Fall 2006

Five Dimensional Literacy Strategies: a Guide for Elementary Classroom Teachers

Karen J. Bixler
Regis University

FIVE DIMENSIONAL LITERACY STRATEGIES

A GUIDE FOR ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM TEACHERS

by

Karen J. Bixler

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

REGIS UNIVERSITY

August, 2006

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers are experiencing more pressure than ever to increase student achievement in reading literacy. Members of society and educators are finding that it is important to use reading strategies that work for all levels of reading instruction. There is a national issue of the United States having an “under educated” or illiterate mass of people.

Statement of the Problem

Reading failure has brought about enormous long-term consequences for children when considering overall self-confidence, motivation to learn, and academic performance. While there are no simple answers or quick solutions for enhancing reading literacy achievement, a knowledge base now exists to show educators and parents the skills children must learn in order to read well Keeping this in mind, educators are looking for a different way of thinking when it comes to teaching reading literacy and seeking new found strategies to facilitate reading literacy development.

Background of the Problem

Members of the National Reading Panel (2000) issued a report expressing the need to identify key skills and methods central to reading achievement. The members of this Panel reviewed research in reading instruction, primarily focusing on the critical years of kindergarten through third grade. Also identified in the report were methods and skills that relate to reading success. The methods include phonemic awareness instruction, phonics instruction, fluency instruction, vocabulary instruction and text comprehension instruction.

Three other agencies, the National Institute for Literacy, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and the U.S. Department of Education collaborated to make research available to educators, parents, policy-makers, and others with an interest in helping all people learn to read well. The findings of the collaborative effort of these agencies were published in the 2000 report of the National Reading Panel. This agency responded to a Congressional mandate to help educators, parents, and policy makers identify key skills and instructional strategies central to reading achievement. All of this was in an effort to address the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 instituted in the last couple of years by U.S. government agencies during the Bush administration.

In addition to identifying effective teaching practices regarding reading instruction, the work of the National Reading Panel challenges educators to consider the evidence of effectiveness whenever decisions are made about the content and structure of reading instruction programs. Because of this, teachers can learn about and emphasize approaches and strategies that have worked well in the classroom and caused reading improvement as well as achievement in all academic areas for large numbers of children. Much improvement is needed with reading instruction within the school system, and by targeting “what works” instruction with the guidance of the research-based five components of reading, the incidence of reading success should increase (NRP, 2000).

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to develop a manual for elementary school teachers and parents with background knowledge in reading that summarizes what researchers have discovered about the methodology of reading instruction and provide approaches and strategies to teach the five components of reading instruction. The guide focused on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction. Each component of reading defines skills, reviews evidence from research, suggests implications for classroom instruction, and describes the various strategies for teaching literacy skills that are so essential to the reading achievement of children. The strategies discussed in this project are intended to be used in the general education classroom as well as the special education classroom. The components discussed may be used with both struggling readers and children who are reading at grade level or above grade level. The guide will provide a valuable resource for educators wanting to try new approaches to target large groups of children when teaching literacy.

Definition of Terms

The definitions of the following list of terms were acquired from *Putting Reading First* (Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2001).

Comprehension: The ability to understand what is read.

Fluency: The ability to read text accurately and quickly.

Grapheme: The smallest part of written language that represents a phoneme in the spelling of a word. A grapheme may be just one letter, such as *b, d, f*; or several letters, such as *ch, th, ea, -igh*..

Onset: The initial consonant sound of a syllable.

Phoneme: The smallest part of the spoken language that makes a difference in the meaning of words. The English language has about 41 phonemes. Sometimes one phoneme is represented by more than one letter.

Phonemic Awareness: The ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds in spoken words.

Phonics: The understanding that there is a predictable relationship between phoneme (sounds of spoken language) and graphemes (letters and spellings that represent those sounds in written language).

Phonological awareness: The understanding that spoken language is made up of individual words, that words are made up of individual syllables, and that syllables are made up of individual sounds.

Rime: The part of a syllable that contains the vowel and all that follows it.

Syllable: A word part that contains a vowel, or in spoken language, a vowel sound.

Vocabulary: The ability to use words to communicate effectively.

Chapter Summary

Educators may use various strategies to teach literacy to children across the United States. It is understood that in order for reading achievement to occur among children, the way of thinking about how to teach literacy must change and educators must have an open mind to use what works in their classrooms. Agencies involved in the Partnership for Reading include the U.S. Department of Education, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and the National Institute for Literacy.

Chapter 2 presents a Review of Literature with regard to literacy instruction. The review contains historical, theoretical background and current theories related to using the five components of reading instruction. Specific areas covered in the Review of Literature include: (a) phonemic awareness instruction, (b) phonics instruction, (c) fluency instruction, (d) vocabulary instruction, and (e) text comprehension instruction.

Chapter 3 includes methods useful to fulfill the project. An overview of the development of the guide is presented. This chapter includes the target population for the guide, the procedures followed, goals, and assessment of the project.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reading ability is central to students' learning, to their success in school, and ultimately to their success in life (Salinger, 2003). Because reading is considered as essential as some basic needs in life, educators need to consider if more effective approaches can be used to improve reading ability and the success of students.

The National Assessment of Education Progress (2003, as cited in Salinger, 2003) reports no overall change in reading achievement from 1992 to 2000. Several researchers (Donahue, Finnegan, Lutkus, Allen, & Campbell, 2001, as cited in Salinger, 2003) found that close to 40% of fourth-grade students cannot read at what National Assessment of Education Progress terms as the basic level. The percentage is even higher among low-income and minority children.

With renewed interest in children's education at the legislative level, teaching practices are being reevaluated for effectiveness. Guidance at the state and district level is being provided to teachers with regard to reading instruction. According to Salinger (2003), the federal government has committed its energies and an unprecedented amount of money to the improvement of reading. The National Reading Panel (NRP, 2001) synthesized the extensive research on teaching students to read. The Panel identified explicit and systematic instruction in five components as essential to effective reading instruction. The findings were later adopted by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 was signed into law by President Bush and is considered by legislators on both sides of the aisle as the bill that swept education reform into the new century (Cicchinelli, Gaddy, Lefkowits, & Miller, 2003). Since the bill was signed into law, policy makers in nearly every state have been looking for ways to comply with the Act's requirement.

Thanks to many years of substantial research, educators have deeper understandings and the tools necessary to help children develop as good readers in the critical early years of school (Salinger, 2003). Quality literacy instruction must include the five components of reading and understanding of a body of evidence approach. In addition, at school interventions and support at home are essential needs that will be addressed by using the five components of reading as recommended by the National Reading Panel (2000) as addressed in the No Child Left Behind Act (2002).

This review of literature is purposefully designed for several reasons. First, a body of evidence approach is rationalized and briefly reviewed. Next, included in this review is an analysis of the body of evidence supporting the five components of reading instruction which supports an effective literacy program. Lastly, the review will take a deeper look at some successful strategies that pertain to the five essential components of reading as related to a balanced literacy program.

Body of Evidence

Every teacher looks for evidence of some sort as to how well students are doing in any subject. When it comes to reading, teachers need to be especially diligent to collect a wide variety of work or samples of each child to measure growth or no growth in reading. According to members of the Pikes Peak Literacy Strategies Project (PPLSP, 2005) a body of evidence includes:

> A collection of samples over time that, when taken together, help to determine whether a student is on track or in need of assistance. The evidence must be aligned to the grade level expectations and include all five components of reading. No single sample can tell you everything you need to know about the student's reading skills. A body of evidence should be comprehensive, include all five components of reading, be gathered over time, include multiple measures, and tell a story of the student's overarching strengths and needs (p.4-5).

Multiple Measures

There are multiple measures teachers should take into account when evaluating reading ability with each student. Since no single measure can tell a teacher everything he or she needs to know about a child's reading level, then these multiple measures need to be considered carefully. The first measure addresses screening each student before coming up with a plan of reading instruction. Screening includes the ability to identify which students are in need of assistance with reading. The next multiple measure is progress monitoring. This process includes frequent updates and feedback on the student's progress. Finally, the summative multiple measures identify whether a student achieved what was expected in the end (PPLSP, 2005, p.5).

The Process

The body of evidence approach integrates a process every teacher should consider. According to the members of the PPLSP (2005), this process is a big part of the reading success of children in the early years of education. The process involves three simple steps. The first step is the review. This step takes into account a thoughtful review of the student's comprehensive body of evidence. Next, the accurate identification of the student's literacy skills and needs are determined. The final step is the selection of appropriate instructional strategies based on the identified needs. When selecting strategies, teachers need to consider the five components of reading and apply these skills to an instructional plan for each student. As one can tell, the review step leads to identification resulting in the selection of appropriate instructional strategies (PPLSP, 2005).

Components of Reading

Phonemic Awareness

Leading reading researchers , Armbruster, Lehr, and Osborn (2001), stated, "effective phonemic awareness instruction teaches children to notice, think about, and work or manipulate sounds in spoken language" (p.5). Phonemic awareness is like a foundation wall on a house. It is the foundation upon which skills are built upon (Adams, Foorman, Lundberg & Beeler (1996). Phonemic awareness particularly focuses on sounds and not necessarily the written letters or words. Share & Stanovich (1995, as cited in Salinger, 2003) stated that "Research has shown repeatedly children who lack phonemic awareness experience difficulty learning to read" (p.2). Salinger (2003) goes on to say that:

> Children often demonstrate phonemic awareness spontaneously by identifying and creating oral rhymes, clapping out the syllables they hear in words, or submitting initial or final consonants in words to create new words. These exuberant demonstrations of language play are in many ways the foundation of literacy, for they show that children are sensitive to and can manipulate the sounds of language. Unfortunately, many children fail to generalize this behavior to the tasks of reading and writing. They do not make the important connection between verbal play and the abstract tasks of translating print to sound. Lacking this cognitive connection, they have no behavioral touchstone, no sense of competency, for the rigors of learning to read (p.2).

As children begin the journey toward literacy development and becoming successful readers, grasping the phonemic awareness skills are very essential and must take place for children in the critical years. Children need to have meaningful reading instruction and be exposed to a literature rich environment which will provide the opportunities for children to become successful readers. As children come to realize that words are made up of sounds, they can take the next step which is learning the relationships between sounds, letters and the alphabetic principle. This next step is called the phonics instruction approach.

Phonics Instruction

According to Salinger (2003), "To benefit from phonics instruction, children must be able to draw on the basic premises of phonemic awareness principles" (p.2). Once children have a good grasp of phonemic awareness strategies, they can learn and apply even more difficult strategies that are based on phonics instruction. Many people, to include professionals in the field of reading, often do not differentiate between phonemic awareness and phonics instruction. These are two very different strategies and should not be confused with one another. To clarify, phonemic awareness skills include the sounds of language, while phonics is the integration of sounds and letter symbols (PPLSP, 2005). Phonics instruction teaches children the relationships between the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language and the letters of written language (graphemes) (PPLSP, 2005). According to the research conducted by the Pikes Peak Literacy Strategies Project (2005):

> Phonics is the ability to learn the alphabetic system known as letter sound or grapheme-phoneme correspondence. It is also the ability to code knowledge during reading by using decoding and encoding words. Phonics is and essential part of the decoding process. Decoding is the primary means of word recognition. If a student cannot make sound-symbol associations (decode) with accuracy and automaticity, then fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension will suffer. Readers

> decipher words in five ways: (1) decoding, (2) spelling, patterns, (3) analogizing, (4) sight words, and (5) context clues (p. 4/ 3).

*4/3 refers to section 4, page 3

The research conducted about phonics says that "phonics instruction must be explicit and systematic" (Adams, 1990, as cited in PPLSP, p. 5/4). The National Reading Panel (2000) indicated that phonics is best taught for two consecutive years such as kindergarten and first grade, or first grade and second grade consecutively. "Poorly developed word recognition skills are the most important pervasive and debilitating source of reading difficulty" (Perfetti, 1986). As one can see, the scientific research supports the need to effectively teach phonics within the classroom and during the critical early years.

