

USING COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS TO HELP STRUGGLING READERS IN  
KINDERGARTEN

By

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## **Abstract**

### **USING COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS TO HELP STRUGGLING READERS IN KINDERGARTEN**

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It can be difficult to help struggling kindergarten students learn pre-reading skills with limited resources. Trained community volunteers can make an impact on student literacy learning while forming positive relationships with students as they deliver a prescribed curriculum. This project explores the value of Professional Learning Communities (PLC), school and district support, the use of collaboration time, intervention, pre-reading essential standards, community support and PLC self-assessment. A handbook designed to assist in organizing effective interventions for the teacher or tutor is presented. This manual includes the role of professional learning communities in literacy tutoring; in developing essential standards, assessments and interventions. Next, the handbook addresses training volunteers about school procedures and curriculum. Followed by a toolkit for volunteers to use. Finally, the handbook focuses on methods for monitoring tutors and student progress. This research-based project is easy to use in any kindergarten reading intervention program.

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## **Introduction**

Young children come to school with a variety of experiences. Some children have been brought up with a myriad of books, attend pre-school and have rich conversations and experiences with the world around them; while others have far more limited opportunities to develop literacy skills. Kindergarten teachers have to analyze the results of these varied experiences and try to close the gap in learning to read. They attempt to balance instruction by providing literacy opportunities to those who need it as they offer new instruction and enrichments for students who are proficient. In an attempt to find pedagogical methods that are effective with students who have limited literacy skills, Jeanne Wanzek and Sharon Vaughn (2007) researched eighteen published studies written between 1995 and 2005. Their analysis concluded that the available evidence indicates overall positive outcomes for young students when they participate in small group reading interventions. Other studies have obtained the same results. (e.g., Ritter, Barnett, Denny, & Albin, 2009). The challenge addressed in this project is how to create opportunities for these interventions to occur.

Today's classrooms are busy meeting the demands of delivering instruction as prescribed by the California Common Core State Standard with limited school

resources. This alone is a challenging proposition, but it is made more so by the diverse levels of school readiness of incoming Kindergarteners. Teachers do not need to work in isolation to meet the challenge of preparing students with limited literacy skills. Professional Learning Communities (PLC) can be helpful in organizing curriculum delivery, developing common assessments and interventions leading to higher levels of learning for students (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, & Mattos, 2016).

This project proposes a process for recruiting and developing trained community volunteers who can partner with classroom teachers as literacy tutors to provide interventions for struggling students. The evidence suggests that literacy tutors who implement a program such as the one presented here, while forming close relationships with students, can facilitate significant growth in early reading skills (Vadasy et al., 1997).

The handbook presented as part of this Masters Project offers a guide for teachers to use a PLC model to develop lessons for volunteer tutors based on the California Common Core State Literacy Standards. The handbook includes lessons, assessments, a process for selecting students for intervention, strategies for volunteer training, and a tool kit of intervention materials. The handbook offers a straightforward package for community members to use. Everything required for the



teacher to assemble a volunteer tool kit tailored to their needs is available in the handbook. Each kit can draw from provided relationship building activities, lesson instruction cards, reading comprehension activities, phonemic awareness lessons, flashcards and communication forms. The material in this handbook is based on research into best practices and was designed to provide a useful resource for facilitating learning in pre-reading instruction by giving students the tools needed to be successful.

In conclusion, this project includes the use of PLCs and community members to help struggling students learn to read. It examines research on a variety of effective pre-reading skill development methods including story reading and comprehension discussions, letter naming, sound identification, sight words and phonemic awareness. The project includes a handbook designed to assist busy teachers with an effective way of recruiting community volunteers and providing the training and tools for the volunteers to effectively augment classroom instruction in helping struggling readers develop literacy skills.

## Literature Review

*It is the process of learning together that helps educators build their capacity to create a powerful PLC (Professional Learning Community). - Rick Dufour (2016)*

### Introduction

Classroom teachers often teach in isolation and are challenged to help all their students be successful in learning essential standards. However, when teachers work together in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), they collaboratively plan curriculum, assessments and interventions to ensure high levels of learning for students: “In order to ensure all students learn at high levels, educators must work collaboratively and take collective responsibility for the success of each student” (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, & Mattos, 2016, p. 12).

The use of PLCs to plan curriculum and interventions helps increase kindergarten student success with learning pre-reading skills. Learning communities bring teachers together on a regular basis for planning, discussing curriculum, and the assessment of student understanding (Servage, 2008). These collaborative meetings target skills students need to understand essential standards through common assessments. Working together on common goals creates an environment where teachers take collective responsibility to ensure student learning at high levels.

This review of the literature will begin with the purpose of Professional Learning Communities, the magnitude of district support, the use of teacher collaboration time,

essential pre-reading skills for kindergarten students, and intervention strategies for students who are not learning essential skills. Finally, this review will examine using community members to work one to one with struggling beginning readers, and the importance of assessing a PLC's program effectiveness.

### **Purpose of a Professional Learning Community**

The general purpose of Professional Learning Communities is for teachers to collaboratively work together to improve student learning. Servage (2008) argues that PLCs are transformative practices teachers participate in to reform how students learn. Dufour and Marzano (2011) concur with the transformative nature of PLCs: "It does not demand that educators work harder at what they traditionally have done: it calls upon all educators – every teacher, counselor, principal, central office staff member, and superintendent- to redefine their roles and responsibilities and do differently" (p. 22). In addition to the transformative potential of PLCs, Servage (2008) defines PLCs as having the following core benefits: staff professional development, which is essential to improved student learning; an opportunity for ongoing and sustained collaboration and collegial time; and, collaborative work that considers new ideas and solutions around teaching and student learning.

As stated by DuFour and Marzano (2011) there are three big ideas that drive PLCs. The first idea, which is foundational for all PLCs, requires the organization to ensure that all students learn at high levels. Educators plan what students will learn, determine if they learned the material, and arrange for students who either have or do not

have foundational knowledge and understanding of the curriculum material. In the second idea, PLCs help all students learn using a collaborative effort. The final big idea requires PLCs to monitor student learning and respond appropriately to student needs (DuFour & Marzano, 2011).

When educators are part of a community where they feel valued and supported they are more willing and able to support student learning (Sweetland, 2008). Effective PLCs move away from traditional isolated teaching practices to a shared model, where professional learning is continuously discussed and evaluated (Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015). When teachers work together to improve student learning, it strengthens the group as a whole and places the members of the PLC on an equal playing field (Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015).

No longer working in isolation, groups of educators work together to improve learning by planning, discussing and assessing curriculum for all students. Finally, as PLCs look at student learning using data, they are then able to accurately use effective interventions to meet student needs. This work would not be possible without school and district support.

### **School and District Support**

Effective PLCs cannot successfully exist without school and district support. A social norm states: “It takes a village to raise a child.” The same idea is true in education. A teacher in isolation cannot provide all the support a child needs to learn essential standards. Research shows that without district support and a commitment to promote

collaborative practices, schools can only be effective with the PLC process for a short period of time (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). “School and district leaders must do more than urge teachers to go collaborate. They must provide the priorities and parameters that help teachers focus their collective effort on the right work” (DuFour et al., 2016, p. 237). Collaborative practice, however, does not come naturally and many teachers resist the change. Successful PLCs occur when the principal provides additional staff in classrooms providing extra support to students: “For a professional community to develop, change agents must foster a culture in which teaching professionals think of themselves as capable of and responsible for, making interpersonal choices that have a positive impact on school climate and student learning” (Sweetland, 2008, p. 2).

