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# Effective Early Literacy Interventions, Strategies, And Supplemental Programs For Primary Students

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EFFECTIVE EARLY LITERACY INTERVENTIONS, STRATEGIES, AND  
SUPPLEMENTAL PROGRAMS FOR PRIMARY STUDENTS

By

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Literacy Education.

Hamline University

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Each August, I prepare my classroom for a new group of students. Every year I gather, search for, collect, and organize any materials that I may find useful throughout the coming year, when in reality I have no idea to what to expect. Every year is different and, every child has varying levels of strengths and needs. This reality is especially true in the subject of reading. In first grade, the grade I have taught for the past five years, this is an insurmountable truth. The truth is that every child needs a different learning approach to achieve success, particularly success in their journey of learning how to read. For each child this journey looks very different, and as a teacher this brings up the question: If every journey is so different, why is the road map the same?

Over the past five years I have noticed a dramatic increase in the number of students entering first grade with very little understanding of how to read. Each September, my students are assessed in the areas of math and reading with an assessment called AIMSweb, which determines if they will qualify for Title I services. Over the last few years there has been a steady increase in students who qualify for this service. This year a little less than half of my first graders qualified for Title I services in the area of reading at the beginning of the year, and unfortunately that number has stayed the same as the year has progressed. This has been an increase from the six students that qualified last year, and the four that qualified the year before.

To address this progressively increasing issue, I want to learn how to better help these students achieve success through further research in the topic of reading for primary students,

and find the answer to the following question: *What interventions, strategies, or supplemental programs are available to address and aid primary students who struggle in reading?*

## **Chapter One Preview**

This chapter will provide background on my experience working with struggling readers at the primary level. First, I will describe my personal background and teaching history. Then, I will address how the school where I teach differentiates and supplements struggling readers currently, and how I specifically address struggling readers in my classroom. Next, I will state my hopes and vision for what can be done to further help these struggling readers in their journey of learning how to read. And finally, I will discuss my rationale as to why this topic is one I am extremely passionate about.

## **Personal Background**

I have always wanted to be a teacher. Partly because of my love for children, but also because of my love for learning. When I was deciding what college I wanted to attend for my undergraduate degree, I searched for a school with a great teaching program. That was all I cared about, and nothing else. When I had my first opportunity to work in a classroom with students I was so excited to teach and to learn with each of them. Each paper and assignment was something that led me closer to my dream; to have my own classroom.

When I started my student teaching experience, I remember being eager to teach. I was also very nervous, but that was because I knew the gravity of what a teacher does every day. What I said and did mattered, and could affect each of these children's futures. Not only was that

a very powerful thing, but it was also incredibly terrifying as well. When I did finally get my own classroom, this understanding of the importance of what I was doing each day was not only still there but amplified, now that it was solely up to me to teach them each day. I think that this philosophy or understanding has continued with me every day, as I walk into my classroom. I believe this is why I have the desire to learn how to help struggling readers on their reading journey, because I know how monumental it can be for their futures in learning.

### **Teaching History**

I began my teaching experience six years ago as a teacher in small rural school in the Midwest. I was hired as a fifth grade classroom teacher part time, whose focus was to teach reading and math. Entering the classroom, I was under the false assumption that children at that level would be reading fairly well. This was the case for many, but there were some students for whom this was not their reality. Reading was an everyday struggle, and did nothing but frustrate and upset them. As a new, inexperienced teacher I taught to the middle of my students needs, not addressing the needs of students with higher levels of reading ability, and not necessarily helping students who were struggling either. I can honestly say I did the best I could at the time, but looking back now, I know that there was so much more that could have been done, if only I would have had more reading preparation.

When I learned that my position was no longer required for the following school year, and there were no other positions available, I found a job in a neighboring town teaching a multi-age classroom of 1st-3rd graders. I could no longer even attempt to teach to the middle of my students, and this experience really taught me the importance of differentiation in the



classroom. Now instead of one big class to provide with reading instruction, I assessed and grouped my students based upon their level in reading, not their age. I went from teaching one reading lesson a day to all students, to teaching six different reading lessons to small groups of students.

After two years teaching in that experience, my life led me back to that small rural Midwest school, where I had taught my first class. This is where I have been teaching for the last three years, in a primary first grade classroom.

### **School's Current Programs**

Currently, as stated in the introduction, students in K-2 are assessed using an assessment called AIMSweb, at our school. As stated on their website AIMSweb helps to “identify at-risk students early, and monitor and report student progress.” Also that it “is the leading assessment and RTI solution in school today—a complete web-based solution for universal screening, progress monitoring, and data management for Grades K-12.” (AIMSweb, 2014). This assessment is used to determine if students qualify for Title I services, and this benchmark is done three times a year in the fall, winter, and spring. Depending on the child's grade level, there are specific criteria and standards of where the state believes each child should test. If they fall below this predetermined level then they qualify to receive service through our Title I department.

If they qualify for this service students are taught extra lessons in reading, through a pull out structure. Each day during a selected time students are pulled for 30 minutes and are grouped into small groups of 2-4 students, where they work on specific areas of need. They are also

progress monitored weekly to measure progress and growth. This service is the only supplemental or additional program offered by the school for our struggling readers.

There are many benefits from this service to students who are struggling readers, but there are also still areas of improvement that are necessary. Though very dedicated, our Title I teachers are not licensed teachers, but are instead supervised by one licensed teacher. It is my belief that they are not always using best practices in reading, specifically because they do not have the knowledge base. In order to teach these best practices, it is important to first determine what they are; leading back to my research focus question.

### **My Classroom**

In my classroom I struggle with how to help my struggling readers. Currently, my reading time is structured in a way that best fits into the time I have available. This is in two separate reading blocks. In the first block we focus on our core curriculum, which is a basal series called Reading Wonders. This was a new curriculum and this is our second year using it as a school. When I go through the curriculum, I work to pair it with a CAFE structure that I also have established in my classroom. During this time we have mainly whole group lessons in reading strategies, vocabulary, writing, grammar, and spelling. How I ask the students to demonstrate understanding varies from day to day. When working on a reading strategy we may read a story together and they pair off and read to someone. With vocabulary, grammar, and spelling lessons we use technology and have various interactive games or lessons on the SMARTboard. Our curriculum resources include many different songs and dances that go with grammar and spelling lessons that the students enjoy doing as well. And our writing lessons

vary depending on the content. During this block of time is also when we have interactive read alouds and continue to work on our reading strategies.

The second block of time is where I implement a Daily 5 structure that I pair with CAFE and our reading curriculum. Unfortunately, this is also when students who qualify for Title I services are getting pulled. During this time I meet with small groups of students while the rest of the students are working independently on a Daily 5 choice. These choices are as follows: read to self, read to someone, listen to reading, work on writing, and word work. In the beginning of the year we spend five weeks developing stamina in each of these tasks, which helps students best utilize their time when they are working independently. In my small groups, I group students based upon their reading level as well as skills that I have identified they need to work on. Currently, I meet with each group once to twice a week, although I wish I could meet with them daily. In our groups we work on reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading strategies.

The major problem with this current structure is that I feel that I do not get enough time to work with my struggling readers in the classroom, one on one or as a small group. This is largely due to the fact that these students are getting pulled out of the classroom for an additional 30 minutes of reading instruction a day, and it is hard to find time in the schedule to have additional time with these students. Not only is time an issue, but also I feel I lack the knowledge of what research says are the best ways to work with them as well. So between a lack of time and knowledge of research, it is easy to get stuck. This feeling has lead me to wonder what interventions or strategies are available for students who struggle in reading. Are there also additional supplemental programs that our school could use to address this issue at all grade

levels? I need to know the answer to this question in order to better serve my students and help prepare them for their future journeys in reading.

### **Dream and Vision**

In an ideal and perfect world I would find all the answers to this daily dilemma. I am searching for things that I can use directly with my students each day. What I would love to find are interventions and strategies that are research based and tested to show effective results, but that are also fairly simplistic. Simplicity is necessary because beyond just using these new interventions and strategies in my classroom, I would like to share them with my colleagues who are having similar struggles in their own rooms. I would like to accomplish this by developing a resource guide for teachers with interventions and reading strategies listed and provide professional development to teachers in the use of this resource guide. Beyond that if my research brings me to learn about supplemental programs for struggling readers, I want to bring that new knowledge to my school administrators for consideration for possible implementation in our school. Even though these are only dreams, and a vision I have for my school, I have no idea what I will find throughout my research. But with that being said, there is a large need in my classroom and our school to learn more for the benefit of the students, particularly the students who struggle in reading.

### **Rationale**

The rationale behind my research focus question is that I have observed struggling readers at all levels in the elementary setting. I think back to the memories I have of those

struggling fifth grade readers and wonder if they could have been helped sooner, if that would not have been their reality. I look back on that year with some regret that perhaps I could have done more, and I do not want to feel that way in the future. If I can learn new ways to provide support to the struggling readers in my classroom through interventions, strategies, or supplemental programs, I can help students early on become better readers, so they won't struggle as much in the future. In order to make this happen, I need to know what research states is the most effective way to help struggling readers.

## **Conclusion**

Struggling readers cannot fix their issues with reading by themselves. Teachers also cannot teach these readers with the same tools that they use with other students in their classroom. If those strategies worked for these students, then they wouldn't be struggling. This is why there is a necessity to learn more about how to help struggling readers. This assistance also needs to begin early on, at the primary level, because students have less of a learning gap. If we wait too long, then the task becomes much harder and the learning gap much larger, and students become increasingly frustrated and lose self confidence. This problem can be addressed through finding the answer to the following research question; *What interventions, strategies, or supplemental programs are available to address and aid primary students who struggle in reading?*

In the next chapter, I will present a review of research, that I have discovered pertaining to this question. I will address the definition of early literacy, and compare literary theory of the past and present, and explore interventions and strategies are available and best practice. In

addition, I will describe if there are supplemental programs to address and aid, primary students who struggle with reading.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

If you look into the window of any classroom, what you observe may be very different from one to the next. Teaching styles, practices, and methods vary enormously from teacher to teacher, school to school, and district to district. Looking in the window of my first grade classroom, may be very different from that of the other first grade teacher's next door. Even with these differences there is something prevalent in most every classroom that I have gazed into, and that is the presence of primary struggling readers. It may be just one child or a group of many, but their presence still exists. In my classroom in particular, this is especially true and this manifestation of struggling readers in the classroom has only grown in numbers from year to year. This has spurred the question; *What interventions, strategies, or supplemental programs are available to address and aid, primary students who struggle in reading?*

The topic of struggling readers is very broad, and there is a lot of differing and conflicting research and opinions about the best ways to teach and work with students who struggle in the area of learning how to read. Lyons (2009) defines good readers as children who are phonemically aware, have an understanding of the alphabetic principle, and the ability to apply these skills to fluency in reading. Good readers should also possess strong vocabularies

and grammar skills, and have the ability to relate what they are reading to their own experiences. If students are lacking any skills in these areas, they could be considered struggling readers. According to Lyons (2009) children who are raised in poverty, have limited proficiency in English, or come from homes where parents who have also struggled with reading are at an increased risk of reading failure.