Critics may argue that the English language include many spellings that are too irregular for phonics instruction to really help children to read words. The point of phonics instruction is to teach children a system for remembering how to read words rather than rely on a rule-dominated system of application to correspondence. Children's memories can help them to read, spell, and recognize the words instantly and more accurately. For example, once children learn that the word phone is spelled with a /ph/ rather than with a /f/ as in *fone*, their memory helps them to spell, read, and recognize the word instantly (Armbruster et al., 2001, p.12). The alphabetic system is a mnemonic device that lends itself to remembering phonics skills can increase literacy achievement.

Fluency Instruction

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000) explain that fluency is the ability to read a text quickly and accurately, instead of stumbling word by word. By reading quickly and accurately, readers can gain meaning from what they have read. “Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression” (Armbruster et al., 2001, p.22). Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins (2001) as cited by Salinger (2003) indicated that:

> Whether reading silently or orally, fluent readers group words into meaningful units and make connections among the ideas in what they read. They are able to focus their cognitive energies on comprehending what they read, not on decoding individual words. The labored choppy oral performance of weak readers indicates that their cognitive energies are going toward word identification, and comprehension can be seriously impeded, if not sacrificed (p.2).

Fluency also can vary depending on the reader’s familiarity with the words in the text (Rasinski, 1990, p. 148). Fluency is very important to reading instruction because it provides a “bridge between word recognition and comprehension” (Armbruster et al., 2001, p 22). The Partnership for Reading Council (2001) believes that more fluent readers can focus their attention on making connections among the ideas in a text and between the ideas and the reader’s background knowledge. Therefore, fluent readers are able to focus on comprehension. Less fluent or weak readers must focus their attention primarily on decoding individual words. This makes it difficult for a struggling reader to pay much attention to comprehending the text. According to the PPLSP (2005) “Research has proven that fluency has a reciprocal relationship with comprehension; each fosters the other” (p. 6/13.). Fluency is more directly related to comprehension than word recognition, and it is the most neglected component of reading improvement of the five components of reading. Since fluency develops over time with continued practice, then it requires consistent, monitored practice on both an independent level and on an instructional reading level. Even though research supports oral practices to develop fluency, there is insufficient support for silent reading when attempting to develop reading fluency.

Vocabulary Instruction

The National Reading Panel's report (2001) cited the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000):

> "A benefit in understanding text by applying letter-sound correspondence to printed material only comes about if the resultant oral representation is a known word in the learner's oral vocabulary. If the resultant item is not in the learner's vocabulary, it will not be better understood than it was in print. Thus, vocabulary seems to occupy an important middle ground in learning to read. Oral vocabulary is a key to making the transition from oral to written forms, whereas reading vocabulary is crucial to the comprehension processes of a skilled reader."

Vocabulary refers to the words we must know and use to communicate effectively. The four main components of vocabulary instruction are speaking vocabulary, reading vocabulary, listening vocabulary, and writing vocabulary. Oral vocabulary refers both listening and speaking vocabulary. Oral vocabulary refers to words people use when speaking or recognize when using listening skills. Reading vocabulary refers to words needed to know to understand what is read or the words used in writing (Armbruster et al., 2001).

Vocabulary plays a major role in the overall goal of comprehension. If students read advanced or technical text material, more than likely they will encounter difficulty with understanding (Blachowicz, C., & Fisher, P. (1996). What appears to be a comprehension problem, often times turns out to be a vocabulary problem. "Students need to have conceptual knowledge and understanding before they are able to comprehend text" (PPLSP, 2005, p. 7/4). On the flip side, sometimes what appears to be a vocabulary problem turns out to be a phonics issue. "If a student cannot decode a word, they are not able to demonstrate the knowledge of the word's meaning" (PPLSP, 2005, p. 7/5).

Members of the research team from the PPLSP (2005) found that there are three tiers of vocabulary each teacher should be familiar with prior to vocabulary instruction. Tier one involves words and concepts that are familiar to students. Tier two includes high frequency or unknown words and concepts. Finally, tier three includes obtuse words and concepts. For vocabulary instruction, teachers should focus on tier two words and concepts.

Comprehension

Reading is not just reciting words, but it is more a skill that brings meaning to the printed symbols or letters and words (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Comprehension is the ultimate goal of the rationale of why people read. Basically, "comprehension is the reason for reading. If readers can read the words but do not understand what they are reading, they are not really reading" (Armbruster et al., 2001, p. 49). "We want students to not only understand what they read, but also enjoy texts, interpret them, and apply their learning from reading to other areas" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Research has shown that instruction in comprehension skills can assist students with understanding what they read, communicate with others about what was read, and remember what was read (The Partnership for Reading, 2001).

Armbuster, Lehr, & Osborn (2001) stated that "Good readers are both purposeful and active." Having a purpose for reading is important and readers must recognize this fact. Determining if gathering information or simply entertaining the mind for pleasure is a skill good readers determine before engaging in reading. Good readers are also active. Active reading requires focus on what is being read. During active reading, readers use their background knowledge of the world, knowledge of vocabulary and language structure, and reading strategies. In addition, good readers recognize when problems occur with understanding and engage strategies to resolve these problems (Armbruster et al. 2001, p. 48).

Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary are the stepping stones that lead the way for comprehension. Salinger (2003) observed that:

> "Poor readers experience comprehension problems because they cannot accurately or fluently identify words in a text. If they stop to decode a large percentage of the words they encounter, their energy and attention are diverted from the important task of making meaning. They think they have actually read the text, but they have not understood it. Other poor comprehenders lack the background knowledge to understand what they read and do not possess the strategies to activate what they know (p.3).

When comprehension occurs, the ultimate goal of reading has occurred and success takes place.

Five Components of Reading Strategies

Phonemic Awareness Instructional Strategies

After many years of scientific-based research, educators have found many successful strategies that support phonemic awareness instruction. According to the National Institute of Literacy (2001), an agency within the U.S. Department of Education, some basic principles of phonemic awareness strategies include: (a) phoneme isolation, (b) phoneme identity, (c) phoneme categorization, (d) phoneme blending, (e) phoneme segmentation, (f) phoneme deletion, (g) phoneme addition, and (h) phoneme substitution. If teachers use these strategies frequently and rigorously, reading achievement is more likely to occur than if these strategies were not used. Additionally, members of the Partnership for Reading (2001, as cited in Armbruster et al., 2001, p. 16) observed that a reading phonics program must be systematic and explicit. One might ask, what does a systematic and explicit program look like? "A program of systematic phonics instruction clearly identifies a carefully selected and useful set of letter-sound relationships and then organizes the introduction of these relationships into a logical instructional sequence." Furthermore, "an explicit program provides children with ample opportunities to practice the relationships they are learning" (Armbruster et al., 2001, p.16)

The first couple of strategies, phoneme isolation and phoneme identity, are two very powerful and proven techniques teachers can use to teach phonemic awareness. Phoneme isolation occurs when children can recognize individual sounds in a word. For example, the first sound in *van* is /v/. Phoneme identity occurs when children recognize the same sounds in different words. An example of phoneme identity is the ability to recognize the words *bat*, *bird*, and *bun* all have the same onset of sounds which is /b/. Another example would be *bat, sit*, and *lot* all have an ending sound of /t/ (Tyner, 2004). These two strategies should be taught in the very early stages of literacy development such as in kindergarten.

Other early reading development strategies include using phoneme categorization, phoneme blending, and phoneme segmentation. Phoneme categorization is a strategy that focuses on the word in a set of words that has the "odd" sound. Given the set *rat, ring,* and *bat* a child should be taught that *bat* does not belong with this set of words because it has an onset sound of /b/ and the other two go together because the onset sound is /r/. Phoneme blending is when children listen to a sequence of separately spoken phonemes, and then combine the phonemes to form a word. At this stage, children should write and be able to read the word. For example, the word *rat* has three sounds that include a /r/, /a/, and /t/. When all of these sounds are blended together the child should be able to read and write the word *rat*. Phoneme segmentation is similar to phoneme blending, but the slight difference is taking a word and breaking it into its separate sounds instead of taking letters and blending them to make a word. An example of the segmentation strategy is taking the word *bag* and breaking it into three separate sounds such as /b/, /a/, /g/. A good technique that enhances the segmentation strategy would be to have children tap out or count out the different sounds and then write and read the word (Armbruster et al., 2001, p.5). These three strategies should also be used during the early developmental years such as in kindergarten, first and second grade.

The next three strategies, phoneme deletion, phoneme addition, and phoneme substitution, are challenging for early readers to grasp. These should also be used during the early development years; however, they could also be used with third, fourth, or even fifth graders who struggle in reading. Phoneme deletion is a strategy where children recognize a word that remains when a phoneme is removed from another word. For example, the word *smile* without the /s/ becomes the word *mile*. Phoneme addition is when children make a new word by adding a phoneme to and existing word. When a /s/ is added to the word *park* the new word becomes *spark* using the addition strategy. The last strategy, phoneme substitution, is another great way to teach phonemic awareness skills. For example, the word *bug* has a /g/ sound at the end of the word. If the ending sound is substituted with a /n/ sound the word becomes *bun* (Armbruster et al., 2001, p.6) Phonemic awareness particularly focuses on sounds and not necessarily the written letters or words. As children come to realize that words are made up of sounds, they can take the next step which is learning the relationships between sounds, letters and the alphabetic principle. This next step is called the phonics approach.

Phonics Instructional Strategies

When phonics skills are in place, teachers should see correct letter-sound relationships in students' reading and writing skills. Duffy-Hester & Stahl (1998) recognize that phonics is only a part of a good reading program (p.339). “Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is more effective than non-systematic or no phonics instruction” (Armbruster et al., 2001, p.13). Since this is the case educators should become acquainted with several approaches to teach phonics skills. The approaches include: (a) synthetic phonics, (b) analytic phonics, (c) analogy-bases phonics, (d) phonics through spelling, (e) embedded phonics, and (f) onset-rime phonics instruction (Armbruster et al., 2001, p13)

Various phonics approaches could be used to help children acquire the phonics skills needed to become successful readers. The approaches are taken from the Partnership for Reading (2001) and U.S. Department of Education (2001) as cited by Arbruster et al., 2001, (p.13). The synthetic approach allows children to learn how to convert letter combinations into sounds. The strategy teaches how to blend sounds together forming recognizable words. The analytic phonics approach uses letter sound relationships that were previously learned in other words. The analytic-based phonics approach uses word families such as *hat*, *bat*, *cat*, and so on. Phonics through spelling is another very useful approach to consider when teaching phonics. This system is taught by segmenting words into phonemes and then writing letters for phonemes. The embedded phonic approach uses letter sound relationships during the reading of connected text. The last approach is onset-rime phonics instruction, and in this approach strategies are used to identify the sound of the letter or letters before the first vowel. In a one syllable word, the first vowel would be the onset and the sound of the remaining part of the word is called the rime. These approaches are typically systematic and explicit which has proven to be "most effective when introduced during the early critical years of reading development" (Duffy-Hester et al., 1998, p. 346).

Fluency Instructional Strategies

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000) stated, "fluency is characterized by the ability to read with expression as the reader begins to recognize not just single words, but grammatical units such as phrases, clauses, and punctuation, that give the text its tone and cadence." Overall, the goal is comprehension through fluent readings of text. This goal can be accomplished by using the research based strategies founded by the Partnership for Reading Council (2001). The strategies include: (a) modeling, (b) repeated readings of text, and (c) selection of appropriately leveled text.

Teaching fluency begins with the teacher modeling fluent reading. According to Armbruster, Lehr, and Osborn (2001):

> By listening to good models of fluent reading, students learn how a reader's voice can help written text make sense. Read aloud daily to your students. By reading effortlessly and with expression, you are modeling for your students how a fluent reader sounds during reading (p.49).

When modeling, teachers should use some components of fluency. The components of the fluency modeling approach include expression, intonation, and flow. Reading with expression allows for the mood of the text to be revealed, such as happiness or sadness. Teachers should also read with intonation, which is the rise and fall of the voice. Intonation is usually indicated by sentence structure or punctuation. When modeling intonation, the flow of the voice is also very important. The flow is the smoothness of the voice as it moves quickly through the words of a sentence (National Reading Panel, 2000). The finale to modeling fluency is to give students the opportunity to read the text that was modeled.

