STRENGTHENING STUDENT EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

English Language Arts
Menu of Best Practices and Strategies
English Language Arts: Menu of Best Practices and Strategies

2017

Authorizing legislation: RCW 28A.165 & 28A.655.235

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Students throughout the state of Washington receive tutoring, extra classes, summer programs, and other interventions with the help of funds from the Learning Assistance Program (LAP). The state of Washington invests several hundred million dollars per year in LAP to help students meet grade level standards. About 13 percent of students statewide are served by LAP.

Unfortunately, in the past we saw high variability in LAP implementation. OSPI did not collect data on effective interventions, and statutory examples of best practices were limited. There was little or no collaboration among professionals across the state to promote what really works to help students within the program.

In 2013, the Legislature passed a bill (ESSB 5946) requiring the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to improve the LAP system and K–4 literacy outcomes. Now, OSPI annually convenes expert panels to identify the practices that best help students grow and succeed academically. Their work informs the Mathematics, English Language Arts (ELA), and Behavior Menu of Best Practices and Strategies. Each year, districts report on the academic growth of students receiving LAP services. Districts can either use the best practices from the menus, or provide data showing that their alternative practices are effective in achieving student growth. These provisions are detailed in RCW 28A.165 and RCW 28A.655.235.

The Legislature also passed a companion bill authorizing the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) to identify evidence-based and research-based best practices for student interventions. OSPI and WSIPP annually collaborate on the development of the menus.

We know an opportunity gap exists among different student populations. Poverty is a striking example of a factor that can significantly disrupt a student’s learning. Students learning English as an additional language face the task of learning a new language and new academic content at the same time. Students who have, or are experiencing, trauma may exhibit behavioral anomalies that can interrupt their academic progress. Teachers are actively seeking ways to better support all students. Through the menus, the expert panels have identified best practices to reduce the opportunity gap among all students.

This report contains not only the menu of best practices, but also foundational content describing Washington state’s literacy landscape and other initiatives designed to improve literacy skills for all students. It describes how a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework is critical for implementing a high-achieving educational system. It also explains how assessment data and reporting serve to continuously improve LAP and student outcomes. We have included a rich set of resources and references for those who wish to further explore the identified best practices.
We are starting to see the promise in this focused partnership between districts, Educational Service Districts (ESDs), OSPI, WSIPP, and the Legislature. This is the fourth year the ELA menu has been published, and each year the professionals who comprise the panel search the current literature for proven interventions to make improvements to the existing practices, and provide additional advice and support to teachers, student support staff, and school administrators who are implementing LAP with their students.

We have a duty to educate all students. Collecting the best strategies that districts use to reach those who need extra help is a great step toward meeting that responsibility.

Chris Reykdal, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

We thank you for your thoughtful read of this menu and for your ongoing commitment to serve students who need support the most.

The Learning Assistance Program Team
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
May 2017

Note: OSPI published this menu May 2017, prior to the adjournment of the 2017 legislative session. A second update will be conducted if any legislation passes that impacts the Learning Assistance Program for the 2017–18 school year.
STRENGTHENING STUDENT EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

The Strengthening Student Educational Outcomes Act (ESSB 5946) passed the state Legislature in 2013. It required OSPI to convene an ELA panel of experts to develop a menu of best practices and strategies to provide additional support to students who have not yet met grade-level standard and are enrolled in the Learning Assistance Program. The same legislation also required the ELA panel of experts to develop a menu of best practices and strategies for K–4 ELA instruction. The 2013–14 ELA panel of experts and OSPI agreed many of the same strategies would be in both menus.

That’s why this 2017 ELA menu update targets two groups: LAP students in grades K–12, and all students in grades K–4. At the heart of the menu is a focus on accelerating student ELA performance. This menu highlights when a strategy is for K–4 ELA core instruction and when it is for ELA LAP. The practices align to WA ELA Standards, and they reflect the work of the National Reading Panel and the National Early Literacy Panel.

Under the law, districts must select a practice or strategy from the menu to serve LAP students in ELA. Districts must first focus their LAP program on K–4 reading. Additionally, schools with more than 40 percent of students not meeting 3rd grade ELA goals must also select a best practice or strategy to serve K–4 students. Districts have the option to select a practice or strategy from the ELA menu or they may use an alternative practice or strategy per OSPI guidelines.

In addition to the ELA menu, OSPI developed menus for math and behavior. These LAP menus are for students served by LAP in grades K–12. All three menus are updated annually by July 1.

To learn more about this process, please see the project webpage.
The Learning Assistance Program (LAP) offers supplemental services for K–12 students scoring below grade-level standard in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. These supports focus on accelerating student growth so that students make progress towards grade level. These supports may include academic readiness skill development or behavior supports to address barriers preventing students from accessing core instruction. The intent is for LAP students to increase academic growth during the period of time they are provided services. LAP requires districts to use research-based best practices to increase student achievement.

LAP K–4 Focus on Literacy
Districts must focus first on K–4 students who have not yet met grade-level standards in reading or are lacking the readiness skills needed for learning to read. The K–4 focus first on literacy does not mean that all LAP funds are to be used exclusively on K–4 literacy. OSPI guidelines allow that a district may meet the K–4 focus on literacy by ensuring that of the total number of students served by the LAP, approximately 50 percent are students enrolled in grades K–4 receiving ELA services. Districts are not capped at 50 percent. They may serve more students in K–4 ELA. Additionally, districts may serve less than 50 percent under specific OSPI Guidelines.

LAP Eligibility
Districts identify the students eligible for LAP by using multiple measures of performance. These should include nationally normed assessments and/or state assessments to identify students scoring below grade-level standards for ELA or math. Other options to measure student eligibility include: teacher-made assessments, teacher observations, teacher recommendations, and parent referrals. Credits earned, grade point average (GPA), discipline referrals, and absenteeism are also potential measures.

Entrance and exit assessment data are used to measure student academic growth in ELA or math, regardless of whether the student receives LAP academic services or LAP behavior services. A student may receive LAP services for academic and behavior support or just behavior support.

Behavior Services
Districts may serve students who have not yet met grade-level standards in ELA or math with behavior services. These services are available for students when the district believes addressing behavioral needs would improve students’ academic performance.

Prior to receiving LAP behavior services, students must have been identified, using multiple measures of performance, as scoring below standard for their grade level in either ELA or math. While additional indicators must be used to identify a student for behavior services, the impact
of behavior services is measured by growth in ELA or math. The assumption is that the provision of behavior services should positively influence student academic outcomes.

### LAP Allowable Activities

Allowable LAP activities are guided by state statute ([RCW 28A.165](#)). They must be aligned to a best practice from the menu or an approved district alternative. Districts must use data to inform program development and integrate best practices and strategies to support supplemental instruction/services that accelerate growth for students who have not yet met academic and non-academic performance standards.

Allowable activities may include extended learning time, extra support in the classroom, educator professional learning, family engagement, and purchase of specialized learning materials. Additional assistance for students identified in 8th grade to successfully transition into high school may be provided through LAP. Graduation assistance is an option for 11th and 12th-grade students who are not on track to meet graduation requirements. Academic readiness and Readiness to Learn (RTL) are also LAP-allowable activities. These terms are often confused and are defined separately below.

### Readiness to Learn – Up to Five Percent

Up to five percent of a district’s LAP funds may be used for RTL programs. The school board must approve in an open meeting any community-based organization or local agency that will offer RTL services before learning assistance program funds may be expended.

District Readiness to Learn (RTL) programs provide academic and non-academic supports for students at-risk of not being successful in school. They may be offered in partnership with community-based organizations. The goal of RTL is to reduce barriers to learning, strengthen engagement, and ensure all students are able to attend school ready to learn.

Students do not need to have been identified as scoring below grade-level standard in math or ELA to participate in Readiness to Learn (RTL) programs. RTL programs are designed to serve students significantly at-risk of not being successful in school. Each district determines the eligibility criteria for participation in RTL programs.

### Academic Readiness

As part of the academic readiness component, schools use LAP funds to support students with necessary preparation skills needed to engage in math or ELA content. Readiness is applicable for all grades. However, LAP does pay particular attention to early grade classroom readiness skills. K–2 readiness includes emerging literacy, early numeracy, and classroom preparedness skills. Emerging research is showing that building early numeracy skills is a strong predictor of future academic success.
The WaKIDS GOLD™ Objectives and Dimensions observation tool identifies core skills in the social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and mathematics domains essential for being ready for kindergarten. The panels strongly emphasized social emotional, cognitive, numeracy, and language skills as being necessary for K–2 readiness. Each panel also recognized the importance of incorporating play into K–2 readiness activities.
WASHINGTON STATE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

The 2013 Legislature directed WSIPP to “prepare an inventory of evidence-based and research-based effective practices, activities and programs for use by school districts in the Learning Assistance Program” (Senate Bill 5034, Section 610). The WSIPP Inventory of Evidence- and Research-Based Practices: Washington’s K–12 Learning Assistance Program classifies LAP strategies as evidence-based, research-based, or promising according to average effect sizes for identified interventions, a cost-benefit analysis, and other criteria. Both OSPI and WSIPP consider the two reports as companions. As such, OSPI and WSIPP coordinated their tasks to ensure that the reports’ content was consistent, while still adhering to the unique directives given to each agency.

Both agencies collaborated on identifying topics for consideration as best practices and strategies. WSIPP Research Associate Matt Lemon was a key participant in the expert panel sessions as a non-voting member. He provided research references to the panel members, and solicited panel member input regarding effective practices. The two agencies then followed different, complementary processes to identify and classify practices for inclusion in each report.

The identification of best practices and strategies in the OSPI report was informed by WSIPP’s findings and ultimately determined by the expert panel. OSPI included notations indicating whether the practices included in the menu are evidence-based or research-based, as determined by WSIPP. Additional practices and strategies are included in the menu as promising based on the research reviewed by the panel of experts.
WASHINGTON INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORTS PROTOCOL *

In 2016, the Washington state legislature created the Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol (WISSP) when it passed 4SHB 1541. In the bill the Legislature included the WISSP among an extensive set of interdependent strategies for closing educational opportunity gaps. This comprehensive approach was based on the recommendation of the State’s Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC).

In the bill, the Legislature charged the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL), within OSPI, with developing the WISSP. The purpose of the protocol, as outlined in the bill, is to help schools and districts move toward a student support approach where efforts to meet both the academic and non-academic needs of students are integrated into one system, and to partner more effectively with their communities to develop and secure the supports students need to be successful.

Integrated Student Supports

“Integrated Student Supports (ISS) is an emerging field of practice that is best described as a school-based approach to promoting students’ academic achievement and educational attainment by coordinating a seamless system of wraparound supports at multiple levels that target academic and non-academic barriers to student learning.” (Child Trends, 2014a, p. 19). According to Child Trend’s Theory of Change, an ISS system enables educators to mobilize academic supports (i.e. reading or math interventions) as well as non-academic supports (i.e. social skills training, behavior intervention plans or basic needs support) to promote students’ academic success and overall health and well-being. In a synthesis of the evidence to support ISS, Child Trends notes that while “ISS programs take many forms, integration is key to the model—both integration of supports to meet individual students’ needs and integration of the ISS program into the life of a school.” (Child Trends, 2014b, p. 1)

Core Components of the WISSP

The following components are included as part of the integrated student supports framework adopted by the Legislature in 4SHB 1541.

Needs Assessments: In an ISS model, school or ISS program staff assess student’s needs and strengths to begin to identify the areas in which they may need additional support. Additionally, staff may conduct needs assessments at the school, district, and community levels to identify existing resources and potential areas to build additional capacity. School or ISS program staff can conduct needs assessments in collaboration with local organizations, community members, and families.
Integration within the school: When school staff facilitate ISS efforts, they are fully integrated into existing student support teams. When a partner organization facilitates ISS efforts, the organization works closely with school leadership and staff to enhance program effectiveness. To that end, partner staff are usually based in the school or, at minimum, have an office within the district.

Coordination of Supports: In an ISS model, school staff, partner organizations, and other service providers work together to connect students to existing supports in a timely manner. A central point of contact often serves to coordinate these efforts.

Use of Data: In an ISS model, school staff use data to identify students’ needs and strengths, to monitor their progress over time, and to guide future planning. Data may include assessment outcomes, discipline referrals, attendance records, home-language survey information, or other student level data.

Community Partnerships: In an ISS model, schools partner with individual community members, local businesses, health and social service providers, and other community organizations to address the needs of students and their families.

Connections between ISS and Other Systems of Support
The components of the WISSP are not unique to ISS. These components are also found in other student support frameworks such as Response to Intervention (RTI), School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Inter-connected Systems Framework (ISF), and other tiered-systems of support that address one or more domains of learning. These components are also present in a comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework that, when implemented, enables educators and community members to work together to effectively and efficiently address students’ needs across all domains within one seamless system.

The Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol is not meant to replace existing systems of support. Rather, the purpose of the protocol is to encourage schools to use needs assessments to identify students’ academic and non-academic barriers to learning, collaborate with their community to secure additional resources for students and their families, use data to monitor progress, and strive for greater alignment across student support services and programs like LAP.

References
Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a service delivery framework focused on problem solving and prevention. An MTSS connects all of the academic and nonacademic interventions, supports, and services available in schools and communities to support instruction and eliminate barriers to learning and teaching. An MTSS framework includes multiple levels of instruction, assessment, and intervention designed to support the academic and non-academic needs of all students.

**Figure 1. Multi-Tiered System of Supports, from OSPI**
MTSS Approach
There are many approaches to support student achievement and eliminate barriers to learning and teaching. To effectively and efficiently meet the unique needs of students, it is important to have a coherent, unified system that takes a holistic approach to simultaneously address the academic and non-academic (behavioral, social, and emotional learning) needs of students. Common tiered frameworks in Washington include Response to Intervention (RTI), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). When these systems are implemented separately, silos are created, services are duplicated, resources are stretched, and students experience fragmented supports.

Core Instruction and Tiered Supports
Within Multi-Tiered System of Supports, educators use data-informed practices to support student outcomes while also establishing and sustaining a positive school climate. An MTSS framework should be designed to promote collaboration among educators and professional learning across schools/districts. While the number of tiered levels of support outlined for any given MTSS model may vary, a three-tiered theory of action framework is standard. Within a multi-tiered framework, the tiers refer to supports students receive rather than to students. For example, there are not tier 2 or tier 3 students there are instead, tier 2 and tier 3 supports. In a three-tiered framework, all students receive Tier 1 instruction, some students receive Tier 2 services/support, and a small number of students receive Tier 3 services/support. Normally, Tier 3 services in an MTSS model are for both highly capable students and students who have not yet to meet grade-level expectations. For the purpose of the menus, Tier 3 will refer only to the supports and services addressing the needs of students who have not yet met academic and non-academic learning goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Description of tier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All</strong></td>
<td>Tier 1 is for all students and is designed to meet the needs of at least 80 percent of the student population. Differentiated instruction during core learning time is the first response for students who have not yet met academic and non-academic goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Some</strong></td>
<td>Tier 2 is for students who need additional support to meet academic and non-academic goals. A standard assessment plan and clear criteria are necessary for successfully entering and exiting students from Tier 2 interventions. Supports should be designed to quickly screen for and target students who need extra instruction or services to get back on track. This level typically addresses the needs of around 15 percent of a student population.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An effective MTSS system is grounded in strong instruction that is designed to meet the educational needs of at least 80 percent of students. If more than 20 percent of students are not meeting education expectations, then core instructional design and strategies should be re-evaluated. When students are not meeting their learning goals in the general education classroom, school improvement teams meet to discuss the best approach to provide effective differentiated instruction in the core curricula and interventions through a systematic support framework.

Data-Based Decision-Making Teams
Decision making within an MTSS framework is done with a systematic, comprehensive approach. This process includes decisions about the development of the MTSS framework, the selection of assessments used to identify students, the design of an implementation plan, and evaluation of a school or district’s individual students’ needs. The decision-making team will make adjustments and improvements to the framework as students’ needs change, ultimately supporting both academic and non-academic success in the classroom. Teams should develop a feedback process to evaluate the effectiveness of their MTSS framework and implementation. Data-based decision making should be informed by measurable and relevant learning criteria to support student learning. Data-based outcomes should be used to guide decisions regarding instructional effectiveness, student responsiveness, and intervention adaptations or modifications.

MTSS levels of support are fluid. Students need different levels of support as their circumstances and needs change. Data-based progress monitoring of student academic achievement and social/emotional learning can indicate a need to adjust the support based on responses to interventions, services, and emerging needs. Established protocols for data-based decision making will help identify when students need supplemental services, and when they have met exit criteria and no longer need additional targeted support. Data-based decision making in an MTSS framework is enabled by a comprehensive assessment system. Districts/schools must determine which assessments to use to identify and monitor student progress.
Comprehensive System to Identify Students

A comprehensive assessment system includes universal screening, diagnostic assessment(s), formative assessment processes, and progress monitoring. For each of these components, it is important to ensure protocols are followed for all formal assessments, decision rules are in place for students not making satisfactory progress, and training is sufficiently delivered to instructional/data teams to support implementation of the comprehensive system. It is also important to recognize that different types of assessments are useful for different purposes. The key is to ensure the results of an assessment are used for the intended purpose and not extrapolated or misused otherwise. For example, confusion between universal screening and diagnostic assessment can lead to misuse of results from screening measures.

A comprehensive assessment system should include:

**Universal screening tools:** These tools are used to identify all potentially at-risk students. By design, universal screeners tend to over identify students, meaning more students are identified as potentially at-risk than are actually at-risk in an attempt to not miss anyone who might be at-risk. Screeners are used in many different ways—in everyday life, before an eye exam, during oil changes for cars, or when checking blood pressure. Universal screening takes place at scheduled intervals and is followed by more targeted diagnostic assessment for students potentially at-risk. Instructional decisions are not based on universal screeners. These screeners inform decision makers of whether or not a diagnostic assessment is necessary.

**Diagnostic assessment tools:** Diagnostic assessments identify the initial skill level for each student and can determine the need for supports, interventions, enrichments, and resources. Assessments are administered before instruction or after screening occurs to identify the appropriate instruction and/or intervention plan. Diagnostic assessments provide detailed information. A diagnostic assessment can help determine why a person’s temperature is high, why the indicator light went on in a car, or whether a full eye exam is needed. For example, in reading, a diagnostic test may measure a student’s ability to evaluate print, understand phonics, decode letters and sounds, recognize words, analyze word patterns and sounds, determine oral reading accuracy and fluency, and comprehend reading passages. Once the data from a diagnostic assessment are available, educators can determine what to teach and select appropriate interventions to address specific skill deficiencies.

**Formative assessment processes:** Formative assessment is not a single event—it is an ongoing process used by educators and students to assess learning and adjust instruction. The formative assessment process is deliberate and provides actionable feedback to improve students’ learning. There are four attributes in the formative assessment process: 1) clarify intended learning; 2) elicit evidence; 3) interpret evidence; and 4) act on evidence.
Progress monitoring tools: Student performance and progress should be reviewed on a regular basis and in a systematic manner to identify students who are: making adequate progress, at some risk of failure if not provided extra assistance, or at high risk of failure if not provided specialized supports. Progress monitoring is used to determine if students are understanding the material being provided. It is useful in determining the next level of instruction or intervention to be used with individual students, a small group, or an entire class. While formative assessment is closely linked to the immediate learning that occurs during a lesson, progress monitoring assesses what the student understands as a result of the unit of instruction.

Supplemental Supports and Services
The Learning Assistance Program (LAP) primarily provides supplemental services to support core instruction. As a supplemental program, LAP generally provides tier 2 or tier 3 supports, but does not replace core instruction. Students receiving targeted interventions must have full access to core instruction.

LAP serves eligible students who need additional academic support to accelerate student growth in English language arts and mathematics, or who need to develop K–2 readiness knowledge and skills to successfully meet standards in these core content areas. By focusing on acceleration, students served outside of core instruction should increase learning over a given period of time. However, the degree of content growth depends on the intensity and quality of the services.

LAP also serves students who could benefit from behavioral supports in order to improve academic and non-academic student outcomes.

This menu provides information regarding evidence-based, research-based, and promising practices and strategies for supplemental supports/services.
Background and Philosophy

CONTENT PHILOSOPHY (WA STATE LITERACY) **

Vision of English Language Arts Education
Washington’s literacy teaching landscape is as diverse as our charter, native, private, and public school districts. OSPI’s mission is to provide funding, resources, tools, data, and technical assistance that enable educators to ensure students succeed in our public schools, are prepared to access post-secondary training and education, and are equipped to thrive in their careers and lives. OSPI and statewide partners work to support literacy instruction by continually revising and improving the supports and systems available for educators to support building students’ literacy skills.

Washington’s definition of literacy was developed by the 2012 State Literacy Team made up of experts and practitioners from across Washington. This definition of literacy defines literacy as an on-going cognitive process that begins at birth. It involves the integration of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and critical thinking. Literacy includes the knowledge that enables the speaker, writer, or reader to recognize and use language appropriate to a situation in an increasingly complex literate environment. Active literacy allows people to think, create, question, solve problems, and reflect in order to participate effectively in a democratic, multi-cultural society.

The Washington State Literacy Plan, the Pathways to Early Literacy (Early Literacy Pathways), and the ELA Menu of Best Practices and Strategies are complementary resources. Together, with the English Language Arts standards and the English Language proficiency standards, these three resources provide the foundational building blocks of a Comprehensive Literacy System.

A Literacy Plan is a systematic approach to learning and teaching ELA and consists of:

- **Core instruction and interventions** aligned to **standards**.
- **Assessments and data** that support learning and teaching through early identification for additional literacy support and progress monitoring.
- **Professional learning** opportunities to improve pedagogy and to support student literacy outcomes.
• **Family and community engagement** strategies to support literacy at home.

• **Systems** development, improvement, and fidelity.

Educators’ knowledge of the standards and best practices are enhanced when there is additional understanding of both literacy and child development as a continuum. This understanding recognizes that the standards articulate the learning progression for English Language Arts in a grade level sequence with end of the year expectations outlined. The goal for all students is to meet the end of year expectations, and when it is necessary, it is also important for educators to recognize stages of literacy development are based on experiences and not solely defined by age or grade level. In any classroom, there are students achieving beyond the grade-level standards and students not yet achieving the grade-level standards. As the unique needs of each learner are met, it is essential to take into consideration the literacy progression necessary for growth by planning intentional experiences, selecting appropriate materials, and determining the best instructional approaches to meet students’ learning needs.

The **Literacy Pathways** (2016) were created to support educators, caregivers and families in understanding and supporting literacy development. The Literacy Pathways were written using the following frameworks specifically in the areas of social-emotional development, cognitive development, language and literacy development, and reading and writing development.

• Early Learning and Development Guidelines (ELG)

• GOLD (formerly Teaching Strategies GOLD) (WaKIDS & ECEAP)

• Head Start Early Learning Outcomes (HS)

• Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

The **Literacy Pathways** are built on the foundation that every child brings strengths, interests, and needs in their developmental growth and acquisition along the continuum. The pathways are divided into the following three bands.

• Birth-to-three years old—acquiring the foundations of literacy,

• Three-to-six years old—using individual literacy foundations to learn specific literacy skills, and

• Six-to-nine years old—using reading, writing, speaking, and listening to learn and communicate effectively.

The **Washington State K–12 ELA Learning Standards (ELA Standards)** are built on an intentional progression of the skills and knowledge necessary for all students to be ready for careers, college, and life when they exit high school. These learning progressions provide a specific focus
for each grade level. The ELA Standards lay the groundwork for literacy achievement and expand the skills students need across all grade levels.

The English Language Proficiency Standards (ELP Standards) were developed to provide a language bridge to move students learning English as an additional language toward full engagement and academic success while simultaneously addressing the increased rigor and language demands of the career- and college-ready standards. Learning English as an additional language goes hand-in-hand with Washington’s definition of literacy. The ELP Standards make it clear that learning English as an additional language encompasses more than just learning grammar and vocabulary. Instruction is grounded in speaking and listening, and it must focus on receptive, productive, and interactive learning modalities.

ELP standards professional development modules are available on the OSPI website. These five modules were created in partnership between ELPA21 members, Understanding Language, and 16 educators, eight of whom are from Washington state. Module 1 includes an overview of the ELP standards; module 2 focuses on inquiry-based task analysis; module 3 helps educators analyze and reflect the use of ELP standards in planning and instruction; module 4 dives into the ELP standards level descriptors; and module 5 focuses on using the formative assessment process to inform planning and instruction to support students’ content and language learning.

Washington state values bilingual education. Emphasis on instruction in a student’s primary language will enhance cognitive processes and student literacy outcomes. The Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program (TBIP) places strong emphasis on cultural values. The goal is for English learners (EL) to meet state standards and develop language proficiency in an environment where language and cultural assets are recognized as valuable resources for learning. TBIP promotes a two-language system of instruction where students learn language concepts and knowledge in their primary language at the same time they receive instruction in English. Dual language programs are the priority model in Washington state. OSPI’s Dual Language Toolkit provides information on building a shared vision, program planning, and implementation.

Instruction and Interventions
All students should receive high-quality literacy instruction grounded in the use of research-based materials and instructional strategies that are implemented with fidelity. Still, even with a high-quality, rigorous core instructional literacy plan, instruction may not meet the needs of all learners. Within the MTSS framework, most students (approximately 80 percent) will be academically successful. However, if more than 20 percent of students are struggling to meet grade-level literacy standards, districts should re-examine their core instructional materials and strategies.
As a strategy for improving and accelerating the achievement of all students who have not yet met literacy standards, it is important to focus on students’ foundational literacy skill development. Interventions should be aligned to and support core classroom curriculum, and classroom teachers and intervention specialists must collaboratively work together to support student academic and non-academic growth to meet grade-level literacy standards.

Too often, intervention programs are approached as remediation programs. This approach, although it may be well intentioned, actually slows down learning and widens the achievement gap. When interventions use a model that focuses on accelerating academic skills, students’ academic progress is evident and their self-confidence and engagement increases. Intervention models that focus on accelerating academic skill development clearly articulate and connect to core classrooms goals to intervention goals, emphasizing ongoing collaboration (Rollins, 2014).

**Foundational Literacy Skills**

The ELA panel of experts believes Washington state literacy educators should be well versed in the foundational literacy skills. Educator understanding of these skills is essential for the successful implementation of best practices and strategies in K–4 literacy classrooms and K–12 literacy interventions. Findings from the National Reading Panel (2000), the National Early Literacy Panel (2008), and the National Council on Teacher Quality (2014) support the need to identify and enhance professional learning opportunities for educators in the area of foundational literacy skills.

The National Reading Panel identifies five pillars of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The Washington state literacy vision supports the five pillars and includes oral language and alphabet knowledge as
being essential components of these foundational literacy skills. High quality instruction in the foundational literacy skills is vital to students’ literacy success. Each component is an early predictor of, and is directly correlated with, later literacy achievement (NELP, 2008; NICHD, 2000). Deep understanding of essential foundational literacy skills must guide professionals as they plan and develop appropriate and engaging instruction and supplemental services for students who have not yet met literacy standards and for their teachers through professional learning opportunities (Pittman & Dorel, 2014; Strickland & Shanahan, 2004).

The foundational literacy skills are early predictors of later literacy success. For example, oral language skills help students develop reading and writing skills. As students enter kindergarten and progress through grade 12, oral language skills are connected to gaps in both reading and writing. These gaps can be the direct result of a weak foundation in oral language development. English language development for students learning an additional language is also grounded in oral language skill development and needs explicit instruction in upper grades.

Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade (2016) provides four recommendations for teaching foundational reading skills to K–3 students:

- “Teach student academic language skills, including the use of inferential and narrative language, and vocabulary knowledge.
- Develop awareness of the segments of sounds in speech and how they link to letters.
- Teach students to decode words and analyze word parts, and write and recognize words.
- Ensure that each student reads connected text every day to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension” (p. 2).

The Professional Learning Communities Facilitator’s Guide (2016) supports educators’ implementation of the recommendations from the WWC foundational skills practice guide. This guide includes activities, templates, discussion questions, and videos. The 38 videos illustrate foundational reading skills in practice.

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**Academic Language**

Academic language (also referred to as academic English, disciplinary language, scientific language, critical language, and language of school) helps define school success for all students. It is the language of textbooks and homework, the language found in assessments, and the language students should hear and see in all classrooms. This language is different in register, structure, and vocabulary from everyday language. Academic language is at the heart of grade-level curriculum across content areas (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014). The three dimensions of Academic language include: vocabulary, sentence structure, and student discourse.

Gisela Ernst-Slavit, Ph.D., worked on contract with the Bilingual Education Program at OSPI in 2016 to develop the Academic Language Toolkit. This toolkit includes informational webinars...
on academic language, information on linguistics (cognates, roots, prefixes, etc.), readings, and videos.

Vocabulary
- General, specialized, and technical words
- Nominalizations (Converting verbs and adjectives to nouns)
- Multiple-meaning words and idiomatic expressions

Sentence Structures
- Types of sentences: simple, compound, complex
- Prepositional phrases
- Word order

Discourse
- Genres or text types
- Cohesion of text
- Coherence of ideas

Figure 2. Dimensions of Academic Language. From: Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit (2014), Academic Language in Diverse Classrooms: Definitions and Contexts

OSPI ELA staff and Regional Literacy Coordinators from across the state (including experts in K–4 literacy) representing the nine Educational Service Districts (ESDs) have jointly developed professional learning opportunities to strengthen WA state literacy outcomes. State literacy partners are poised to provide comprehensive and coherent opportunities grounded in the foundational literacy skills, academic language, standards, differentiated instruction, the formative assessment process, fundamentals of assessment, and student equity.

For additional resources and information on implementing the foundational literacy skills, please refer to the ELA Menu: Appendix A. This appendix should be used as a guide when designing core literacy instruction, interventions, and professional learning opportunities to strengthen student literacy outcomes.
CLASSROOM PRACTICES—HABITS OF MIND **
Best practices and strategies in classrooms are grounded in authentic, student-centered approaches that are essential to effective literacy instruction. Research demonstrates that a dynamic learning environment tailored to individual students’ needs is necessary to prepare students to be ready for the literacy demands of college and career. According to the ELA Standards, students who are college/career ready exhibit the following attributes (CCSS-ELA, p. 7).

These attributes, also referred to as Habits of Mind, are:

- Students demonstrate independence.
- Students build strong content knowledge.
- Students respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.
- Students comprehend as well as critique.
- Students value evidence.
- Students use technology and digital media strategically and capably.
- Students come to understand other perspectives and cultures.

The following classroom and student-centered teaching principles, practices, and strategies are essential to the effective preparation of students for college and career expectations and literacy success.