The work of a PLC team might be divided among its members. Buffum, Mattos, & Weber (2012) describe how three collaborative teams are needed to help students succeed in learning essential standards. The first team, a collaborative teacher team, defines the learning outcomes for students. The subsequent two teams consist of school-wide members who support the teacher teams to attain student goals; and, the school leadership team comprised of representatives from each teacher team, an administrator, classified staff, and support staff. This school leadership team carries a variety of responsibilities, such as coordinating collective efforts across grade levels to support the school mission by creating master schedules for intervention, coordinating PLC time during school hours, designing and implementing supports for core instruction and intervention, allocating funds for core instruction and interventions, providing behavior support systems, and monitoring school wide student learning. The final team is the

school-wide intervention team consisting of the principal, counselor, speech teacher, nurse, special education teacher, English Language Learner (ELL) teacher, reading specialist, and librarian. This team's goal is to look at struggling students academically and behaviorally, determine the cause, find an appropriate intervention, monitor their progress to determine if the intervention is working, and revise the plan when necessary.

Time is always a factor for effective change efforts. In order for teachers to look at school vision and culture they need enough support and time from district leaders during the school day (DuFour et al., 2016; Sweetland, 2008). Teachers require time for dialogue and reflection on new solutions to learning problems. Sweetland (2008) advises that teacher teams and partnerships should be provided three to five years for the cultural shift to take root, grow and become self-sustaining.

With support of the district office, principals and curriculum coaches, as well as adequate time, instructional support staff, and relevant curriculum, collaborative teams of classroom teachers can work together to provide high levels of learning for all students.

### **The Use of Teacher Collaboration Time**

Using grade level collaborative groups teachers work together to establish essential standards, plan units, design common assessments and make sure students are receiving the extra support they need to be successful learners. Highly effective PLCs work towards professional improvement of their members. "Teachers consider collaborative meetings as a means of improving student learning as well as a powerful tool for their own professional development" (Leclerc, Moreau, Dumouchel, &

Sallafranzue-St-Louis, 2012, p. 2). The important work for teachers is to continuously learn from research and other sources. When staff is able to come together, they share their new learning enabling the team to accomplish goals for their students (Hord, 2007).

Grade level teams are the most meaningful because the members have a common interest to explore the best practices of learning (DuFour et al., 2016). Groups of teachers create knowledge of the best professional practices, which are used by individual teachers to support student learning. Highly successful PLCs build trust and close supportive relationships among its members and are able share ideas and knowledge (Liou & Daly, 2014; Riveros, Newton, & Burgess, 2012).

One of the team tasks is to plan the content students need to learn and/or the essential standards to be addressed. As they collectively review the standards, they also prioritize them. “Perhaps the greatest benefit of prioritizing the standards is that it encourages teachers to embrace more in-depth instruction by reducing the pressure to simply cover the material” (DuFour et al., 2016, p. 117). The goal of planning essential standards is to ensure students acquire the same knowledge and skills regardless of the teacher. Once the essential standards are established, the team must determine pacing guidelines for planned curriculum and finally commit to teaching it. The members of this team are committed to helping all students learn (DuFour & Marzano, 2011).

The next priority for the PLC team is monitoring student learning through common assessments. It is necessary for the team to know who has learned the material, as well as who might have gaps in learning. All teachers need to give their students common authentic assessments of student learning. With the data from these assessments,

the team collectively makes a plan for students who need more time and support to learn the targeted instruction (DuFour et al., 2016; DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Stewart, 2014).

PLCs are charged with creating a plan for students who need more time and support to learn essential standards, as well as a systematic planned intervention to meet their learning needs. This intervention should be implemented daily by trained staff. It is important, however, that students do not miss core instructional time. Extra practice and access to interventions must be offered during school hours (DuFour et al., 2016; DuFour & Marzano, 2011). With quality, direct instruction most students will learn to read. For those students who don't learn the skills they need for reading, they will need more intensive small group instruction as a method of intervention (Mathes et al., 2005). Children who have already learned the essential skills might participate in enrichment activities during intervention.

### **Intervention**

PLCs will determine who needs intensive support and time to learn essential standards. For example, a PLC team might decide to group students with trained staff who will reteach skills. This Response-to-Intervention (RTI) model provides high quality instruction and support based on children's needs through a multi-tiered model (Gettinger & Stoiber, 2007). There are three tiers of RTI.

Tier 1 is whole group classroom instruction. In kindergarten literacy, this includes research-based curriculum, print rich environment, and support activities which reinforce the curriculum (Gettinger & Stoiber, 2007; Justice, 2006). Tier 1 is high quality



instruction where most children develop their readings skills (Justice, 2006). This is a protected time insuring students do not miss this core instruction (Buffum et al., 2012; DuFour et al., 2016; Justice, 2006). Learning in Tier 1 is monitored every 2-3 weeks to identify students who need extra support to learn the curriculum (Buffum et al., 2012; DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Justice, 2006). These students also receive instruction in Tier 2.

Tier 2 instruction is conducted in small groups of 4-6 students to provide extra time and support to master essential standards learned in Tier 1: “Tier 2 includes daily, teacher-directed, small group instruction that provides greater exposure to language and print, additional practice with literacy skills and/or activity adaptations for groups of 4 to 6 children based on their individual needs” (Gettinger & Stoiber, 2007, p. 201).

Tier 3 instruction occurs when students do not understand the essential standards after they have received Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction: “Tier 3 includes intensive, individualized tutoring whereby children receive explicit and highly focused training in early literacy skills from specialized early literacy tutors” (Gettinger & Stoiber, 2007, p. 201). This intervention is in addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2 and gives struggling students extra time to practice their learning.

Buffum et al. (2012) recommends the following guiding question be asked about RTI instruction strategies: Are they researched based, directive and hold students accountable, timely, provided by highly trained staff, systematic for all learners who need it, and targeted to student needs? Educators must learn about the child’s learning

strengths and needs. The best way to do this is common assessment and progress monitoring (Coleman, Roth, & West, 2009).

Once the child's needs have been established, the intervention must be researched based: "Evidence-based practices and standard protocols increase the likelihood that the supports and services provided will benefit the child" (Coleman et al., 2009, p. 7). The importance of research-based interventions is supported by Buffum et al. (2012): "A school should utilize interventions for which they can point to research that demonstrates a practice has a high likelihood of working or can provide student data that demonstrates the practice is working for many students who have received the intervention" (p. 132). Using researched based curriculum ensures all students are learning at high levels.

To achieve these high levels of learning a school must make time for children to learn the targeted skills. There must be time built into the school day for intervention, just as time was saved for core instruction. One recommendation from Buffum et al. (2012) includes using flexible time where students are grouped according to need. These students receive support to learn essential standards, while students who already know the standard may attend art or another enrichment type of activity. The groups are fluid and students remain in the intervention group based on their knowledge of literacy skills and the need to learn these skills.

