Closing the Literacy Gap:

A Whole School Approach to Prevention and Intervention

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Biography of Miriam Trehearne

Miriam Trehearne has been a classroom teacher, resource teacher, program specialist, and University Associate. Recently seconded from her position as Literacy Specialist with the Calgary Board of Education, Ms. Trehearne now devotes much of her time to researching literacy best practices, presenting to teachers, literacy professionals, and school administrators at conferences, and writing books and journal articles. A regular speaker at International Reading Association conferences since 2000, she was a Featured Speaker at the 49th Annual IRA Convention in Reno, Nevada in May, 2004 and at the World Congress of the IRA in Edinburgh, Scotland in July, 2002. Last year, she also presented at the Annual NAEYC conference and the Northeast Literacy Conference. In 2005, she keynoted at the 24th Annual ASCD Kindergarten Conference, the National ASCD Conference, and the Georgia Reading Conference. She will also present at the Annual IRA Convention in May 2005, where she will co-chair a one-day Institute with renown literacy expert Regie Routman.

Following the success of her first book published in the U.S., the Comprehensive Literacy Resource for Kindergarten Teachers (2003, ETA/Cuisenaire), Ms. Trehearne authored the Comprehensive Literacy Resource for Preschool Teachers (2004, ETA/Cuisenaire) and recently published her third volume, the Comprehensive Literacy Resource for Grades 1-2 Teachers (2005, ETA/Cuisenaire).
TITLE OF WORKSHOP:

Closing the Literacy Gap Using a Whole School Approach to Prevention and Intervention

"To be effective, schools and school systems must base educational decisions on evidence, not simply ideology."

- Reading Today, IRA, February / March 2001

Description of Workshop:

The Calgary Board of Education first implemented a research based comprehensive early literacy framework in 56 of its high needs schools in September 1998. Ongoing data collection has been used both to monitor programs and improve instruction. Formative and summative assessments (both qualitative and quantitative) are interpreted at the classroom, school and sometimes system level.

Assessments target:

- Teacher Beliefs / School Climate / Synergy
- School / Classroom Organisation
- Engaged Learning Time
- Materials
- Focussed Teaching (grounded in solid research)
- Ongoing Student Achievement (tied to clear standards and targets)
- Staff Development
- Parent Involvement / Satisfaction
- Early Intervention (K-2)
- Instructional Leadership

With ongoing research undertaken by the University of Calgary, it is clear that when schools adopt a common focus and receive support, using a researched based approach, and partner with parents, significant, even dramatic improvement is evident. Using both standardized assessments, informal assessments and ongoing focused kid watching, dramatic improvement in student literacy learning (K-3) across the schools is evident. These schools are successfully implementing a road map to successful literacy learning. The gap is closing. A plan for building and sustaining school capacity will be shared.
"While we must realize that children's homes and backgrounds influence failure or success, we must also realize that what happens in classrooms minute by minute, day after day, determines what and how much will be learned by how many children."

– Richard Allington
Balanced Literacy Programs + Early Intervention = Success for All

In May 1998 the Government of Alberta provided funds for school systems to begin an early literacy initiative focussed on children kindergarten through grade 2. The initiative, specifically targets students struggling in learning to read. Of the funding received under this initiative, a minimum of 85 percent must be used to employ additional human resources to support classroom teachers (K-2), and the remaining funding, up to 15 percent may be used for teacher in-service and to purchase early literacy resources. As a result of this initiative Alberta Education expects

- by the time children enter grade 3, they will be able to read well.
- children at risk will get the special help and attention they need so they can learn to read and get a good start on future education success.
- more children will meet the acceptable standards set by the language arts achievement tests at the grade three level.

Why the focus on early literacy and early intervention in Alberta, across Canada, and worldwide?

Rather, the question should be, why has it taken so long for there to be a focus on early literacy and early intervention?

- The research is very clear: Too many adults (more than 20 percent in Canada) are functionally illiterate. (Statistics Canada, 1996)

- In early grades success in school is virtually synonymous with success in reading. In fact, research has shown that a child’s reading level at the end of third grade is a more accurate predictor of school success than any other variable - including family income, educational attainment of parents, ethnic or cultural identity or home language. (Carter, L.F.)

- According to a study by Juel (1988), the probability that a child who is a poor reader at the end of Grade 1 will remain a poor reader at the end of Grade 4 is .88. There is a near 90% chance of remaining a poor reader after 3 years of schooling. Juel noted, "Children who did not develop good word recognition skills in first grade began to dislike reading and read considerably less than good readers both in and out of school." (Allington, R., 1998)

- It is estimated that 80 percent of the children who are identified as learning disabled have, as their predominant characteristic a serious problem in learning to read. However, there is an impressive growing body of evidence showing that many of these reading problems, which all too frequently become permanent are preventable, if provided with effective intervention early (kindergarten through third grade). (Pikulski, J., 1998)

- There is very little evidence that programs designed to correct reading problems beyond second grade are successful. (Pikulski, J., 1994) Remediating learning deficits after they are already well-established is extremely difficult. Clearly, the time to provide additional help to children who are at risk of school failure is early on, when they are still motivated and confident or when learning deficits are relatively small and remediable. (Madden, Slavin, et.al., 1991). Thus, the research around the work indicates that the "gap" in reading widens dramatically after first year and is hard to close. In an Australian study it was found that even by third grade, the learning gap was so large that for low achieving students, catching up with their peers (in reading) was virtually impossible. (Hill, Crevola, 1999)

- There is little doubt that failing to learn to read has many disadvantages beyond reading. Poor readers experience problems in many other aspects of education that likely will affect their self-concept. Reading problems have been linked with emotional problems, school dropout and criminal behavior. (Julisbo, Norman, and Malicky, 1989)
How can school systems most effectively support their at-risk readers?

Research on early intervention suggests that there is no magic bullet, no program that administered for one or two years, will ensure the success of all at-risk students throughout their careers and beyond. (Slavin, et.al., 1993, p.16) To produce substantial and lasting gains, early intervention programs must be supported and followed by high quality literacy curriculum and instruction. (Research Speaks to teachers, Vol. 27, #4) That is, intensive early intervention programs coupled with long-term improvements in curriculum and instruction can prevent school failure for nearly all students. (Slavin, et.al., 1993) What schools need is a comprehensive early literacy program, which involves balanced literacy instruction: good first teaching, on-going professional development, parent involvement, and early intervention for students at risk. (Pinnell & Fountas, 1996) There will always be some students struggling in early reading even with early intervention, but with improved first teaching there will be fewer students needing intervention. A good school is a collection of good classrooms. Good classrooms have good teachers. (Allington, R., 1997) Thus, on-going development for all K-2 teachers is necessary, proactive work which should help all students to be more successful, earlier.

What effective early literacy instruction looks like:

• Beliefs - Teachers' beliefs are crucial to student success. "Until teachers and administrators believe that all children can become proficient readers and writers it is unlikely that efforts to create extraordinary instructional programs will be sustained." (Allington, R., 1996) Teachers must also believe that their role is key to reading development and that they can and must create the opportunities. Children are least successful in schools where teachers lack confidence in their own efforts to help children become readers and writers. (Allington, R., 1996)

• Time - Across virtually every study of classroom effectiveness in elementary schools, one finding stands out. That is, teachers who allocate more time to reading and language arts are the teachers whose children show the greatest gains in literacy development. (Allington, R., 1996) Long blocks of time are most beneficial.

Engagement - The amount of time students are truly engaged in learning is the most potent predictor of literacy learning. Task difficulty and task interest largely determine engagement (Allington, R., 1996)

• Teaching - Students need more structured modeling, demonstrating, and coaching, and less assigning. (Allington, R., 1996) This teaching involves much work with flexible groupings of students based on student need/interest.