The members of the Partnership for Reading Council (2001) observed that “Usually, having students read a text four times is sufficient to improve fluency.” Encouraging parents or other adults to read aloud to children at home will also add to the enrichment of fluent readers. The old saying, “the more the better” certainly applies in this case. Another strategy of rereading is to have students repeatedly read aloud passages with guidance (Armbruster et al., 2001, p.26). The members of Partnership for Reading (2001) suggested several strategies that pertain to repeated readings. The first is student-adult reading. In this strategy, the student reads one-on-one with an adult. The adult reads first acting as a model of fluent reading. Then the student reads the same passage to the adult with guidance.

Choral reading is another strategy to develop fluency. Choral reading is also known as unison reading where students read along as a group. The group can be a small differentiated group or simply the teacher and a few other students (Tyner, 2004). With choral reading, the text selection should not be too long and for the most part at the students’ level. Patterned or predictable books are often used because of their repetitious style. Choral reading is a component of repeated reading.

Another useful technique is tape-assisted reading. In tape-assisted reading, students read along in their books as they hear a fluent reader read a book on an audio tape. The first time through the book, the student should simply listen to the tape. The second and third time through a book the student should try to read aloud along with the tape. After that, the student should try to read the book without the support of the tape. Teachers need to keep in mind that if using tape-assisted materials, the tape should not have sound effects or music. These items could interfere with the ultimate goal of fluent reading, which is comprehension. Partner reading is also a very useful strategy teachers should try with their students to enhance fluency. Pairing students who are fluent readers with students who are less fluent can produce dramatic results for the less fluent readers. This strategy enables the teacher to effectively maximize the strengths in the classroom such as fluent readers helping the struggling readers.

A favorite strategy among both teachers and students is Reader's Theatre. In reader's theatre, students rehearse and perform a play for peers or others. Reader's Theatre provides readers with a legitimate reason to reread text. The Reader's Theatre strategy enables them to practice fluency. It is a favorite because it not only builds fluency, it gives students opportunities to interact with peers and this makes reading tasks always more appealing (Partnership for Reading, 2001).

According to PPLSP (2005) providing material at the student's independent level or material that is reasonably easy for student will cultivate the most success with fluency. Picking material that is short, such as text that is 50-200 words in length is essential in this case. Accuracy needs to be kept at around 85 percent. The three levels of text can help guide teachers when selecting material to use for fluency instruction. Experts in the field of reading instruction, Armbruster, Lehr, and Osborn (2001) agree that, " a text is at a student's independent level if they can read it with 95 percent accuracy, or misread only about one out of every 20 words" (p. 27). Instructional level texts should be challenging for the reader reading at approximately 90 percent success. Frustration level text is difficult for the reader, and the reader exhibits less than 90 percent success with this kind of text (Armbruster et al., 2001, p.26). Independent level texts should be used when teaching fluency to students.

Vocabulary Instructional Strategies

Students who have good comprehension skills can recognize many words automatically and they have the skills and strategies to figure out unfamiliar words. Often, these students have vocabularies that are broad and deep so they can connect what they read to their background knowledge (Salinger, 2003).

Teachers can enhance the skills needed to influence vocabulary development through the use of several strategies. Specific word instruction can deepen the knowledge of various word meanings. Strategies associated with specific word instruction include teaching specific words before reading, providing instruction of vocabulary over a period of time, and repeated exposure to new words. It has been proven that children learn best when they are provided instruction over a period of time and when they encounter words repeatedly in various contexts (Armbruster et al., 2001, p.36).

It is not possible to teach all the words students do not know. Therefore, additional strategies need to be taught so when students encounter words they do not know, they are able to use word-learning strategies to help them determine the meaning of these words. According to the members of the Partnership for Reading (2001) and the members of PPLSP (2005), there are three main word learning strategies. The first is the use of a dictionary and other reference aids to learn word meanings. Often times it is assumed that students understand how to use reference materials. However, this is not the case. Students need to be shown, for example, how a dictionary works, how various words may have multiple meanings, and picking out the definition that works best in context. Next is the strategy of how to use information about word parts to gain meaning of specific words. Word parts encompass the teachings of affixes, base words, and word roots. Teaching children how to use word parts to make a word such as *play* into *playe*r, *playful*, *playpen*, or even *ballplayer* can prove effective in vocabulary instruction. Affixes are word parts that are fixed to either the beginning (prefixes) or endings (suffixes) of a base word. Teaching the meaning of a prefix or suffix word part can help students gain meaning of a base word. For example, the word *submarine* has a prefix and a base word. The prefix, *sub*, means below, and the base word, *marine*, means sea. Students should be taught to break word into word parts to bring meaning to words they do not understand. Finally, using context clues is another strategy students can be taught to assist in gaining meaning from words that are unfamiliar. “Context clues are hints about the meanings of an unknown word that are provided in the words phrases, and sentences that surround the word” (Armbruster et al, 2001, p. 40).

Vocabulary can be developed indirectly and directly. “When students engage in daily oral language, listen to adults read to them, and read extensively on their own…” (Armbruster et al, 2001, p. 45) vocabulary will be enhanced. Direct instruction is another approach to teaching vocabulary development. Direct instruction of vocabulary is specific word instruction and word learning strategies. Members of the PPLSP (2005) suggested refraining from overloading students with too many vocabulary words though. Eight to ten words per week is suggested.

Comprehension Instructional Strategies

Text comprehension can be improved by instruction that helps readers use specific comprehension strategies (Armbuster et al., 2001, p. 49). Strategies, as explained by Harvey & Goudvis (2000), include: (a) making connections, (b) questioning, (c) visualizing, (d) inferring, and (e) synthesizing.

"Readers naturally make connections between books and their own lives" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Comprehension will be enhanced by using personal collective experience and relating it to what is read. PPLSP (2005) members added that making connections can happen through text to text, text to self, and text to world approaches. Text to text connections happens when readers connect big ideas and themes across texts. Text to self occurs when students link the material in the text to their own personal lives. Text to world connections happens by sharing knowledge to build historical understandings (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Harvey and Goudvis stated:

> As we introduce new topics or issues, we observe students struggling to understand unfamiliar ideas and information. Students who have background knowledge about a topic have a real advantage because they can connect the new information they encounter to what they already know. Our responsibility is to help student's background knowledge so that they can independently gain new information. Encouraging students to make text to world connections supports our efforts to teach students about social studies and science concepts and topics (p.26).

Students' comprehension of text could truly be enhanced if taught to use these three strategies.

According to Harvey & Goudivis (2000) questioning is the "strategy that propels readers forward." Questioning during reading engages the reader and keeps the reader reading. Teachers who begin teaching the strategy of questioning should share questions that happen before reading, during reading, and after reading. Before reading, questioning may occur through making predictions. After reading, students should be encouraged to come up with their own questions they may still have about the text. Questions come in all shapes and forms. Questions can be answered from information in the text or even the reader's background knowledge. Additionally, questions can be answered through discussion or further research or reading on in a text (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). When all is said and done, the questions asked by teachers and students definitely help the comprehension process.

Some other strategies to enhance comprehension are visualizing and inferring. “Visualizing brings joy to what we read” (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). One way to teach visualizing is through wordless picture books. This strategy can be accomplished by taking clues revealed in illustrations and combine these clues with the missing pictures we make in our mind. Teachers can also relate unfamiliar items discussed in expository texts, such as the size of a dinosaur’s tooth to an item that is familiar to a student, like a banana. A student can now visualize how big the tooth was and can then make a connection to understanding through visualization. The best way to describe inferential strategy is reading between the lines within a text. Harvey and Goudvis (2000) explained inferring as the “bedrock of comprehension.” Inferring requires students to use background knowledge. Inferring is about reading faces, body language, expressions, and tone. Students need to be taught that the author may not give all the information needed for understanding, so students will have to activate their background knowledge and then infer information to gain meaning.

“Synthesizing is the most complex of comprehension strategies” (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Synthesis of information is achieved when a new perspective or thought comes out of the text being read. To help synthesize information, the SQ3R method could be used (PPLSP, 2005, p. 8/ 11). The SQ3R is an approach that requires children to survey, question, read, recite, and review. This thoughtful process helps children bring new meaning to what is read, and often times bring new perspective which is synthesizing information.

The National Institute for Literacy (2001) suggested teaching these comprehension approaches through direct explanation by the teacher, modeling, guided practice and application by the student. Direct explanation could include using graphic organizers such as maps, chart, or diagrams, to help students organize information and focus on the important points the author of the text is trying to convey. Giving students opportunities to answer teachers' questions is also a helpful strategy. This strategy helps students focus on the point and answer effectively orally or in written communication. Teaching children to generate their own questions can prove to be a successful strategy. Students who are taught to generate their own questions tend to be more active and involved readers. Having children analyze a text in terms of its plot, characters, setting, and other content categories can enhance the memory of a story. When children recognize story structure such as fiction or nonfiction elements, students may also find success with comprehension. Finally, summarizing encourages student to focus on the most important elements in a text and then reprocess these elements through their own words (National Institute of Child and Human Development (2000).

Elliott-Faust & Pressley (1986) as cited in NRP (2000) discussed metacognition as an important element to comprehension. Metacognition is thinking about thinking. Metacognition allows students to monitor understanding and adjust reading speed during reading of text. The metacognition strategy provides students the ability to think about and control their reading. Students who use strategies associated with metacognition will demonstrate engagement with text, self-correcting as needed, rereading, and generating and answering questions (PPLSP, 2005, p. 8/ 14).

Chapter Summary

With many agencies, government or private, there continues to be pressure for increased achievement in reading for children across America; teachers scramble to find new ways to assist them with reading instruction so greater achievement among students will be seen. Many school districts are taking on the challenge of using the five components of literacy instruction approach in hopes of seeing increased reading achievement for developing readers. Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension strategies are so very relevant to the development of children's reading skills so they can become literate adults.

Presented in Chapter 3 is the method by which the project was developed. The purpose of the project is to develop a teacher and parent manual summarizing the five components of reading and suggesting strategies to use with reading instruction that are associated with each component.

Chapter 3

METHOD

The purpose of this project is to give elementary teachers a resource that will guide and facilitate lesson planning in reading literacy that addresses the needs identified by the National Reading Panel's report (2000). Additionally, the Resource Manual will serve as a guide to parents as they seek to support their children in literacy based activities. This report was in response to a Congressional mandate to help parents, teachers, and policy makers identify key skills and methods that are central to reading achievement. As a result of the findings of the NRP (2000), the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 was instituted by the U.S. government during the Bush administration. The Act mandates that all children in public school must show academic achievement or proficiency in all subject areas by the year 2014. This project addresses the area of reading through new found strategies to teach the five essential components of reading. The guide will not only provide ideas and strategies, but it will provide analysis and discussion of the five components of reading instruction. It is essential that teachers take responsibility to ensure that children are given the tools necessary for achieving reading proficiency.

Target Population

This project will be developed for teachers of elementary reading literacy or parents with background knowledge in reading literacy. If parents use this guide, substantial knowledge is required in reading terminology. The author is assuming teachers who use this guide will have the background knowledge in reading terminology.

Procedures

While conducting a thorough investigation of reading literacy development, the author of this project was able to gain substantial knowledge about the five components of reading instruction for Chapters 1 and 2. The project will include information about statistical data, reasons for reading literacy development among children, and a brief description of each component of reading instruction. In addition, strategies will be the main focus of the project providing teachers ideas of various ways to teach each of the five components of reading.

Goals of the Applied Project

The goal of this project is to provide an instructional manual that will increase the overall academic performance of elementary aged children in reading achievement. Another goal of this project is to provide a manual to parents who desire a better understanding of their students' reading instruction. The manual will especially help parents whose children struggle in reading to better understand reading literacy. Additionally, the guide will provide teachers and parents with valuable information about phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension instructional strategies.