Culturally Responsive Teaching
To achieve a high-quality public education for all students, all educators must be able to work effectively in diverse settings. To become effective in diverse context educators must be willing to learn about systemic racism and inequities in the public education system and to develop culturally competent skills and mindsets (EOGOAC, 2017). Professional learning opportunities aimed at increasing cultural competencies are focused on increasing educators’ knowledge of student cultural histories and context (as well as family norms and values in different cultures), abilities to access community resources for community and family outreach, and skills in adapting instruction to align to students’ experiences and identifying cultural contexts for individual students (RCW 28A.410.260). In accordance with best practices regarding family engagement, districts should make every effort to ensure cultural competence training programs are developed and implemented in partnership with families and communities (EOGOAC, 2017).

When classrooms and schools are staffed with culturally competent educators, schools are more likely to effectively work towards closing the opportunity gap and increasing student achievement. OSPI has created a toolkit to support educators as they integrate students’ funds
of knowledge in the classroom. Additional resources that support culturally responsive practices include: *Culturally Responsive Teaching Matters!, Culturally Responsive Classroom Management*, and *Culturally Responsive Teaching*.

**Teacher and Student Relationships**
The teacher-student relationship, either positive or negative, has long-lasting effects on student outcomes. Positive relationships between teachers and students help improve academic success. Students try harder, knowing someone cares about the outcomes. Students feel more comfortable seeking help in academics and beyond, when the relationship is positive and supportive. Teachers who have high expectations for their students and positive attitudes about literacy positively influence student outcomes.

Students who have strong relationships with their teachers, become more engaged in their own academic success. In addition, engaged students are willing help their peers become successful, too.

**Learning Environment**
The learning environment should foster student academic growth. Beginning on the first day of school, the learning environment is established through expectations that are understood and accepted by students. Classroom expectations are practiced until they become classroom routines. Student-centered classrooms foster independence and aid in deep learning through evaluation and reflection. The climate of the classroom is the result of organizational and social norms. Organization is often dependent on the size of the classroom, furniture, and technology available. The arrangement must be functional for the teaching and learning needs of all students. Establishing areas for whole class instruction and small group work are essential to maximize student academic achievement. The social climate is established through interactions in the classroom cooperative, competitive, and individually focused. The learning climate should be aligned to the learning goals. An effective learning environment is the result of effective teacher planning and implementation of classroom management strategies.

**Technology**
When used strategically, technology can provide students with opportunities to develop speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills and to access a variety of texts in a variety of mediums. Teachers must monitor student progress and adjust instruction based on formative assessment in all formats. Technology is a tool, not an intervention in and of itself. Technology alone cannot replace effective teaching or intervention activities. It must be a balanced supplement especially with students who struggle with self-regulation and efficacy. Instructional programs for core or intervention, whether purchased or Open Educational Resources, need to be aligned with standards, adequately scaffold learning, and provide a variety of rich texts and rigorous tasks. Access to digital texts including written, image, and
video expand learning opportunities for students but also open the need for students to learn to navigate these media. This digital literacy contributes to the student’s literacy in print media as well.

**Differentiation for Social, Emotional, and Physiological Needs**

From the physical environment to the social/emotional climate of the classroom, educators are tasked with meeting the diverse academic and emotional needs of their students. Educators understand that a student’s readiness is influenced by his/her prior learning success or failure, self-esteem, self-efficacy, cultural norms, experiences, attitudes, and habits of mind. Social and emotional well-being, part of the affective component, is directly linked to cognitive and academic development in children. By making connections and building relationships with students, educators create an environment of safety and trust, providing a sense of well-being. Four areas for differentiation are: (1) content; (2) process; (3) product; and (4) the learning environment.

**Background Knowledge & Academic Literacies**

Effective literacy instruction for students requires educators to assess and identify students’ background knowledge. Background knowledge is the wide range of academic knowledge and personal experiences that each student brings to the classroom. Background knowledge is developed through interactions with experiences, texts, and through content that is taught. Research shows a correlation between background knowledge and academic achievement. By attending to students’ background knowledge, educators can be more precise in instruction and make material more relevant to students.

In addition, the opportunities and texts we offer students in reading, writing, speaking, and listening should build student background knowledge for future learning.

**Metacognitive Strategies, Growth Mindset, & Grit**

Metacognition is the process of reflecting on how one thinks and learns. Research suggests that students who use metacognitive strategies while they read better comprehend the text. Successful readers may intuitively incorporate these strategies during reading. However, struggling readers benefit from explicit instruction in metacognitive strategies. Just as students need to engage in metacognitive strategies to meet academic goals, students need to develop non-cognitive skills that represent the “full range of behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs students demonstrate while engaging in the learning process” (Conley, 2013, p. 21). Non-cognitive skills include persistence with difficult tasks, setting goals, seeking help, and working with others. Grit and growth mindset are two new areas for research around non-cognitive skills. Grit is defined as resilience in the face of failure and perseverance for long-term goals. A growth mindset is a key aspect of developing grit because with a growth mindset, students believe that effort can impact achievement. Having a growth mindset is “a key ingredient in successful
learning because the individual believes that learning and success are associated with hard work, practice, and persistence” (Elish-Piper, 2014, p. 59). Both grit and mindset can and should be intentionally developed in students.

References


ELA SMATER BALANCED ASSESSMENT, LAP ELIGIBILITY, AND LAP STUDENT DATA REPORTING

Students in grades 3–8 and 11 take the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments aligned to the Washington State English Language Arts K–12 K–1 Learning Standards. The state summative assessments determine students’ progress toward college and career readiness in English language arts. These summative assessments consist of two parts: a computer adaptive test and a performance task.

The learning outcomes are organized around four assessment claims and represent ELA skills that are relevant to 21st century college- and career-ready students.

The evidence of students’ progress toward college and career readiness is provided by student performance on the items and tasks in the four assessment categories, referred to as Claims: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Research.

Claim 1 – Reading: The student can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.

Students should be exposed to a broad range of high quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts. Carefully selected texts should range across genres, cultures, and centuries to provide access to literary and cultural knowledge as well as familiarity with different text structures and elements. Instruction should promote careful examination of materials to help deepen the students’ ability to use evidence to support inferences, draw conclusions, provide evaluations, and make judgements. Whatever they are reading, students should be able to show a growing ability to make multiple connections, consider textual evidence, and become sensitive to inconsistencies, ambiguities, and poor reasoning.

Appendix A of the ELA Standards (p. 1–16) provides a three-part model for measuring text complexity, tools, and samples.

Smarter Balanced Content Specifications (p. 21–35) provides rationale, evidence, and targets for ELA/Literacy Claim 1.

Claim 2 – Writing: Students can produce effective and well-grounded writing for a range of purposes and audiences.

Students should have significant time devoted to producing numerous pieces of writing over short and extended time frames. Carefully selected instruction should promote writing as a way of offering and supporting opinions or arguments, demonstrating understanding of subjects, and conveying real and imagined experience and events. Skills such as the ability to plan, revise, edit, and publish, are applicable to many types of writing, and should result in argumentative, informative/explanatory and narrative text. Providing opportunities to clearly communicate
ideas to an external, sometimes unfamiliar, audience should be adapted as students accomplish a particular task and purpose. Through the use of language and vocabulary, students should be encouraged to advance the style of their writing. Students should also develop control over the conventions of Standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics as well as learn other ways to use language to convey meaning effectively.

Appendix A of the ELA Standards (p. 23–25) defines the three text types.

Smarter Balanced Content Specifications (p. 36–42) provides rationale, evidence, and targets for ELA/Literacy Claim 2.

Claim 3 – Speaking* and Listening: Students can employ effective speaking and listening skills for a range of purposes and audiences.

Students should develop a broad range of useful oral communication and interpersonal skills; they should have ample opportunities to participate in a variety of rich, structured conversations—as part of a whole class, in small groups, and with a partner. Collaborative working environments should encourage students to express and listen carefully to ideas, integrate information from various media sources, evaluate what they hear, and adapt speech to context, content, and task. In addition, students should contribute to meaningful conversations while providing accurate, relevant information; responding to and developing on what others have said; making comparisons and contrasts; and analyzing and synthesizing ideas appropriate to a particular topic.

* Currently, students are only assessed on listening, specifically interpreting, analyzing, and using information delivered verbally.

Appendix A of the ELA Standards (p. 26–35) identifies the role of speaking and listening in K–5 classrooms, the link between read-alouds and the reading-speaking-listening connection, the link between conventions, language and vocabulary, the progression of language skills, and acquiring vocabulary.

Smarter Balanced Content Specifications (p. 43–45) provides rationale, evidence, and targets for ELA/Literacy Claim 3.

Claim 4 – Research: Students can engage in research and inquiry to investigate topics, and to analyze, integrate, and present information.

Students should use inquiry and critical thinking to produce new insights, perspective, solutions, and products. Writing or presenting on a topic should require students to make connections from reading varied sources. Students should become adept at gathering, analyzing, and integrating information from various sources, evaluating and citing sources
accurately, and interpreting findings. Students should plan tasks, notice patterns, generate reasonable arguments and explanations, and respond analytically to sources.

**Smarter Balanced Content Specifications** (p. 46–48) provides rationale and targets for ELA/Literacy Claim 4.

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**Smarter Balanced Assessment System**

The **Smarter Balanced Assessment System** consists of three major components: resources and supports to implement formative assessment processes, interim assessments, and summative assessments. This complete system consists of resources to support student learning, check student progress, and measure student achievement in grades 3–8 and high school.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium consists of multiple states working together to create and submit resources and to develop assessments. Over 4,700 educators across the consortium have developed and reviewed test items, established achievement levels, and contributed resources to the **Digital Library**.

The **Digital Library** provides educators with high-quality instructional and professional learning resources that are aligned to the Washington state ELA Standards. These resources were created by educators for educators and can help guide educators with implementation of formative assessment processes in the classroom.

Interim assessments are for students and can be taken at various intervals throughout the year. Interim assessments are available on the **Washington Comprehensive Assessment Program (WCAP)** portal.

Practice and training tests for the Smarter Balanced assessment are available online. The **Smarter Balanced Practice and Training Tests** are for students and educators as they prepare for the Smarter Balanced assessment.

The summative assessment is a computer adaptive test, meaning the questions a student receives are dependent upon a student’s correct or incorrect answers. Adaptive tests are tailored to each student individually; they provide scores that are more accurate than fixed-form assessments, and identify student mastery of skills.

If you are interested in receiving information about and/or participating in the work of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium with other Washington state educators, please sign up for ELA assessment updates at **OSPI Email Updates**.

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**Multiple Measures of Assessment for LAP**

Students are identified as being eligible for LAP based on multiple measures or assessment. As identified earlier in the MTSS section of this report, establishing data-based decision-making protocols using a comprehensive system for assessment is important to identify and monitor
students who need supplemental supports/services. The comprehensive system should include universal screening for all students, diagnostic assessments for students who are identified as potentially at-risk, progress monitoring, and formative assessment processes.

Washington state is a local-control state and does not make recommendations on which assessments schools and districts should use to honor the needs and expectations in a comprehensive assessment system. Thus, the following assessment tools and resources are available to support district/school as they select assessments to support decision-making processes:

- **Universal Screening:** The National Center on Response to Intervention provides a Screening Tools Chart
- **Diagnostic Assessments:** SEDL, an affiliate of the American Institute for Research, provides a Reading Assessment Database
- **Formative Assessment Processes:** Smarter Balanced comprehensive assessment system provides access to the Digital Library to participating states
- **Progress Monitoring:** The National Center on Intensive Intervention at American Institutes for Research provides Academic Progress monitoring GOM tool chart

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**Smarter Balanced Assessments: LAP Student Eligibility and Data Reporting**

Districts/schools are not required to use the Smarter Balanced assessment system to determine student eligibility for LAP or to monitor student growth. If a district elects to use the Smarter Balanced assessment system for LAP student data reporting, all three Smarter Balanced assessment formats, summative, interim, or formative, can serve as one of the multiple measures to determine eligibility. However, when reporting growth for progress monitoring, OSPI only recommends using the summative assessment to derive growth. Specifically, OSPI recommends districts use the score earned from the spring of one year to the spring of the following year.

The Smarter Balanced summative assessment is a good option to monitor student growth for three reasons:

1. The vertical scale of the summative assessment allows for the determination of absolute growth.
2. The three months of non-instructional time is equivalent for students across districts and schools.
3. This method could potentially capture growth acquired during summertime interventions.

The Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICA) are limited at monitoring student growth because they do not assess the student’s knowledge before learning, and should not be used to
provide a baseline for understanding how much learning has taken place post intervention. The ICA is most valuable when given later in the school year because it assesses content students should have acquired during the school year. Since the ICAs are a fixed form assessment and there is only one version of each grade level’s ICA in each subject, when given both as a pre- and post-assessment, students’ scores may be affected by students’ familiarity with the assessment, and limiting the scores’ utility for progress monitoring.

The Interim Assessment Blocks (IAB) are limited at monitoring student growth because they only have a three-level classification to report student data. This does not provide the detail needed to make determinations about student growth. It is always the case in testing that the more robust the test, the more precise the information. When sampling from content, such is the case for the interim blocks, it is important to be very cautious about drawing conclusions about student knowledge. The IABs are also fixed-form assessments, and student familiarity with previous performance and the assessments are problematic for progress monitoring.

References

ELA Menu

OVERVIEW
The expert panel worked together with the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) to develop a comprehensive menu of best practices and strategies based on the most current evidence and rigorous research available. Panelists used the following WSIPP definitions for evidence-based, research-based, and promising practices.

Evidence-based
A program or practice that has been tested in heterogeneous or intended populations with multiple randomized, or statistically controlled evaluations, or both; or one large multiple site randomized, or statistically controlled evaluation, or both, where the weight of the evidence from a systemic review demonstrates sustained improvements in at least one outcome. Evidence-based also means a program or practice that can be implemented with a set of procedures to allow successful replication in Washington and, when possible, is determined to be cost-beneficial.

Research-based
A program or practice that has been tested with a single randomized, or statistically controlled evaluation, or both, demonstrating sustained desirable outcomes; or where the weight of the evidence from a systemic review supports sustained outcomes [. . .] but does not meet the full criteria for evidence-based.

Promising
A practice that, based on statistical analyses or a well-established theory of change, shows potential for meeting the evidence-based or research-based criteria.

The English Language Arts menu lists practices and strategies that have been shown to support literacy improvement for students who have not yet met academic benchmarks. It is important to note that the work of the expert panel was to identify proven general practices and strategies, not recommend specifically branded programs that might include those practices. Districts considering adoption of programs or curriculum are encouraged to review the materials for alignment to the WA State K–12 ELA Learning Standards and best practices and strategies outlined in this menu. Schools are also encouraged to use the IMET and EQUIP rubrics to vet alignment of materials. Any chosen program or curriculum should be evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure it effectively impacts student achievement.
Menu Organization
The menus have been organized into four broad categories of interventions. Student-centered practices and strategies directly involve the student, like peer tutoring, double dosing, or summer book programs. Transition and readiness practices and strategies include practices designed to get students ready to learn, move from middle to high school, or graduate from high school. Educator-focused practices and strategies include activities like targeted professional learning and training, frameworks for teaching literacy, or co-teaching. Family and community practices and strategies include activities like mentoring, family engagement, and P–4 community partners.
### Student-Centered Practices and Strategies

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<th>Practice</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Double Dosing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer Book Programs</td>
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<td>Summer School/Programs</td>
<td>Evidence-based</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutoring by Adults</td>
<td>Evidence-based</td>
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<td>Tutoring by Intervention Specialists</td>
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### Educator-Focused Practices and Strategies

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<td>Consultant Teacher/EL Coaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultant Teacher/Instructional Coaches</td>
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<td>Professional Learning Communities</td>
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<td>Targeted Professional Learning</td>
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<td>Specialized Literacy instruction for English Learners (EL) *</td>
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## Transition and Readiness Practices and Strategies

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## Family and Community Practices and Strategies

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<td>P–4 Community Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community-Based Student Mentors</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
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* New Entry  
** Updated Entry
Before & After School Programs
Quality before- and after-school programs are evidence-based practices. Research emphasizes the importance of high quality out-of-school time learning opportunities for children's academic success in school, as well as their health and well-being. *Out of School Time* (OST) programs can support and promote academics, socialization, sports, and safe environments for children before- and after-school, on Saturdays, and during scheduled school breaks. Programs that focus on emerging foundational literacy skills and on-going speaking, listening, writing, and reading skill development can significantly impact student learning outcomes.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Design fun learning opportunities that focus on literacy skill development, not merely provide homework help for students. For example, incorporating literacy enrichment activities that incorporate the arts, fitness, and technology can motivate student attendance and engagement while impacting literacy skill development.

- Provide targeted interventions before and/or after school for students who need additional literacy support and provide student transportation home from after-school learning opportunities to ensure students will be able to participate.

- Identify programs within your community that celebrate the backgrounds and cultures of the families and children in your school. Partner with these programs to enroll students and to support literacy skill development.

- Design clubs/camps around literacy themes, author’s work, and/or games. Give the club a fun name or have students help name the club. The club could focus on poetry, song writing, singing, and/or reading. A karaoke club incorporates reading, speaking, and listening. Apples to Apples, Scrabble, and Bananograms are just a few games to incorporate in-club opportunities. Offer clubs before and/or after school, on Saturdays, and during regularly scheduled school breaks.

- Design project-based learning opportunities for students. Projects incorporate and develop speaking, listening, reading, and writing, while also developing critical thinking and cooperative learning.

- Create project-based, computer-assisted credit retrieval programs for students in grades 11–12 to complete before and after school.

- Partner with district food service and/or child nutrition providers to provide breakfast, lunch, or snacks to students, while LAP providers focus on literacy skill development. Target shared reading experiences and foundational literacy skill development to support students with feed the body and the mind activities.
Demographic Considerations—Student Factors to Consider When Planning

- Students who have not yet met standard in reading, writing, speaking, and listening benefit from before- and after-school programs that target and offer opportunities for development in those areas.

- Cultural interests of students should be part of the design of the program.

- Activities should be age appropriate to engage students beyond the school day.

- Elementary school students need: program time to be consistent throughout the school year and time in program is aligned to student needs.

- Middle school students need: credible/trained staff and programs that are independent from school, yet family connected.

- High school students need: funding collaboration, planning/cooperation from stakeholders, set objectives, connections to community/career readiness, and leadership opportunities.

Strategies for Implementation—Success factors to Consider When Planning

- Consider students’ interests.

- Recruit district-level sponsorship.

- Provide an on-site coordinator.

- Establish sustainable funding.

- Partner with district food service and/or child nutrition providers to provide healthy snacks.

- Create a positive environment, dedicated to building connections with students.

- Provide training and technical assistance for staff.

- Establish goals with timelines for the program and students.

- Limit staff turnover.

- Align regular-day curriculum and assessment with hands on enrichment activities.

- Use individual/group data to target program design.

- Engage in on-going progress monitoring.

- Make connections with schools and school day teachers.

- Encourage community involvement.
Resources—Tools for Planning

- Structuring Out-Of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement
- The Evaluation of Enhanced Academic Instruction in After-School Programs Final Report
- After School Alliance: Literacy Brief & Toolbox
- Effective Out-of-School Time Programs: Reading Rockets
- Literacy in Afterschool Programs: SEDL Report
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- School’s Out Washington
- Buck Institute for Education (BIE): Project-Based Learning
- National Education Association Research Spotlight on Project-Based Learning

Supporting Research

Before- and after-school programs take all different shapes and forms. Some schools design and implement opportunities while others connect with external providers. Regardless of the program provider, Out of School Time (OST) opportunities can lead to positive outcomes for children and youth, as well as families, communities, and schools (Vandell, 2014).

The National Center for Time and Learning (NCTL) and UCLA’s Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access (IDEA) support more and better extended learning time and recognize that low-income students generally do not have access to extended enrichment opportunities outside of the typical school day (Del Razo & Renée, 2013). The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (2009) reports: (1) Quality programs improve school attendance, engagement in learning, test scores, and grades; (2) high-risk students who participate regularly in programs benefit the most; (3) the frequency and duration of participation increase benefits.

Several ELT programs that occur after-school are sponsored by community partners. These programs have many benefits to frequent students and families who participate regularly in after-school programs. Participation reduces stress for parents by knowing that their child is in a supervised activity after-school, and it reduces juvenile crime and accidents (NIOST, 2009).

The design of before- and after-school programs are unique to the schools and communities they serve. One example of an after-school literacy program co-exists with a free YMCA after-school program. This program is free to students and families because over 90 percent of the students qualify for the free and reduced lunch. Annual reports of student progress from 2001–2004 identify nearly 40 percent of participating students achieved more than one year’s growth on reading assessments. Student growth was connected to program attendance records. The
primary design of the program focuses on one-on-one tutoring that targeted oral fluency and comprehension (Fleming, 2005).

Another example of a uniquely designed program used a project-based learning (PBL) model. Elementary, middle, and high school students participate in a minimum of four PBL assignments ranging from three to ten weeks throughout the year (Schwalm & Tylek, 2012). The use of PBL provides students with meaningful and authentic learning experiences. By selecting high-interest projects, students are intrinsically motivated to participate in a variety of literacy activities involved in the project. Using PBL during additional after-school learning time helps enhance literacy skills and prepares students for college and career readiness by developing communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration skills (Schwalm & Tylek, 2012).

Recently, there has been much debate on the placement of core literacy standards in after-school programs. Opponents believe that after-school activities should be designed around enrichment, leadership, arts, sports, and civics (Marten, Hill, & Lawrence, 2014). However, the Robert Bowne Foundation in New York City has offered quarterly forums for over ten years to support the development of quality OST programs. Through their work, they have concluded that OST programs already support core literacy standards and they recommend more and better partnerships between OST programs and schools to develop systematic strategies (Marten, Hill, & Lawrence, 2014). Focusing on the CCSS-ELA Habits of Mind, OST programs can align the literacy skills necessary for students to be college and career ready while developing their individual skills in leadership, “problem-solving, perseverance, independence, and understanding other cultures” (Marten, Hill, & Lawrence, 2014).

References

Double Dosing

Double dosing is evidence-based. Double dosing provides additional time during the school day for targeted ELA intervention with a certified teacher. The intervention is closely aligned with the students’ identified literacy learning needs and the grade-level ELA Standards as they are being taught in the students’ core instruction. In elementary schools, double dosing often occurs in a pull-out program or in lieu of other content time three to five days a week, while in middle school and high school, double dosing occurs during a designated class period five days a week. The content focus of double dosing is most effective as the result of ongoing communication between the core classroom content teacher and the intervention specialist. All students in double dosing programs must participate in core instruction.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Identify what literacy skills are needed for students to accelerate learning and align materials and instruction to those needs. Review data regularly to ensure the materials are aligned to core instruction and strategies being used are effective for each student.
- Focus instruction on pre-teaching aligned to core instruction, conceptual understanding, and skills to support grade-level standards.
- Establish routines for goal setting and reflection aligned to core instruction and that support grade-level standards.
- Create an additional instructional block in the master schedule for targeted interventions, more practice, and advanced learning opportunities. Weekly or bi-weekly, educators identify students who need targeted interventions. The educator who had the most success with students on a particular literacy skill will provide re-teaching for the students most at need, thus pairing the most skilled educator with the students most at-risk.
- Provide collaboration time and ongoing training for educators who lead double dosing opportunities. Focus collaboration time on aligning the intervention with the objectives of core instruction. Ongoing training and support is necessary for educators who are working with students to accelerate literacy skills.
- Pair computer-assisted skill building programs with educator support and to provide practice, to monitor student progress, and to communicate student progress with families.
- Provide independent and partner work time for speaking, listening, reading, and writing in double-dosing classrooms. Students need additional time with books and for writing to improve literacy skills. Educators provide targeted coaching and support for partners.
Demographic Considerations—Student Factors to Consider When Planning

- Students who are just below grade-level proficiency experience the greatest positive impact.
- Students who are significantly below grade may require a more intensive intervention.
- English Learners (EL) benefit when instruction is in their home/primary language whenever feasible and is focused on building academic language.
- English learners may not have background knowledge to understand literacy content. Find ways to connect ELA lessons to students’ funds of knowledge.

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning

- Align the double dose intervention tightly to the core instruction.
- Establish clear literacy goals and learning targets.
- Provide a positive learning environment for students.
- Design literacy instruction based on achievement data and progress monitoring to meet individual student needs.
- Provide consistent, predictable structures and routines.
- Design literacy instruction that is systematic, allows time for student practice, and provides specific, individualized feedback to students.
- Portray double dosing as an opportunity for success by creating an environment where students can exercise choice in their selection of literacy materials, and engage socially with others in speaking, listening, reading, and writing practice.
- Use games and play in early learning to strengthen speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills and keep students engaged.
- Use cognitive tools such as graphic organizers, illustrations, concept maps, anchor charts, and pictures to support core instruction during double dosing.
- Consider scheduling the double-dose intervention before the core class so that educators can pre-teach the concepts and skills students will encounter in their core class and to ensure that the double-dose intervention does not become homework help time.
- Select educators to teach double-dose intervention who believe students can be successful, who work closely with core instructional educators, and who have deep pedagogical content knowledge.
Resources—Tools for Planning

- Florida Center for Reading Research: Elements for Effective Reading Interventions
- Perspectives for a Diverse America: Literacy Passages, Tasks and Strategies
- Self-study Guide for Implementing Early Literacy Interventions
- Self-study Guide for Implementing High School Intervention
- Academic Language Toolkit
- Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)
- ELA Shifts
- Readworks.org

Supporting Research

The academic focus during double dosing should be aligned to foundational literacy skills and the ELA Standards. Additionally, alignment to the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards is necessary for students learning English as an additional language. Collaboration time among teachers is essential to develop clarity and coherence among the general education teachers and the staff members providing double dosing for students to meet ELA Standards. The intervention team (all the adults serving the student) should determine the instructional and assessment plans for each student to meet the instructional targets. The student’s ability to articulate the learning targets, along with ongoing progress monitoring and student self-assessment, will identify when these targets are met. Students should continue to receive services until they meet the learning targets identified for them by the instructional team.

In this model, students are identified as needing support, and their responses to interventions are measured on a regular basis. All students are screened at the beginning and again during the middle of the year. Students who have not yet met ELA Standards receive additional instruction three to five times a week for 20–40 minutes in small groups. Their progress is monitored at least once a month (Gersten et. al., 2009). The report found a strong level of evidence that “intensive, systematic instruction on up to three foundational reading skills in small groups to students who score below the benchmark” works for students performing below benchmark (Gersten, et. al., 2009, p. 6). Proven instructional strategies with small groups of students is the best use of double-dosing time.

Mazzolini & Morely (2006) describe the benefits an extra period for literacy instruction within the regular school day has on accelerating literacy skills for middle and high school students who are reading one or more years below grade level. By regularly using vocabulary activities, mini-lessons, read-alouds, and independent reading practice, students experienced growth in
reading achievement and reported increased self-efficacy and motivation to read. Additional time for students who struggle with speaking, listening, writing, and reading within the school day will require a design shift for scheduling.

References


Summer Book Programs

Summer book programs are a promising practice. Students can participate from any location during non-scheduled school time. Summer book programs provide students with a choice of reading materials and access to books at home.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Use LAP funds to support your summer program by providing new books for LAP students to borrow during the summer. Students select books to borrow and bring back to school in the fall. These books may be used to stock LAP classroom libraries so that independent practice in reading continues throughout the school year.

- Identify community partners to support enrichment summer opportunities for students as an incentive for participating in summer reading activities. National and community partners can provide free books and other incentives for at-risk students.

- Partner with a local library to promote summer reading resources. Provide training opportunities for students and parents to use the library electronic resources to reserve books and search for e-books, audio books, magazines, and movies.

- Establish a summer literacy program that includes books and blogs. Blogging about summer books provides educators an opportunity to formatively assess student comprehension and interact with students. Teachers could be provided a summer teaching stipend to follow up and work with LAP students remotely/electronically during the summer.

- Design a K–2 program using numeracy and/or social-emotional development-themed books. Provide training for shared-reading opportunities and books for parents to borrow for the summer. Collect the books at the end of the summer during a summer book reading celebration.

- Establish a book mobile program and deliver books to low socio-economic areas. Seek community partners, grants, and volunteers to assist in the design and development of the program.

- Develop a system to mail a book to students every two weeks, and then have staff follow up with a phone call to each student to have a genuine conversation about what they liked about the book. Train staff members or volunteers (adults or high school students) to engage students in phone book talk conversations.

Demographic Considerations—Student Factors to Consider When Planning

- Students who struggle with reading and reluctant readers benefit greatly when given a choice of reading materials.
• Students identified for free and reduced-price lunch programs often have fewer books at home and gain added benefit with access to books.

• Students learning English as an additional language benefit from a mix of leveled books and audiobooks for language development and comprehension.

• All K–4 students benefit from multi-year summer book programs that start in kindergarten and continue for at least three years.

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning
• Provide multi-year programs designed to accelerate reading growth.

• Provide easy access to books for students and families.

• Allow students to self-select books to increase reading motivation.

• Seek grant funding to provide books for low-income, at-risk students.

• Engage families as partners.

• Use reading logs to measure progress toward goals (available online).

• Collaborate with community libraries.

• Provide external motivators to help with engagement (e.g., name in local paper or recognition by school board for amount of time spent reading over summer).

• Read out loud to primary students who are not independent readers.

• Provide guidance to students as they select books to ensure books are not too difficult.

• Encourage students to read a wide selection of genres.

• Create a schedule to open the school library during summer months.

• Provide families with meaningful strategies and resources that can be carried over and implemented at home, which ensures continuity of summer reading programs throughout the year, after the intervention has concluded.

Resources—Tools for Planning
• OSPI Summer Programs Presentation

• Washington State’s Summer Reading Program

• Cultivating Readers Family Guide for shared literacy activities.: English & Spanish

• Reading Rockets: Get Ready for Summer! Ideas for Teachers to Share with Families!

• Book Programs: Pizza Hut—Book It!, Scholastic app—Summer Reading Challenge, Barnes and Noble—Summer Reading Program, and Reading Rockets resources for free books
Supporting Research

Research shows that students who do not read in the summer can lose two to three months of reading development, whereas students who do read tend to gain a month of reading proficiency during the same amount of time (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003). For decades, summer break has attributed to loss of reading comprehension skills and student academic outcomes in reading. From 1st to 5th grade, summer break can attribute to a loss of up to 1.5 grade levels (Whittingham & Rickman, 2015). Reading just five books over the summer can prevent summer learning loss (Heyns, 1978), and students who participate in multi-year programs show the greatest academic growth (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2013).

Summer book programs promote students’ reading during the days they are not in school. Multiple strategies are starting to emerge to provide students access to books and choice of materials. Some programs hand the books out to students at the end of the regular school year or mail books to students throughout the summer, while other programs have establish digital device checkouts with a multitude of books loaded on the device (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2013; Mitchell, 2016). Mobile book projects are also becoming more popular and the results of these projects are reducing summer reading loss and inspiring communities (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2013; Genay, 2015; Groff, S, 2015).