PLCs also consider behavioral supports and how student behavior might impede learning. Are students motivated to learn? If not, behavioral supports might increase motivation and learning. "While supporting the student's behavioral issue, take the time to investigate if academic difficulties exist as well. Helping students experience success,

whether behavioral or academic, gives hope and can be the antidote to frustration and poor choices” (Buffum et al., 2012, p. 147). The best way to achieve high levels of learning for all students is to focus on academic and behavioral achievement. As students learn and practice positive behavior at school, it becomes a habit for learning. In time, students will make good decisions because it is the right thing to do, rather than because of the reward they might receive (Hierck, Coleman, & Weber, 2011, p. 45). Social skills are part of the curriculum every year. It should not be assumed that students know and use social skills to be successful in school. Just like academics, when students are not understanding behavioral curriculum, they need more practice and support in positive behavioral interventions without embarrassing the child (Hierck et al., 2011). Research conducted by Mathes et al. (2005) found there was no one best way to administer intervention for struggling students; schools should be allowed to choose an intervention that best fits the school philosophy. When schools choose their own interventions, there is more buy-in and less resistance to creating high levels of learning for students.

Pre-reading skills are taught by the classroom teacher using high quality Tier 1 instruction, and the PLC determines who might benefit from extra time and support to master these skills. Using common assessments, the PLC collaborative team can determine what interventions might be necessary to help students meet essential standards.

## **Pre-Reading Essential Standards**

Essential standards are the pre-reading skills the PLC determines are the most important for kindergarteners to learn before they enter first grade. Educators in California use the Common Core State Standards as a guide. All standards are taught throughout the year; however, the PLC determines a small number of standards all students must master. “From a vast laundry list of topics, collaborative teams in a PLC must extract a guaranteed and viable curriculum that is relentlessly focused on the most essential learning outcomes for their students” (DuFour & Marzano, 2011, p. 118).

Children come to kindergarten with a wide variety of literacy experiences (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999). In the first year of school, educators strive to level the playing field and close the literary skill gap. Research supports the following essential pre-reading skills for students to be prepared for first grade: book and print awareness, phonological awareness, rapid letter and sound naming, verbal memory and oral language skills (Badian, 1995; Burns et al., 1999; Corriveau, Goswami, & Thomson, 2010; Eissa, 2014; Lennon & Siesinski, 1999; Mathes et al., 2005). “Kindergarten should help children get comfortable with learning from print, since much of their future education will depend on this. By the end of the year, kindergarteners should have an interest in the types of language and knowledge that books can bring them” (Burns et al., 1999, p. 76).

Kindergarten programs work hard to provide students with literacy resources they need to be ready for first grade. Some students, however, need extra support.

Community members who have a passion and the time to help children learn are a possible solution for this extra support.

### **Community Member Support**

There are many motivated members of a community such as parents, grandparents or a retiree, who may want to volunteer their time to make a difference and help students learn. Community members can play a major role in helping children develop pre-reading skills (as cited in Vadasy, Jenkins, Antil, Wayne, & O'Connor, 1997). When a trained community tutor works with one student or a very small group, they can focus on a child's academic needs and provide high quality targeted instruction making a positive effect on a child's reading progress (Lennon & Siesinski, 1999; Ritter, Barnett, Denny, & Albin, 2009; Wasik & Slavin, 1993).

Support and training for community tutors is vital before they start working with children. This training would introduce the goals and materials, followed by time for the tutor to practice each component in the program. Finally, tutors should be provided direct guidance and a framework for behavior management to help them work effectively with students. Activities implemented by tutors should be simple, predictable and easy to use to maximum time spent working with students (Vadasy et al., 1997).

As interventions are being implemented, tutors should be observed and monitored to ensure they are getting enough support to be successful with students, as well as assistance with lesson implementation and difficult students. Additionally, tutors should be provided with an explanation of how to follow lesson formats and why their regular

attendance is vital for student learning (Vadasy et al., 1997). On-going communication is essential to ensure the tutor is getting necessary support and encouragement to help students. And, finally, all tutors deserve recognition and praise for their contributions.

A study that measured the effectiveness of tutoring by community tutors found that community members could help first grade students improve their low-level reading skills (Vadasy et al., 1997). These tutors worked with two students for 30 minutes, four days a week, for up to 23 weeks depending on student learning. The students did not fully reach the learning outcomes the study had hoped for, however; when Vadasy et al. (1997) examined the data, some tutors had made significant gains in learning for their students. Researchers discovered that community members who had formed close relationships with their students and carefully implemented the program as designed, saw significant growth in reading and spelling skills for their students.

Using community support is another way to move student learning in a progressive direction. Students learn more and volunteers feel connected to education in a positive way. Community connections can be part of a PLC and have the potential of furthering growth and learning for students. However, effectiveness of the PLC is just as important as student learning and growth.

### **PLC Self-Assessment**

PLCs are a cycle of work looking to significantly increase the growth of student learning at high levels. Each team collaborates to plan and implement effective strategies to meet student goals. It is essential for teachers to self-assess their program to ensure it

is offering the best resources for students. Educators need to know that students served by the team are making adequate growth. Collective reflection on educational practices is an opportunity for a faculty to share teaching practices in order to improve and impart their best strategies to help others in the PLC (Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015).

Teacher PLC teams can be more powerful when they study standards, share instructional delivery methods, coach and discuss with one another teaching practices using instructional rounds (Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015). Instructional rounds, performed by the PLC members, allow the unit to examine the effectiveness of the lessons they have designed while comparing the individual teaching practices of each member. The positive discussion and reflection at the end of these rounds provide the most benefit to professional development (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). It is also necessary to measure growth by analyzing student data collected at the end of each learning unit. Student learning is the ultimate test of effective instruction and evidence that they have learned (DuFour & Marzano, 2011).

School and district leaders must also evaluate their PLC teams to make sure their efforts are effective in promoting high levels of learning. All schools state their intentions in a vision. Student work is a valuable tool in determining if current practices reflect their objectives of student learning. This evidence can lead to an action plan for revising curriculum, teaching strategies and/or a new set of goals for the team (Cushman, 1996). “If we don’t know exactly where each student is and what he or she needs to succeed, our interventions and enrichments will be well-intentioned shotgun blasts of strategies aimed at a plethora of skills in hopes that something will stick” (Buffum et al.,

2012, p. 77). In addition to teacher created common assessments, the school must monitor student progress at the beginning, middle and end of the year to determine if instruction is meeting student needs and their learning is improving (DuFour et al., 2016; DuFour & Marzano, 2011).

Finally, PLCs want to celebrate their hard work and successes. “When celebrations continually remind people of the purpose and priorities of their organizations, members are more likely to embrace the purpose and work toward agreed-on priorities” (DuFour et al., 2016).

## **Conclusion**

The body of evidence reviewed in this paper suggests that the use of professional learning communities to plan student learning and interventions for struggling students helps increase pupil success in gaining knowledge of kindergarten essential standards.

The review of literature focused on how groups of educators can work together to support student learning. Teacher led teams are essential to this process, but they cannot do it without the support of school and district leaders. Evidence shows students are capable of learning essential standards with the extra time and support of interventions. These interventions focus on the essential standards agreed upon by the PLCs. Trained community volunteers are shown to provide effective assistance for learners. Self-assessment is crucial to evaluate how the work of the PLC is progressing.

The evidence in the data shows a correlation between teacher collaboration and intervention practices to improve student learning. When teachers work together using



the best teaching practices, student learning improves. Interventions give children opportunities to learn essential standards. The research shows some discrepancy about whether community volunteer-based tutoring provides gains in student learning, as some tutors did make a difference while others did not. Tutors who made personal connections with children made a larger impact on learning. Even when the results of the study were inconclusive, every study stated that volunteers impact student learning. More studies need to be done on community member tutor preparation and guidance for working with children in education. The last challenge in the literature was finding research on the self-assessment of the PLC process. Very little work has been done in this area. Rick Dufour and his team have a vast amount of experience in the PLC process that could be included in this review.

