building confidence.

Beginning readers must develop a rigorous knowledge of sight word vocabulary through memorization and sound (Iwasaki et al., 2013). Songs entails features like melody and rhythm that make it easy to learn and remember. Therefore, songs offer opportunities to develop sight vocabulary because of their memorable nature. There are a variety of songs that teachers can use

and fit into their curriculum. A new song may be used and taught each week to the students. Teachers can write the song lyrics on a chart paper and point out words to draw students' attention to. They can discuss and talk about what the words mean and ask students to think about other related words. The teacher can direct students to finding words they may already know or do not know. A copy of the lyrics can be given to students to take home and practice. In class, students can refer to their own copy or the chart paper. Teachers can play the song for students to listen to or students can sing the song as a class without the music being played in the background. While singing, students can look at the words and point to them as they as they are signing. Teachers can point to the words of the song on the chart paper for students to follow along as well. Once the song has been circulated and practiced for quite some time, the teacher can have students point out words they now recognize, but did not before. Students can discuss their favorite part of the song and write in their journal about their thoughts or learning related to the song. Teachers can extend this activity by having students perform their song for an audience. The performance can encourage students to take ownership of their learning and motivate them to participate in reading.

Frayer model. The Frayer Model is a chart proposed by Gazith (2014) which helps students with vocabulary development and assists with organizing their thoughts about a particular word. The chart is divided into four sections with the main word placed at the center. Within the four categories, students must first write out the definition in their own words. Then, give examples, non-examples, and finally, provide facts or characteristics which relate to the word that is placed in the center.

Vocabulary games. Teachers can play games with words to help students acquire better vocabulary knowledge. One example of a game that can be played with students in regard to

vocabulary as suggested by Gazith (2014) includes having students connect a vocabulary word with an object they may have. For example, the word "writing" can be connected to the physical object of the pencil that the student may have. Another game that can be played is called "Jeopardy," in which students can discuss the opposite of certain words. Teachers can discuss with students how different people may use a particular word and act it out.

Comprehension. Comprehension is the ability to make meaning from visual information (print and punctuation) and non-visual information (background knowledge and language) (Gazith, 2014; Iwasaki et al., 2013). Whereas, reading comprehension is the ability to read any given text and process as well as understand what it is trying to convey (meaning). "Reading ability transcends the mere skills of decoding letters and words into the more complex realms of comprehension which is the goal of all reading related activities" (Mahdavi et al., 2013, p. 77). There are many factors that contribute to the ability to effectively comprehend a text. To fully understand what is being read, effective readers must navigate texts and make sense of it while using multiple strategies, simultaneously (Lacina & Matthews, 2012). Students must not only be able to decode, but need rich vocabulary knowledge and the ability to problem solve to determine word meanings (Kindle, 2009, Lacina et al., 2012; Mahdavi et al., 2013; Pullen et al., 2010; Puhulla, 2011, Silverman, 2007). If students are able to understand about 90-95 words in the text then they will have good comprehension (Pullen et al., 2010). Student comprehension is also influenced by individual's traits and skills, affective skills, story engagement, connection to prior background knowledge, ability to make inferences, as well as their mother tongue and culture influences.

Good comprehenders vs. poor comprehenders. Essentially good comprehenders exhibit similar behaviors. They monitor their reading, select appropriate strategies, understand the

purpose of reading, reflect on their reading, correct errors, have developed reading stamina, and apply background knowledge (Gazith, 2014). On the other hand, poor comprehenders do not do display the aforementioned reading behaviors. Reading comprehension does not come easily for all students; therefore, teachers must make a conscious effort to help their students build comprehension (Mahdavi et al., 2013). McIntyre et al. (2005) found that students who received supplemental instruction for comprehension performed higher in comprehension assessments than their counterparts, who did not receive supplemental instruction. In addition, Gazith (2014) suggested that teachers must teach reading strategies, engage students with texts and help build background knowledge. Therefore, in order to help struggling readers with comprehension strategies for teachers to use with students reading e-books or traditional texts are offered below.

Reading comprehension strategies. Researches about reading comprehension strategies being taught to children are promising as they have generated positive results (Mahdavi et al., 2013). There are a variety of strategies teachers can use in the classroom with struggling readers to help build comprehension. These strategies can not only be used when interacting with e-books, but also with traditional texts. Students should be taught to use both print-text and online text strategies in order to better prepare them for reading and comprehension (Lacina, et al., 2012). "Online reading comprehension includes a problem-based inquiry process involving new skills and strategies are necessary to navigate online text" (Lacina et al., 2012, p. 159). E-books allow for students to not only use print-text strategies that they are familiar with, but also explore as well as use new strategies. The following eight reading strategies are suggested by Gazith (2014), Lacina et al. (2012), and Mahdavi et al. (2013) to allow students to be critical readers and thinkers: (a) making connections, (b) text coding, (c) reciprocal teaching, (d) peer mediating learning, (e) vocabulary instruction, (f) story grammar and text structure, (g) story mapping and

other graphic organizers, (h) and self-questioning and text imagery. These strategies allow for students to evaluate their reading, synthesize information, and communicate information they have read.

Making connections. Making different connections to what students have read helps reading comprehension. To assist students connect to books, we must teach them to make text-to-self, text-to-text, or text-to-world connections (Gazith, 2014; Lacina et al., 2012). Teachers should model this skill to students when reading any book so they can eventually learn to do it independently. To foster text-to-self connections, whether students are using e-books or traditional text, teachers can follow four simple steps:

"(1) Model how to read an online text. Choose an online story featuring characters to which you and your students can make personal connections.

(2) Before reading online storybook to the children, select parts of the online story that you have already made connections to.

(3) As you read the text, note on a T-chart what type of text-to-self connections you made while reading the online text.

(4) End the lesson by asking students if they can make connections between the story and their own lives." (Lacina et al., 2012, p. 159).

To further this reading strategy, teachers should also demonstrate how to make text-to-text and text-to-world connections as well. The same steps can be used for these connections. Student can jot down their different connections to the text on a sticky note as they are reading.

Text coding. Text coding is another strategy students can use to help build their comprehension. This strategy can also be taught to students in the classroom by their teacher using e-books or traditional texts. Students should adopt metacognitive skills, that is, thinking

about their thinking process while reading. As they are reading, students should note down any questions and ask for clarification on important information they come across (Gazith, 2014; Lacina et al., 2012). This method or reading strategy also allows for students to be actively engaged with the text.

Reciprocal teaching. Reciprocal teaching is usually intended for fluent readers in grade 2 and higher (Gazith, 2014; Lacina et al., 2012). It is a strategy that allows for dialogue between teacher and student in regards to different parts of text. Five simple steps to use for reciprocal teaching of e-books and traditional texts are suggested:

"(1) First, the teacher needs to model the strategy by explaining her thinking in the process. The teacher reads an online text while the students observe her reading. After reading for three minutes, the teacher stops and summarizes what she has just read. Then, she demonstrates the other roles while the students observe.

(2) Once the students have a clear understanding of each roles, place them in groups of three.

(3) Distribute one role card to each group member to identify each child's role (summarizer, clarifier/ questioner, and predictor).

(4) Have students read the online text in their groups. Encourage them to jot down brief notes to help prepare for their role in discussion.

(5) To encourage students for discussion, set a timer that is visible to the entire class, and have the students stop every 3 to 5 minutes while reading the online text. By consistently stopping and discussing the story, students have time to ask questions, clarify details, summarize the story elements, and predict what will occur next." (Lacina et al., 2012, p. 160).

After using this process, the teacher can have students present what they have learned to their classmates. This strategy allows for collaboration and rich discussions to take place among peers.

Peer mediated learning strategy (PALS) and class wide peer tutoring (CWPT). Peer mediated learning can be done using two learning strategy programs called Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) and Class Wide Peer Tutoring (CWPT) learning strategies (Mahdavi et al., 2013). Both of these have been extensively researched and have proven to help students with reading comprehension over traditional teaching instruction (Mahdavi et al., 2013; Marr et al., 2009). The PALS method, in particular, has students paired off according to higher reading skills vs. lower reading skills. Both students in the group have the opportunity to assume the role of tutor and tutee, however, typically, the more skilled classmate would act as a coach the first time around. The teacher must include several instructional periods which allows for modelling of the activity. Sessions are designed to last a total of 30-40 minutes and are meant to be carried out three to -five times per week. It is essential that all the materials used in this strategy meet the lower achieving students' needs. In effort to increase student participation, incentives are established with the classroom teacher. There is a kindergarten version of PALS called KPALS and this version focuses on phonemic awareness and alphabetic principle. It has demonstrated positive results for children at risk for reading failure. CWPT is similar to PALS in which structure and reciprocal tutor and tutee role with scripts are given to students. Time for peer tutoring is scheduled into every school day and materials are related to areas of concern. Students study through drill and practice. The focus of this strategy is to have teachers carefully and closely monitor the peer groups and see results of tutoring. Furthermore, teachers can observe whether or not changing the partnering or instructional materials are needed.

Vocabulary instruction. There is a great need for explicitly teaching words and their meaning to student so that they can completely understand what they are reading. Vocabulary instruction is another strategies that teachers can adopt in their classroom to help student better their reading comprehension (Kindle, 2010; Mahdavi et al., 2013; Moore et al., 2014; Puhulla, 2011; Pullen, et al., 2010; & Silverman, 2007). This type of instruction allows teachers to select several target vocabulary words they want to teach their students. A great way to incorporate vocabulary instruction is through read alouds. Here, teachers can teach students vocabulary so that they can understand the text even better. Activities to introduce the words are completed before reading stories. Teachers and students highlight words during reading and then review them after the story is completed. For example, a vocabulary activity could be as simple as students using words in sentences and then determining if their teacher or peers have used the words correctly. Learning words is difficult for students, hence, teacher must present them in a creative manner. Furthermore, to teach target words, teachers must use context and specific, explained examples. Vocabulary instruction is, indeed, a time consuming process, however it is necessary especially for students that are at risk for reading or with disabilities. As students are exposed to vocabulary instruction, they are able to learn and apply new vocabulary as well as build upon their comprehension skills.

Story grammar and text structure. Understanding how to decipher story grammar (commonly known as text pattern) and text structure is helpful to build overall text comprehension and therefore, must be explicitly taught. Often students are made familiar with the elements of a story (theme, plot, characters, conflict and solution), however, students are not always introduced to expository or information based texts. Therefore, an emphasis must be placed on teaching the various structures of this type of text. Students must also be taught how

to differentiate between narrative and expository texts (Gazith, 2014; Mahdavi, et al., 2013). All texts have structures and simple patterns, whether it is a narrative or an expository piece of writing. Some examples of text pattern and text structure include: relation to attributes, sequences, compare and contrast, cause and effect, and problem and solution. Teachers must make it a point to teach students about these patterns and structures. Students need to know what clue words to look for so that it can reveal each text structure. Teaching students clue words specific to a text structure and allowing them to have guided practice in locating these clue words helps students identify text structures. Moreover, students must learn what questions they must ask to further understand texts content. Teaching students specific text structure questions and how to represent key features of a text on a graphic organizer visually also helps with comprehension. Students must also be made aware of features such as table of contents, glossary, index, headings, maps, bullets and captions.

Story mapping and other graphic organizers. To help teach structures of texts, graphic organizers can be used in effort to assist with reading comprehension (Gazith, 2014; Mahdavi et al., 2013). Teachers can choose from a large selection of graphic organizers including KWL charts, Venn diagrams, and webs as a means of presenting their learners with a visual representation of the knowledge that is being shared. Story mapping can be used when trying to help students extract the main points of a story in a simple and concise manner. Key words can be included on the map which includes: characters, setting, main events, problem and solution.