In a study by Allington et al. (2010), elementary students self-selected 12 books each spring for a voluntary summer reading program over three consecutive years. Students who received books in this study “reported more often engaging in voluntary summer reading and had significantly higher reading achievement than the control group…. [T]he reading gains of students from the most economically disadvantaged families in the study were found to be larger, perhaps because these students have the most restricted access to books” (p. 422). When students identified for free and reduced-price lunches participated in voluntary summer reading programs, their confidence increased in the classroom and their achievement scores were higher at the beginning and end of the following school year (Whittingham & Rickman, 2015).

In a 2008 summer book program study, 400 students in grades 3–5 displayed significant differences based on their research groups (Blazer, 2011). The research groups included: (1) students were not provided books, (2) students were provided books, (3) students were provided books and fluency scaffolding, and (4) students were provided books with fluency and comprehension scaffolding. The study resulted in significant differences in the no books and the books with fluency and comprehension scaffolding groups. Black, Hispanic, and low-income students enrolled in the book program study group with both oral fluency and comprehension scaffolding showed average gains of four months of academic growth over the course of three months (Blazer, 2011).
Research suggests the following strategies will help schools develop successful summer reading programs (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2013; Blazer, 2011, p. 8–9):

- Review oral reading and comprehension strategies at the end of the school year with students individually.
- Review oral reading and comprehension strategies at the end of the school year with both students and parents together.
- Teach parents how to scaffold oral and comprehension activities at home.
- Review book selection activities to ensure books are just right for the reader at the independent reading level.
- Send at least eight books (that match each student’s reading level) home for the summer.
- Open the school library on designated days.
- Establish a bookmobile program.
- Send families packets, postcards, and books at regular intervals.
- Send summer letters with scaffolding skills and reminders.

Research on the impact of digital devices to enhance literacy skills during summer break is still new. Early research has found that adolescents using e-readers have reported changes in attitudes and motivation toward reading, students preferred to read on the e-readers, and reluctant readers are incentivized by using e-readers (Mitchell, 2016). In an 11-week summer book program for 6th grade students, Nooks were preloaded with books and checked out to students who struggled to meet grade-level reading outcomes. Two findings stood out in this study: students regularly used and benefited from the imbedded tools in the e-reader, and the e-reader provided more opportunities for reading because of its portability and convenience. Students reported the dictionary as the most used tool because it helped them understand the text and learn new words (Mitchell, 2016).

Many adolescent students prefer to read using a digital device, and teachers can motivate students by incorporating digital devices in reading and writing activities (Fink, 2012). With the added motivation, teachers can guide students to use their digital devices with academic intent to explore their interest and develop their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills with a variety of apps and websites. Multiple websites provide free magazines and grammar games that can enhance summer reading activities, and various apps have recording tools for speaking activities. For older students, digital devices are becoming more practical based on their daily access to laptops, cell phones, and tablets; digital devices are also becoming more and more accessible to younger students (Fink, 2012).
References


Summer School Programs

Summer school programs are evidence-based. These Out-of-School Time (OST) programs have the potential to accelerate the reading development of students who struggle to read and diminish summer reading loss. Summer programs extend the school year into the summer months and provide enriching opportunities to foster a love of reading and develop speaking, listening, and writing skills. Summer learning loss disproportionately affects low-income students. An academic summer program has the potential to minimize learning loss and result in achievement gains.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Create summer school programs that promote a balanced literacy model of reading and allow for student choice.
- Use LAP funds to purchase classroom libraries for summer school classrooms. These books can be re-distributed to LAP classroom libraries in the fall.
- Use a creative name to promote your summer school opportunity (e.g., Reading Playground, All About Bugs, or Sing! Dance! Play!). Invite community partners to participate in creating programs, naming, and highlighting their literacy talents.
- Combine literacy summer school programs with other content areas or enrichment opportunities such as Lego robotics, science, math, and/or theater to create excitement and engagement.
- Create a literacy summer camp and focus on a theme. Students can dig into a topic by reading about it, writing about it, and creating a product to share and tell about it. Students will be reading, writing, speaking, and listening throughout the camp, so it will be literacy-based and students will become experts in their camp topic. Provide options for different themes for students to choose from throughout the summer.
- Create a project-based, computer-assisted ELA credit retrieval summer program for grades 11–12 students.

Demographic Considerations—Student Factors to Consider When Planning

- Students from families of poverty may have few or no books at home and will benefit from a summer literacy program.
- Students who are reluctant to read, are building reading skills, or are learning English as an additional language, will benefit from engaging summer literacy opportunities.
- Students who are reading below grade-level proficiency standards and those who have not yet met grade level standards on state ELA assessments benefit from summer literacy programs.
Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning

- Keep student/staff ratios small and support targeted interventions for students who have not yet met grade-level standards.
- Align summer instruction to the regular school-year curriculum and the Washington State Learning Standards.
- Design curriculum that is relevant, interactive, and hands-on so that students stay engaged.
- Provide professional learning to teachers and/or trained professionals to improve the quality and consistency of instruction in supporting best practices in literacy instruction.
- Hire experienced staff and provide professional learning opportunities.
- Provide differentiated instruction.
- Provide small group instruction and supports (3–6 students).
- Allow for student choice and teach how to select just right books.
- Provide sustained time for independent reading.
- Support connection to core and school-year instructional strategies and content.
- Partner with transportation services and provide transportation to and from summer learning opportunities.
- Partner with district food service and/or child nutrition providers to provide healthy snacks.
- Provide communication between the program and home, and encourage regular attendance.
- Encourage parents and families to read with their child daily and talk to their children about what they have read.
- Evaluate programs to ensure the summer program is effective at improving and sustaining student outcomes.
- Use observational data, youth, parent, and staff input, and student academic data to evaluate programs.
- Provide summer school opportunities over multiple summers.

Resources—Tools for Planning

- OSPI Summer Programs Presentation
- Summer Reading Camp Self-Study Guide
• Reading Rockets: Get Ready for Summer! Ideas for Teachers to Share with Families!
• Reading Rockets, Colorin Colorado, and LD Online: Making Reading Relevant: Read, Learn, and Do! (K–3)
• Washington State’s Summer Reading Program
• Every Child, Every Day by Richard Allington

Supporting Research

Research on summer reading loss dates back to the early 1900s (Blazer, 2011). Not only are students who live below the poverty line less likely to participate in summer activities like going to the museum, camp or zoo, they are also less likely to go to the library or bookstore. Summer programs serve multiple purposes for students, families, educators, and communities. These programs are often designed to promote students who have failed or been retained, accelerate learning for students who have not yet met standard, prevent future academic problems, improve student and parent attitudes towards school performance, and provide academic enrichment. Program design should include enrichment activities that are hands-on and foster students’ creativity (Blazer, 2011). Summer learning should also provide different experiences than those provided during the regular school year. Allington (2013) discusses the importance of providing high-quality summer literacy opportunities for students from families of poverty in order to close the reading achievement gap.

Attending school-based, camp, and community programs has been found to be beneficial to students. However, those in low-income households are less likely to participate in these summer enrichment activities (Blazer, 2011). Research indicates over half of the participants in summer programs are white. It further indicates that Black (18 percent), Hispanic (14 percent), Asian (5 percent) and Native American (2 percent) students are poorly represented (Blazer, 2011, p. 4). The design of the summer program must appeal to the diversity of its students and families. Intensive summer intervention strategies, such as small group or one-on-one teaching using an evidence-based curriculum, can be delivered through well-designed summer programs. Tutoring, family involvement, and community outreach programs can extend into the summer months to provide services to students and families.

According to Duffy (2001), summer school programs have the potential to accelerate the reading development of students who struggle with reading. In this particular study by Duffy (2001) of 2nd-grade students in a summer school program, students improved in word identification, fluency, comprehension, perceptions of themselves as readers, attitudes toward reading, and instructional reading levels. This summer school program was designed and implemented according to the constructs of balanced literacy instruction—a short, explicit mini-lesson, independent reading, partner reading, shared reading and/or interactive read aloud, shared/interactive writing and independent writing. Also included was accelerated teaching
and responsive teaching–small group-guided reading, strategy groups, and conferring with students. Duffy (2001) warns though, that summer school, as a short-term intervention, should not be viewed as a quick fix for all students who struggle with reading. Some students will need ongoing literacy support during the school year to meet grade-level goals and to sustain their summer literacy learning.

Borman’s research indicates that summer learning may be the primary intervention through which educators can prevent the cumulative widening of the reading achievement gap (Borman, 2000, p. 24). Local schools and districts should use data to design, develop, and evaluate programs to serve different student groups, including students with disabilities at various grade levels, multiple demographics, and students who are learning English as an additional language. Research conducted by Roderick, et al. (1999) demonstrates that participation in a summer program, in addition to the regular academic school year’s curriculum, provides students with at least a short-term gain in standardized test scores (Roderick, Bryk, Jacob, Easton, & Allensworth, 1999). More recently, Kindron & Lindsay (2014), through a meta-analytic review of the research, found that increased learning time programs had a positive effect on students’ literacy performance at the elementary school level, and it was especially beneficial for students performing below standard.

References


Tutoring by Adults

Quality adult tutoring practices range from evidence-to research-based, depending on the structure of the intervention. Adult tutors, when they receive professional learning in foundational literacy skills and the ELA Standards, are a strong supplement to a comprehensive literacy program. Carefully selected adult tutors can include teachers, intervention specialists, paraeducators, other classified personnel, and volunteers. Tutors can provide targeted one-on-one or small-group instruction to meet the specific needs of students. All tutors should receive specialized professional learning to target students’ literacy needs.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Provide a framework for literacy tutors. The framework will provide a foundation for training, monitor student progress, and will reduce prep time for teachers.

- Provide targeted training for all tutors prior to working with students. Training for tutors should be on-going and aligned to the foundational skills targeted during scheduled tutoring time. Tutor training should also focus on delivery strategies like wait time, student observation, data collection, coaching, correction techniques, etc.

- Partner with local university education departments and/or ESDs to provide literacy foundational skills training for educators and tutors.

- Beginning readers (whether they are K–4, learning English as an additional language, or dyslexic) often need decoding monitoring and modeling. Adults trained in the foundational reading skills can work one-on-one or in small groups with students to improve student outcomes.

- Some readers are proficient decoders but struggle with vocabulary usage and comprehension. Adults trained in prompting techniques can support students with context clues and word morphology. Training in questioning strategies (such as recall, conceptualizing strategic thinking, and extended thinking) helps students to improve comprehension.

- Students who struggle with writing often need content and organizational monitoring and modelling. Adults trained in development strategies (such as retell, categorization, and layering), as well as organization and text structure strategies (such as cause and effect, comparison/contrast, and problem and solution), help students to improve their writing.

Demographic Considerations—Student Factors to Consider When Planning

- Students who are reading below grade-level proficiency standards and who have not yet met grade level ELA assessments.
• Students identified as needing additional language development support, including students learning English as an additional language, who need more practice with oral fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and literacy skill motivation.

• Students with learning disabilities benefit from adult tutoring when the adult tutor receives extra training, targeted materials, and when the intervention is intensive.

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning
• Select a scientifically research-based intervention model within a multi-tiered system of support that use individualized, diagnostic assessments to design appropriate developmental lessons for students.

• Provide a setting where distractions and disruptions do not interfere with productive engagement.

• Provide extensive and ongoing tutoring for all tutors that includes observation and correction techniques.

• Recognize that untrained tutors can have negative effects on learning.

• Schedule tutoring time that pairs students who have the greatest needs with the most skilled tutor.

• Provide one-to-one or small group tutoring, consisting of 3–6 students.

• Consider group size when reviewing student outcomes.

• Design and implement a highly structured program where knowledge is constructed from the integration of previously learned and newly acquired skill sets.

• Pair computer-assisted learning programs can be paired with adult tutoring models but should not replace adult tutoring interventions

Resources—Tools for Planning
• Utah State Office of Education: Star Reading Tutoring

• Reading Rockets: Tutoring Strategies for the Primary Grades

• Keys to Effective Intervention

• U.S. Department of Education—Tips for Reading Tutors

• Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade

• Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices
Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade

Supporting Research

Research has consistently shown that students benefit from tutoring programs that are well-designed and include professional training and coaching centered on the best practices in literacy development (Center for Prevention Research and Development, 2009; Elbaum et al., 2000; Ritter et al., 2009; Shinn, Deno & Fuchs, 2002; Slavin et al., 2011).

Adult tutors must be familiar with concepts associated with the essential components of reading such as: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Birsch, 2005; Erion & Ronka, 2014; Pittman & Dorel, 2014). For example, early literacy tutors should be trained to provide instruction with respect to alphabetic sounds (both consonants and vowels), blending letters, word recognition skills, and decoding unfamiliar words. Moreover, as students’ literacy skills develop, tutors must be well versed in strategies to enhance fluency, engage students in dialogue about reading and error correction processes, and support comprehension (Birsch, 2005; Pittman & Dorel, 2014). Both in and outside of the classroom, tutors can play an essential role in supporting literacy learning for students.

Tutoring as an intervention should be provided in addition to regularly scheduled core classroom instruction. Shorter sessions, multiple times a week, are more successful than longer sessions fewer times a week. The desired length of one-on-one tutoring should be 10–15 minutes, and multiple sessions should be at least three per week. The intensity and frequency of the session will allow the students who need more intensive instruction to become proficient in the relevant concept or topic (Allington, 2001; Center for Prevention Research and Development, 2009).

Tutoring can be implemented via a pull-out model, wherein the student is removed from the classroom in order to receive extra support or instruction, or via a push-in model, wherein intervention is provided by an adult tutor within the classroom itself. All students must have access to core literacy instruction; therefore, all supplemental pull-out tutoring models must be provided outside core literacy instructional time.

Very limited research exists in support of the effectiveness of the push-in model of tutoring (Gelzheiser, Meyers, & Pruzek, 1992). Push-in tutoring generally is implemented one of two ways. In one approach, the tutor works with an individual or groups of students to help them better learn from the lesson the classroom teacher is giving to the whole class; in another common model, the tutor provides intensive re-teaching of targeted lessons (Shanahan, 2008). Both push-in and pull-out models of tutoring must be targeted and based on student learning data, and aligned carefully to curriculum used by the classroom teacher (Shanahan, 2008). Careful planning and communication between classroom teacher and tutor is key to the effectiveness of literacy tutoring interventions (Shanahan, 2008).
communication between teacher and tutor has been found to be a common weakness of both the push-in and pull-out models (Allington, 1994; Davis & Wilson, 1999; Dawson, 2014).

Overall, interventions should be designed around evidence-based and reliable diagnostic assessments administered at the beginning of the school year and throughout the intervention program for progress monitoring. Well-designed tutoring programs can improve students’ literacy skills. From one-to-one instruction to small group instruction, tutors can accelerate academic outcomes. Through carefully coordinated processes and Multi-Tiered System of Supports, students who require more intensive literacy instruction will develop proficiency (Allington, 2001).

References


Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2009). Background research: Tutoring programs. Champaign, IL: Center for Prevention Research and Development, Institute of Government and Public Affairs, University of Illinois.


Tutoring by Interventionist/Specialists

Tutoring by a literacy interventionist/specialist is evidence-based. Highly trained literacy interventionists/specialists provide quality literacy instruction that support students who have not yet met ELA Standards. Tutoring by an interventionist/specialist is supplemental to core literacy instruction and provides students additional learning time during the school day and during Out-of-School Time (OST) programs with a trained content expert.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Flex interventionists’ time to start the workday earlier or end after school in order to serve students outside the regular-scheduled school day.

- Create an intervention/enrichment block within the master schedule to serve students who need additional literacy support. Ensure literacy interventionist works with students most at-risk.

- Create opportunities for classroom teachers and interventionist to develop a push-in or pull-out model for targeted literacy intervention support.

Demographic Considerations—Student Factors to Consider When Planning

- Students who are reading below grade-level proficiency standards.

- Students identified as needing additional language development support, including students learning English as an additional language, who need more practice with oral fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and literacy skill motivation.

- Students in grade 3–12 who need accelerated literacy growth to meet grade-level standards on state ELA assessments.

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning

- Select a scientifically research-based intervention model within a multi-tiered system of support that use individualized, diagnostic assessments to design appropriate developmental lessons for students.

- Ensure strategies and programs are evidence-based.

- Implement a highly structured program where knowledge is constructed from the integration of previously learned and newly acquired skill sets.

- Provide regular, structured opportunities to develop speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills.

- Build students’ literacy skills through explicit teaching and modeling of strategies.
• Provide a setting where distractions and disruptions do not interfere with productive engagement. Provide frequent opportunities for shared-reading experiences for students who struggle with literacy skills.

• Establish a continuation of communication with families.

• Adjust teaching to meet students’ needs based upon frequent diagnostic progress monitoring assessments.

• Schedule intervention time that pairs expert professionals with students who have the greatest needs.

• Provide frequent and ongoing-targeted professional learning for reading intervention specialists.

• Hire highly trained reading specialists to provide intervention to students struggling to read.

• One-to-one and small group tutoring, consisting of three (3) to six (6) students.

• Effectiveness of outcomes determines group size.

Resources—Tools for Planning

• Keys to Effective Intervention

• Utah State Office of Education: Star Reading Tutoring

• Reading Rockets: Tutoring Strategies for the Primary Grades

• U.S. Department of Education—Tips for Reading Tutors

• Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade

• Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices

• Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade

Supporting Research

Literacy interventionists/specialists working in one-on-one and small-group contexts supplemental to core literacy instruction must be highly trained and pursue continuing professional learning (Gordon, 2009). If the intent is to accelerate students’ literacy development sufficient to close the achievement gap, interventions must be planned such that the teachers who are experts on reading instruction deliver those lessons. Expecting less well-trained adults in the school to provide powerful instruction to the most difficult-to-teach students has little basis in theory or research. Good teaching is adaptive, and interventions
require frequent modifications to groupings of students based upon regular progress monitoring results.

Literacy interventions should focus on the foundational literacy skills that include phonemic awareness, oral language (oracy), alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Birsch, 2005; NELP, 2008). In addition to working directly with students, another role of interventionists/specialists should be to work with classroom teachers to identify text at the best reading level for students who struggle to access content area materials. Even as difficult texts are required for students to be college and career ready, it is necessary to have text at the appropriate reading level for students who struggle with reading to scaffold their learning. According to Allington (2001), students need to have access to [engaging] books throughout the day that are at each student’s independent reading level.

Procedures and routines within a predictable structure are crucial to intervention success; however, no two lessons will be identical because all students are different—even within small groups. Thus, interventionists/specialists need a deep knowledge of content, instructional pedagogy, and the concepts embedded in various practices in order to provide optimal services. Reading interventionists/specialists must be able to draw on their discipline-specific expertise to intentionally select the strategic actions that best match the needs of the specific reader and their learning goals. They must be able to teach for the transfer of skills and strategies necessary for successful classroom achievement.

References


Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2009). *Background research: Tutoring programs*. Champaign, IL: Center for Prevention Research and Development, Institute of Government and Public Affairs, University of Illinois.


Tutoring by Peers

Peer tutoring is a research-based practice. It is a term that has been used to describe a wide array of tutoring arrangements, but most of the research on its success refers to students working in pairs to help one another learn material or practice academic tasks. Peer and cross-age tutoring are effective in developing literacy skills, while at the same time providing social benefits for tutors and the students they tutor. Peer and cross-age tutoring increase opportunities for immediate feedback and support during learning. Peer tutoring is more focused and intentional than peer collaboration or cooperative groups where students work together in small groups. Reciprocal peer tutoring allows the tutor and tutee to alternate roles to increase learning. LAP funds can be used to support peer tutor training to establish routines and structures.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

• Recruit volunteer site coordinators to work with educators to develop structured peer tutoring routines. Provide regular training for peer tutors and provide guidance by designing an easy to follow template for tutors.

• Develop a training manual and/or anchor posters about tutoring routines to provide guidance and support for peer tutors.

• Recruit volunteer peer tutors from high schools, local colleges, universities, and educator preparatory programs. Train tutors to support targeted skill development (e.g. phonemic awareness).

• Schedule peer tutoring time for 35 minutes on three days each week to work on reading fluency and comprehension. Establish reciprocal partner routines where students read aloud and synthesizes/summarizes text together.

• Schedule time for grade-level teams to work with coaches to establish peer tutoring routines and to model and observe these routines with students.

Demographic Considerations—Student Factors to Consider When Planning

• Students in elementary, middle, and high school benefit from peer tutoring arrangements.

• Peer tutors and tutees benefit from peer tutoring arrangements.

• K–1 students benefit most from phonological awareness, decoding and fluency practices with focus on word level reading skills, word attack, word identification, and spelling activities.

• Students identified as needing additional language development support, including students learning English as an additional language, who need more practice with oral
fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

- Peer tutoring can be implemented in a small group setting or whole class configurations.

**Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning**

- Train educators to implement peer tutoring into teaching routines and structures.
- Peer tutoring will be most effective with purposeful planning and preparation.
- Provide training and coaching time to establish and review roles for peer tutors.
- Provide peer tutors with multiple opportunities to develop their skills as a tutor.
- Develop peer tutors to serve as partner in reading with story retelling, summarizing text (paragraph shrinking), and making predictions (prediction relay).
- Train peer tutors to respond with structured prompts and support when tutees are having difficulty.
- Train student tutors to model study skills, communication skills, work habits, questioning skills, and other helpful academic behaviors.
- Train adult supervisors to construct and monitor peer partnerships.
- Monitor student growth to ensure peer tutoring is meeting literacy goals.
- Provide students with a template for expectations and note taking.
- Provide practice time for both the tutor and the tutee.
- Establish routines for peer tutoring time three or more times per week.
- Ensure each partner is provided the same amount of time (e.g., five minutes) for reading out loud during partner reading.
- Provide 35 minutes three times a week for elementary students.
- Provide 35 minutes five times over the course of two weeks for high school students.
- Incorporate a motivation system for students to use during peer tutoring time.
- Older students benefit from rewards as a motivator.

**Resources—Tools for Planning**

- Council for Learning Disabilities: Peer Tutoring
- Peer Tutoring Resource Center
- Kids as Reading Helpers— A Peer Tutor Training Manual
Provided feedback—Austin’s Butterfly: Building Excellence in Student Work

Edutopia—Analyzing Student Work: Using Peer Feedback to Improve Instruction

The Teaching Channel—ELL Peer-to-Peer Tutoring

Education Leadership Video with Nancy Frey: Peer Teachers

Supporting Research

According to Zeneli, Thurston, & Roseth (2016), peer tutoring is a form of cooperative learning and can be implemented through peer-assisted learning, reciprocal peer tutoring, and cross-age tutoring. In a meta-analysis, same-age reciprocal peer tutoring was identified as being to be the most beneficial arrangement for peer tutoring followed by cross-age fixed role peer tutoring (Zeneli, Thurston, & Roseth, 2016). Tutoring is a versatile practice and can occur in alternative programs, resource rooms, before/after-school settings, during summer arrangements, and in general education classrooms (Bowman-Perrott, et. al., 2013).

Peer tutoring is effective across multiple demographics of students (Bowman-Perrott, et. al., 2013). The benefits of peer tutoring include improved social emotional outcomes (e.g. self-efficacy and confidence). Peer tutoring also improves student time on task and pacing by providing students with timely feedback and more opportunities to respond/participate (Shenderovich, Thurston, & Miller, 2015; Bowman-Perrott, et. al., 2013). Fuchs & Fuchs (2005) have found that reading skills improve when students cooperatively work together using well-designed routines. Peer tutoring is especially effective at improving peer relationships, personal development, and motivation (Topping, 2008). Hattie notes research demonstrates that peer tutoring has numerous benefits for both the tutor and tutee (Hattie, 2009).

Peer-assisted learning is appropriate for all students and is often targeted at students in grades K—6 (What Works Clearinghouse, 2012). Students work together on literacy activities. Peer-assisted learning generally partners students based on literacy skill/ability levels (e.g., proficient students with non-proficient students) and students take on assigned roles of tutor or tutee (What Works Clearinghouse, 2012). When implementing peer tutoring arrangements, practitioners should combine organized structures, foundational skills in reading instruction, partner reading with story retelling, summarizing text (paragraph shrinking), making predictions (prediction relay), and group-reward contingencies to experience positive results (Gersten et al., 2007; Fantuzzo & Rohrbeck, 1992; What Works Clearinghouse, 2012).

Reciprocal peer tutoring (RPT) is an intervention strategy in which students alternate roles between the tutor and the tutee. RPT has a structured format where “students prompt, teach, monitor, evaluate, and encourage each other” (Fantuzzo, King, Heller, 1992, p. 332). RPT learning opportunities can be used to increase the learning time and opportunities within the classroom. This peer-tutoring model combines self-management methods, group reward...
possibilities, and promotes academic and social aptitude (Fantuzzo & Rohrbeck, 1992).
Whenever RPT is used, keeping the group small is important. The lead teacher, or lead tutor,
should determine the selection of tutoring groups based on the goal of the activities and the
daily schedule (Gersten et. al., 2007; Fantuzzo & Rohrbeck, 1992).

Cross-age peer tutoring consists of older students, college/university students, and community
volunteers who work with tutees; tutors are not certificated educators, but they are part of the
tutees community (Shenderovich, Thurston, & Miller, 2015).

Research on peer tutoring in grades K–6 can be effective at improving student literacy
outcomes. Based on Fuchs & Fuchs research and partnerships with the Center on Accelerated
Student Learning (CASL), five conclusions can be drawn (2005):

1. Content for kindergartners and fluency building in 1st grade should be directed at
younger students.

2. Teachers can implement peer tutoring in the classroom to impact reading instruction
and skills.

3. Research supports positive and robust results in literacy outcomes for all students: low,
middle, and high performers including students with special needs, English language
learners, and free and reduced-price lunch populations.

4. No one pedagogical best practice reaches 100 percent of students; therefore, 10–20
percent of students will need additional academic supports.

5. Narrowing the focus on specific skill development during peer tutoring is recommended.

References

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Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades: A
Regional Research Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.


**Balanced Literacy**

Balanced Literacy is a promising practice. This framework integrates a variety of instructional approaches, including readers and writers workshop, to meet the needs of all students while providing meaningful literacy experiences to students. Its foundation includes explicit skill instruction balanced with supported independent practice. Balanced Literacy also relies on assessment-based planning to differentiate and individualize student literacy instruction. LAP funds can be used to support Balanced Literacy practices to support students who have not yet met ELA Standards. For example, LAP funds could be used to determine instructional support, differentiate instructional practices, and educator training to support the development of foundational literacy skills.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- A Balanced Literacy framework can be used to design core literacy instruction and/or literacy interventions during the school day (e.g., double dose of shared reading, strategy groups, or guided reading).
- A Balanced Literacy framework can be used to design before/after school literacy interventions and summer programs.
- A Balanced Literacy framework can provide a guide for targeted professional learning for educators who provide shared, guided, interactive, and independent opportunities for students (e.g., shared reading, guided reading, interactive writing, or independent word-study).

Demographic Considerations—Student Factors to Consider When Planning

- Students learning English as an additional language benefit from individualized linguistic, academic, and socio-emotional support.
- Special education students who are in a push-in or inclusion model benefit from individualized linguistic, academic, and socio-emotional support.
- Students in low-performing demographic subgroups benefit from additional differentiation and individualized instruction.

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning

- Provide explicit instruction, within a gradual release of responsibility, to scaffold learning.
- Use assessments to know students individually as readers, writers, and users of language.
- Match instruction to the individual, not to a program.
• Provide ample opportunities and support for students to use and extend their instruction in functional reading and writing.

• Provide students with guided choices for reading and writing.

• Provide ample time each day for independent reading and writing.

• Build classrooms libraries.

Resources—Tools for Planning

• Highline School District: Balanced Literacy Vision

• Janette M. Hughes: K-6 Balanced Literacy

• Interactive Read-Aloud Routines and Suggested Grades K–8 Titles from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project

• Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade

• Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices

• Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade

Supporting Research

The goal of Balanced Literacy is to gradually release control of learning, whereby responsibility is shifted from the teacher to the students. It includes all of the foundational speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills and incorporates multiple instructional approaches that include interactive, shared, guided, and independent practices. Students in Balanced Literacy classrooms participate regularly in word study practices that go beyond spelling and vocabulary development and include phonics, how words are made up, multiple meanings of words, and word origins.

Balanced Literacy provides the opportunity for classroom teachers to differentiate speaking, listening, reading, writing, and word study based on the needs of each student. When selecting and implementing Balanced Literacy, classroom teachers should be knowledgeable, or willing to learn, about the strengths of each student.

Setting up a classroom in a way that allows for whole group, small group, and individual instruction can be challenging, yet is essential in order to differentiate literacy instruction for each student. Classrooms tend to have an abundance of materials, books, and resources that have been purchased to meet the needs of students. However, Balanced Literacy is not a program or materials; instead, it is a framework of using assessment for learning and providing differentiated instruction that will make a difference in student outcomes. A single curriculum
does not fit all students (Buly & Valencia, 2004). A balanced literacy approach meets the needs of all students in a classroom through strong differentiation of core literacy instruction (Fitzgerald & Cunningham, 2002).

Balanced Literacy is deeply rooted in the belief that teachers should be constantly aware of students' individual needs and progress. In order to be able to teach to the strengths and needs of each child, how educators teach and how educators set up the instructional framework is as important as what is taught. The use of various instructional techniques is intended to allow for differentiated literacy instruction to help children gain access to developmentally appropriate literacy knowledge and skills (Frey, et. al., 2005; Hoffman et al., 2000).

Teacher’s College Reading and Writing Project, under the guidance of Lucy Calkins, provides a research base for the various components of Balanced Literacy online (Calkins, n.d.). Fountas and Pinnell provide descriptions in a variety of publications, including When Readers Struggle: Teaching that Works (2009). Highline School District has summarized key components of their Balanced Literacy approach in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactive Read Aloud:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interactive Writing:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students become motivated, life-long learners, while discussing and interacting with each other around a complex text and experiencing a model of authentic skill and strategy application.</td>
<td>Students, with a high level of teacher support, share the pen to do the writing, creating products that are well beyond their independent level of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shared Reading:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Shared Writing:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students engage in a close reading experience that provides all students access to grade level text and guided practice for reading and rereading with opportunities for students to discuss and interact.</td>
<td>Students and the teacher work collaboratively to compose a common piece of writing with the teacher acting as scribe, allowing students an opportunity to focus on language, writing features and style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guided Reading:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guided Writing:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students practice reading and thinking about text at their instructional level while receiving immediate feedback from the teacher.</td>
<td>Students try on a specific writing procedure, strategy, or skill with side-by-side coaching from the teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Reading:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Independent Writing:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students practice applying skills and strategies in independent-level texts while also developing self-directed and self-regulated reading behaviors.</td>
<td>Students create, write, and engage in authentic and purposeful writing while taking ownership of both the process and the product.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Balanced Literacy Instructional Approaches

**Gradual Release of Responsibility:** Students receive explicit instruction in literacy strategies followed by guided, collaborative, and independent practice with differentiated support.