This study considers quantitative, qualitative research and the experience of educators who have successfully used the PLC process to improve the learning in struggling schools throughout the United States. A description of the methodology used for creating an action plan for community support is outlined in the next chapter.

## **Methodology**

### **Project Development**

This project is an action plan to incorporate community members in the classroom as literacy tutors for kindergarten students struggling with beginning reading skills. This chapter will address how I chose my topic, conducted research and put together a manual, toolkit and training program for volunteer literacy tutors.

In September 2016, my school district sent me to Long Beach, California to attend a Professional Learning Communities Conference sponsored by Solution Tree called PLCs at Work. The incredible presentations were led by Richard and Rebecca DuFour leaders in the PLC community. I learned many new ideas about PLCs from sessions like What Do We Do When Students Learn Quickly or Already Know It? presented by Virginia Mahlke. Mike Mattos lead a class called, Simplifying Response to Intervention: How to Systematically Respond When Students Don't Learn. There was also a session titled, Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change by Anthony Muhammad. Next, Rebecca DuFour discussed, Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools. Finally, Richard DuFour talked about the importance of Common Formative Assessment: The Lynchpin of the PLC.

## Research

I purchased and read 3 books written by the presenters: *Leaders of Learning: How School Districts, School and Classroom Leaders Improve Student Achievement*, by Richard DuFour and Robert J. Marzano (2011), *Simplifying Response to Intervention: Four Essential Guiding Principles*, by Austin Buffum, Mike Mattos and Chris Weber (2012), and finally *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work*, written by Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker, Thomas W Many and Mike Mattos (2016).

After attending the PLC conference and reading the books, it was clear my project would include working with PLCs to organize intervention in my own classroom. To start the project the PLC team at my school looked at struggling students and figured out strategies to use with community members to help learning. The next step was to conduct research in this area. The following is a list of the topics flagged for study before developing the handbook for volunteers:

1. Research-based interventions for young students who are struggling with beginning reading skills.
2. Defining Professional Learning Communities as a method for developing and assessing early literacy interventions.
3. How can school districts support PLC's?
4. How do PLC teams take collective responsibility for student success?

## 5. How can teams become focused on results?

The library databases were used to find articles about related topics. The search was restricted to articles written in the last ten years. Using phrases like, professional learning communities and reading intervention, this exploration generated a list of about 100 articles. After examining the articles, I found 10 articles that met my criteria. Examples include: *Critical and Transforming Practices in Professional Learning Communities*, by Laura Servage, (2008), *The Effectiveness of Volunteer Tutoring Programs for Elementary and Middle School Students*, by G.W. Ritter et al., (2009) and *Applying a RTI Model for Early Literacy Development in Low-Income Children* by Maribeth Gettinger and Karen Stoiber, (2007).

Article reference sections were used to find common foundational articles within the literature as well as other related research. Richard and Rebecca Dufour were found listed in the references in most of the articles.

In October, my school sent me to a presentation called, *Nourishing Conversation and Lifelong Potential* with Ann Fernald, PhD., (2016). This researcher conducted a study of young children who fail to reach their developmental potential in language and as a result enter school without a strong foundation for learning. Her lecture stressed the importance of vocabulary development in young children. Other topics included teaching parents to read with their children to develop their vocabularies using picture books. The presentation reminded me of the literacy tutors who helped struggling kindergarteners when I taught in Eureka. The Humboldt Office of Education recruited community members and trained them to work with struggling readers using children's books. The

program made a big difference for children who needed a little extra help learning pre-reading skills. Each tutor read with three students for twenty minutes, two days a week. The focus was story comprehension, vocabulary development, and concepts of print. Students discussed story comprehension with their tutors and received help learning letters, sounds and sight words. Stacy Young from the Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE) was consulted. She shared materials used when overseeing this program. HCOE gave their tutors a toolkit with resources applicable to their student's needs. Some of these ideas, like the tutoring schedule, story comprehension, reviewing letters, sounds and a toolkit were included in my handbook. Like Humboldt County, I based the materials in the handbook on the skills required by the Gateway District PLC.

### **Community Volunteer Handbook**

This project idea now became fully formed with the goal of starting a similar program for kindergarten at our school. My kindergarten PLC partner, the principal and the director of human resources were all excited about using community volunteers to help kindergarteners learn pre-reading skills. It was time to look at the literature review again. Additional readings were needed to support the development of the program including the following new topics:

1. Purpose of Professional Learning Communities
2. School and District Support
3. The Use of Teacher Collaboration Time
4. Intervention

5. Pre-Reading Essential Standards
6. Community Member Support
7. PLC Self-Assessment

The ERIC Database and Google Scholar were used to locate many more articles found from the reference lists of earlier articles about interventions with early learners, pre-reading essential standards, community member support, and PLC self-assessment. As I studied the literature and reviewed research about effective practice, the essential skills needed were identified. The handbook would cover book and print awareness, story comprehension, phonological awareness, letter naming, and oral language skill activities. Research showed that volunteer tutoring programs can make an impact on student growth,(Ritter, Barnett, Denny, & Albin, 2009). The Effectiveness of One-To-One Tutoring by Community Tutors for At-Risk Beginning Readers by Patricia F. Vadasy et al. (1997). and The Effectiveness of Volunteer Tutoring Programs for Elementary and Middle School Students: A Meta-Analysis by Gary W. Ritter et al. (2009), provided evidence community members can help students make significant gains in their reading skills with training and support. Research from these studies showed that volunteers need to be trained to provide simple, predictable, targeted learning practices that are easy to use in order to be effective. Volunteers also need ongoing support from teachers. The most effective tutors were able to develop strong relationships and trust with the students. Therefore recruitment, selection and evaluation of volunteers is a key task in any successful tutoring program.

The work I have been doing with my two Professional Learning Communities made another important contribution to building a useful handbook for volunteers. My school PLC, where I work with another teacher to implement assessments to test student learning, led to the selection of The Basic Phonics Skills Test (BPST) developed by John Shefelbine, California State University, Sacramento (2014). The kindergarten portion of this test includes the following sections: letter naming, identifying consonant, short and long vowel sounds and reading 10 consonants, short vowels, and consonant-vowel words. We are also assessing phonemic awareness skills including rhyming, orally segmenting and blending words.

In addition to the school PLC, I am a member of the district PLC which decides when to teach essential standards and when students need to demonstrate mastery of these standards. Students are monitored regularly to identify which students need extra tutoring and the areas where extra practice is needed. Literacy tutors effectively help student meet these standards.

When reading skills are not mastered during class instruction, tutors will need to provide extra practice. The enclosed handbook is designed to help teachers and community volunteers provide students with targeted learning practice facilitating the development of beginning reading skills identified in the standards. This handbook provides teachers with the framework to train volunteers and includes the materials needed to practice reading skills. The teacher will have to identify and reproduce the appropriate tools from the handbook's selection in a kit for volunteers to accomplish the

teacher's goals for his/her students. After the teacher assembles the kit they want, there is no additional preparation required for the teacher or tutor.