Assessment

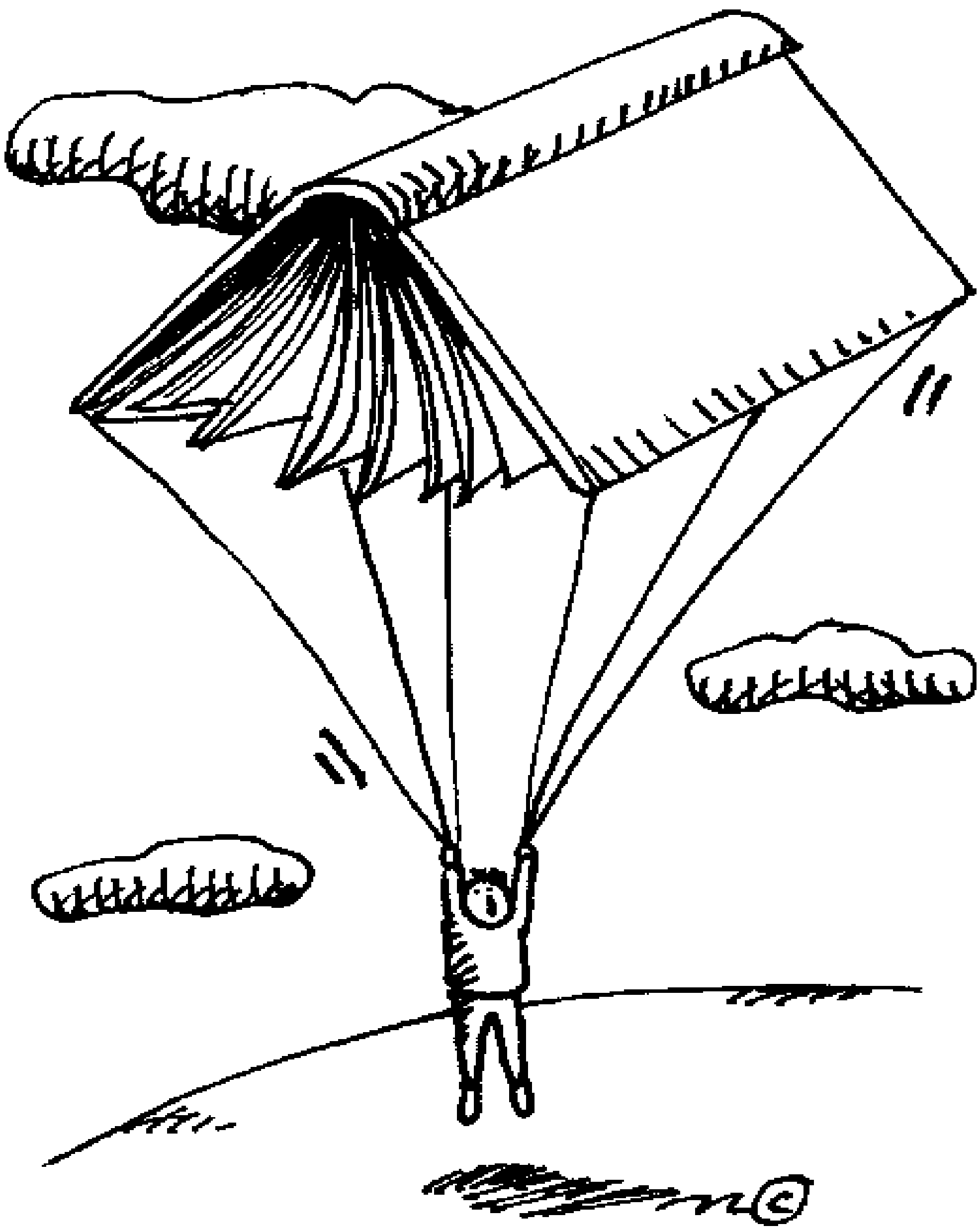
Since the project will be used with colleagues of the author, valuable feedback will be sought after teachers have had an opportunity to not only review the manual, but had a chance to use some of the strategies suggested in the manual. The feedback will come in the form of verbal communication or through a project evaluation form that will be developed during the maturity of the project itself. The project evaluation form will focus on the following: (a) effectiveness of strategies, (b) the readability of the project, and (c) how well the five components of reading instruction are explained within the project. Both the verbal feedback and the project development form will provide invaluable information on the worthiness of the project. A long-term assessment of the project would be to see improved reading achievement scores of the children in which the strategies were used to teach reading.

Chapter Summary

This chapter included information about the target population, project development details, goals, and assessment of the guide on the five components of reading instruction. As noted in the chapter, the target population will be primarily reading teachers; however, parents with background knowledge or a strong interest in reading instruction will be able to use the manual as well. The goals of the project are to provide a manual to reading teachers as well as parents. In addition, the overall goal will be to see reading achievement in the elementary classroom. Reading achievement can be measured by increased standardized testing scores. The effectiveness and worthiness of the project will be measured by verbal feedback from colleges of the author and a project evaluation form.

Five Dimensional Reading

A Resource Manual for Educators and Parents



By

Karen Bixler

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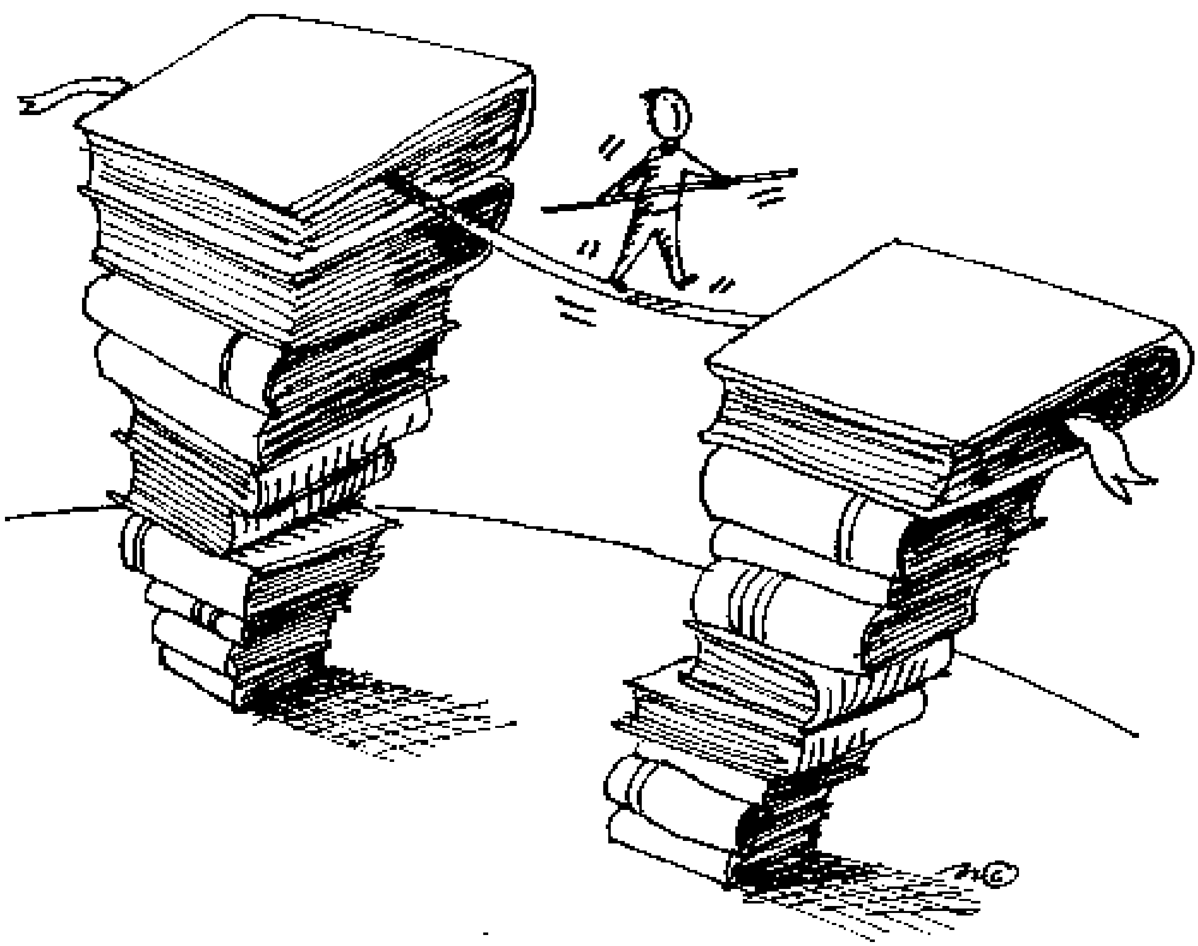
Objective

The purpose of this resource manual is to provide reading literacy information to elementary educators and parents. For educators, the manual serves as a guide to facilitate lesson planning in reading literacy; it also as provides information about the five components of reading. Additionally, the manual provides information about reading literacy to parents who seek to support their children as they are learning to read. The reading strategies explained in this manual include: (a) phonemic awareness, (b) phonics, (c) reading fluency, (d) vocabulary, and (e) comprehension.



Why the Five Components of Reading?

Members of the National Reading Panel (2000) issued a report expressing the need to identify key skills and methods central to reading achievement. The members of this panel reviewed research in reading instruction, primarily focusing on the critical years of kindergarten through fourth grade. Also identified in the report were methods and skills that relate to reading success. The methods include instructional strategies for phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension.

Three other agencies, the National Institute for Literacy, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and the U.S. Department of Education collaborated to make research available to educators, parents, policy-makers, and others with an interest in helping all people learn to read well. The findings of the collaborative effort of these agencies were published in the 2000 report of the National Reading Panel. This agency responded to a Congressional mandate to help educators, parents, and policy makers identify key skills and instructional strategies central to reading achievement. All of this was in an effort to address the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 instituted in the last couple of years by U.S. government agencies during the Bush administration.

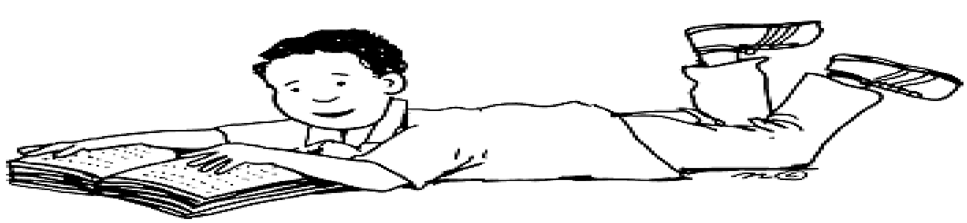
In addition to identifying effective teaching practices regarding reading instruction, the work of the National Reading Panel challenges educators to consider the evidence of effectiveness whenever decisions are made about the content and structure of reading instruction programs. Because of this, teachers can learn about and emphasize approaches and strategies that have worked well in the classroom and caused reading improvement as well as achievement in all academic areas for large numbers of children. Experts agree that much improvement is needed with reading instruction within the school system, and by targeting “what works” instruction with the guidance of the research-based five components of reading, the incidence of reading success should increase (NRP, 2000).

Extensive research supports the effectiveness of the five essential components as strategies for effective reading instruction. The National Reading Panel conducted extensive research about effective practices and identified strategies based on the five components as essential and effective to reading instruction (NRP, 2000). The findings were later adopted by the No Child Left Behind Act as the basis for reading instruction in the United States (NRP, 2000).

What is Phonemic Awareness?

Phonemic awareness is often referred to by professionals as the foundation of reading, much like the foundation walls on a house. It is the foundation upon which skills are built. Without phonemic awareness, children will experience difficulty with the other components of reading. Share & Stanovich (1995, as cited in Salinger, 2003) stated "research has shown repeatedly children who lack phonemic awareness experience difficulty learning to read" (p.2).

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds in a spoken language. Children who can segment words (break words apart sound by sound) and then blend the sounds back together by hearing and saying them, will become more successful readers than children who have difficulty with this skill (Pikes Peak Literacy Strategies Project (PPLSP), 2005). Through proper phonemic awareness instruction, children learn that words are made up of single speech sounds called phonemes. Then, taking reading instruction a step further, children will learn, through phonics that sounds are connected to symbols called graphemes of the English language. Another way to explain grapheme is it is the smallest part of a written language that represents a phoneme in the spelling of a word. A grapheme may be just one letter, such as *b, d, f*; or several letters, such as *ch, th, ea, -igh.* "Phonemic awareness and phonics have a reciprocal relationship; developing skills in one area helps the other…" (PPLSP, 2005, p.13).



Phonemic Awareness Instructional Strategies

Phonemic awareness is not a difficult component to teach. However, if child is having difficulty grasping phonemic awareness skills, strategies must be reinforced and reviewed before moving on to other skills as phonemic awareness is the foundation.