Questioning, self-questioning, and text imagery. Teachers should allot time for a questioning period from students so that they can receive ample feedback for their work, which serves as an even better learning opportunity than simply answering a question that is directly posed to them (Gazith, 2014; Mahdavi et al. 2013). Moreover, although self-questioning may

seem like a simple endeavor, we must actively teach students to self-guide themselves through their reading and pause at meaningful passages to pose questions in effort to better understand what the text is trying to say (Mahdavi et al., 2013). Students must be taught to read for meaning, or read between the lines, because sometimes, answers may not be straightforward so they must get a good feel for the text. At first, the teacher must model what is to be done by sharing their thoughts and questions out loud. They must be prepared to put themselves in the learners' shoes and walk them through the questioning process. Along the way, teachers must stop to offer informative, constructive feedback. The intention is to begin with scaffolding and then gradually reduce the technique until it completely renders itself useless and the students develop confidence and become more independent. Students can also incorporate text imagery as a strategy in which they try to visualize the text as they read and question it.

E-books and comprehension. E-books and tech-related resources have the capacity to connect students with text. Even though e-books are a popular choice when it comes to fostering comprehension with struggling readers, teachers are not limited to only using this particular method. Many of the reading comprehension strategies listed below for e-books can be easily transferred to traditional texts. Summaries provided by Lacina et al. (2012) of research related to the benefits of using e-books and e-book websites with specific examples are provided below. All of these highlighted benefits of using e-books foster better comprehension skills. These consist of developing decoding skills and automaticity to focus on meaning, repeating reading to build fluency, motivating readers through online narration, and encouraging language flexibility.

Decoding skills and automaticity. E-books help develop decoding skills and automaticity, which in turn allows for students to focus on meaning. Rather than traditional

texts, using e-books helps students easily decode and concentrate on the meaning because there are word pronunciations, narrations, sound effects, and animations to scaffold the learner (Lacina et al., 2012). Animations help with comprehension of the text because students can observe exactly what is taking place in the story. Narration and the colorful highlighting options on e-books also assist students with decoding and comprehension. Students find these e-books rather engaging and fun because of all the features it has to offer. Many of these features support students with decoding, automaticity, fluency, and comprehension. Teachers can use these e-books in their classrooms to demonstrate reading skills as a whole group or even in small group exercises. *Starfall* is a perfect example of a highly interactive website that allows for support in decoding and fluency or automaticity. This website has games, activities, as well as leveled e-books. Decoding skills are built in these leveled e-books and words are highlighted as students' mouse over them. For additional support for struggling readers, individual words can be clicked on and a phonetic breakdown of the words will be provided.

Repetition. Repetition is a great way to build reading fluency as well as comprehension (Gazith, 2014; Lacina et al., 2012; Mahdavi et al., 2013). Many e-books have repeated texts and graphics and often times words as well as sentences can be repeated for students. This options provides students with an opportunity to not only understand what they are reading, but also reinforce their fluency. The website, *Between the Lions*, is an excellent resource for building fluency. Examples of e-books that can be found on this website include read alouds with sound effects in the background. While the narrator reads the story, words and phrases are highlighted so students can follow along with ease. Student can listen to the narration, read along with the narrator, or immediately after the narrator (echo reading). Echo reading is a strategy in which students read immediately after the narrator and is intended to build fluency and confidence.

Vocabulary. E-books allow for students to learn new vocabulary while fostering comprehension. In order to completely understand the relationship among words, teachers must provide students with explicit vocabulary instruction (Gazith, 2014; Lacina et al., 2012). Websites can visually display a word and the relationships it has with the text. This can help students not only build upon their vocabulary, but also assist with comprehension. There are a multitude of websites available to help students learn new vocabulary to foster their comprehension. These websites include: *Story Time for Me*, *Wordle*, and *WordSift*. *Story Time for Me* allows for students to click on a word and see the visual representation of that particular word. This website has a many online tools for students to help students get acquainted with vocabulary words. For example, students can hear the story aloud and have the visual display of the e-book. For teachers to explicitly teach words *Wordle* and *WordSift* are suggested. Teachers can demonstrate how to create word clouds which is a great strategy to show the relationship among words. Next, the meanings and relationships among these words can be discussed in a fun and meaningful way. It is possible that students already know many of the words, however, there may some that they do not have knowledge about and so, further exploration can be done.

Motivation. Motivation to read is a key factor for students and it also contributes to the comprehension process (Lacina et al., 2012 & Allington, 2013). In order to build reading motivation, websites like *Book Pals* and *Magic Keys* are recommended. *Book Pals* is a great website that offers numerous e-books that are read aloud by popular celebrities which inspire and excite young readers. Comprehension strategies and critical thinking are fostered through the activities and comprehension questions found on the website. *Magic Keys* offers online stories, some of which are narrative. Picture and text display are available and student can turn the pages. This website covers many different topics and interests.

Language options. When students learn to read in their mother tongue, it leads to high achievement (Lacina et al., 2012). Encouraging language flexibility allows for students to explore reading with the language they are most comfortable with and simultaneously helps build comprehension. Many reading comprehension strategies that are taught to students can be practiced with their language of preferences first and can later be transferred to a language they are less comfortable with. There are multiple websites that offer stories in more than one particular language. *Clifford the Big Red Dog Interactive Storybooks* is a website that offers English and Spanish language options. These interactive e-books have text reading, colorful illustration, and phonics games. These games help develop their language and reading. *The International Children's Digital Library* website offers fifty-four different e-book language options. This website allows for teachers to search for e-books by various categories such as country, author, illustrator, and award-winning.

E-books vs. traditional texts. Although e-books hold an excellent place in the modern day classroom, students should be exposed to traditional text as well. Teachers have a great responsibility when choosing a type of e-book to use that will help them meet the intended learning objectives. It is essential to ensure that e-books are chosen and integrated intentionally, to serve a specific purpose, while ensuring that it supports and extends the learners understanding. Schugar, Smith and Schugar (2013) provided shared experiences and examples of other research conducted in the area of technology and comprehension. It was found that although students self-reported more engagement through e-books, their overall comprehension was greater when traditional texts were used. That being said, teachers must keep in mind that although using e-books may be amusing for students, it may alter the way students internalize the information they receive or affect their comprehension of a given text. Teachers must provide

student with tips and strategies on how to transfer understanding and what to look out for when interacting with e-books. Students can be explicitly taught how to effectively and appropriately read e-books and teachers can model these strategies during classroom instruction (Lacina et al., 2012).

Rich text exposure. Students should be exposed to a variety of rich texts and given opportunities to read and apply the above-mentioned reading strategies. Reading strategies have students engaged in active participation because it is necessary to build comprehension, rather than have them be passive readers. Comprehension is indeed a complex process for any reader. Consequently, it is imperative for teachers to give students effective comprehension instruction ensuring that it is taught intentionally and explicitly. Whether teachers and students are using e-books or traditional text, the important factor is that the students are familiar with the different reading comprehension strategies for both and are able to use them interchangeably when they are having difficulties understanding a text. Finally, teachers are the experts of their classrooms and they must exercise their own judgment when it comes effectively meeting the needs of their struggling readers.

Technological Component

Our students are digital natives and are spending hours on end using technological devices. Most students, if not all, are interested in technology and teachers can use this medium to connect with their students by tapping into their interests while leading them to interact with the device in a meaningful way. The use of technology also allows students to be active participants of their learning as they take ownership of the activities at hand. So, why not use it to our advantage in the classroom setting as a means of keeping our students engaged and motivated to learn? Furthermore, technology has made great advances over the years and

continues to do so across many disciplines, including the field of education. Evidently, technology continues to increase in popularity and is difficult to compete with. Using technology in the classroom is "an excellent opportunity to connect school and learning activities" (Northrop & Killeen, 2013, p. 531). Therefore, it is time for teachers to adopt the "if you can't beat them, join them" mentality and get on board.

Teachers can use technology to support students' needs while serving a specific purpose or goal. Using technology does not only promote media literacy in the classroom, it is also another medium in which to practice the five areas of literacy. It is important to note that while technology does not replace the need for the classroom teacher (who serves as a facilitator and mentor), it does assist in providing students with scaffolding. For instance, computers provide text-speech support for those struggling with decoding, spelling, or penmanship. Having direct and immediate access to this enhancement alleviates students' anxiety, while allowing them more opportunity to focus on truly grasping the task at hand. This is one of many ways teachers can enhance their instruction and student learning. Technology, as a whole, provides endless possibilities.

Successful integration of technology. In order to successfully incorporate technology in the classroom environment, educationally sound instruction must be delivered by an experienced teacher. It is essential to note that as much as technology can be useful in the classroom to motivate and engage students, it does not necessarily equate to an instant increase in overall student achievement (Northrop et al., 2013). A lot of thought goes into integrating technology in the classroom because teachers must ensure positive as well as optimal learning outcomes for all students. It is important for teachers to carefully filter and select which technological devices they use and constantly questions why they are integrating technology in their

classrooms. Ultimately, the learning objective must always be kept at the forefront of a teacher's mind, and the rest of the lesson must be planned with the main goal or purpose in mind. The use of technology can hinder student achievement, therefore, it is critical to take the time to appropriately integrate it into the curriculum and use it as a support system for predetermined learning goals.

Many different facets of technology are in circulation. Once teachers have discovered that a particular technological device, website, or app meets their intended learning objective, they must work towards effectively incorporating it into the classroom. In Northrop et al.'s (2013) framework, the teacher should follow four steps to help integrate technology into their classroom. This technology integration model begins with a teacher-centered approach and slowly moves towards a student-centered approach. Teachers gradually release responsibility and allow students to assume more independence over time. Teachers must teach the literacy concept without the technological component (e.g., iPad). Instruction and materials can be adjusted along the way and feedback should be given to students. First, teachers must explain and model the desired concept. Next, students should be given ample opportunity for guided practice with the technological device. Teachers can scaffold and guide their students along the way. Finally, students should be able to move towards independent practice with the device. This framework ensures that students are working at an instructional or independent level while accessing and working with literacy content. Consequently, the use of technology may allow students to internalize and automate literacy content.

Electronic books (E-books). Electronic books, commonly called e-books are rapidly trending and increasing in popularity. E-books can be especially enticing because it allows for auditory and visual animation, which will keep our learners engaged. After examining books in

the present, Yokota and Teale (2014) reported that e-books and apps that include aspects such as text, illustrations, and interactive features have become a major force in today's society. E-books appeal to the different learning styles (visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic) presented in classrooms.

E-books present a "one stop shop" for differentiated instruction and allow students to receive instant, albeit, not always informative feedback. Schugar et al. (2013) applaud the use of e-books, because it certainly helps a book come into existence, however, they have cautioned when it comes to distractibility. Teachers must preview the e-book ahead of time to ensure that what they wish to use as part of their literary instruction in fact supports the text, and extends beyond it. Three particular suggestions are made for teachers to consider when choosing quality e-books: (a) ensure that the selected e-books assist students to learn difficult vocabulary words, (b) ensure that interactions with e-books last a brief amount of time, and (c) ensure that the e-book actually supports and extends the lesson as well as learning objectives, rather than detracting.

Apps. As it stands, apps are being massively produced and there is no tight-knit process in place to filter or deem them as high quality. Schugar et al. (2013) mentioned that teachers have to screen the apps they use themselves. Apps are constantly changing and evolving, therefore, it is suggested that teachers visit reliable app websites such as *Digital Storytime* and *Smart Apps for Kids*. Not only can teachers refer to these aforementioned websites to keep themselves updated on the most recent apps, but they can also refer to suggestions made by reliable sources. Teachers can consult educational research, consultants, news forums, and so on.