“Reading skills are the key building blocks of a child’s formal education” (Jacob, Armstrong, Bowen, & Pan, 2016). Clay (2005) describes reading development as the “learning to use multiple sources of information,” including phonemic awareness, letter-sound relationships, letter identification, word recognition, word identification, and the use of oral language skills to construct meaning from text. Currently two out of three American 4th graders read below grade level, and almost  $\frac{1}{3}$  of children nationwide lack basic reading skills. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Also according to Early Literacy Development (2011) 90% of children who do not read at level by the time they reach 3rd grade will never reach grade level at all. If reading skills truly are building blocks to education, then these statistics show that something needs to happen to change the way struggling readers are instructed in the classroom. Teachers, support staff, parents and guardians, and communities, need to be shown ways to help students learn to read early on, and address reading deficiencies as soon as possible.

## **Chapter Two Preview**

This chapter begins with the fundamentals of early literacy. It is important to first understand what the components of early literacy are in order to understand where struggling readers may have deficiencies. Along with the fundamentals of early literacy, it is also important

to understand the history of literacy and the development of literary theory over time. This topic is an important place to begin, to provide background to the reader about how literacy has evolved and is still changing, as well as all the fundamental components in which early literacy is comprised.

The second topic of focus for this literature review is early interventions. This is essential based upon the statistical evidence mentioned previously, to help address students reading deficiencies as soon as possible. This leads to the third topic of discussion, which are additional reading strategies that can be performed with students when it too late for early interventions or when early interventions have not been successful.

Then when early interventions and reading strategies are still not enough, it leads us to the fourth topic of focus, supplemental programs. The supplemental programs to be discussed may take place inside or outside of the school setting. Lastly, the fifth and final topic is describing what ideal effective reading instruction should look like in the classroom.

### **Fundamentals of Early Literacy**

According to Early Literacy Development (2011), early childhood literacy instruction and a child's reading readiness is based on whether or not they acquire a set of "prescribed literacy skills." These "prescribed literacy skills," fit into two domains as stated by Whitehurst & Lonigan (1998) and cited by Tichnor-Wagner, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, & Vernon-Feagans (2016), and are called outside-in skills and inside-out skills. Outside-in skills are fundamental skills in language, vocabulary, content, and narrative understanding. Whereas inside-out skills are fundamental skills in symbol/sound correspondences, words within words, word decoding,



the alphabetic principle, and phonemic awareness. D'Agostino, Rodgers, Harmeey, & Brownfield (2016), cite Clay (2005) stating that young readers start with a slow processing system which develops over time, by students processing multiple sources of information around them. They develop beginning reading skills, and these skills remain “under construction” as their reading skills continue to develop.

It is important to realize that early literacy doesn't begin to develop when students first step into the classroom, but instead in their first years of life. “An important influence on children's early literacy ability is their home literacy environment, which have been associated with children's emergent literacy skills and later reading achievement” (Tichnor-Wagner, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, & Vernon-Feagans, 2016). Parents and caregivers play a large role in the development of their child's literacy and language skills (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, National Academy of Sciences, 2009), this is why early literacy development takes place long before the classroom and school, and begins in home, and community environments first (Early Literacy Development, 2011).

Play is one of the first ways children begin to develop literacy skills in their early years. “Play is one of the most common forms of behavior during childhood, and dramatic play is most commonly linked to literacy development” (Christie, 1991). Play prepares children for literacy because it is a fundamental cognitive activity, and gets children ready for more complex cognitive activities such as literacy. Both the language and symbolic behavior in play relate to literacy and the written language (Christie, 1991). According to Early Literacy Development (2011) children learn in situations that are purposeful. Play can provide purpose for children developing early literacy skills.

Once these beginning literacy skills are developed through the use of play, the transition can be made to other forms of literacy instruction. This is where children make the transition from play where they monitor their activities, to literacy where teachers monitor activities. “Literacy is seen mainly as a visual/perceptual skill and one which is highly individualized.” Children now begin to submit the ownership of their learning to others instead of themselves (Christie, 1991). When teachers begin to introduce children to the concepts of print, this usually begins with the introduction of the alphabetic principle or the understanding of how written letters and spoken sounds relate, which through theory and research has shown to be an important milestone in children’s literacy development (D’Agostino, Rodgers, Harmey, & Brownfield, 2016).

Once children reach a comfort level with the alphabetic principle, they can move onto developing phonemic and phonological awareness, transitioning from letters, to sounds, to sound combinations, to words. Then once they have established a “comfort level with print, it becomes easier for them to focus on comprehension rather than placing all of their attention to figuring out or decoding words” (Rasinski, Rupley, Paige & Nichols, 2016, p. 165-166). It is important for children to experience repeated practice with text and print early, because reading is such a complex problem solving activity, and knowledge and understanding increase the more it is practiced (D’Agostino, Rodgers, Harmey, & Brownfield, 2016). The fundamentals of early literacy did not develop without the development of literary theory, the next section will detail how literary theory transformed over time.

### **Early Literacy Theory**

The fundamental aspects of early literacy did not develop on their own, but instead have developed over time through the development of literary theory. It is important to understand the theory behind our current literacy practices in order to understand that literacy still continues to change and develop, as it has done throughout history. The next section will detail how literary theory that has been developed throughout recent history, in order to clarify the way literacy is taught in the classrooms of today.

Jean Piaget's theories state that the "child acquires knowledge through interacting with the world." This view is also constantly changing and developing as the child learns more. This connects to what was previously mentioned about a child's mind being "under construction" and changing as it is introduced to multiple sources of information. (Early Literacy Development, 2011). Piaget's theory centers around a child's language development, seriating (sorting objects by color, size, shape, or type), representing different modalities, and spatial relations. Lev S. Vygotsky's theory also connects with that of Piaget's but focuses on learning occurring for children as they are exposed to new concepts or schemas defined as previous background or prior knowledge. (Early Literacy Development, 2011). Vygotsky also believed that mental functions were developed out of social relationships. He also introduced the theory of the Zone of Proximal Development, when a child can do some parts of a task but not all, and how this fosters learning in growth. (Early Literacy Development, 2011).

Later, in 1925 Gesell introduced a new model called the skill based model, which was a systematic way of teaching reading, and implemented only when children were ready to learn early reading and writing skills. This model focused on the child's maturation as the most important thing about learning how to read. This was controversial because many educators were

“uncomfortable with waiting for children to be ready to read” It also focused on direct instruction or time on task, routines, and practice, and had a strong focus on children obtaining new skills. (Early Literacy Development, 2011).

This led to Reading Readiness, which began in the 1930’s and 1940’s when standardized testing became increasingly popular. Reading Readiness focused on core skills for students including; auditory discrimination, visual discrimination, visual motor skills, and large motor skills. (Early Literacy Development, 2011).

New education policies began for preschool-Kindergarten in the 1960’s. In 1965 President Johnson started the Head Start program providing disadvantaged children with access to preschool. This program followed a child-centered model, developed out of a theory by John Dewey (1966). This child centered approach, had a focus on problem solving, providing children with opportunities for growth through exploring and experimenting, while learning self-regulation. There were also integrated content areas present in the classroom. Although there were many benefits to Dewey’s approach, his classrooms lacked formal skill instruction. (Early Literacy Development, 2011).

In the 1960’s Marie Clay also introduced her theory of Emergent Literacy, which gave awareness to literacy development beginning in the first year of life, and not when a child was mature enough to read, as in the skill based model presented. Clay recognized that there was a relationship between early communication skills and literacy development. The sooner children were exposed to books and writing, the better developed their literacy skills were. Clay also stated the importance of incorporating literacy into the curriculum throughout the whole day. The more embedded and integrated, the more purposeful the literacy instruction becomes. Theorists

Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi also relate to Clay's belief about the importance of a child's early education. They believed that learning should be a natural process where children learn through what is of interest to them and what makes them curious. (Early Literacy Development, 2011).

During this same time period Maria Montessori also influenced literacy education. Montessori believed that "children needed early, orderly, systematic training mastering one skill after another" (Early Literacy Development, 2011). Her model of literacy instruction has a strong emphasis on the use of manipulatives to learn. It also encouraged students to work to foster independence in their learning, make errors and corrections independently, and work to achieve their goals. Friedrich Froebel also theorized about the importance of using sensory experiences for children to manipulate, and emphasized how beneficial it is for children to play to learn. (Early Literacy Development, 2011).

All of these theorists bring us to what is called the Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Model, which combines the child-centered approaches of Montessori, Dewey, and Clay with the skill based model of Gesell. This is due to the fact that "no single method or single combination of methods can successfully teach all children to read" (Early Literacy Development, 2011). Educators need to know many methods for teaching reading and writing to be successful, as well as teach from various social, emotional, physical, and intellectual perspectives. In today's world we use what has been theorized in the past to inform our practice, and continue to develop new theories and ideas about literacy. Not all classrooms look the same, and we might see various theories being tested and practiced in one place. Early literacy education today is very much a

conglomeration of many theories and ideas, and this is the reason why there are so many methods of teaching reading.

The next two sections will discuss early interventions and reading strategies. Early interventions are interventions performed with the child early in their development, whereas reading strategies detail processes of how a reader relates and interacts with a text. The sections to follow will detail research-based early interventions and reading strategies that can help struggling readers achieve success in reading.