Phoneme Isolation Strategies

Phoneme isolation is a strategy used to isolate individual sounds in a word. For example, the word *man* has three sounds, /m/, /a/, /n/. One useful instructional strategy teachers and parents can use includes writing one phoneme on one note card for each phoneme in a particular word and line the cards up in the sequential order of the word. The note cards will demonstrate how many sounds are in a word. Point to the various cards and have the child isolate the sound that go with a particular card. Repeat with different words on a daily basis until mastery is demonstrated.

Another instructional strategy involves making a game that can be used in a group setting (as in a classroom) or even on a bus or car that can be played between just two children. The first player says a word and the next player has to say a word that begins with the same sound the first player's word ends with (PPLSP, 2005). For example, *most*, *stop*, *pig*, and *get* all demonstrate words that follow a phonemic awareness pattern.

A simple way to reinforce phonemic awareness is to simply ask a child to isolate the sounds, such as "What is the first sound in lion?" One of the easiest ways to demonstrate phonemic awareness to a child is to model and show them exactly what is expected several times before they are tasked to demonstrate the skill on his or her own.

Phoneme Identity Strategies

Phoneme identity is the ability to identify the same sounds in multiple words. Successful modeling of this strategy insures success for each student. Simply playing a game by asking, "Which sound is the same in *hat, hot* and *hunt*?" is a fun and purposeful way to reinforce reading skills. A child should respond by saying the sound /h/. Again, this can be played in a classroom setting; a parent may want to facilitate this game in a car or at the dinner table. It does not require any special equipment. One can choose beginning, middle, or ending sounds to play this game.

Another identity strategy involves the use of color counters or cards. Each card will represent a different sound of a word. Say the various sounds in a word and put the cards down on a table. A rectangle may also be drawn and divided into sections that represent the sounds. Assign colors to the various sounds. Say several words, and have the child point to the colored cards that have the same sounds.

Phoneme Categorization Strategy

The categorization strategy is used to recognize a word that has a different sound in a set of words. For example, *mat*, *pot*, and *pig* could be a set of words given verbally to a child. The child should recognize that *pig* does not belong because *mat* and *pot* both end in a /t/ sound and pig ends in a /g/ sound.

Phoneme Blending

Phoneme blending is simply combining phonemes in a sequence that will form a word. A two letter word could be utilized or as the child becomes more proficient, a more complex word with many more phonemes could be utilized. An example of phoneme blending is the word *ran* broken into phonemes, /r/, /a/, /n/. The child would then blend the phonemes together to make the word *ran*. Using the colored note card placed into a sectioned rectangle and pointing to the cards representing the different phonemes is a way to reinforce this skill.

Phoneme Segmentation

Segmentation is just the opposite of blending. Take a word like *sat* and have a child "break" it into its separate phonemes. The word *sat* would break apart like this manner: /s/, /a/, /t/. This game can be played with a whole classroom of children by having all children stand with each child giving a phoneme in the appropriate sequence around the room. It can also be played as a game between two children by having each child segment various words. The same type of game can be applied to blending phonemes.

Phoneme Deletion

The task of deletion of phonemes takes place when a child is able to recognize a word that remains when a phoneme is removed. For example, when the /s/ is removed from the word *stop*, then the word becomes *top*. With repeated practice, a child should master the deletion task, which will aid is his or her ability to read successfully. Another way to teach the segmentation strategy is through the hands-on technique using colored note cards again. Place different colored note cards representing different phonemes into a rectangle which is divided into sections. The sequence of the cards should represent all the phonemes that are contained in particular word. Do not place letters on the note cards because the cards are representing the sounds and not the symbols of the letters. Verbally say the word to the child, pointing to the card that represents each phoneme. Then have the child remove one card that you select and ask the child to identify the new word. This task is typically not as simple as some of the others and may require more repeated practice.

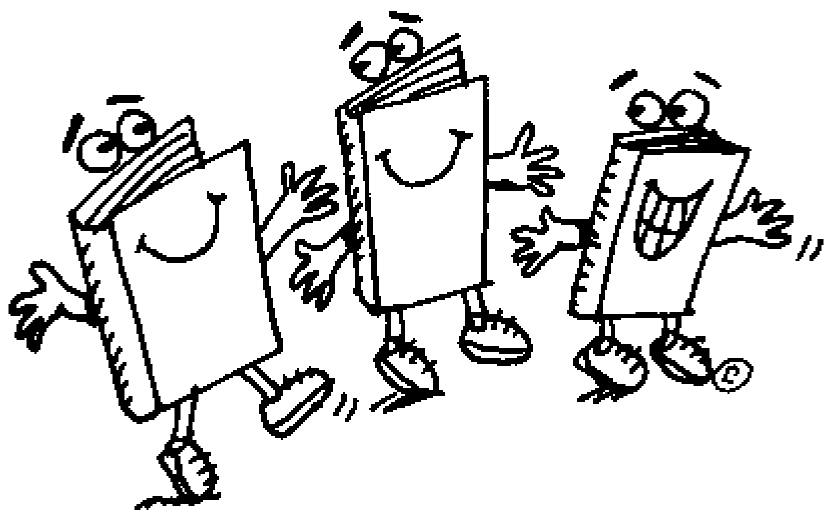
Phoneme Addition

Phoneme addition is the opposite of the deletion task. Add a phoneme to an existing word that will form a new word. For example, the word *air* becomes *hair* when the phoneme /h/ is added. Similar games that are played with the deletion task can be applied to the addition task.

Phoneme Substitution

Finally, the substitution task is another strategy to enhance reading skills. Substitution strategy involves substituting one phoneme for another to make a new word. If you take the word *ran* and substituted the phoneme /n/ with the phoneme /g/, the new word would be *rug*. This strategy, as with all of the phonemic awareness strategies, can be completed through one on one direct instruction or games played that include a whole classroom of children. For one on one instruction, ask the child to simply substitute phonemes that will result in new words. For a classroom setting, a word game can be played in that students are asked to come up with as many words as possible using the substitution task. Specific words can be given or by using a more open format, children are given many choices from which to choose. The task can be timed and then the words discussed. Other children will get to see what words their peers have developed. This strategy is a great way to expand on the substitution task with a simple word game. As with all the strategies, the games that can be played are endless if you put your mind to it.

As you can see, each phonemic awareness strategy is related in one way or another. Modeling and providing children ample opportunities to practice the relationships they are learning will increase the success children are having while learning to read.



What is Phonics?

Teaching phonics means teaching children to understand the connection between sounds of the spoken language and the letters of the written language. The English language has many irregularities. Learning phonics provides a firm foundation for reading most words and for learning strategies to decode the irregularities (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001). “To benefit from phonics instruction, children must be able to draw on the basic premises of phonemic awareness…” Salinger, 2003, p.2). Though the research of the Pikes Peak Literacy Strategies Project (2003), as cited in Libberman (1974), many educators are finding the following strategies very effective in phonics instruction. Phonics instruction entails working with consonants, vowels, word families, compound words, affixes, and syllabication skills.

Phonics Instructional Strategies

Consonant Instruction

Several strategies have proven effective when teaching consonant skills. Children must be familiar with individual consonants, doubled consonants, consonant blends, diagraphs, and silent consonants to be successful readers.

Individual Consonants

Individual consonants are the sounds that are produced by the tongue changing the air flow out of the mouth. Typical instruction includes modeling how each consonant feels and looks as it is pronounced. A mirror works well as a child can watch how to say, for instance, the phoneme /d/. Additionally playing games that match letters to the sounds they make can be effective. A BINGO-type of game works well. The teacher says the sound and the child find the letter it corresponds to on a BINGO card.

Doubled Consonants

Doubled consonants make one sound, but are spelled with two of the same consonants. It is important for children to know the spelling rule of doubling consonants. The spelling rule of *f, l,* and *s* is the word will typically be one syllable and the vowel will be a short sound. The ending of the word will have a double constant using *f, l,* or *s.* While keeping this skill in mind facilitate a word hunt and relate it back to the spelling rule.

Consonant Blends

When two different consonants blend together, they become a consonant blend. Note, however, that each sound can still be heard. For example, *tr-*, *fl-*, *sm-*, *st-*, or *–mp* are typical blends. The hyphen before or after the blend means more letters, to include vowel(s), precedes the blend or comes after the blend. To facilitate instruction in the blend skill area, find text that incorporates many blends and read with a child. Take the various blended words found in the text and write on a board and practice blending rather that segmenting the blend. Other games can be played such as a word hunt game with text or made up text, BINGO, or even a card game.

Diagraphs

A diagraph sounds complicated; it is simply two consonants together that make a completely different sound than what the letter symbol dictates. For instance, *ch, sh, th, wh,* and *ph* make one sound rather than making a segmented sound. Children who have not had significant exposure and practice with diagraphs tend to segment the two letters. When this happens, words do not make sense and fluency and comprehension is compromised. Here again, games as mentioned above or heavy influence of text exposure will aid in teaching diagraphs. Modeling and practice is the key to diagraph instruction.

Silent Consonants

Silent consonants can be difficult if a child has not had exposure and practice as well. Silent consonants are words that contain consonants that are silent. An example would be the infamous letters *k, b,* and *g*. Actual words might include *knife*, *comb*, and *gnaw*. A purposeful way to help a child with this skill is to model, practice and read with the child. When reading with a child, it is appropriate to help the child decode words with silent consonants by telling them which letter is silent. Otherwise, he or she might want to decode the word, including the letter that is supposed to be silent. The word then does not make sense. Though repetition, children will remember those silent consonant letters and become better readers and spellers.

Vowels, Vowels and More Vowels Instruction

Teaching children the rules that encompass vowels can be difficult. Unlike consonants, one vowel can make several different sounds. The various skills in vowel instruction include short vowels and long vowels.

Short Vowels

Before addressing vowel instruction, be sure the child is thoroughly familiar with /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/, and sometimes /y/. A child must understand these letters are deemed vowels and they can make several different sounds. Though phonemic awareness instruction, a child should be familiar with the different sounds each vowel can make and recite back the sounds when asked to do so.

There is one basic rule when it comes to short vowel sounding words. Often this rule is referred to as closed syllables. This rule dictates that, when one vowel is present and followed by a consonant in a word or a syllable of a word, the vowel then makes the short vowel sound, otherwise known as the sound other than its name. Effective ways of having children find the syllables in a word include having the child put the back side of his or her hand under the chin and pronounce the word. Each time the chin drops while feeling this with the back side of the hand is determined a syllable. Each syllable will have a vowel in it. After a multisyllable word is broken into syllables, determine if the vowel is closed (there is a consonant following the vowel). If so, then the vowel will be a short sound. If not, then the vowel will be a long sound. For example, a one syllable word like *mat* is considered closed because the letter /t/ is a part of the syllable and closes in the /a/. Therefore, the /a/ has a short sound. A multisyllable word like *context* can be broken into two syllables, con-text. The first syllable *con* is closed by the /n/, which makes the o short. The second syllable is also closed by the /x/ and /t/ making the /e/ short. Repeated readings and repetition using flash cards can support children in understanding this rule. Also making up nonsense words can help reiterate the skill. Additionally, reading with a child and helping them decode is a very effective strategy.

Long Syllables

There are several rules to teach when working with long vowels. First, the silent /e/ (often referred to as the magic /e/) is typically very easy for children to understand. This is when a word ends in a /e/; the /e/ at the end is silent and makes the vowel before it say its name, which is a long sound. A best practice when teaching this is to model the skill, and then keep reminding as a child reads. They will soon remember this skill demonstrating mastery. Another long vowel skill is the double vowel, such as in *green*; the vowel sound is usually long. There are exceptions to this rule. Take the word *been* and notice the vowels do not make a long sound. Remind children that English rules work most of the time, but on occasion, they will not work and children will have to use context clues to help them decode words. Context clues will be discussed in the comprehension section of the manual.

Like a consonant diagraph, a vowel diagraph is seen when two vowels are paired with the end result being a new sound. An example would be the words *heat*, and *pain*. Notice the vowels that are paired do not make their each individual sound. Typically, when two vowels are paired, the first one says its name to make a long vowel sound and the second remains silent. A well-known rhyme to reinforce this skill is as follows: "When two vowels go walking, the first one starts talking." This rhyme can be a fun way for children to remember this rule. Keep in mind that the rule does not apply to all words; remind children of this. Another way to teach this skill is to isolate diagraph vowel words on a wipe-off board and analyze with children. Again, reading and helping a child decode is always good practice.