**Mini-lesson:** Students are taught a specific strategy to support them in acquiring the necessary skills through explicit, direct instruction that includes teacher modeling and demonstration followed by students’ active engagement in applying the strategy.

**Conferring:** Students receive individualized feedback and instruction in one-on-one or small group conferences with the teacher.

**Partnerships:** Students engage in discourse to support one another, increase understanding, and develop independence.

**Teaching Share:** Students share examples and reflect on learning for clarification, reinforcement, and closure of the day’s work.

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**Balanced Literacy Component #1—Interactive Read Aloud**

In an Interactive Read Aloud, the teacher *thinks aloud* while reading a text to demonstrate use of comprehension skills and strategies. Students interact to co-construct meaning while authentically applying skills and strategies. This structured routine allows educators to scaffold student text comprehension and it provides students opportunities to interpret and respond to the text (Giroir, et al., 2015). Educators can model literacy behaviors and strategies for students in materials and in ways that the students may not yet be accessing (Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey, 2004). Until middle school, listening comprehension is stronger than reading comprehension (Sticht & James, 1984); therefore, students can often comprehend more complex text if the text is read-aloud versus if it is read independently. Complex read-alouds also aid in vocabulary development (NRP, 2000) and provide EL students language development opportunities through input and output activities (Giroir, et al., 2015).

**Balanced Literacy Component #2—Shared Reading/Writing**

Teacher and students engage in a collaborative close reading or writing experience that provides all students access to grade-level text and grade-level writing opportunities with opportunities for students to discuss and interact. Fisher and Frey (2012) describe the purpose of close reading as, “...to build the habits of readers as they engage with the complex texts of the discipline and to build their stamina and skills for being able to do so independently (p. 8). Fisher and Frey (2012) also suggest the following for close reading: use short, worthy passages, design lessons for rereading, annotate text, note confusions, model reading, discuss the reading, and ask text-dependent/specific questions (pages 8-11).
Balanced Literacy Component #3–Direct and explicit instruction linked to guided practice

Teacher and students engage in a very explicit and short mini-lesson taught to the whole class. All students should participate in the classroom mini-lessons that focus on a variety literacy foundational skills: standards aligned to reading, writing, word study, craft, speaking, listening, and critical thinking.) Classroom mini-lessons also focus on routines, strategies, procedures, and engagement activities that can create independence in a workshop. Procedural lessons are essential to allow the teacher to differentiate after the mini-lesson. Mini-lessons are based on a gradual release of responsibility and, through the use of a variety of materials, provide differentiated resources for these short, explicit lessons (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). In different fields of education (including special education and English Language Learner Education), gradual release has been labeled differently including (but not limited to) the following: I do, we do, you do, you do on your own; Read/Write To, Read/Write With, Read/Write by.

Balanced Literacy Component #4–Independent Time to Read and Write

Independent reading/writing time should be supported by regular conferences with the teacher and opportunities to interact with peers related to their reading and/or writing. Research evidence suggests that volume of reading is linked to attaining higher-order literacy proficiencies (Allington, 2012; Brozo, Brozo, Shiel, & Topping, 2008; Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992). Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) found that the amount of time reading was the best predictor of reading achievement, including a child’s growth as a reader from the 2nd to the 5th grade. Cullinan (2000) reviewed the research on the effects of independent reading for the purpose of informing policy makers, curriculum developers, parents, teachers, and librarians about the importance of independent reading and programs that support it. She concluded that independent reading, defined as the reading students choose to do, supports learning and school achievement. Providing students with protected reading and writing time is necessary in order to support their growth in reading and writing. Independent writing can be on-demand (journal, quick-writes) or process writing. Time to write can occur in writer’s workshop, genre study, author study, and/or mentor text study (Bromley, 2007; Morrow and Gambrell, 2001).

Independent reading (IR) supports student outcomes in fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension proficiency. Students need regular and frequent reading practice in order to build reading stamina and skills (Miller & Moss, 2013). Students who struggle with reading need to experience high success reading (98 percent or more accuracy) activities every day (Allington, 2013). The solution to increase reading practice during the school day is not to provide a free-reading period (Shanahan, 2014). It is important to not confuse free-reading periods like sustained silent reading (SSR) or drop everything and read (DEAR) with IR time. Although these models include providing time to read during the school day and choice of
reading materials, IR focuses on guided choice of reading materials, includes time for individual teacher conferences, and focuses on developing reading skills by teaching explicit strategies to work on during IR time (Buly, 2006). When implemented purposely and systematically with explicit instruction and modeling, IR time can provide the scaffolding and support students need to read proficiently and independently at each grade level (Buly, 2006; Miller & Moss, 2013).

In order to be effective, student IR time must be supported by specific teacher actions (Miller & Moss, 2013):

- Explicit instruction,
- Guided choice for reading material,
- Listening to students’ oral fluency,
- Identifying small differentiated groups,
- Student individual and small group conferences,
- Providing actionable feedback to students, and
- Time for reading reflections and sharing.

IR time is not about keeping students busy. Instead, the goal is to provide purposeful instructional time, that is authentic for students, provides students with choices about what to read, and incorporates explicit instruction to model what students will be practicing and learning (Miller & Moss, 2013). Conferring with students helps them be accountable for reading while supporting individual student progress (Buly, 2006).

Balanced Literacy Component # 5–Word Study
During word study, students become word detectives who engage in developmentally appropriate learning of how English is constructed and used. Through word study, students learn letters and the sounds they make, the structure of sentences, about root words, suffixes and prefixes, and how to derive the meaning of words (Bear, et al., 2015). For more information on word selection and activities for word study, refer to the academic language and vocabulary sections of this menu.

References


Co-Teaching

Co-teaching is a promising practice. As a pedagogical strategy, co-teaching arrangements consist of two certified educational professionals in one classroom. As a partnership, co-teaching is designed to enhance access to core grade-level instruction for all students. Generally, co-teaching partnerships consist of a general education educator and a certified specialist.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Partner English Language specialist with a grade-level or content-based teacher (K–12) to co-plan, co-teach, co-assess, and reflect on students’ literacy skills.
- Partner a special education teacher with a grade-level or content-based teacher to co-plan, co-teach, co-assess, and reflection on student literacy skills.
- Create a flexible design for educators to partner for the entire day or for a designated block of time during the day. Support a variety of arrangements of outside services such as pairing classroom teacher for literacy blocks with English Language specialist, speech and language therapist, media specialist, gifted and talented/highly capable teacher, or special education teacher.
- Partner a first-year teacher with a veteran teacher who can also mentor and support the new teacher as they co-plan, co-teach, co-assess, and reflect together.
- Provide two first-year co-teachers with a coach to mentor and support their co-teaching partnership by co-planning, co-teaching, co-assessing, and reflecting with them.
- Partner with literacy interventionists/specialists to push-in to provide additional ELA support.

Demographic Considerations—Student Factors to Consider When Planning

- Students learning English as an additional language benefit from the additional linguistic, academic, and socio-emotional support.
- Students learning English as an additional language benefit from have the same arrangement throughout the day versus segmented hours throughout the day.
- Special education students who are in a push-in or inclusion model benefit from access to core literacy instruction.
- Students in low-performing demographics subgroups benefit from additional differentiation and support in literacy instruction.

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning

- Provide training on co-teaching model.
• Provide adequate planning time for co-teacher to plan together (co-teaching requires more planning than solo teaching).
• Establish collaborating norms and strategies.
• Require agreement and openness to participate.
• Establish systematic and periodic feedback and evaluation of the model.
• Develop strong co-teaching working relationships.
• Provide coaching, administrative support, and needed resources to co-teaching partners.
• Develop effective strategies to assess the effectiveness of the co-teaching partnership.

Resources—Tools for Planning
• NEA: 6 Steps to Co-Teaching
• University of Minnesota—What is Co-Teaching?
• 5 Models of Co-Teaching
• Co-Teach America
• Self-study for Implementing Early Interventions

Supporting Research
Co-teaching originally started as a practice designed to provide students with disabilities access to grade-level core instruction by partnering a special education teacher with a general education teacher (Friend, 2016). Co-teaching can also be successful when partnering an English Language Specialist with general education teachers (Beninghof & Leensvaart, 2016; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2016). Co-teaching partnerships that include a teacher who specializes in and focuses on meeting the needs of students who have not yet met ELA Standards can benefit student educational outcomes.

Villa, Thousand, and Nevin (2013) define co-teaching as “two or more people sharing responsibility for teaching all of the students assigned to a classroom.” While Friend (2014) provides a slightly different definition, defining the arrangement as being dependent on the characteristics of the students’ individual needs and the services provided. According to Friend, a co-teaching arrangement would include a general education teacher and an educator with specialization for students who struggle. Examples might include a special education teacher, an English language teacher, a speech and language therapist, a media specialist, or a teacher of gifted and talented/highly capable students.
The benefits of co-teaching reach further than student academic growth. As a result of co-teaching, educators who participate in this partnership tend to reflect more on individual instructional strengths and areas for improvement with their co-teaching partner, thus improving their educational practices (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013; Simmons & Magiera, 2007). In addition, co-teaching improves instructional practices through its in-depth, all-inclusive, collaborative approach that improves teacher effectiveness (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013; Beninghof & Leensvaart, 2016). Educator relationships are enhanced by bringing equal value to the individuality that each educator brings to the classroom (Friend, 2016).

Co-teaching partners can take six different approaches in the classroom (Friend, 2016; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2016):

1. Station Teaching: Each teacher works at a station while students rotate through teacher guided and independent areas. Each teacher will work with every student as students rotate through the stations.

2. Parallel Teaching: Working in two groups, teachers present instruction in different ways using different strategies.

3. Alternative Teaching: One teacher teaches whole group while the other teacher pulls small groups for re-teaching, pre-teaching, enrichment, etc.

4. Teaming: Teachers co-instruct the lesson together.

5. One Teach, One Assist: One teacher leads whole group instruction while the other moves around the room re-directing student behavior, re-explaining directions/concepts, and answering questions individually.

6. One Teach, One Observe: While one teacher leads whole group instruction, the other teacher collects observational and/or formative assessment data.

For students, the benefits of co-teaching re-emphasize students’ right to specially designed instruction, recognizing multiple instructional strategies are needed for all students to be successful. For students learning English as an additional language, co-teaching allows students to stay in the class with their native-speaking peers instead of being pulled out and segregated for language instruction (Beninghof & Leensvaart, 2016). Co-taught classrooms “aim to create a classroom culture of acceptance, in which learning variations and strategies to address those variations are the norm” (Friend, 2016, p. 21). Because of its positive results in achievement gains, most notably in language arts and reading, co-teaching is recommended at both the elementary and the secondary level (Simmons & Magiera, 2007).

Researchers have determined that co-teaching is a promising pedagogical strategy applicable to all students, with and without academic difficulties (Simmons & Magiera, 2007). Co-teaching, as defined above, is a viable model that will intensify instructional practices, provide access to
core literacy instruction, and increase student achievement in ELA for all students. While this practice has been explored in the context of providing services for students identified for special education for over 30 years, a recent resurgence of interest has been the result of current reform demands. Research supports that co-teaching improves instructional practices with its in-depth, all-inclusive, collaborative approach to improve teacher effectiveness (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013), and specially designed instruction can be embedded in every co-teaching approach (Friend, 2016).

Ongoing, long-term professional learning is necessary to enhance the effectiveness of coaching. “Simply placing two educators together in a classroom does not result in effective co-teaching” (Beninghof & Leensvaart, 2016, p. 71). Establishing a framework for co-planning can help teachers effectively come together as they co-plan, co-teach, and co-assess. For example, one co-planning framework includes three phases for instructional planning (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2016):

Phase 1: Pre-Planning is completed separately. Each educator reviews and plans for the learning targets and standards, possible content and language objectives, materials, resources, and learning tasks.

Phase 2: Collaborative Planning is done completely together. Co-teachers come together with their pre-planning ideas in an agreed-upon meeting (e.g., face-to-face, by phone, Skype, etc.). During this meeting, educators confirm targets, standards, objectives, etc., and they discuss how they will co-teach the lesson. They also identify challenging concepts and skills students will face.

Phase 3: Post-Planning is completed separately. After establishing roles and responsibilities, each teacher follows through on assigned tasks for the lesson (e.g., scaffolding activities, prepping stations, finding materials, etc.).

The roles of the teachers are shared and lessons are planned based upon the identified needs of the students. Co-teachers take on various roles, from partner teaching the same lesson to teaching the same lesson using different strategies.

References


Consultant Teachers/Coaches: English Language (EL) Coaches

English language (EL) coaches are promising. EL coaches work with classroom teachers to maximize student learning and achievement for students learning English as an additional language. EL coaches can provide professional learning and coaching in literacy acceleration to meet ELA Standards and across content areas to support the language learning needs of students. EL coaches can work with educators to effectively impact student outcomes for LAP students who have not yet met ELA Standards.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Establish an EL coaching model for your school/district. Identify how educators can identify areas for EL growth and receive individual/team coaching. Ask educators what support is needed and how they would like to learn, develop, and implement new skills and strategies. Establish criteria for reciprocal feedback between coaches and educators by designing a template with talking points for coaches and educators to ensure coaching is targeted and effective.

- Provide EL coaching for language proficiency standards across content areas, throughout the day (e.g., coach models use of strategy during literacy block, in science, in math).

- Use gradual release of responsibility model with EL strategies as coach models, co-teaches, and independently coaches educators.

- Coach co-plans with teachers as they implement literacy strategies and language objectives with content standards to target students language development needs.

- Ensure students have access to grade-level content. EL coaches can work with grade-level and content-based teachers to ensure K–12 students are supported across content areas.

- Establish a system for developing anchor charts across the building to assist students with sentence frames. Provide ongoing professional learning opportunities for educators to incorporate anchor charts in the classroom by modeling, co-teaching, observing, and providing feedback to educators.

- Provide opportunities for EL coaches to work with all educators (classroom teachers, paraeducators, and volunteers) to support students English language needs of students. Target strategies for whole group instruction, small group, and one-on-one intensive interventions.

Demographic Considerations—Educator Factors to Consider When Planning

- K–4 EL coaches can identify and assess language literacy needs for English Language Learners.
• K–12 EL coaches can pinpoint gaps in students’ language learning for students who are learning the English language.

• K–12 EL coaches can support developmentally appropriate instructional activities and model interventions for students learning the English language.

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning
• Provide administrative support and guidance regarding the short and long-term planning of EL coaches.

• Ensure the work of the EL coach is aligned to the broader vision of the school and the multi-tiered supports in the building.

• Provide the foundation upon which the EL coach can improve, enhance, and develop teachers’ efficacy in both literacy and content-based instruction.

• Provide culturally familiar texts.

• Provide feedback to teachers through video reflection as they implement new strategies.

• Provide time to review, reflect and adjust techniques; and on agreement, share with staff as an example of successful implementation.

• Use videos as a tool for successful coaching.

• Avoid assigning the EL coach test administration tasks, as this reduces coaching time and opportunities to impact student growth.

Resources—Tools for Planning
• Characteristics of Effective Literacy Coaching

• Self-study Guide for Implementing Early Literacy Interventions

• Instructional Design Framework: Literacy Design Collaborative

• Learning Forward: The Professional Learning Association, site for National Council of Professional Learning.

• Washington Education Association

Supporting Research: EL Coaches
Like other instructional coaches, EL coaches collaborate with classroom teachers to maximize student learning and achievement for students learning English as an additional language (EL). Over the past decade, EL students’ enrollment in Washington has increased. A unique pedagogy is necessary for teachers teaching EL students learning to read and write (Escamilla, 2007).
Specific details surrounding the general professional duties of coaching are outlined above in the section on *Instructional Coaches*. Moreover, EL coaches are also faced with a variety of unique demands that may not typically be encountered by content specific coaches. Examples of such demands include (but are not limited to):

- Designing instructional approaches within a framework of learning English as an additional language.
- Assessing students’ language needs according to the English language proficiency standards.
- Focusing on students’ oral language development while simultaneously incorporating literacy skills.
- Identifying techniques for supporting students from varying language proficiency levels.
- Accommodating the needs of students from multiple linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- Familiarizing themselves and staff with the student’s first language.
- Working with teachers from multiple content areas and grade levels.
- Finding resources for primary language support.
- Acting as “cultural brokers” between home and school interactions.

Stemming from these demands, EL coaches are best supported when provided with explicit professional learning opportunities that cater to their professional contexts (Burkins & Ritchie, 2007). Specific areas for EL coaching professional learning opportunities include:

- Explicit English Language (EL) instruction techniques.
- Effective language scaffolding methods.
- Language demands across content areas.
- Sheltering instruction.
- Family engagement strategies.
- Effective collaboration strategies to communicate with colleagues.
- Differentiated instruction techniques.
- How to create meaningful language opportunities.
- How to integrate primary language into instruction.
- How to build on EL students’ funds of knowledge.
How to analyze text for cultural teaching.

Effective EL coaching also involves working closely with school literacy coaches, while being mindful of supporting ELs through linguistically and culturally appropriate ways. Of particular importance for EL coaches is helping classroom teachers draw on their students’ cultural background and funds of knowledge and promoting the use of students’ primary language in learning activities (Escamilla, 2007). Many EL students understand more than they are able to express in English both orally and in writing; thus, “[c]oaches need to understand that reading comprehension for second language learners may mean that students understand more in English reading than they are able to discuss” (Escamilla, 2007). This understanding will help coaches work with teachers who fear that allowing students to speak in a language other than English will slow down the students English language learning. In fact, learning is enhanced when EL students are allowed to use both their first language and English in learning activities (Escamilla, 2007). EL coaches are instrumental in mentoring teachers who work with EL students.

References


Consultant Teachers/Coaches: Instructional Coaches

Instructional coaches are evidence-based. Instructional coaches focus on personalized and team-centered professional learning that is often embedded during the school day. To increase student achievement, coaches support staff, identify leadership needs, and facilitate decision making around instruction (e.g., instructional materials choices, data analysis/formative assessment, technology integration, instructional/pedagogical strategies). The goal is to increase educator instructional expertise and to effectively impact literacy outcomes for LAP students struggling to meet ELA Standards.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Provide data coaching by training staff, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), grade-level teams, and/or individuals on how to use universal screeners, diagnostic assessments, formative assessment processes, and progress monitoring tools. Model, co-assess, and provide feedback as teachers assess students and use data for planning instruction.

- Facilitate new teacher and mentor meetings to establish trusting relationships, establish targeted goals, and provide on-going guidance and support.

- Support educators (classroom teachers, paraeducators, volunteers, etc.) through a push-in model. Coaches will observe, co-plan, co-teach, etc., to develop educator literacy skills and strategies.

- Establish a coaching model for your school/district. Identify how educators can safely identify areas for growth and receive individual/team coaching. Ask educators what instructional support is needed and determine which adult learning style will be effective to implement new instructional skills and strategies. Establish criteria for reciprocal feedback between coaches and educators by designing a template with talking points for coaches and educators to ensure coaching is targeted and effective.

- Establish coaching cycles, based on grade-level need, where an instructional coach models differentiation strategies in the classroom, then coaches educators to implement strategies through ongoing non-evaluative feedback as educators master strategies.

- Support PLCs in the process of identifying targeted professional learning needs for students who have not yet met ELA Standards. Coaches lead data analysis processes, lead student progress monitoring, establish protocols for lesson design aligned to standards/claims, and incorporate formative assessment processes to identify individual needs of learners.
Demographic Considerations—Educator Factors to Consider When Planning

- K–12 coaches must be proficient in content standards.
- K–12 coaches must be proficient in research-based teaching strategies.
- K–12 coaches must be proficient in diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring and data analysis.
- K–12 coaches must be able to plan and model lessons with teachers.
- K–12 coaches must be able to plan and model differentiation with students.
- K–12 coaches must understand and apply appropriate principles of adult learning theory.

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning

- Build trust with staff through frequent communication and collaboration.
- Connect coaching to current practices and on-going content initiatives.
- Use gradual release of responsibility model with effective instructional strategies as coach models, co-teaches, and independently coaches teachers.
- Teach research-based strategies for identified needs of learners.
- Focus on student progress through data oriented teaching and learning.
- Provide feedback to teachers through lesson observation and video reflection as they teachers implement new strategies.
- Allow for review, reflection and adjusting techniques; and on agreement, share with staff as an example of successful implementation.
- Use videos and modeling as a tool for successful coaching.
- Establish evaluation criteria for evaluation of the coaching model.
- Monitor effectiveness of coaching program with assistance from school/district administration.

Resources—Tools for Planning

- IES: Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade
- IES: Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices
Supporting Research: Instructional Coaches

Instructional coaches may specifically target meeting the needs of students identified for LAP services by providing professional learning in instructional strategies and decision making. Coaching should be student and data centered with a direct link to improved literacy outcomes (Sweeney, 2010).

Coaching may be in a 1:1 setting with small groups or in larger cross-content groups. Coaching may include modeling best practice with students and classes, conducting learning walks, engaging in book studies, or other focused actions that reflect the data-driven needs for the learners in the building (Shanklin, 2006).

To ensure credibility with novice as well veteran teachers, instructional coaches should have demonstrated successful teaching histories (Blachowicz et al., 2005). Along with the requisite knowledge of standards, differentiated instructional practices, and assessments, an instructional coach must also have a deep understanding of the components of effective coaching (L’Allier et al., 2010; Shanklin, 2006). The knowledge, skills, and dispositions of coaching specifically for instructional coaches are strongly recommended (Biancarosa, 2010).

For strongest impact, coaches should be supported by the system. Building principals should intentionally structure the learning culture that support instructional coaching. Principals should closely monitor the roles of the instructional coaches to ensure the activities support teachers in improving their practice. “Studies suggest that coaching may need to be embedded in broader efforts to build professional knowledge if it is to be most useful” (Darling-Hammond, et al. 2009, p. 12).

Instructional coaches designated to support K–4 literacy outcomes should be proficient with the ELA Standards, instructional practices, programs, and assessments to the degree to which they can plan and model lessons with teachers (Biancarosa, 2010). Strong knowledge of foundational reading skills, a continuum of literacy learning, differentiation methods, and
instructional strategies for acceleration are critical to support teachers working with students who have not yet met ELA outcomes.

References


Consultant Teachers/Coaches: Literacy Coaches

Literacy coaches are evidence-based. These coaches specialize in literacy instruction and foundational literacy skills. Literacy coaches have depth of knowledge and training in literacy and are adept at identifying students at-risk of not meeting literacy benchmarks. In order to support acceleration of student achievement in literacy, literacy coaches work 1:1 with a classroom teacher or with a team of teachers to target specific professional learning to meet the needs of LAP students.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Develop literacy coaching cycles, with grade-level teams of teachers, for coaches to model and plan for implementation of research-based strategies for literacy acceleration (e.g., guided reading, shared reading, oral language development, etc.). Set collaborative goals for desired outcomes of the coaching cycles and review frequently to guide coaching decisions and measure effectiveness.

- Identify groups of students not proficient in ELA Standards; provide ongoing coaching for teachers of students needing specialized instruction in foundational literacy skills instruction.

- Regularly meet with staff, PLCs, grade-level teams, and/or individually to model use of literacy assessment tools: universal screeners, diagnostic assessments, formative assessment processes, and progress monitoring tools. Model, co-assess, and provide feedback as teachers assess students and use data to differentiate instruction.

- Establish a literacy-coaching model for your school/district. Identify how educators can safely identify literacy areas for growth and receive individual/team coaching. Ask educators what foundational literacy skills they need to develop as educators and implement a “push-in” coaching plan to model, co-teach, and observe new skills and strategies. Establish criteria for reciprocal feedback between coaches and educators by designing a template with talking points for coaches and educators to ensure literacy coaching is targeted and effective.

- Provide opportunities during the school day that allow for modeling and co-teaching with time for reflection and feedback.

Demographic Considerations—Educator Factors to Consider When Planning

- K–4 literacy coaches must be proficient in pedagogy and instruction to support early literacy skills development for students who have not yet met ELA Standards.

- K–12 literacy coaches must be proficient in pedagogy and instruction for students who have not yet met ELA Standards.
• K–12 literacy coaches must be proficient in using research-based teaching strategies for students who have not yet met ELA Standards.

• K–12 literacy coaches must be proficient in using evidence and research-based diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring, data analysis, and gap analysis tools for students who have not yet met ELA Standards.

• K–12 literacy coaches must be able to plan and model lessons with teachers for students who have not yet met ELA Standards.

• K–12 literacy coaches must be able to plan and model interventions with students who have not yet met ELA Standards.

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning

• Provide administrative support, guidance, and goals regarding the short and long-term planning of literacy coaches.

• Use gradual release of responsibility model with effective literacy instructional strategies as coach models, co-teaches, and independently coaches teachers.

• Define and develop a literacy coaching plan for the building.

• Ensure that work is aligned to the broader vision of the school and the multi-tiered supports in the building.

• Provide administrative support to set the foundation upon which the literacy coach can improve, enhance, and develop teachers’ efficacy in reading instruction.

• Connect coaching to current practices and on-going literacy initiatives.

• Build trust with staff by providing resources, instructional support, and demonstration of lessons.

• Provide frequent communication and collaboration opportunities for staff.

• Teach research-based strategies that are reproducible by teachers.

• Focus on student progress.

• Provide feedback to teachers through lesson observation and video reflection.

• Provide time to review, reflect and adjust techniques; and on agreement, share with staff as an example of successful implementation.

Resources—Tools for Planning

• Self-study for Implementing Early Interventions

IES: Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade

IES: Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices

IES: Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade

Learning Forward: The Professional Learning Association, site for National Council of Professional Learning

Self-study Guide for Implementing Early Literacy Interventions

Achieve the Core: Understanding the ELA/Literacy Shifts

Characteristics of Effective Literacy Coaching

Instructional Design Framework: Literacy Design Collaborative

Smarter Balanced Digital Library: Formative Assessment Process Modules

Supporting Research: Literacy Coaches

Student success in literacy improvement is dependent on teachers’ abilities to use strategies and interventions that meet the differentiated needs of all learners. The National Reading Panel (2000) describes this simply as a complex task that necessitates much professional training. Evidence supports literacy coaching increases student literacy success (Shanklin, 2006). The term literacy coach refers to one who has specialized knowledge/training in literacy instruction, which may encompass specific intervention with reading and/or writing instruction. The focus of work is to support acceleration of student achievement in literacy via working with the classroom teacher and collaborating with teams. The literacy coach should be available to work with all staff across content areas and experience levels. By creating a cohort of teachers from across the building, a learning community develops and teachers learn from each other (Shanklin, 2006).

According to the International Reading Association, “[Literacy] coaching is a powerful intervention with great potential; however, that potential will be unfulfilled if reading coaches do not have sufficient depth of knowledge and range of skills to perform adequately in the coaching role” (International Reading Association, 2004, p. 4). To have a positive impact on student achievement, literacy coaches will have deep training and experience in research and evidence-based literacy instruction, including intervention and assessment strategies. Additionally, literacy coaches will work with educators to impact outcomes for students.
struggling to meet ELA Standards. Literacy coaches are collaborative members of the larger faculty who work cohesively among staff to provide rich literacy support for students.

Like other coaches (e.g., EL and instructional), literacy coaches collaborate with educators to maximize student literacy learning and achievement. Data analysis of students’ learning outcomes guides coaching. Data comes in the form of formative, classroom-based, interim, and summative assessments (Shanklin, 2006). Specific details surrounding the general professional duties of coaching are outlined in the section on Instructional Coaches. Some of the demands of literacy coaches who specialize in meeting the needs of students who have not yet met ELA Standards are similar to content-specific coaches. Literacy coaches must:

- Have specialized knowledge that goes beyond teaching reading; is best to have certification or advanced training in pedagogy for literacy.
- Build collaborative and trusting relationships that honor confidentiality and effective communication.
- Spend a majority of their time with educators observing, videotaping, modeling, conferencing, and co-teaching.
- Encourage and guide teachers to reflect on their instructional practices and evidence-based research (Shanklin, 2006).
- Support a core set of literacy activities that deepens understanding of literacy and foundational reading skills and teachers’ instructional practice.
- Set goals and direction of the literacy program and support the structural changes necessary for buildings/districts to achieve increased literacy outcomes (Shanklin, 2006; L'Allier, 2010).

Successful literacy coaches will ensure the school has a clear, site-based literacy plan that is linked to district growth goals. Literacy coaches ensure on-going, job-embedded professional learning is available to all educators who work with students who have not yet met ELA Standards. Literacy coaches lead study groups, co-teaching, adult learning time, and guidance on Response to Intervention and/or Multi-Tiered System of Supports to improve literacy instruction and learning. Literacy coaches are supportive, not evaluative; they help guide teachers in reflection activities and identify areas for educator growth (Shanklin, 2006).

References

International Reading Association (2004). The Role and Qualifications of the Reading Coach in the United States. [Brochure]. Newark, DE.


ELA Menu

Professional Learning Communities

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are promising. PLCs capitalize on the positive effects of collaborative learning. It can be defined as a group of teachers, administrators, coaches, or school staff (or a combination of people in these roles) that meets on a regular, planned basis with the goal of collaboratively improving practices in the classroom and school in order to support literacy outcomes for students who have not yet met ELA Standards. PLCs funded with LAP funds must have a focus of supporting LAP students, which can include determining instructional supports, differentiated instructional practices, implementing an early warning system, and development of formative assessment processes to support student growth.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Create a PLC by grade level and/or content area (e.g., 2nd-grade teachers or 11th-grade ELA staff) with a focus on students who are not meeting literacy benchmarks. Be sure to include a specialist for special education and English Learners. Educators will identify the foundational literacy skills students need to improve to effectively support student literacy outcomes. PLCs will develop a learning plan for educators to acquire these skills to support students who have not yet met ELA Standards.

- Use PLC time to focus on best practices and strategy implementation (e.g., foundational literacy skills, text complexity, working with tutors, etc.). Develop a learning plan and schedule walk-throughs for PLC members to observe colleagues implementing best practices to support students struggling to meet literacy benchmarks. Use PLC time to share self-reflections, discuss observations, and provide feedback on implementation practices.

- Design PLC focus around ELA target standards/claims, formative assessment processes, and student progress monitoring. Identify students who have not yet met standard and develop targeted intervention plans. PLCs can also identify and pursue targeted professional learning needs.

- Develop a cross-disciplinary PLC using the common Literacy standards for ELA and History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects to support students who struggle with literacy across content areas by focusing on academic language professional learning and implementing academic language.

- Participants can de-privatize their practice to make teaching visible, with a focus on collaboration and opportunities to work together to improve teaching strategies and student learning outcomes for students who have not yet met standard.

- Utilize PLC time for team professional learning opportunities focused on best practices and strategy implementation for students served by LAP. Develop a learning plan and
schedule walk-throughs for PLC members to observe one another implementing best practices. Use PLC time to share self-reflections, discuss observations, and provide feedback on implementation practices with a focus on student learning.