The following is an outline of the Handbook's contents:

- The Professional Learning Community
  - District PLC
  - Essential Standards
  - Common Assessments
    - Student Selection
  - Literacy Tutoring PLC
- Training Community Volunteers to be Literacy Tutors
  - School and Tutoring Procedures
  - The Literacy Session Content
- The Tool Kit
  - Introduction
  - Literacy Tutor Procedure Sheet
  - Student Check-Off Sheet
  - Quick Reference Activities Cards
  - Relationship Activity Sheets
  - Story Comprehension Sheets
  - Letter Naming Flash Cards
  - Sight Word Flash Cards
  - Communication Form



- Monitoring Literacy Tutors and Student Progress
  - Assessing Student Learning
  - PLC Collaboration Time
  - Providing Supplemental Training
  - Building Relationships with Community Members
  - Providing Effective Communication
  - Evaluating the Draft Handbook

### **Testing the Handbook Material**

The next step was to test the handbook by identifying a volunteer who meets the selection criteria and selecting three students with the lowest BPST scores from my class to try out the handbook's content and approach.

To begin the process the volunteer tutor and I met for about an hour discussing the practices presented in the draft handbook. Once the tutor began working with students, it quickly became clear more tools were needed. A relationship building component was created with four shared story prompts where students wrote about their family and interests (Lennon & Siesinski, 1999; Ritter et al., 2009; Wasik & Slavin, 1993). In implementing the unit, the tutor decided to write too so the kids would get to know him as well. Additional flashcards with letters and sight words were designed, and more thorough directions and prompt cards for student activities were added to the tool kit. Finally, a communication sheet and a student needs form were added to provide more interaction with community members about tutoring sessions.

This handbook will be a living document as our PLC develops new curriculum, common assessments and timelines for reading skill mastery. The future goal is to work with the first grade PLCs and expand this program into other grades.

## Conclusions

This project began as a research plan to evaluate the effectiveness of a PLC process to develop an intervention program for struggling kindergarten readers using community volunteers.

The research literature supported claims that PLC working groups can effectively develop essential standards, common assessments, a process to identify students needing extra support, and practices to attain high levels of learning (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2012; DuFour et al., 2016). The evidence suggests that the most effective interventions include small group sizes, two or three days a week for 15-30 minutes per session lasting a minimum of eight to ten weeks (Cavanaugh, Kim, Wanzek, & Vaughn, 2004; Wanzeck & Vaughn, 2007).

After reviewing the research, a project was developed for using community members as volunteer literacy tutors. "Selection of tutors who are motivated to make a significant difference in the lives of young students, and who can be trained to deliver instruction dependably and with care is critical." (Vadasy et al., 1997, p. 136) Next, the handbook was constructed based on the current findings of best practice in using community volunteers. It is meant to assist teachers and community members in helping students learn skills for reading. The manual includes the purpose of PLC

work, volunteer training including procedures and lesson plans, a tool kit, assessing student progress and tutor/teacher communication. It is designed to minimize preparation time for teachers and volunteers. Once the teacher assembles a tool kit from the provided materials to meet their specific needs, community members can spend their time working with students.

In the future, this literacy tutor project can expand by recruiting more community members for other kindergarten classes eventually joining the first grade PLC to involve community members in their intervention program. There are some differences in the research concerning the gains achieved in student learning supported by community volunteers. The literature showed some tutors making a difference yet there is variation in how much volunteers impact reading growth. This project sought out the structure and content of those programs that demonstrated the effectiveness of this model and applied those to the handbook. More studies are necessary focusing on community member literacy tutor training and support. Finally, an added challenge was acquiring research to provide effective guidelines for PLCs to conduct assessment.

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## **Appendix**

Literacy Tutoring Handbook

A Guide for Teachers and Community Members to Help Struggling Kindergarten

Students Learn the Skills Needed to Read

By

Tamara Lindblom

**Introduction**

As educators, we strive to deliver curriculum in ways that all the students learn the material. Sometimes students need extra time and practice to help them learn essential skills. It can be difficult to find the time and ways to provide a few students extra support. Working individually with students can be problematic with limited school resources. Community tutors are one solution. They can develop rewarding relationships with school children helping struggling readers succeed by providing extra support and practice time to learn important reading skills. This program requires community tutors to volunteer one hour, two days per week to work with three students who are struggling to learn the skills taught in class. They will read stories and ask comprehension questions while teaching concepts of print, reviewing letter names, sounds, and sight words, depending on each child's need. Students find this rewarding and enjoy spending time with adults who care and are interested in helping them learn to read.

This handbook includes learning guidelines and the means needed to help students practice reading skills by offering teachers training resources and a tool kit to conduct tutoring sessions without additional preparation outside of class. This guide provides instructions for selecting students, requirements for becoming a tutor,

monitoring literacy tutor and student progress, training suggestions, key components of teaching pre-reading skills, and tools to use with students.

## **Chapter 1**

### **The Professional Learning Communities**

Kindergarten teacher teams work together using the professional learning community process to determine the essential standards kindergarteners need to know by the end of the year to be successful in first grade. PLCs choose essential standards from foundational reading skills, informational text and literature. All the California common core standard skills are taught in classrooms however district kindergarten teams look at all the standards and pick skills to emphasize those they consider most important to master so students can learn to read. See table 1 for essential standards selected by our district.

**Table 1: Description of Essential Standards**

<b>Standard Number</b>	<b>Description of Essential Standards for Our District</b>
Literature RL.K.3	With prompting and support, kindergarteners will be able to identify characters, settings and major events in a story.
Informational Text RF.K.1	With prompting and support, describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.
Foundational Skills RF.K.1 RF.K.3	<p>Students will demonstrate their understanding of the organization and basic features of print. They will be able to follow words from left to right, top to bottom and page by page. Students will recognize that spoken words are represented by written language by using a sequence of letters. Next students will be able to understand words are separated by spaces in print. Finally, they will recognize and name all the upper and lower-case letters in the alphabet.</p> <p>Students will learn and apply kindergarten grade level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. Kindergarteners will be able to produce the primary sounds for each consonant letter. Identify the long and short sounds with the common spellings for the five-major vowels. Read common high-frequency words identified by district PLC by sight. Finally, students will need to distinguish between similarly spelled words by identifying the sounds of the letters that differ.</p> <p>(Adopted by the California State Board of Education, 2013)</p>

The PLC team develops common assessments to monitor student progress. For example, our group chose the BPST IV developed by John Shefelbine of California (Shefelbine, Ph.D & Bruce, 2014). This test includes data on letter naming, sounds and consonant vowel consonant (cvc) words. These tests are administered at

the beginning of the year and the end of each trimester. Letter and sound naming assessments are also given monthly to monitor learning. Common assessment dates have been agreed upon. For instance, students need to know their letter names by December, letter sounds by March and able to read cvc words by May. This assessment does not include sight words or story comprehension standards therefore the PLC team decided that students will read the list of sight words and retell a familiar story to determine who needs extra practice. These common assessments are an easy way to compare how students are learning and identifying children who need extra support. After analyzing the data, three struggling students are selected to work with each community volunteer to improve their pre-reading skills.

Common assessments are only one consideration in student selection.

Teachers need to consider the community member's experience working with young children and the particulars of each student. For example, it would be best to place a student with behavior issues with a seasoned literacy tutor.

Literacy tutors need to be included in the PLC process. Teachers should to meet with volunteers at least once per trimester to evaluate and discuss the data from the common assessment. The team will look for growth patterns and discuss the best plan to improve learning. It is also a time to celebrate growth and discuss any concerns about the student.

