IRIS CENTER™

Early Reading

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Contents:

    *For an Instructor's Guide to this case study, please email your full name, title, and institutional affiliation to the IRIS Center at iris@vanderbilt.edu.

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Licensure and Content Standards

This IRIS Case Study aligns with the following licensure and program standards and topic areas.

Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)

CAEP standards for the accreditation of educators are designed to improve the quality and effectiveness not only of new instructional practitioners but also the evidence-base used to assess those qualities in the classroom.

- Standard 1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

CEC standards encompass a wide range of ethics, standards, and practices created to help guide those who have taken on the crucial role of educating students with disabilities.

- Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies

Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC)

InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards are designed to help teachers of all grade levels and content areas to prepare their students either for college or for employment following graduation.

- Standard 8: Instructional Strategies

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

NCATE standards are intended to serve as professional guidelines for educators. They also overview the "organizational structures, policies, and procedures" necessary to support them.

- Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions

About the Strategy

Comprehension is the understanding of what has been read. **Comprehension strategies** are the techniques a proficient reader uses to gain meaning from the text.

What the Research and Resources Say

- The purpose of strategy instruction is to provide students with metacognitive tools that they can (at some point) use on their own (Swanson & De La Paz, 1998).
- Though teachers report teaching comprehension strategies, studies have shown that most teachers just monitor comprehension by asking students questions after they have read a passage, instead of teaching specific strategies that will increase comprehension skills (Levy, Coleman, & Alsman, 2002; Swanson & De La Paz, 1998).
- Teach one or two comprehension strategies at a time. A new strategy should not be introduced until an old strategy is well established (Swanson & De La Paz, 1998).
- Teach students when and where to use the strategies, not just how to use the strategies (Swanson & De La Paz, 1998).
- A good reading comprehension program includes a systematic approach to introducing vocabulary and background information, specific strategies with cumulative review and practice, and the integration of the skills during passage reading (Jitendra & Gardill, 1994).
- Reading comprehension skills improve when teachers systematically guide students to attend to story elements and model the thought process behind each strategy (Bos & Vaughn, 1998; Mathes, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 1997; Taylor, Harris, Pearson, & Garcia, 1995).

Strategies to Implement

Predicting, Summarizing, Retelling, Rereading, and Questioning (tried and true comprehension strategies)

- **Predicting**
  a. Prior to reading, activate and assess students' prior knowledge through predicting activities. Students can make predictions based upon the story title, a scanning of story pictures, or from past experience with the topics, themes, or characters in the story.
  b. Predicting sets a purpose for learning and guides comprehension—"Hmmm, that is not what I thought was going to happen. Did I read that correctly or do I need to read more to find out how this works out?"

- **Summarizing:** The goal of summarizing at the early reading level is for students to identify the main idea of a story. Teaching students strategies for summarizing helps them focus on main idea concepts.
  a. One Sentence Summarizing: Teach the students to read a paragraph or a short section of a book and then sum up what was read in one sentence.
  b. Paragraph Shrinking (appropriate for end of first grade and second grade on): This technique is designed to help students identify the main idea of a paragraph or story. Students are asked to name the "who" or "what" of the story, decide what the most important thing is about the "who" or the "what," and finally, say it in 10 words or fewer.

- **Retelling**
  a. Allow opportunities for students to retell stories after they have read or listened to them.
  b. Retellings can be scored for: (a) inclusion of main idea, (b) correct chronological sequence, and/or (c) inclusion of characters, settings, and main events.

- **Rereading**
  a. Teach students a variety of rereading strategies. One is the "look back" strategy. If a student does not know the answer to a question, teach them to look back in the story to find the answer.
  b. Another rereading strategy is reading for fluency. Teach students to reread a sentence or paragraph if they had difficulty with more than two words.
  c. Rereading of familiar books also encourages fluency—an important component to comprehension.

- **Questioning**
  a. Beginning readers should be able to answer the following questions of text: who, what, when, where, and how.