### **Early Interventions**

After looking into the fundamental components of early literacy, and the theories and theorists that have shaped literacy education, it is necessary to also discuss early interventions and their effect on struggling readers. Burns, Griffin, & Snow (2009) emphasize the important realization that children do not learn everything at the same pace, as well as the understanding that children come to kindergarten and first grade with completely different preschool experiences. As previously mentioned, it is very crucial that children begin to develop phonological awareness and understanding of the alphabetic principle as early as preschool, if not even earlier. (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, National Academy of Sciences, 2009). With these varying levels of experiences, it is not hard to understand where children's ability levels may vary. If children do come to kindergarten and first grade behind, this is where early interventions become useful.

In first grade the average number of students using targeted interventions can be 10-20% (although that number can vary significantly) (St. John & Loescher, 2001). In my current first

grade classroom the number is much higher at about 35%. Although this number varies from classroom to classroom, place to place, and year to year, it is essential to realize that the number doesn't matter if there are still struggling readers present. Research also states that it is possible to overcome the effects of a "poor start" in reading if students are provided with early interventions. (Reynolds, Wheldall & Madelaine, 2011).

Griffin (2016) states that interventions are most effective if they provide focused instruction, as determined by assessments, including essential components, that add to what is already being taught in the classroom. These components of successful reading interventions include; that they are researched based, individualized for the student, provide students with enough repeated practice and guided practice, have continuously trained teachers, an ongoing assessment, and a fast-paced intervention for the student to receive immediate success. (Griffin, 2016, p. 23) Reynolds, Wheldall & Madelaine (2011), have six different approaches that reading interventions can take from Kindergarten through 5th grade. The first approach is individual tutoring that is performed by the teacher, this is also shown to be most effective for students, but comes with a number of problems, with the largest problem being finding enough time to perform additional interventions in the school day. The next approach is individual tutoring that is performed by paraprofessionals or volunteers. This can also be very effective, but paraprofessionals and volunteers may lack training, and students need to be pulled from their regular classrooms. The other approaches are small group instruction, instructional process approaches, and computer assisted instruction with or without tutoring. (Reynolds, Wheldall & Madelaine, 2011).

There are a plethora of reading intervention programs available and being used in classrooms today. First let us focus on three reading intervention programs; Early Intervention in Reading, Early Steps, and Reading Recovery (St. John & Loescher, 2001). St. John & Loescher, (2001) performed an analysis of these three interventions compared to one another. The analysis reviewed whether each intervention met the following criteria; word recognition, fluency and vocabulary development, literary response and analysis, and reading comprehension.

Early Intervention in Reading (EIR) focuses on Kindergarten through 4th grade students. The program addresses word recognition, and fluency and vocabulary development very well, but only partially addressed literary response and analysis and had very little impact on reading comprehension. Early Steps focuses only on first grade students and is a one-one intervention. The program addresses phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and vocabulary, and partially addresses reading comprehension and literary response and analysis. Reading Recovery also focuses only on first grade and is a one-one intervention. It has a strong focus in phonological awareness, and also using context within text, as well as addressing word recognition, fluency, and vocabulary development. Although it only partially addresses reading comprehension, and literary response and analysis.

It is also important to discuss the difference between targeted interventions and classroom based interventions. The three interventions we just discussed would be considered targeted interventions or interventions that work only with students who are struggling in reading, and provide those students with support, additional to regular classroom instruction. (St. John & Loescher, 2001). Targeted instruction is also typically a “pull out” program where students are pulled from their regular classrooms for additional instruction. Classroom based interventions are



interventions that are performed in the classroom with all students, even if students are not struggling. These interventions are designed to “work for all children” (St. John & Loescher, 2001). Next we will discuss four classroom based interventions; First Steps, The Four Blocks Method, Literacy Collaborative, and Waterford Early Reading Program (St. John & Loescher, 2001).

First Steps is a Kindergarten through 8th grade classroom intervention its focus is oral language, spelling, and writing, and provides students with continuous assessment in reading. Four Blocks on the other hand only works with first grade students and blends vocabulary with reading and writing instruction. Literacy Collaborative is very different and is actually a schoolwide restructuring of language arts. It encourages collaboration among teachers to discuss student performance and what can be done to help students succeed. Then lastly, the Waterford Early Reading Program (WERP) is a technology based intervention, that is used as a supplement to the current reading curriculum. It provides daily integrated reading instruction to students. (St. John & Loescher, 2001).

According to St. John & Loescher, (2001) early reading interventions are programs that address the need for strong readers in the classroom, this is to ensure student success as they go through school. Through the additional research on early reading interventions, some additional less traditional intervention approaches were discovered. The first was a cross-age tutoring program, which could provide students with an “affordable, high quality, reading intervention” (Wright & Cleary, 2006). This program was developed in response to an effort to try and reduce referrals to special education. As referenced by Wright & Cleary (2006), The National Reading Panel (2000) “recommends specific evidence based rehearsal strategies such as listening while

reading and paired reading,” these strategies can also be taught quickly with little instructional resources. This was the beginning of the development of the cross-age tutoring program where students would tutor students.

The program consisted of site coordinators who were adults that were trained, as well as student tutors who were given tutor training and manuals with step by step instructions and curriculum. The research behind this program was that learning occurs in four stages; the acquisition stage or ability to perform a skill, the fluency stage or the ability to increase the speed of skill, the generalization phase or how to apply knowledge, and the adaptation phase or the ability to apply learning to new uses (Wright & Cleary, 2006) Overall the study of this program showed success in the areas of fluency, and that fluency grew for not only for the tutee but also the tutor, although the rate for the tutee was an additional word per week vs. an additional .5 of a word for the tutor per week (Wright & Cleary, 2006).

The next non traditional reading intervention that was examined was an intervention that focused on home literacy activities. A study was conducted on rural school students home literacy environments. According to Tichnor-Wagner, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, & Vernon-Feagans (2016) who conducted the study their focus was on rural school children because “rural students are at an increased risk for reading difficulties compared to their urban and suburban counterparts.” They also discuss that children who are living in poverty are at greater risk to struggle with reading, and are 1.3-3.4 times more at risk for identification with a learning disability. (Citing Blair & Scott, 2002). Intervention can serve as a way to help these children at risk and set them up for growth in school.

This study examined children's home literacy environments through the use of surveys. Asking what home literacy activities parents performed with their children, examples included shared book reading, teaching the child to read at home, and helping the child with their homework. They also assessed families' access to literacy materials, because this access correlated to "the extent to which they are able to engage in print related activities" (Tichnor-Wagner, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, & Vernon-Feagans, 2016). The number of books in the home was also examined, and if families made regular library visits.

Overall the study showed that home literacy activities happened frequently in rural home environments, although there were questions about the authenticity because the data was based only on a survey, and not knowing if answers were completely truthful. This finding did "combat negative stereotypes that cast low-income parents as being uninvolved...and that they do not care about their children's education" (Tichnor-Wagner, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, & Vernon-Feagans, 2016). Another thing that is important to mention, is that the study also found that families had limited access to resources so this could be an important intervention. Schools could provide these resources and try to partner that school to home connection. Teachers could also encourage parents by helping them build confidence by providing them with clear instructions of how to help their children develop literacy skills. In the end the study showed that bridging the gap between school and home is a non-traditional reading intervention that will help students develop literacy skills (Tichnor-Wagner, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, & Vernon-Feagans, 2016).

Technology can also play a role in early reading interventions for students. In a study conducted by D'Agostino, Rodgers, Harmey, & Brownfield (2016) they examined the

effectiveness of using an iPad application as an intervention. Paired with a reading recovery lesson they developed an application that allowed students to manipulate letters to make new words. Stating that “attention and movement are important to processing and learning” (D’Agostino, Rodgers, Harmey, & Brownfield, 2016). This form of new literacy was presented as a new way to help students become fully literate. Unfortunately the study did not produce the outcome they were hoping for and did not show much difference from traditional letter movement and word making interventions, but it does still lead one to wonder if other interventions can be performed with the help of technology in the future.

There has also been some research conducted on the effects of music and movement on literacy development. In a study conducted by Selway (2004) they examined the effects of music and movement in phonemic awareness instruction in kindergarten students. Although the study performed by Selway (2004) did not show a significant difference between students receiving the intervention and those who were not, there was still an increase in students phonemic skills. This could still be considered to be an intervention to research further to examine the role music and movement can play in early literacy intervention.

There are still many early reading interventions that this research has not covered, but these interventions do provide a good place to begin. If students can be helped counteract their reading deficiencies early on, this will help their future reading success. But if students still need assistance and additional support, the following reading strategies that will be discussed should also assist them in developing their ability to read.

## **Reading Strategies**

“Reading instruction should be engaging and authentic” (Rasinski, Rupley, Paige & Nichols, 2016). According to Burns, Griffin, & Snow (2009) formal reading instruction needs to focus on mastery of two components; word recognition and reading comprehension. Some ways to work toward mastery of these two components is for students to have personal baskets of books and individual journals. Also for teachers to post reading strategies so students have easy access to them, as well as providing students with activity centers to participate in (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, National Academy of Sciences, 2009, p. 62). It is also important to increase motivation and engagement in the classroom, and this can be done through the use of teacher made games, computer based reading activities, listening to text while reading it, or other tangible reinforcers (Mendez, Pelzmann & Frank, 2016).

To increase reading comprehension, “ongoing, structured read-aloud experiences” should occur according to Santoro, Baker, Fien, Smith & Chard (2016). This reading strategy provides students with vocabulary and comprehension instruction that is explicit, and models to students what comprehension looks and feels like from an adult. “Active engagement with complex texts holds the key for student growth in vocabulary, language, and knowledge acquisition and thinking-or areas increasingly referred to as deep comprehension” (Santoro, Baker, Fien, Smith & Chard, 2016). This reading strategy can also be very useful for special education teachers to help their students reading complex text, especially complex informational text, which can be extremely challenging to them. With the use of read alouds the teacher can start comprehension instruction for their students before they are actually ready to read the text themselves. It can also be a great motivator for students because they can comprehend text that is read aloud to them in areas they are interested in. (Santoro, Baker, Fien, Smith & Chard, 2016).