PLC teams are a very important part of supporting students. These teams can include teacher colleagues, administration and community volunteers. The focus is always student centered for maximum learning.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Training Community Volunteers to be Literacy Tutors**

In order to participate, community members must follow the procedures set by the school district before they can complete the training and start working with students. Each volunteer must fill out a volunteer packet provided by the school district and pass the clearance screening for working with children. Community members commit to volunteering one hour, two days per week, attending literacy tutor training and demonstrate the desire to help young students learn to read.

School procedures can vary, and volunteers need to follow the local guidelines. Literacy tutors need to recognize the importance of following a tutoring schedule which provides the consistency necessary for student success. The following procedures to be taught in training classes include guidelines for school safety and making the most efficient use of time. Training starts with school and tutoring practices.

#### **School and Tutoring Procedures**

1. Always sign in and get a visitor's badge from the office before working with children.



2. Review the school calendar so community members know when breaks occur.
3. Be on time for literacy tutoring. Every class has a schedule, if a tutor is late, they may not be able to see all the children.
4. Tutors need to let the teacher know if they are going to be absent. If it is a planned absence inform the student. They enjoy meeting with tutors and look forward to it.
5. If a student is absent, the teacher should have an alternative student who needs extra practice time. If the teacher cannot communicate this with the tutor, the time should be split between the other two students.
6. Tutors will spend the first two weeks getting to know their students by learning their interests. What is their favorite TV show, game, animal or sport. These things can help find interesting books. Use the worksheets (included) for discussion prompts in the tool kit to help facilitate this process. When strong relationships are formed with the children, they will develop trust and be willing to listen and learn more.
7. Watch the time working with each student. There are only 20 minutes per student.

Regular routine is very important. Children perform better if they can predict what is going to happen.

8. Rewards are great. Check with the teacher before giving out prizes to make sure it is appropriate. Be considerate of the other children's feelings because they notice when others get something.
9. It is inappropriate to exchange phone numbers or addresses with students. Community members should enjoy their time with the students tutored during school time. It is not appropriate to communicate with children outside class.
10. Tutors will be working with students and learn about their personal and academic lives. It is important to remember the things learned about the students remain confidential and are not shared outside of school.
11. The classroom teacher is a mandated reporter. If a child shares any kind of emotional or physical abuse, report it immediately. School personnel are obligated by law to report abuse to the proper authorities.
12. Tutors should take some time to communicate with the teacher about how students are performing and any tutoring needs that may arise. It is important to share whether or not the students are cooperating during literacy time to maximize learning. Sometimes it can be difficult because the classroom teacher is working with other students when a tutor comes and leaves the

classroom. The communication form included in the tool kit or a note might be the best way to correspond.

The training begins with an overview of procedures ending with discussion and questions. Part two of tutoring instruction will consist of an overview of materials volunteers will be using to help kindergarteners improve their pre-reading skills.

**Table 2: Sight Word List**

I	am	my
it	he	see
go	we	for
with	do	this
like	and	you
said	does	at
come	have	here
is	a	see
little	to	
if	me	
in	can	
was	the	
of	look	

### **The Elements of Reinforcing Pre-Reading Skills**

This section focuses on the work Community Literacy Tutors will be doing with students. The tool kit containing instructions, worksheets, and flashcards is

provided. Each volunteer will spend the majority of their time coaching students about concepts of print and story comprehension. The end of the session will focus on letter naming, sound identification and sight words depending on the learning needs of the child. Table 2 is a list of sight words our district PLC preferred. The Literacy Tutoring Check-off Sheet shown in table 3 will communicate the needs of each child. The quick reference cards are available in the tool kit with instructions for each activity.

**Table 3: Literacy Tutoring Check-Off Sheet**

Literacy Tutoring Check-Off Sheet		
Student	_____	
First Trimester	_____	Second Trimester _____ Third Trimester _____
_____	_____	_____
	_____	Read Aloud
	_____	Story Comprehension
	_____	Concepts of Print
	_____	Vocabulary words
	_____	Story Writing Practice
		Characters, Setting, Story Events, and Favorite Part of the
Story		
	_____	Letter Naming and Sound Practice
	_____	Sight Word Practice
	_____	Phonemic Awareness Practice
		Syllabication
		Rhyming
		Oral Blending
		Oral Segmenting

Sound Deletion
Sound Substitution
_____ Name Writing Practice

### **Reading Literature and Informational Texts**

Literacy tutors provide two or three interesting story choices for their students to pick from. Keep the choices limited to avoid wasted time when deciding on a book. Volunteers can bring their own stories or ask the teacher for classroom books. The following story activities need to be completed before, during and after the story to give the students the extra practice they need for mastery of concepts of print and story comprehension. Concepts of print skills are teaching children how books work. The following skills are activities to include when reading a story.

- Identifies the front and back cover.
- Read the title (the name of the book).
- Discuss the author (the person who wrote the words).
- Discuss the illustrator (the person who drew the pictures).
- Identifies where the title, author's name and illustrator's name is located on the front cover.

- Understands print moves from left to right (they can show which way words are read).
- Understands what to do at the end of a line and the end of the page.
- Predicting story events while looking at the pictures before reading.

If a fictional story is being read to a child, follow the next sequence of activities to practice listening comprehension skills. Students will listen to a fictional story and be able to tell an adult the main characters, setting, and the main events of the story. This will include understanding what happened at the beginning, middle and the end of the story.

**Steps for reading a fiction book.**

1. Do a story walk by looking at the pictures and predicting story events.
2. Read the story asking questions while reading to check for understanding of the story.
3. After reading, discuss the characters, setting and main events
4. Ask student to explain their favorite part and why they liked it.

The steps for non-fiction book reading is very similar to fiction but instead of understanding the characters and plot. Students will explore facts about a topic and how they are related. For example, if a child is listening to a book explaining plants

need soil, air, water and sun light. The student needs to express in their own words what plants need to grow.

**Steps for reading a non-fiction book.**

1. Do a story walk by looking at the pictures and predict what the book is going to teach.
2. Read the book asking questions while reading to check their understanding of the book.
3. After reading ask the student to explain the main ideas about the topic.
4. Have student think about and explain how the main ideas are related.
5. Have student explain something new they learned from the book.

There are worksheets for each of the story writing practice areas included in the tool kit located at the end of this handbook. They are meant to be a quick review. Kindergarten students need help writing, so the volunteer will write the response to the story and the child will draw a picture to go with it. This will help students express their thoughts about the story without worrying about how to do the writing themselves. It is also good for them to see an adult model and discuss writing.



### **Foundational Skill Practice**

The second part of the training session will be foundational skill practice prescribed by the teacher. The literacy check-off sheet presented above lists the skills necessary for student growth. They may need to practice letter naming, sound identification phonemic awareness skills or sight word practice. Only chose a few letters and word flash cards at a time 8-10 alphabet and 5-6 sight words otherwise it may seem overwhelming. When using alphabet cards start with uppercase letters because they are easier for students to identify. “Ask what letter?” If the child doesn’t know tell them. Have them repeat the letter. Repeat this process when working on sounds using the lowercase flashcards.

Sight word practice is conducted using the following procedures: Ask the student to read the word. If they don’t know. Read it, spell it and read it again. Then ask the child to do the same. Once they have mastered each card, remove it from the pile and add new cards. Students enjoy playing games with the flash cards like Go Fish or Concentration.