• Materials - A print-rich environment is crucial. Students need to read a variety of books, representative of many different difficulty levels and genres. Children in classrooms with library centres read about 50% more books than children in classrooms without such centres. (Allington, R., 1996)

• Balanced Literacy Programs - such programs involve a wide variety of activities provided consistently. These activities include reading/writing to/for children; reading/writing with children; reading/writing by children; visual literacy; oral language and numerous forms of representing knowledge/understandings.

• Home/School/Community Partnerships - When parents, caregivers, and communities support the work of schools, students make greater progress. (Hill, Crevola, 1999) These partnerships are not always easy to establish or maintain, but are very important.

You never judge a system by those who succeed in it. Those people will likely succeed in any system. You judge it by those it fails. Harold Rosen
Essential elements of effective early reading intervention programs

- Daily (at least 30 minutes) individual or very small group instruction is essential. Some children will definitely require one-to-one tutoring. A verified (proven) model of early intervention should be used.
- Intervention is most profitably focussed on students in first grade.
- Texts for early intervention programs should be interesting engaging and "just right" so that students are successful daily.
- Repeated reading of the same text is crucial.
- Instruction must focus student attention on words, letters, phonemic awareness, phonics, and word patterns.
- Writing is important.
- On-going assessment that monitors student progress and directs instruction is necessary.
- Communication between home/school with daily reading at home is strongly encouraged. Parents must be shown effective strategies to use with their children.
- On-going professional development for intervention teachers is integral to the program. Teachers must know how best to support struggling readers. (Pikulski, J., 1994; Snow, C., et al., 1998)

Has the early literacy initiative made a difference to Alberta students?

The Initiative has made a difference to many Alberta students but the degree of effectiveness depends upon specific program implementation. To be effective, schools and school systems must base educational decisions on evidence, not simply ideology. (Reading Today, IRA, February/March 2001) Pendulum swings (the latest flavor of the month) can disenfranchise students. A verified model of early intervention (K-2) coupled with ongoing effective first teaching must be used in every classroom. Schools must make literacy the top of the agenda and be relentless in working in this area. Ongoing staff development through workshops, networks, and visiting other classrooms is crucial. Schools involved must adopt a whole-school approach to early literacy. Pockets of excellence do not create effective schools. Parents must be involved and supported. Harold Rosen, former chair of the Department of English - London University stated: "You never judge a system by those who succeed in it. Those people will likely succeed in any system. You judge it by those it fails." (Hamilton, S., 1995) In our culture, a child who is eight years old and not a reader is a child in deep trouble at school. (McGill-Franzen, A., 1992) Through this initiative we have seen fewer students "failing" in learning to read, resulting in more who are not only able to read by age eight, but also choose to do so.

Bibliography


Research Speaks to Teachers Enhancing Early Literacy, Vol. 27, No. 4, 1993.

Reading Today, IRA, February/March 2001


The document calls on educators and policy makers to take the following steps:

- Base educational decisions on evidence, not ideology.
- Promote adoption of texts based on the evidence of what works.
- Provide adequate professional development.
- Promote whole-school adoption of effective methods.
- Involve parents in support of their children’s reading.
- Provide early childhood experiences that promote literacy.
- Improve preservice education and instruction.
- Provide additional staff for tutoring and class-size reduction.
- Improve early identification and intervention.
- Introduce accountability measures for the early grades.
- Intensify reading research.

The Learning First Alliance:
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, the American Association of School Administrators, the American Federation of Teachers, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Education Commission of the States, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Education Association, the National PTA, and the National School Boards Association.

Reading Today
International Reading Association
February/March 2001
In considering any innovation, educational leaders need to know:

- Does existing research indicate that the program has been effective in other settings?
- Is the program appropriate for the specific needs and conditions in our community?
- What must we do to implement the program successfully?

Ten Promising Programs for Educating All Children: Evidence of Impact
Effective School Reading Programs

Common Characteristics:

- a school wide emphasis on reading and literacy
- strong administrative support for reading
- parent and often community involvement
- an emphasis on having students reading for fun and for practical purposes
- a balanced approach to literacy instruction
- a good supply of books available for students to read for pleasure
- an expectation of success for all students

– from Reading Today (IRA)
Schools working with whole-school reform tend to have more impact on student learning than do schools attempting various pull-out programs.

Students' total program of reading instruction should be considered when planning for early intervention. Tutoring and extra time pull-out programs certainly can be effective; however, for maximum impact, early intervention programs should try to ensure that students are receiving excellent and coordinated instruction both in their classrooms and in the special intervention programs.

—John Pikulski
Preventing Reading Failure:
A review of Five Effective Programs from:
Of the schools observed during the first through third grades, schools using externally developed designs tend to achieve more consistent implementation than do locally developed programs.

Figure 2. Design elements of a general model of school improvement (Hill & Crévola, 1997)
Effective Early Literacy Instruction

Depends upon:
- Beliefs
- Time
- Engagement
- Teaching
- Materials
- Balanced Literacy Programs
- Home/School/Community Partnerships
- Early Intervention (K-2)
TIME (Quantity and Quality)

Based on your timetable for this year (please attach copy) consider:

- how many minutes per day are allocated to language arts

- what activities are done as a:
  
  whole class:

  small group:

  partner or one-on-one:

  individuals:

- specifically when is language arts blocked in the day and what is the longest uninterrupted block

- approximately how many minutes daily (during L.A.) are the students reading and writing

- are all components of a balanced literacy schedule incorporated daily

- approximately how many minutes daily are spent on modeling, demonstrating and explaining
CLASSROOMS IN THE STUDY

High Academic Engagement and Competence

Most students (e.g., 90%) are engaged in things academic most of the time (e.g., 90%). **++
There is very little misbehavior. **++
There is lots of on-task student talking. **++
Students often keep working right into recess time. ++
By the end of the year, most student writing includes multiple sentences. There is use of important conventions, such as capitals at the beginning of sentences and punctuation marks at the end of sentences. **++
By the end of the year, most students are reading books that should be expected of end-of-first-grade readers. **++

Excellent Classroom Management

There are clear rules and expectations. **+
Much teacher planning is evident in instruction. **++
Tasks that are assigned are designed so students spend much more time on academically demanding subtasks than non-demanding ones (e.g., on a writing and illustrating task, students spend the majority of time on the composing activity not the illustrating). **++
The teacher carefully coordinates with aides and special teachers to assure that the curriculum integrity is maintained—that is, everyone working with students focuses on skills, strategies, and tasks that are emphasized in the classroom instruction. **++

Positive, Reinforcing, Cooperative Environment

There is a consistent positive tone in the classroom. **+
There is a great deal of positive reinforcement for achievement. **+
Students are encouraged to work cooperatively with one another as part of reading and writing—and do so (e.g., buddy reading, buddy writing). **
When discipline occurs, it is handled gently but firmly with minimal disruption to the class. **+

Explicit Teaching of Skills (i.e., word-level, comprehension, writing skills)

Skills are taught exclusively or predominantly in the context of actual reading and writing tasks. **
Teacher explicitly and saliently models many of the activities students are asked to do. **
There is explicit teaching of word recognition skills. **
Students are taught to use multiple cues (i.e., phonics, word parts, looking at the whole word, picture clues, other semantic context clues, syntactic clues) as part of word recognition. **++
There are explicit activities around common word patterns (i.e., word families—such as generating as many of the -all words as possible or as many of the -at words as possible). **
The teacher makes use of Pat Cunningham’s (1994) “making-words” approach. **