The next reading strategy focuses on word study instruction which has a focus on understanding patterns of words and the ability to decode words using letter-sound correspondence (Park & Lombardino, 2013) The following components are necessary to have effective word study instruction according to Park & Lombardino (2013) these components include; phonological awareness, phonics and decoding instruction, spelling instruction, vocabulary instruction, and morphological instruction. Phonological awareness is the ability to manipulate oral language and is developed in the early stages of literacy acquisition. Phonemic awareness and decoding instruction is the direct skill of manipulating phonemes or small sounds in words, it is also something that must be understood in order for students to learn how to decode words well. Once students have developed phonological and phonemic awareness this can be applied to their spelling knowledge and understanding. Then a “link between knowledge of word meaning and later text reading fluency and comprehension” can be developed through vocabulary instruction (Park & Lombardino, 2013) And finally with the development of morphological knowledge, children can understand morphemes and morphemic structures and detect grammatical changes in words. (Park & Lombardino, 2013) This reading strategy of word study instruction can greatly assist students knowledge and understanding of words, and therefore deepen their understanding of text.

A shared book experience is another useful reading strategy to help struggling readers in the classroom. According to Chung & Keckler (2016), a shared book experience encourages struggling readers to orally communicate with each other socially. This is especially beneficial with the use of informational text, particularly in the content area of science. This integration also allows for an increase in science instruction “in an overcrowded elementary curriculum”

(Chung & Keckler, 2016). Science and literacy have many process skills in common as discussed by Chung & Keckler (2016) these process skills include; making inferences, asking questions, drawing conclusions, and predicting outcomes. This strategy also facilitates the development of scientific vocabulary (Chung & Keckler, 2016, p. 33). But the most important component to this strategy involves the talk students experience when reading text through a shared book experience, this benefits their literacy development more than just reading the text itself (Chung & Keckler, 2016, p. 33).

Along with the benefits of the shared reading of scientific text, other alternative texts such as poetry, song lyrics, readers theater scripts, and speeches can also be useful reading strategies to help with reading fluency (Rasinski, Rupley, Paige & Nichols, 2016). These alternative texts provide students with a greater interest, and make for more enjoyable and engaging reading. Poetry as an alternative text can help struggling readers learn words and letter sound patterns, it also helps with phonics, and the understanding of rhyme which helps develop orthographic knowledge (Rasinski, Rupley, Paige & Nichols, 2016). This new orthographic knowledge then helps students when they come in contact with new words in their reading containing these patterns.

Students also enjoy performing repeated oral reading more often with the use of alternative texts. Repeated oral reading of a text is used to increase reading fluency, and can “lead to improved word recognition, accuracy, reading rate, expressive and meaningful reading, reading comprehension, and confidence in the reader” (Rasinski, Rupley, Paige & Nichols, 2016). Using these alternative text types such as speeches, scripts, songs, and poetry that they could perform to an audience help to increase fluency. As stated by Rasinski, Rupley, Paige &

Nichols (2016) it is not practice that makes perfect it is a perfect practice that make perfect.

Through repeated practice, that is scaffolded, and modeled to students, fluency instruction is way more effective. Alternative texts as a reading strategy can help struggling learners become more fluent readers with greater abilities to decode text, regardless of their grade level (Rasinski, Rupley, Paige & Nichols, 2016, p. 166.)

Technology can also be used as an effective reading strategy for struggling readers. It has been shown to have some effects on struggling readers but current evidence is small (D'Agostino, Rodgers, Harmey, & Brownfield, 2016). Technology can have many benefits, particularly in student motivation and interest levels. But there are also a lot of obstacles for using technology as a reading strategy in the classroom, these obstacles include; lack of time, lack of technological support, and lack of access to technology ( D'Agostino, Rodgers, Harmey, & Brownfield, 2016). Currently, there is still a lot to discover about using technology as a reading strategy and more research still needs to be conducted to determine how is most effectively used as reading strategy.

Summer reading interventions can also be a possible reading strategy for struggling readers. There are two types of summer reading interventions; classroom based interventions, and home based interventions (Kim & Quinn, 2013). Although in a study conducted by Kim & Quinn (2013) in regards to the effectiveness of home summer reading interventions, there was no significant difference noted between home and classroom based interventions, there was improvement in reading comprehension overall. This reading strategy could also use further research, but could still be a useful reading strategy for struggling readers to help them over the summer.



The reading strategies that have already been discussed could all be very useful for struggling readers. It is also important to mention various reading strategies that can help students in the classroom particularly at the early primary level of Kindergarten and first grade. The following components we have learned throughout this review are essential to literacy instruction, these components are; letter recognition, decoding, word recognition, phonemic awareness, spelling and writing, language, comprehension, and response to text, and book and print awareness strategies ((Burns, Griffin, & Snow, National Academy of Sciences, 2009). In Kindergarten these strategies can be used to address letter and word recognition, and decoding; having a letter of the day, games with sight words, and games where students need to find letters in the classroom, and practice sound switching. Reading strategies that focus on phonemic awareness in Kindergarten are phonemic blending games, and listening to phonemes games. In regards to spelling and writing, kindergarteners can use various writing materials and have their own personal letter dictionaries. Language, comprehension, and response to text can be developed in kindergarteners through the use of many reading strategies including; building vocabulary through stories, books on tape, discussions about text, field trips, sharing time, sociodramatic play, and the reading of fiction and nonfiction through shared book experiences. Dictation activities can also be useful to develop kindergarteners book and print awareness strategies. (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, National Academy of Sciences, 2009).

First grade students can build upon these strategies for kindergarteners, to enhance their phonemic awareness, and letter knowledge they can use the following reading strategies; breaking apart syllables and phonemes, having their own personal word dictionaries, having think alouds, and having various text types read aloud to them. Making words with word cards

and having a word wall are great reading strategies for increasing first graders decoding and word recognition skills. Spelling and writing skills can be improved by giving students choice in what they are writing, allowing them to write about themselves, to share their writing, or to even have dialogue or chat journals where students can write back and forth to one another. Lastly, first graders language and comprehension skills can be increased by using reading strategies such as repeated reads, discussions about what they are reading to promote comprehension and vocabulary, and using strategies such as “Before, During, and After Reading.” (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, National Academy of Sciences, 2009). There are a myriad of reading strategies available to use with students who struggle with reading, these are just some of those available. In the next section of this review, we will take a closer look at some additional supplemental programs available to assist struggling readers in the classroom.

### **Supplemental Programs**

When early interventions and reading strategies are not sufficient, this is where the use of supplemental programs comes into play. Supplemental programs are initiatives to help struggling readers (Jacob, Armstrong, Bowden, & Pan, 2016). Supplemental programs were born out of legislation such as the Reading Excellence Act of 1997, Reading First, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, some states have even adopted laws about reading proficiency (Jacob, Armstrong, Bowden, & Pan, 2016). Another very important piece of legislation regarding supplemental programs to help struggling readers was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 2002, this act states that schools must provide low-income families with

supplemental education services in schools that qualify for Title I, and this is provided at no cost to the family (Jacob, Armstrong, Bowden, & Pan, 2016).

The first supplemental program researched is actually more of a framework, and is called Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI receives their funding from the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004, RTI is mandated to be used for some states, but it has not been mandated by all states. Students are monitored and assessed for placement, in a three tiered system (Jacob, Armstrong, Bowden, & Pan, 2016). Tier 1 of this system is just regular classroom instruction or lessons and activities, that are happening in a regular classroom setting. Tier 2 provides students with supplemental instruction and Tier 3 provides students with intense interventions (Griffin, 2016, p. 18) According to Griffin (2016), Intervention Central is a great online resource for the implementation of RTI, stating that the program provides reading interventions, progress monitoring tools, curriculum based assessments, and other various probes for students. This resource is would be best utilized in Tier 2 and 3 of the RTI framework, to provide teachers with additional resources for students.

An additional supplemental program available is called Early Reading Tutor (ERT), which is a multisensory reading program. Multisensory programs like this were first introduced by Dr. Samuel Orton in the 1920's to help students with dyslexia (Campbell, Helf, & Cooke, 2008). He found that by adding "multisensory elements to an intensive, systematic, supplemental phonics program," students reading skills would improve. (Campbell, Helf, & Cooke, 2008). Multisensory instruction uses visual, auditory, and kinesthetic/tactile strategies to support reading. (Campbell, Helf, & Cooke, 2008). In a study completed by Campbell, Helf, & Cooke (2008) on the effectiveness of ERT with additional multisensory components added, the results

showed that fluency or decoding vowel-consonant and consonant-vowel-consonant words nonsense words increased. As well as an increase in fluency of sound recognition and students oral reading fluency. (Campbell, Helf, & Cooke, 2008).

The Reading Partners Program is another supplemental program that is worth mentioning. Reading Partners is a “pull out” of classrooms program during or after school. The program focuses on students Kindergarten through 5th grade who are half a year to two and a half years behind grade level in reading, that are not special education students, and are English fluent (Jacobs, Armstrong, Bowden, & Pan, 2016). Students participate in twice weekly, one-one tutoring sessions that are 45 minutes in length. Tutors are community volunteers with or without prior experience, that are trained and monitored by a site coordinator. (Jacobs, Armstrong, Bowden, & Pan, 2016). The program consists of six core components; one-one tutoring, dedicated space and materials in the school for tutoring, a structured and individualized curriculum, instruction is data-driven, tutors have ongoing training, as well as instruction supervision and support (Jacobs, Armstrong, Bowden, & Pan, 2016). In a study completed by Jacobs, Armstrong, Bowden, & Pan (2016) concerning this effectiveness of this program, there were more positive impacts than negative. Some of the positive impacts were that this program provided great training to tutors, and tutors felt that they were supported by their site coordinators. Another positive impact was the cost of this program which was relatively low. But the greatest impact was the effects this program had on the students which was; an additional growth per student of one and one half to two months growth in fluency, sight word efficiency, and comprehension (Jacobs, Armstrong, Bowden, & Pan, 2016). Overall, according to Jacobs, Armstrong, Bowden, & Pan (2016) this program has mainly positive impacts with the only

negative impact recorded, being the consistency of the attendance of the volunteers. This study showed an effective intervention that unlike traditional intervention programs was relatively low cost.

Some other supplemental programs include STAR Reading, where students are given STAR assessments to determine their reading levels and to discover their exact reading deficiencies (Griffin, 2016, p. 14). SRA Reading mastery is another program that is “designed to teach reading skills through the use of controlled vocabulary, orthographical prompts, and careful instruction of phonics rules” (Mendez, Pelzmann & Frank, 2016). There is also a program called Cognitive Strategy Instruction in Writing, that provides students with instructional dialogues in writing, in the form of teacher modeling and think alouds. This program also uses the gradual release of responsibility to the students in writing dialogue, through scaffolded instruction, where small groups are used to model and practice skills, and provide students with collaborative interactions between the author and the readers. This program helps students better understand text structures that can transfer to their writing skills (Englert, 2009).

This research only includes a small list of the many supplemental program available to help struggling readers become more successful. Which supplemental program is best for your students, and your school depends on a number of factors. The most important factor is money, many of these programs are very costly and expensive, and some research is being done to discover less expensive options for schools. Another important factor is time, and where teachers and students find time to participate in these additional programs when the school day is already so full. Lastly, another important factor to remember is that one program will not work for all

students, students have varying levels of experience, skill sets, and ways that they learn, so no matter which program is chosen it will not be effective for all students. This leads us to question if not all programs work for all students, what should effective reading instruction look like, and what does it all entail?

### **Effective Reading Instruction**

“Best instructional practice requires teachers to support students in effective instructional assistance when needed and allow each student the opportunity to experience success in learning” (Griffin, 2016, p. 24). This success in learning is something that all teachers want for their students, but how do teachers help all students reach this success? Early Literacy Development (2011) states that there is no best approach for early literacy instruction, and success relies on integration of literacy into all other subjects, as well as having learning be meaningful and functional for students. Some essential elements to literacy development are explicit modeling and scaffolding, guided and independent practice, enough time on task, structure and routine, and differentiation. It is also important to provide students with feedback from others through, exploration, experimentation, collaboration socially, and problem solving (Early Literacy Development, 2011).

The five most effective strategies to promote early literacy development in students are; phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency (Early Literacy Development, 2011). Some effective reading practices include; independent reading with text of students interest, reading text below students frustration level, daily supported reading of more difficult text, and promoting reading outside of the school environment (Burns, Griffin, & Snow,

National Academy of Sciences, 2009). To promote students writing instruction, teachers can encourage students to write through a progression of skills. First, through writing letters, then parts of words, words, and then sentences. Allowing students to use invented spelling is also essential. As well as allowing students time to write on a daily basis (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, National Academy of Sciences, 2009). Effective reading instruction is comprised of many things and can look very different for every child, but through the use of these strategies and practices, students should be provided with the skills they need to become successful readers.

## **Summary**

Chapter two provides a summary of my literature review focusing on early literacy, specific reading interventions, strategies, and supplemental programs, and the components of effective reading instruction. The chapter begins by discussing the fundamentals of early literacy and the theory behind the practice, to provide background of what students need, in order to become successful readers. Next, the review focuses on specific early reading interventions to help students right away who are struggling with literacy development. In the event that these early interventions were not successful, the review goes on to discuss additional reading strategies to use with students to help struggling readers. There is also discussion about additional supplemental reading programs that schools can use. And lastly, there is discussion about what effective reading instruction looks like and its fundamental components.

Through the process of this literature review, it taught me many things about literacy. I found it very important to understand the components of early literacy and the theory behind the practice. It was very interesting to see how literacy, and literary theory has developed over time,

and it brought attention to the fact that literacy instruction is still developing. The research about early interventions and reading strategies was also very beneficial, because it offered additional ways to work with struggling readers in the classroom. Learning about additional supplemental programs was also useful because it offered ideas of initiatives whole schools could take to help struggling readers be successful. But the most important thing to be learned from this literature review is what makes effective reading instruction. What I discovered was very similar to my learning about interventions, strategies, and supplemental programs, and that was that there are necessary components students must learn to be successful readers, but what each student is missing can be very different. No one intervention, strategy, or supplemental program will be effective for all students, and effective reading instruction is discovering what students are missing and providing them with ways to obtain that skill.

Chapter three provides a plan for how I will use this review of literature to help the struggling readers in my classroom, and ultimately in my school. It will detail how I plan to use this research to develop a resource guide for the other teachers and support staff in my building to help struggling readers. This resource guide would provide teachers with professional development in reading interventions and strategies at a primary level in reading.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Project Description

#### Introduction

I discovered many new things through the process of answering the research focus question; *What interventions, strategies, or supplemental programs are available to address and aid primary students who struggle in reading?* I had set out to answer this question for my own personal reasons and to better understand how to help these struggling readers in my own classroom, but what I came to realize through my research was how much these new interventions, strategies, and supplemental programs can benefit more than just the students who I teach.

I have had many conversations with fellow educators who seem to have the same questions and struggles with how to best assist and aid students who struggle in reading, and many felt the same way that I did, which was stuck. It was interesting to learn, that similar to my situation, many things that they were also trying only worked for some students and not for others. That a strategy that they may be trying would only address part of the problem, and there were still things that students needed that their teachers did not know how to deliver. These conversations with fellow educators made me feel better, I was not alone in my struggles, but it did not solve the problem for myself or for them.

This feeling that something was missing, or lacking in how to best assist and aid struggling readers is what first got me thinking about ideas for this project. I think that the best way to address this need for resources, is through the development and use of a resource guide. The resource guide would provide primary teachers with another place to look for interventions

and strategies to help struggling readers, and it would be categorized to address specific needs. Using this resource guide would allow teachers to be able to save time they do not have, searching for specific interventions and strategies, and instead spend the time getting to help and work with struggling readers. In the sections to come I will go into more detail about what this resource guide will look like, and its fundamental components.

This chapter will detail first, who this resource guide will benefit and serve, and who the individuals are that could use it, as well as a timeline for implementation. Next, it will discuss what the resource guide will entail and how it will be comprised, explaining its four parts; background in early literacy and literary theory, interventions, strategies, and supplemental programs. Then, it will explain when it will be used and how it will be implemented in my workplace. Finally, it will provide the rationale to why it is an important resource for teachers to use with their students who struggle in reading.

## **Framework**

The resource guide will be presented using this framework; first introducing early literacy and early literary theory, then early interventions, and finally reading strategies to use with students. By first defining early literacy and explaining how early literary theory has developed throughout time, it will provide the reader with background of what is necessary and essential for children to understand, in order to become strong readers. Next, the resource guide will present a variety of different early interventions that teachers can use with young students early on, to help them develop their reading skills. Reading strategies will then be provided to help readers who are identified as struggling and will be listed and categorized based on need.

## **Research Paradigm**

This resource guide will be something that educators can use to assist and aid students who struggle in reading. As educators, there never seems to be enough time, time to teach all the things necessary, and time to find additional resources to help fill in the holes as to what students are missing. This resource guide will provide primary educators in my workplace with resources all in one place. This guide will be organized in a way that allows teachers to look up what their student needs in reading, and be provided with interventions and strategies that address those specific needs. Along with this resource guide, there will be a training or a professional development component, where some of the most beneficial strategies will be demonstrated and modeled.

## **Setting and Audience**

The setting for this project will be a small rural P-5 elementary school in the Midwest. The school's population is roughly 330 students, and it's demographic consists of 96% White/Caucasian students, 2% two or more races, and 1% Latino, with about 30% of its students qualifying for free and reduced lunches. This school has limited resources because of its size and lack of monetary funds for additional programs, beyond what is necessary. It is also a Title I qualifying school, providing students with Title I services in math and reading, K-3. The resource guide will be provided and available for all Title I teachers, special education teachers and early elementary teachers K-1, but initial implementation will start at the first grade level. The students who will benefit from this resource guide will be students who are identified as struggling readers in the classroom.

## **Timeline**

The timeline for this project would begin in the Fall of 2017. The resource guide will be developed by the beginning of the school year and presented first in the first grade classrooms. Title I and Special Education teachers would also have access to this resource. Teachers would be given instruction as to how the resource guide is comprised and how to use it. Teachers would be asked to use this guide with their struggling readers for the month November. Participation will be voluntary, and only if the teacher would like to use the resource guide. After initial implementation and the course of the month, teachers would be asked share their opinions as to how useful they found the resource guide and how well it helped their struggling readers. At this time the resource guide would also be evaluated to see if it should be implemented in other grade levels as well, and if teachers have interest using it at those grade levels.

## **Parts of the Resource Guide**

The first part of this resource guide will provide a background as to what components are necessary for students to master in early literacy, as well as an overview of early literary theory. It is important to understand where literacy started to better understand what it looks like today. The second part of the resource guide will consist of early interventions that educators can use with struggling readers beginning in preschool and kindergarten. These interventions will be categorized according to what Early Literacy Development (2011) states are the “prescribed literacy skills” necessary for early childhood literacy instruction. As mentioned previously these “prescribed literacy skills,” fit into two domains as stated by Whitehurst & Lonigan (1998) and

cited by Tichnor-Wagner, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, & Vernon-Feagans (2016), they are called outside-in skills and inside-out skills. Outside-in skills are fundamental skills in language, vocabulary, content, and narrative understanding. Whereas inside-out skills are fundamental skills in symbol/sound correspondences, words within words, word decoding, the alphabetic principle, and phonemic awareness. Outside-in and inside-out skills will be listed and the interventions will be categorized based upon these literacy skills. This will provide educators easy access to interventions, but will allow them to spend less time searching through resources. It will be structured in a way that will allow them to look up the literacy skill that students need to master, and find a variety of interventions that address that specific need.

The next part of this resource guide will focus on reading strategies that can be used with primary students, to improve and develop their reading skills. The format will be similar to that of how the interventions portion of this resource guide will be comprised. Listing the specific need and a variety of specific strategies that will address that need. As stated previously, Burns, Griffin, & Snow (2009) formal reading instruction needs to focus on mastery of two components; word recognition and reading comprehension.

This portion of the resource guide will address specific strategies that assist students in the mastery of word recognition and reading comprehension. As mentioned previously the following components are necessary to have effective word study instruction according to Park & Lombardino (2013) these components include; phonological awareness, phonics and decoding instruction, spelling instruction, vocabulary instruction, and morphological instruction. These essential components will serve as sub categories for the topic of word recognition, and specific

strategies will be listed for each. Reading comprehension will also have various subcategories based upon specific reading strategies.