Examples of apps. There are many different apps available to teachers, parents, and students in relations to the five areas of literacy. Northrop et al. (2013) suggested a few iPad apps that can be used with struggling readers. They are as follows:

1. iWrite Words
2. Little Matchups ABC
3. ABC Pocket Phonics
4. Word Connex
5. iCardSort
6. Fry Sight Words
7. Toontastic
8. Popplet
9. Doodle Buddy.

iWrite Words can be used for letter identification. On this app students can trace upper and lowercase letters as well as simple three letter words. *Little Matchups ABC* can be used for letter identification and phonics. This app allows for matching lowercase to uppercase letters and matching letters to letter sounds. Students can also match letters to pictures that start with a particular sound. *ABC Pocket Phonics*, *Word Connex*, and *iCardSort* are ideal for phonics. On *ABC Pocket Phonics* students can identify letters based on sound to create words. *Word Connex* allows for students to sort words according to common meaning, spelling patterns, and phonics features. *iCartSort* allows for students to customize cards and make their own words. *Fry Sight Words* is great for sight word practice. There is a list of ten sight words at a time for students to practice as well as match games to help with memorization. This app allows for customization to the needs of each student. *Toontastic*, *iCardSort*, *Popplet*, and *Doodle Buddy* work well for

comprehension. *Toontastic* uses pre-made sets and characters to create stories with a beginning, middle, and end. *iCardSort* is a blank card-sorting program which can be used to sequence the events. *Popplet* allows for creating concepts maps. *Doodle Buddy* has students draw scenes from the story.

Mallette and Barone (2014) also share innovative classroom practices that incorporate technology into classrooms and literacy instruction. They have compiled a list of top ten apps that can be used with students. These apps include:

1. Story Buddy
2. i-Prompt
3. i-Translate
4. Writer's Hat
5. Evernote
6. Evernote Peek
7. Dragon Dictation
8. Online Stickies (e.g., Lino)
9. Puppet Pals
10. Story Wheels
11. SoundNote.

StoryBuddy is an app students can use to make their own e-book online and then save them. Stories can be handwritten or typed. It also allows for students to work on brainstorming ideas, sequencing events, and sharing their stories. *i-Prompt* is an app that allows students to practice fluency for reading and oral presentations. Text can be copied on to this app and it will go through the text at the users' desired speed. *i-Translate* is an app that can be used for students

who do not speak English. It helps to translate many languages to English and allows students to convey their message in day-to-day interactions with other people. *Writer's Hat* is a word generator app. It can generate who, what, when, and where words as well as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. It can be used for short writing pieces, struggling writers, oral storytelling, or acting. *Evernote* is a note-taking app which can be used for typed notes, audio, and photos. Notes can be organized on this app using online notebooks. It also allows for users to share their notes with others. *Evernote* has E*vernote Peek* which can be used as a revision tool. In addition, students can record themselves reading on *Evernote*. These recordings can be saved, tagged by the user, and accessed later on any other computer. *Evernote* allows teachers to log on to the data projector in class and have students write their notes and ideas online. It will, then synchronize each students' work onto the account and everyone can see it pop up on the projector. Moreover, this app can be used as a shared writing tool on the iPad. *The Dragon Dictation* app converts speech into texts that can be edited. These texts can, then, be copied or sent through email. It works really well for students who have difficulty with writing. There are *Online Stickies* apps, such as *Lino* and they can be used in multiple ways. The app can be used for crowdsourcing or sharing ideas on an online noticeboard. Users can format "stickies" into different sizes and colors or one can add hyperlinks and images. These online noticeboards or sticky boards can be accessed on a desktop as well. *Puppet Pals* is an app that allows students to make their own story, record their voice, and make the actions with various characters. They can they record, play it back, as well as save their play. *Story Wheel* is a collaborative storytelling app in which students can work in small groups. It is a learning tool used for developing speaking and listening skills as well as story structure. Students have to spin the wheel to get a picture and then record or narrate the rest of the story. When completed, students can listen to

the story they have created and watch the animation to go along with it. *SoundNote* is an app in which users can type or handwrite their particular notes. Texts, audios, and drawings can be emailed or transferred to a Mac or PC.

Why use technology? Using technology in the classroom is essential because it is engaging and motivating for students (Lacina et al., 2012). The abovementioned use of a framework for technological integration in the classroom as well as the use of e-books and apps can be easily applied into the teacher's daily instruction. There is no reason for teachers to shy away from or refuse to use technology in the classroom, provided they are properly educated and prepared. At the same time, the use of technology promotes digital citizenship as well as prepares students for the future job market. It is our duty to work alongside our students to help them learn and mature, shaping them to become well-rounded, successful citizens. This also lends itself to the concept of digital citizenship. We must teach students how to properly interact with their devices. The fact remains that today's students have the easiest access to the most updated information at their disposal. It is crucial to stress the students' role and responsibility because they must make responsible decisions prior to clicking on and visiting each website. Students must be made aware that they will leave a digital footprint wherever they explore, and therefore, should think and make wise choices before they decide to point and click. As teachers, we also acknowledge that promoting technology in schools is essential, especially when it comes to preparing our students for their future job market, which will include the use of wireless technology. Tech savvy skills will be advantageous and will extend their possible work experiences.

Resource Kit

English Language Arts (ELA) teachers follow the Québec Education Plan (QEP) as a teaching and learning program. Teachers base their curriculum on the three competencies listed in the QEP, and use these to assess their learners. These competencies include "(a) read and listen to spoken, written, and media texts, (b) produces written texts and media texts, and (c) uses language to communicate and learn" (Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2001, p. 73). Keeping these competencies in mind, this resource kit was designed to serve ELA teachers who are working with struggling readers in grades 1 and 2. The resource kit is divided into three major sections that include benchmark assessments, researched-based strategies for the five areas of literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), and progress-monitoring materials.

Students should be benchmarked at the beginning, middle, and end of each year in order to guide instruction and target the students in need. Benchmarks provide useful information as it pinpoints the exact area which students are experiencing difficulty. Moreover, it allows teachers the flexibility to set up and update personalized goals for each and every student as they make progress throughout the year. This resource kit includes the DIBELS benchmarks for students from kindergarten through grade six. Assessments for all five areas of literacy are explored through this assessment tool. The DIBELS teacher manual, teacher booklets, and student booklets are also included.

As teachers come to realize what their students are struggling with, they can refer to the researched-based strategies portion of the kit and find ready to use tips and tools. This kit offers numerous strategies for each area of literacy. Each strategy includes a list of materials, step-by-step instructions, worksheet examples, and websites to refer to. These strategies have been

extracted from *Reading Rockets* (WETA Public Broadcasting, 2015) because it features research based strategies, along with lessons and activities to help promote early literacy among students. One strategy that teachers can use for fluency instruction is called timed repeated reading. For this strategy, teachers provide students with books or passages that are matched to their independent reading levels. Teachers should allot time for students to practice reading the text multiple times (at least three to -four) and on their own before conducting a reading assessment. This method, found and extracted from Reading Rockets (WETA Public Broadcasting, 2015), is supported by Hudson, Lane, and Pullen (2005). Through their extensive review of research of fluency, it was suggested that teachers can use timed repeated reading to help struggling readers develop their fluency skills. Another strategy that can be used is for comprehension purposes involves the graphic organizers, more specifically, concept maps. Teachers can refer to these because they help students visually represent and organize their ideas. Teachers should assist students to make connections between concepts as the lesson goes on and make necessary changes to the map as students ideas evolve over time. This technique, also found and extracted from Reading Rockers (WETA Public Broadcasting, 2015), is supported by Birbili (2006). Through Birbili's (2006) research review, it was found that concepts maps can be beneficial in helping students build off of previous knowledge and develop better connections between new ideas which promotes increased comprehension. These are just two examples of research based strategies that teachers can refer to in our resource kit and use in their classroom with their students. Within the resource kit, many more collected and compiled strategies can be found.

Continuous and frequent progress-monitoring of students with reading difficulties is essential because it allows for teachers to observe if the strategies they are using are effective. Progress-monitoring allows for solid evidence to guide teacher instruction, while

keeping track of students and pushing them to achieve their benchmark goals. The progress-monitoring teacher Manuel, teacher booklets, and student booklets are also included in this kit. Teachers should strive to find strategies that complement the student's area of weakness. Should a strategy prove to be ineffective for a particular student, teachers should revisit the area of need and find other possible strategies. It is critical to be persistent when it comes to finding what works for students.

Conclusion

Literacy plays a major role in our lives as human beings. It is the absolute foundational basis on which we learn how to perform other relevant skills needed to function as an independent person in the real world. Being literate impacts a person's ability to understand and participate in what is taking place in their society. In turn, their knowledge will assist them to make meaningful contributions to the world around them. Essentially, it is an educational tool of personal empowerment. It is the role of educators to cultivate literacy development in students. All students deserve an education of high quality. Education should be accessible to all regardless of their differences in individual characteristics, personal backgrounds, experiences, learning styles, level of readiness, and more. Educators must stop thinking about "the student" as the whole class and start thinking about each student, individually. Each and every student in a class is unique and because of these distinctions found in the diversity of human beings, students should also be entitled to approach their learning from a point of view that makes sense to them and accommodates to their needs. Educators must keep in mind what their goals are in terms of the curriculum, but must also keep the different students in a class in mind and how they will get where they need to be, given these profiles. Differentiated instruction allows for teachers and students to embark on a learning journey in which

accommodations and modifications are made along the way. Students will require sufficient scaffolding techniques, delivered by the classroom teacher, which caters to their current level of functioning, or zone of proximal development (ZDP). Response to Intervention (tiered instruction) is an effective model of differentiation used to meet the various needs of students in a classroom. RTI is also a means of early intervention. Benchmarking, progress-monitoring and research based strategies are all essential when it comes to assessing a student's current level of understanding and monitoring students' progress in relation to the strategies chosen to help them succeed.

As teachers, it is essential to have a proper working knowledge and command of the English language so we can serve our students most effectively. Reading instruction, in particular, is a large and important component of a student's education. It can be broken down into the five areas of literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, but teachers should also address them simultaneously in daily language arts activities. As mentioned throughout this literature review, there are many research based strategies in regards to the five areas of literacy that a teacher can use to reach out to their struggling readers. Technology is also a useful means to enhance the teaching and learning experience. Careful thought, effort, and planning of instruction as well as allocation of time are crucial on the teacher's part for effective practice to take place. Teachers must be enthusiastic and motivated in order to help learners excel. Possessing qualities of patience, persistence, and dedication are key towards helping students reach their maximum learning potential. As teachers, we wish to help our students in the best way possible and are so pleased to see the academic and personal growth of our students take place throughout the school year. We are fully aware that we are sowing a seed that we may personally never see the benefit of. Even if

we do not see the end result of what kind of harvest the student may bring forth in their educational journey, we take pride in knowing that we were part of the process.

Annotated Bibliography

Allington, R. L. (2011). What at-risk. *Educational Leadership, 68*(6)*,* 40-45.

Early intervention is critical for students' success in later grades in regards to reading. Schools need to implement RTI in their classroom as it is an effective way to reach struggling readers and closes the reading achievement gap. Using RTI tiers provide high quality expert instruction. This author lists what does not work in schools and what works in schools.