From: The Nature of Effective First-Grade Literacy Instruction
Michael Pressley; Ruth Wharton-McDonald; Richard Allington; Cathy Collins Block; Lesley
APPENDIX B: CHARACTERISTICS THAT DIFFERENTIATE THE MOST-EFFECTIVE-FOR-LOCHE CLASSROOMS IN THE STUDY

Explicit Teaching of Skills (continued)

Students are expected to identify new words in books that they read. **†

There are many words posted on the wall of the room—large enough so students can see them easily. *‡

Teacher makes reference to classroom resources that can assist in spelling (e.g., easel displays and charts with words on them). *†

There is explicit teaching of comprehension skills (e.g., making predictions, construction of mental images, summarizing, looking for story grammar elements to understand a story). **††

Students are taught to plan, draft, and then revise. Sometimes this results in publication of the final product. **††

There is a great deal of opportunistic teaching/reteaching of skills—for example, word recognition strategies are cued and reviewed (phonics, use of rime and onset, reminding students of sight words) when students encounter difficulties in decoding; also, spelling strategies are cued when students are having difficulties writing a word in a composition. **†

When explicit teaching and opportunistic teaching are combined, often there are many skills (10-20) covered during every hour of literacy time in the classroom. **††

Stronger students especially are encouraged to model for weaker students. *†

When the students publish their books, they input them themselves on a computer. *†

Literature Emphasis

The teacher reads outstanding literature to the class. **†

There is use of Story Box, Sunshine, and similar natural language beginning reading texts. **†

There are author studies—that is, particular authors are highlighted, with a number of the author's books read to/by the class. *†

Much Reading and Writing

There are large blocks of time for language arts (i.e., 45 minutes or more). **†

One-on-one reading in the classroom occurs with an adult other than the teacher (e.g., parent volunteer). *†

Students frequently read aloud to other students. *†

Students do buddy reading. **†

There are many easy-to-read books available for students to read. *†

Student writing is prominently displayed in the room. *†

There are "big books" that the class has written. **††
Appendix B: Characteristics That Differentiate the Most-Effective-For-Locale Classrooms in the Study

Match of Accelerating Demands to Student Competence, with a Great Deal of Scaffolding

There are high, but realistic expectations. **†

The teacher consistently encourages students to try more challenging tasks, but ones that are not too challenging. (That is, the teacher structures tasks and makes assignments to assure student success.) **†

The teacher heavily scaffolds students use of skills—monitoring when they need them and are not using them, providing prompts for them to do so on an as-needed basis. *†

There is extensive scaffolding of reading (especially word recognition), with the teacher encouraging use of decoding strategies. **†

There are editing sheets and cue cards for the writing processes—for example, a card providing hints about what needs to be checked during revision. **††

One-on-one teacher writing conferences are part of the revision process. **†

The teacher gradually and steadily increases the writing demands as the year progresses—in terms of length, use of conventions, etc. **†

By the end of the year there are high demands on most students with respect to use of conventions—for example, capitalizing sentences, ending sentences with punctuation marks, spelling high frequency words correctly. **††

There are high demands with respect to spelling during writing—that is, correct spelling of high frequency words expected, reasonable invented spellings are expected for lower frequency words, and some use of a dictionary to check spellings is expected. **††

Encouragement of Self-Regulation

The teacher explicitly teaches children to self-regulate. **††

Teacher does not so much cue use of particular skills at a particular moment but rather emphasizes that students should choose appropriate skills to be applied as they do the task in question. *†

Students are taught to check their writing to determine if their use of conventions (i.e., capitalization, punctuation, spelling) is correct. **†

Teacher teaches students strategies for selecting a book (e.g., count number of words not known at the beginning of the book; if it does exceed 5, book is probably too difficult). *†

The teacher expects/demands that students work to their capacity—and does not accept work from them that is not at their capacity. *†

Strong Connections across the Curriculum

Students encouraged to use/have opportunities to use the skills they are learning across the school day. **†

There are extensive across-curriculum connections—that is, reading and writing often relate to and are in the context of social studies and science themes. **†

Vocabulary words taught are driven by what students are reading. **†
APPENDIX B: CHARACTERISTICS THAT DIFFERENTIATE THE MOST-EFFECTIVE-FOR-LOCALE CLASSROOMS IN THE STUDY

Strong Connections across the Curriculum

The thematic unit drives much of what is read by students. **†

Thematic units drive much of writing. **†

Students often write in response to literature—that is, there is a clear integration of reading and writing instruction. **†

Writing occurs in the context of science/social studies instruction. **†

Note: Single-starred (*) items were noted in 4 of 5 most effective-for-locale classrooms. Double-starred (**) items were noted in all 5 of the most effective-for-locale classrooms. Single-crossed items (†) were cited as more characteristic of most effective—compared to least effective-for-locale classrooms for 4 of 5 locales. Double-crossed (‡‡) items were cited as more characteristic of most-effective-for-locale compared to worst-for-locale classrooms at all 5 locales.
Programs identified as effective for school-wide reform have been strong, structured instructional programs that specify the skills and knowledge to be acquired and use frequent assessment.

Jeanne S. Chall, 2000, page 184
# Clear Benchmarks

**Kindergarten - Print Awareness, Phonological Awareness, Oral Language**

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<th>DRA</th>
<th>PM Benchmark</th>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>End</td>
<td>28</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Literacy Learning in Kindergarten: What is Developmentally Appropriate
Learning to Read and Write: What is Developmentally Appropriate

Miriam P. Trehearne
Literacy Consultant

Teachers want to know:

- What is the role of literacy learning in kindergarten
- How they can best support student literacy in order to meet the needs of all students.

The field of education is notorious for pendulum swings. Instead of following the latest “flavour of the month” teachers must base educational decisions on evidence (research) not simply ideology. And, it is what teachers do or don’t do that really makes the difference.

What the Research Tells Us

Literacy learning in kindergarten is extremely important, for school systems have a small window of opportunity (K-2) in which to get students off to a strong start. According to a study by Connie Juel (1988), the probability that a child who is a poor reader at the end of grade 1 will remain a poor reader at the end of grade 4 is 88% (Allington R., 1998).

In an Australian study it was found that even by third grade, the learning gap was so large that for low achieving students, catching up with their peers (in reading) was virtually impossible (Hilli, Crevola, 1999). And, “there is very little evidence that programs designed to correct reading problems beyond second grade are successful” (Pikulski, J., 1998). Literacy development begins at birth. “Although it may seem as though some children acquire these understandings magically or on their own, studies suggest that they are the beneficiaries of considerable, though playful and informal, adult guidance and instruction. The ability to read and write does not develop naturally without careful planning and instruction.” (IRA, NAEYC, 1998). And, “the place to start early intervention programs is kindergarten, not first grade.” (Pikulski, J., 1997).

Developmentally Appropriate

The terms “developmentally appropriate” or “developmentally appropriate practice” have become buzzwords. Like the terms whole language and balanced literacy, these terms are often used with reverence, as if common understandings are shared by all. In order to bring some clarity to the term “developmentally appropriate”, the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) defined developmentally appropriate as “goals and expectations for young children’s reading and writing, which are challenging but achievable with sufficient adult support.” (IRA, NAEYC, 1998). Unfortunately, developmental appropriateness has frequently been interpreted to mean that reading and writing are “academic skills” that do not belong in child-centred early childhood programs and that there is no role for adult modeling or teaching in so-called “active” learning environments. This long tradition of stress on the importance of child activity, child interest and self-discovery has caused some early childhood teachers to fail to pay attention to research and theory on instructional practice that can be found in the emergent literacy literature. “We will not have done our best for young children if we deny them the path to learning they seek through play, but we also will not have done our best if we fail to provide instruction. As much as it is true that young children play and discover many things on their own, it is also true that children need adult assistance or guidance.” (Schickedanz, J., 1994).
Literacy Goals and Skills

Literacy Goals in Kindergarten

"Two goals are paramount:

- The first is to ensure that students leave kindergarten familiar with the structural elements and organization of print. By the end of kindergarten, students should be familiar with the forms and format of books and other print resources and be able to recognize and write most of the alphabet; they should also have some basic phonemic awareness— that is, the understanding of the segmentability of spoken words into smaller units.

- The second major goal of kindergarten is to establish perspectives and attitudes on which learning about and from print depend; it includes motivating students to be literate and making them feel like successful learners." (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998)

Literacy Skills in Kindergarten

Students excel as they:

- develop both a rich vocabulary and a deep understanding of many concepts and language structures. Developing reasoning, creative/critical thinking, and inquiry skills is crucial.

- learn that written language is a system for representing oral language.

- learn the concepts about print (e.g., directionality, concept of letter, word) and the concepts about books (e.g., purpose of book, book features.)

- learn that speech can be segmented into small units of sound, and learn how to play with language (phonological awareness.)

- learn to recognize letters and their corresponding sounds.

- learn how to print most letters (when provided with letter names, sounds, pictures, or keywords) and a few words (using invented spelling.)

- recognize their own names in print and a few other familiar and high-frequency words.

- are able to listen to and understand stories and informational books. Retellings must include important information or ideas.

- begin to see themselves as readers and writers.
“Too many preschool and kindergarten teachers, perceiving themselves as advocates of developmentally appropriate practice, fear pushing children too much academically and fail to teach them the knowledge and skills they need.”

(Bredekamp, 1997)


Parent Involvement

Research shows that the home plays a key role in emergent literacy. The most important implication for kindergarten teachers is to help parents embed literacy into their families’ everyday lives. (Sulzby and Teale, 1991).

Teachers can help by sharing with parents what has been learned from the work of Delores Durkin (1966), who studied the home environments of many youngsters who learned to read before coming to school. She found that these students received an average of 1000-1500 hours of enjoyable preschool literacy experiences. Many occurred daily and were spontaneous, often taking less than a minute. They were simply part of living. These experiences included:

- Reading and discussing story books frequently
- Teaching letters and sounds, both spontaneously and intentionally
- Teaching “sight words,” both high-frequency words and words of personal significance (e.g., one’s name)
- Providing help based on the child’s questions and requests for assistance
- Making rhymes with words
- Participating in reading-related activities (e.g., magnetic letters on fridge, writing a letter, baking etc.)
- Listening to the child “reading”
- Enjoying family literacy activities “on the run” (e.g., reading signs)
- Providing direct instruction (information and explanations)

Parents need more than “read to your child.” Observation surveys, such as My Child as a Literacy Learner, help parents to more effectively monitor and support progress:
My Child as a Literacy Learner  
Observation Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Child (Name):</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Speaks so others can understand him or her</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Is able to follow oral directions</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Likes to be read to</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Knows how to open a book</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Knows where to start reading on a page</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Understands what is read aloud to him or her</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. &quot;reads&quot; to me using pictures/story</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Can follow along by pointing</td>
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<td>9. Understands what a word/letter is</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Recognizes and names most letters</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Recognizes his or her name, some environmental print, other words</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Can recognize a rhyme</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Can create a rhyming word</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Can blend the sounds in a word (e.g., c-at = cat)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Draws pictures and writes some letters</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Can print his or her name</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Knows the first/last sound in a word (e.g., &quot;c&quot; in cat; &quot;t&quot; in cat)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Can copy some words/letters</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Writes using invented spelling (e.g., dg for dog; gt for gate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Can talk about what he or she wrote</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Chooses to look at books alone or with a partner</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Chooses to &quot;write&quot; for fun or a purpose</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Likes to &quot;read&quot; to me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Joins in group conversations</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further Observations:


Early Intervention for Students At-Risk

"Recently constructed instructional interventions in kindergarten and first grade have improved children's later reading." (Mason & Sinha, 1993)

Children who have not benefited from numerous preschool literacy experiences (minimum of 1000 hours) are frequently at risk, and even those who have such experiences may still struggle. In fact, approximately 20 percent of students have some difficulty with phonological awareness, with about 7 to 10 percent experiencing substantial difficulty.

According to the international Reading Association "Approximately 20 percent of students have not achieved phonemic awareness by the middle of grade 1. The research on this statistic is as clear as it is alarming. The likelihood of these students becoming successful readers is slim under current instructional plans. We felt that we can reduce this figure through the early identification of students who are outside the norms of progress in phonemic awareness development and through the offering of intensive programs of instruction." (IRA, 1998).
"The concept 'developmentally appropriate' should not suggest delaying intervention but using appropriate instructional strategies at an early age – especially in kindergarten." (Centre for the Future of Teaching and Learning 1995) Waiting for the student to "flower" (mature) by providing "the gift of time" will not provide the support needed.

Intervention programs are not intended to replace effective ongoing literacy instruction. Before designing an intervention program, it is important to examine literacy in the kindergarten program, across the day. "Most students’ reading and writing development can be accelerated if schools are reorganized and resources are used to create programs that provide students with instruction of sufficient quantity and quality." (Allington & Cunningham, 1996). However, even with strong literacy programs, some kindergarten students will need intervention in one or all of the three major areas.

- Print awareness
- Phonological awareness
- Oral language

This 15-30 minute daily (one-on-one and/or small group) intervention supports and complements the effective classroom program.

### Essential Elements of Effective Kindergarten Literacy Intervention Programs

Intervention programs support and complement effective classroom programs:

- They generally occur on a daily basis (15-30 minutes)
- They involve working with individuals or small groups of six or less. These groups change depending upon the needs of students.
- They involve more time in "reading" (shared, partner, and independent), writing, and phonological awareness activities.
- They involve spending more time in direct teaching – teacher modeling, explaining, and demonstrating what reading and writing are about. "All children benefit from instruction, but some need incredible amounts of careful, personal instruction – usually clear and repeated demonstrations of how readers and writers go about reading and writing." (Allington and Cunningham 1996).
- They provide opportunities for students to apply immediately the strategies that have been shared.
- They involve repeated "reading" of the same text (e.g., chart, Big Book)
- They provide daily, ongoing assessments that drive instruction, generally in the areas of print awareness, phonological awareness, and oral language.
- They involve frequent home communication that helps parents to understand specifically how they can support their children at home. (see Chapter 6: Linking Home and School).


### Literacy across the Kindergarten Day

Kindergarten teachers can make a monumental difference to student literacy learning, and even our most at-risk students can be very successful with the right kindergarten environment and sufficient support. Educators and parents working together have a small window of opportunity (kindergarten to grade two) in which to support strong early literacy skill development. Being child-centred and activity-centred, although important, is not enough nor is simply immersing students in a print-rich environment. Classroom activities based on kindergarten literacy goals must intentionally promote literacy throughout the day, and teachers, parents, paraprofessionals, volunteers, and buddies must demonstrate model, and explain the strategies that effective readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and viewers use.

Students must be provided with the opportunities to apply the strategies they are taught by doing interesting activities that make sense to them because they learn best when they see a specific purpose for what they are doing. By using materials and activities that are "just right" for them, and through linking home and school, literacy becomes embedded in students' everyday lives in both settings. Students in kindergarten and beyond construct knowledge, but they also need direct teaching. The two are not mutually exclusive. Teachers must make use of those spontaneous experiences or "teachable moments," but they must also plan intentional
literacy experiences in all areas of the curriculum – math, art, science, social studies, and gym. All literacy experiences need to focus on the three crucial areas:

- Print awareness
- Phonological awareness
- Oral language

Effective kindergarten classrooms replicate strong home environments by encouraging students to engage actively in storybook, writing, and play experiences, with support. "A balanced developmentally appropriate language and literacy curriculum is not only beneficial but perhaps crucial in these early years." (Neuman, Susan B., 1998)

As Anne McGill-Franzen states, "I believe that reading and writing do belong in the pre-school – absolutely massive amounts of playful and even raucous literacy activities. Ditto for kindergarten and first grade." (Teale, William H., 1995) Students will become literate if their teachers, beginning in kindergarten, use a balanced approach and provide the appropriate conditions to make it happen.

"Research consistently points to the importance of ensuring that children enter first grade with the attitudes and knowledge about literacy that will enable them to succeed in learning to read. A strong message is that a priority mission of every school district should be to provide good kindergarten literacy to all children."

(Snow, Burns, Griffin, 1998)
Bibliography


Pikulski, John J. “Reading and Writing in Kindergarten: Developmentally Appropriate” *Reading Today* August-September 1997: 24


LANGUAGE ARTS ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTION

Consider:

1. which specific assessment tools you now use and why you use them (i.e. what they tell you)

2. how you develop a program based on the results of your assessment

3. how you share the assessment/instruction information with others (parents, students, other teachers)
Assessments Which Drive Instruction

- Standardized assessments
- Informal assessments
- Ongoing focused kid watching
**Phonological Awareness Checklist**

Name: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Teacher: _________________________ School: _________________________

*Transfer all results from Blackline Master 1, on pages 157-63, onto this checklist.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Most of the Time</th>
<th>Some of the Time</th>
<th>Not Yet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word Awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claps out words in sentences (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracks print accurately (voice-print match) (2)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leaves spaces between words in writing (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syllable Awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Claps out syllables in one- to three-syllable words (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blends words presented in syllable segments (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhyme Awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes when two words rhyme (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Produces rhyming words (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blends onset and rime (8)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Segments onset and rime (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sound Awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matches words that begin with the same sound (10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matches words that end with the same sound (10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifies the first sound in a word (11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifies the last sound in a word (11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blends two sounds to make a word (12)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blends three sounds to make a word (12)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segments two sounds in a word (13)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segments three sounds in a word (13)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deletes a sound to make a new word (14)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Yopp—Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation

Name: ___________________________ Date: __________

Teacher: _________________________ School: _______________________

Score (number correct) ________________________

Before using this assessment, be sure that the student has had many opportunities to engage in literacy and classroom activities that promote an understanding of phoneme segmentation. Feedback is given to the student as he or she progresses through the list. If the student responds correctly, the examiner nods or says "That's right." If the student gives an incorrect response, the examiner models the correct response.

Although teachers may find a wide range of scores on this test, by January of the kindergarten year, students who have had specific practice in phoneme segmentation will normally be able to answer approximately 12 items correctly. Students who correctly segment some items are displaying emergent phonemic awareness. Students who are able to segment only a few items or none at all lack appropriate levels of phonemic awareness and will likely need further support. (See Chapter 5: Early Intervention for Students At Risk.)

This test has a reliability of .95, making it very reliable.

Directions: Today we're going to play a word game. I'm going to say a word and I want you to break the word apart. You are going to tell me each sound in the word in order. For example, if I say "old," you should say /o/-/l/-/d/" (Administrator: Be sure to say the sounds, not the letters, in the word.) Let's try a few together.

Practice items: (Assist the child in segmenting these items, as necessary.) ride, go, man

Test items: (Circle those items that the student correctly segments; incorrect responses may be recorded on the blank line following the item.)

1. dog
2. keep
3. fine
4. no
5. she
6. wave
7. grew
8. that
9. red
10. me
11. sat
12. lay
13. race
14. zoo
15. three
16. job
17. in
18. ice
19. at
20. top
21. by
22. do

"No Excuses" Spelling Words for Grade 1

We know how to spell

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>h</th>
<th>i</th>
<th>o</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>w</th>
<th>y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>be</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>had</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>of</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>was</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>*he</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>the</td>
<td>with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are</td>
<td>his</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>or</td>
<td>they</td>
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<td>as</td>
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<td>at</td>
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</table>

* If we know he then we know she.
"No Excuses" Spelling Words for Grade 2

We know how to spell

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>27.</td>
<td>don’t</td>
<td>53.</td>
<td>make</td>
<td>79.</td>
<td>their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>about</td>
<td>28.</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>54.</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>80.</td>
<td>them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>after</td>
<td>29.</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>55.</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>81.</td>
<td>then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>30.</td>
<td>get</td>
<td>56.</td>
<td>mother</td>
<td>82.</td>
<td>there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>am</td>
<td>31.</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>57.</td>
<td>my</td>
<td>83.</td>
<td>they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>an</td>
<td>32.</td>
<td>going</td>
<td>58.</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>84.</td>
<td>this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>33.</td>
<td>had</td>
<td>59.</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>85.</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>are</td>
<td>34.</td>
<td>has</td>
<td>60.</td>
<td>now</td>
<td>86.</td>
<td>too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>35.</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>61.</td>
<td>of</td>
<td>87.</td>
<td>two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>asked</td>
<td>36.</td>
<td>he</td>
<td>62.</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>88.</td>
<td>up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>37.</td>
<td>her</td>
<td>63.</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>89.</td>
<td>us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>away</td>
<td>38.</td>
<td>here</td>
<td>64.</td>
<td>or</td>
<td>90.</td>
<td>very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>back</td>
<td>39.</td>
<td>him</td>
<td>65.</td>
<td>our</td>
<td>91.</td>
<td>was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>be</td>
<td>40.</td>
<td>his</td>
<td>66.</td>
<td>out</td>
<td>92.</td>
<td>we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>because</td>
<td>41.</td>
<td>how</td>
<td>67.</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>93.</td>
<td>went</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>before</td>
<td>42.</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>68.</td>
<td>play</td>
<td>94.</td>
<td>were</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>big</td>
<td>43.</td>
<td>if</td>
<td>69.</td>
<td>put</td>
<td>95.</td>
<td>what</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>44.</td>
<td>I’m</td>
<td>70.</td>
<td>said</td>
<td>96.</td>
<td>when</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>45.</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>71.</td>
<td>saw</td>
<td>97.</td>
<td>where</td>
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<td>came</td>
<td>46.</td>
<td>into</td>
<td>72.</td>
<td>see</td>
<td>98.</td>
<td>who</td>
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<td>can</td>
<td>47.</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>73.</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>99.</td>
<td>will</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>come</td>
<td>48.</td>
<td>it</td>
<td>74.</td>
<td>so</td>
<td>100.</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>could</td>
<td>49.</td>
<td>just</td>
<td>75.</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>101.</td>
<td>would</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>day</td>
<td>50.</td>
<td>like</td>
<td>76.</td>
<td>than</td>
<td>102.</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>did</td>
<td>51.</td>
<td>little</td>
<td>77.</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>103.</td>
<td>your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>52.</td>
<td>look</td>
<td>78.</td>
<td>the</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ideas:

Organization:

Voice:

Word choice:

Sentence Fluency:

Conventions & Creative Layout:
Components of a Student's Balanced Literacy Program

Shared Reading
The teacher involves students in reading together using an enlarged text. Reading and rereading often includes big books and charts such as language experience and interactive writing.

Read Aloud
The teacher reads aloud to the whole class or small groups. A variety of genres are selected. Favourites are often reread.

Guided Reading
The teacher works with a small group of students. The groupings are flexible based on common needs and/or interests. There is a specific purpose and teaching element for each lesson. The teacher introduces and selects text that is at an instructional level. The students read the text to themselves. The teacher supports students during and after the reading.
- ✓ requires multiple copies of a text
- ✓ a new, unseen text
- ✓ opportunities to read and reread the text
- ✓ opportunities to discuss the text

Independent Reading
Students read on their own or with a partner choosing from a wide range of materials, genres. Most of their independent reading should involve materials at their independent reading levels.
- ✓ book bags/tubs
- ✓ students know where they can find just right books

Modeled Writing/Write Aloud
The teacher holds the pen and writes in front of the students, verbalizing his/her thought processes as well as what is being written. The students are the observers.

Shared Writing
This is a shared construction of text. The teacher and students compose the text together. The teacher is the scribe and can negotiate vocabulary, clarify or revise ideas so that the students can read back writing independently. Language experience is a form of shared writing.

Independent Literacy Activities
Students are engaged in a variety of activities involving reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing and representing.

Guided Writing
Students engage in a variety of writing text forms. Mini-lessons are provided to demonstrate the process of writing including composing, drafting, and editing. Like a guided reading lesson, the teacher provides instruction to small groups of children on various aspects of writing.

Interactive Writing
As in shared writing, teacher and students compose the message or story. The teacher is the scribe and strategically shares the pen with the student.

Word Work
Word work involves working with words, letters and sounds. This supports students in understanding/acquiring:
- ✓ knowledge of an ever increasing core of words
- ✓ knowledge of patterns that occur in words
- ✓ knowledge of strategies for solving words

Oral Language
Students are provided with strategies/experiences to enhance both speaking and listening including the development of phonological awareness, often through rhyme, rhythm and song.

Independent Writing
The students write independently using a variety of forms for different purposes. Students may write lists, letters, and journals.
Ask Yourself

How much time do children spend reading extended text at an appropriate level?

How much time do I spend on individual conference, whole class instruction, guided reading lessons?

How do I determine flexible groupings?

How do I determine what strategies need to be taught?

How do I select the reading materials for classroom use?
Characteristics of Successful Intervention Programs

- One-on-one and small-group tutoring.
- Individual attention and extra instructional time.
- Coordination with regular classroom instruction.
- Explicit instruction in letter-sound relationships, word identification strategies, phonological awareness, letters, words, and word patterns (Grossen, 1997).
- Repeated exposure to words to encourage mastery and the presentation of words in small practice sets to provide scaffolding for struggling readers (Juel, 1996; McCormick, 1994).
- Explicit instruction in techniques that will improve reading comprehension. Some strategies to teach include self-questioning (readers ask themselves questions about the story as they are reading), visual imagery (readers visualize what they are reading), and retelling (readers tell the story to someone else). Successful instruction also includes helping struggling readers transfer these strategies to other texts (Dole, Brown, and Thathen, 1996; Sorrell, 1996).
- Multiple opportunities for repeated reading of connected texts to develop fluency. Methods of encouraging repeated reading include paired reading, modeling, direct instruction, choral reading, and providing easy reading materials. Repeated reading also helps increase the word recognition rate and accuracy of the reader (McCormick, 1994; Reutzel, Hollingsworth, and Eldredge, 1994; Dowhower, 1994).
**HOW ARE PERSONNEL USED TO PROMOTE STUDENT SUCCESS?**

Evaluating the use of personnel is an important step for schoolwide planning. Use this grid to identify what services each staff member is contributing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Certified Classroom Teachers</th>
<th>Certified Special Service Teachers e.g. Reading Recovery™ Resource Teachers</th>
<th>Site Literacy Coordinator</th>
<th>Certified Personnel (paraprofessionals)</th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PK</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>K</td>
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*Adapted from Leadership For Literacy: A Guidebook For School-Based Planning, Susan Y. Paynter 1996.*
Curriculum Materials - Reading

The materials your students spend the most time reading during Language Arts and across the curriculum

Consider:

1. how many books you keep in your classroom at any one time.
   how frequently these books are "recycled".
   which genres are evident.
   what percentage of your books are non-fiction.

2. how you access classroom books.

3. what range of difficulty is evident in the materials provided; how the difficulty level is determined.

4. how the books are organized and arranged for easy accessibility.

5. who selects the students’ reading materials.

6. how the reading material is used for instruction and assessment.
The Principal's Role

The principal is responsible for ensuring:

- the imperative for improvement
- whole-school buy-in
- the blueprint and plan for allocating resources
- the focus on classroom processes and on improving student outcomes
- the organizational learning culture, teams and networks
- the consistency of focus over time
- ongoing use of data to inform teaching and drive improvement
- successful transition from initiation to implementation to institutionalization

-- Dr. Peter W. Hill
# Summary of Classroom Observation Data

## Engagement

**Grade:** K-3  
**School:**  
**Teacher:**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Observation #1 for Teacher</th>
<th>Observation #2 for Teacher</th>
<th>Observation #3 for Teacher</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time on Task</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole Group</td>
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<td>Small Group</td>
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<td>Word-Level Activities</td>
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<td>Low Level Text Comprehension</td>
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<td>Fictional Text</td>
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<td>Informational Text</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Summary:**

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*Adapted from: The CIERA School Change Classroom Observation Scheme. B. Taylor, P. D. Pearson*
The importance of leadership

♦ the principal is the key actor in improving early literacy (and all educational) outcomes

♦ leadership is a distributed role: the role of the principal is to ensure that leadership is occurring at all levels and in all areas

♦ principals and coordinators require significant systemic support focusing on their role as designers, leaders and managers of the instructional program of the school

Dr. Peter W. Hill
Use of Time, Engagement, Routines

Observer: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Classroom/Teacher: ____________________ Grade: _________________________

School: _____________________________ Number students: __________________

Instructions. Note exact time an instructional activity starts. Change to new instructional activity any time the teacher changes focus, moves to a new area with different materials, moves the students, or signals in some way that the instructional activity is changing. For example, when a teacher at the easel changes from reading aloud to interactive writing, this requires a new line. For a “transition” (for example, when students are moving from one area to another, sharpening pencils, getting materials, etc.), use a line, write transition as the instructional activity, and note the time started.

The STARTING TIME for each new instructional activity noted is also the ENDING TIME for the previous instructional activity. This form accounts for every minute of class time, with no gaps between the instructional activities noted on the lines. A guided reading or interactive writing lesson should be noted in this guide, with the time started. Then, switch to the form for that activity. This form should reflect the appropriate box and time for guided reading and interactive writing.

The INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY describes whatever the teacher and students are doing—individually or as a group. ESTABLISHED ROUTINES are those activities that you note as being routines of instruction or procedures for student behavior.