### **Method Rationale**

The reason I decided to develop a resource guide for primary teachers in my building, was because of many reasons. The first reason is that there are more and more students struggling with learning how to read at a young age. Teachers in my building, not unlike myself have voiced frustrations, and a desire to want to do more for their students who struggle in reading, but do not have adequate time or resources to do so. Another important reason I chose this method, developed after my literature review was completed and I discovered many new ways to help struggling readers, that I knew would benefit students of my fellow educators. Because of lack of time and money in our school, I think that the best way to share this new information with my colleagues is in the form of a resource guide. This guide would serve as something teachers could refer to and find a specific strategy or intervention that they are looking for, without much time being spent. This would also help to individualize instruction for students, and help teachers have more opportunities to differentiate. In the use of this resource guide, teachers would not need to have a lot of training in order to be effective, again saving time. This guide would also be something that could be added to over time, and be a living document where new strategies and interventions could be added as they are developed and tested.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the development of a resource guide for struggling readers, to better assist and aid students who struggle in reading. First, a framework was presented, detailing what important components in which the resource guide would be comprised. The setting and audience of this project was discussed next, detailing that the setting would take place in a P-5 school, where I currently am employed, and initial implementation would be at the first grade, Title I, and Special Education levels. Then, a timeline was presented for implementation in the classroom, and when effectiveness would be determined. The various parts of the resource guide were discussed next, detailing its four parts; early literacy theory, interventions, strategies, and supplemental programs. And finally, choice and rationale behind the method for this project was stated, so that the reader could understand why I believe it is important to develop this resource guide for my students, but also share it with my fellow educators in hopes that it can benefit their students as well.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Introduction

The field of education is constantly changing, developing, and evolving as we understand more and more about how children learn. When it comes to teaching a child to read, there is not one concrete method that will work for every child in the classroom. Differentiation is now a key component to daily instruction. As an educator you never know what you will walk into each day you enter the classroom, or what each child will need from you. Not only do we need to adapt to each child's individual learning style but we also need to be flexible, and know that their needs change on a monthly, daily, or even hourly basis.

When it comes to teaching a child to read these needs are constantly changing as the child evolves on their reading journey. Is every educator equipped to address these ever changing needs? What are the best evidence based interventions to help children become better readers? These are two of the questions I asked myself when I was developing my research focus question; *What interventions, strategies, or supplemental programs are available to address and aid primary students who struggle in reading?*

When I set out to answer this question I was bombarded with so much information regarding the numerous reading interventions, a myriad of strategies, and countless supplemental programs. I also learned so much information about how early literacy instruction has developed over time, and how it has progressed over the years. It was interesting to learn about all the educational theories that also influenced how reading has been taught. This new knowledge forever changed my understanding of how to teach a child to read.



## Chapter Four Preview

In this chapter, I will discuss how this new found understanding of how to teach reading and help struggling readers, sparked the need share what I had learned with my colleagues, and in turn began the development of my “Resource Guide.” The overall goal was to develop a resource that teachers could easily access, and providing them with a summarized version of all my new found knowledge of research based interventions and strategies. In this guide it was important to include definitions of all the early literacy components, vocabulary pertaining to that component, the progression of early literacy theory over time, and the theorists who influenced it. I also thought it necessary to share all of the different interventions and strategies I had learned to teach reading, and more specifically help struggling readers. This information I thought was best organized by the components of literacy; alphabetic principle, phonological and phonemic awareness, fluency and accuracy, vocabulary, and comprehension.

As an educator we always want to help our students to the best of our ability, but we don’t always have the resources or the time for that matter to do so. I wanted these strategies and interventions to be easily accessible and provide educators with tools in all of these areas of literacy development. I also found it necessary to provide background of literacy theory and vocabulary in order for these strategies to be implemented as they were intended.

In the rest of this chapter I will describe in detail the development of my “Resource Guide.” I will discuss all the things that went well as well as the challenges that I faced during the development of this project. I will also describe the thoughts of my first grade team regarding this resource, my plans for sharing it with other colleagues, and plans for continued development of the guide in the future.

## **Purpose**

As I stated in the introduction of this chapter, my purpose for developing this resource guide was to share all of the new information that I had learned when answering my research focus question. When constructing my “Resource Guide,” I also found it necessary to include this statement of purpose to demonstrate my hopes for the best utilization of this document. As with anything I that use I can greater utilize it, if I know for which purpose it is intended. I also believed that this was a great introduction to the components of the guide to follow including: literacy skills, early literacy theory and theorists, early intervention strategies, and reading strategies.

## **Literacy Skills**

After establishing my purpose for developing this “Resource Guide,” I also wanted to provide the user with background knowledge of literacy skills. According to Early Literacy Development (2011), early childhood literacy instruction and a child’s reading readiness is based on whether or not they acquire a set of “prescribed literacy skills.” These “prescribed literacy skills,” fit into two domains as stated by Whitehurst & Lonigan (1998) and cited by Tichnor-Wagner, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, & Vernon-Feagans (2016), they are called outside-in skills and inside-out skills. I used a table to list the various outside-in skills and inside-out skills, and help to save time when reading the information. Below this table I wanted to also list the progression of these skills in literacy development. My thought was that in order to know what each student needs in order to become a successful reader, the educator first needs to understand that there is a progression of literacy development, and which stage that child is currently in.

### **Early Literacy Theory and Theorists**

Along with the understanding of literacy skills, I also gained understanding about literacy instruction through my research of literacy theory. I wanted to share this information in my guide as well. But because of the sheer magnitude of all the information, I thought this would be best done by using a table and listing in chronological order the theorist and their literacy theory. I also summarized the information so that it was quick and easy for the reader to read.

### **Early Reading Intervention Strategies**

I felt confident that after establishing my purpose for writing this resource guide, defining literacy skills, and providing background of early literacy theory and theorists, that I could begin to discuss early reading intervention strategies. I started with the first stage in the literacy progression that I had listed before, the alphabetic principle. Within the alphabetic principle there are stages of development, I began by listing these stages and their definitions. Next, I listed the some guidelines that are important when working with students during this stage. Then I listed key vocabulary that pertains to the alphabetic principle and their definitions. Finally I summarized and listed the core intervention strategies that I had encountered during my research and how to teach each intervention strategy.

During the composition of this chapter, I ultimately decided to include all of these things, because I wanted to make sure that the user not only had an understanding of this stage of the progression through the various vocabulary and guidelines, but also had strategies to take directly to the students to help their development of the skill.

In the next section of this chapter; phonological and phonemic awareness, I followed a similar structure listing the guidelines for instruction, key vocabulary, and numerous intervention strategies and practice activities. I decided that it would be beneficial to have this similar structure throughout the entire “Resource Guide” because it would be easier for the user to find what they need.

### **Reading Strategies**

In the next chapter focusing on reading strategies I continued the same structure as the alphabetic principle and phonological and phonemic awareness sections to maintain consistency. In this chapter I divided it into three sections; vocabulary, accuracy and fluency, and comprehension. Again I listed any key vocabulary, guidelines, and then strategies and interventions for that stage of development. I took all of the information that I had gathered through my literature review and summarized it based on each category into one single document. I also referenced each source throughout the document so that if the user wanted to look into something further they could go to the source directly. Overall, I think that the final product gave the user many options to addressing specific literacy needs with a student, as well as a defining important and necessary literacy components.

### **Challenges**

Overall I felt like I knew what I wanted to do for this project, but when it came to how I wanted to format my ideas I encountered many difficulties. In my opinion this was due to the fact that literacy is comprised of so many different elements, and then each element has its own

vocabulary, and progression of development and instruction. I wanted a document that flowed and followed a consistent structure, but each component involved many different things. It took a lot of time to finally settle on the way my document was formatted, but I believe that the final product makes sense and is user friendly.

Another challenge that I encountered in developing my “Resource Guide” was how to cite all of my sources and not interfere with the flow of the document, and the accessibility for the user. I finally settled on citing the author's name and year of publication within the document, and then having a reference page at the end. I think that this ended up being the most effective way to give credit but also not interfere with the ease of use for the user.

Overall I didn't encounter a lot of challenges, but I feel like those I did find, I worked through and resolved. I did want to also gain some additional insight about what I may need to change or add to this “Resource Guide” so I shared it with my First Grade Team and then surveyed their opinions to provide additional feedback.

### **Opinions of Colleagues**

Unfortunately, my team was not able to implement my resource guide as much as I had hoped. This year we implemented some other new curriculum so our focus was shifted to learning how to teach and implement that program. My hopes are that once things settle down, the first grade team will have more time to assess and use the resource guide. I think that I should also offer some professional development with the guide in the future to help teachers understand my thoughts for utilization. Overall their consensus was that the guide looked like it would be a helpful resource but they did not have the time to dive into using it just yet.

## **Future Plan**

Although I feel that this guide is well developed and comprised of a lot of information pertaining to literacy, there is no possible way that it includes every strategy or intervention that is out there. I see this document as some that is could be considered a living and breathing document that is ever changing as time goes on. Like I stated before literacy instruction is constantly changing and evolving, and so are the children we work with. So in order for this guide to stay current it will need to be added to as time goes on. This is something that I plan to do over time, as I continue to grow professionally.

Additional to the need for the document to be added to over time, I would also like to share this resource with more than just my first grade team. One of the main reasons why I chose the research focus question that I did, was because more and more students at our school are qualifying for Title I services. I think that if I were to share this resource with the Title I teachers in our building it might provide them with additional options for working with the qualifying students. I also hope that is would also begin to bridge greater communication about the interventions that each teacher is performing with the same student, so we can begin to help each other instead of being separate of one another. With greater communication it can only help to address the needs of the student.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I learned so much through not only the development of my paper, but also through the construction of my project. In the beginning I started with the research focus

question; *What interventions, strategies, or supplemental programs are available to address and aid primary students who struggle in reading?* I wanted to learn how to best help my struggling readers, and I didn't feel like I had all the knowledge and expertise I needed to do so. What I learned was not only how to better serve my struggling readers, but I gained a better understanding of literacy development as a whole.

Teaching a child to read is an ongoing process that evolves over the course of time. Every child in the classroom is at various points in this evolution. I learned that many different components go into teaching a child to read. That there are not only different theories of literacy development but also is a progression of literacy skills. Within these literacy skills there are various components, that have their own individual guidelines, vocabulary, and strategies and interventions to address them. I wanted to use all of this new found information to develop a "Resource Guide" for myself but also other educators in my building.

It is my hope that this guide will provide teachers with a resource that they can call upon when they are struggling to help a student become a successful reader. I hope that it gives them tools to add to their toolbox, as well a background information about the development of literacy and all the components involved. This document is a cultivation of everything I have learned during the process of this Capstone. I have learned an immense amount from this process, and my goal for this "Resource Guide" is to share that knowledge with other educators, for the betterment of struggling readers.