Phonemic awareness skills are acquired as children play with words and sounds without print. They are foundational skills of pre-reading. The phonemic awareness skills kindergarteners learn are letter sounds, syllabication, recognizing and producing rhymes, blending and segmenting words and finally sound deletion and

substitution to make new words. The quick reference activity cards from the tool kit offer a variety of ideas for this part of the lessons.

### **Helping Community Members be Successful**

At the end of the training session for Community Volunteers, tutoring techniques will be modeled. The best learning will take place when the community member can see a book read while demonstrating good coaching practices using picture walks, vocabulary use, comprehension questioning while reading and story discussion after reading. Then the literacy tutor should practice reading a book with the instructor or a partner. This familiar book will be used with students during tutoring.

## Chapter 4

### The Tool Kit

Classrooms are very busy. Teachers are providing instruction to students, transitioning to different activities or helping small groups practice skills.

Communication with adults working in the room can be difficult. Literacy tutors have everything they need to work independently in the tool kit assembled by the classroom teacher. Each tutor will receive a basket or box and a place to keep it with all the materials needed to conduct a literacy session. Tutors should also have access to different book choices for the reading comprehension component. Each kit includes:

- school and tutoring procedures list,
- a tutoring check-off sheet for each student,
- the quick reference activity instruction cards,
- relationship forming activity sheets,
- story comprehension activity sheets,
- letter naming flashcards,
- a familiar story from the training.
- sight word flashcards,

- a classroom teacher/literacy tutor communication form.

**Reproducible Materials for the Literacy Tool Kit****Table 4: School and Tutoring Procedures Sheet**

School and Tutoring Procedures Sheet
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Always get a visitor's badge from the office before working with children.</li><li>2. Review the school calendar so community members know when breaks occur.</li><li>3. Be on time for literacy tutoring. Every class has a schedule, if a tutor is late, they may not be able to see all the children.</li><li>4. Tutors need to let the teacher know if they are going to be absent. If it is a planned absence inform the student. They enjoy meeting with tutors and look forward to it.</li><li>5. If a student is absent, the teacher should identify an alternative student who needs extra practice time. If the teacher cannot arrange the substitution with the tutor, the tutoring time should be split between the other two students.</li><li>6. Tutors will spend the first two weeks getting to know their students by learning their interests. What is their favorite TV show, game, animal or sport. These things can help in finding interesting books. Use the included worksheets for discussion prompts to help facilitate this process. When strong relationships are formed with the children, they will build trust and be willing to listen and learn more.</li><li>7. Watch the time in working with each student. There are only 20 minutes per student.</li></ol>

8. Regular routine is very important. Children perform better if they can predict what is going to happen.
9. Rewards can be great. Check with the teacher before giving out prizes to make sure it is appropriate. Be considerate of the other children's feelings because they notice when others get something.
10. It is inappropriate to exchange phone numbers or addresses with students.  
Community members should enjoy their time with the students during school time. It is not appropriate to communicate with children outside class.
11. Tutors will be working with students and learn about their personal and academic lives. It is important to remember the things learned about the students remain confidential and are not shared outside of school.
12. The classroom teacher is a mandated reporter. If a child shares any kind of emotional or physical abuse, report it immediately. School personnel are obligated by law to report abuse to the proper authorities.
13. Take some time to communicate with the child's teacher about how they are performing and any tutoring needs. It is important to share whether or not the students are cooperating during literacy time to maximize learning.  
Sometimes it can be difficult because the classroom teacher is working with other students. The communication form from the tool kit or a note might be the best way to correspond.



**Table 6: Quick Reference Activity Cards**

Tutoring Schedule	
I can learn many reading skills from listening to stories.	
1.	Read Story (15 minutes) -ask comprehension questions -discuss vocabulary words from story -model using concepts of print
2.	Focus on an additional skill from the student needs sheet. (5 minutes)
3.	Total time 20 minutes
Repeat for the next two students. If a student is absent, ask the teacher for an alternate student or split the time between the other students.	
Pick some interesting stories. Show the students 2 or 3 story choices and let them choose a book. Tutors can bring their own stories (with teacher approval) or ask the teacher for classroom books.	

Forming Relationships with Student Activity Pages	
I can learn about reading when I enjoy working with my literacy tutor.	
Learning Target: Students will build a positive relationship and trust to be able to learn the reading skills necessary master all the essential kindergarten standards.	
Spend the first 2 weeks forming relationships with your students. There are 4 student activity writing pages in the tool kit. Do one each day until they are completed. The tutor will write as the student illustrates each topic is discussed. Tutors will start reading stories on the 5 <sup>th</sup> visit.	
Topics:	
My Family	
My Pets	
My Favorite Activities	
My Favorite Books	
These activities will help volunteers learn student interests and form positive relationships to maximize learning. This should be a rewarding, fun time for students and tutors. Student really look forward to spending time with their tutors.	



### Concepts of Print

I can name the parts of a book.

Learning Target: Students will learn the parts of the book and understand how books work.

Identify the front and back cover.

Name and find the title of the story.

Understand the title is the name of the book.

Find the author's name and identify the authors job.

Find the illustrator's name and identify their job.

Understand print is read from left to right.

Understand what to do at the end of a line or page.

Predict what will happen in a story by looking at the front cover and illustrations.

### Reading Fictional Stories

I can make predictions about a story before I read.

Learning Target: Students will listen to a fictional story and be able to explain the main characters, setting, and main events of the story.

#### Steps for Reading

1. Do a story walk by looking at the pictures and predicting what the story will be about.
2. will be about.
3. Read the story asking questions while reading to check their understanding of the story.
4. understanding of the story.
5. After reading choose one of the following:
  - Talk about the main characters.
  - Talk about the setting
  - Talk about the main events.
  - Ask student to explain their favorite part.

This could be a conversation or use a story writing sheet.

### Reading Non-Fictional Books

I can name the main idea.

Learning Target: Students will listen to a non-fictional book and be able to explain the facts learned and how they are related. For example, if a child is listening to a book explaining that plants need soil, air, water and sun light. The student should express in their own words the key ideas of growing plants. and how the ideas are related. (Soil, air, water and sunlight help plants grow.)

#### Steps for Reading:

1. Do a story walk by looking at the pictures and making predictions.
2. Read the story asking questions to check understanding.
3. After reading, ask the student to name the main ideas about the topic.
4. With help, have the student explain how the main ideas are related.
5. Have student explain something learned from the book.

### Story Writing Practice

I can draw and write about stories.

Learning Target: With support, students will be able to write or dictate story details. They will also draw a picture to go with it.

Use the story writing worksheets with students to model writing and verbalize the student's understanding of stories read. Tutors will write student responses, modeling the writing process. It is important to talk about the conventions of writing. For example, there needs to be a discussion of spaces between words, capital letters and punctuation. Student responses should be reread so students can hear their responses. The student will illustrate the writing.

Letter and Sound Identification and Sight Word Practice

I can name uppercase and lowercase letters and their sounds.

I can read all my sight words.

Learning Target: Students will identify all the uppercase and lowercase letters in the alphabet, name each sound and read the grade level list of sight words.

Letter Naming – Start with uppercase because they are easier to identify. Select 8-10 letters to practice. Ask the student to name the letter. If they know the letter put it in one pile. If they do not identify the letter correctly, tell them the name and have the child repeat it to you. Put the letter in the more practice pile. Known letters they can be removed and then practice can focus on the unfamiliar letters again next time. After the student has mastered the uppercase then work on the lower case and finally the sounds using the same procedures.