The letter /r/ plays an important role when teaching vowel skills. This skill is known as the controlled /r/; often referred to as the bossy /r/. When a vowel comes before a /r/, then the /r/ impacts how the vowel will sound. Some sounds may include *–ir, -or, ar, -ur,* or *–er*. Some example words include: *start, shirt, short, hurt, and her*. Constant repetition and reminding children of the /r/ rule works well. Games can also be played such as "Go-Fish" or BINGO to reinforce the bossy /r/ skill. When a child comes to a bossy /r/ word and wants to say each phoneme in a segmented pattern, then remind the child of the skill and have him/her say the word several times pointing to the bossy /r/ pattern.

Long vowel words will often have open syllables in them. An open syllable means there is not a consonant behind the vowel to close it, which would make the vowel have a short sound. Like short closed syllable words, it is a good idea for children to "feel" the syllables with the back of their hands. This will help them "break" words into syllables and properly decode. Then they can determine if the syllable is open or closed, which will indicate a long or short sound for the vowel. For instance, the word *open* is two syllables, *o-pen*. The /o/ does not have a consonant behind it to tell it to be a short sound; therefore it will be long. The *pen* portion of the word is closed by the /n/ making the /e/ have a short sound. The "sometimes" /y/ vowel has a part in the open vowel skill. When the /y/ comes at the end of a word as in *baby,* the sound will be a long /e/. The word *baby* can be broken into to syllables, *ba-by*. The *ba* is open and the /a/ says its name; the *by* is open, so the /y/ would be pronounced with a long /e/. Teach these various long vowel rules though repetition and practice. Again, wipe-off boards where words can be isolated and analyzed work well.

Compound Words

Though good reading instruction, children should recognize compound words when they are decoding. A compound word is one word made up of several words that could stand alone. Some examples of compound words are *playhouse, snowman,* and *icebox*. Using the hand technique as mentioned above to locate syllables will help a child identify a compound word. Using both open and closed strategies to determine the sound of the vowel will also help children decode compound words. While teaching compound words, have the child identify the smaller words within the compound word. Having them use the word in context also is effective. Eventually, the goal would be to have a child just by glancing as the text, determine that the word has two smaller words contained and is a compound word.

Word Families

Word families are words that have a rhyming pattern. They are also referred to as phonograms by educators. For the simpler strategy, creating lists of words that rhyme with the same pattern works well. For example, *ran*, *pan*, and *can* all rhyme and follow the same pattern. To take it a step further, put in a word like *hat* and determine if children can pick it out as the word that does not follow the pattern. For the more complex words like *sought, wrought,* and *brought*, the same skill can be applied. Another great way to reinforce this skill is use text that specifically works with word families. Having children pick out word family words while decoding can be very effective.

Affixes

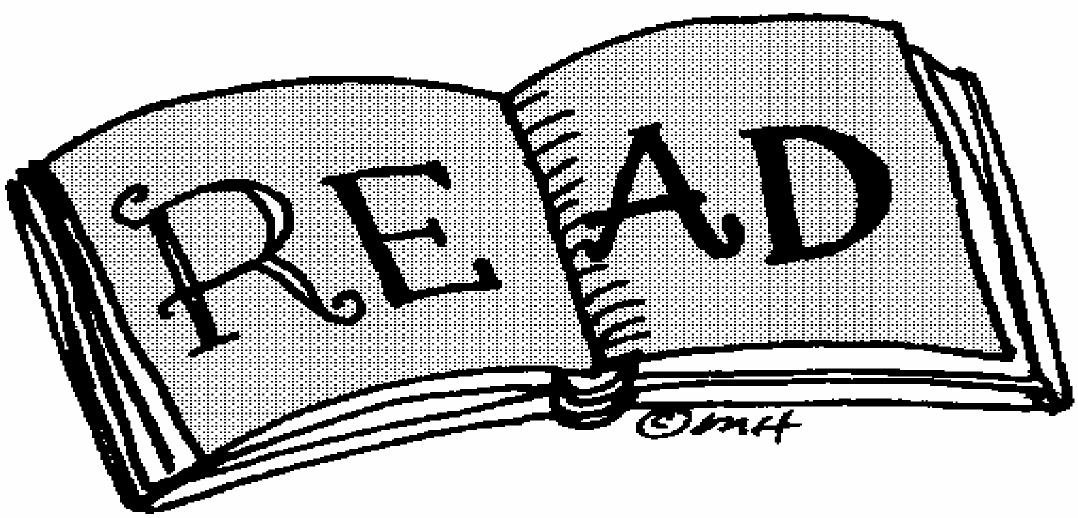
An affix is the grouping of letters that come before or after a word that may affect the meaning of the root or base word. Affixes are considered a prefix, letters that come before the base word, or suffix, letters that come after a base word to make up a new word. Words with affixes can have a prefix, suffix or both. Example affix words include *<u>mis</u>use*, *<u>re</u>mind*, *help<u>ful</u>*, *pave<u>ment</u>*, and *<u>im</u>prove<u>ment</u>*. The portion underlined is the affix and the potion not underlined is the base word.

Teaching children the specific meaning of prefixes and suffixes can help them understand the meaning of words with affixes. One way to teach this is to first introduce prefixes and suffixes and give their meanings. Write the meaning on a separate note card and the suffix or prefix on a different note card. Shuffle all cards and play a game of memory where cards are laid face down and children have to match the meaning to the prefix or suffix. Common prefixes to teach include: *un, re, in, im, il, dis, en, em, non,over, mis, sub, pre, inter, de, trans, super, semi, anti, mid,* and *under*. Common suffixes to teach include*: s, es, ed, ing, ly, er, or, tion, ion, ation, al, ial, y, ness, ful, ment, ous, ious, en, ive, ative, less* and *est.* The definition of actual prefixes and suffixes can be found in a dictionary. After children understand how prefixes and suffixes can change the meaning of words, have them use it in context while reading text and identifying words with affixes.

Syllabication

Syllabication encompasses the above phonics information and strategies and synthesizes this information for students. Direct instruction of the six syllable types is an effective way to teach children reading and spelling skills. For effective results, direct instruction of the six syllable types should be taught in the following sequence: closed syllable, open syllable, silent *e*, diagraph (vowel team), controlled *r,* and the consonant-*le.*   The first five syllable types have been discussed above, the sixth, consonant-*le* is equally as important and only deals with words that end in *le.* This can be done though repetition and identifying *le* words within text.

Various strategies work well for syllabication. One strategy is to write word on a wipe-off board breaking it into its syllables. After reviewing the six syllable types and practicing, have children identify which of the six syllable types each syllable contains. Then have children pronounce the word using the rules associated with the six syllable types. This strategy can be reversed by giving students the word and telling them the syllable types and having them write down the word spacing it indicating syllables. Another strategy for beginning readers is to write syllables on note cards and have them arrange into words that make sense. Don't give to many words within a stack of note cards because this can become overwhelming.   Again, feeling the jaw drop with the back of the hand is a great way to segment words into syllables. For beginning readers, using mirrors to help with visual cues will aid in understanding that each syllable has only one vowel sound even though there may be several vowel letters. By using syllabication and phonics skills, children will have a better understanding of the decoding process and their journey to becoming successful readers will be increased.



What is Fluency?

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000) states, “fluency is characterized by the ability to read with expression and the reader begins to recognize not just single words, but grammatical units such as phrases, clauses, and punctuation, that gives text its tone and cadence.” It is the ability to read text quickly and accurately. According to reading experts, Arbruster, Lehr, and Osborn (2001) students should be fluent at texts that are deemed appropriate at their grade level. A text that is highly technical may even be difficult for a proficient adult reader. Through fluent reading of text, the reader and listener are better able to understand what is being read and comprehension takes place. Comprehension is the overall goal to successful reading.

Thus far, phonemic awareness, phonics, and now fluency are the stepping stones to the ultimate goal of comprehension.

Fluency Instructional Strategies

The PPLSP (2003), through research, formulated successful strategies that may be used at home or in the classroom for fluency instruction. These strategies will be paraphrased in this manual. Accuracy, automaticity and speed, and expression and prosody are the skill areas addressed in the fluency section. You will find these strategies helpful and effective when teaching them to children.

Accuracy

Accuracy is the ability to correctly break words into parts using phonemic awareness and phonics skills. Part of reading accurately is self-correcting when mistakes are made. Accuracy entails correct sound and letter recognition. Children who typically stumble on words show a pattern where it may be related to a phonics issue. Document the words a child stumbles over during a reading of a passage and analyze the words he or she is having difficulty with. It may be that going back and reteaching phonemic awareness skills may help this issue. Another area of difficulty is when children incorrectly say words, letters, or even objects. One way to help enhance this area of accuracy is to name a particular category such as food. Come up with several (five to seven) words that pertain to this category. Say the list of words and have the child repeat them back to you quickly in the same order. Also having speed drills in which a child reads letters, words or identifies objects on a page is effective. This strategy forces the child to pay attention to detail and strive for perfection. Repeated reading is a wonderful strategy to help build accuracy. You may even time the reading and document the errors to see the improvement. Having a child graph their success on a chart will reinforce the desire to do well. Another wonderful strategy is to help the child build accuracy by pointing to the words as he or she reads. If a child says a word incorrectly, point to it again. After a few attempts, help the child decode the word.

Automaticity / Speed

Speed is the name of the game! Without speed, a passage can sound choppy which impacts the ability to understand what is being read. Choppy reading can be especially difficult for a listener to comprehend the material as well as the reader. Automaticity is the ability to have automatic letter - sound relationships, and the ability to have automatic recognition of words and objects. Automaticity is accomplished through repetition. For example, putting word families onto flash cards and drilling students will make them more automatic with those particular words. Using a stopwatch to time a child will aid with some of the drilling activities. By the third grade, high frequency words should be automatic for children. Children should not have to stop and decode these words. Choosing short passages that contain the majority of the high frequency words and having the child reread the passage five to ten times will reinforce the automaticity skill. Books on tape are a great way to model good automaticity and speed. Choral reading, which is reading together at the same time, will help a child to keep pace and become faster. Using a phrase to phrase method works well with beginning readers. Scoop under the phase a child should read in one breath. Keep doing it throughout a passage and the repeat using the same passage. After rereading several times while scooping phrases, have the child read it independently while you listen to ensure he/she understands automaticity and speed skills.

Suggested reading speeds on independent-level text based on the research conducted by the members of the PPLSP (2003), as adapted from Hasbrouck &Tindal (1992) and Opiz & Raninski (1998) are as follows:

Grade	Words per minute on independent level
1	60-80
2	80-95
3	90-115
4	100-140
5	105-160
6	115-180
7	125-190
8	135-200

To find the child's independent level, word recognition should be at 95% or higher and comprehension should be at 90% or higher. Both word recognition and comprehension are called the accuracy rate. The above reading speeds are for children being tested on the independent level material. Through repeated readings of the same text, a child should be building fluency through focusing on accuracy and speed.

Expression and Prosody

Fluency not only requires reading accuracy and at the appropriate speed, but it also requires children to read with expression and prosody. Expression is when a child is able to read text and make it should like a conversation. It also is the use of correct punctuation and the ability to divide text into meaningful chunks while reading. According to the members of the PPLSP (2003), "Prosody is associated with rhythm, meter, and verse, and comes into play frequently when reading poetry or lyrical phrase."

Reading with expression and prosody is needed if a child reads in a monotone manner. Often children will sound like a robot or be very choppy. Modeling good expression and then having a student repeat back what you modeled is a great way to show how phrases should sound. Another strategy is having a child read into a tape recorder and then play it back. A child will quickly learn that he/she may sound choppy and be convinced this is an area that needs improvement. Repeating tape recorded readings can show improvement and be very motivational to children. Having children read plays and take turns reading the various parts of the play promotes fluency as well. Text segmentation provides children a guide that will assist them when knowing when to pause. Another name for this strategy is phrase reading. To accomplish this, take a passage that is at the child's independent level and segment it into smaller phrases by putting slashes in the place where it is natural to pause. Give the passage to a child and model reading the segmented text emphasizing the natural pause locations. Have the child take a turn and continue to practice for mastery and understanding. Finally, reading rhythmical poems or lyrics can help children build fluency. Using choral reading (teacher and child read together) works well when using rhythmical material. The key to building fluent readers is repetition and even more repetition!

What is Vocabulary?

Vocabulary refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively. In general terms, vocabulary can be described as oral vocabulary or reading vocabulary. Oral vocabulary refers to words that we use in speaking or recognize while listening. Reading vocabulary refers to words we recognize or use in print (Armbuster, Lehr, &Osborn, 2001). Students who have good comprehension skills can recognize many words automatically, and they have the skills and strategies to figure out many unfamiliar words. Often these students have vocabularies that are broader and deeper so they can connect what they read to their background knowledge (Salinger, 2003). Vocabulary can be developed directly and indirectly. “When students engage in daily oral language, listen to adults read to them, and read extensively on their own…” (Armbruster et al, 2001), vocabulary will be enhanced. These activities would be how children develop vocabulary indirectly. The direct approach is through direct instruction of vocabulary or vocabulary enhancing activities. Vocabulary is an important key to effectively comprehend the written or spoken language.

Vocabulary Instructional Strategies

Obviously, the more a child reads or is read to, the more he or she will be exposed to vocabulary. This great indirect strategy encourages reading a wide variety of material. However, direct instruction should also occur so a child is exposed to more vocabulary. Through direct instruction a child should apply words correctly, bring meaning to text, and build word knowledge. The following strategies are found successful through the research conducted by the members of the PPLSP (2003).

Application

The ability to appropriately apply known words in spoken or written form is considered the application phase of vocabulary development. One strategy that works well is having students develop a written word bank. The word bank would be used for unfamiliar words as a reference guide. New words can be added and old words may be reviewed on a frequent basis. A strategy that incorporates the word bank is to teach children to "sticky" note unfamiliar words when reading and then add these words to their word bank. Children should list the word and definition. To take the word bank further, one can have children show how the word is used in context or how it is used in context in the passage. There are so many variations on how to do a word bank. Other ideas include noting synonyms, antonyms, feature analysis, metaphors or developing the words using a web with each leg being one of aforementioned items. Watching television programs that are rich in history or science will help expose the reader to new words and then discuss the new vocabulary. Avoiding "baby talk" and using more advanced vocabulary around children can also develop application skills. This indirect approach can easily be turned into a direct approach by discussing words you are using with the child. Additionally, try to avoid simple words like "things, and "stuff." Picking newspapers to read can really challenge a child. Having them read an article from a newspaper can expose children to a wide variety of new words since most articles are written for adults and include more advanced vocabulary. Using vocabulary word walls can encourage the use and risk taking of the new words. Crossword puzzles can also be a helpful tool, especially for multiple meaning words. This strategy presents an opportunity for further study of particular words.

Meaning

Meaning is the ability to use background knowledge and context clues to gain understanding when reading unfamiliar material.

Morphemic Analysis

One useful strategy is through morphemic analysis. This strategy deals with using affixes to help bring meaning to words. Before using this strategy, children must be familiar with breaking words into parts so they are able to pick out any prefixes or suffixes. Teach only a couple prefixes or suffixes at a time so children do not get overwhelmed. Introduce the meaning of the prefix or suffix you are teaching and then attach the affix to a root word. Discuss how it changed the meaning of that word. Using affixes can bring meaning to words and assist a child when trying to figure out the meaning of words. See the Phonics Instructional Strategies/Affixes section for a list of common affixes that you can review and teach that will compliment the morphemic analysis strategy.

Context Clues

Another strategy is to teach children to use context clues to discover the meaning of passages with difficult vocabulary. Educators struggle to teach children to move from the unknown word to the sentence or phase the word is found in and attempt to bring meaning so comprehension can occur. This strategy is called using context clues. Reminding a student to use context clues and going back and questioning themselves about a difficult word helps the reader become successful with this strategy. Picture clues can also be good context clues to use. Additionally, using word substitution while the student uses context clues can help decipher the meaning of a passage. To use this strategy, have the child substitute another word that he or she knows in the place of the difficult word to see if the phrase makes sense. Depending on how technical the text is, the word substitution strategy may not work.

Vocabulary Preview

Vocabulary preview is a great way to introduce new words. The preview strategy should be used before children read a book, passage, or even article. It can even be completed if a class is going on a field trip to a certain place and specific words may need to be a part of the background knowledge. To use the preview strategy, simply review the meaning, possible morphemic elements, and feature analysis of the identified word. This activity will give children some background knowledge of the word before they attempt to read and comprehend it in a passage.

Graphic Organizers

Using graphic organizers is a wonderful way for children to organize information related to vocabulary development. The use of sematic maps and sematic feature analysis works well for children who can memorize words and their meanings, but have difficulty applying in context. This strategy comes in handy when working with multiple meaning words.

The use of a web technique is one example of a graphic organizer. To use a web, put the identified word in a circle then draw lines coming out from the edges of the circle. It looks something like a top view of a spider with an assortment of legs. Each leg will stand for a sematic feature like antonym, synonym, analogies, definitions, examples, metaphors, and even drawing a picture can help bring understanding of the identified word. Students are more likely to remember identified words when the word in question is studied in depth and mapped like the above example. You may notice the child attempting to use the word in conversation or in writing after an in depth study.

Another variation of this strategy is to use a T-chart to demonstrate multiple meanings of words. For example, put a word like *watch* on the top of a line. Then draw a line from beneath the top line to the bottom of a page. It will look like a T. On one side of the line have the child define one variation of the word *watch*. He or she might write "to see something." Then in the same space have the child draw out the definition. On the other side of the T, have the child write another definition of the word *watch*, which he or she might write "a device used to tell time that is worn on the wrist." Again, have the child draw a picture of the definition in the same space as the definition. The use of graphic organizers can steadily enhance the knowledge base of various words and is a handy tool to help a child organize their ideas for words as well.

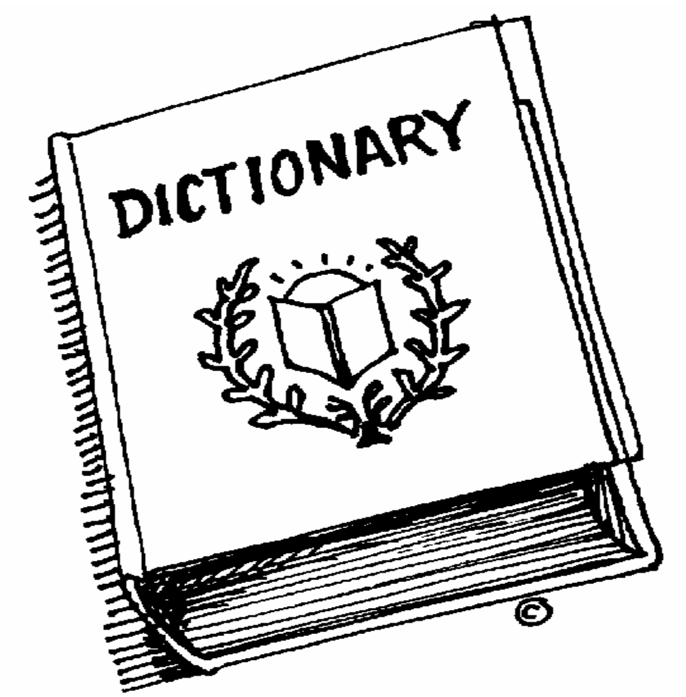
Concept maps are a useful strategy to introduce richer vocabulary when a "big" idea is being presented. Using the web technique, T-chart, outlines, or even simple lists are great ways to introduce the vocabulary associated with a particular subject. This strategy is like doing a vocabulary preview, but can be done using a graphic organizer.

Word Knowledge

Word knowledge is the final component of vocabulary development. When a child has the ability to apply and recognize words, word families, compound words, syllables, affixes, etc., then the child has a good grasp of word knowledge. Within this component of vocabulary, analyzing the parts of words (affixes and root words) can enhance the meaning of a word. Children will have difficulty and a limited vocabulary if they are unable to break words into meaningful chunks using word families, compound words, and affixes. Though the study of these areas, children will understand words more in depth and transfer it to reading and writing activities. The following strategies are supported by the members who developed the PPLSP (2003).

Using Common Resources

Children who are exposed to dictionaries, thesauruses, glossaries, and word banks tend to have a greater depth of experience and understanding when it comes to word knowledge. Teaching children how to use these items is equally as important. Children cannot be expected to understand what each resource could be used for and how to use it if not shown. When teaching the dictionary or glossary skills, be sure to model finding the word and then matching up the word with the appropriate definition in context. Children need to understand that an abundance of the words in the English language have multiple meanings. In addition, remember to teach for quality and not quantity. The retention of new words is lost if the number being presented is too great. Constant daily practice will help build vocabulary.



Memory Devices

Often, children who have difficulty retaining information will do well with such memory devices as keywords, visualization, and associations. Playing memory games such as Charades or Pictionary can assist with rapid, long-term retention of new words. Another way to reinforce retention skills is to have children draw a picture that relates to a new vocabulary word. This technique may trigger a memory pattern if a child sees the same word again later.

Word Play with the Arts

Research has shown that there are multiple pathways and regions of the brain that are dedicated to music, drama, dance and physical action (PPLSP, 2003 as stated in Stal, 1983). Playing word games that involve music, drama or even dance can enhance learning and retention of word study. Children can create raps, songs, or skits that involve new vocabulary words. Another way to increase retention is to have the children sing along with a prerecorded CD that may go over new words and their meanings. These kinds of CD's can be found at local school supply stores.

What is Comprehension?

Comprehension

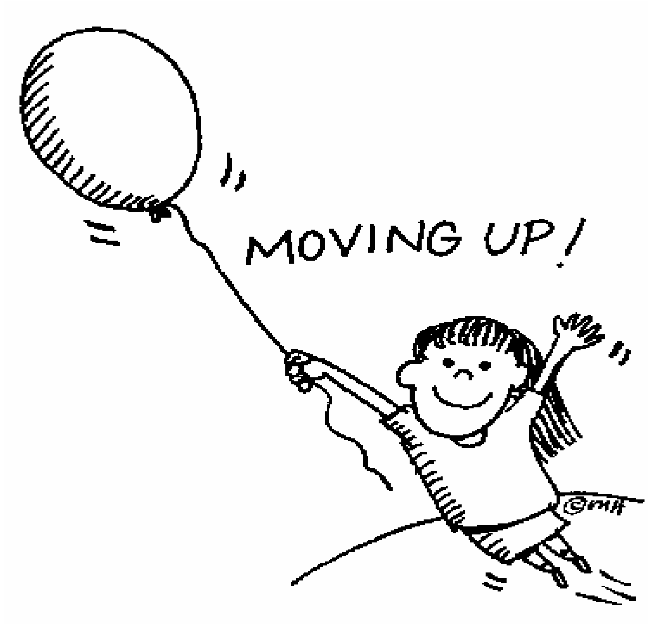
Reading is not just reciting word, but it is more a skill that brings meaning to the printed symbols or letters and words (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Comprehension is the ultimate goal of the rationale of why people read. Basically, "Comprehension is the reason for reading. If readers can read the words, but do not understand what they are reading, then they are not really reading" (Armbruster et al., 2001, p. 49). "We want students to not only understand what they read, but also enjoy texts, interpret them, and apply their learning from reading to other areas" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Research has shown that instruction in comprehension skills can assist students with understanding what they read, communicate with others about what was read, and remember what was read. (The Partnership for Reading, 2001).

Armbuster, Lehr, & Osborn (2001) state that "good readers are both purposeful and active." Having a purpose for reading is important, and readers must recognize this fact. Good readers determine the purpose for gathering information or simply entertaining the mind for pleasure. This important skill is necessary for readers to determine before engaging in reading. Good readers are also active. Reading requires focus on what is being read. During active reading, readers use their background knowledge of the world, knowledge of vocabulary and language structure, and reading strategies. In addition, good readers recognize when problems occur with understanding and engage strategies to resolve these problems (Armbruster et al. 2001, p. 48).

Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary are the stepping stones that lead the way for comprehension. Salinger (2003) observed that:

> "Poor readers experience comprehension problems because they cannot accurately or fluently identify words in a text. If they stop to decode a large percentage of the words they encounter, their energy and attention are diverted from the important task of making meaning. They think they have actually read the text, but they have not understood it. Other poor comprehenders lack the background knowledge to understand what they read and do not possess the strategies to activate what they know (p.3).