Demographic Considerations—Educator Factors to Consider When Planning

- Identify demographic and subgroup populations who need additional support to meet ELA Standards.
- Incorporate culturally responsive instructional strategies to support learners who have not yet met ELA Standards.
- Invite support staff to PLCs to increase awareness of the needs of the population(s) identified and discuss how to support students through targeted academic and non-academic strategies.

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning

- Provide professional learning early in the work day when adults are energetic.
- Create a collaborative culture: classroom, building, district, and region.
- Provide initial and ongoing training for all PLC participants.
- Establish a regular schedule for collaboration time with clear objectives to support students who struggle with literacy skills.
- Develop clear and shared: mission, vision, values, goals, and accountability.
- Design a vision focused on effectively impacting student literacy learning for all students/subgroups. Seek to turn actions and visions into effective practices.
- Be action oriented with a strong focus on bridging the learning-doing gap.
- Analyze data when goals for student outcomes are not met and seek to understand why.
- Analyze data when goals for student outcomes are met and seek to understand why.
- Use a continuous improvement model and evaluate it for effectiveness.
- Align with pre-existing structures such as Teacher/Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP), school improvement plans, and National Boards certification to effectively support students who have not yet met ELA Standards.
- Document and celebrate the work of the PLC (for example, agendas, and minutes).

Resources—Tools for Planning

- Measurement instruments for assessing the performance of professional learning communities
• Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade
• Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices
• Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade
• Self-study for Implementing Early Interventions
• All Things PLC
• Action Research in Education
• Self-study Guide for Implementing Early Literacy Interventions
• Smarter Balanced Digital Library: Formative Assessment Process Modules
• Achieve the Core: Understanding the ELA/Literacy Shifts
• Instructional Design Framework: Literacy Design Collaborative

Supporting Research
A large body of rigorous research suggests that the most effective professional learning should involve relationship building among teachers. While this research does not involve comparison-group studies, evidence in support of PLCs is credible, large-scale, longitudinal, and empirical (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Hord, 1997; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). In fact, in Learning Forward’s (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009) recent review and analysis of the most credible research on effective professional learning, “collaboration” is one of four identified characteristics of the kind of professional learning that positively impacts student achievement. As the authors of the report write, “[a] number of large-scale studies have identified specific ways in which professional community-building can deepen teachers’ knowledge, build their skills, and improve instruction” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). The development and utilization of PLCs as a strategy for professional learning capitalizes on the positive effects of collaborative learning.

Shirley Hord (1997) provides a simple definition: “[p]rofessionals coming together in a group—a community—to learn.” As Richard DuFour (2008) suggests, however, effective PLCs must be developed and implemented based on clearly articulated shared goals for student achievement and school improvement. According to DuFour (2008), an effective PLC is more than just a given group of educators. As Killion and Crow (2011) note, “[l]earning communities apply a cycle of continuous improvement to engage in inquiry, action research, data analysis, planning, implementation, reflection, and evaluation.”
Jones et al., (2013) emphasizes the role of the school principal in facilitating PLCs, being an instructional leader, and facilitating a positive school learning culture. Blankstein (2010) suggests six essential principles for schools with PLCs:

- Common mission, vision, values and goals.
- Ensure achievement for all students.
- Collaborative teaming focused on teaching and learning.
- Using data to guide decision making and continuous improvement.
- Gaining active engagement from family and community.
- Building sustainable leadership capacity.

A PLC must work collaboratively as part of a coherent, comprehensive improvement plan, developed in response to an evaluation of student learning data, focused on a shared vision, and in the service of a clear set of goals for student achievement. When professionals form a collaborative learning community with an explicit shared focus on student achievement and school improvement goals, they purposefully engage in professional learning that has tremendous potential.

References


**Specialized Literacy Instruction for English Learners (ELs)**

Specialized literacy instruction for English Learners (ELs) is a research-based practice. Many students can benefit from specialized literacy instruction, but since ELs are learning two language registers, native language at home and English at school, they require specialized instruction to become proficient listeners, speakers, readers, and writers in English. Specialized literacy instruction for ELs relies on assessment-based planning to differentiate and individualize student literacy instruction based on the student’s English proficiency level. LAP can support ELs who have not yet met ELA Standards.

Dual Language (DL) instructional models for ELs are considered core instructional models, and for the purpose of this menu, could be selected as a strategy for K–4 schools with more than 40 percent of students not meeting standard. When ELs become literate in both their native language and English they outperform peers in English-only instruction on standardized tests in English.

LAP funds supporting ELs can include determining instructional support, differentiated instructional practices, and educator training to support the development of foundational literacy skills. LAP can also provide additional ELA support for students enrolled in DL programs. LAP can support professional learning opportunities and ongoing coaching for educators to implement EL strategies since the ultimate goal is to help ELs meet content standards in ELA. (Title III funds can also be used for professional learning to build capacity for staff members serving EL students.) When LAP funds are used to support EL students, it should be in addition to Basic Education funding and TBIP funding, not in place of those funds. As a reminder, under statute, LAP is for students struggling to meet standard in ELA and/or math.

**Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning**

- Train all staff in EL literacy strategies and academic language to support EL language development.
- Develop language and content objectives for each lesson and explicitly share with students.
- Coordinate professional learning and instructional supports for ELs to integrate content instruction with English language development with the EL specialist pushing-in or co-teaching rather than providing isolated interventions.
- Use the English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards to provide meaningful access to content for ELs. The ELP standards scaffold instruction by grade level and content with differentiation examples to support ELs at various levels of English language proficiency.
- Implement a two-way dual language core instruction program to build upon the bilingual assets of ELs.
• Hire certificated staff with an EL or Bilingual Education endorsement to design and provide language instruction for ELs. Whenever possible, hire biliterate teachers who are qualified to provide instruction in the student’s native language and English.

Demographic Considerations—Student Factors to Consider When Planning
• English Learner is a classification that encompasses a wide range of English language proficiency. Identify the EL’s proficiency level and use the Achievement Level Descriptors to understand the student’s English language skills.
• ELs who are dual-served with special education benefit academically when there is intentional, systematic collaboration between the classroom teacher, EL specialist, and special education teacher.
• ELs progress rapidly from beginning to middle levels of proficiency (levels 1-3) and often progress more slowly or plateau, from middle to advanced levels of proficiency (levels 3-5).
• ELs generally required 4-6 years to achieve early advanced proficiency (level 4).
• Students with EL designation for more than five years (long-term ELs) benefit from additional one-on-one and small group instruction on oral language and academic language development.
• ELs come from a variety of rich cultural and linguistic backgrounds and benefit from primary language development and scaffolds to develop literacy in English.

Implementation Success Factors—Options to Consider When Planning
• Use the students home language to promote learning, this includes using native language texts, primary language thinking partners, and scaffolds to build English literacy skills.
• Engage students in learning activities that build background knowledge and native language literacy skills to make personal connections to the text.
• Explicitly teach metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective strategies to support academic growth.
• Explicitly teach English academic vocabulary and language skills.
• Allow students to negotiate meaning and clarity in primary language.
• Use cognates, words with the same linguistic origins, from the student’s native language when teaching vocabulary.
• Provide ample opportunities for ELs to use, and be exposed to, new vocabulary through authentic task-based practices that foster comprehension and skill transfer.
• Use songs, chants, rhymes, poems, texts with repetitive frames and read-alouds to facilitate phonemic awareness, the practice of language structures, and develop content knowledge.

• Use realia (objects or activities that bring real life to classroom learning), visuals, non-verbal support, and highly contextualized text to develop comprehension and academic vocabulary.

• Focus phonological awareness instruction on English phonemes that are not present in the student’s native language.

• Provide increased one-on-one and small group time to guide ELs through miscues and explicit phonological processing instruction.

• Deconstruct complex text and focus student’s attention on grammatical and rhetorical structures to develop academic language.

• Create opportunities for guided oral language practice with peers and adults who can model content-based discourse, participate in storytelling, and/or question-of-the-day oration activities.

• Use anchor charts to support oral and written discourse.

• Use a holistic, well-rounded, approach to literacy and assess the EL’s literacy in English and their native language to identify gaps for targeted instruction.

• Identify groups based on the EL’s native language proficiency levels.

• Provide ELs with opportunities to practice literacy strategies using age-appropriate, high interest texts (in English) that align with the student’s English language proficiency level.

• Use materials that were initially written in the student’s native language rather than translations from English as this will often change the reading level of the text.

• Develop metalinguistic charts with students to identify similarities and differences between English and the student’s native language, with additional instruction on the language differences to facilitate skill transfer to English.

Resources—Tools for Planning

• Institute of Education Sciences/Southwest Regional Educational Laboratory: Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School and the Professional Learning Communities Facilitator’s Guide for Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School with handouts and videos
• **OSPI Online Professional Learning to Support ELs**: Academic Language Toolkit, Dual Language Toolkit, Funds of Knowledge and Home Visits Toolkit

• **English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards** with Correspondences to K–12 ELA, Mathematic, and Science Practices, K–12 ELA Standards, and 6–12 Literacy Standards

• **U.S. Department of ED**: English Learner Toolkit & Newcomer Toolkit

• Professional learning modules and recommendations for scaffolding instruction for ELs; Center for Applied Linguistics

• Resources and tools for developing EL literacy skills; Center for Teaching for Biliteracy

• Professional learning modules and tools to build classroom-based assessments in the student’s native language; Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition

• **Dual Language Washington**

**Supporting Research**

Specialized literacy instruction for ELs provides a framework for instructional design and collaboration to support ELs through the complexity and increased cognitive load of learning two language registers (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007) and becoming proficient in English. An English Learner (EL) acquires primary listening and speaking skills in a language other than English. These students encounter greater challenges in school because they are faced with the challenge of simultaneously acquiring English and learning academic content. High school graduation rates of ELs are lower than their non-EL peers (Huang, et al., 2016). To address this challenge, educators need to understand the different levels of language acquisition within oral and language domains.

To the greatest extent possible, students’ primary language and cultural background should be integrated into instructional practices to enhance comprehension and conceptual development. When feasible, bilingual instruction programs should be offered to strengthen students’ literacy skills in both English and their primary language. Recommendations for success for secondary English learners also highlight the importance of student identity, identity groups, and the creation of a community of learners [aka Funds of Knowledge] (Faltis & Coulter, 2008; Flores-Gonzalez, 2002; Walqui, 2000).

Recognizing the student’s native language skills as an asset is fundamental to designing effective literacy instruction for ELs. Assessing the student’s native language literacy opens the door to using and developing these skills as they transfer to and can accelerate learning in English (Escamilla et al., 2013; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005). Educators can use students’ home language to support academic learning even when instruction is primarily in English. This results in both academic and non-academic benefits in the classroom (Goldenberg, Hicks, & Lit,
Additionally, when native language scaffolds are used, ELs develop greater brain density in areas related to language, memory, and attention which increase comprehension in English (Moughamian, Rivera, & Francis, 2009). When students learn to read in their home language, it benefits them as they learn to read in English (Goldenberg, 2013).

Research has shown that instruction in the essential elements of reading will have a greater impact on decoding and fluency for ELs than on comprehension (August & Shanahan, 2006; Lesaux, Crosson, Kieffer, & Pierce, 2010) requiring intentional oral language support to develop this critical aspect of literacy. Difficulties with reading comprehension compromise learning academic language and can lead to achievement and opportunity gaps for ELs beginning as early as mid-elementary (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Providing instruction in oral language development in the student’s native language and English builds a foundation and a bridge for the student’s English literacy development (Beeman & Urow, 2013). As ELs are learning phonemes in their native language and in English, they benefit from increased time and instruction focused on phonological processing. Providing instruction on the similarities and differences in discourse structures in English and in the student’s native language enables the EL to effectively transfer their native literacy skills to English literacy skills (August & Shanahan, 2006).

Educators must be aware of how oral language and literacy skills develop across different contexts (both in and out of school) as well as across the different academic content areas. Input, interaction, and output experiences are essential components of language acquisition (Zhang, 2009). Language proficiency levels vary greatly, both across grade levels as well as within the same age/grade level. Given these understandings, educators need to create learning environments where students are taught and have opportunities to use the content and academic vocabulary of the grade level curriculum (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014). EL students need ample opportunities for verbal interaction with the target language, and they require learning opportunities that integrate language across subject areas, thus increasing both depth and frequency of language use (Saunders, et al., 2013).

As ELs in the early grades are learning the foundational literacy skills alongside their native English-speaking peers, they are simultaneously developing the vocabulary, syntax, and constructs of an entirely new language system. As Pauline Gibbons notes, “many approaches and mainstream reading programs do not take into account the needs of ELs, since most are based on the assumption that learners are already familiar with the spoken form of the language” (2009, p. 83). For this reason, developing literacy with ELs must take into account the development of the student’s oral language skills in English. Oral language is a foundational literacy skill. For literacy development, research has shown that reading interventions have a
minimal effect when time spent on oral language is not part of the intervention. A study by Klingner and Vaughn (1996) indicated “children with the potential to benefit most from the [reading] intervention had some initial reading ability and fairly high levels of second-language oral proficiency” (In August, et al., 2008, p. 163).

With close collaboration between the EL specialist and the classroom teacher, design language and content objectives for each lesson and explicitly share them with students (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2012) to magnify the connection between language, literacy, and content knowledge. Provide students opportunities to communicate orally about content in English to foster listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Lesaux, Crosson, Kieffer, & Pierce, 2010). To further support comprehension and skill transfer, provide ELs with context-embedded instruction and authentic task-based practices (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Models of Instruction

Strategies to support ELs are implemented in a variety of ways. Instructional models and programs can be implemented as English-only or Bilingual models. English-only models include structured immersion and sheltered instruction and are often used when EL student demographics in a building represent multiple languages. English-only models decrease the amount of native language supports as students develop their English language skills (Moughamian, Rivera, & Francis, 2009). Strategies in English-only programs include the use of background knowledge, graphic organizers, sentence frames, anchor charts, gestures, pictures, multi-media, and hands-on, interactive learning activities to develop academic skills and to build content knowledge (Goldenberg, 2013; Moughamian, Rivera, & Francis, 2009). It is important to note that students in English-only programs can receive directions and support in their primary language as they work to develop their English language skills.

Bilingual models consist of dual language and transition bilingual models. These models differ in “intensity and length of time in which students participate” (Moughamian, Rivera, & Francis, 2009, p. 7). The most effective bilingual model of instruction for ELs is to implement a two-way dual language program — classrooms with 50% ELs and 50% native English speaking students. This model leverages the bilingual assets of ELs, develops biliteracy for all students, and produces the strongest long-term academic outcomes for ELs and their English speaking peers (Swenson & Watzinger-Tharp, 2012; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Since students in dual language programs are learning in two languages, their literacy trajectory at 3rd grade is slightly slower in developing than peers in English-only instruction. However, in 5th grade and beyond, ELs in dual language programs outperform their peers on academic assessments in English (Escamilla et al., 2013; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006; Swenson & Watzinger-Tharp, 2012; Thomas & Collier, 2002).
Similar results were reported in a recent longitudinal study of the dual language programs in Portland Public Schools where students had an average of seven months of additional reading skills in 5th grade and an additional nine months in 8th grade compared to their peers who received English-only instruction.

Both English-only and bilingual models focus on using effective instructional strategies. These strategies overlap with what is effective for all students and focus on (Moughamian, Rivera, & Francis, 2009; Goldenberg, 2013; Saunders, et al., 2013):

- Oral language development,
- Cooperative learning,
- Explicit literacy instruction,
- Differentiated instruction,
- Actionable feedback,
- Graphic organizers to support comprehension, and
- Academic language.

Studies show that students in both English-only and bilingual program models benefit from additional time focused on explicit English language development instruction, specifically time devoted to listening and speaking increases oral language proficiency (Saunders, et al., 2013). When deciding which model to implement, “decision-makers should look both at the language of instruction (i.e., bilingual or English-only), and at an instructional program’s specific elements to ensure that ELs receive the optimal instruction to facilitate their English language and literacy development as well as their academic success” (Moughamian, Rivera, & Francis, 2009, p. 22). When schools and districts focus on EL academic success goals, EL students have higher levels of student achievement (Saunders, et al, 2013).

References


Targeted Professional Learning

Targeted professional learning refers to an evidence-based practice that focuses on improving teaching practices in a particular content area and/or a particular grade level in order to meet student needs. Targeted professional learning should be explicitly aligned to student learning goals, student achievement, and school improvement. The focus of targeted professional learning, when funded by LAP, should include behavioral strategies, pedagogies, and skills that will support students who struggle to meet grade-level standards.

The focus of targeted professional learning, when funded by LAP, should include instructional strategies, pedagogy, and literacy content that will support students who have not yet met grade-level standards. It is important to note that there are a lot of professional learning opportunities that can benefit all students, not just students who struggle. If the intent is to support LAP students, other forms of targeted professional learning that may benefit all students can be used. For example, LAP Funds can support targeted professional development for kindergarten educators, early learning providers, and caregivers of students in areas where WaKIDS data identify student needs.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Identify foundation literacy skills educators need to develop/improve. Seek professional learning opportunities through the local ESD or with a literacy coach well versed in these skills to target professional learning of staff.

- Provide a summer institute on foundational literacy skills and follow-up with facilitated on-going classroom observations of literacy strategies being implemented. Ensure participants are provided time to connect throughout the following school year. Have members participate in observational walk-throughs in teams of three to five to observe and provide feedback to improve teacher practices.

- Create a flipped professional learning summer camp. During afternoon workshops, educators (e.g., classroom teachers, paraeducators, volunteers, etc.) participate in workshops to implement foundational skills strategies for students have not yet met ELA Standards. During morning summer program sessions, educators are observed and coached on implementation as they work with students one-on-one or in small groups. Schedule a new skill/strategy each week.

- Establish lesson study cycles that include bi-weekly or monthly sessions where teachers collaboratively plan lessons for accelerating reading with an identified group(s) of readers. Sessions could include professional learning on how to use data, how to differentiate and/or plan additional lessons for identified students, how to use specific literacy strategies, and how to set goals for learners and monitor their progress.
• Provide time for grade-level/content-based teams to work with a coach on lesson planning and observe each other teaching the lesson. Follow up with team feedback on observations and identify areas for continued improvement.

• Identify staff literacy development needs and target learning opportunities for all educators (e.g., classroom teachers, paraeducators, volunteers, etc.) working with students. For example, foundational literacy skills, K–2 readiness, or balanced literacy.

• Deliver targeted professional learning for grade-level or content-based teams, and then have teams cross-collaborate to identify common goals and strategies.

Demographic Considerations—Educator Factors to Consider When Planning
• K–4 educators who would benefit from explicit instruction in foundational literacy skills.

• K–12 educators who would benefit from opportunities to deepen their understanding of the WA K–12 ELA Learning Standards.

• K–12 educators who would benefit from opportunities to deepen their understanding of the English Language Proficiency Standards.

• K–12 educators who would benefit from opportunities to deepen their understanding of the Formative Assessment Process.

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning
• Provide theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and classroom support as part of ongoing professional learning opportunities.

• Focus on specific data, literacy skills, or instructional strategies rather than a general approach.

• Design learning aligned with school improvement goals, student achievement data, and professional learning for the educator.

• Focus on modeling strategies for teachers and opportunities for hands-on professional learning that builds literacy skill development knowledge.

• Ensure collaboration within PLCs is focused, follows protocols, and monitored.

• Plan for professional learning that is ongoing and supports educators.

• Align professional learning plans to standards for professional learning to develop systemic, sustained, high-quality professional learning.

Resources Resources—Tools for Planning
• Self-study for Implementing Early Interventions
Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade and K–3 Foundational Skills Professional Learning Communities Facilitator’s Guide

Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade

Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices

Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade

Learning Forward: The Professional Learning Association, site for National Council of Professional Learning

Smarter Balanced Digital Library: Formative Assessment Process Modules

Achieve the Core: Understanding the ELA/Literacy Shifts

Characteristics of Effective Literacy Coaching

Instructional Design Framework: Literacy Design Collaborative

Supporting Research

Research is clear that highly effective teachers make a difference in student success and student achievement (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009). Therefore, it is worthwhile for schools and districts to invest in high-quality professional learning that strengthens educators’ knowledge of ELA content and pedagogy, and effectively impacts student literacy outcomes.

While professional learning opportunities are vital for teacher engagement and motivation for improvement, not all professional learning opportunities effectively impact student literacy outcomes equally. Research identifies targeted professional learning as producing the best results on student outcomes. According to the Washington State Institute for Public Policy report (Pennucci, et al, 2015) and Linda Darling-Hammond’s studies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Yoon et al., 2007; Garet et al, 2001), professional learning is most effective when it is targeted, which involves expertise on behalf of educators. Targeted professional learning includes a focus on standards and goals specific to learners, data that informs instruction, and instructional strategies specific to the content.

The McREL Report (Snow-Renner & Lauer, 2005) states that providing professional learning that is long lasting, content-focused, and based on student and teacher performance data takes more time and effort to implement in comparison to less effective types of professional learning opportunities. In addition, Garet, et al. state (2001), “[a] professional development activity is more likely to be effective in improving teachers' knowledge and skills if it forms a coherent part of a wider set of opportunities for teacher learning and development” (p. 927).
Thus, successful professional learning takes time and is part of a coherent and comprehensive plan to improve student and educator performance (Darling-Hammond, 2009).

Research also contends that to improve student achievement through professional learning, the work should be contextualized. Darling-Hammond explains that educator professional learning improves student achievement when it is focused on “the concrete, everyday challenges involved in teaching and learning specific to academic subject matter, rather than focusing on abstract educational principles or teaching methods taken out of context” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 10). In addition, professional learning needs to be sustained; that is provided as an ongoing, systemic process informed by evaluation of students, and the needs of teachers and schools. Research by Joyce and Showers (2002) supports the importance of ongoing, adult learning through a continuum in which participants learn from a presentation of theory, observe demonstrations, apply and receive feedback around a practice, and are ultimately provided with coaching or other classroom supports to self-evaluate according to learner-centered goals (Joyce, 2002). This model of transfer for adult learning and professional learning identifies the importance of educators needing ongoing, professional learning that is relevant, job-embedded, and supported over time.

Drawn from research and evidence-based practices, Learning Forward’s standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011) aim to support a systemic and sustained professional learning system. Seven standards describe the characteristics of effective professional learning which may be used as a consumer guide for educators and school systems as they plan and prepare for high-quality, targeted professional learning. The standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011) encompass goals related to learning communities, leadership, data, resources, learning design, implementation, and outcomes. Such standards support schools and districts in their efforts of planning, facilitating, and evaluating the effectiveness of professional learning.

Below is a list of professional learning formats that support ongoing, targeted, data-driven, job-embedded professional learning for literacy improvement for educators targeting students who have not yet met ELA Standards.

- **PLCs**: a group of educators that regularly meet to analyze data, collaborate on student achievement, and set goals for instruction.
- **Lesson study**: a professional learning practice that involves educators collaboratively planning lessons based on data and student needs, and observing evidence of student learning in action.
- **Facilitated observations**: may also be referred to as learning walks or instructional rounds whereby a group of educators participate in classroom observations based on a
problem of practice or focus related to the instructional core (the students, the teacher, the task).

- Ongoing workshops or coursework: workshops/courses based on an identified content need; coursework is ongoing and over time.
- Online networks: a professional group focused on specific content that strengthens professional expertise.
- Targeted literacy coaching: literacy coaching that involves modeling, working with assessments, observation and feedback, co-planning, and conferencing makes a difference in reading and writing achievement (Elish-Piper and L’Allier, 2011).

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Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a promising practice. UDL provides a framework for teaching ELA because it provides educators with tools and resources to differentiate lessons to maximize learning for all students. Universal means that learning opportunities meet the needs of every student. The what, why, and how of learning are enhanced by instruction that is designed to enhance student engagement. The UDL framework focuses on the goal of learning and identifies barriers students may face in meeting these goals. LAP can fund UDL implementation cost and professional learning to support LAP students struggling to meet ELA Standards.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Use the UDL framework to strengthen core literacy practices and supplemental literacy support to individualize learning for students who have not yet met ELA Standards.
- Provide opportunities for educators to use the UDL frameworks to develop individualized instruction with students who have not yet met ELA Standards.
- Provide professional learning opportunities to help guide educators implementing UDL.
- Seek consultant/coaching services to plan and implement UDL informed environments to be supportive of all learners within inclusive settings.

Demographic Considerations—Student Factors to Consider When Planning

- Students learning English as an additional language and students with disabilities benefit from individualized instruction and UDL practices.
- Students who have not yet met ELA Standards benefit from having options in a UDL framework.
- Students who are challenged to stay engaged in the classroom benefit from having a multitude of ways by which they can interact with the literacy content in the classroom.

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning

- Represent information and content in different ways.
- Differentiate the action and expression that a student can convey what they know.
- Stimulate engagement by connecting with student interest.
- Respect the diversity in the classroom from the beginning by varying the content presented.
- Use evidence-based strategies that positively impact classroom goals, methods, materials, and assessments for the students.
• Use varied approaches to curriculum development, instruction, and assessment across the classrooms.

• Provide student choice.

Resources: Tools for Planning

• Powerful Instruction: Culturally Responsive, Universal Design for Learning & Differentiated Instruction

• About Universal Design for Learning [Video: UDL at a Glance] [Handout]

• UDL Series—Free online professional learning

• Tools, resources, and examples of how to establish universally accessible curriculum is available through the National Center on Universal Design for Learning

• Capacity building, case stories, and free learning tools are available from CAST (Center for Applied Special Technology)

• OSPI Educational Technology program also contains links and information regarding Universal Design for Learning

Supporting Research

Universal Design for learning (UDL) provides a framework for instructional design, processes, and assessment to provide each student an opportunity to both learn and to show what he/she has learned (Maryland State Department of Education, 2011). UDL includes tools and strategies to reduce barriers in educational settings in order to enhance the accessibility and equity of access for all students. This helps educators "create curricula that meet the needs of all learners from the start" (CAST, 2011, p. 3–4).

Based in the neurosciences and researchers understanding of how the brain learns, UDL is based on three principles that focus on the what, why, and how of learning (Dalton & Proctor, 2007). These principles provide learners with multiple means of representation and options to acquire new information, multiple means of action and expression to demonstrate what they have learned, and multiple means of engagement to provide increased motivation by appealing to the learners’ interests with appropriate challenges (Maryland State Department of Education, 2011). The three dimensions of UDL provide educators with a way to rethink and transform classrooms to support learning for all students (Haley-Mize & Reeves, 2013). For example, rethinking representation might include using videos, websites, graphic organizers, or pictures. Students should have a variety of options to show what they know. For literacy activities, this could include orally, kinesthetically, in writing, through pictures, etc. (Haley-Mize & Reeves, 2013). Goal setting, self-assessment, and progress monitoring and reflection provide
students with self-regulation opportunities and support student motivation (Haley-Mize & Reeves, 2013).

![Figure 3. Retrieved from www.udlcenter.org. (c) CAST, 2011. Used with permission.](image)

Classrooms are made up of a diverse set of individuals with a variety of skills, abilities, knowledge, and interests. To enhance learning and engagement, it is critical for educators to produce content, instruction, and assessments in a way that addresses the uniqueness of every student. UDL is an approach to curriculum development that promotes multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement in the classroom (Rose & Meyer, 2000). UDL can be applied to emergent and developing literacy activities (Haley-Mize & Reeves, 2013).

Researchers discussing UDL like Harac (2004) have shared that "...with the right materials, technology, and training, teachers can make all lessons flexible enough to benefit every student-including those considered disabled" (p. 1). Katz (2015) found that in classrooms using the UDL framework, students increased engagement, peer interactions, student autonomy, and inclusivity for the classrooms. UDL research continues to garner evidence and support as a beneficial framework for planning by educators of all grades to enhance educational gains for all students (Baldiris Navarro et al, 2016; Katz, 2013 & 2015: Spooner et al., 2007; Strobel et al., 2007).

References


TRANSITION AND READINESS PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES

Transition & Readiness

Student-Centered

Educator-Focused

Family & Community
Credit Retrieval and Mastery of High School Standards

Credit retrieval for students who have not yet met graduation requirements is a promising practice. Students may be at-risk of not graduating because of not earning credit in courses due to unsatisfactory grades and/or insufficient attendance. Other students graduate, but then need to immediately enroll in remedial community college courses before starting regular freshman level work.

LAP funding can be allocated for these programs targeting 11th- and 12th-grade students at-risk of not graduating or meeting state standards on the high school assessments. It is important that these specialized ELA programs provide innovative structures that are rigorous (targeting ELA speaking, listening, reading, and/or writing), develop a growth mindset, and focus on college and career readiness.

Credit retrieval, or credit recovery, allows students to retake ELA courses, stay in school, and graduate on time. Credit retrieval programs may be offered in a variety of formats and times such as online, face-to-face, and through a blended-learning approach. Credit retrieval programs allow students to retake coursework for which credit was not earned.

*Note:* OSPI does not establish the criteria for 11th- and 12th-grade students in Washington state. Districts set this policy (e.g. by age of student or by student credit accumulation). The OSPI CEDARS manual for data reporting lists age as a suggestion for determining grade-level, with age 16 as of August 31 for 11th grade and age 17 as of August 31 for 12th grade. It is recommended that eligibility for LAP credit retrieval be based on age.

Practice Possibilities: Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Use LAP funds to support during, after, and/or summer school programs for ELA credit retrieval. Funds can be used to cover teacher salaries, teacher prep time, paraeducator support, reading, and other instructional materials, and applicable professional learning opportunities.

- Online courses or hybrid courses that are designed to be individualized and self-paced should not be left up to the student to complete without support, but designed to provide students’ support from an ELA teacher well versed in the Washington State K–12 Learning Standards for ELA who can effectively coach and motivate students. Be explicit with students about developing effective study skills and self-management strategies when engaging in online courses, as well as established timelines with multiple check in dates for course completion.

- Offer a 4th-year transition course to support 12th-grade students who have not yet met standard on the assessments, but do intend to enroll in post-secondary coursework after high school. Transition courses provide an opportunity for students to focus on the mathematics they will need to be successful in credit bearing courses in college. For
successful post-high school transitions, courses may include Bridge to College or Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID).

- Provide ELA online course work and/or blended learning opportunities, which may be more appealing or accessible for particular students.
- Create an alternative to whole class instruction and activities. Assess and think about what barriers caused students not to receive ELA credit. Design and deliver instruction that meets similar learning course objectives while accounting for previous learning barriers.
- Develop an ELA project-based learning program. Project-based learning has projects central to the curriculum, are focused on a question or problem, require students to investigate, are student-driven, and are authentic. Whereas some students find the student-centered nature of project-based learning to be motivational, others find it a barrier to learning.
- Create a project-based, computer assisted ELA credit retrieval program for 11th and 12th-grade students. Out-of-School Time (OST) credit retrieval can be available for students before/after school and/or during the summer.