Allington, R. L. (2013). What really matters when working with struggling readers. *The Reading Teacher, 66,* 520-530. doi:10.1002/TRTR.1154

The article highlights for schools to implement reading programs based on solid research as opposed to the latest fades. It is suggested to invest in research based reading lessons. Oftentimes, we misinterpret research and teachers do no commit to seeing a program through from start to finish. Teachers also do not have experts working with them to help struggling readers. Furthermore, struggling readers are asked to read texts that are too difficult and independent reading should be minimized in schools. Struggling readers are assigned with less reading, but have more worksheets to do. Finally, money is discounted as a factor when it comes to teaching children how to read.

Baker, B. (2007). Preparing teachers to support struggling first-grade readers. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, 28, 233-242.* doi:10.1080/10901020701555531

The importance of having highly qualified teachers to help students with literacy instruction, especially those who are struggling with reading is highlighted. There is a dire need to educate pre-service teachers on how to teach explicitly and thoughtfully teach reading skills to students. These teachers must be trained to be very skilled and knowledgeable

because it will allow for effective literacy instruction and, perhaps, help reduce the amount of students struggling with reading.

Birbili, M. (2006). Mapping knowledge: Concepts maps in early childhood education. *Early Childhood Research and Practice, 8*(2). Retrieved from http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v8n2/birbili.html

This article discusses the importance of graphic organizers which are essential teaching and learning tools for teachers and students alike, especially when it comes to identifying how concepts can relate to one another. It also uses prior knowledge to build upon ideas. The use of concept maps in the classroom may assist teachers and provide them with a means of informal assessment that can be used to inform their teaching practices in terms of deciding what the next step in their instruction should be. Finally, this article highlights some issues that may arise when using concepts maps with younger students and suggests how teachers can introduce this process in the classroom.

Brown, K. J., Morris, D., & Fields, M. (2005). Intervention after grade 1: Serving increased numbers of struggling readers effectively. *Journal of Literacy Research, 37*(1), 61-94. doi:10.1207/s15548430jlr3701_3

A study was completed using a tutoring model as a means for intervention and to help struggling readers in grade 2 and 3. This model was implemented by teachers and paraprofessionals. In this model teachers planned and trained paraprofessionals to work with struggling readers in their areas of need. This was an effective model to use in order to help students improve their reading skills.

Canadian Literacy and Learning Network. (2015). Literacy statistics. Canadian Literacy and Learning Network. Retrieved from http://www.literacy.ca/literacy/literacy-sub/

On this particular page of the website, the Canadian Literacy and Learning Network provided literacy statistics for the general public to read and kept informed in regards to the most current data.

Canady, C. E., & Canady, R. L. (2012). Catching readers up before they fail. *Educational Leadership, 69*(9)*,* 1-4.

This article outlines how schools can organize and train teams to provide intensive small-group literacy from kindergarten to grade six. This literacy program doubles students reading proficiency through the use of explicit daily instruction.

Dynamic Measurement Group. (n.d.). How to get DIBELS next. *DIBELS next: Dynamic Measurement Group*. Retrieved from http://dibels.org/dibelsnext.html

This website features an assessment tools to benchmark and monitor students' progress in the different elements of literacy from kindergarten to grade six.

Elliot, J., Lee, S. W., & Tollefson, N. (2001). A reliability and validity study of the dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills-modified. *School Psychology Review, 30,* 33-49.

The researchers performed a study with kindergarten students who were at risk of developing reading failures. They used DIBELS as an intervention tool to assess and track students' progress over time. They also looked the validity and reliability of this assessment tool. It was concluded that DIBELS is an effective assessment tool to use with struggling readers.

Gazith, K. (2014). Teaching of Reading [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from Lecture Notes Online Web site: https://mycourses2.mcgill.ca/d2l/home/141457

These Power Point presentations explain the five areas of literacy and how to foster better reading skills in struggling readers. It includes specific strategies as well as examples.

Halladay, J. L. (2012). Revisiting key assumptions of the reading level framework. *The Reading Teacher, 66,* 53-62. doi:10.1002/TRTR.01093

The article recommends that professionals be properly informed and trained on how to administer developmental reading assessment tests (DRAs) and make instructional decisions based on the results. The authors of the articles explore four key assumptions related to DRAs. First, decoding accuracy and reading comprehension are closely linked. Second, independent reading requires nearly perfect decoding accuracy. Third, oral reading performance is a reasonable proxy for silent reading behaviors. Fourth, certain levels of decoding and comprehension difficulty cause frustration. Finally, the article provides a list of things to consider prior to performing DRAs.

Hettinger, H. R., & Knapp, N. F. (2001). Lessons from J. P.: Supporting underachieving readers in the elementary classroom. *The Reading Teacher, 55,* 26-29.

This article provides suggestions about how to help students overcome their struggles with decoding, such as engaging in partner reading, listening to audio tapes, reading aloud, listening to computer programs that read aloud, and so on.

Hudson, R. F., Lane, H. B., & Pullen, P. C. (2005). Reading fluency assessment and instruction: What, why, and how? *The Reading Teacher, 58,* 702-714. doi:10.1598/RT.58.8.1

This article provides a review of research on the aspects of fluency (reading rate, accuracy and prosody) and its influence on reading proficiency. It also offers fluency strategies that can be used in the classroom and how teachers can assess them.

Hutchinson, N. L. (2014). *Inclusion of exceptional learners in Canadian schools (4th edition)*. Toronto, ON: Pearson.

This is a practical handbook for Canadian teachers to learn about inclusion of exceptional learners in their classrooms.

Iwasaki, B., Rasinski, T., Yildirim, K., & Zimmerman, B. S. (2013). Let's bring back the magic of song for teaching reading. *The Reading Teacher, 67,* 137-141. doi:10.1002/trtr.1203

The use of songs in the classroom is recommended especially when teaching vocabulary and phonics to students because it is fun, engaging and effective.

Kindle, K. J. (2010). Vocabulary development during read-alouds: Primary practices. *The Reading Teacher, 63,* 202-211. doi:10.1598/rt.63.3.3

Vocabulary growth is enhanced when teachers use read alouds in early grades. Teachers must know what practices optimize students' learning of words and determine how to effectively elaborate and explain words without interrupting the flow of reading to the class.

Khun, M. R. (2005). A comparative study of small group fluency instruction. *Reading Psychology, 26*(2)*,* 127-146. doi:10.1080/02702710590930492

Researchers look at the effectiveness of repeated and wide reading as a means to developing fluency. They also explore the importance of expressive, or prosodic, reading in concert with automatic and accurate word recognition. Three intervention strategies (repeated reading, wide reading, and listening only) were implemented with three grade 2 classes. Results indicated that wide and repeated reading is effective for word recognition in isolation, prosody and correct words per minute. Also, wide reading groups performed well in comprehension.

Lacina, J., & Mathews, S. (2012). Using online storybooks to build comprehension. *Childhood Education, 88,* 155-161. doi:10.1080/00094056.2012.682547

The authors promote the use of online storybooks as a means to build reading comprehension. Using e-books is advantageous because it helps to develop decoding skills and automaticity to focus on meaning. It also works to build fluency through repetitive reading and fosters comprehension by introducing new vocabulary. Finally, the use of technology motivates readers and it allows them to explore different language settings. The article provides additional strategies to build comprehension such as making connections, text coding, and reciprocal teacher.

Lipson, M. Y., & Wixson, K. K. (2012). To what interventions are students responding? *The Reading Teacher, 66,* 111-115. doi:10.1002/TRTR.01110

This article examines interventions that are most effective in improving literacy outcomes for all students. The difference between intervention and remediation is discussed. Successful interventions include having a support system, being coordinated with the core curriculum, an increased exposure to instruction, and having instruction properly aligned with evaluation outcomes. There is a multimodal approach to accelerate students' achievement in language and literacy, however, schedules, systems and fidelities must be taken into consideration at all times.

Mahdavi, J. N., & Tensfeldt, L. (2013). Untangling reading comprehension strategy instruction: Assisting struggling readers in the primary grades. *Preventing School Failure*, *57*(2)*,* 77-92. doi:10.1080/1045988x.2012.668576

This article indicates that reading comprehension can be taught to young students through the following categories of: (a) peer learning, (b) self-questioning, (c) story grammar, (d) text structure, (e) story mapping, (f) graphic organizers, and (g) vocabulary development.

Research has shown that combining two or more of these strategies is beneficial for students, increasing their comprehension abilities.

Mallette, M. H., & Barone, D. (2014). Interesting ways to use iPad in the classroom. *The Reading Teacher, 67,* 621-625. doi:10.1002/TRTR.1264

In this article, top 10 iPad educational applications are listed to use in the classroom. They are: Story Buddy, I-Prompt, I Translate, Writer's Hat, Evernote, Dragon Dictation, Online Stickies, Puppet Pals, Storywheel, and SoundNote.

Marcell, B., & Ferraro, C. (2013). So long, robot reader! A superhero intervention plan for improving fluency. *The Reading Teacher, 66,* 607-614. doi:10.1002/TRTR.1165

The authors created a fluency intervention plan called The Fluency Foursome. The program improves students' expression, pace, comprehension, and ability to connect to the text.

Marr, M. B., Algozzine B., Kavel, R. L., & Dugan, K. K. (2009). Using peer coaches to build oral reading fluency. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 14,* 256-270. doi:10.1080/10824660903375735

These authors investigated the effects of enhanced reading fluency instruction with struggling readers. Interventions were provided for grade 2 students. Due to the enhanced reading fluency instruction, students who were at risk for reading failure showed improvements. Both fluency and comprehension were improved as they go hand in hand. Guidelines for developing as well as using the intervention plan in other classrooms are provided.

Marr, M. B., Algozzine, B., Nicholson, K., & Dugan, K. K. (2011). Building oral reading fluency with peer coaching. *Remedial and Special Education. 32,* 256-264. doi:10.1177/0741932510362202

The effectiveness of peer-mediated fluency-building intervention for struggling readers in grade 2 was explored. Results indicated that oral reading fluency performance had improved as there was an enhanced fluency instruction. A two-way relationship between fluency and comprehension was evident. Similar peer-mediated interventions are discussed along with developing interventions that support the idea of RTI.

Pullen, P. C., Tuckwiller, E. D., Konold, T. R., Maynard, K. L., & Coyne, M. D (2010). A tiered intervention model for early vocabulary instruction: The effects of tiered instruction for young students at risk for reading disability. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 25,* 110-123. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5826.2010.00309.x

The authors of this study suggested the use of a tiered intervention model for vocabulary instruction along with the use of read alouds. In their study of first grade students were taught using the above mentioned model and made greater gains in vocabulary acquisition. It was concluded that teachers adopt this method with their students in the classroom to further develop vocabulary skills.

McIntyre, E., Jones, D., Powers, S., Newsome, F., Petrosko, J., Powell, R., & Bright, K. (2005). Supplemental instruction in early reading: Does it matter for struggling readers? *The Journal of Educational Research, 99*(2)*,* 99-107. doi:10.3200/JOER.99.2.99-108

The authors of this article sought out to see if supplemental instruction for grade 2 students in phonics and reading comprehension would be beneficial as opposed to students who did not receive supplemental instruction. They found that there was a much higher achievement for students with supplemental instruction in reading comprehension, but not in phonics. They concluded that teachers should incorporate supplemental instruction into their curriculum.

McIntyre, E., Rightmyer, E., Powell, R., Powers, S., & Petrosko, J. (2006). How much should young children read? A study of the relationship between development and instruction. *Literacy Teaching and Learning, 11*(1)*,* 51-72.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the time the beginning readers spend on connected text reading in school. Researchers also argue that while students are engaged in the beginning stages of reading, it is best for teachers to mediate by using fluency strategies such as repeated readings, choral/echo readings, paired reading or assisted oral readings.