Sight Word Naming: Select 5-6 sight words that have already been introduced (See the classroom word wall). If they know the word put it in one pile. If the child cannot read the word, say the word, spell the word, say the word again. Then have the student read, spell, read the word. Make a second pile of unfamiliar words to review next time.

Phonemic Awareness

Rhyming

I can recognize and produce rhyming words.

Learning Target: Students will be able to recognize and produce rhyming words.

For Example:

Recognizing Rhymes:

Ask child if the following sets of words rhyme.

Do ran and tan rhyme?

Do cat and mouse rhyme?

Do book and cook rhyme?

Do hat and bat rhyme?

Producing Rhymes:

Tell me a word that rhymes with rat.

(wet, bug, big, mop, tall, red, tan, tin, fun)

Their responses can be real words or made up words.

## Phonemic Awareness

## Syllabication

I clap and count the syllables in words.

- Learning Target: Students will be able to identify and count the syllables in a word.
- I often tell students it is the heart beat of a word. How many heart beats or syllables do you hear? Clap the syllables.

- Count the syllables in the word hot. (1)
- Count the syllables in the word popcorn. (2)
- Count the syllables in the word lion (2)
- Count the syllables in the word elephant. (3)
- Count the syllables in the word cup. (1)
- Count the syllables in the word umbrella. (3)
- Count the syllables in the word newspaper. (3)
- Count the syllables in the word pumpkin. (2)
- Count the syllables in the word pencil. (1)
- Count the syllables in the word dog. (1)

## Phonemic Awareness

## Sound Deletion

I can leave off sounds to make a new word.

- Learning Target: Students can leave off a part of a word (orally) and identify the new word.

Example:

- Say snowman. Take off the word snow. What is the new word? (man)
- Say weekday. Take off the word week. What is the new word? (day)
- Say the word homework. Take off the word work. What is the new word? (home)
- Say the word cannot. Take off the word can. What is the new word? (not)
- Say the word flashlight. Take off the word light. What is the new word? (flash)

Any compound word can be used.

Phonemic Awareness

Sound and Word Substitution

I can change sounds to make a new word.

Learning Target: Students can (orally) substitute a new beginning sound and identify the word.

Example:

Say kit. Change the “k” in kit to “b”. What is the new word? (bit)

Say dog. Change the “d” in dog to “l”. What is the new word? (log)

Say rake. Change the “r” in rake to “b”. What is the new word? (bake)

Say bug. Change the “b” in bug to “r”. What is the new word? (rug)

Say red. Change the “r” in red to “f”. What is the new word? (fed)

**Table 7: Relationship Building Activity Sheet #1**

My Family

**Table 8: Relationship Building Activity Sheet #2**

<p>My Pets</p>
<p>Tell me about your pets or a pet you wish you had.</p>
<hr/>
<hr/>
<hr/>

**Table 9: Relationship Building Activity Sheet # 3**

Favorite Activities
I like to
<hr/>
<hr/>
<hr/>



**Table 10: Relationship Building Activity Sheet #4**

My Favorite Books
My favorite books are
<hr/>
<hr/>
<hr/>

**Table 11: Fictional Story Comprehension Activity Sheet # 1**

I can name the characters in the story.
<hr/>
<hr/>
<hr/>

**Table 12: Fictional Story Comprehension Activity Sheet #2**

I can write and draw about the setting.
<hr/>
<hr/>
<hr/>

**Table 13: Fictional Story Comprehension Activity Sheet #3**

At the beginning of the story
<hr/>
<hr/>
<hr/>

**Table 14: Fictional Story Comprehension Activity Sheet #4**

In the middle of the story
<hr/>
<hr/>
<hr/>

**Table 15: Fictional Story Comprehension Activity Sheet #5**

At the end of the story
<hr/>
<hr/>
<hr/>

**Table 16: Fictional Story Comprehension Activity Sheet #6**

<p>My favorite part of the story was</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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**Table 17: Non-Fictional Story Comprehension Activity Sheet #7**

<p>Explain something you learned from the book.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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**Table 18: Uppercase Letter Naming Flashcards**

A	B	C
D	E	F
G	H	I

J	K	L
M	N	O
P	Q	R

S	T	U
V	W	X
Y	Z	

**Table 19: Lowercase Letter and Sound Naming Flashcards**

a	b	c
d	e	f
g	h	i

j	k	l
m	n	o
p	q	r

S	t	u
V	W	X
Z	y	

**Table 20: Sight Words Cards**

I	go
it	with
like	come
said	is
little	in
if	was

of	here
am	he
we	do
and	does
have	a
to	me



can	the
look	she
my	see
for	this
you	at

**Table 21: Classroom Teacher/Literacy Tutor Communication Form for Tool Kit**

<p>Classroom Teacher/Literacy Tutor Communication Form</p> <p>Literacy Tutor _____</p> <p>Students</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>1. How are the sessions going? Do you feel the students are doing well?</p> <p>2. How is student behavior? Are you concerned about anyone? Do you need help or suggestions?</p> <p>3. Do you need anything to help with Literacy Tutoring?</p> <p>4. Would a collaboration time outside of class be helpful?</p> <p>5. Is your tutoring time working?</p> <p>6. Other comments:</p>

## Chapter 5

### Monitoring Student Progress and Literacy Tutors

Teachers will be using common assessments to monitor student progress. The data from these tests will be reviewed in district, school and literacy tutor PLCs to determine if students are learning skills. These teams will evaluate if more literacy tutoring is necessary. Children who have mastered the letter naming, sound identification, sight word recognition and story comprehension no longer need extra practice and new students can receive the extra help from tutors.

Literacy tutors are included in the PLC process. It is critical to meet with volunteers to share how students are learning, discuss future goals and collaborate for future learning. Community members will reveal valuable information about students and new ideas to share with the teacher. The PLC will provide tutors a time to ask questions and learn more about helping the students they work with.

It is essential to discuss how literacy sessions are functioning and discovering ways to improve time spent with students. Make sure tutors have everything they need to conduct sessions. Ask questions like: “Are students cooperative and paying attention? Are the tutoring times working? Are there any questions about how to help students?” to help facilitate exploring any additional training needed.

Supplemental training may be needed to offer tips for handling student discipline, discuss appropriate rewards, and plan additional strategies and activities to help students

understand concepts of print and story comprehension, letter naming, letter sounds and phonemic awareness.

To promote the best learning communication between the teacher and community members it is necessary to spend time developing a positive relationship with trust. Use the communication form (table 4) at least once a month to monitor how tutoring is working. Include it in the tool kit and encourage volunteers to communicate any needs or ideas using the forms or informal communication as well as scheduling sufficient PLC time to provide collaboration time.

**Table 22: Classroom Teacher/Literacy Tutor Communication Form**

Classroom Teacher/Literacy Tutor Communication Form	
Literacy Tutor _____	
Students	
<hr/>	
<hr/>	
<hr/>	
1.	How are the sessions going? Are the students performing well?
2.	How is student behavior? Are you concerned about anyone?
3.	Do you need help or suggestions?
4.	Do you need anything to help with Literacy Tutoring?
5.	Would a collaboration time outside of class be helpful?
6.	Is your tutoring time working?
7.	Other comments:

