

How Reading & Writing Are Taught at Alcott, Thoreau and Willard Elementary Schools

Presentation given on April 12, 2021 by:

Kristen Herbert, Director of Teaching and Learning

Tara Venuti, SLP & Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach, Thoreau School

Jordan Tamulynas, Reading Specialist, Alcott School

Sharon Hehn, ELA Specialist, Willard School



Agenda

- Overview of the reading process
- “Components of Literacy”
- Assessments
- Interventions

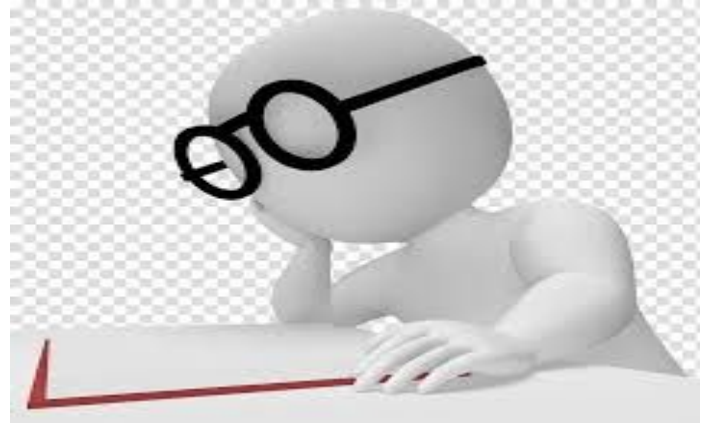
We were never born to read

- Hardwired for language, hearing, vision . . . not reading
- Reading was invented only a few thousand years ago
- Learning to read requires building circuit between two unconnected processing areas (auditory and visual)

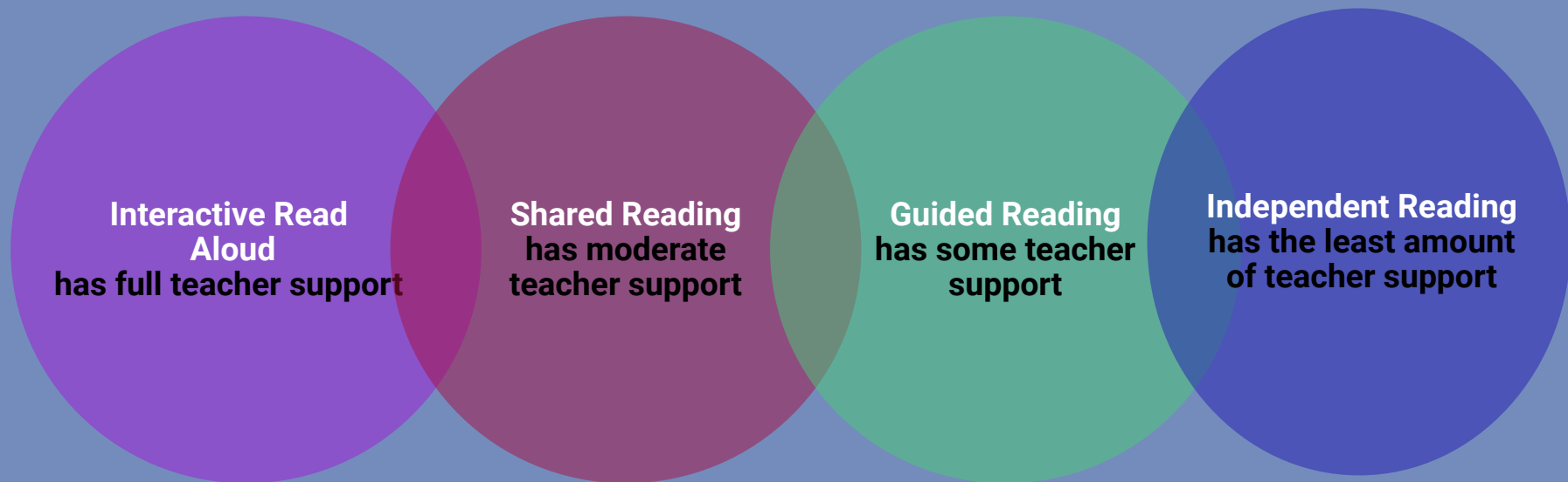


Components of Literacy

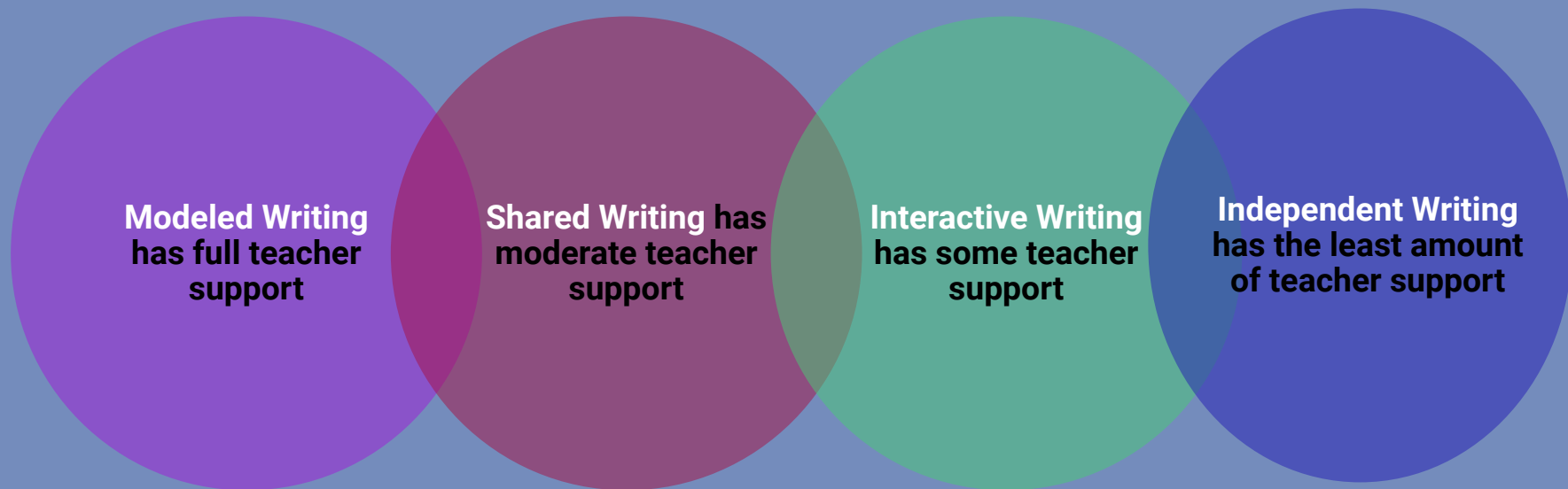
- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Writing



Children learn to read within a variety of instructional contexts in the classroom, not just a single one, including:

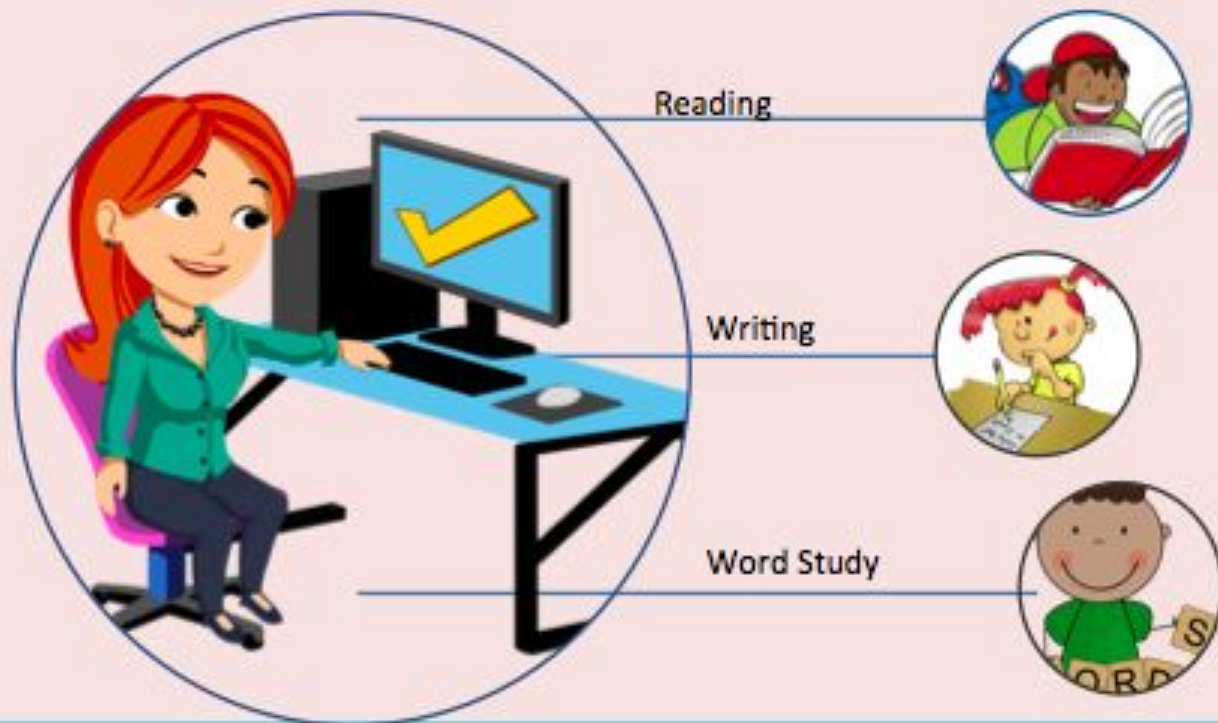


Children also learn to write within a variety of instructional contexts including:



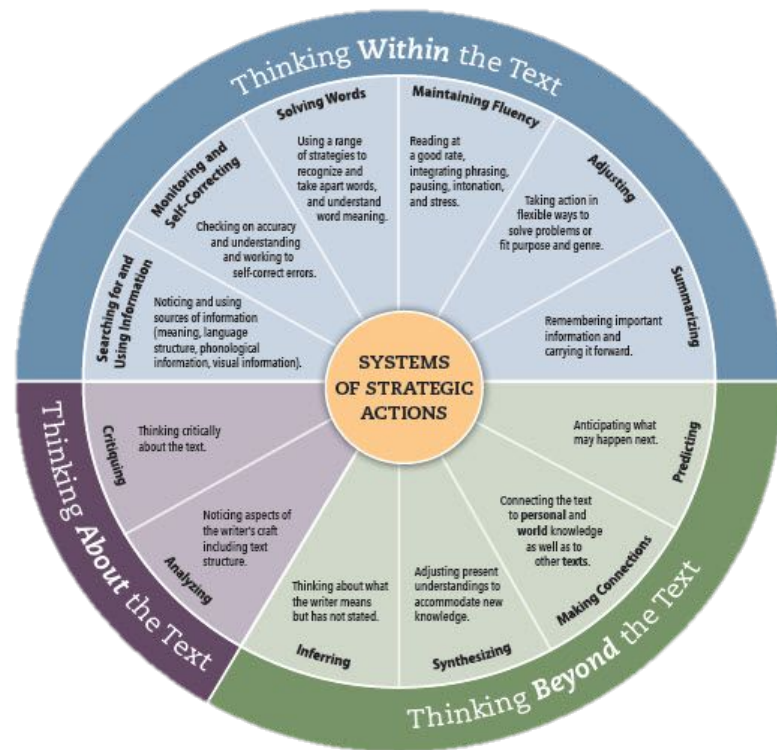
"Reading, Writing, and Word Study are three contexts for learning.
All three components are necessary and, in combination, provide effective
literacy instruction for all children" – from "Word Matters" by Fontas & Pinnell

Your Literacy Instruction



Our goal is to teach our students to become **WORD SOLVERS**.

This means that *as they read*, they can *take words apart* to help them in their search for meaning, and that *while they write* they are able to *construct words* from such essential elements as letters and letter clusters. - Word Matters, F&P



NINE AREAS OF LEARNING

1. Early Literacy Concepts
2. Phonological Awareness
3. Letter Knowledge
4. Letter-Sound Relationships
5. Spelling Patterns
6. High-Frequency Words
7. Word Meaning and Vocabulary
8. Word Structure
9. Word Solving Actions



Nine Areas of Learning

1. Early Literacy Concepts: foundational understandings of reading
Print is the words on the page and we read the print to understand stories.
2. Phonological Awareness: hearing the SOUNDS in words
I can identify, isolate, segment, change, and blend the sounds in words, without even seeing the letters. These are within-the-head skills.
3. Letter Knowledge: knowing how LETTERS LOOK
Letters are made of straight lines, curves, “plane line, grass line, worm line” of Foundations.
4. Letter-Sound Relationships: knowing how LETTERS/LETTER COMBINATIONS SOUND
Some letters make a sound (“b” says /b/), and some letter clusters make a sound (“ch” says /ch/). This is the “f, fun, /f/” of Foundations.
5. Spelling Patterns: looking for and finding WORD PARTS & PATTERNS to spell and read words
The word part “ip” is in clip and ship, the word part “-ade” is in made and shade.

Nine Areas of Learning

6. High-Frequency Words: knowing and recognizing SIGHT WORDS.

I can read and spell common words quickly and automatic.

7. Word Meaning and Vocabulary: learning more about the WORDS THEY KNOW AND ADDING WORDS THAT ARE NEW.

This is a lifelong skill, expanding receptive and expressive vocabularies.

8. Word Structure: Words are built according to rules.

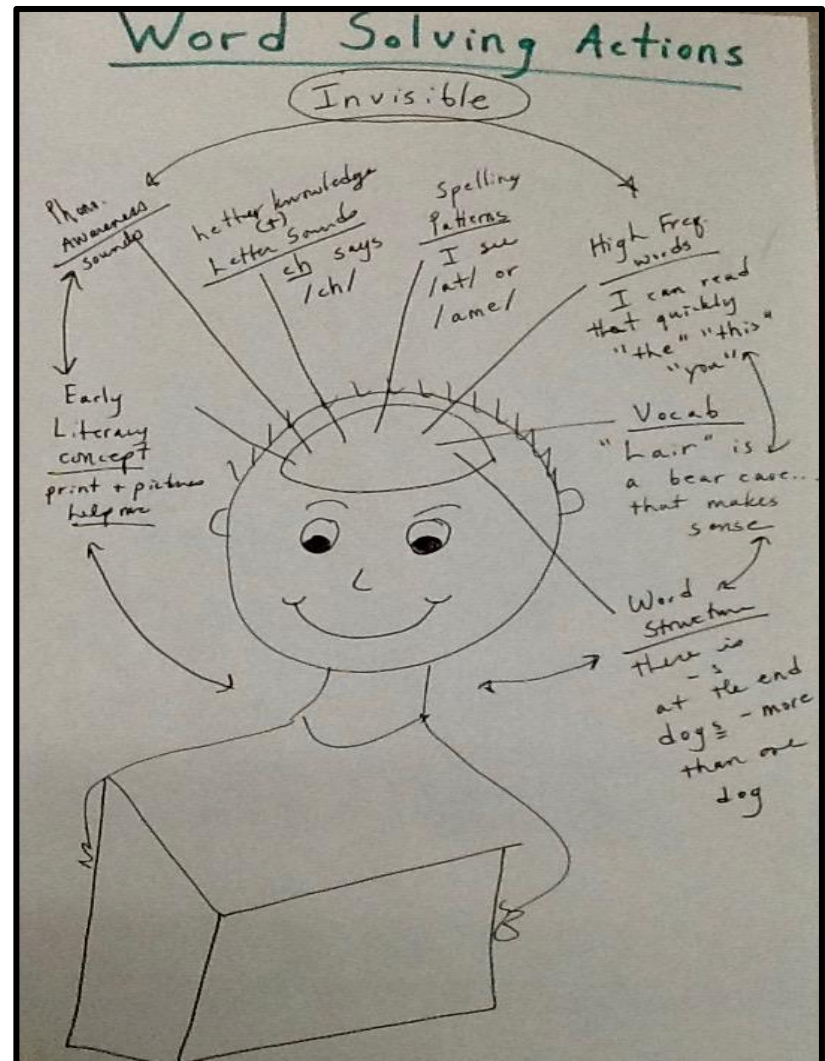
Looking at word structure will help students learn how words are related to each other and how they can change.

9. Word Solving Actions

A combination of **all** skills together, the invisible "IN THE HEAD STRATEGIES" students use when reading and writing.

They move and shift as needed between:

- Phonological awareness
- Letter knowledge
- Letter sound relationships
- Spelling patterns
- High Frequency words
- Word structure



Phonological Awareness
to hear sounds, segment
sounds, isolate sounds

Letter Sound Relationships to
know how letters look and what
they sound like

Knowledge of **common letter patterns**
(-ip, -ap, -ake, -ind)

High Frequency Word Knowledge for
quick spelling of common words

Direct teaching in all areas is key to the
acquisition of effective reading and
writing/spelling Skills.



Read it, Build it, Write it

Read It

look

Build It

look

Write It

look

see

See

see

the

the

like



Magnetic Letters



Use of tactiles



Word Families



Pocket Charts

Segment sounds and spell



Fluency

Fluency is another area of reading that can be modeled and taught to students directly. It has two essential components:

- Automaticity: the ability to recognize words effortlessly and accurately
- Prosody: expression and phrasing



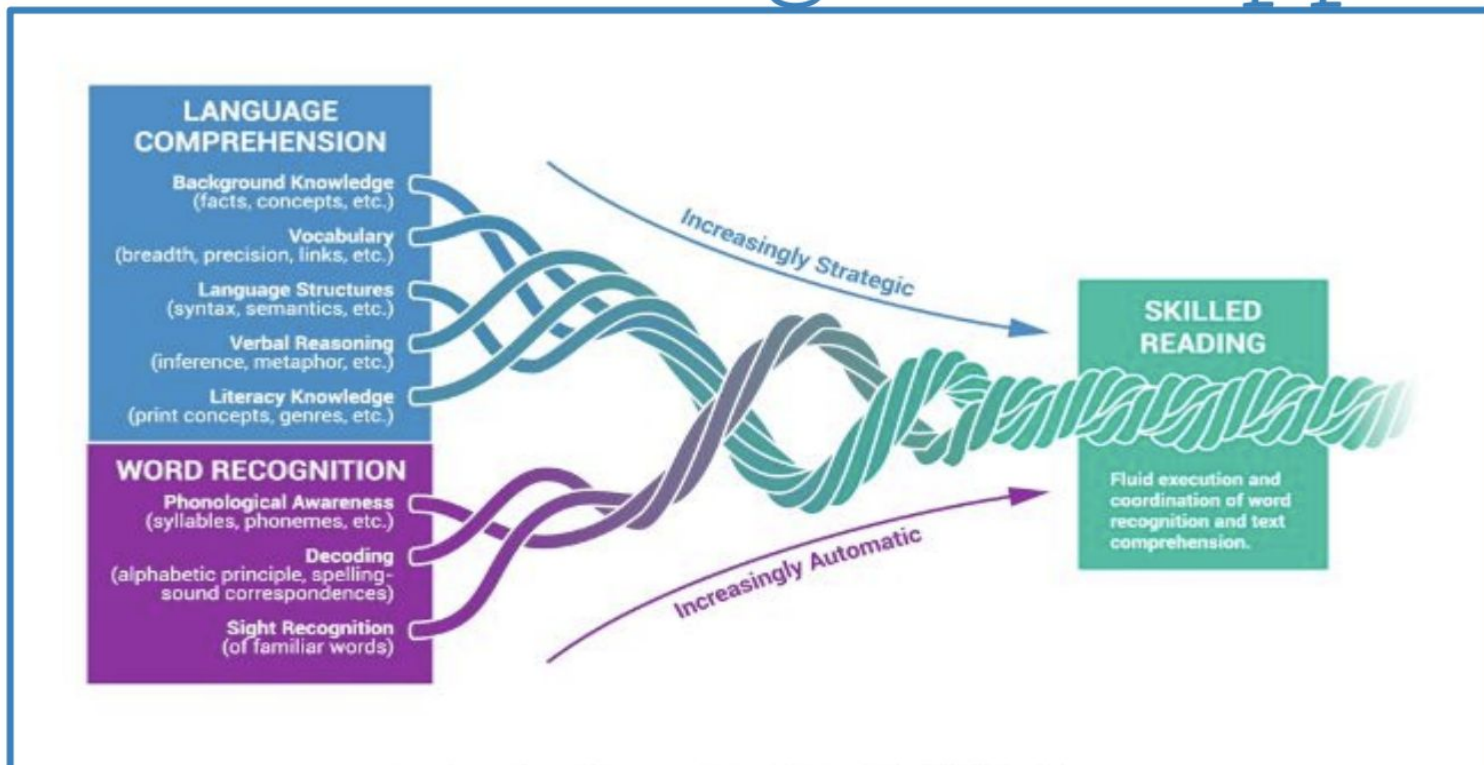
Comprehension

Apple banana blue walk tree happy sing.

- Reading comprehension is demonstrating an understanding what you are reading through talk or writing.
- It weaves together all the previous components of reading.

Readers need to: activate prior knowledge, make and confirm predictions, ask questions, make connections, visualize, infer, synthesize, monitor understanding.

Universal Teaching and Support





The following skills areas are taught in our classrooms using the Foundations Program

- 1) Phonological Awareness
- 2) Phonemic Awareness and the Alphabetic Principle
- 3) Sound Mastery
- 4) Key Linkages: Letter Name, Formation, and Sound
- 5) Phonics
- 6) Vocabulary
- 7) High Frequency “trick words” or sight words
- 8) Reading Fluency
- 9) Reading Comprehension
- 10) Automaticity of Handwriting
- 11) Spelling
- 12) Punctuation and Capitalization

Driving Goal of Our Literacy Instruction

Children learn much more than we teach them;
they often astound us with the creativity of their insights.

A driving goal of our teaching is to help children become
active examiners and analyzers of print.

We want them always to be searching for connections and patterns, to
form categories of knowledge, and to have a store of examples to which
they can refer.

Writing

- Motor planning skills
- Sentence and paragraph skills
- Writing process: plan, draft, revise
- Organization & development of ideas
- Basic text types and text structures
 - Informational, argument, narrative, literary analysis
 - Introductions, transitions, conclusions
- Conventions
 - Spelling, punctuation, grammar
- Learning to Write, Writing to Learn, Writing to Enter the Conversation

Evidence-based Literacy instruction must...

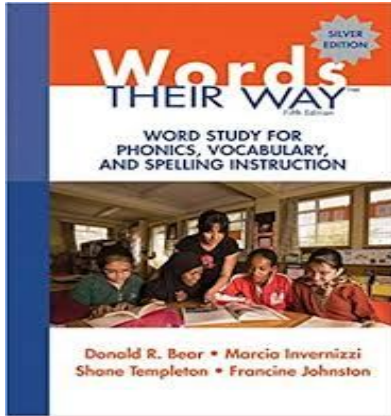
1. Build disciplinary and world knowledge
2. Provide exposure to a volume and range of texts
3. Provide motivating texts and contexts for reading
4. Teach text structures
5. Engage students in discussion
6. Build vocabulary and language knowledge
7. Integrate reading and writing
8. Include conferring with students in order to differentiate instruction
9. Teach strategies for comprehending

Core Instruction: Phonics



- K-3
- Sequential, explicit, multi-sensory, systematic approach to teaching phonics
 - Synthetic phonics approach
 - Decoding and encoding
- Direct instruction in letter sounds, syllable types, high frequency words, fluency, and letter formation
- End of unit assessments

Core Instruction: Phonics



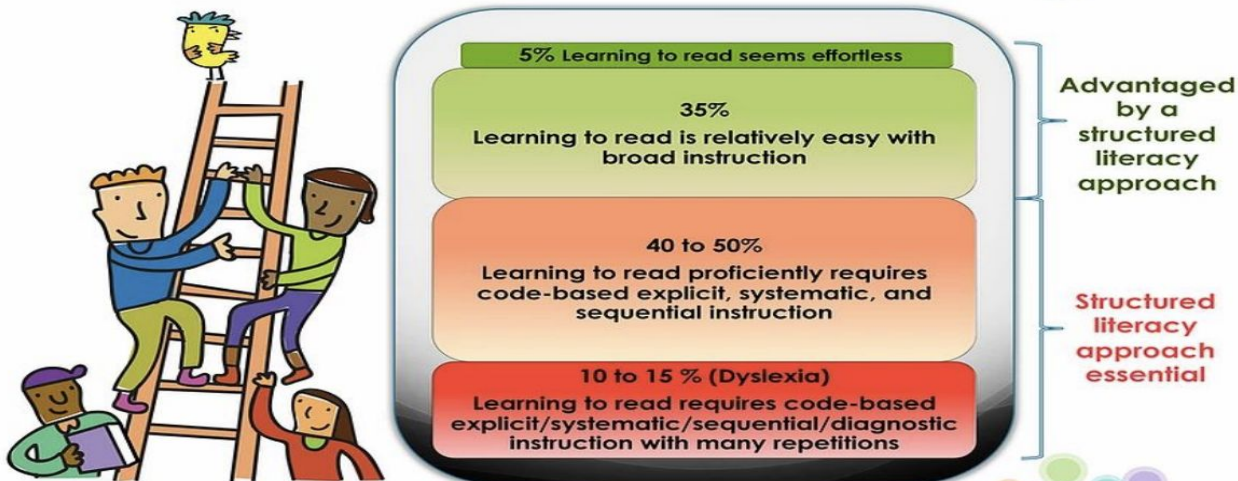
- 4th Grade & 5th Grade
- Spelling instruction
- Analytic phonics approach
 - Word/letter patterns
 - Chunking
 - Structural Word Skills (root words, prefixes, suffixes)
- Students are actively constructing their own knowledge of spelling patterns
- Varied programs used

Core Instruction: Reading Comprehension & Writing

- Balanced Approach
 - Guided Reading
 - At Instructional Level
 - Small group instruction
- Read Alouds
- Shared Reading
- Independent Reading
- Units of Study in Writing
- Empowering Writers
- EmPOWER (Brain Frames)

Core Instruction: Giving Individual Students What Is Needed

Universal Teaching and Support The Ladder of Reading



© N. Young, 2012 (Updated 2020)
Artwork by Dean Stanton
(Lyon, 1998; NRP, 2000; IDA, 2015; Hempenstall, 2016)

www.nancyyoung.ca

Nancy Young
B.A., M.Ed.
Reading
Spelling
Writing

Assessment: Screening

Used to identify or predict students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes. Universal screening.

- Renaissance STAR screening products used K - 12



Renaissance Star Early Literacy®

Quickly measure K-3 students' early literacy and early numeracy skills with a computer-adaptive assessment designed just for young learners. For universal screening, progress monitoring, goal setting, and more. Administer in-person or remotely.

Assessment: Areas Screened

Star Early Literacy K–3 students

Alphabetic Principle, Concept of Word, & Visual Discrimination,
Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Structural Analysis & Vocabulary
Sentence- & Paragraph-Level Comprehension

Assessment: Areas Screened

Star Reading

Grades 1-5 students

Word Knowledge and Skills, Comprehension Strategies and Constructing Meaning,
Analyzing Literary Text, Understanding Author's Craft, Reading Literature
Analyzing Argument and Evaluating Text, Reading Informational Text

Star Math

Grades 1- 5 students

Counting and Cardinality, Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Geometry, Expressions
and Equations, Number and Operations - Fractions, Functions
Ratios and Proportional Relationships, The Number System, Measurement and Data ,
Number and Operations in Base Ten, Statistics and Probability

Assessment: Dyslexia Screener

Massachusetts Dyslexia Guidelines

Dyslexia Guidelines Key Areas

- Co-developed by the Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education and Early Education and Care
- Fulfills the specific requirements of [An Act Relative to Students with Dyslexia](#), Chapter 272 of the Acts of 2018
- Outlines the **relationship between early literacy screening and screening for risk of dyslexia**
- Includes DESE Universal Screening Assessment Guidance for selecting DESE-approved screeners
- Provides **K-2 screening administration guidelines** for risk of dyslexia, including timeframe, development of a screening team, and tasks for each grade level
- Sets out **critical elements of intervention for students at risk of dyslexia and reading difficulties**:
 - evidence-based Tier 1 PK-2 instruction (aligned with [Mass Literacy Guide](#))
 - role of Tier 2 and 3 interventions (aligned with [MTSS Blueprint](#))

Other Common Assessments

Kindergarten

RAN RAS (3 x per year)
Clay/Letter ID/Sound (3 x per year)
Phonemic Awareness Profile (2 x per year - winter and spring)
Concepts About Print (2 x per year- winter and spring)
Foundations Unit Tests
Lucy Calkins on-demand assessment rubrics for narrative, informational, persuasive with with Writing Samples
Handwriting K

Grade 1

- Teachers College Reading Assessment or BAS (3 x per year)
- Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words (2 x per year)
- Foundations Unit Tests
- Lucy Calkins on-demand writing assessment rubrics: narrative, informational, persuasive with Writing Samples
- Handwriting

Grade 2

- Teachers College Reading Assessment or BAS (2 x per year)
- Lucy Calkins on-demand writing assessment rubrics: narrative, informational, persuasive with with Writing Samples
- Foundations Unit Tests
- Handwriting

Grade 3

- Teachers College Reading Assessment or BAS (2 x per year)
- Lucy Calkins on-demand writing assessment rubrics: narrative, informational, persuasive with Writing Samples
- Foundations Unit Tests
- Handwriting
- MCAS

Grade 4

- Teachers College Reading Assessment or BAS (2 x per year)
- Lucy Calkins on-demand writing assessment rubrics: narrative, informational, persuasive with Writing Samples
- MCAS

Grade 5

- Teachers College Reading Assessment or BAS (2 x per year)
- Lucy Calkins on-demand writing assessment rubrics: narrative, informational, persuasive
- MCAS

Assessment: Diagnostic

Provide more in-depth information about the student's skills.

- Speed Dial 4 and DIBELS data combined
- RAN/RAS - automaticity (perceive a symbol accurately & rapidly)
- WADE/WIST - phonics accuracy in decoding and encoding
- TOWRE - accuracy and fluency in isolated words
- PAT- The Phonological Awareness Test ages 5-7
- Phonemic Awareness Inventory
- Common Writing Assessments in ELA K-2
- QRI/CRI - accuracy and fluency in connected text, comprehension

Assessment: Diagnostic

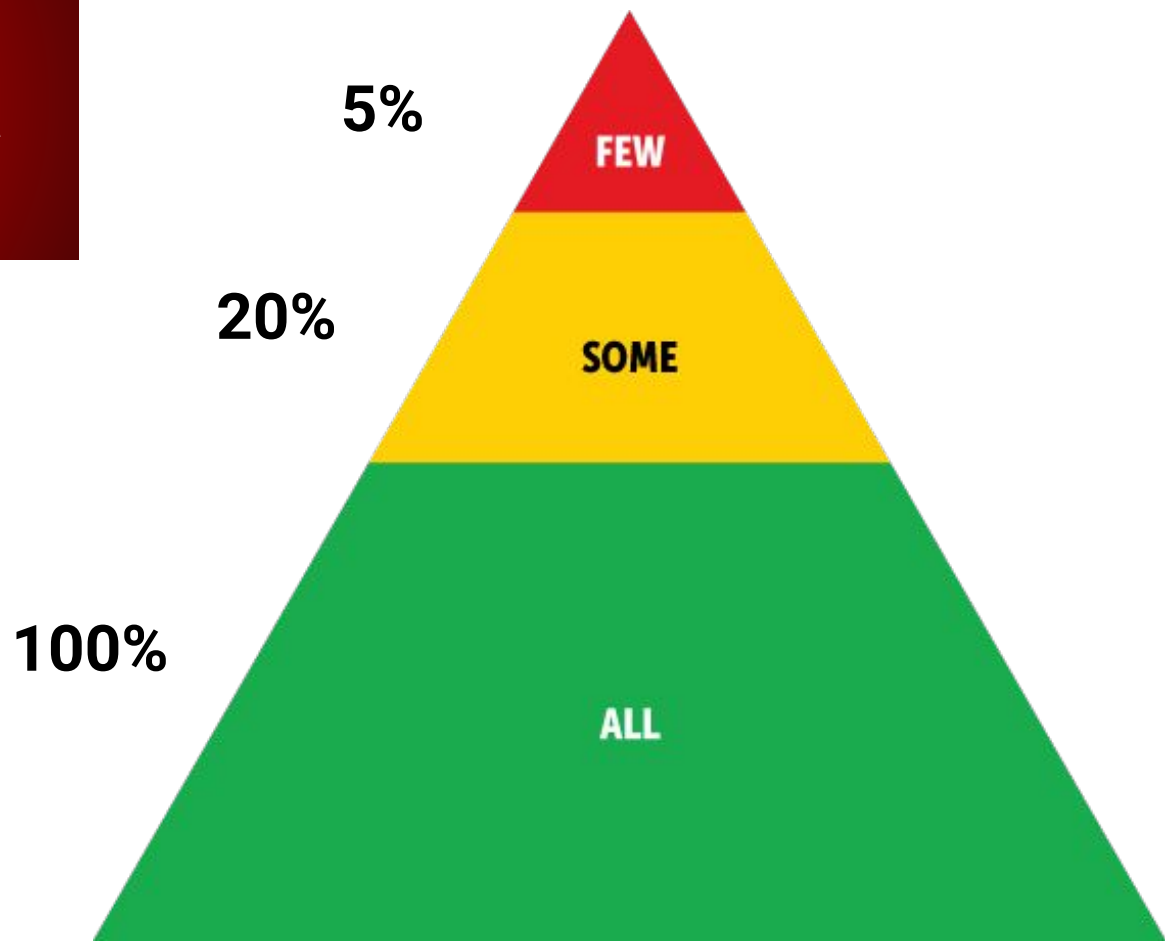
Provide more in-depth information about the student's skills.

- CTOPP: Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing in Reading (age five -adult)
- Yopp-Singer test of Phoneme Segmentation (K-1)
- TOPA: Test of Phonological Awareness (K-grade 2)
- RAN/RAS: Rapid Automatized Naming and Alternating Stimulus Tests (ages 5-18)
- DRA 3 : Developmental Reading Inventory (grades K-8)

Assessment: Formative & Summative

- Formative: Informs instruction. Track student performance during an instructional period. Determines intervention.
- Summative: Provide data for accountability and research purposes. Assess curriculum design, implementation and teachers' efforts over the course of a school year.
 - Benchmark Assessment System and Teacher's College Reading Assessments
 - K: 2x per year
 - Grade 1: 3x a year
 - Grades 2-5: 2x per year
 - Conferring (on-going)
 - Units of Study Pre and Post Assessments (4 x yr)
 - Writing Unit assessments along with On-Demand Writing
 - Foundations Unit Assessments
 - MCAS

Three Tiered Model of Student Supports



Literacy Interventions K - 5

- Additional, small group learning of Foundations (intervention materials)
- Inclusion of Orton-Gillingham strategies (phonics)
- Wilson
- 95% Group (phonemic awareness and phonics)
- LiPS (phonemic analysis, and phonics, spelling)
- Lexia (phonics)
- Leveled Literacy Intervention (decoding, encoding, comprehension)
- Read Naturally (fluency)
- Fry and Rasinski Increasing Fluency (high frequency words/phrases/text)
- Foundations Fluency (words, phrases, sentence and stories)
- STARS and CARS (comprehension)
- Project Read (comp. and writing)
- Readworks

Next Steps



- preK - 12 Literature Review Committee for Cultural Competency
- Continuous upgrade of school and classroom libraries for “Mirrors and Windows”
- Professional development next school year for teachers with Dr. Nadine Gaab on addressing students who struggle to learn to read

Dr. Nadine Gaab is an Associate Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Nadine’s work focuses on developmental cognitive neuroscience, particularly in language-based learning disabilities. Her research in the GaabLab (www.gaablab.com) examines the development of typical and atypical language and literacy skills in the pediatric brain and pre-markers of learning disabilities and the development of screening tools for screening literacy milestones and dyslexia. She is the 2019 recipient of the LDA Award (Learning Disabilities Association America) for her work on learning disabilities. In 2018, Nadine was presented with the Allan C. Crocker Award for her advocacy on behalf of children with dyslexia and reading disabilities and efforts around the recent passage of the Massachusetts screening legislation (under the guidance of Decoding Dyslexia MA). She has also been recognized by the International Dyslexia Association in her receipt of the Norman Geschwind Memorial lecture 2020 and the Alice H. Garside Award for outstanding leadership in advancing the science and advocacy of dyslexia. She is an international speaker, frequently presenting to teachers on the brain science of typical and atypical literacy development.

Feel free to contact us at:

Kristen Herbert kherbert@concordps.org

Tara Venuti tvenuti@concordps.org

Jordan Tamulynas jtamulynas@concordps.org

Sharon Hehn shehn@concordps.org