**Appendix**

# **Resource Guide**



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### **Purpose for this Resource Guide**

As educators it is our duty to do the best we can at instructing all students and meeting their individual needs. Every student is different and every student begins at a different place in their reading journey when they start school. So how do we possibly meet all of these needs, when each student may be at various stages of literacy development? There will never be one document that will give you every strategy to help every student on their reading journey, but the purpose of this resource guide is to give you a starting point.

Through my research, I have learned so much about the development of literacy in a child, as well as so many new strategies to help my students who are striving to become better readers. In this guide I have compiled many of these strategies so that they are in one place. I begin the resource guide with an introduction to literacy skills, and the progression of literacy development. Then, I describe the progression of early literacy theory over the years to provide a background for where literacy instruction began, and how it has changed and developed over time. Next, the resource guide is broken down into five separate categories; the alphabetic principle, phonological awareness and phonics, vocabulary, accuracy and fluency, and comprehension. In each section there are all or some of the following; guiding principles for instruction, concept vocabulary, and strategies for instruction.

It is my hope that this guide will strengthen educators understanding of the components of literacy and provide tools for helping with student intervention. There are so many things that go into teaching a child how to read, and I hope that this guide will help address some needs for those children.

# Literacy Skills

According to Early Literacy Development (2011), early childhood literacy instruction and a child's reading readiness is based on whether or not they acquire a set of "prescribed literacy skills." These "prescribed literacy skills," fit into two domains as stated by Whitehurst & Lonigan (1998) and cited by Tichnor-Wagner, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, & Vernon-Feagans (2016), they are called outside-in skills and inside-out skills.

<b>Inside-Out Skills</b>	<b>Outside-In Skills</b>
Symbol/sound correspondences: Relationship between a symbol (letter) and the sound.	Language
Words within words: The ability to use known words to decode unknown words.	Vocabulary
Word decoding: Using knowledge of letter-sound relationships to determine a word.	Content
The alphabetic principle: The understanding of how written letters and spoken sounds relate to one another.	Narrative understanding
Phonemic awareness: The ability to hear and manipulate small sounds or phonemes to help with the decoding of words.	(Use of these four components with assist in the understanding and comprehension of what is being read.)

## Progression of Literacy Development

1. The Alphabetic Principle
2. Phonemic and Phonological Awareness
  1. Letters
  2. Sounds
  3. Sound combinations
  4. Words
3. Vocabulary
4. Accuracy & Fluency
5. Comprehension

# **Early Literacy Theories & Theorists**

Jean Piaget	Piaget's theory centers around a child's language development, seriating (sorting objects by color, size, shape, or type), representing different modalities, and spatial relations. The child's mind is "under construction" and constantly changing.
Lev S. Vygotsky	Vygotsky's theory focuses on learning occurring for children as they are exposed to new concepts or schemas defined as previous background or prior knowledge. (Early Literacy Development, 2011). Vygotsky also believed that mental functions were developed out of social relationships. He also introduced the theory of the Zone of Proximal Development, when a child can do some parts of a task but not all, and how this fosters learning in growth. (Early Literacy Development, 2011).
Gesell (Reading Readiness)	Skill based model: systematic way of teaching reading, and only when children were ready to learn early reading and writing skills. It also focused on direct instruction or time on task, routines, and practice, and had a strong focus on children obtaining new skills. (Early Literacy Development, 2011).

John Dewey (Head Start)	This child centered approach, had a focus on problem solving, providing children with opportunities for growth through exploring and experimenting, meanwhile learning self-regulation. There were also integrated content areas present in the classroom. Although there were many benefits to Dewey's approach his classrooms lacked formal skill instruction. (Early Literacy Development, 2011).
Marie Clay	The theory of Emergent Literacy, which gave awareness to literacy development beginning in the first year of life, and not when a child was mature enough to read, as in the skill based model presented. Clay recognized that there was a relationship between early communication skills and literacy development. The sooner children were exposed to books and writing the better developed their literacy skills were. Clay also stated the importance of incorporating literacy into the curriculum throughout the whole day. The more embedded and integrated, the more purposeful the literacy instruction.
Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi	Learning should be a natural process where children learn through what is of interest to them and what makes them curious. (Early Literacy Development, 2011).



<p>Maria Montessori</p>	<p>Her model of literacy instruction has a strong emphasis on the use of manipulatives to learn. It was also important for students to work to foster independence in their learning, making errors and corrections independently, and working to achieve their goals.</p>
<p>Friedrich Froebel</p>	<p>Theorized about the importance of using sensory experiences for children to manipulate, and emphasised how beneficial it was for children to play to learn. (Early Literacy Development, 2011).</p>
<p>Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Model, which combines the child-centered approaches of Montessori, Dewey, and Clay with the skill based model of Gesell.</p>	<p>“No single method or single combination of methods can successfully teach all children to read” (Early Literacy Development, 2011). Educators need to know many methods for teaching reading and writing to be successful, as well as teach from various social, emotional, physical, and intellectual perspectives.</p>

# **Early Reading Intervention Strategy Section**

## Alphabetic Principle

*Stages of Development* (Source: Cadwell & Lesile, 2013.)

- **Logographic Stage:** identifying words like they identify pictures. Visual cues are attributed to a word. They have not mastered letters or sounds.
- **Alphabetic Stage:** the first awareness of the alphabet. Association of some letters and sounds but their knowledge is incomplete. Focus also tends to be at the beginning and then end sounds of words.
- **Controlled Word Recognition:** Further in the alphabetic stage, and using a variety of sound and spelling patterns to recognize words. Less dependent on pictures, but word reading is slow and labored.
- **Automatic Word Recognition:** reading rate begins to increase, less attention to decoding, and oral reading has more expression.

### *Guidelines for Alphabetic Principle*

- Identify what stage of development the child is in.
- Work through the stages of development
- Begin with visual cues or picture associations
- Then focus on beginning and ending sounds
- When reading rate increases focus on encouraging the child to read with expression.

*Alphabetic Principle Vocabulary* (Source: University of Oregon CTL)

**Letter-sound:** Letter and sound identification.

- Questions to ask: *What letter is this? What sound does this letter make?*

**Blending:** Blending of sounds.

- Questions to ask: *What sound do these two letters make? Or What sound does this letter combination make?*

**Segmenting:** Breaking the words into parts.

- Question to ask: *Can you break apart this word into chunks?*

**Manipulating letter-sound correspondences in words:** Changing letters throughout the word to make a new word.

- Questions to ask: *What word would you make if you changed the first letter? What word would you make if you changed the vowel sound? What word would you make if you changed the ending?*

**Nonsense words:** Reading words that are not real words.

- Questions to ask: *What word does this combination of letters make? Can you segment the word for me, then blend the word together?*

**Word identification:** Identifying the word.

- Questions to ask: *Can you read this word?*

*Strategies for the Alphabetic Principle (Source: Allen, 1998.)*

### 1. Understanding rhyme

- Using texts with rhyming words embedded within them
- Reciting rhyming poems
- Playing games like Memory, Go Fish, or Bingo using rhyming words
- Use spelling patterns with keywords
- Using word families

### 2. Cross checking strategy

- Using a variety of cues to help decode a word; letter sound cues, word meaning cues, grammatical cues, picture cues, and prior knowledge

### 3. Learning Core Words

- Learning sight words or words that can't be phonetically decoded. This can be done through chanting, clapping, snapping, or playing games such as Bingo or Memory.

### 4. Teacher Modeling

- Direct modeling of tasks for students to accomplish.

### 5. Word Wall

- Word cards are placed on a large wall for students to see and read on a daily basis.

### 6. Children's Literature

- Frequently reading children's literature will also increase motivation and attitudes about reading.

### 7. Building Letter Knowledge: (Source: D'Agostino, Rodgers, Harmey, & Brownfield, 2016.)

- Use a visual form of the letter, and demonstrate the movement of letters to make words. The manipulation of letters using magnetic letters, letter tiles, etc.

### 8. Letter dictionaries (Source: Burns, 1999.)

- Have students use letter dictionaries with pictures and illustrations of each letter and their attributed sound.

### 9. Letter of the Day (Source: Burns, 1999.)

- Have a letter of the day or week that instruction will be focused on. An activity that can be used with this strategy are having students try to "I spy" the letter around the classroom.

## Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

### *Guidelines For Instruction*

- Model each activity for student slowly and explicitly. Be sure to also model pronunciations slowly and exaggerated for continuous sounds and brief and repeated for stop sounds.
- Begin with continuous sounds or sounds where the airflow is not interrupted (ex. /a/, /f/, & /s/), then move on to stop sounds where airflow stops (ex. /b/, /d/, & /g/).
- Start with easier tasks and move to more complex tasks.
- Use manipulatives such as counters, blocks, or pictures to model how to segment a word.

Continuous Sounds		Stop Sounds	
a	fat	b	boy
e	set	c	cat
f	fit	d	dad
i	sit	g	get
l	left	h	ham
m	mat	j	jug
n	not	k	kick
o	lot	p	pit
r	ran	q	quit
s	send	t	tap
u	cut	x	fox
v	vat		
w	well		
y	yes		
z	zoom		

(Source: Cooper, Chard, & Kiger, 2006.)

*Phonemic Vocabulary* (Source: University of Oregon CTL.)

**Sound and Word discrimination:** The ability to determine what word doesn't fit with the other words.

- Example: *Which word doesn't fit in this group of words, leg, beg, tag. "Tag" doesn't follow the same pattern as the other two words.*

**Rhyming:** The ability to determine if one word rhymes with another word.

- Example: *What word rhymes with dog? Log rhymes with dog.*

**Syllable splitting:** The ability to split a word into its onset and rime.

- Example: *In the word pot the onset is /p/ and the rime is /ot/.*

**Blending:** When given the individual sounds of a word the student can blend those sounds together to make a word.

- Example: *What word do the sounds /p/ /o/ /t/ make? pot*

**Phonemic segmentation:** The ability to segment a word into its individual sounds.

- Example: *What are the sounds in "pot"? /p/ /o/ /t/*

**Phoneme deletion:** The ability to delete a sound in a word and identify what the new word makes.

- Example: *What is "sat" without the /s/? "at"*

**Phoneme manipulation:** Making a new word by manipulating the sounds in a word.

- Example: *What word can we make if we change the /t/ in sat to a /p/? sap*

## Strategies for Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

### *Sequence of Phonemic Awareness Activities*

If assessment results demonstrate a need for added phonemic awareness, this is a possible sequence of phonemic awareness activities (Cooper, Chard, & Kiger, 2006, p. 37.) It is important to model each activity explicitly and give students multiple opportunities to practice each skill.