When comprehension occurs, the ultimate goal of reading has occurred and success takes place.



Comprehension Instructional Strategies

The following comprehension strategies are supported by the members of the PPLSP (2003) and Harvey & Goudvis (2000). These strategies include making connections, questioning, visualizing, inferring, and synthesizing.

Making Connections and Questioning

"Readers naturally make connections between books and their own lives" (Harvey &Goudvis, 2000, p.52). When children can relate personal experiences to text material, then comprehension will more likely occur than if a child cannot relate to the book.

PPLSP members added that making connections can happen through text to text, text to self, and text to world approaches. Text to text happens when children connect big ideas to themes across various texts. Text to self occurs when children link reading material to their own experiences. Text to world connections occurs when children relate the text to world activities that will build historical understandings (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000).

Background knowledge and Schema Activation

Text to self connections can be taught through teaching the child to use and apply his or her background knowledge and through schema activation. To teach schema activation you should ask questions that may relate to the big ideas of the story that you know the child has some background knowledge. The questions can be formulated before reading a passage or during the reading of a passage. Additionally, it would be helpful to have children make predictions before reading the text. Children should be given instruction on types of questions to pose when reading a text to enhance comprehension. These types of questions should not have yes or no answers, but answers that children will be able to elaborate on. Predictions may also be made as the text is being read. Modeling this strategy can be effective and will show children that it is important to try to relate the text to background knowledge and life experiences. Another strategy to use to enhance text to self comprehension is to introduce a nonfiction reading book by using fictional picture books. In a classroom, this can be done by using picture books as a whole group sharing activity and then having children read nonfiction novels or textbooks about the same topic. Though the use of fictional picture books, children will relate the nonfiction to the picture book and you will have built additional background knowledge before going in depth in a certain area. In addition, make sure to bring children's experiences into a book through good questioning and having children eventually formulate their own questions.

Text to text connections can be taught by providing multiple texts around a topic for student to conduct research and experience. Relating material on a certain topic to another text is very difficult for students to accomplish. Modeling text to text relationships is one of the best ways to teach this strategy. Providing graphic organizers such as a Venn diagram (compare and contrast chart) or T-charts as discussed above can be helpful tools when teaching comprehension strategies. Another great graphic organizer to use is a story map, which includes categories like character, setting, events, problem, and solution. These concepts can also be used when teaching text to world connections.

Making text to world connections is enhanced when students have some cultural background knowledge. It is important to expose children to various genres and material that include culturally diverse material. One strategy may include integrating hand-on activities such as building miniature adobes when discussing Indian homes. If you are studying Indians in social studies, you could integrate the subject area into reading by introducing a book that relates to how Indians lived. Text to world connections can also be accomplished though role-playing, skits and plays.

We all know that most children like to watch television. Instead of watching any show, provide movies or documentaries that are educational. Even biographies of famous people can be enriching and provides entertainment for a child as well.

Knowledge of Text Structure

It is important a child understand the various parts of a book before expecting to read and understand the material presented in the book. Teaching table of contents, chapter titles, section headings, boldface words, pictures and their captions, charts, diagrams, tables, glossaries, and index will help a child understand some differences between fiction and nonfiction elements as well as being able to preview for these items to help understanding. Teaching the features of nonlinear text will facilitate the ability to make connections. Children often believe that reading is simply reading text and not necessarily charts or even maps, for instance. They need to understand that this type of material is put in books to help with understanding and comprehension of the actual written language. It is as important as the words in a book. Children need to be taught how to read and interpret this type of material.

Locating the main idea is a form of text structure. Teaching children through the use of smaller passages to locate the main idea and then formulate questions about the main idea is a great way to decipher what is important and not important in a passage. Often the main idea will be presented in topic sentences or in chapter headings. However, children need to know that the main idea is not always found in these places. Children need to be taught to concentrate on what is being read and then ask, “What was the passage mainly about?”

Another strategy about text structure is to locate common transition words, commonly referred to as signal words. These are words that help paragraphs flow and keep the reader from getting “lost.” This concept will help a child organize the events in a book. Some common transition words include: *before*, *after*, *while*, *during*, etc. Providing children with a list of common transition words will help in reading comprehension and even writing. Additionally, providing short stories and having children highlight transition words can show the organization of a story and events of a story.

Understanding the difference between narrative format and expository format can be difficult for younger students. Narrative genre is a story that includes characters, setting, events, problem and solution. It also includes events that are in a sequence. Think of narrative like a movie that tells a story like the Disney production of *Lion King*. Expository texts have paragraphs of sentences about the same topic with a key sentence as the leading idea. Practice identifying narrative and expository elements and explaining their reasoning will help children grasp the difference between narrative and expository text.

Previewing a text through skimming and scanning can help children understand the type of book they are going to read and components of the book that may be useful while reading the book. This step is a simple and not a time consuming way to preview a book.

Visualizing Information

Visualizing can bring depth to understanding while reading. It is important to model the strategy of visualization so children can understand the importance.

Illustrations/ Picturing in Mind

Cue children to make mental images in their minds as they read. A great way to reinforce this is to have children draw pictures about what they are reading. Drawings can be about a character and how the character looks, or even the setting or an event. You then can look at the pictures and ask questions about why they interpreted the "character" this way. In addition, compare different children's drawings on the same topic and discuss the differences and what words may have clued them into making a character look a certain way, for instance.

Graphic Organizers

Once a child has completed various graphic organizers many times, they are usually able to visualize the organizer in their mind which will help comprehension. Practice this technique by reading a passage and having the children close their eyes while you read. Then, have the children apply the information to a "visual" graphic organizer and "plug" in the information you just read. Their eyes should still be shut since this is a paperless activity. It is all done in their minds. After a few minutes, have children open their eyes and discuss. This activity will help organize important information in their minds and get rid of the unimportant information which will also facilitate finding the main idea. Children are recalling information visually and then retelling when asked to discuss the information. You may be writing the ideas on a large white board while it is being discussed to reiterate the use of a particular graphic organizer. You may also instruct the children on which type of organizer to visualize or give a choice and then model on the board.

Inferring Information

Most information adults read requires some inferring. In order for a child to read more difficult material as they grow in reading, inferring information will be inevitable. Most young readers are able to locate literal information within a passage with direction. Literal information is presented by the author in the text. The author simply explains what he or she means. Literal information can be found in the reading material. Inferential information is not always explained completely by the author and requires the reader to use background knowledge to bring understanding of the material. Children need to be taught that the author may not give all the information and will often have to activate their background knowledge and then infer to gain meaning. Harvey & Goudvis (2000) explained inferring as the "bedrock of comprehension."

Predictions

One strategy to use is to first make initial predictions using the skimming and scanning strategies listed above. Make sure children look at the titles, pictures, and even headings. Then have children read one third of a selected passage and evaluate their predictions individually or in a group. Have the children evaluate a prediction using true, false, or was not yet mentioned answers during their evaluation. Make additional predictions and then repeat the above steps. This activity will help activate background knowledge and inferential thinking should occur. Point out when inferential thinking has occurred so children can differentiate between literal and inferential comprehension. Practicing these steps with children as a whole group or even small groups works well.

Activate Background Knowledge

Another strategy to demonstrate inferential comprehension is to show an advertisement and have the children determine what it may be about. Show the slogan and any pictures it may contain. Children will access background knowledge to make a determination what it will be about. After determinations have been made, discuss reasoning with children.

Questioning

The questioning strategy should extend over several days of instruction. On the first day of a book introduce and discuss the vocabulary the children will encounter. On the second day, skim, scan, and conduct a pre-reading activity. Review the vocabulary again. On the third day, read the text and conduct inferential questioning. The students should be familiar with the meaning of inference. Reiterate that the answers to the inferential questions are items that the author hints or gives clues about in the text. Be sure the children understand that nowhere in the text will they find the specific words to answer inferential questions. Some refer to the answers to inferential questions are educated guesses that use background knowledge. Inferential questioning may be taught to large groups, small groups, or even individuals as a supplement to comprehension instruction.

Synthesizing Information

"Synthesizing is the most complex of comprehension strategies" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Synthesis of information is achieved when a new perspective or thought comes out of the text being read.

SQ3R

To help synthesis of information, the SQ3R method could be used (PPLSP, 2005, p. 8/ 11). The SQ3R is an approach that requires children to survey, question, read, recite, and review. This thoughtful process helps children bring new meaning to what is read, and often will bring new perspective to the reading material.

Using Multiple Texts

According to the research conducted by the members of the PPLSP (2005), "when students begin to compare and question texts, and to think about the ideas within them, they begin to construct their own knowledge. By using more than one text, students internalize more conceptual information and are less persuaded by the authority of one text's presentation of material." Presenting questions like, "When reading this text, what other texts come to mind?", and another question like, "Why did you remember this text while reading the current text?" are great questioning techniques that focus on getting answers that go beyond the yes or no responses. These are some examples of questions that help a child synthesize information. They will eventually draw their own conclusions based on the use of multiple texts.

Summarizing

An important component of synthesizing information is being able to recall and retell important information. Elaboration is a more advanced skill in which a reader brings in their own conclusions about a topic to the reading material. Teach children to keep summaries organized, to the point, and only include relevant details. Once again, the use of graphic organizers can aid in relevant information and help them synthesize their thoughts.

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Summary

Presented in this chapter was a resource manual designed to help teachers facilitate lesson planning and help parents seeking to support their children as they are learning to read. The manual provided information and instructional strategies on the following five components of reading: (a) phonemic awareness, (b) phonics, (c) reading fluency, (d) vocabulary, and (e) comprehension. At the end of the manual is a list of references for teachers and parents to refer to if they wish for more information or clarification on any strategies. Presented in chapter 5 is a discussion evaluating the manual and offering suggestions for manual improvement.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The author discussed the importance of the five components of reading and addressed strategies for educators and parents to employ when teaching elementary aged children to read. The importance of the five components of reading was supported by research conducted by the author and experts in the field of reading achievement. The use of these components in literacy instruction was also supported by President Bush's administration and the No Child Left Behind Campaign of 2002. The results were compiled into an educator and parent manual that corresponded to strategies related to the following components: (a) phonemic awareness, (b) phonics, (c) fluency, (d) vocabulary, and (e) comprehension.

The feedback received from both her colleagues and students' parents was positive; the author feels that she accomplished her goal of developing a successful Educator and Parent Manual that pertains to student literacy achievement. The information provided in the manual should continue to prove useful as teachers and parents look for strategies to help children learn to read. One colleague commented, "The manual could be utilized in a staff development course that focuses on literacy." Another colleague commented, "It will prove to be valuable as I plan lessons in reading instruction." One parent indicated that the manual will be "practical and the suggestions in the manual are easy to follow." A second parent added, “The manual is well organized and seems easy to use as a reference guide as I help my child to learn to read.”

The author of the manual will continue to share her work with parents and educators within her community. As new research becomes available, the author hopes to add and revise strategies listed in the manual. Based on feedback from educators, the author will provide copies of sections of the manual to parents, which will enable parents to reference the component their child struggles with easily; thus the entire manual will not be distributed to parents. However, the entire manual will be distributed to educators to be used to facilitate lesson planning. The author plans on providing a school-based parent workshop to provide interested parents with the manual as she briefly discusses each component.

Project Summary

This project included information about reading literacy to include historical research and strategies found to be successful when teaching elementary aged children to read. The five components of reading including: (a) phonemic awareness, (b) phonics, (c) fluency, (d) vocabulary, and (e) comprehension were reviewed and explained. Strategies were discussed and listed in the manual by component. The manual is intended to be used by newly licensed educators or those parents who are interested in learning about reading literacy and applying this new knowledge to working with their children.

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APPENDIX A

Educator and Parent Manual Survey

Educator and Parent Manual Survey Form

Circle one:
I am a teacher, parent, or parent and teacher.

Rate each statement below using the following:

3= Excellent
2= Average
1= Needs Improvement

________The manual was easy to read and understand.

________The terminology presented in the manual was explained thoroughly and easy to understand.

________The components of reading were explained thoroughly and understandable.

________ The strategies presented in the manual will be easy to implement at home or in classroom.

________The strategies presented in the manual will be motivating to students.

Circle one:

Yes / No I will use this manual in the future.

Comments:

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