Demographic Considerations: Student Factors to Consider When Planning

- Services are only for 11th and 12th-grade ELA students.
- Identify barriers for students by analyzing school achievement data, as well as demographic, IEP, and 504 data to determine possible barriers to earning ELA credit.
- Students learning English as an additional language may need ELA support to meet graduation requirements.
- High school migrant students may benefit from opportunities to access credit retrieval, tutorial support, and additional time to submit assignments.
- Students and families from American Indian/Alaska Native communities may benefit from a teaching environment that focuses on cooperation instead of competition, has Tribal cultures represented in the classroom, and utilizes culturally responsive teaching methods. For example, Students and families could inquire with their school about the implementation of the Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State curriculum (which focuses on teaching about Tribal history, culture, and the government of Tribes whose boundaries lay within Washington state).

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning

- Identify and support high school students early when they are at-risk of not graduating.
- Provide rolling enrollment in ELA credit retrieval courses.
• Provide counseling and tutoring services for students in ELA credit retrieval courses.

• For courses which are graduation specific (such as Algebra, Geometry, American History, Biology), use previous course objectives to ensure rigor.

• For courses which are not graduation specific (such as English, third year of math, electives), design objectives with an emphasis on student choice and on building skill deficits.

• Provide dual credit options (i.e., American History and ELA credit using speaking, listening, writing, and reading standards).

• Students who have struggled to earn ELA credit often benefit when given content format choices (such as print, video, audio, etc.).

• Develop pre- and post-testing to ensure students can demonstrate mastery of the ELA skills learned in the previous attempt to pass the course, and allow students to complete coursework not yet mastered.

• Create a systematic structure for online and blended programs.

Resources: Tools for Planning
• Self-study Guide for Implementing High School Intervention
• Buck Institute for Education (BIE): Project Based Learning
• National Education Association Research Spotlight on Project-Based Learning
• Bridge to College
• Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)
• Center for Change in Transition Services

Supporting Research
Credit retrieval, or credit recovery, is a LAP-allowable service under RCW 28A.320.190. Credit retrieval refers to alternative ways for 11th and 12th-grade students to earn high school credit toward graduation after a student has completed a course and not earned credit on the initial attempt. Credit retrieval is a promising practice because it provides a time during and outside school for additional learning opportunities (D’Agustino, 2013). These opportunities may better suit students who struggle with regular attendance, essential literacy skill deficits, are learning English as an additional language, need additional time and support to complete ELA coursework, have specific learning disabilities (such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, and ADD/ADHD—sometimes undiagnosed), or are disconnected from school. Credit retrieval programs are often used to keep students in school and on track for graduation (Watson and Gemin, 2008). Credit retrieval programs may be designed in a variety of formats.
One possible credit retrieval format is to implement an online program. As Franco and Patel (2011) note, “Key features of success for high school students in virtual learning programs are the development of self-regulative strategies and the ability to guide their own learning.” Unfortunately, other students “engaged in online programs have not sufficiently developed these attributes, making it more difficult for them to be successful” (p. 18).

Another possible credit retrieval format is to present material via alternative whole-class instruction. Here the design often differs from the classroom design where the student previously did not earn credit. Some design changes which have been implemented with an attention to increasing student credit retrieval success are providing smaller class sizes, different curriculum (than what was previously taught), and essential skills development. The use of different instructional material that is more appropriate for the target population provides students a second chance to engage with the content and improve their chances for achieving success. By using pre- and post-assessments to measure growth and attainment of the relevant standards, both students and teachers can feel more confident that essential skills are being developed. Students who have not yet met standard benefit from smaller class sizes as they receive more individualized attention from the teacher and support in areas of skill deficit (Malloy et al, 2010).

Not surprisingly, some educators have blended online and traditional classroom instruction with some success. It stands to reason that if some credit-retrieval students struggle because they lack regulatory controls, then having a highly qualified educator available to develop and implement instruction (as well as offer individual tutoring) would increase student success. As Watson and Gemin (2008) have explained, “The blended approach is important because it provides expanded student support and face-to-face contact. The online component—whether fully online or blended—provides 21st century skills to a group of students who often have less-than-average exposure to computers and technology” (p. 15).

A fourth possible credit retrieval format is to implement a project-based learning approach. True project-based learning has five components including projects that 1) “are central, not peripheral to the curriculum,” 2) “are focused on questions or problems that “drive” students to encounter,” 3) “involve students in a constructive investigation,” 4) “are student-driven to some significant degree,” and “are realistic, not school-like” (Thomas, March 2000). In a study of two British schools (Boaler, 1998), one school described as “traditional” in its “teacher-directed, didactic” instruction and the other school described as “project-based” in its student-directed, “open-ended project” instruction, “Students at the project-based school performed as well as or better than students at the traditional school on items that required rote knowledge of...
mathematical concepts.” Also of significance, “[s]tudents at the project-based school outperformed students at the traditional school on the conceptual questions as well as on a number of applied (conceptual) problems developed” (Thomas, March 2000).

It is important to note that although project-based learning may be successfully used as a credit retrieval model, certain drawbacks should be taken into consideration. Project-based learning proponents often cite the student-directed nature of project-based learning as a motivational factor for students who struggle, although motivation has proven to be more complex than this observation would suggest. In a study examining students who performed poorly in traditional classrooms (Rosenfield and Rosenfield, 1998), the students, who “exhibited high scores on inventory scales for applied, discovery (as measured by the 4-MAT learning style inventory), technical, and/or confluent processing (as measured by 21 the LCI learning style inventory),” did well with project-based learning. Students who “scored high on the fact-oriented scale of the 4-MAT” did poorly with project-based learning (Thomas, March 2000).

In Marx et al. (1997), researchers noted five barriers to implementing effective project-based learning:

1. Time—because projects often take longer than anticipated.
2. Classroom management—because so many students are doing different activities at the same time.
3. Control—because some teachers are not comfortable with students learning outside teachers’ areas of expertise.
4. Technology—because teachers sometimes have difficulty incorporating technology.
5. Assessment—because teachers sometimes have difficulty deciding what constitutes credit-worthy projects (Thomas, March 2000).

Nearly 40 percent of Washington state high school graduates enrolling in post-secondary in the immediate fall after graduation take at least one remedial course (ERDC, 2015). Students assigned to remedial courses are less likely to earn their post-secondary degree or credential (Vandal, 2010). High school transition courses may provide opportunities for high school students to shore up their math and ELA skills prior to graduation and bypass remediation. These courses have their best success when targeted towards students who intend to pursue college and are close to, but have not, quite demonstrated mastery of high school math proficiency on assessments. Professional learning for the participating high school faculty on the specific transition curriculum is another key factor for success (Barnett, 2016).

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Grade 8 to High School Transitions

Grade 8 transition readiness is a promising practice. ELA transition readiness opportunities refer to programs intended to support successful literacy transitions from 8th grade ELA to high school English. Students identified for support might lack one or more of the following: motivation, self-efficacy, speaking, listening, reading, writing, and/or foundational literacy skills. Transition readiness for 8th-grade students must provide engaging content and effective literacy instruction. For the purpose of LAP, Grade 8 transition programs begin in 8th grade and may continue in the summer and through 9th grade. In some cases, when over one-third of the incoming freshman students experience one or more early warning indicators (excessive absenteeism, failing a course in the first quarter, or receiving a suspension), LAP funds may be used for school-wide transition programs.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Create an 8th-grade student mentor system where each student is assigned a high school peer mentor. Mentor/mentee activities are scheduled monthly over the course of the school year. Opportunities are scheduled for mentor/mentees to connect over the summer and during the beginning of the 9th grade school year.

- Put a student monitoring system in place that tracks 8th-grade students’ progress to identify students at the beginning of the school year. Invite students to club activities and provide ongoing transition support throughout the school year and continue club activities to support students in 9th grade.

- Design an 8th-grade course that focuses on the skills and habits of mind needed to be successful in a high school environment. A program like Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) may be particularly effective for transition readiness. AVID’s professional learning for educators focuses on instructional strategies in reading, writing, and speaking.

- Design and implement a summer academy for 8th-grade students at the end of the school year. This program should introduce students to the expectations regarding academics, activities, school culture, and the habits of success needed for high school. Provide check-in activities to support students in 9th grade.

- Some middle schools may identify a significant portion of their students for transition services based on early warning systems or based on the experience of prior 8th graders who have transitioned to 9th grade. For example, a district would be concerned if over a third of a middle school’s 8th graders, upon entering the 9th grade, were identified with one of the following indicators: failing Algebra I in the first quarter, missing more than 10 days of school in the first quarter, or a suspension in the first quarter. In these situations, consider school-wide transition programs such as freshman academies,
authentic learning experiences, and intentional integration of mathematics within other content areas.

- Design a 9th-grade transition readiness academy to support LAP students identified in Grade 8.

Demographic Considerations—Educator Factors to Consider When Planning

- 8th-grade students who are at-risk of dropping out due to poor foundational literacy skills.
- 8th-grade students learning English as an additional language and need more support to meet grade level ELA Standards.
- 8th-grade students who qualify for free- and reduced-price lunch and need more support to meet grade level ELA Standards.
- 8th-grade students who have not yet met ELA Standards due to various factors: basic needs, family outreach, academic interventions, social and emotional support, etc.
- Students and families from American Indian/Alaska Native communities may benefit from a teaching environment that focuses on cooperation instead of competition, has Tribal cultures represented in the classroom, and utilizes culturally responsive teaching methods. For example, Students and families could inquire with their school about the implementation of the Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State curriculum (which focuses on teaching about Tribal history, culture, and the government of Tribes whose boundaries lay within Washington state).

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning

- Design transition interventions with models that accelerate learning.
- Design highly engaging interventions to develop student literacy self-efficacy.
- Incorporate practices that address non-cognitive factors and support development of the habits of mind possessed by successful literacy students.
- Design interventions that are led by engaging, experienced staff.
- Provide educators time to support programs.
- Train mentors (teacher and student).

Resources—Tools for Planning

- Education Northwest: A Practitioner’s Guide to Implementing Early Warning Systems
- Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do
- OSPI Career and Guidance Washington
• Supporting Successful Transitions to High School
• Great School Partnerships: Ninth Grade Counts: A Three-Part Guide to Strengthening the Transition into High School
• The University of Texas at Austin, Charles A. Dana Center: Academic Youth Development (AYD) and AYD Factsheet
• College Spark Washington
• Washington Student Oral Histories Project: Listening to and Learning from Disconnected Youth
• Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

Supporting Research
A cornerstone of improving high school graduation rates is that schools and districts put early warning systems in place. Dropping out of high school is not a single act. Instead, most students offer early clues in middle school: absenteeism, behavior incidents, and failure of an English or math course (Bruce, 2011). Schools and districts monitoring for these clues are able to intervene early with high school transition opportunities.

The 9th-grade year has often been looked upon as a time when students will either make it or not. Students who make it often struggle with the increased pressure to do well and graduate. The ones who do not make it battle with motivation and self-esteem, along with the misery of failure. Even though this year is critical, the “failure rate in ninth grade remains higher than the rate in any other grade level” (Bottoms, 2008). To alleviate these issues before they even begin, districts and schools should consider having a robust Grade 8 transition readiness plan in place.

Students identified for a transition-to-high-school program might lack one or more of the following: motivation, self-efficacy, and mathematics skills, and conceptual mathematical understanding. A transitional program, therefore, needs to be able to engage all students in productive ways with meaningful mathematics. Traditional remedial classes are not effective in supporting successful transitions; instead, transition interventions that effectively prepare students for high school operate on a model of accelerated learning growth (Herlihy, 2007). The intervention should address not only ELA content but also increase student engagement, encourage academic discourse, develop a growth mindset, and reward academic risk-taking.

In most cases, a well-designed transition program for LAP-eligible students can be a successful intervention strategy. In instances where a school has over one-third of their 9th-grade students at risk for failure, LAP funds can be used for a school-wide transition program. School-wide transition programs have also been successful at improving student performance and decreasing dropout rates for all students. One model, freshman academies, provides focused
support for 9th-grade students. The academies group students and intentionally provide academic and social supports including team teaching, student advisories and diagnostic assessment to monitor student progress (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007).

According to The Ninth Grade Challenge by S. Habeeb, “teacher teams [core content teachers who share the same students throughout the day] are the most effective model for easing the transition to high school and preparing freshmen for success” (p. 20). While many schools can use this type of model, it is important to note that others may struggle with the demands of incoming freshmen; therefore, whatever model used must include support that is flexible, positive, goal oriented, efficacious, and empowering (Habeeb, 2013). Traditional remedial classes are not effective in supporting successful transitions; instead, transition interventions that effectively prepare students for high school operate on a model of accelerated learning (Herlihy, 2007).

According to Breakthrough Collaborative (2011), results from a Chicago school study with over 115,000 participants revealed that, “almost one quarter of students in the top quartile of their eighth grade were off track by the end of ninth grade” (Breakthrough Collaborative, 2011). Furthermore, failure to graduate high school is strongly associated with failure in 9th-grade courses. “Research shows that between 70 and 80 percent of students who fail in the first year will not graduate from high school (Breakthrough Collaborative, 2011).

Some might wonder, why is this transition so challenging for students? The complex answer revolves around increased academic pressure and expectations; larger, more diverse student populations, and less individualized support and connections with teachers.

So, the question remains, what can be done? Two respected research-based organizations lay out plans that show promise in easing the difficult transition from middle school to high school. The Breakthrough Collaborative offers summer and year-long programs to students who are motivated, but may lack the resources to persevere through high school. Some of their implementation suggestions are outlined below.

First, it is recommended that 8th-grade students and their families must be informed about high school course expectations, and they must be taught the tools needed to create their four-year plan. Students must then be monitored as they progress through their plan. This can be accomplished through a teacher-advisor system, student mentor/mentee system, learning communities, or specific 9th-grade courses designed to focus on the habits and skills needed for successful high school completion.

Next, students and their families must be educated about the high school culture. This means students must be informed ahead of time about increased academic challenges, changes in the social environment, and the differences in teaching and learning. This can be done through
summer programs and/or through spring programs that organize high school visits for middle school students, information nights that focus on alleviating transitions worries, and strong mentor programs pairing high school students with middle school students.

Students need to be explicitly taught the skills and behaviors needed for high school success. Ninth grade-specific courses are a great place to house the teaching of problem-solving skills, behavior expectations, time management and organizational skills, and self-advocacy. These skills can also be addressed through a mentor/mentee program.

Finally, teachers can be one of the best advocates for incoming 9th-grade students. Teacher advisory programs have success in creating lasting relationships between student and teacher. When teachers establish authentic, trusting relationships with students, the students fail fewer classes (Breakthrough Collaborative, 2011).

The Southern Regional Education Board has published widespread research on the middle-to-high school transition. Gene Bottoms, a senior vice president for the SREB, has published extensively on this topic. He outlines several conditions that should be in place to ensure the best results.

Early orientation is key and must be started before high school begins and continued well into the 9th-grade year. Schools can organize 9th-grade students into academies with dedicated teachers who are willing to patiently teach the skills students need. These academies should be small and intimate so trusting relationships can flourish. Teachers should have common planning time to establish and maintain consistency.

Specialized 9th-grade courses with specific high standards, skill and behavior guidance, and counselor support can also play a significant role in successful transitions. These courses should be standards-based with an eye toward teaching college and career ready skills. A project-based approach can be successful as long as committed educators have the time, the resources, and the desire to collaborate on the curriculum.

Guidance and support are critical and can be delivered via an adult mentor/advisor for incoming 9th graders. These caring adults should involve the student’s family and help the student set long-term goals for college and beyond. Finally, for schools that already have transition programs in place, Bottoms recommends asking specific questions of the program to determine if a redesign might be needed (Bottoms, 2008).

- What percentage of 9th-grade students is performing below grade level?
- What percentage of 9th-grade students practice acceptable study skills, read and comprehends text and know how to complete challenging work?
- Are all 9th-grade students linked to a caring adult or an adult/student mentor?
• How many 9th-grade students are failing more than one class?
• What percentage of 9th-grade students is still enrolled in school for their senior year?
• What percentage of students are placed into remedial courses in college?

The answer to these questions could indicate that a redesign might be needed. Whatever tactic is chosen to help incoming 9th graders be successful should be rooted in results—reduced failure rates, improved achievement, and increased graduation rates. If schools are dedicated to designing and implementing successful transition programs, the reaped rewards will be visible in the statistics, and more importantly, in the attitude, motivation, and accomplishment of the students.

References


and the Transition to College and Career. National Research Center for Career and Technical Education.


Kindergarten Transitions **

Supporting kindergarten transitions is a promising practice. Transitioning through kindergarten is a time when behavioral, emotional, and social changes impact all students and their families. Communities, schools, families, and educators can increase the likelihood of a successful student transition by providing academic and non-academic support services. Kindergarten transition opportunities provide support to students and their families for successful transitions from in-home care, daycare, relative care, pre-school, ECEAP, or Head Start.

LAP funds may support transition to kindergarten through a number of different strategies. Districts are encouraged to set up data-sharing opportunities with early learning providers and families to be able to identify the children who may need additional transition support prior to the start of the kindergarten year.

Note: Washington state statute starts LAP eligibility at kindergartners. As such, kindergarten transition strategies funded with LAP should start after a child has enrolled in kindergarten. They may start prior to the first day of school. LAP allowable funding options for children enrolled in kindergarten, and identified as needing extra support, may include:

- In late spring/summer, educators can conduct family engagement and home visits.
- During the summer, before kindergarten starts, educators can provide transition programs.

LAP funds could be used throughout the year for professional learning time between early learning providers (preschool and childcare) and kindergarten teachers to focus on strategies to improve the academic readiness of students arriving at kindergarten. LAP funds for this professional development should be focused on foundational early skills alignment (social emotional, numeracy, and literacy) focused on the providers serving students most in need of kindergarten transition support. WaKIDS data is a great resource for districts to use to identify students for services and content for instruction and professional learning.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Establish a program that allows pre-kindergarten and kindergarten educators to create a transition plan with a focus on sharing student data, aligning curriculum, and supporting strategies for transitioning students.
- Create an outreach program that promotes early kindergarten registration, conducts needs assessments with families, finds and connects families with resources, and provides a safety net of support for the first several months a child attends kindergarten.
• Provide opportunities for families to visit elementary schools before children begin kindergarten by inviting students and families to participate in school events, school tours, school lunch, library time, and recess.

• Develop summer transition programs, or kindergarten camps, that focus on incoming kindergarteners who may not have attended a pre-school program. Allow time for kindergarten students to become familiar with teachers, buildings, classrooms, and routines.

• Cultivate a peer connection program that arranges for pre-school children and kindergarten children to meet, play, and connect within a classroom or outside the classroom at a community event.

• Provide opportunities for teachers to share WaKIDS results with parents and provide activities parents can engage in with their children to support areas of need as identified on the WaKIDS assessment.

Demographic Considerations—Student Factors to Consider When Planning

• Students and families who are new to the school system benefit from a friendly environment where families are valued as decision makers regarding their own child’s education and school programs.

• Migratory families may benefit from programs that help students learn about school routines and ease the separation from home to school; families benefit from learning about activities and strategies families can do in the home to strengthen their child’s education in the classroom.

• Students and families who are learning English as an additional language benefit from a welcoming environment where responsive two-way communication, in the language spoken by the family, is facilitated.

• Students and families who qualify for free and reduced-priced lunch benefit when they are connected to resources and information related to family services.

• Students and families who participate in Head Start or ECEAP programs benefit when standards, curriculum, support services, and assessments from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten are carefully aligned.

• Students who struggle with emotional and/or social issues that may hinder a successful transition benefit from peer connections that continue from pre-school into kindergarten.

• Students and families from American Indian/Alaska Native communities may benefit from a teaching environment that focuses on cooperation instead of competition, has
Tribal cultures represented in the classroom, and utilizes culturally responsive teaching methods.

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning

- Promote academic readiness and emerging literacy, language, numeracy, and social emotional skills families can practice at home. WaKIDS data can help inform these practices.
- Establish protocols for collecting data from pre-kindergarten programs to support early intervention.
- Promote academic readiness and emerging literacy, language, numeracy, and social emotional skills families can practice at home. WaKIDS data can help guide this information.
- Provide families tools and support to be advocates for their children.
- Provide funds to purchase support materials for age-level readiness practices.
- Provide time and funding for collaboration between pre-kindergarten and kindergarten staff, families, and community members to establish a district-wide transition plan for students entering kindergarten.
- Provide time and resources to promote ongoing connections among children, families, in-home, daycare, and pre-kindergarten providers with elementary schools.
- Identify a coordinator to oversee kindergarten transition programs, connect with families/early childhood centers, and monitor progress.
- Provide training for kindergarten educators to further develop an understanding of the norms, practices, and procedures of pre-school education.
- Provide training for educators on culturally sensitive and anti-bias pedagogy, curriculum, early childhood development, and evidence-based practices.
- Provide services tailored to the cultural, linguistic, and learning needs of students and their families.

Resources—Tools for Planning

- Institute for Educational Leadership: Case Studies of Early Childhood Education & Family Engagement in Community Schools
- ChildCare Aware of Washington: Collaboration with Principals and Child Care Providers
- Kindergarten Questionnaires and Checklists: Bellingham Public Schools-Kindergarten Parent Questionnaire and Teacher Questionnaire; Washington State Department of Early Learning Kindergarten Checklist
Supporting Research

Kindergarten transition is a crucial time for young students and families. Transition programs can set the stage for how families will handle their children’s future educational experiences by engaging them in the transition to kindergarten. Kindergarten students in particular need of additional support and care when transitioning as changing learning environments present new challenges: new academic expectations, different school structures, and new social interactions with peers and adults. Families, educators, and community partners can use effective transition activities to create supports and connections across pre-kindergarten and kindergarten settings. (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2008). These practices should begin prior to kindergarten and take into account the cultural, linguistic, and learning needs of individual students and their families (National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement, 2013).

Key guiding principles should be in place as a framework for kindergarten transition success (Sayre & Pianta, 2000, p. 2):

- Foster collaborative relationship building among educators, families, and students;
- Promote continuity between pre-school and kindergarten systems;
- Focus on family strengths to develop school support; and
- Focus on the individual needs of the student.

Building capacity for students, families, and schools is essential. Children’s successful transition to kindergarten relies upon building relationships with a variety of people, including families, day care providers, pre-school educators, and elementary educators (La Paro, Kraft-Sayre, & Pianta, 2003). Family connections, whole child assessment, and early learning collaboration are key components of the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS). Research supports using these three components as the foundation for best practices in successful kindergarten transitions.
Transition to kindergarten activities need to establish effective communication between preschool/pre-kindergarten settings and elementary schools (La Paro, Kraft-Sayre, & Pianta, 2003, Sullivan-Dudzic, Garens, & Leavell, 2010). Fostering collaborative relationships and two-way communication among stakeholders support successful and seamless transitions for students. The culture in an elementary school may be more formal than the typical culture of a preschool (Connors & Epstein, 1995; Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 1999), which makes communication between the two settings more crucial to help students and families navigate the new environment. “These environments should also work together to ensure that standards, curriculum, support services, and assessments from pre-kindergarten settings to kindergarten are carefully aligned” (Bohan-Baker & Little, 2002; Kagan & Neuman, 1998; Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003, Sullivan-Dudzic, Garens, & Leavell, 2010).

Communication with Families

Kindergarten transition plans that promote family participation prior to the start of the school year have been associated with students having increased self-confidence, school enjoyment, and overall happiness with the kindergarten experience (Hubbell, Plantz, Condelli, & Barrett, 1987). Transition to kindergarten should include opportunities for students and families to learn about the new setting, build relationships, and experience continuity in curriculum and assessments within their new setting. Children show greater school readiness (Hubbell et al., 1987; LoCasale-Crouch, Mashburn, Downer, & Pianta, 2008), reduced stress at the beginning of school (Hubbell et al., 1987), and stronger academic growth over their kindergarten year (Ahtola et al., 2011; Schulting, Malone, & Dodge, 2005) when such opportunities are offered.

Outreach to families should be done in a personal way before students enter kindergarten (Pianta et al., 1999; Sullivan-Dudzic, Garens, & Leavell, 2010). Families are more likely to be involved in their student’s kindergarten year when schools actively engage families in the transition process and recognize the families’ efforts to participate (Schulting et al., 2005). Outreach with families that is established in pre-kindergarten programs promotes positive relationships and emphasizes early on that families are valued partners in their child(ren)’s education (La Paro, Kraft-Sayre, & Pianta, 2003). Schools and educators can smooth the transition to kindergarten by engaging families in meaningful ways. Families gain confidence from helping their children adjust to new schools. (Van Voorhis et al, 2013, p. 117). One way to support early family engagement is to establish family visits between kindergarten educators and school staff prior to the beginning of the school.

Research by La Paro, Kraft-Sayre, & Pianta (2003) showed that despite barriers families may face, when offered opportunities to interact with the transition process, such as meeting with educators prior to the beginning of the school year and visiting kindergarten classrooms, families almost always participated and believed that these opportunities were helpful. When asked, families can offer educators knowledge about their children to support classroom
routines and can help reinforce essential academic and non-academic skills at home (Ferretti & Bub, 2017; Sullivan-Dudzic, Gearns, & Leavell, 2010). Students who experience more stability in their early school settings, and in the relationships with the adults in these settings, perform better socially and academically (Curby, Rimm-Kaufman, & Ponitz, 2009; Tran & Winsler, 2011) during their kindergarten year and beyond.

Regardless of a student’s skill level, positive relationships between schools and families support children’s academic progress (Kraft-Sayre & Pianta, 2000). Establishing relationships with community partners, pre-kindergarten learning partners, and kindergarten educators may help provide resources to and support for students and families during the kindergarten transition. “Peer connections that continue from children’s pre-school years into kindergarten also can help ease children’s transition to school by being a source of familiarity and an avenue for building social competencies” (Kraft-Sayre & Pianta, 2000). These types of adult and peer relationships support social and emotional competencies in young students that aid in their school success (Kraft-Sayre & Pianta, 2000).

Community Partnerships
Pre-school and kindergarten programs can make the transition for families smoother by aligning pre-school and kindergarten policies and practices (Sullivan-Dudzic, Gearns, & Leavell, 2010; NCDEL, 2002). “Connecting early childhood programs with the K–12 educational system is a proactive strategic plan to increase student achievement” (Sullivan-Dudzic, Gearns, & Leavell, 2010, p. 1). Consider including the following stakeholders as part of the district kindergarten transition team (Sullivan-Dudzic, Gearns, & Leavell, 2010):

- Elementary school principals,
- Kindergarten and local pre-school educators,
- Families (include multiple demographics and include pre-school and private school families),
- School board members,
- Child care providers,
- Higher-education professionals,
- District leadership (e.g. Title I director, special programs coordinator, etc.),
- School district PTA/PTO president, and
- Other community organization representatives (e.g. tribal leaders, Head Start supervisor, healthcare providers, etc.).
By inviting multiple partners to be part of the planning and implementation of kindergarten transition practices, districts can focus on “increasing achievement, by using a unified approach that honors existing efforts and builds on the strengths and resources in your community” (Sullivan-Dudzic, Gears, & Leavell, 2010, p. 27).

It is also important for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten educators to participate in ongoing professional learning opportunities together to support social emotional and academic competencies necessary for school success and achievement (NCDEL, 2002). Promoting professional learning on culturally sensitive and anti-bias pedagogy, curriculum, early child development, and evidence-based practices ensures that educators receive the supports needed to fully engage students and families both academically and non-academically (Henderson and Berla, 1994; Epstein 2001; Weiss, Caspe, & Lopez, 2006; Halgunseth, 2009).

**Student Success**

“Teachers report that nearly half of typically developing children experience some degree of difficulty during the transition to kindergarten” (Ferretti & Bub, 2017; Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000, Rimm-Kaufman, et al., 2000). In any classroom, there are students achieving beyond the grade-level standards and students not yet achieving the grade-level standards. The goal is for all students to meet the end-of-year expectations, and when necessary, to recognize that stages of development are based on experiences and not solely defined by age or grade. It is essential to take into consideration the learning progressions necessary for student growth by planning intentional experiences, selecting appropriate materials, and determining the best instructional approaches to meet students’ academic and non-academic learning needs. In order for the unique learning needs of students to be met, educators must understand the social-emotional, language, literacy, and numeracy needs of each student.

Educators and researchers recognize that social-emotional competencies and skills related to school preparedness develop early in life. A recent study reports that children who enter kindergarten with underdeveloped social-behavioral skills are more likely to be identified for special education services, suspended or expelled from school, and retained to repeat grade-level standards (Bettencourt, Gross, & Ho, 2016). While focusing on social-emotional development in early childhood is critical, social-emotional learning (SEL) can take place throughout a student’s primary and secondary education. Research indicates that SEL programs can positively influence a variety of student educational outcomes across grade levels (Durlak, et al., 2011).

High-quality instruction in language and literacy skills is vital to students’ academic and non-academic success. Children start developing language and literacy skills at birth; *emergent reading* skills and *early reading* skills start around age three (Early Literacy Pathways, 2016). Oral language skill development helps students as they begin to develop and progress reading
and writing skills. As students enter kindergarten, oral language skills are connected to later gaps in both reading and writing (Coll, 2005; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). English language development for students learning an additional language is also grounded in oral language skill development and needs explicit instruction; by providing instruction in oral language development in a student’s native language, educators can build a foundation for literacy and a bridge for the student’s English literacy development (Beeman & Urow, 2013). For additional information, research, and best practices on oral language, alphabet knowledge, and phonological awareness refer to ELA Menu: Appendix A.

Mastery of early math concepts (number sense and counting) upon school entry is the strongest predictor of future academic success (Duncan, 2007). Learning to make sense of mathematics early helps build future math proficiency. Students transitioning to kindergarten should have opportunities to make sense of math ideas including number concepts and quantities, number relationships and operations, geometry and spatial sense, patterns, and measurement and comparison. For more information on math progressions for early learners, refer to Learning Pathways in Numeracy. An important success factor, and an important tie-in to early literacy, is to get children to communicate their ideas and explain their thinking about mathematics in their natural language. By providing opportunities for students to share their thinking, educators can assess what concepts students understand, and they can identify gaps in students’ mathematical understanding.

Families, pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten programs can provide opportunities to develop social-emotional learning, language, literacy, and numeracy skills through play, songs, books, games, and other daily routines. For more information on social-emotional learning, early literacy, and early numeracy, please refer to the background and philosophy sections in the menus of best practices and strategies.

References
2016. Developed by Molly Branson Thayer, Ed.D in coordination with the English Language Arts-Learning and Teaching Department at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Learning Pathways in Literacy: Addressing Early Literacy Skills.


Family Engagement **

Family engagement is a promising practice. Family engagement involves two-way communication in which families and educators come together as equal partners to engage in decision-making processes. Family literacy support on emerging reading and literacy strategies can help students improve listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills as they progress through the early elementary years. All families engage in social activities to support the development of language and communication. These activities lay the foundation for literacy development in school and life. The more parents and caregivers understand their role in supporting literacy, the more successful they can be in preparing their children for successful literacy experiences and learning.