#### Activity 1:

- Segment sentences into words: *The cat has a hat.* = *The ~ cat ~has ~a ~hat.*
- Blend words into a sentence: *The ~ cat ~has ~a ~hat.* = *The cat has a hat.*

#### Activity 2:

- Segment compound words into separate words: *sidewalk* = *side* + *walk*.
- Blend words into a compound word: *side* + *walk* = *sidewalk*.

#### Activity 3:

- Segment two syllable words that are not compound words: *sister* = *sis* + *ter*
- Blend syllables into a word: *sis* + *ter* = *sister*

#### Activity 4:

- Segment words with more syllables: *neighborhood* = *neigh* + *bor* + *hood*.
- Blend syllables into word: *neigh*+*bor*+*hood*=*neighborhood*

#### Activity 5:

- Segment words (and/or syllables) into onsets and rime: *cat* = /k/ /at/
- Blend segmented onsets and rimes into words: /k/ /at/ = *cat*

#### Activity 6:

- Segment words into individual phonemes: *cat* = /k/ /a/ /t/.
- Blend individual phonemes into words: /k/ /a/ /t/ = *cat*



### *Practice Segmenting and Blending Words*

These activities will help students who need additional practice segmenting and blending words.

- **Matching:** matching a picture to another word that it rhymes with, or matching a picture to a word that begins with the same sound.
- **Oddity Detection:** identifying the odd word or picture in a group.
- **Same/Different Judgement:** identifying if it starts with the same or a different sound.
- **Segment Isolation:** isolating sounds in the word into segments or parts.
- **Production:** providing words that begin or end with the same sound.
- **Counting:** counting the number of parts you hear within a word.
- **Compound Production:** changing a sound in a word to make a new sound or identifying a sound that is omitted when a word is changed.

### *Practice Activities*

**Letter Race** (Source: Cooper, Chard, & Kiger, 2006.): Divide group into partners. Give each group ten cards with different letters and sounds they are familiar with. Set timer for one minute. Partner holds up one card at a time and the other partner says the sound that the letter makes. If the partners says the sound incorrectly it goes back in the pile. When the timer goes off, the partners roles reverse.

**Regular and Irregular Words** (Source: Cooper, Chard, & Kiger, 2006.): Use a 5X5 grid with words that are familiar to the student. This can be done individually or with a partner. Time students for one minute and see how many rows and columns of words they can read in that time. If an error is made in the column the partner will direct the student to reread that row or column again.

**Personal Word Wall** (Source: Cooper, Chard, & Kiger, 2006.): Use a file folder and divide the folder into sections for each letter of the alphabet or spelling pattern. Students add words as they learn them to their own personal word wall on word cards. Practice having the student read the

words, once they can read the word with mastery then they can remove the word and take it home, then they replace it with another word.

**Rhyming and Spelling Patterns** (Source: Caldwell & Leslie, 2013.) (Source: Rasomski, Rupley, Pagie, & Nichols, 2016.)

This intervention is attempting to improve the students' rhyme ability as well as other phonological skills. The children should know which letters are consonants and which are vowels. You will need letter cards with the alphabet and the rhyme ending you are going to be focusing on. Find a poem that focuses on the same rhyming pattern. Model for the student examples of rhyming words. Have the student practice identifying other words within the poem that have that same rhyming or spelling pattern.

**Bean Bag Toss** (Source: Cooper, Chard, & Kiger, 2006.)

Stand in a small circle with the children. Say a CVC word like *dog*. Toss the beanbag to a child and ask them to segment the sounds, then they toss the beanbag to another child who blends those sounds. Then have the child say a new word, and repeat the sequence.

**Music Involvement** (Source: Selway, 2004.)

Using music and movement incorporated in phonics instruction.

**Personal Dictionaries** (Source: Burns, 1999.)

Have students make their own personal dictionaries as new words are learned. Word, definition, picture and even sentence can be included.

**Dictation Activities** (Source: Burns, 1999.)

Demonstrate that anything spoken can also be written and have students practice writing what they hear in a dictation activity.

# Reading Strategy Section

## Vocabulary

*Guidelines for Instruction:* (Source: Cooper, Chard, & Kiger, 2006.)

- Word learning occurs through many different experiences, whether this be through a variety of reading, discussions with others, or through other life events.
- To learn a new word students must experience and understand the meaning of that word.
- Students will benefit from learning new words before reading them within the text. This direct instruction will help students comprehend what they are reading with greater understanding.
- Students need to have understanding of prefixes, suffixes, and inflected endings to have a better understanding of vocabulary.

*Strategies to Improve Vocabulary Skills* (Source: Cooper, Chard, & Kiger, 2006.)

### **Have an daily awareness of words that is ongoing in the classroom.**

- Display vocabulary on bulletin boards
- Word Banks
- Word Books
- Teach students to read a variety of types of texts
- Frequently read aloud to your students
- Talk and discuss new words that are encountered during reading.

### **Develop an understanding of vocabulary-related skills.**

- Teach vocabulary on the concept before reading to strengthen understanding.
- Teach students about prefixes, suffixes, and inflected endings.
- Help to develop connections between words and life experiences.
- Use graphic organizers for students who benefit from a visual representation.

### **Allow opportunities for students to practice and complete practice follow up activities.**

- Sort words by spelling patterns, beginning sound, ending sound, etc.

- Identifying the synonyms and antonyms of a word.
- Examine how words that are related can be similar or different with a feature analysis.

### *Practice Activities*

#### **Personal Dictionaries** (Source: Burns, 1999.)

Have students make their own personal dictionaries as new words are learned. Word, definition, picture and even sentence can be included.

#### **Build Vocabulary Through Stories** ( Source: Burns, 1999.)

Students can listen to stories read aloud or books on tape and then have rich discussions about the text. Both fiction and nonfiction should be read, and students should have opportunities to share and even act out the story through sociodramatic play.

## Accuracy & Fluency

*Guidelines for Instruction:* (Source: Cooper, Chard, & Kiger, 2006.)

- Focus on a student's reading rate, accuracy, and expression.

*Accuracy and Fluency Vocabulary:* (Source: Cooper, Chard, & Kiger, 2006.)

1. **Fluency:** rapid, efficient, accurate application of word recognition skills to allow for the reader to develop meaning and comprehend what they are reading.
2. **Automaticity:** automatic word recognition
3. **Sight Word:** Word is recognized right away after seeing it.
4. **Rate:** The number of words that can be read per minute.
5. **Accuracy:** The number of words that a student can read correctly.
6. **Prosody:** When appropriate expression is used.
7. **Oral Reading Fluency:** A process of assessing rate and accuracy in fluency.

*Strategies for Improving Accuracy and Fluency* (Source: Cooper, Chard, & Kiger, 2006.)

### Modeling

- Model what good readers do, appropriate rate of reading and adequate expression. Teach students how to pay attention to punctuation, and dialogue within the text. Also have students listen to books on tape to model what good readers do, and have students follow along reading silently as the text is read to them.

### Word Lists

- Use word lists to increase fluency. This can be used with the help of word blending to assist in the decoding of words. Make sure that word lists have words with something in common, for example the same spelling pattern.

**Repeated Practice** (Source: Rasomski, Rupley, Pagie, & Nichols, 2016.)

- Repeated reading of the same text, to improve word recognition, accuracy, reading rate, expressive reading, as well as reading comprehension and confidence.

### **Paired Reading**

- Read with someone

### **Guided Reading**

- Guided reading where teacher works with a small group of students and can provide feedback as they read.

### **Alternative and a Variety of Texts** (Source: Rasomski, Rupley, Pagie, & Nichols, 2016.)

- Use a variety of text types: fiction, informational books, magazines, books for different genres, newspapers, advertisements, cookbooks, etc. Use your school and community resources such as the library to have access to different types of text. Alternative texts such as poetry, song lyrics, readers theater scripts, and speeches can also be used.

### **Literature Reviews**

- Book clubs
- Book reviews

### **Writing**

- Use their own writing and have students present it to the class.
- Connect with parents to help students continue their reading beyond the classroom.

### **Perform to an audience** (Source: Rasomski, Rupley, Pagie, & Nichols, 2016.)

- Use scripts, songs, poetry, and speeches to perform to an audience and increase reading fluency.

# Comprehension

*Guidelines for Instruction:* (Source: Cooper, Chard, & Kiger, 2006.)

- Determine students independent, instruction, and frustration reading level. This can be done through a QRI quantitative reading inventory or IRI informal reading inventory.
- Determine what level text you will be using for daily instruction.
- Find students listening level.
- What area of comprehension does the student struggle with: literal, inferential, critical, or vocabulary questions?
- Understand the comprehension strategies that the student already knows, and which strategies they do not know.

*Comprehension Vocabulary* (Source: Cooper, Chard, & Kiger, 2006.)

1. **Comprehension:** the process of understanding and interacting with a text.
2. **Prior Knowledge:** what vocabulary, ideas, or understandings a child has about the text before reading.
3. **Text Factors:** how difficult the text is, how many words are on a page, and the type of text.
4. **Strategies:** a plan for reading a text using multiple skills. These strategies are;
  - a. Identifying Important Information
  - b. Inferring/Predicting
  - c. Monitoring/Clarifying
  - d. Questioning
  - e. Visualizing
  - f. Summarizing
  - g. Synthesizing
  - h. Evaluating



5. **Independent Reading Level:** When the students can read the text without assistance
6. **Instructional Reading Level:** The student can read the text with the help of someone else.
7. **Frustration Reading Level:** The student can not read the text even with the help of someone else.
8. **Informal Reading Inventory:** A series of passages in a progression of easy to more complex. There are also different types of questions such as literal, inferential, critical, and vocabulary.
9. **Listening Level:** The highest level passage where a student can accurately answer 75% of questions correctly.

### *Strategies for Comprehension*

(Source: Burns, 1999.) (Source: Mendez, Pelzmann, & Frank, 2016.)

- Listening while reading
- Paired reading or reading to someone
- Independent reading
- Repeated reading
- Integration of other subject areas; science, math, social studies, etc.
- Read Alouds
- Strategy Instruction and having reading strategies posted
- Computer based reading activities
- Personal basket of books
- Individual comprehension reading journals
- Activity centers focused on comprehension

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