Rubric for engagement:
1 = Only a few students are on task and attending to the instruction. There are many distractions, including noise and movement. Instruction is severely undermined.
2 = About half of the students are on task and attending to the instruction, but there are many distractions, including noise and movement. Instruction is undermined.
3 = Most of the students are on task and attending to the instruction. There are occasional distractions, and some students are moving about. Instruction, in general, is being provided most of the time.
4 = Almost all students are on task and attending to the instruction. Instruction is being provided almost all of the time. There are only a few distractions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Started</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Instructional Activity</th>
<th>Note Established Routines</th>
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From: Systems for Change in Literacy Education  
Heinemann 2001

Blank Forms 251
Role of Site Literacy Coordinator

- assist in the development, organization and distribution of classroom materials

- provide direction, support and assistance to classroom teachers

- develop, implement and coordinate the program elements in consultation with the school principal

- coordinate data collection

- provide in-school professional development for teachers

- disseminate information about the project to the school community

- help to engage and implement home/school partnerships

Coordinators will keep a weekly reflective journal to trace their learning journeys
## Literacy Meetings
Twice a Month

<table>
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<th>Month</th>
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<th>Meeting 2</th>
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"What kinds of prereading skills should my two-year-old have?"
"Should my kindergartner start learning the alphabet?" You may have asked yourself these and other questions about your child's progress in acquiring literacy skills. This section of "The ERIC Review" discusses typical developmental milestones on the path to reading, factors that can slow a child's progress, and techniques for helping the underachiever in reading.

What Should My Child Be Learning at Each Level?

National Research Council

Anyone who has been around children knows that they can be very different from one another and still fall well within the range of normal development for their age group. This article contains lists of skills, interests, and attitudes that parents, caregivers, and others might work toward fostering at each age level, keeping in mind that differences in children's development and experiences may affect their accomplishments.

These lists resulted from the work of the Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children, which was established by the National Academy of Sciences at the request of the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The committee examined an extensive body of research on reading development and instruction, risk factors for reading difficulties, and interventions and approaches that lead to the greatest reading success.

The committee translated the research findings into two publications containing advice and guidance for parents, educators, publishers, and others—the scholarly Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children and the parent-oriented Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success. (For more information on these and other resources related to reading standards, see the box on page 23.)

Accomplishments in Literacy Acquisition

Birth to Three Years Old

- Recognizes specific books by their covers.
- Pretends to read books.
- Understands that books are handled in particular ways.
- Enters into a book-sharing routine with primary caregivers.
- Shows enjoyment of rhyming language and nonsense wordplay.
- Labels objects in books.
- Comments on characters in books.
- Recognizes pictures in books as symbols of real objects.
- Listens to stories.
- Requests/commands an adult to read or write.
Begins noticing specific print, such as letters in names.
Uses increasingly purposeful scribbling.
Occasionally seems to distinguish between drawing and writing.
Produces some letterlike forms and scribbles with some features of English writing.

Three and Four Years Old
Knows that letters of the alphabet are a special category of visual graphics that can be individually named.
Recognizes print on signs and other places, in addition to print in books.
Knows that the print in stories is to be read.
Understands that different text forms are used for different functions of print (for example, lists are used for groceries).
Pays attention to separable and repeating sounds (for example, *Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater*).
Uses new vocabulary and grammatical constructions in speech.
Understands and follows oral directions.
Shows awareness of some sequences of events in stories.

- Shows an interest in books and reading.
- Connects information and events in a story to life experiences.
- Demonstrates an understanding of a story's literal meaning through questions and comments.
- Displays reading and writing attempts, calling attention to self (for example, by saying "Look at my story").
- Identifies 10 or more letters of the alphabet, especially those from own name.
- "Writes" (scribbles) messages as part of playful activity.
- Begins to notice beginning or rhyming sounds in some words.

Accomplishments in Reading

Kindergarten
Knows the parts of a book and their functions.
Begins to track print when listening to a familiar text or when rereading own writing.
"Reads" familiar texts emergently, not necessarily verbatim from the print but also from memory of the content.
Recognizes and can name all uppercase and lowercase letters.
Understands that the sequence of letters in a written word represents the sequence of sounds (phonemes) in a spoken word (alphabetic principle).
Learns many, though not all, one-to-one letter-sound correspondences.
Recognizes some words by sight, including a few common ones (for example, *a, the, I, my, you, is, and are*).
Uses new vocabulary and grammatical constructions in speech.
Makes appropriate switches from oral to written language situations.
Notices when simple sentences fail to make sense.

- Connects information and events in text to life, and life experiences to text.
- Retells, reenacts, or dramatizes stories or parts of stories.
- Listens attentively to books a teacher reads to the class.
- Names some book titles and authors.
- Demonstrates familiarity with various types or genres of text (for example, storybooks, expository texts, poems, newspapers, and everyday print such as signs, notices, and labels).
- Correctly answers questions about stories read aloud.
- Makes predictions based on illustrations or portions of stories.
- Demonstrates understanding that spoken words consist of a sequence of phonemes.
- Identifies the first two words in a spoken set, such as "dan, dan, den," as sounding the same and the third as sounding different.
- Identifies the first two words in a spoken set, such as "dak, pat, zen," as sharing a same sound.
- Merges spoken segments into a meaningful target word.
- Produces another word that rhymes with a given spoken word.
- Writes many uppercase and lowercase letters without help or guidelines.
- Uses phonemic awareness and letter knowledge to spell unconventionally (invented or creative spelling).
- Writes (unconventionally) to express own meaning.
- Builds a repertoire of some conventionally spelled words.
- Distinguishes between "kid writing" and conventional spelling.
- Writes own first and last name and the first names of some friends or classmates.
- Writes most letters and some words when they are dictated. 
First Grade

- Makes a transition from emergent to “real” reading.
- Reads aloud with accuracy and comprehension any text that is appropriately designed for the first half of grade 1.
- Accurately decodes conventionally spelled one-syllable words and nonsense words (for example, sit and zat).
- Uses knowledge of print-sound mappings to sound out unknown words.
- Uses knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to sound out unknown words when reading text.
- Recognizes common, irregularly spelled words by sight (for example, have, said, where, and two).
- Demonstrates a reading vocabulary of 300 to 500 words, including recognized words and easily sounded-out words.
- Monitors own reading and self-corrects when an incorrectly identified word does not fit with cues provided by letters in the word or by the context.
- Reads and comprehends both fiction and nonfiction that is appropriately designed for the grade level.
- Shows evidence of expanding language repertoire, including increasing appropriate use of more formal language constructions.
- Creates written texts for others to read.
- Notices when difficulties are encountered in understanding text.
- Reads and understands simple written instructions.
- Predicts and justifies what will happen next in stories.
- Discusses prior knowledge of topics in expository texts.
- Discusses how, why, and what-if questions in sharing nonfiction texts.
- Describes in own words new information gained from texts.
- Recognizes whether simple sentences are incomplete or fail to make sense, and notices when simple texts fail to make sense.
- Answers simple written comprehension questions based on material read.
- Counts the syllables in a word.
- Blends or segments the phonemes of most one-syllable words.
- Spells three- and four-letter short-vowel words correctly.
- Composes fairly readable first drafts using appropriate parts of the writing process (that is, some attention to planning, drafting, rereading for meaning, and some self-correction).
- Uses invented spelling and phonics-based knowledge to spell independently, when necessary.
- Shows spelling awareness or sensitivity to conventional spelling.
- Uses basic punctuation and capitalization.
- Produces various types of compositions (for example, stories, descriptions, and journal entries), showing appropriate relationships between printed text, illustrations, and other graphics.
- Engages voluntarily in various literary activities (for example, choosing books and stories to read and writing a note to a friend).

Second Grade

- Decodes conventionally spelled multisyllable words and nonsense words (for example, capital and Kalamazoo).
- Uses knowledge of print-sound mappings to sound out unknown words.
- Accurately reads many irregularly spelled words as well as those following certain spelling patterns, such as special vowel spellings and common word endings.
- Reads and comprehends both fiction and nonfiction that is appropriately designed for the grade level.
- Shows evidence of expanding language repertoire, including increasing appropriate use of more formal language constructions.
- Reads voluntarily for interest and own purposes.
- Rereads sentences when meaning is unclear.
- Interprets information from diagrams, charts, and graphs.
- Recalls facts and details of texts.
Reads nonfiction materials for answers to specific questions or for specific purposes.