Family engagement involves collaboration between families and schools toward increasing student success. Family engagement can occur during the regular school day (within the school building or outside of school), within families' homes, or within the community. LAP funding may support family engagement programs to improve the academic outcomes of participating students. The following menu entry provides a robust list of research-based practices and possibilities, including family engagement coordinators and modeling instructional strategies families can provide at home.

Practice Possibilities: Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Create a culturally responsive family leadership program and invite families to join the school improvement planning process. To ensure joint decision-making, ask families to make recommendations to support and promote family engagement practices.

- Provide a space within the school where educational staff can support families and students in literacy. This space could be available for families to convene before, during, and after school. For example, invite families to participate in literacy skill building in the library at the beginning of the school day.

- Create a plan to host monthly family literacy events. These events should have targeted literacy goals and provide time for families to practice literacy skill building. When possible, provide tips/materials for families to continue practicing the literacy strategies learned at the event at home.

- Create literacy games for students to play at home. Families can support skill development by repetitively playing the games in English and/or in the student’s home language.

- Establish a home-visit program where educators engage families. Family preference should determine if visitations occur in the home or at another mutually agreeable
location. Home visits present educators with opportunities to develop authentic and meaningful relationships with families.

- Provide educators with professional learning opportunities on the effective use of funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge are the knowledge and skills a student learns from their family and cultural background. Apply this learning when designing school policies, ELA instruction, family engagement activities, and volunteer opportunities.

- Use technology to support positive ongoing communication with families. Take a photo with each student on the first day of school and share it with the family. Continue to send positive visual updates bi-weekly/monthly on students engaging in literacy activities. Older students can share assignments and accomplishments electronically with their families.

Demographic Considerations—Student Factors to Consider When Planning

- Students without immediate family members in their lives, such as students experiencing homelessness or students in transitional situations, should be welcome to participate in family engagement activities and be encouraged to invite friends or other persons they consider family.

- Families with adverse experiences in schools may require prolonged and intentional positive feedback from school staff before the family will engage in regular, meaningful communication with the school.

- Students with negative feelings about literacy benefit from seeing family members and other trusted adults engaging in literacy activities and expressing positive attitudes about reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

- K–4 family literacy support results in students being more likely to complete high school and go on to college.

- Family engagement in schools starts to decrease as early as grade 3.

- Families who are learning English as an additional language benefit from personal invitations, translation services, and guided support.

- Migratory families benefit from information about the school, community, and services their children can receive as they may be new to the area and unsure how to access resources.

- Students and families from American Indian/Alaska Native communities may benefit from Title VI–Indian Education funded support services.
• Students and families from American Indian/Alaska Native communities may benefit by participating in extra-curricular Tribally sponsored events like read-arounds, pow wows, culture nights, youth leadership programs, Tribal Journeys/canoe families, etc.

• K–12 students who struggle with reading benefit from listening to and discussing text.

Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning

• Welcome all families. Create a family friendly school learning community that is inviting and authentic.

• Design activities and talking points for parents to support oral language and at-home reading expectations.

• Focus on getting to know students and families during home visits.

• Establish opportunities for students to read the same book.

• Consider ways to provide workshop and family night information to those who could not attend: podcasts, online videos, and other formats aligned with parent resources at home.

• Advertise events through multiple modalities: personal invitations in the family’s home language, emails, social media, phone messages, and postcards.

• Establish a positive relationship with families during the first few weeks of school by making phone calls and using authentic outreach efforts.

• Hire a family/community liaison to explicitly connect and communicate with families about the resources available within the community.

• Design support for families around reading skills, homework, student progress-monitoring, and conversations about academic and non-academic supports.

• Communicate using the family’s home language when sharing information about events, expectations, and available resources and materials.

• Give families timely notice and schedule flexible meeting times to provide families with irregular work schedules more opportunities to participate.

• Identify families where English is not the home language and provide interpreters at events to support these families.

• Design activities and games for students to take home to play with their families.
Resources—Tools for Planning

- **National Network of Partnership Schools:** Dr. Joyce Epstein, *Six Types of Involvement: Keys to Successful Partnerships* and PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment
- **OSPI:** Family Engagement Resource List, WA State Title I, Part A website, Funds of Knowledge and Home Visits Toolkit
- **REL:** Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Families and the Community as Partners in Education Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, Part 4
- **National Association for the Education of Young Children:** Engaging Diverse Families Project
- **Washington State Family and Community Engagement Trust**
- **High Expectations**

Supporting Research

Families can and do make a difference in the academic and social-emotional lives of students. School-based family engagement efforts can have a positive impact on K–12 student academic achievement (Jeynes, 2012). However, effective family engagement practices ultimately support improved student academic and non-academic outcomes (Caspe & Lopez, 2006). “When schools build partnerships with families that respond to their concerns and honor their contributions, they are successful in sustaining connections that are aimed at improving student achievement” (Henderson and Mapp, 2002, p. 8).

Family engagement strategies are built on the foundation that:

- All families have goals and dreams for their children.
- All families have the capacity to support a child’s literacy outcomes.
- All families and educators are equal partners.
- Educational leaders are responsible for engaging partnerships (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007).

The Washington State Governor’s Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO) recommends developing and sustaining meaningful, culturally responsive school and family partnerships. The *OEO Family and Community Engagement Recommendations* (2016) highlights the importance
of genuine, authentic relationships between diverse groups of families, educators, and community members to support student success in schools.

Family and community engagement strategies are more inclusive than involvement strategies. Consider the following (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013; Graham-Clay, 2005):

- Involvement means to include as a necessary condition. Involvement strategies tend to coincide with meeting requirements and lack a true partnership. Family and community involvement strategies often result in one-directional communication. This looks and feels like educators passing on information to families.
- Engagement means to pledge or to make an agreement. Engagement strategies work to develop relationships and to build trust. Family and community engagement strategies ignite two-way communication and brings families and educators together as equal partners in the decision-making processes. This looks and feels like teamwork.

Communication with families is vital to promote collaboration between students’ home and school settings, and provides the direct benefit of increased student achievement. However, barriers can and do exist that limit effective communication with families. Schools need to consider socio-economic conditions, cultural and linguistic factors, disability-related needs, and other family characteristics when strategizing how to overcome barriers to effective communication and collaboration with families (Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Cheatham & Santos, 2011; Tucker & Schwartz, 2013). Schools should make a considerable effort to promote collaboration by using multiple means of communication (Graham-Clay, 2005; Cheatham & Santos, 2011). Often families only receive communication from the school when their child has done something wrong. The perspectives of families with a history of negative interactions with the school can inform communications plans if their input is valued (Tucker & Schwartz, 2013). Effective two-way communication with families can be implemented in a variety of ways to strengthen collaboration between school and home.

It is important to have a well-organized family engagement plan around partnership with families (Epstein & Salinas, 2004). Family and community engagement can include a variety of activities and events. When planning family and community activities/events, it is important to include and invite families and community members in all aspects of planning and implementation stages (OEO, 2016). Joint decision making and responsibility are key components to successful partnerships. When planning events, it is also important to have targeted learning goals and time for participants to practice and receive feedback on the desired outcomes. For example, the learning goal of a literacy event may be to provide families with shared reading strategies to support literacy at home. This event would be designed to provide strategies, examples of the strategy in use, and time for family and community
participants to practice and receive feedback on implementing these strategies (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013).

Home visits can be beneficial for all students K–12, especially for new-comers to a district and for those transitioning into a new building. These meetings can occur before the school year begins, and they can take place in the student’s home or at an agreed-upon location in the community. As families and educators meet for the first time, these conversations should not be an overload of information based on expectations and rules. Instead, these meetings should be conversational and focused solely on the child. One question educators can ask families to start these conversations would be: “What are your hopes and dreams for your child?” It is important for families and educators to build a foundation of trust and respect.

One example of home visits could occur at the beginning of the school year when kindergarten teachers meet with families and early learning providers to talk about each child’s strengths and needs. The Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills, or WaKIDS, brings families, educators, and early learning providers together to support each child’s learning and transition into public schools. These meetings are beneficial to students, families, and educators and can take place in neutral locations. They can also increase student attendance and family participation in additional school activities and events (Flamboyan Foundation, 2011; Mapp & Kuttner, 2013).

Family and community engagement includes all of the various ways families and communities effectively support a child’s learning and healthy development. Family members are a child’s first teachers, and literacy development begins at home. Engagement strategies should target multiple stages of a child’s literacy progression, and they should be consistent with, and inclusive of, a child’s home language and culture (Wessels & Trainin, 2014). A focus on intergenerational family literacy, working with the family rather than the child or the adult separately, provides the greatest impact. Effective programs might provide early childhood interventions, early parenting strategies, and increased adult literacy in addition to guidance for parents in the development of their child’s literacy skills (St. Pierre, Layzar & Barnes, 1995; Wasik & Fiermann, 2004, p. 3). Family engagement strategies involving learning activities at home are more likely to have a positive effect on both student achievement and social-emotional development (Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, & Lloyd, 2013).

Well-designed family engagement programs “should be ongoing, culturally relevant, responsive to the community, and target both families and school staff” (O’Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Using a student’s home language and providing families with strategies to support cognitive development that are explicit and culturally responsive empower families to take an active role in supporting their student’s literacy development (Wessels & Trainin, 2014). High interest informational text can promote comprehension skill practice among parents, caregivers, and
children and should also be included in effective family literacy activities. (Pinkham and Neuman, 2012). Hosting family literacy workshops is one way to guide parents in literacy activities such as participating in shared reading, working on fluency, and using electronic resources to enhance literacy skills at home (Mort, 2014). Family workshops can increase literacy dialogue at home by modeling literate behaviors (Mort, 2014). Family nights can also introduce parents to school and community resources, ways to provide homework help, and other ways to support the school curriculum at home, each of which can greatly benefit student literacy achievement through family support (Waldener, 2004; Blazer, 2011; St. Clair et al., 2012; Wessels & Trainin, 2014).

Intervention activities that students can practice at home should be the same activities students are working on in the classroom (Mort, 2014). This ensures that students are familiar with the tasks and can go home and successfully practice the literacy development skills with their families. For example, students experience valuable practice time and build literacy confidence when they take home books they have already read with success in the classroom. Word games are another effective strategy to increase student engagement in word activities at home. Students learn how to play the game in class, and then they take the game home and teach their family how to play. By designing games and establishing at-home literacy routines for students, educators can help families create positive literacy experiences outside of school (Mort, 2014).

It is important to establish family academic supports early in order to establish long-lasting effect on student reading achievement. For example, a family literacy program for migrant kindergarten families showed significant academic gains for students at the end of 1st grade, as well as at the end of 5th and 6th grades (St. Clair et al., 2012). This culturally sensitive program provided family workshops with an adult educator to support student literacy development at home. Additionally, families were provided with materials to support literacy learning at home: letter and word identification games, books, and electronic talking books. By teaching migrant families how to support their child’s language skills, schools can establish a positive collaborative effort with families that will result in increased language and literacy development at home (St. Clair et al., 2012).

As schools/districts review student outcome data, it is important to include families and community members that represent the diversity of the school. Team members should represent the demographic needs of all students. Data-based decision making and goal setting improve when educators and community members work together. One suggestion is to have an action team for partnerships (Epstein & Salinas, 2004). An action team should consist of teachers, administrators, parents, and community partners, and be proactively connected to the school council or school improvement team. The focus of the partnership is to promote
student success, develop the annual plans for family engagement, evaluate family engagement, and develop activities to include all families in the school community.

References


P–4 Community Partnerships

Establishing community partnerships is a research-based practice. Community involvement and partnership not only yield positive results in upper grades, it also has a strong correlation to positive student outcomes for younger children. While there may be different local structures and compositions of community partnerships, many of these components are foundational to the success of this intervention practice to support literacy development. P–4 community partnerships funded with LAP funds must have a focus of supporting LAP students.

Program Possibilities

- Enhance library and community center partnerships by hosting cross-staff and volunteer activities. Invite library staff to lead activities (e.g., shared reading, book talks, how to access digital resources, etc.) during literacy night activities. Plan grade-level events onsite at the library.

- Invite families and community partners to share cultural traditions through oral storytelling, poetry, songs, and crafts during monthly literacy events.

- Develop partnerships for discounted and/or free admission fees one day a month with local children’s museums, zoos, etc., for students and families enrolled at your school. Students will have the opportunity to participate in multiple speaking and listening activities. These experiences build background knowledge for reading comprehension and provide ideas for writing topics.

- Grow strong wrap-around support for children by building decision-making teams of community partners, families, and school personnel to support working together.

- Partner with community organizations to provide a network of support for students and families to develop foundational literacy skills in the community.

Demographic Considerations—Student Factors to Consider When Planning

- Students and families learning English as an additional language benefit from the additional linguistic, academic, and socio-emotional support provided by community partners.

- Students who have not yet met ELA Standards benefit from additional literacy support from community partnerships.

- Students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch programs benefit from community support and resources that support literacy.

- Students in elementary school literacy intervention programs benefit from building and sustaining community partnerships.
Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning

- Focus on working with community and parents versus seeking involvement only.
- Establish goals for short-term actions and activities.
- Establish long-term goals and work trajectory.
- Establish a measurement point in the school year to evaluate the work and processes.
- Use individual/group data to target program design.
- Identify school staff to be stable and ongoing leads throughout multiple years.
- Partner with local healthcare leaders.
- Identify (where possible) family/community lead for a school year.
- Identify student assessment communication protocols to share information with parents.
- Apply for community grants and establish sustainable funding.

Resources—Tools for Planning

- Community in Schools Washington Model
- Build Initiative: Community Development Toolkit
- Washington Reading Corps
- ReadingPartners.org [Video]

Supporting Research

Community involvement in schools is a long-standing indicator of a school’s success across the country. The goal is to engage community involvement, and grow a partnership in which the school and community members work together to create *action* and to *support* children (Ferlazzo, 2011). The most successful partnerships are developed between schools, communities, and families (Jacobson & Blank, 2015). How these partnerships develop is important. Merely engaging family and communities in superficial activities will not improve students’ experiences in the same way as developing deep, authentic, and sustainable collaborative partnerships (Ferlazzo, 2011).

Some community-based programs are established and sustained at individual school sites, while other community-based programs span across districts. What this looks like might be different for different schools and communities. Generally, community-based partnerships can be categorized into three types of programs (NEA, 2011):

1. Community and family programs include community organizations, community residents, and families.
2. Family engagement-focused programs.

3. Wrap-around programs that promote social and health services.

Community-based organizations provide structures and offset costs to implement programs. Across Washington, schools are implementing community-based partnerships with various community organizations. The Washington Reading Corps is a statewide service program committed to improving early literacy and reading outcomes. Reading Corps members serve in schools to provide tutoring and to build capacity for schools to benefit from additional community volunteer involvement. Members also focus on strategies to enhance family engagement in literacy activities. Several Washington schools work with Page Ahead. This community-based partner supports family engagement strategies, summer book programs, and early learning centers as they prepare students for kindergarten readiness.

Community-based partners focus on family engagement, and they approach family engagement programs strategically. Family involvement coordinators, parent-teacher organizations, and parent-school community teams coordinate and support family engagement in schools/districts, unlike traditional family involvement activities where schools send home fliers telling parents what to do, offer parenting classes, refer students to local tutoring programs, seek parent approval for compliance, and hold annual Fun Nights (NEA, 2011). Community-focused schools focus on family engagement. They seek input from families and community members, and they listen to the input. Community-based partners and schools take a shared ownership approach to family engagement and school improvement (NEA, 2011).

Community-based wrap-around supports reduce barriers to learning by establishing purposeful partnerships between community organizations and schools (Blank & Villarreal, 2015). Social and health services are provided resulting in improved student attendance and learning outcomes (NEA 2011, Jacobson & Blank, 2015). Support services may include connecting families to foodbanks and programs that support basic nutrition and shelter needs. Health, eye, dental, and social/emotional services also support student achievement in the classroom. Whenever possible, providing space within the school or within walking distance from the school allows families the opportunity to access wrap-around supports. Schools/districts may use case managers and/or family and community advocates to support community-based wrap-around services.

Building a strong communication structure is vital to establishing strong P–4 community partnerships. The tone of communications outreach can directly influence the strength of relationships. Effective communication and relationship building starts with listening (Ferlazzo, 2011). Encouraging a system that fosters structures so parents and communities not only receive information but can also provide feedback and express concerns is a strong first step (NEA, 2011; Ferlazzo, 2011).
Ideas to build communication structures can cross a range of methods and approaches. Choosing what makes the most sense for the needs of the local community is key. Taking stock of which methods have the highest impact (e.g., weekly email or monthly mailed report, quarterly meetings or bimonthly town halls, etc.) can help teams make efficient choices for maximum impact and efficacy. Regardless of methods, reciprocal communication built on trust is the most effective (Ferlazzo, 2011; NEA, 2011).

References
Community-Based Student Mentors

Community-based student mentoring is research based. It is defined as a positive relationship between a non-parental adult (or older youth) to a younger child or youth. Community-based mentoring usually takes place outside the school day with longer sessions and strong mentor-mentee relationships built over time. The structure of the mentoring experience requires goal setting and may include a variety of social, cultural, and academic activities. Community-based student mentors can support literacy development for students who have not yet met ELA Standards. Community partnerships funded with LAP funds must have a focus of supporting LAP students.

Practice Possibilities—Ideas to Consider When Planning

- Identify possible community connections to support literacy and create a mentor program pairing a non-parental adult to a younger child or youth, provide training for mentor and mentee, develop guidelines for meetings/outings, and create tools for reflection and feedback on the program goals.

- Identify students who might benefit from a community-based mentor to support literacy, do a needs assessment with individual students to gather information to help find the community mentor, set up meetings/events with the students’ needs/interest as the foundation, and gather feedback and reflection on program goals.

- Connect with local libraries, faith-based organizations, and community youth outreach programs to find, train and use adult non-parental mentors who will then connect with identified students who would benefit from a mentor-mentee relationship.

- Partner with Boys and Girls Club and provide transportation after school to support literacy mentoring programs.

Demographic Considerations—Student Factors to Consider When Planning

- Students who have not yet met ELA Standards.

- Students who have not yet met ELA graduation requirements.

- Students who are learning English as an additional language benefit from connecting with native English speakers.

- Students with specific needs: single-parent homes, families in poverty, students who struggle emotionally, socially, and academically and have not yet met ELA Standards.

- Students who come from stressed and busy households and are struggling to meet ELA Standards.

- Students who may need a positive adult role model (for various reasons) and are struggling to meet ELA Standards.
Strategies for Implementation—Success Factors to Consider When Planning

- Activities should be developmentally appropriate and focus on developing speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills.
- Seek parent permission and involve parents in creating goals and activities.
- Provide mentors and mentees regular opportunities to meet and to participate in shared activities over an extended period of time.
- Encourage mentors and mentees to set goals and consistently revisit and adjust goals.
- Screen mentors and identify students who may benefit from the program.
- Identify the characteristics desired in mentors and actively seek out mentors who will commit to the program.
- Provide training for mentors and mentees.
- Monitor and gather feedback on the program to ensure it remains effective.
- Use a mentor coordinator who schedules activities, communicates with families, and recruits/trains/supports mentors and mentees.

Resources—Tools for Planning

- The ABCs of School-Based Mentoring
- Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education’s Student Mentoring Program
- National Mentoring Partnership
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of America
- United Way of America
- Community Partner Toolkits

Supporting Research

Mentoring programs may be broadly categorized as school based or community based. In school-based mentoring, mentors typically meet with mentees one-on-one during or after the school day and engage in both academic and nonacademic activities. Community-based mentoring occurs outside of the school context. Community-based mentoring sessions are typically longer than school-based mentoring activities. In addition, community-based mentor-mentee relationships often are longer in duration than school-based matches (Herrera, 2011).

Mentoring experiences can take many forms. The structure of the mentoring experience is often influenced by the goals of the mentoring program and may include a variety of social, cultural, and academic activities. Mentors and mentees may spend time studying and going to local events, but may also spend time navigating issues for the mentee such as problems with
time management, conflicts with a teacher, relationship issues, or family problems (Larose et al., 2010). The types of activities may vary based on the age and needs of the mentee. “In late adolescents, activities focused on personal and professional identity, autonomy, time and relationship management, and skills development are believed to meet the needs shared by many young people. Mentoring program managers must ensure that the objectives of their programs and the nature of the activities in these programs strongly reflect the developmental needs of their clientele” (Larose et al., 2010, p. 138).

School-based and community-based mentoring has been found to have a positive effect on student academic outcomes. In a study of mostly middle school African American male students, researchers found an Afrocentric mentoring program to be effective in fostering academic achievement and success in the participating mentees (Gordon et al., 2009). In a five-month Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring program, mentees experienced modest short-term academic gains (Herrera et al., 2011).

Other important benefits include: improved self-esteem levels, better relationships with other adults, more clarity in both academics and future college and career outlook (Community Tool Box, 2015). Community-mentoring programs offer innovative options for both mentor and mentees by building partnerships that may lead to valuable life skills. Mentor programs can break down stereotypes, promote teamwork, and help create a culture of community diversity.

Research shows that to build lasting and effective community-mentoring programs, specific factors must be considered. Community partners must be identified and approached to determine commitment level, willingness to contribute financially, and ability to assist in finding and training mentors. Next, youth recipients of mentoring need to be approached and connected with the “best-fit” mentor. This step is critical to the success of not only the mentor/mentee relationship, but also the program as a whole. These relationships take hard work, open minds, flexibility, and a promise to communicate and problem solve as a team (The Community Toolbox, 2016).

Trust is the final factor when building a lasting community mentoring program. Trust among the stakeholders; trust between the mentor and mentee; and trust in the process. Young people often have trust issues with adult authorities, therefore, mentors need to be sensitive to this possibility and be willing to build the relationship slowly. Open communication, consistency, and positive encouragement are key to building trust while also promoting responsible feelings and actions.

The above elements, combined with the principles of mentoring outlined in *The Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*, will ensure a quality program that will instill confidence in the youth who are served. These principles (listed below) should be the foundation upon which any fruitful program is built.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>Recruit mentors and mentees by relaying a realistic description of the programs elements and goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>Screen mentors and mentees to determine commitment, time, and personal characteristics needed to form a lasting relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Training must focus on ensuring that prospective mentors, mentees, and their parents or guardians have the basic knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to build a safe and effective relationship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matching</td>
<td>Matching helps create appropriate mentoring relationships by using strategies most likely to increase the odds that the relationship will be safe and effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and Support</td>
<td>Monitoring and support is critical to mentoring as relationships develop and need to be adjusted to changing needs. Support may also include additional training when needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closure</td>
<td>Closure is a normal stage in a mentoring relationship and mentors and mentees should be able to prepare for closure and reflect upon their experience with the relationship.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These principles are the pillars of community-based mentoring programs that will impact students academically, emotionally, and socially.

References


Larose, S., Cyrenne, D., Garceau, O., Brodeur, P., & Tarabulsy, G. M. (2010). The structure of effective academic mentoring in late adolescence. New Directions for Youth Development 126, 123–140.


BACKGROUND, RESEARCH, AND IMPLEMENTATION FIDELITY

The ELA menu was created to guide schools and districts as they develop supports and services for students who have not yet met standards in English Language Arts. It is critical to ensure best practices are used to design intensive intervention plans for students. These plans need to be implemented with fidelity because even proven practices, when poorly implemented, can fail to raise student educational outcomes.

Often, the word *fidelity* is viewed negatively; however, the LAP team encourages approaching fidelity in a similar manner as integrity or commitment. Implementation fidelity is about delivering an intervention as it was intended to be delivered according to the implementation team’s plan.

The panel of experts recognizes that there are a number of steps that must be taken to ensure that the practices within the menus are implemented with fidelity across the state. Using implementation science is optional. This information is provided as a resource for buildings and districts.

Active Versus Passive Implementation

New practices are implemented at the district/building level each year. Some are implemented with success, while others are not. All too often, promising innovations and practices are abandoned after just a year or two because the expected results were not actualized, and the best practice was viewed as ineffective. But, was the *practice* ineffective or was *implementation* ineffective?

As schools/districts select practices from the menu, the implementation plan and the degree to which the plan is delivered are key to successfully achieving the desired student outcomes. Active implementation is the direct result of action driven teams, purposeful planning, and systematic improvement cycles.

*Figure 4. Used with permission from the National Implementation Research Network.*
Figure 1 displays both passive and active implementation. When passive implementation occurs, it takes approximately 17 years to accomplish minimal results (14 percent). Whereas with active implementation, teams can move toward full implementation (with 80 percent effectiveness) in three years.

**Implementation Science**

Implementation science provides a framework to support the implementation of best practices in education. Implementation science values local conditions and context-specific issues with the assumption that one size will not fit all. Full implementation of best practices takes purposeful planning and time. Implementation science includes a systematic process to ensure full implementation is actualized. The frameworks include the what, how, and who to assist implementation teams with the process. The most effective implementation teams consist of decision makers and practitioners across the system to develop and review systematic improvement cycles.

The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) focuses on active implementation. The Active Implementation Hub (AI Hub) is a free resource available to schools/districts who want to deepen their understanding of implementation science and the power of active implementation. Modules on the AI Hub provide an overview of active implementation and include implementation drivers, teams, stages, improvement cycles, usable interventions, and fidelity checklists.

**Plan, Do, Study, Act**

The *Plan, Do, Study, Act* approach in implementation and improvement science and the *Plan, Do, Check, Act* approach in Lean organizations, are iterative improvement cycles that support active implementation. Iterative cycles are repetitive and use a trial-and-learning approach. In each cycle, implementation teams plan, provide the intervention, review the results, and identify areas for improvement. These teams review student outcomes and adult behaviors, specifically identifying if the intervention was delivered as intended by the plan, then teams identify specific actions to improve the plan.

*Figure 5. Used with permission from the National Implementation Research Network.*
With each improvement cycle, implementation teams learn what went well and what needs to be adjusted to deliver the intervention more effectively in order to benefit student outcomes. Over the course of three active improvement cycles, the effectiveness of an intervention generally reaches 80 percent effectiveness.

Each phase of the Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle guides implementation teams:

- **Plan**—Implementation teams identify purpose, desired outcomes, and success criteria for implementation. Teams identify data and progress monitoring tools that will be used to measure the success of the intervention, who is responsible for collecting data, and when data will be collected and reviewed. Teams will identify challenges that may impact implementation (e.g., transportation, staffing, etc.) and specify how to move interventions forward.

- **Do**—Implementation teams execute the intended intervention plan. Educators complete intended outcomes according to the plan and collect data to ensure the intervention support was delivered.

- **Study**—Implementation teams reflect on the execution of the intended intervention plan. Teams review success criteria and outcomes. Reflective discussions include: what went well, what can be improved, and what unexpected barriers or surprises occurred.

- **Act**—Implementation teams apply learning to identify action steps to improve the process. Teams make targeted adjustments to the original plan to impact student outcomes. Implementation teams use these action steps to begin planning for the next cycle.

Improvement cycles vary in length. The improvement cycle may span across a single school year or for a specific amount of time (such as a quarter, trimester, or semester). Rapid improvement cycles generally range from 30–90 days. Implementation teams should discuss and determine which cycle is best to use with the intervention they are implementing.

**References**


DISTRICT/BUILDING RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Al Hub is a web-based resource that has been developed and maintained by the State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center (SISEP) and NIRN at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. *Implementation Science Modules & Lessons* are available to assist implementation teams. The modules provide self-paced content, activities, and assessments that are designed to promote the knowledge and practice of implementation science and *scaling-up*, improving and expanding the impact of, best practices.

One tool within the AI Hub is the Hexagon Tool. The Hexagon Tool can help states, districts, and schools appropriately select evidence-based instructional, behavioral, and social-emotional interventions and prevention approaches by reviewing six broad factors in relation to the program or practice under consideration. NIRN developed the Hexagon Discussion and Analysis Tool for Implementation Teams to guide deeper discussions and address unique needs.

NIRN provides a glossary of terms for educators who are new to implementation science.

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*Figure 6. Used with permission from the National Implementation Research Network.*
The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching is grounded in improvement science and has several resources to accelerate learning and address problems of practice. Improvement science, which is part of Implementation Science, is a systematic learning-by-doing approach. The Carnegie Foundation, like the National Implementation Research Network, highlights using Plan, Do, Study, Act for implementation. The Carnegie Foundation provides a variety of resources for facilitating improvements in education, including teacher effectiveness. Resources recommended by the panel of experts for optional use are the 90-day Cycle Handbook, the Six Core Principles of Improvement, and a glossary of improvement science terms.

### The Six Core Principles of Improvement

**Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Make the work problem-specific and user-centered.</td>
<td>Starting question: “What specifically is the problem we are trying to solve?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Variation in performance is the core problem to address.</td>
<td>Focus on what works, for whom, and under what set of conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. See the system that produces the current outcomes.</td>
<td>Explore and think about how local conditions shape work processes. Share your hypotheses for change with others to help clarify your goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. We cannot improve at scale what we cannot measure.</td>
<td>Include measures of key outcomes and processes to track if the implemented change is an improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Anchor practice improvement in disciplined inquiry.</td>
<td>Try to use rapid cycles of Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) to learn and improve quickly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Accelerate improvements through networked communities.</td>
<td>Find other partners and share what you learn in order to be more productive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ELA menu will be updated annually, no later than July 1, each calendar year. Interested stakeholders are invited to submit recommendations for intervention practices, along with related research references, for consideration by the expert panel for possible inclusion in subsequent menus. It is important to note that if new research emerges that disproves the effectiveness of a practice that has historically been included in this report, the practice may be removed and no longer allowed under LAP guidelines. Public comment forms are available on the project webpage on OSPI’s website.
APPENDIX A: FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY SKILLS **

Combining the findings from the National Reading Panel (2000), National Early Literacy Panel (2008) and National Council on Teacher Quality (2014), guidance on early literacy skills instruction and interventions is essential to our success to increase 4th-grade reading achievement scores. Educator understanding of these skills is essential for the successful implementation of best practices and strategies in K–4 literacy classrooms and K–12 literacy interventions.

The National Reading Panel identifies five pillars of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The Washington state literacy vision supports the five pillars and includes oral language and alphabet knowledge as being essential components of the foundational literacy skills. High-quality instruction in the foundational literacy skills is vital to students’ literacy success. Each component is directly correlated with an early predictor of literacy success (NELP, 2008; NICHD, 2000). Deep understanding of essential foundational literacy skills must guide professionals as they plan and develop appropriate and engaging instruction and supplemental services for students who have not yet met literacy standards and for their teachers through professional learning opportunities (Pittman & Dorel, 2014; Strickland & Shanahan, 2004).

Appendix A of the ELA Standards provides additional information on the following areas: oral language, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, phoneme-grapheme correspondence, and fluency.