Mesmer, H. A. E. (2005). Text decodibility and the first grade reader. *Reading & Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties, 21,* 61-86. doi:10.1080/10573560590523667

This article analyzed if a difference was found among first graders who were asked to read highly decodable texts, as opposed to those who were asked to read less decodable texts. The students who were placed into the treatment group read more decodable texts and were also able to have a better command of alphabetic letter and sound knowledge than those in the control group who read less decodable texts. As a result, it was concluded that phonics instruction used along with decodable books are highly recommended for teachers to use in their classrooms.

Moore, W., Hammond, L. & Fetherston, T. (2014). Strengthening vocabulary for literacy: An analysis of the use of explicit instruction techniques to improve word learning from story book read-alouds. *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties, 19*(2)*,* 153-172. doi:10.1080/19404158.2014.964992

This particular study investigated the effects of providing instruction in word meaning using storybook read alouds on grade 1 students. Explicit instruction was compared to

traditional instruction of vocabulary. It was concluded that explicit instruction was more effective.

Moustafa, M. & Maldonado-Colon, E. (1999). Whole-to-parts phonics instruction: Building on what children know to help them know more. *The Reading Teacher, 52,* 448-458.

The articles discusses whole-to-parts (modern phonics) and parts to whole instruction (traditional phonics) and addresses how they are both different, but also alike, in the sense that they both require explicit teacher instruction. Both programs are extensive and must be carried out systematically. In the end, authors advocate for newer version of whole-to-parts phonics instruction that is context embedded and meaningful.

Murphy, J. C., & Hernandez, L. (2011). "Teacher, I can read!" The marvels of early intervention strategies. *Kappa Delta Pi Records, 47,* 166-169.

The article discusses a student teacher's experience with struggling readers and highlights five points of emphasis during a three-week intensive intervention program. The program focused on sight words, alphabet knowledge, making words through different modes, differentiation and think-pair-share, as well as guided reading.

National Institute of Child and Health Development. (n.d.). A to Z health & human development topics. *National Institute of Child and Health Development.* Retrieved from http://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/Pages/index.aspx

This is a research based website that offers an abundance of information on child and health development and many other topics related to the health.

Northrop, L., & Killeen, E. (2013). A framework for using iPad to build early literacy skills. *The Reading Teacher, 66,* 531-537. doi:10.1002/TRTR.1155

The article describes how to integrate iPads into the classroom to ensure that teachers are effectively and engagingly teaching early literacy skills. Four steps are listed for successful integration. Step one requires teaching the concept without an IPad. Step two involves the teacher explaining and modelling the app. Step three consists of guided practice with the app whereas step four allows for independent practice with the app.

Porath, S. (2014). Talk less, listen more: Conferring in the reader's workshop. *The Reading Teacher, 67,* 627-635. doi:10.1002/TRTR.1266

It is suggested that teacher implement readers' workshop in their reading instruction as a means to conference with struggling readers. In this conference t is highly recommended that teachers listen to what students have to say and make this teacher and student interaction more of a student centered activity. Students should be an integral part of their learning and have the opportunity to take ownership of it.

Puhulla, E. M. (2011). Enhancing the vocabulary knowledge of first-grade children with supplemental booster instruction. *Remedial and Special Education, 32,* 471-481. doi:10.1177/0741932510362495

In this study, the effects of intensive instruction on the acquisition of storybook vocabulary were examined for at risk grade 1 students who may be prone to early reading failure. The authors also measured whether or not the intervention was effective for closing the gap of the vocabulary knowledge between these students and their average achieving peers. Students who received intensive instruction using storybooks and vocabulary instruction outperformed those students who only received regular instruction on vocabulary.

Québec. Gouvernement du Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation du Loisir et du Sport. (2001). *Québec Education Plan.* Retrieved from

http://www1.mels.gouv.qc.ca/sections/programmeFormation/primaire/pdf/educprg2001/educprg2001.pdf

This is the Québec Education Plan created by the ministry of education for educators to refer to as a reference and guide to teach and assess students. It explains students' progression of learning through various competencies and subjects.

Romain, M. A., Millner, K. A., Moss, V. E., & Held, M. (2007). The effectiveness of classroom-based instructional assessments for progress monitoring purposes in Texas Reading First schools. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 20,* 619-641. doi:10.1007/s11145-007-9057-y

The authors formally reviewed assessment materials from four core reading programs to see if they aligned with the Texas Reading First progress-monitoring guidelines for kindergarten to grade 1. Recommendations for progress-monitoring tools are made.

Saunders, D. & Gierke, T. (1999). Increasing phonemic awareness among primary students to improve reading skills. (Unpublished master's action research project, Saint Xavier University and IRI/Skylight). Retrieved from ERIC. (ED433502)

This report explains a program for increasing phonemic awareness in the early grades. Some strategies for early intervention are also suggested. Through their study of grade 1 and 2 classes, it was concluded that students can build up their phonemic awareness skills, provided that the teacher allows the opportunity for students to engage in rich language experience, while students are carrying out activities that involve actively exploring and manipulating sounds. In turn, this will help students acquire the necessary phonemic awareness skills.

Silverman, R. (2007). A comparison of three methods of vocabulary instruction during read-alouds in Kindergarten. *The Elementary School Journal, 108*(2)*,* 97-113. doi:10.1086/525549

Two studies were conducted in which three approaches (contextual, analytical, and anchored instruction) to teaching vocabulary were compared. One study looked at children's' learning of taught words and the other looked at the effects of instruction. It was concluded that read alouds must use contextual with a high focus on analytical instruction to help students learn vocabulary.

Schugar, H. R., Smith, C. A., & Schugar, J. T. (2013). Teaching with interactive picture e-books in grades k-6. *The Reading Teacher, 66,* 615-624. doi:10.1002/TRTR.1168

The article suggested that prior to using e-books with young readers it is essentials to: (a) familiarize students with the device, (b) teach students to transfer what they know about print reading to e-reading, (c), beware of gimmicks and distractions, (d) remember that an interactive e-book does not replace a good teacher.

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

This website features a panel of reading experts who oversee and compile research based reading strategies which are informed through peer reviewed articles and books. These techniques can be used by teachers and parents who are working with struggling readers in effort to build overall literacy skills.

Woodward, M. M., & Talbert-Johnson, C. (2009). Reading intervention models: Challenges of classroom support and separated instruction. *The Reading Teacher, 63,* 190-200. doi:10.1598/RT.63.3.2

The article mentions that there are five target areas associated with reading intervention (comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, phonics, and phonemic awareness) as identified by the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, n.d.). Effective reading intervention includes small groups who share the same reading difficulties (three to -six), daily intervention (at least 30 minutes each), intervention that addresses all five components of reading, explicit and direct, but engaging and fast-paced. Feedback is given to students when errors are made. Many opportunities are given for students to respond to questions. The ongoing assessment is critical and collected data should determine what reading intervention best suits the student. The article discusses classroom support versus separated instruction. A study was conducted to assess the difference between the two programs. Conclusions and recommendations were made based on these results.

Yokota, J., & Teale, W. H. (2014). Picture books and the digital world: Educators making informed choices. *The Reading Teacher, 67,* 577-585. doi:10.1002/TRTR.1262

This article discusses how e-books and apps are both exciting for young children and yet scary for teachers who are left to their own devices to directly interact with applications that technology brings forth and discern what is educationally appropriate and sound. Researchers caution teachers to make wise decisions when it comes to how and why the digital content used helps enhance a student's understanding of fundamental concepts.

Resource Kit

This section includes only the header pages

because the materials are protected by copyright.

Page numbers in the following Table of Contents refer to

a full document including copyright items.

Electronic sources for all materials are provided for each element.

Resource Kit Table of Contents

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Blending and Segmenting Games: Snail Talk

Performance: During reading.

Materials Required:

- Picture cards

Instructions:

- Place a few cards in front of the student
- Tell them that you are going to say a word using "Snail Talk" which is a slow way of saying words (e.g., /fffffllllaaaagggg/).
- The student must look at the picture and guess what word you are saying.
- Alternate between student saying the word and looking for the word.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Blending and Segmenting Games: Robot Talk

Performance: During reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Blending and Segmenting Games: Blending Slide

Performance: During reading.

Materials Required:

- A picture of a slide
- Picture cards
- Letter tiles

Instructions:

- Pick a picture card and use the letter tiles to spell the word.
- Have students slide the letter tiles on the slide this will help students blend the letters together to form a word.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Blending and Segmenting Games: Oral Blending Activity

Performance: During reading.

Materials Required:

- Picture cards with words

Instructions:

- Show student a picture card and demonstrate how to sound out a word without being choppy (e.g., /c/a/t/) but rather singing the sounds (e.g., /ccccaaaatttt/).
- Have students take a deep breath before starting to sound out a word.
- Make sure they student is pronouncing the sounds correctly.
- They should be singing the sound.
- If the student is separating the sound instead of soothingly blending the sounds together, stop them right away and model the appropriate way.
- After, they sing the sound, ask student to say the word regularly (e.g., cat).

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Blending and Segmenting Games: Sound Blending using Songs

Performance: During reading.

Materials Required:

- Chart paper
- Marker

Instructions:

- Type up the following lyrics on chart paper.

If you think you know this word, shout it out!
If you think you know this word, shout it out!
If you think you know this word,
If you think you know this heard,
If you think you know this word, shout it out!

- Sing the song to your students in the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It, Clap Your Hands."
- After the song is completed, say a segmented word (e.g., /c/a/t/) and have students tell you the blended word (e.g., cat)
- Repeat the song with other segmented words for more practice.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Blending and Segmenting Games: Segmenting with Puppets

Performance: During reading.

Materials Required:

- Picture cards with words
- Puppet

Instructions:

- Pick 12 picture cards for this activity and one puppet.
- Go through the deck of cards and go over the words and pictures with the students so that they are familiar with them.
- Lay out three picture cards to start the activity (e.g., pen, ring, moon).
- Bring out the puppet and say:

  Teacher: Here's Mico. Today he wants to play a game with you. He's going to say a sound and you have to find the word that begins with the same sound. My turn first. This is pen, ring, moon. (Point to each picture card in turn.) What's the sound, Mico?

  Mico: Find the word that starts with /m/.

  Teacher: What's that?

  Mico: /m/ like man.

  Teacher: Which word begins with /m/?

  Student: Moon!

  Teacher: Right! Moon begins with /m/ mmmoon.
- Replace the three picture cards with three other picture and repeat.
- Continue with another set of three picture cards. Keep an eye out for students that are not responding and allow them to have an individual turn.
- If the activity is too hard, you may adjust the number of cards. Use two cards instead of three. Later, you can increase the set of cards to three.
- Once students have mastered the three card activity, challenge them by using four, six, and then all 12 picture cards.

- Make note of students that have difficulties and students that understand.

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Blending and Segmenting Games: Sound It Out!

Performance: During reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Blending and Segmenting Games: Baseball Blend

Performance: During reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Blending and Segmenting Games: I-Spy

Performance: During reading.

Note: See handout for explanation.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Blending and Segmenting Games: Graph It

Performance: During reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Blending and Segmenting Games: Segmenting Cheer

Performance: During reading.

Note: See handout for explanation.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Elkonin Boxes

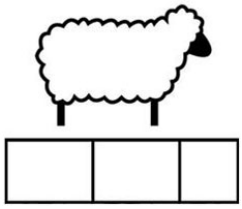
Materials Required:

- Picture cards with Elkonin boxes underneath (each box represents each syllable or phoneme.
- Colored circles or unifix cubes

Instructions:

- Pick a picture card.
- Pronounce the target word slowly, stretching it out by sound.
- Ask the child to repeat the word.
- Have the child count the number of phonemes in the word, not necessarily the number of letters (e.g., wish would have three boxes /w/, /i/, /sh/).
- Direct the child to slide one colored circle or unifix cube in each cell of the Elkonin box as he or she repeats the word.

Example:



Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Onset Rhyme Games: Onset and Rime Slide

Performance: Before reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Onset Rhyme Games: Rime House

Performance: Before reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Onset Rhyme Games: Rime Closed Sort

Performance: Before reading.

Note: See handout for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Onset Rhyme Games: Speedy Rime Words

Performance: Before reading.

Note: See handouts for explanations and samples

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Onset Rhyme Games: Word Family Builders

Performance: Before reading.

Materials Required:

- Word Family Builder package
- Pencil
- Eraser
- Scissors
- Glue

Instructions:

- Provide a lesson on short vowel sounds to students.
- Use the worksheets provided in the Word Family Builder Package to practice and reinforce short vowel sounds.
- These worksheets can be done in centers, one on one, or whole group. They can also be used for assessments.
- For centers, laminate the worksheets for multiple uses.

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Onset Rhyme Games: Onset and Rimes Tiles

Performance: Before reading.

Materials Required:

- Onset and rime tiles
- Chart paper
- Marker

Instructions:

- Use this onset and rime tiles to build words with students.
- Pick one tile and try to make as many words as possible with it as a whole group, small group, or one on one on a chart paper.
- Challenge students by presenting onset and rime tiles together and see if they can match them both to make as many words as possible.

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Rhyming Games: Rhyme Books

Performance: Before reading.

Materials Required:

- Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue
- 8x11 white of paper
- 2 pieces of construction paper (any color)
- Stapler
- Pencil
- Eraser
- Markers

Instructions:

- Have each student look for rhyming words or picture and cut them out.
- Have them glue it on a blank sheet of paper with their name on it
- Gather all the papers that students have created and put them between two pieces of construction paper
- Staple them together to make a class rhyme book.
- On the cover page write the title, "Class Rhyme Book" by…
- Have students decorate the cover page.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Rhyming Games: Rhyme Matching

Performance: Before reading.

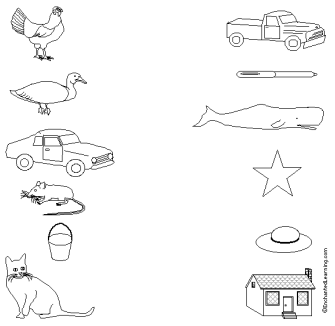
Materials Required:

- Rhyme matching worksheets or chart paper with markers

Instructions:

- Provide students with worksheets that have pictures of things that rhyme with one another.
- Place them on the left and right side to form two columns.
- The columns on both sides should be mixed up so that students can match words that rhyme.
- Instead of worksheets, you can draw pictures or write words on a chart paper and have students come up one at a time to match.

Example:



These strategies were extracted from…

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PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Rhyming Games: File Folder Rhyming Games

Performance: Before reading.

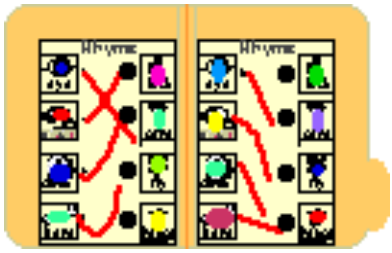
Materials Required:

- File folders
- Rhyme worksheets
- Plastifying sheets
- Yarn
- Velcro self-stick buttons
- Scissors
- Hot Glue Gun
- Glue

Instructions:

- Glue the rhyme worksheets on the left and right side of the file folder.
- Plastify the file folder.
- Cut out yarn or string. They should be about ten inches long.
- Hot glue one end of the yarn or string to the left column.
- Stick the Velcro self-stick buttons on the right side of the column.
- Provide students with file folder.
- Students will have to find the rhyming pair by taking the yarn and sticking it on the right Velcro self-stick button.

Example:



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WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Rhyming Games: Space-Themed Rhymes

Performance: Before reading.

Materials Required:

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Rocket ship cutouts
- Pencil
- Eraser

Instructions:

- One the chart paper, draw a large circle representing a planet.
- Write a keyword inside that planet (e.g., run).
- Distribute rocket shit cutouts to each student.
- Have students come up with words that that rhyme with your keyword and write it out on the rocket ship cutouts.
- Have students fly their ship and land on the planet.
- Repeat with a new keyword.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Rhyming Games: Word Family Chart

Performance: Before reading.

Materials Required:

- Chart paper
- Markers

Instructions:

- Draw the outline of a house on a chart paper.
- Write a word family on the roof (e.g., -am).
- Have students come up with words that have -am.
- Write those words in the house until there is no more room left.
- Read the words, one after the other, to demonstrate that this a family of words that belong together under -am (e.g., dam, Sam, lamb, jam).
- Point out that all these words rhyme with one another as well.
- Repeat with another word family.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Syllable Games: Marker Activity

Performance: Before reading.

Materials Required:

- Marker
- Book

Instructions:

- Select a text from a book.
- To warm up to this activity, have students following along as you read using the marker to track from left to right. Students should be placing the marker on each word that you read.
- Then have them place the maker on a word that you read. Students should place the maker for each syllable that you sound out.
- Students can also clap their hands, tap their desk, or march in place for each word you read or syllable you sound out.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Syllable Games: Multisyllabic Manipulations

Performance: Before reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Syllable Games: Clapping Games

Performance: Before reading.

Materials Required:

- Chart paper
- Marker

Instructions:

- Write a few words on the chart paper and read them out loud to the students.
- Read them out loud as a class.
- Ask students:

  Can you count the syllables or the word parts in…?
- Model how to clap to each syllable they hear and then have students copy for the first few words.
- Slowly allow them to clap to the words on their own without any modelling.
- Start with words that have one-three syllables and, then, move on to words that have more than three syllables.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Syllable Games: Using Mirrors

Performance: Before reading.

Materials Required:

- Mirrors

Instructions:

- Distribute small mirrors to students or have them find a partner as he or she pronounces each word.
- Have students say aloud a series of words of different lengths as they look in the mirror.
- Have them count the number of times their mouths open when they say the word. This is the number of syllables in the word.
- Have students take turns using the mirror.
- Students can also cup their jaw to count the number of times it drops when saying the word. This is another way to count the number of syllables.
- As a challenge ask students to identify which part of the word causes their mouth to open (the vowel sound). Point out to students that a syllable had one vowel sound.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONEMIC AWARENESS STRATEGIES

Syllable Games: Jumping Syllables

Performance: Before reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Matching: Flashcards

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Materials Required:

- Cut out of alphabet letter templates

Instructions:

- Use flashcards as a drilling activity for students once letter recognition and sound association has been taught and mastered.
- Students can sit in a circle and teacher can go clockwise or counter-clockwise when presenting the students with a specific letter.
- The student must accurately name the letter, make its associated sound and name a noun (person, place, or thing) that begins with that letter within a 10-15 second time frame.

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Matching: Matching Uppercase and Lowercase

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Matching: Letter Formation (sand, playdough, flour)

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Materials Required:

- Alphabet Mats
- Alphabet cookie cutters

Instructions:

- Provide students with alphabet mats and have them manipulate play dough, forming it into the similar letter shape found on the map.
- An alternative medium for students to explore includes giving them letter cookie cutters and having them fill it up with sand.
- For more tactile learners, students can run their finger over the sand so that they feel the letter formation.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Worksheet and Game

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Note: See handouts for explanations and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Matching: Letter Bingo

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Materials Required:

- Bingo grid sheet of uppercase letter templates (2x4)
- Bingo grid sheet of lowercase letters templates (2x4)

Instructions:

- On each little square, place a series of uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Hand out template to students and provide bingo chips.
- Alternate between calling out letters or simply making sounds to observe student progress on both letter and sound recognition.

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Matching: Letter Stamps

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Materials Required:

- Sponges
- Scissors
- Acrylic paints
- Paper bowls (one for each color of paint)
- Paper

Instructions:

- Assist students to trace the alphabet letters onto the sponges using a fine tip marker.
- Cut the letters out of the sponges.
- Pour different colored paints into paper bowls.
- Allow students to dampen the stamps with water and squeeze out any excess water.
- Ask students to gently press the sponge stamp into the paint, and press it onto the paper.
- As the activity is going on, discuss the letters of the alphabet. Ask students to name the letters they are using, and encourage them to spell out any words or names he/she may know.
- As an extension, ask students to name objects that begin with each letter or sound.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Matching: Letter Recognition Fluency - Speedy Alphabet Arc

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Matching: Letter Recognition Fluency - Glow Go

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Note: See handout for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Matching: Letter Recognition Fluency - Hungry Letter Mouse

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Matching: Letter Recognition Fluency - Speed Letter Stamping

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Matching: Letter Recognition Fluency - Tap Stack

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Note: See handout for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Matching: Letter Recognition Fluency - Match It

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Matching: Letter Recognition Fluency - Clothes Pin Match

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Matching: Letter Recognition Fluency - Fluency Letter Wheel

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Matching: Letter Recognition Fluency - Letter Flash

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Alphabet Matching: Letter Books

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Materials Required:

- Child-friendly magazines
- Construction paper/ loose-leaf

Instructions:

- Teachers can help students to create individual letter books.
- The students can draw pictures on loose-leaf or cut out pictures from magazines that start with the particular letter in question and glue them into their book.
- An alternative to the book idea would be to ask students to bring in a shoebox filled with items/objects that begin with the particular letter that they are assigned and share it with the class.

Examples:

Suggestions: One book that can be used to compliment the above-mentioned strategies is *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin Jr. John Archambault.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

PHONICS STRATEGIES

Matching Books to Phonics: Levelled Readers

Materials Required:

- Books that are adequately matched to students level of fluency, comprehension, etc.

Instructions:

- Through the use of leveled readers, teachers help students practice and reinforce reading skills.
- Features such as language usage, sentence structure and story elements are used to evaluate how difficult or easy a text is for a student.
- Assessments determine which level the students should be reading at that is appropriate to their individual learning pace.
- The goal is to keep it challenging enough so that progress is made and monitored while eliminating the common frustration or anxiety that is often associated with reading along the way.

Examples: A good example of this is the online program Reading A-Z which schools must have a license for in order to use with students.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Choral Reading

Performance: During reading.

Materials Required:

- A copy of the selected text for each student (so they can follow along) or a smartboard so that the words are projected on the computer.

Instructions:

- Select a book or passage that works well for reading aloud as a group.
- The book should be patterned or predictable (for beginning readers) and not too long; and
- The book should be matched to the independent reading level of most of the students in the group.
- Read the passage or story aloud and model fluent reading for the students.
- Ask the students to use a marker or finger to follow along with the text as they read.
- Reread the passage and have all students in the group read the story or passage aloud in unison.
- Choral reading provides a model for fluent reading as less-capable readers listen, and later mimic reading. This also helps students improve their ability to recognize sight words.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Partner (Paired) Reading

Performance: During reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Readers' Theatre

Performance: During reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Guided Reading/Shared Reading

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Materials Required:

- Age-appropriate storybook

Instruction**:**

1. Introduce the story and discuss important aspects (author/illustrator, title, cover page, predictions, etc.).
2. The teacher should read with appropriate fluency and expression to model proficient reading skills. Ask students along the way to monitor students' comprehension level.
3. Take time to pause and discuss the structures and features of a text (e.g., font written in larger print, the use of exclamation marks, etc.).
4. At the end of the story, ask students to summarize the story in their own words.
5. Ask students to share reactions/comments.
6. Ask the students if they can make any meaningful connections from the story to their own lives.

Notes: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Tape-Assisted Reading

Performance: During reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Repeated-Timed Reading

Performance: During reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Picture and Words

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Reading Relay

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Fast Match

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Word Flash

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Word Walk

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Word Wiz

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Sentence Scramble

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Rereading Decodable Text

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Computer-Based Reading

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Chunking

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

FLUENCY STRATEGIES

Express It

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

These strategies were extracted from…

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VOCABULARY STRATEGIES

List-Group-Label

Materials Required:

- Chart paper
- Markers (different colors)

Instructions:

- Choose a main concept in a reading selection (e.g., gardening)
- *List:* Ask students to brainstorm all the possible words they can think of that relates to the main topic.
    - Visually display student responses (e.g., sunshine, tomatoes, soil, water).
    - Some words may not reflect the main concept, but do not critique it. Instead, model critical thinking skills and reasoning skills out loud. Hopefully, students will realize this as they begin grouping the words in the next step.
- *Group:* Divide the class into small groups. Each group will work to cluster the large list that was originally assembled into subcategories.
- As groups of words emerge, challenge your students to explain their reasoning for placing words together or discarding them. For example, things such as sunshine, soil, and water can be listed together because these are things a plant needs.
- *Label:* Invite students to suggest a title or label for the groups of words they have formed. These labels should relate to their reasoning for the grouping (e.g., things a plant needs to grow).

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

VOCABULARY STRATEGIES

Possible Sentences

Material Required:

- Pencil
- Paper

Instructions:

- Choose and display a series of vocabulary words.
- Ask students to define the words and pair related words together.
- Ask students to write sentences using their word pairs. Remind students that their sentences should be ones they expect to see in the text as they read.
- Have students read the text and compare their possible sentences with the actual sentences within the text.
- If your students' possible sentences are inaccurate, ask them to rewrite their sentences to be accurate.

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

VOCABULARY STRATEGIES

Semantic Feature Analysis

Material Required:

- Pencil
- Paper

Instructions:

- Select a category or topic for the semantic feature analysis (e.g., Bears).
- Provide students with key vocabulary words and important features related to the topic. (e.g., key vocabulary can be the types of bears: grizzly bears, polar bears, sun bear, sloth bear, giant panda, brown bear). Under features and properties a variety of items, which bears eat can be lists (e.g., plants, fish, animals, honey, insects).
- Vocabulary words should be listed down the left hand column (vertically) and the features of the topic across the top row of the chart (horizontally).
- Have students place a "+" sign in the grid when a vocabulary word aligns with a particular feature of the topic. If the word does not align students may put a "–" in the grid. If students are unable to determine a relationship they may leave it blank.

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

VOCABULARY STRATEGIES

Semantic Gradients

Material Required:

- Paper
- Colored markers

Instructions:

- Select a pair of polar opposite words.
- Come up with at least five synonyms for each of the opposite words.
- Arrange the words in a way that makes a bridge from one opposite word to the other. Continuums can be done horizontally or vertically, in a ladder-like fashion.
- Have students discuss their rationale for placing certain words in certain locations. Encourage a conversation about the subtle differences among the words.

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

VOCABULARY STRATEGIES

Word Hunts

Materials Required:

- Storybooks
- Paper
- Pencil

Instructions:

- Introduce the book or topic to be read and provide students with written material (e.g., newspapers, magazines, dictionaries, books, and/or news articles on the Internet).
- Model word hunting by using a portion of text copied onto chart paper, overhead transparencies, or a familiar book.
- Ask the students to read and reread a text to find words that fit a particular pattern. For example, in language arts, ask students to use the book *The Cat in the Hat* or other Dr. Seuss book to find all the words that end with a particular vowel pattern word.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

VOCABULARY STRATEGIES

Word Maps

Materials Required:

- Paper
- Pencil
- Dictionaries

Instructions:

- Introduce the vocabulary word and the map to the students.
- Teach them how to use the map by putting the target word in the central box.
- Ask students to suggest words or phrases to put in the other boxes which answer the following questions: "*What is it?,*" "*What is it like?,*" and "*What are some examples?*"
- Encourage students to use synonyms, antonyms, and a picture to help illustrate the new target word or concept.
- Model how to write a definition using the information on the word map.

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

VOCABULARY STRATEGIES

Word Walls

Materials Required:

- Laminated word cards

Instructions:

- Make words accessible by putting them where every student can see them. They should be written in large, black letters using a variety of background colors to distinguish easily confused words.
- Teachers and students should work together to determine which words should go on the word wall. Try to include words that children use most commonly in their writing. Words should be added gradually - a general guideline is five words per week.
- Use the word wall daily to practice words, incorporating a variety of activities such as chanting, snapping, cheering, clapping, tracing, word guessing games as well as writing them.
- Provide enough practice so that words are read and spelled automatically and make sure that words from the wall are always spelled correctly in the children's daily writing.
- New words should be added on a regular basis as students continue to learn and expand their thinking skills.
- Use content-area material from the curriculum rather than randomly selected words.
- Word walls should be referred to often so students come to understand and see their relevance.

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Anticipation Guides

Performance: Before reading.

Materials Required:

- A storybook (fiction or non-fiction)
- Pencil
- Eraser
- Anticipation guide (with specific pre-selected sentences that allow students to make predictions about the story. They can select "*true*" or "*false,*" "*agree,*" or "*false.*"

Instructions:

- Write four to six statements about key ideas in the text; some true and some false. Include columns following each statement, which can be left blank or can be labeled "*Yes,*" or "*No*" ("*Maybe*" can also be used). Teachers may wish to create an additional column for revisiting the guide after the material has been read.
- Model the process. Introduce the text or reading material and share the guide with the students. Model the process of responding to the statements and marking the columns.
- Read each of the statements and ask the students if they agree or disagree with it. Provide the opportunity for discussion. The emphasis is not on right answers but to share what they know and to make predictions.
- Read the text aloud or have students read the selection individually. If reading aloud, teachers should read slowly and stop at places in the text that correspond to each of the statements.
- Bring closure to the reading by revisiting each of the statements.

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Concept Maps

Performance: During reading.

Materials Required:

- Concept map "*web*" template
- Pencil
- Eraser

Instructions:

- Model how to identify the major ideas or concepts presented in a selection of text as you read.
- Organize the ideas into categories. Remind students that your organization may change as you continue to read and add more information.
- Use lines or arrows on the map to represent how ideas are connected to one another, a particular category, and/or the main concept. Limit the amount of information on the map to avoid frustration.
- After students have finished the map, encourage them to share and reflect on how they each made the connections between concepts.
- Encourage students to use the concept map to summarize what was read.

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Concept Sort

Performance: Before reading.

Materials Required:

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Vocabulary word cards (e.g., post-its, cue cards, etc.,)

Instructions:

- If your goal is to teach a concept such as rough/smooth, gather 10-15 objects or pictures that have rough and smooth textures and work with students to sort them into appropriate categories.
- Working individually, in small groups or as a class, have the students sort the vocabulary word cards or objects into meaningful groups. The groups (or categories) can be pre-defined by the teacher (often called a closed sort) or by the students (often called an open sort).
- Discuss the categories used within the different groups. Describe why certain cards were placed within certain groups.

Example for Science:

The following example introduces students to a book about discovering plants:

Introduce and discuss the following pre-selected terms:

flowers	leaves	Water	gardens
weeds	forests	Air	trees
sunlight	soil	roots	stems

Then, ask students to sort the terms according to the following categories OR ask the students to sort the cards in a way that is meaningful to them and follow up to check their understanding of the concepts.

Types of plants

Parts of a plant

Where plants grow

What plants need to grow

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)

Performance: During reading.

Material Required:

- Pencil
- DRTA chart

Instructions:

- Teachers should follow the steps below when creating a DRTA.
- Determine the text to be used and pre-select points for students to pause during the reading process.
- Introduce the text, the purpose of the DRTA, and provide examples of how to make predictions. Be aware of the reading levels of each student, and be prepared to provide appropriate questions, prompts, and support as needed.
- Use the following outline to guide the procedure:

  D = DIRECT. Teachers direct and activate students' thinking prior to reading a passage by scanning the title, chapter headings, illustrations, and other materials. Teachers should use open-ended questions to direct students as they make predictions about the content or perspective of the text (e.g., "Given this title, what do you think the passage will be about?").

  R = READING. Students read up to the first pre-selected stopping point. The teacher then prompts the students with questions about specific information and asks them to evaluate their predictions and refine them if necessary. This process should be continued until students have read each section of the passage.

  T = THINKING. At the end of each section, students go back through the text and think about their predictions. Students should verify or modify their predictions by finding supporting statements in the text. The teacher asks questions such as:

  - What do you think about your predictions now?
  - What did you find in the text to prove your predictions?

- What did you we read in the text that made you change your predictions?

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Exit Slips

Performance: After reading.

Material Required:

- Blackboard
- Whiteboard or smartboard
- 3x5 cue cards (for students to record their responses)

Instructions:

- At the end of the lesson ask students to respond to a question or prompt. There are three categories of exit slips (Fisher & Frey, 2004):
    - Prompts that *document* learning:
        - Example: Write one thing you learned today.
        - Example: Discuss how today's lesson could be used in the real world.
    - Prompts that emphasize the *process of learning*:
        - Example: I didn't understand…
        - Example: Write one question you have about today's lesson.
    - Prompts to evaluate the *effectiveness of instruction*:
        - Example: Did you enjoy working in small groups today?
    - Other exit prompts include:
        - I would like to learn more about…
        - Please explain more about…
        - The thing that surprised me the most today was…
        - I wish…
- Review the exit slips to determine how you may need to alter your instruction to better meet the needs of all your students.
- Collect the exit slips as a part of an assessment portfolio for each student.

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

First Lines

Performance: Before reading.

Materials Required:

- Storybook, poem or play

Instructions:

- Choose the assigned reading and introduce the text (poem, storybook, or play) to the students. Ask students to read only the first line of the assigned text, or if using your read aloud, read aloud only the first line.
- Ask students to make predictions for the reading based on the first sentence.
- Engage the class in discussion about the predictions.
- Encourage students to return to their original predictions after reading the text, assessing their original predictions and building evidence to support those predictions, which are accurate. Students can create new predictions as well.

These strategies were extracted from…

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COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Inferences

Material Required:

- Chart paper (with a specific question posed, to help guide students making connections and synthesize information)

Instructions:

- One simplified model for teaching inference includes the following assumptions:
    - We need to find clues to get some answers.
    - We need to add those clues to what we already know or have read.
    - There can be more than one correct answer.
    - We need to be able to support inferences.
- Marzano (2010) suggests teachers pose four questions to students to facilitate a discussion about inferences:
    - **What is my inference?**
        - This question helps students become aware that they may have just made an inference by filling in information that wasn't directly presented.
    - **What information did I use to make this inference?**
        - It's important for students to understand the various types of information they use to make inferences. This may include information presented in the text, or it may be background knowledge that a student brings to the learning setting.
    - **How good was my thinking?**
        - According to Marzano, once students have identified the premises on which they've based their inferences, they can engage in the most powerful part of the process — examining the validity of their thinking.
    - **Do I need to change my thinking?**
        - The final step in the process is for students to consider possible changes in their thinking. The point here is not to invalidate students' original

inferences, but rather to help them develop the habit of continually updating their thinking as they gather new information.

- One model that teachers can use to teach inference is called "*It says,*" "*I say,*" and "*so*" developed by Kylene Beers (2003).

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Inquiry Chart

Performance: During reading.

Material Required:

- Blank I-charts

Instructions:

- The teacher provides each student with a blank I-chart and assists with topic selection OR provides the pre-selected topic.
- The students engage in forming questions about the topic. Those questions are placed at the top of each individual column.
- The rows are for recording any information students already know and the key ideas pulled from several different sources of information. The last row gives students the opportunity to pull together the ideas into a general summary.
- Teachers may ask students to resolve competing ideas found in the separate sources or develop new questions to explore based on any conflicting or incomplete information.

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

WETA Public Broadcasting. (2015). *Classroom strategies. Launching Young Readers! Reading Rockets.* Washington, DC: WETA (Educational Television Station) Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies

COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Jigsaw

Performance: During reading.

Materials Required:

- Book
- Graphic organizer

Instructions:

- Introduce the strategy and the topic to be studied.
- Assign each student to a Home group of 3-5 students who reflect a range of reading abilities.
- Determine a set of reading selections and assign one selection to each student.
- Create Expert groups that consist of students across "home groups" who will read the same selection.
- Give all students a framework for managing their time on the various parts of the jigsaw task.
- Provide key questions to help the Expert groups gather information in their particular area.
- Provide materials and resources necessary for all students to learn about their topics and become experts. It is important that the reading material assigned is at appropriate instructional levels (90–95% reading accuracy).
- Discuss the rules for reconvening into Home groups and provide guidelines as each expert reports the information learned.
- Prepare a summary chart or graphic organizer for each Home group as a guide for organizing the experts' information report.
- Remind students that Home group members are responsible to learn all content from one another.

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COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Listen-Read-Discuss (LRD)

Performance: Before and during reading.

Material Required:

- Storybook
- Graphic organizer

Instructions:

- Listen: Present information to students about the book they will be reading. This can be in the form of a short lecture on the topic, using a graphic organizer to guide the lecture.
- Read: Ask students to read a text selection. The content should be similar to the material presented during the listen portion of the lesson.
- Discuss: Lead a classroom discussion of the material. Encourage students to reflect on any differences between their reading of the content and your presentation.

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COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Paragraph Shrinking

Performance: During and after reading.

Materials Required:

- Book

Instructions:

- Choose the assigned reading and introduce the text to the students.
- Create pairs within the classroom by identifying which children require help on specific skills and who the most appropriate children are to help other children learn those skills.
- Model the procedure to ensure that students understand how to use the strategy.
- Have each member of the teacher-assigned pair take turns being Coach and Player.
- Ask each student to read aloud for 5 minutes without rereading a text. After each paragraph, students should stop to summarize the main points of the reading. Ask students to then summarize the following information:
    - The who or what of the paragraph
    - The most important thing about who or what
    - The main idea
- If a Player ever gives a wrong answer, the Coach asks the Player to skim the paragraph again and answer question a second time.
- Ask students to state the main idea in 10 words or less which will encourage them to monitor comprehension while taking turns reading.
- Award each pair points when the above goals of the strategy are met.

Note: See sample handouts.

These strategies were extracted from…

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COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Partner Reading

Performance: During reading.

Materials Required:

- Book

Instructions:

- Create pairs within the class by identifying which students require help on specific skills and who the most appropriate student are to help other children learn those skills.
- Model the procedure to ensure that students understand how to use the strategy.
- Have each member of the teacher-assigned pair take turns being a "Coach" and "Player." These pairs are changed regularly and over a period of time as students work. Therefore, all students have the opportunity to "coaches" and "players."
- Ask the stronger reader to begin the activity as the "Player" and read orally for five minutes. Have the "Coach" follow along and correct any mistakes when necessary.
- Have the pair switch roles and ask the weaker reader to become the "Player." The "Player" rereads the same passage for the next five minutes and the "Coach" provides corrective feedback.
- Optional: One point is earned for each correct sentence read.
- Teacher walks around and takes notes of the students.

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COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Question the Author

Performance: During reading.

Materials Required:

- Book

Instructions:

- Choose a passage that is both interesting and can spur a good conversation.
- Decide on appropriate stopping points where you think your students need to obtain a greater understanding.
- Create queries or questions for each stopping point.
    - What is the author trying to say?
    - Why do you think the author used the following phrase?
    - Does this make sense to you?
- Display a short passage to your students along with one or two queries you have designed ahead of time.
- Model for your student show to think through the queries.
- Ask students to read and work through the queries you have prepared for their readings.

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COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR)

Performance: After reading.

Materials Required:

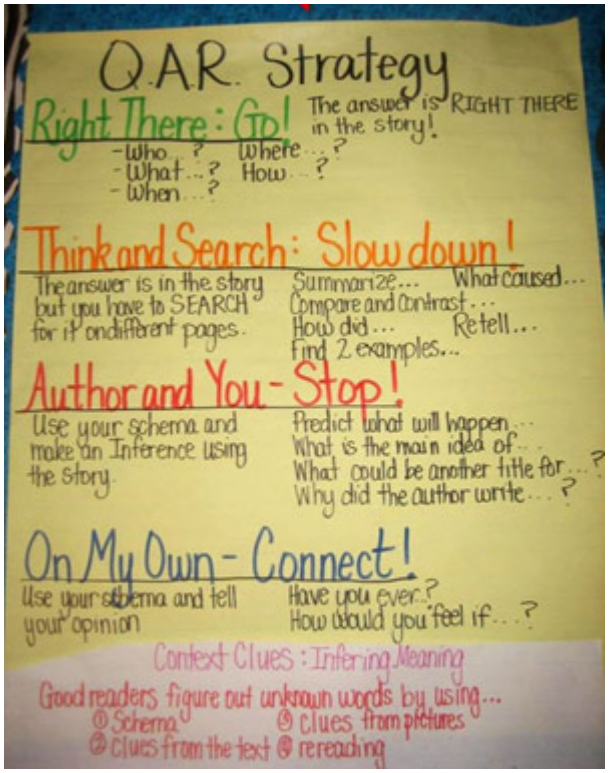
- Book
- Chart paper
- Markers

Instructions:

- Explain to student that there are four types of questions that they will encounter. Define each type of question and give an example.
- The four types of questions that are examined in the QAR. Note these QAR strategies down on a chart paper with the corresponding examples.
    - **Right Three Questions**
        - Literal questions whose answers can be found in the text. Often the words used in the question are the same words found in the text.
    - **Think and Search Questions**
        - Answers are gathered from several parts of the text and put together to make meaning.
    - **Author and You**
        - These questions are based on information provided in the text but the student is required to relate it to their own experience. Although the answer does not like directly in the text, the student must have read it in order to answer the question.
    - **On My Own**
        - These questions do not require the student to have read the passage but he or she must use their background or prior knowledge to answer the question.
- Read the short passage aloud to your students.

- Have predetermined questions you will ask after you stop reading. When you have finished reading, read the questions aloud to students and model how you decide which type of question you have been asked to answer.
- Show students how to find information to answer the question (e.g., in the next, from your own experiences, etc.)

Example:



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COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Reading Guide

Performance: During reading.

Materials Required:

- Book

Instructions:

- Determine the major ideas from a book or assigned reading and consider each student's knowledge related to the concepts.
- Write questions or statements designed to guide readers through the major ideas and supporting details of the text. Guides may be phrased as statements or as questions.
- Introduce the assigned book and discuss the main ideas and new vocabulary.
- Discuss the statements or ask the questions on the reading guide.
- Read the selection aloud or students read the assigned text as teachers monitor reading.
- Work with students to respond to statements or questions on the reading guides during the reading process. Monitor and support student as they work.
- Students can also make their own guides and provide support for one another once they are proficient in completing reading guides designed by the teacher.

Examples of statements or questions that may be found in a reading guide:

- What do you think this book is about?
- What/who were the characters, places, and events that took place?
- What happened in the story?
- Why did the author write this book?
- The author discusses the differences between ___ and ___ .
- The main idea of this book is…
- What new information have you learned from the book?

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COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Reciprocal Teaching

Performance: During reading.

Materials Required:

- Book
- Note cards labeled with roles (Summarizer, Questioner, Clarifier, and Predictor)

Instructions:

- Students must be paired in groups of four.
- Hand out one note to each member of the group to identify their role.
    - Summarizer
    - Questioner
    - Clarifier
    - Predictor
- Have students read a few paragraph of the selected text. Encourage them to use note-taking strategies such as selective underlining or sticky-notes to help them better prepare for their roles in the discussion.
- At the given stopping point, the Summarizer will highlight the key ideas up to this point in the reading.
- The Questioner will then pose questions about the selection
    - Unclear parts
    - Puzzling information
    - Connection to other content already learned
- The Clarifier will address confusing parts and attempt to answer the questions that were just posed.
- The Predictor can offer predictions about what the author will tell the group next or, if it's a literary selection, the predictor might suggest what the next events in the story will be.

- The roles in the group can be switched for the next selection of paragraphs. The rotation can be clockwise.
- This continues until the entire selections of readings are completed.
- The teacher can guide and nurture the students' ability to use the four strategies successfully within the small groups.

Note: See sample handouts

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COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Story Maps

Performance: During and after reading.

Materials Required:

- Story map graphic organizers
- Book

Instructions:

- Discuss the main components of a story (e.g., characters, setting, plot, theme, beginning, middle, end).
- Handout story map graphic organizers.
- Model how to complete these story map graphic organizers.
- As students read, have them complete the story map graphic organizers.
- Once they have finished reading the whole text, any missing parts should be filled in.

Note: See sample handouts.

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COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Story Sequence

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Materials Required:

- Story sequence graphic organizer
- Book

Instructions:

- Discuss the that a story develops in sequence (beginning, middle, end).
- Handout story sequences graphic organizers.
- Model how to complete these story sequence graphic organizers.
- As students read, have them complete the story sequence graphic organizers.
- Once they have finished reading the whole text, any missing parts should be filled in.

Note: See sample handouts.

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COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Summarizing

Performance: After reading.

Materials Required:

- Book

Instructions:

- Read or have the student read a selected text.
- Ask students the following questions:
    - What are the main ideas?
    - What are the crucial details necessary for supporting the ideas?
    - What information is irrelevant or unnecessary?
- Have them use key words or phrases to identify main points from the text.

Note: See sample handouts.

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COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Think-Alouds

Performance: Before and during reading.

Materials Required:

- Book

Instructions

- Model the strategy first. Model your thinking as you read. Do this at points in the text that may be confusing for students (e.g., new vocabulary, unusual sentence construction).
- Introduce the assigned text and discuss the purpose of Think-Aloud strategy.
- Develop the set of questions to support thinking aloud.
- Give students opportunities to practice the technique and offer structured feedback to students.
- Read the selected passage aloud as the students read the same text silently. At certain points top and think-aloud the answers to some of the pre-selected questions.
- Demonstrate how good readers monitor their understanding by re-reading a sentence, reading ahead to clarify, and/or looking for context clues. Students then learn to offer answers to the questions as the teacher leads the think-aloud.

Note: See sample handout.

These strategies were extracted from…

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COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Think-Pair-Share

Performance: Before reading.

Materials Required:

- Book

Instructions:

- Decide which text will be read and develop the set of questions or prompts that target key content concepts.
- Describe the purpose of the strategy and provide guidelines for discussion.
- Model the procedure to ensure that students understand how to use the strategy.
- Monitor and support students as they work through the following:

T: (Think) Teacher begins by asking specific questions about the text. Students "think" about what they know or have learned about this topic.

P: (Pair) Each student should be paired with another student or a small group.

S: (Share) Students share their thinking with their partner. Teacher expands the "share" into a whole-class discussion.

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COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Visual Imagery

Performance: Before, during, and after reading.

Note: See handouts for explanation and samples.

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