Takes part in creative responses to texts, such as dramatizations, oral presentations, and fantasy play.

Discusses similarities in characters and events across stories.

Connects and compares information across nonfiction selections.

Poses possible answers to how, why, and what-if questions.

Correctly spells previously studied words and spelling patterns in own writing.

Represents the complete sound of a word when spelling independently.

Shows sensitivity to using formal language patterns in place of oral language patterns at appropriate spots in own writing (for example, by decontextualizing sentences and using conventions for quoted speech, literary language forms, and proper verb forms).

Makes reasonable judgments about what to include in written products.

Discusses productive ways to clarify and refine own writing and that of others.

Adds use of conferencing, revision, and editing processes (with assistance) to clarify and refine own writing, according to the expected steps in the writing process.

Writes informative, well-structured reports (with organizational help).

Attends to spelling, mechanics, and presentation for final products.

Produces various compositions (for example, stories, reports, and correspondence).

Third Grade

Reads aloud with fluency and comprehension any text that is appropriately designed for the grade level.

Uses knowledge of letter-sound relationships and structural analysis to decode words.

Reads and comprehends both fiction and nonfiction that is appropriately designed for the grade level.

Reads longer fictional selections and books with chapters independently.

Takes part in creative responses to texts, such as dramatizations, oral presentations, and fantasy play.

Points to or clearly identifies specific words or phrases that cause comprehension difficulties.

Summarizes major points from fiction and nonfiction texts.

Discusses the underlying theme or message when interpreting fiction.

Asks how, why, and what-if questions when interpreting nonfiction texts.

Recognizes cause and effect, fact and opinion, and main idea and supporting details when interpreting nonfiction.

Uses information and reasoning to examine the basis of own hypotheses and opinions.

Infer word meanings from roots, prefixes, and suffixes.

Correctly spells previously studied words and spelling patterns in own writing.

Begins to incorporate descriptive words and language patterns into own writing (for example, elaborates on descriptions and uses figurative wording).

Uses all aspects of the writing process (with some guidance) in producing compositions and reports.

Combines information from multiple sources in writing reports.

Suggests and implements (with assistance) editing and revision to clarify and refine writing.

Presents and discusses own writing with other students, and responds helpfully to other students’ compositions.

Reviews own work for spelling, mechanics, and presentation independently.

Produces various written works (including literature responses, reports, and “books”) in various formats, including multimedia forms.

Source

Dear Parents,

Two of you to talk about books.

Warm and special time for the development and will provide a help your child's literacy.

This sharing experience will help your child to tell you about the book. Please ask your child to tell you about the book that we have read in class.

Today your child is bringing home a "Story Bit". This will be a reminder of the story that we read today.

I hope you enjoyed hearing about the story, watch for the next.

This is the story bit...

Home-School Connections

Story Bits
CBE Early Literacy Initiative Guidelines

- a minimum of 2 hours and 15 minutes of Language Arts instruction daily – at least two hours to be in one time block (grade 1-2)
- incorporation of balanced literacy programs
- small flexible groupings as the main component of the Language Arts block
- strong literacy thrust in Kindergarten
- site literacy coordinator (at least .5)
- early intervention (either Early Reading Intervention or Reading Recovery™ at least .5)
- consistent small group (2-6 students) support for at risk students not receiving a form of early intervention
- twice a month literacy meetings
- home-school links
- use of suitable books for students including multiple copies for Guided Reading
- use of baseline assessment instruments – data to be reported three times yearly
- additional on-going assessments and record-keeping for all students receiving early intervention
- attendance of Reading Recovery™ and site literacy coordinator and K-2 teacher teams at on-going staff development sessions
- involvement in the Early Literacy Research Project
Literacy Review, February 27, 2001

When I consider our work as a staff on Literacy this year, I think of...
(Please return to Laurie's box by March 2, 2001)

the challenges

the opportunities

the positive outcomes

my new learnings
Institutional changes that are both sweeping, and practical don't endure and succeed by chance.
To meet the challenge of literacy for all requires teamwork and mutual support, as well as commitment to the long-term rather than to quick fixes.

Allington & Cunningham, 1996
There is commitment to a long-range plan with adequate funding.

Preparation for change, change itself, and institutionalization of change in teaching practices may take three to five years. Short-term solutions to long-range challenges will not work. The process of committing to long-term funding is essential in sustaining focus and effort, because other priorities will compete and undermine commitment to this type of improvement effort. Adequate funding must be linked directly to the expected results of better instruction.

Every Child Reading: A Professional Development Guide
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of School Administrators
American Federation of Teachers
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Council of Chief State School Officers
Education Commission of the States
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Education Association
National PTA
National School Boards Association
Research: A Critical Component in the Project

Christine J. Gordon
University of Calgary
Presented at
IRA Annual Convention, April 2001.

Research Questions: (Beginning September, 1999)

1. What is the level of student achievement for all students in the ELRP classes?

2. What is the effect of a variety of factors on student achievement?

Note:
- To answer these questions, we are using some of the same instruments as used last year, although many have been revised, piloted, and modified.
- We have also added tests and questionnaires.

The Specifics

More Specifically, Question 1

1. What is the level of student achievement for all students in ELRP?

- from pretest to posttest (comparisons within)
- ERI vs. RR (comparisons across early literacy programs)
- intervention students vs. all other students in the K-2 classes (comparisons between)
- in subsets of schools (comparisons among subsets of schools using different interventions, or differing on the basis of other factors).

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

To answer Question 1, we are using mostly tests and surveys that will give us quantitative data from:

- DRA
- CTBS
- Demographics by school community
- Student details
- Teacher details
- Timetabling
- Grouping
- Materials
- Adherence to balanced literacy programs

Quantitative Analysis will be mostly multi-variate analyses of variance to ascertain differences in achievement and factor analyses (e.g., multilevel regression analyses) to see which factors are significant contributors to achievement.
The Specifics (Cont'd)

More Specifically, Question 2

1. What effect do the following factors have on school achievement?

   a) Students themselves
      ➢ demographics by school community
      ➢ Student details (grade level, date of birth, gender, whether student has English as
        Second Language)
      ➢ Student attitudes and beliefs

   b) Teachers as factors
      ➢ Teacher details (years, type and level of experience)
      ➢ Teacher beliefs re: literacy development, students and self and any change that has
        occurred
      ➢ Opinions on professional development

   c) Parents
      ➢ level and type of participation at home
      ➢ aspirations re: program and student

   d) School Environment as a factor
      ➢ Timetable
      ➢ Flexible grouping
      ➢ Materials
      ➢ Adherence to a balanced literacy program
      ➢ Support of administration
      ➢ Role of site coordinator
      ➢ Parental involvement

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

To answer Question 2, we are using surveys and telephone and face-to-face interviews that
will give us qualitative data about:

   ➢ Student attitudes and beliefs
   ➢ Teacher beliefs re: student and self
   ➢ Opinions on professional development
   ➢ Level of participation at home by parents
   ➢ Aspirations of parents re: program and student support of administration
   ➢ Role of site-coordinator
   ➢ Parental involvement as viewed by administrators

While we may be able to quantify some of these data to include in the factor analyses, the
majority of data will be analyzed qualitatively using the comparison and contrast method
and coding to see emerging patterns of responses.
Early Literacy Book Suggestions for Further Reading


Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read. Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, April 2002


Roller, Cathy M. So... What's a Tutor to Do? Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 1998.