Oral Language

Research demonstrates that oral language ability impacts children’s success in learning to read, as well as overall academic success (Coll, 2005; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). “Oral language is the foundation of learning to read and write” (Roskos et al., 2009, p. 1). The English oral language ability of children as they enter school varies widely and may be impacted by various cultural factors (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Crawford-Brooke, 2013). Some factors affecting English oral language development can include:

- Exposure to language and print
- Opportunities to expand their background experiences
- Opportunities for oral conversations

Early gaps in reading ability and language development that result from a weak foundation in English oral language can continue throughout a student’s academic experience (Crawford-Brooke, 2013; Fielding et al., 2007; Juel et al., 2003). However, lack of oral language exposure
should not be interpreted as a learning disability. Proficiency in a language other than English is also powerful. Families should engage their children in the strongest language of the home, and schools should engage their students in the strongest language of the classroom.

Speaking a second language in the home is very beneficial to oral language and literacy development. Families should be encouraged to speak languages in which they are fully fluent to aid oral language development, especially vocabulary and concept understanding. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are all important skills for learning. Therefore, children who have had a wide variety of language experiences will bring a stronger, intuitive, knowledge of how language works.

Oral language is an integral part of learning to read and write (Coll, 2005; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002; Crawford-Brooke, 2013); literacy instruction must therefore incorporate a focus on oral language for all students. Beginning readers use their oral vocabulary to make sense of the words they see in print. Readers must know what most of the words mean before they can understand what they are reading. Because students’ vocabularies are an essential factor in student success in school and beyond (Beck & McKeown, 2007), students also need to be exposed to a wide variety of words and texts and to solid blocks of time for independent reading. One’s use of oral language enables students to learn not just in literacy but also in all areas (Munro, 2009).

According to Kirkland and Patterson (2005), the development of oral language may be facilitated through an authentic environment for students to engage in conversations and thoughtfully planned oral language activities. For example, classrooms should be print-rich and include student work. Print on the walls should be functional, instructional supports (e.g., anchor charts, visual word walls—with picture support), signs for routine activities, (e.g., marking lunch choices), and all should be accompanied by picture support. Time should be scheduled for routine opportunities for students to converse with each other, such as a ritual class meeting at the end of the day for students to discuss challenges and successes of the day, and book clubs throughout the day and across content areas. Thoughtfully planned oral language activities may include think-alouds where oral language is modeled, shared reading, reader’s theater, daily news, book clubs, turn and talk, and interactive read-alouds. “Teachers can no longer afford to squeeze a read-aloud book between lunchtime and bathroom break. Because reading aloud is so important to language development, we must systematically and explicitly plan for its use in the daily routine” (Kirkland & Patterson, 2005, p. 393).

For successful oral language implementation, the classroom environment must be supportive and nurturing. Specific time designated for listening and speaking activities must start in kindergarten or, even better, in preschool. Using the precise language of the content is important because development of language needs to be simultaneous with content learning.
Not only does attention to oral language help develop language and reading, it benefits writing. Students benefit from talking about what they are thinking and what they plan to write before attempting to write.

### Phonological Awareness

Reading success in English, especially decoding, is connected to phonological awareness. Listening, rhyming, and identifying sounds in oral words or pictures are early literacy skills that help develop successful readers of English (Sullivan-Dudzic, Gears, & Leavell, 2007). Phonemic awareness can be stimulated through parent-child activities [such as] playing rhyming games and reading rhymes (Pressley & Allington, 2015).

The most advanced area of phonological awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds—phonemes—in spoken words, called phonemic awareness. With phonemic awareness comes the understanding of the idea that spoken words can be broken down into sounds. Before children learn to read print, they need to become aware of how the sounds in words work. They must understand that words are made up of speech sounds (phonemes), the smallest parts of sound in a spoken word. Based on a simple view of reading, research suggests that two types of striving readers emerge—poor decoders and poor comprehenders. The group of poor decoders may not have strong skills in phonological awareness (Elwér, et al., 2013).

Equally important to understand is that phonemic awareness is not critical in all languages. For example, Spanish is taught by syllables, not by single sounds. Therefore, a student who reads and writes in Spanish may not demonstrate phonemic awareness in English, even though the student is a reader and writer (Hernandez, 2015).

**Appendix A of the ELA Standards** (p. 19–20) describes various aspects of phonological awareness and ends with a general progression of phonemic awareness development in grades K–2. Note that this progression refers to spoken language, not print.

All aspects of phonological awareness, including the sophisticated aspects of phonemic awareness refer to spoken language:

- Phoneme Identity (Spoken Language).
- Phoneme Isolation (Spoken Language).
- Phoneme Blending (Spoken Language).
- Phoneme Segmentation (Spoken Language).
- Phoneme Addition (Spoken Language).
- Phoneme Substitution (Spoken Language).
• Phoneme Deletion (Spoken Language).

Phonemic Awareness can be developed through spoken language activities:

• Identify and categorize sounds.
• Blend sounds to form words.
• Delete or add sounds to form new words.
• Substitute sounds to make new words.

Phonemic awareness instruction is usually taught in kindergarten and sometimes continued in 1st grade. Early readers can show they have phonemic awareness in several ways. The basics include:

• Recognizing which words in a set of oral words start with the same sound.
• Isolating and saying the first or last sound in a spoken word.
• Combining or blending the separate sounds in a spoken word in order to say the word.
• Breaking up or segmenting a spoken word into its separate sounds.
• Representing each phoneme when spelling (e.g., doktr for doctor).

Alphabet Knowledge (AK)

The NELP (2008) recognizes alphabet knowledge (AK) as an essential component in literacy and an early predictor of literacy success. Jones & Reutzel (2012) identify AK as “an essential prerequisite for developing early reading proficiency” (p. 448). Studies have shown that AK is a predictor in reading proficiency of multilingual students. AK is also thought to be a predictor of reading proficiency in students who are genetically at-risk for dyslexia. (Jones & Reutzel, 2012, p. 449).

AK instruction has been predominately based on what has traditionally been done and not research–based best practice. For example, teaching a letter a week in sequential order of the alphabet is not a research-based best practice, and it has many disadvantages. Teaching a letter a week has been criticized because it takes 26 weeks to teach (Mort, 2014). Research has identified numerous factors that influence and can enhance AK instruction that are highly effective for all students. For example, research regarding the advantages of the letters in the student’s name, alphabetic order (at the beginning and the end of the alphabet), letter frequency, letter pronunciation, and consonant phoneme acquisition order, can inform AK instruction (Jones & Reutzel, 2012).

When students have AK, they develop the foundation for early decoding, spelling, and working toward comprehension (Jones & Reutzel, 2012; Strictland, D.S. & Shanahan, T., 2004). It is,
however, essential to remember that saying a word correctly does not mean that one understands the word or concepts. Some students will be able to say words or decode words without understanding what they are reading (Riddle Buly & Valencia, 2002; Valencia & Riddle Buly, 2004). Riddle Buly and Valencia have identified various profiles of readers, which are important to consider when working with students, especially students who are adding English as an additional language. AK can be supported in a variety of ways at home such as letter puzzles, reading to children, and talking about the book and the words and letters, alphabet games, alphabet songs, and carefully selected electronic programs. In addition, it is a common focus of children’s television shows, storybooks, and computerized applications (Pressley & Allington, 2015).

Suggested tips for instruction: (1) frequent, brief, explicit, and repetitive instruction, (2) letter-a-day instructional cycles, (3) 10/20 review cycles, (4) name, sound, upper/lower case, and text identification, (5) each pacing cycle has a different sequence, and (6) focus on difficult-to-learn letters in additional pacing cycles and reviews (Jones & Reutzel, 2012).

**Phonics (Phoneme-Grapheme Correspondences)**

Phonics comes from the term graphophonics, meaning the relationships between symbol and sound. When simply referred to as *phonics*, the definition can be muddled.

**Appendix A of the ELA Standards** refers to this area as phoneme-grapheme (or sound-symbol) correspondence, and is a more accurate label for this foundational area. Phoneme-Grapheme Correspondence defines the relationship between written letters and the spoken sounds that those letters represent. Conclusions from decades of research in reading related to grapheme-phoneme correspondence are summarized in the following set of recommendations:

- **Teach every letter-sound correspondence explicitly.** Research supporting this idea is simply overwhelming. Children who have been taught explicitly to decode words are far more likely to decode words successfully in the early grades than children who have had limited experiences.

- **Teach high-frequency letter-sound relationships early.** Successful materials tend to involve students in activities in which they can experience immediate and ongoing success. A successful grapheme-phoneme correspondence program gets children reading as soon as possible by teaching the highest frequency relationships early.

- **Teach sound-blending explicitly.** Students do not necessarily understand how to connect the phoneme-grapheme connections in unfamiliar words. Students with explicit teaching outperform those who have had little or no training.

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- Teach students how to chunk words.

Appendix A of the ELA Standards (p. 22) provides three useful principles for chunking longer words into syllables:

1. VC-CV: Two or more consonants between two vowels.
   a. When syllables have two or more adjacent consonants between them, we divide between the consonants.
      i. The first syllable will be closed (with a short vowel).
      ii. *sub-let, nap-kin, pen-ny, emp-ty*

2. V-CV and VC-V: One consonant between two vowels.
   a. First, try dividing before the consonant.
      i. This makes the first syllable open and the vowel long.
      ii. This strategy will work 75 percent of the time with VCV syllable division.
      iii. *e-ven ra-bies, de-cent ri-val*
   b. If the word is not recognized, try dividing after the consonant.
      i. This makes the first syllable closed and the vowel sound short.
      ii. This strategy will work 25 percent of the time with VCV syllable division.
      iii. *ev-er, rab-id, dec-ade, riv-er*

3. Consonant blends usually stick together.
   a. Do not separate digraphs when using the first two principles for decoding.
      i. *e-ther, spec-trum, se-quin*

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**Fluency**

Reading fluency is the ability to read with appropriate rate, expression, and accuracy. Allington (2006) describes fluency as “reading in phrases, with appropriate intonation and prosody— fluency is reading with expression” (p. 94). Rasinski defines fluency as the bridge between grapheme-phoneme relationships and comprehension. Reading with a lack of fluency is directly associated (correlated, but not causal) with lower reading comprehension. Rasinski (2002) suggests that fluent readers simply read more than those who struggle with reading because they are self-motivated and they read for pleasure (Rasinski, 2002), thus they get more practice with reading. Signs of reading disabilities begin with decoding and develop into slow, dysfluent,
inaccurate reading (Kiuru et al., 2013). High-quality reading fluency instruction “lays the foundation for success in reading” (Rasinski & Zimmerman, 2013).

Although Classroom-based Measurements (CBMs) that measure words correct per minute (wcpm) are commonly used, they have been identified as being problematic. Allington (2006) notes that practicing speed-reading of words and non-words to increase students’ wcpm “does not improve text-reading performances (p. 95)”. To be efficient readers, students must have many opportunities to practice appropriate intonation, prosody, and phrasing (Allington, 2001; Rasinski, 2006) and lots of opportunity to read text independently. Recent research shows that wcpm in upper elementary grades and beyond has only a moderate correlation to comprehension, with a higher correlation as an accurate performance indicator for primary-aged students (Hunley, et al., 2013; Valencia, et al. 2010). However, it is important to understand that a correlation is simply a relationship; it does not show that fast reading creates stronger readers: what it does suggest is that strong readers are likely to read faster.

The misunderstanding of fluency has led to many educators focusing on speed and accuracy, since these are easily measured, without consideration of the other critical components of fluency described by Allington (2006), and cited above, as “reading in phrases, with appropriate intonation and prosody—fluency is reading with expression.” If speed and accuracy are used in isolation as a screening tool, it is imperative to understand that false negatives are likely to occur when calculating wcpm. What that means is that students who are actually at-risk are not identified. Valencia, et al. (2010) report, “findings of under-identification parallel several other studies of screening accuracy using wcpm oral reading measures...rates ranged from 15 percent to as high as 47 percent, depending on the benchmark used” (p. 287). When students are screened for rate and accuracy, nearly half of the students identified receive the wrong intervention (Valencia, et al., 2010). This results as a misunderstanding of the purpose of a screening measure.

According to Allington (2001), “[w]e cannot get too carried away with a focus on reading rate” (p. 71). We must be careful not to lose sight of all the indicators of oral reading fluency: rate, accuracy, and prosody; or, as Dawn Chrisitiana, from Bellingham Public Schools, likes to say, “rate is not a teaching point.”

Fountas and Pinnell (2008) describe fluency in six dimensions, with descriptions and rubrics for each dimension:

1. Pausing—how the reader is guided by punctuation to reflect meaning.
2. Phrasing—how the reader groups words to reflect meaning.
3. Stress—how the reader emphasizes words to reflect meaning.
4. Intonation—how the reader uses expression to reflect meaning.
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5. **Rate**—how the reader uses appropriate rate—not too fast and not too slow—to reflect meaning.

6. **Integration**—how the reader uses 1–5 together to reflect meaning.

Rasinski (2004) describes an analogy between reading aloud and giving a speech: the reader, like the speaker, uses the voice in a variety of tones, speeds, and expressions to capture the attention of the audience. “Speaking in appropriate phrases, emphasizing certain words, raising and lowering volume, and varying intonation help the listener understand what the speaker is trying to communicate” (Rasinski, 2004, p. 2). Just like giving a speech, reading aloud is a performance task that can be intimidating for some students, especially those with anxiety, striving to read, and those who speak English as an additional language. Thus, oral fluency is important when reading to others, and may be an indicator of internal fluency. However, it is critical to remember that the purpose of fluent reading, as a developing reader, is that fluency in our heads assists us as readers to understand the author’s meaning. The goal is for students to read fluently and with meaning—it is an essential learning component for students to become proficient readers (Rasinski, 2002; Rasinski 2013).

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**Vocabulary**

Vocabulary knowledge can be a predictor of reading fluency and comprehension success (Hickman, et al., 2004). Students’ depths of knowledge in vocabulary varies significantly when they start school. The number of vocabulary words a student starts with on the first day of school can be as low as zero (for students who do not speak English as their primary language at home), and it generally ranges from 5,000 words to 20,000 words. Vocabulary knowledge is highly correlated to the family’s socio-economic status (Marulis & Neuman, 2010), and it can be acquired in multiple ways: by listening, speaking, reading, writing, and sight (word practice) (International Reading Association, 2002). “The relationship between vocabulary is thought to be reciprocal—knowing more words facilitates successful comprehension, while successful comprehension and wider reading lead to opportunities to learn more words” (Lesaux, et al., 2010, p. 197).

Appendix A of the ELA Standards (p. 32) provides information on vocabulary acquisition and the three tiers of words.

Jensen (1998) supports that vocabulary skills start developing in infancy when adults talk to, sing to, and read to children. Natural approaches to vocabulary acquisition are effective strategies for EL students; however, the classroom cannot easily replicate primary language learning experiences (Jesness, 2004). Tim Rasinski (2014) advocates using poetry and songs to build vocabulary. A careful balance of formal study and natural approaches enable EL students to acquire active knowledge. Younger students benefit more from natural techniques, and
intermediate students require a more explicit approach. Educators need to decide which words are best taught naturally and which words are best taught analytically. Vocabulary acquisition requires a significant time allotment for students to be successful. Larger classes need to have English-speaking volunteers and assistants for EL vocabulary acquisition (Jesness, 2004).

*Reading Standard 4* and *Language Standards 4, 5 & 6* explicitly focus on vocabulary in English language arts. Vocabulary can be an indirect focus, but it is a necessary comprehension tool across multiple content area standards (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Vocabulary knowledge is “emphasized...more than 150 times” in the Common Core Standards (Manyak et al., 2014, p. 13).

Learning vocabulary is multifaceted. It is both implicit and explicit. Vocabulary instruction should be provided both directly and indirectly to support all areas of learning (International Reading Association, 2002). The National Reading Panel (2000) recognized there is not a single approach to teaching and learning vocabulary and suggests the following to support vocabulary instruction:

- Direct and indirect instruction,
- Repetition,
- Rich contexts, and
- Active engagement.

Manyak et al. (2014) recognize that vocabulary instruction outcomes are dependent on high quality implementation of research-informed instruction and activities—simply applying these techniques and strategies “does not in and of itself guarantee efficient and effective vocabulary instruction” (p. 22). For example, in more than 50 studies where educators implemented Marzano’s *the six-step process* for teaching vocabulary, student outcomes varied from negative effects to gains greater than 40 percentile points (Marzano, 2009). In reviewing these studies, the findings show that implementing the strategy as it was intended had a greater impact on student outcomes than when educators adapted, changed, or modified the delivery of the strategy. Vocabulary interventions that are taught explicitly versus passively also have better results (Marulis & Neuman, 2010). Explicit vocabulary interventions have the greatest effect on students with lower vocabulary knowledge, and interventions that combine explicit vocabulary instruction with implicit instruction (e.g. exposure in books and oral language) had that largest effect size (Bowne, Yoshika, & Snow, 2017).

It is important to identify when educators are not using best practices to support vocabulary learning. For example, instructional time devoted solely to completing worksheets and looking up word lists are not best practice; unfortunately, Fisher and Frey (2014) report that during
vocabulary instructional time this practice occurs 39 percent of the time. Moreover, in lower elementary classrooms, vocabulary instruction is often taught during read-aloud times, but this strategy only results in 20-40 percent improvement on target words. “Few read-aloud interventions have shown effects on general vocabulary knowledge” (Silverman & Crandell, 2010).

Providing students with “more opportunities to interact with and process word meanings have been found to be the most effective at supporting both learning of the words taught and growth in overall receptive vocabulary” (Bowne, Yoshika, & Snow, 2017). Some effective strategies to support vocabulary instruction include:

- Connecting words to personal experiences,
- Comparing and contrasting words,
- Providing simple definitions of words,
- Creating and answering questions about words,
- Connecting words to photos, videos, and books,
- Making relationships between words (e.g. synonyms/antonyms), and
- Teaching words in groups and word families (Bowne, Yoshika, & Snow, 2017).

Effective vocabulary instruction should be part of rich routines, provide explicit definitions and examples with anchor experiences to support active and deep processing. Vocabulary instruction needs to be multi-faceted and varied for all students. A one-size-fits-all approach does not work for two reasons: (1) students come to classrooms with various depths of vocabulary knowledge, and (2) words simply “differ in nature, ranging from concrete nouns like peninsula . . . to densely conceptual terms like democracy” (Manyak et al., 2014).

Comprehension**

Mastery of foundational skills in literacy is directly correlated to successful reading comprehension. Fluency and vocabulary knowledge are both strong predictors of student success in reading comprehension. When approaching interventions for reading comprehension, it is necessary to also assess the student’s proficiency in fluency and vocabulary to ensure the intervention services provided meet the individual needs of the student. It is important to scaffold the interventions accordingly to ensure the reading intervention is comprehension-focused and not decoding-centered (Watson et al., 2012).

Appendix A of the ELA Standards (p. 27) highlights the need for ELA classrooms to explicitly make the connection between oral and written language because listening comprehension surpasses reading comprehension in the early grades.
The What Works Clearing House Practice Guide (2010) on Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd grade outlines five recommendations that support reading comprehension. These recommendations are:

- “Teach students how to use reading comprehension strategies;
- Teach students to identify and use the text’s organizational structure to comprehend, learn, and remember content;
- Guide students through focused, high quality discussion on the meaning of text;
- Select texts purposefully to support comprehension development; and
- Establish an engaging and motivation context in which to teach reading comprehension.”

Having the ability to process information to analyze text, to synthesize text, and to draw conclusions from text are strategies that can be practiced and supported in the classroom both orally and in writing. Activating prior knowledge, or schema, is one of the most effective ways to help students connect to text and build understanding (Messenger, 2015). Background knowledge enhances reading and reading builds background knowledge for future reading experiences; prior knowledge helps the reader understand plot and conflict, make inferences, and draw conclusions (Lemov, 2017). Research supports explicit instruction benefits for students who have not yet met reading comprehension standards (Watson et al., 2012). Writing about texts also strengthens reading comprehension (Shanahan, 2014).

Current studies specify that direct teaching of text structure and exposure to informational text is beneficial to students as early as pre-school (Culatta et al., 2010). Close reading of complex text is essential for college and career readiness, and is correlated to reading proficiency success (Boyles, 2013). Close reading is a strategy that invites students to examine texts. Close reading provides students opportunities to expand their schema by connecting the reader’s background knowledge and prior experiences to the text. Close reading also builds stamina and essential reading habits needed for complex, independent practice. Strategies for close reading include: using short passages (from a few paragraphs to a couple of pages), providing opportunities for re-reading text, annotating text, identifying areas needed for clarification, modelling reading, leading text discussions, asking text-dependent/specific questions, and focusing on observing and analyzing text (Fisher & Frey 2012; Boyles, 2013).

The following reading strategies can help guide scaffolding for reading comprehension (Messenger, 2015; Watson et al., 2012):

- Activate prior knowledge,
- Make predictions,
• Draw conclusions,
• Ask questions,
• Make inferences,
• Synthesize text,
• Build fluency,
• Develop vocabulary,
• Self-regulation, and
• Text structure.

Shanahan (2014) encourages the following five steps to support student reading success:

• Students should read extensively during instruction across content areas;
• Teachers should scaffold guidance and support of grade-level text to increase stamina and rigor;
• Texts should be rich in content and challenge students’ reading ability;
• Students need to explain their answers by using text evidence to support claims; and
• Students need to write about (summarize and synthesize) texts.

Resources


Appendices


Appendices


APPENDIX B: 2017 EXPERT PANEL

Amy Mesick, M.Ed. (2017) currently serves as the LAP Coordinator for Vancouver Public Schools. She earned her undergraduate degree from Portland State University and a Master’s degree in Education and Leadership from the University of Portland. She has been in the field of education for over 25 years as an elementary school teacher, Reading First literacy coach, interventionist, and literacy specialist. Throughout her career, she has had the opportunity to work with students from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, in a variety of school settings: dual language, multi-age classrooms, and traditional models. Providing district leadership and professional development in the areas of curriculum, data analysis, best practices for instruction, and coordinating and monitoring program effectiveness are primary functions of her work. Amy believes educators must be relentless to improve student achievement and provide exceptional educational opportunities for all learners.

Ann Teberg, Ed.D. (2017) began her teaching career as a LAP/Title I teacher working with struggling readers and writers. In her 30+ years in education, she has served students in public and private schools as a literacy specialist and taught in gifted and talented programs and general classrooms in grades 1–8. Most recently she has worked with graduate and undergraduate students in teacher education programs with a focus on Literacy Instruction. She is currently the Chair of the Teacher Education Department and Literacy Faculty at Whitworth University. She is the founder of Read With Me Arusha, a literacy-based non-profit organization promoting the development of literacy skills for children in Arusha, Tanzania through the creation of libraries in orphanages, and mentoring teachers in the schools. Ann holds a Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education with an emphasis in Reading and her Doctorate in Literacy and Curriculum and Instruction, both from Washington State University.

Dawn Christiana, M.Ed. (2017) is a Director of Teaching and Learning in the Bellingham School District. Her teaching career began in Pennsylvania where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood and Elementary Education. While being a classroom teacher in Blaine and Bellingham, Washington, she was honored with being named her school and district Teacher of the Year. She earned a Master’s degree in Education with a focus on literacy and has shared her passion as a consultant, past President of the Washington State Literacy Association, GLAD trainer and adjunct professor at Western Washington University. Dawn left the classroom to become a Literacy Specialist and then a district-level Teacher on Special Assignment focused on supporting teachers with implementing best practice literacy instruction. Upon completing the University of Washington Danforth Educational Leadership program, she was given her current role leading K–12 Literacy, Highly Capable, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and the Instructional Framework for the Bellingham School District.

Jeffrey Dunn, Ph.D. (2016–17) was named the 2014 ESD 101 Regional Teacher of the year and has earned a Ph.D. in English Literature and Culture Studies at the University of Pittsburg. Currently he works as the Secondary LAP Coordinator in the Deer Park School District and has taught English for 39 years. As part of his duties at DPHS, he directs regular school day and
summer school project-based credit retrieval programs; coordinates the school’s career counseling advisory program; and works with students, parents, and teachers toward the goal of high school graduation for all. To this end, he started using standards-based grading 20 years ago and works with OSPI in the initial development of the Washington’s Collection of Evidence Alternative Assessment System. Because he is dyslexic and has an autistic child, he is particularly sensitive to the needs of cognitively unique students. Globally, Jeffrey believes in Paulo Freire’s theory that great teachers should first be model students—exemplifying the courtesy, ethics, creativity, and determination they hope to cultivate in their students.

**Katharine Overhauser-Smith M.Ed.** (2017) is a literacy specialist at Michael Anderson Elementary School on Fairchild Air Force Base. She has been a teacher for 11 years serving as a classroom teacher in grades 3–5, a STEM teacher in grades 6–8, a highly capable educator in grades 3–6, and an instructor in early literacy at Washington State University. She also works as a consultant for EdReports.org. Katharine earned her BA in Sociology and earned her Master's degree in Teaching at Washington State University (WSU). She is currently completing her Ph.D. at WSU in Language, Literacy, and Technology. Katharine’s research focuses on depictions in picture books. She has her National Board Certification in Middle Generalist.

**Leilani Thomas, M.Ed.** (2016) has been in education for over 30 years. Starting her career as a bi-lingual kindergarten teacher, Leilani has held many roles including working with students in grades 3–4, high school English, algebra, special education P–12, and university preservice and graduate programs. She taught in Paraguay, South America, and in the bush of Alaska. She was a reading coach as part of the original Washington Reading Corps. During the last 10 years, Leilani has served her district as the Executive Director, overseeing Title I, Part A, LAP, Special Education, Gifted, Early Childhood, Foster Care and Assessment and Teaching/Learning. Leilani earned her M.Ed. at Western Washington University.

**Mari Atkinson, M.Ed.** (2017) is a National Board Certified Teacher in Early Adolescence through Young Adult/Art, a Past-President of the Washington Art Education Association, and the current Pacific Region Middle Level Representative for the National Art Education Association. Mari serves on the OSPI Arts Cadre, the OSPI Arts Time Steering Committee, the Schack Art Education Committee, and the state Arts Advisory Committee. Throughout the past 26 years, Mari has worked for the Mukilteo School District as a TOSA in Reading, classroom teacher in grades 4–5, grade 6 ELA and Social Studies, and grade 6–8 Visual Arts. Mari graduated Cum Laude from Carroll University with a Bachelor of Arts degree, and earned her Master’s degree in Language Arts from Seattle Pacific University. Mari is a national presenter on authentic assessment, and was named Art Advocate of the Year (2016) for the Snohomish County Schack Arts Council.

**Marsha Riddle Buly, Ph.D.** (2016–17) is a Past-President of Washington Association for Bilingual Education (WABE) and is the author of NCTE’s English Language Learners in Literacy Workshops. She is co-recipient of the Literacy Research Association’s 2015 P. David Pearson scholarly influence award for her work identifying varying profiles of striving readers, including those
adding English as an additional language. Marsha is a literacy professor at Western Washington University (WWU) and “on loan” as a half time district Literacy/ELL support TOSA to Bellingham School District. She is an agency GLAD trainer with Bellingham Schools and WWU, and the Director of the Public Education Standards Board funded Future Bilingual Teacher Fellows Alternative Certification (FBTF) program between WWU and Highline Schools.

**Mary Boyle, M. Ed.** (2017) currently serves as Federal/State Program Director and teacher for the Pateros School District. She has worked in education for 37 years serving as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, Special Education Director and currently all federal and state programs. Mary received her BA and MA in reading at Eastern Washington University (EWU), and she also earned her administration certificate from EWU. She is nationally board certified in Literacy: Reading–Language Arts.

**Matt Lemon, MPA** (2014–17) conducts applied policy research for the state Legislature with a focus in education. His work in K–12 policy includes studies of innovative schools in Washington and the Learning Assistance Program, which provides academic support to students who have not yet met grade-level standards. His work in higher education has examined a scholarship program for foster youth (Passport to College Promise) and the Washington State Need Grant for low-income undergraduate students. In addition to his research, Matt is a member of the K–12 Data Governance group that oversees the development and implementation of an education data system in Washington state. Matt graduated magna cum laude from Western Washington University with a BA in political science and received a M.P.A. from The Evergreen State College.

**Michele Vegas, M.Ed.** (2017) has been in education for 20 years. She has spent her teaching career in elementary education and currently teaches in the North Thurston School District. Michele received her Bachelor of Arts in Education from Saint Martin’s College with endorsements in Reading and Special Education. She earned a Master’s degree in Professional Development from Heritage College. She has taught grade levels K–5 and has also worked outside of the classroom for part of her career as a Literacy Coach, Program Facilitator, and Response to Intervention Coordinator. She has a vast experience working in schools that serve diverse, high needs, and Title I student populations. While currently a classroom teacher, she continues to be involved in building, district, and state initiatives in English Language Arts instruction and school improvement efforts. Michele's love of the classroom and her students is what drives her to stay active in all aspects of education, and fuels her desire to do her best to meet the needs of all students.

**Patricia A. Jones, M.Ed.** (2017) is a National Board Certified Teacher currently serving as Instructional Coach and LAP coordinator at the K–1 Primary School in the Woodland School District. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Colorado and a Master’s degree from the University of Portland. She has taught in elementary, middle, high, alternative, and bilingual programs in diverse school districts in Washington and Colorado, and served as Instructional Learning Coach at elementary, middle, and high school. She has assisted with an Oregon Department of Education Science Curriculum Concept Paper, co-authored a
New American Schools proposal, and was the lead teacher and author of the Washington Transforming Learning Project (WA-TPL) for a SW Washington school district. She has led district initiatives in curriculum adoption and standards based learning and currently serves with Washington State Learning Forward.

Theresa Kendall, M.Ed. (2016–17) is the Categorical Programs/K–4 Literacy Administrator in the West Valley School District (Spokane WA). Her path to public education came later in her career. After attaining a BA in Business Management at EWU, Theresa worked in the private sector within the computer industry. Her love for education and her belief in the role passionate teachers play came as she realized she was spending more time volunteering at her children’s school than was typical. Theresa graduated a few years later with a degree in Child/Human Development, endorsed in Elementary Education and Reading K–12. She further explored the power of teaching & learning by completing her Master’s degree in Teaching Mathematics, National Board Certification in Literacy, and Administrative/Principal credential. With 20+ years in education at various capacities, classroom teacher, reading specialist, building administrator, and Categorical Programs, she always keeps at the center of her work, the power of the classroom teacher and the great importance of meeting the needs of all learners.
# APPENDIX C: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Expert Panel Members

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<th>Name</th>
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<th>Year(s)</th>
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<td>Neah Bay Elementary</td>
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<td>Amy Mesick</td>
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<td>Ann Teberg</td>
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<td>Associate Professor of Education and Director of Student Teaching</td>
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<td>Cheryl Vance</td>
<td>ESD 113</td>
<td>Regional Literacy Coordinator</td>
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<td>Christine Clausen</td>
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<td>2014, 2015</td>
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**APPENDIX D: LIST OF ACRONYMS**

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<td>Advancement Via Individual Determination</td>
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