Keep in Mind

- Most strategies will take more than three lessons before students are able to begin to employ the strategy either independently or with less teacher support.
- A teacher may model, guide, and support the practice of a strategy, but unless students are taught when and where a strategy should be used they will be reliant on teacher guidance for strategy use.
- For student ownership and generalization to occur, students must have mastery of the strategy and opportunities to apply the strategy in a variety of settings or conditions.
- When teaching a strategy use simple reading materials that students can read independently. The focus should be on the comprehension strategy, not on decoding the words of the text.
- Once students begin to use the skills independently, some may require visual cue cards to provide continual guidance.

Resources

Bos, C. S., & Vaughn, S. (1998). *Strategies for teaching students with learning and behavior problems* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Jitendra, A. K., & Gardill, M. C. (1994). Reading comprehension curriculum evaluation and modification: An instructional design perspective. *Preventing School Failure, 40*(4), 174–180.

Levy, S., Coleman, M., & Alsman, B. (2002). Reading instruction for elementary students with emotional/behavioral disorders: What's a teacher to do? *Beyond Behavior, 11*(3), 3–10.

Mathes, P. G., Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. (1997). Cooperative story mapping. *Remedial and Special Education, 18*(1), 20–27.

Swanson, P. N., & De La Paz, S. (1998). Teaching effective comprehension strategies to students with learning and reading disabilities. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 33*, 209–218.

Taylor, B., Harris, L. A., Pearson, P. D., & Garcia, G. (1995). *Reading difficulties: Instruction and assessment* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

About the Strategy

Graphic organizers are simple diagrams used to assist students, at any grade level, in organizing and recalling elements from stories they have listened to or read. As early as kindergarten, students can use simple maps to identify the who, what, where, when, and why of a story or sequence the events of a story (see examples following Strategies to Implement).

What the Research and Resources say

- Teaching students to attend to story elements has been shown to enhance reading comprehension skills (Idol, 1987; Mathes, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 1997).
- Students at-risk for reading difficulties require systematic, explicit instruction and more repetition to develop important reading skills (Babyak, Koorland, & Mathes, 2000; Foorman & Torgesen, 2001).
- The visual framework of a graphic organizer provides an organizational format for reading text that has been shown to help children with learning disabilities increase reading comprehension skills (Babyak, Koorland, & Mathes, 2000; Idol, 1987).
- Strategic readers connect what they know to what they are reading. Children at-risk for or with learning disabilities need explicit instruction on attending to story elements in order to make this connection (Babyak, Koorland, & Mathes, 2000; Idol, 1987; Mathes, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 1997).
- The purpose of teaching students to use graphic organizers is to provide students with metacognitive tools that they can (eventually) use on their own (Swanson & De La Paz, 1998).

Strategies to Implement

- Use graphic organizers to help students identify and answer questions about characters, settings, and events.
- Teach story retelling through one of the following retelling approaches:
    a. Retell the story by using key words: first, next, and last.
    b. Retell the story by using story elements: character (who), setting (where), and plot (what).
    c. Retell the story by using story markers: beginning, middle, and end.
    d. Use imagery to create a mental picture of the story.
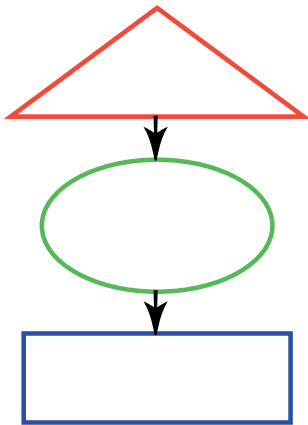- Use the Model-Lead-Test Strategy for teaching story mapping.

Story Mapping: Parts of the Story

Who?

What?   **Where?**
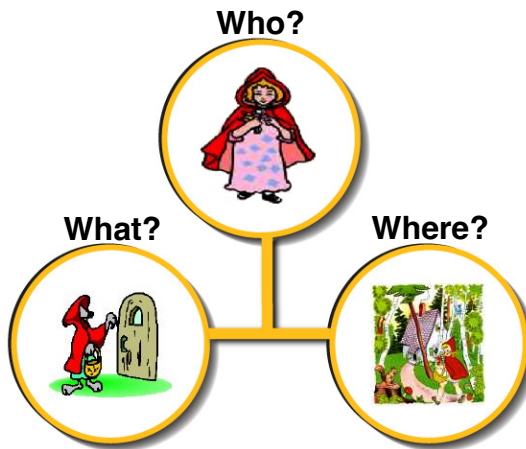
Literary Webs:

Literary webs help students understand a story in terms of both the whole and its parts.

Setting

First

Next

Second
Character

Sequence of
Events

Last

First
Character

Characters

STORY TITLE

Problems

Main Idea
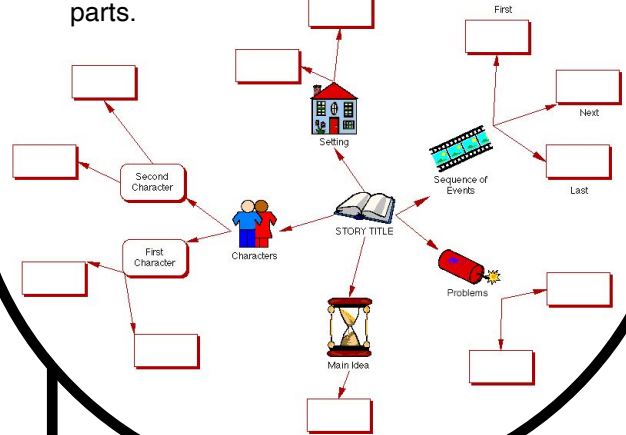
Story Mapping: Sequencing

Students can draw pictures to represent the sequence or write down key words.
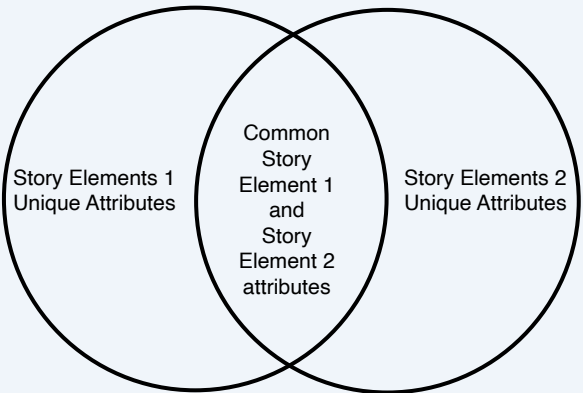
Venn Diagrams:

The Venn Diagram can be used for simple comparisons

Story Elements 1
Unique Attributes

Common
Story
Element 1
and
Story
Element 2
attributes

Story Elements 2
Unique Attributes

Keep in Mind

- Make sure that the story elements are easy to identify when choosing reading material.
- Graphic organizers can help students remember what they read by helping them recall story elements including main idea, characters, setting, and sequence of events.
- Some students may require completed maps or visual cue cards to help guide them during the test phase or independent activities.
- Graphic organizers can be used as independent activities or as group activities in peer tutoring or cooperative learning groups.
- Teachers can create their own story maps with headings to match their instructional goals. Appropriate headings for early reading story maps include: story structure (e.g., characters, settings, and main events) or questions (e.g., who, what, when, where, and how).
- Model how to complete the story map on several occasions prior to students independently completing a map.
- Use self-instruction statements (think aloud) such as "As I read, I am filling in the names of the characters as I meet each one."
- Gradually fade out the story map graphic organizer as students are independently able to identify story elements in their reading comprehension.

Resources

Babyak, A. E., Koorland, M., & Mathes, P. G. (2000). The effects of story mapping instruction on the reading comprehension of students with behavioral disorders. *Behavioral Disorders*, *25*(3), 239–258.

Foorman, B. R., & Torgesen, J. (2001). Critical elements of classroom and small-group instruction promote reading success in all children. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, *16*(4), 203–212.

Idol, L. (1987). Group story mapping: A comprehension strategy for both skilled and unskilled readers. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *20*(4), 196–205.

Mathes, P. G., Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. (1997). Cooperative story mapping. *Remedial and Special Education*, *18*(1), 20–27.

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Taylor, B., Harris, L. A., Pearson, P. D., & Garcia, G. (1995). *Reading difficulties: Instruction and assessment* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

About the Strategy

Independent practice activities allow students to practice the skills that have already been taught. A variety of activities fall under this strategy including learning centers, games, computer assisted learning (CAI), independent reading, and self-correcting materials (Bos & Vaughn, 1994).

What the Research and Resources Say

- Children learn to read by practicing reading skills (Taylor, Harris, Pearson & Garcia, 1995).
- Games are motivational and provide opportunities for students to apply their reading skills to an enjoyable activity (Taylor, Harris, Pearson & Garcia, 1995).
- Materials should be chosen at a level of difficulty that students readily understand how to use them. Typically, one or two demonstrations should be sufficient for students to learn how to use the materials (Mercer & Mercer, 2001).
- Research on CAI consistently demonstrates educationally significant effects of computer drill and practice when used as a supplement to teacher instruction (Cotton, 1991-1992).
- CAI also has positive effects on learning rate, retention of information, and overall attitude towards learning (Kulik, 1985).
- Overall, CAI has been found to be effective for students of varying ability levels, particularly for students with special needs, but it has not been found to be effective with English as a Second Language (ESL) learners (Cotton, 1991–1992; Lloyd, Forness, & Kavale, 1998).
- In a traditional classroom, students spend about two thirds of their reading instruction time away from their teacher working on independent activities (Ford & Optiz, 2002).

Strategies to Implement

- Create a section of the classroom for quiet reading activities including comfortable seating for children.
- Provide scheduled time for students to interact with reading materials including reading self-selected material, following along while listening to books on tape and participate in pretend reading and make a book activities.
- Planning is important. Before implementing independent activities, take time to develop the activities, as well as a class rotation schedule, routines for movement, and a behavioral management system.
- Teachers need to instruct students in how to use each activity and provide easy to understand directions for each activity.
- Reading and writing activities should be engaging and require students to interact with print (not just draw, color or paste activities).
- The teacher can use independent practice time to monitor individual student progress on specific skills.
- Games can be created or adapted for independent practice.
- Teachers can involve parents as partners in participating in or monitoring independent reading activities at home.

- Most parents are willing and want to help their child learn to read, but many do not know how to help. Provide parents with information and activities that they can do at home, and encourage them to read to their children daily.

Types of Activities to Implement

The following examples are just a few of the activities that can be implemented as independent practice activities.

Games:

Games offer students a fun and enjoyable way to practice skills they have already been taught. Games that address specific skills are available commercially, but teachers can also create games by adapting games such as Candyland™ or Monopoly™, or creating homemade games. When adapting a game such as Candyland™, students are required to complete an academic task prior to taking a turn. For example, the student could draw a card with "cat" on it and have to supply a rhyming word before taking a turn.

Independent Reading:

Children increase their reading skills by practicing reading. Independent reading is designed to encourage children to relate to books and practice reading skills. It is important that children see teachers, parents and other important adults actively engaged in reading both for enjoyment and during "real life" activities.

Pretend Reading:

Students select a familiar book to pretend to read to the teacher or another student. Students should be reinforced for holding the book correctly, turning the pages, using the finger to track left to right and top to bottom, and for using pictures for context. Students should read in a manner that demonstrates the understanding that print conveys meaning.

Make a Book:

Students use a three-frame story guide to draw a beginning, middle, and ending representational picture. Students will create a front and back cover, and give the book a title. Students will publish their books and read them to demonstrate the understanding that print conveys meaning.

Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI):

CAI refers to drill-and-practice, tutorials, games, or simulation activities offered either by themselves or as supplements to traditional, teacher-led instruction (Cotton, 1991–1992).

Drill-and-Practice:

This type of computer software provides students with practice opportunities once a skill has been taught by the teacher. Advantages of CAI drill and practice activities are: ample practice opportunities, immediate feedback, availability of various difficulty levels to target practice, and documentation of student performance while using the software.

Tutorials:

Computer-based tutorials instruction on specific procedures, provide information and often include assessments to gauge comprehension of the materials.

Example: My Reading Coach® (Mindplay)

Games:

Many CAI programs are designed in a game-like format where students are working towards a set goal (e.g., safely move the characters from one location to another or place all of the clues in a box). These programs tend to support problem solving and application of concepts rather than the skill development and speed that is fostered in drill and practice.

Example: Logical Journey of the Zoombinis® (Broderbund)

Simulations:

Simulations provide students the opportunity to apply a variety of skills in a "real life" situation without the real world risks. Simulations range from setting up and running your own lemonade stand to building a community.

Example: Sim Town® (Maxis Software)

- Tips for using CAI include:
  - Practice using the software before implementing it in class to be familiar with how to navigate the program. Learn basic computer trouble-shooting skills.
  - Identify which skills each student needs to practice and match the appropriate computer program to the student's needs.
  - Establish rules and procedures for computer use and teach the students these expectations prior to CAI use.
  - Implement computer programs with pairs or small groups of students.
  - Limit the amount of time spent on each type of program so that students do not become bored.

Self-Correcting Materials

See following pictured examples:

Flaps and Windows

Teachers can create cards to be inserted in the folder as indicated below. The student works through the task presented in the windows of the folder and then self-checks by opening the flap to reveal the correct answer.
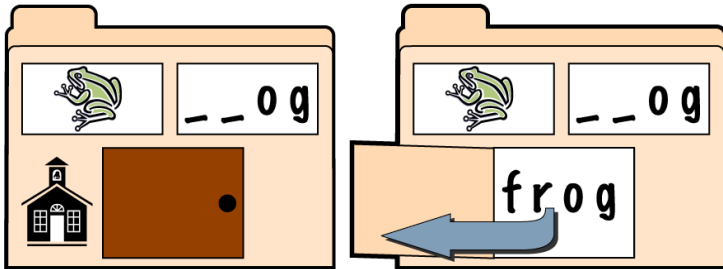

Puzzles

Create problem sets that are in the shape of corresponding puzzle pieces. Students verify their answers by checking to see if the pieces match.
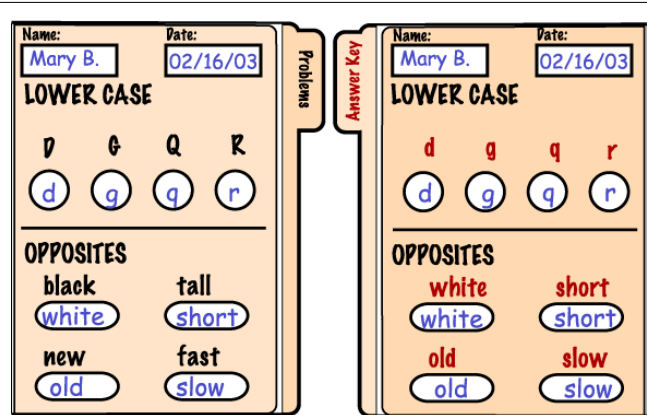
Answer Check Holes

Create a folder with problems or tasks written on the front. Underneath the problem, create a hole. The answer to the problem is written on the left-hand side of the inside of the folder above or next to the hole. Students can insert a piece of paper into the folder and write the answer in the hole. To check the answer, the student can remove the paper, invert the folder, put the paper back in the folder, and verify the answer.

Matching Cards or Concentration
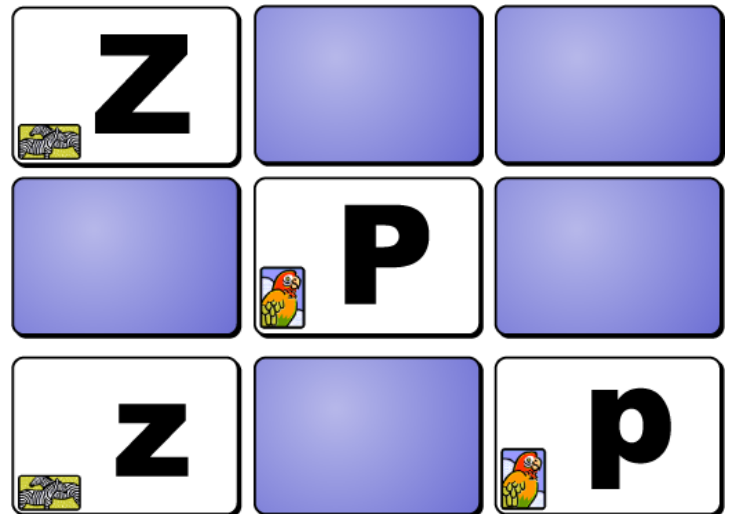
Cards similar to the ones above can be used for a game of concentration or matching. By placing identical symbols or pictures in the corner of the card, students are provided with a self-checking system.

Self-correcting materials provide the student with independent practice opportunities and immediate feedback. When a student makes a mistake using self-correcting materials, the student immediately is informed of the correct answer. Thus, the student is not "practicing incorrectly," a common problem that occurs when a student completes an entire worksheet of practice problems the wrong way. Self-correcting materials also foster a "game-like" environment—"I know I will get this one right!"

- Mercer & Mercer (2001) provide specific recommendations for using self-correcting materials:
  - Self-correcting materials can come in many different forms. Answer keys, matching cards, puzzles, and computers are all examples of self-correcting materials.
  - Materials should be at a level of difficulty that students can readily understand how to use them. Typically, one or two demonstrations should be sufficient for students to learn how to use the materials.
  - Vary the self-correcting materials in order to maintain student interest. Content can be frequently changed or different materials used in order to sustain student involvement.
  - Although some "cheating" may occur in the beginning, many students will begin to enjoy "guessing and checking" more than beating the system.

Keep in Mind

- Materials will be used over and over, so they should be durable.
- Organization and management of materials are important, as small parts can easily be lost or mixed up.
- Students need to be taught how and where to store materials.
- Practice activities do not have to be just paper and pencil activities.
- Students need to be taught how to use each activity before they can be expected to use them as an individual practice activity.
- Limit the number and types of games or computer programs available, or change the academic task required so that students will practice the skills that are needed and not get bored.

Resources

Bos, C. S., & Vaughn, S. (1994). *Strategies for teaching students with learning and behavior problems*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Cotton, K. (1991–1992). *Computer assisted instruction.* School improvement research series. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Ford, M. P., & Optiz, M. F. (2002). Using centers to engage children during guided reading time: Intensifying learning experiences away from the teacher. *The Reading Teacher, 55*(8), 710–717

Kulik, J. (1985). *Consistencies in findings on computer-based education*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

Lloyd, J. W., Forness, S. R., & Kavale, K. A. (1998). Some methods are more effective. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 33*(1), 195–200.

Mercer, C. D., & Mercer, A. R. (2001). *Teaching students with learning problems* (6th ed.). New Jersey: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Taylor, B., Harris, L. A., Pearson, P. D., & Garcia, G. (1995). *Reading difficulties: Instruction and assessment* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

About the Strategy

The Model-Lead-Test approach to instruction is used to provides students with frequent opportunities for practicing a new skill correctly while having direct teacher supervision (Carnine, Silbert, & Kame'enui, 1997).

What the Research and Resources Say

- The Model-Lead-Test approach to teaching, based on the Direct Instruction Model, provides frequent opportunities for students to practice skills correctly, thus reducing the rehearsal of incorrect responses (Carnine, et al., 1997).
- The Model component of the strategy allows teachers to demonstrate the thought process behind comprehension skills such as finding the main idea of a story (Bos, & Vaughn, 1994; Taylor, Harris, Pearson, & Garcia, 1995).
- Students at-risk for reading difficulties require systematic, explicit instruction and more repetition to develop important reading skills (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). The Model-Lead-Test strategy is systematic, explicit, and allows for repetition.
- Reading comprehension skills improve when teachers systematically guide students to attend to story elements. Using the Model-Lead-Test strategy with story mapping is one way to address this issue (Mathes, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 1997).

Strategies to Implement

- **Model Phase:** Demonstrate what is expected of the student by modeling the skill verbally or through a demonstration. For higher level reading skills, talk through the thought process that helps to increase reading comprehension.
- **Lead Phase:** Lead the students through the skill and ask the students to respond as a group. Repeat this process until students can respond automatically.
- **Test Phase:** Check whether the students can perform the skill. If not, return to the Model phase.

Examples of How to Implement

- Letter-Sound Matching

  Model: Point to a letter and say the sound of the letter.

  Lead: Point to a letter on card, chart, or board. State, "This letter makes the sound /mmmm/. What sound does this letter make?" Signal the students to respond with you. Remember to drag out continuous sounds such as

  /mmmmm/

  and stop with "stop" sounds such as /t/.

  Test: Point to the letter. Ask the group or individual students to say the matching sound as you point to a letter.

  Repeat this process often for each letter.

- Story Mapping (Also see Graphic Organizers STAR Sheet) Idol (1987) provides a Model-Lead-Test Strategy for teaching students to use story maps. The key components of this strategy include:

Model Phase

Step 1:   Teacher reads the story aloud.

Step 2:   Teacher stops reading when one of the key story elements (e.g., character, setting) is presented.

Step 3:   Student identifies the key element.

Step 4:   Teacher writes or draws the information on the map.

Step 5:   Students complete their maps. Younger students may draw pictures to represent key elements.

Lead Phase

Step 1:   Students read the story independently. For younger students the teacher may read the story out loud.

Step 2:   Students complete their maps, with teacher assistance if needed.

Step 3:   Teacher and student review completed maps adding missed information.

Test Phase

Step 1:   Students read story independently. For younger students the teacher may read the story out loud.

Step 2:   Students complete their maps independently.

Step 3:   Teacher asks the following questions: Who were the main characters? Where did the story take place? What was the main idea of the story?

Keep in Mind

- Some students may require more detailed information and practice during the model phase.
- Some students may benefit from visual cue cards that follow the sequence of the skill the teacher is modeling.
- Some students may be able to monitor their performance during the lead phase.

Resources

Bos, C. S., & Vaughn, S. (1994). *Strategies for teaching students with learning and behavior problems.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Carnine, D., Silbert, J., & Kame'enui, E.J. (1997). *Direct instruction reading* (3rd ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Foorman, B. R., & Torgesen, J. (2001). Critical elements of classroom and small-group instruction promote reading success in all children. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 16*(4), 203–212.

Gunning, T. G. (1998). *Assessing and correcting reading and writing difficulties.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Idol, L. (1987). Group story mapping: A comprehension strategy for both skilled and unskilled readers. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 20*(4), 196–205.

Mathes, P. G., Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. (1997). Cooperative story mapping. *Remedial and Special Education, 18*(1), 20–27.

Taylor, B., Harris, L. A., Pearson, P. D., & Garcia, G. (1995). *Reading difficulties: Instruction and assessment* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

About the Strategy

Peer tutoring is a strategy where children work together in a structured manner to practice teacher selected skills (Falk & Wehby, 2001; Hudson, Lignugaris-Kraft, & Miller, 1993). Peer tutoring formats include classwide peer tutoring or cross-age peer tutoring.

What the Research and Resources Say

- Peer tutoring can be effective when working with groups of students who have different instructional levels (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998; Mortweet et. al, 1999).
- Peer tutoring provides increased, focused instructional time that is linked to improvements in reading skills (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001).
- Peer tutoring increases the opportunities to practice skills (Mathes & Babyak, 2001)
- Peer tutoring allows students to receive more feedback and encouragement from peers (Vaughn, Gersten, & Chard, 2000).
- Peer tutoring increases positive social contacts linked to improvements in social and behavioral skills for students with emotional or behavioral disorders (Falk & Wehby, 2001).
- Both the tutors and the tutees show gains in the academic area addressed during the peer tutoring session (Falk & Wehby, 2001).

Strategies to Implement

Research-validated models of peer tutoring include certain essential components. These components include:

- Carefully pairing students based on an instructional rationale
  a. Cross-age peer tutoring:
     - The older student tutors the younger student
     - Older students with reading deficits have shown increases in their own reading skills when they tutor younger students in reading
     - Teachers need to train, supervise and provide feedback to the tutor
  b. Classwide peer tutoring: Fuchs and Fuchs (1998) described one method for pairing students. In the Peer Assisted Learning Strategies model, teachers:
     - Rank order students in the class from the lowest to highest reader
     - Divide the class into two groups—high performers and low performers
     - Pair the students by matching the highest performer in the high group to the highest student in the low performance group. The second highest in the high group is matched to the second highest in the low group, and so forth until all students are matched.
     - Rank and match students in this way to ensure that, although at different skill levels, student pairs are not dramatically different in terms of their instructional needs.
     - Screen the partner groups further to avoid pairing students who would have difficulty working with each other.

- Creating a structured tutoring environment. Effective peer teaching does not occur naturally. To make certain that learning is occurring, teachers need to.
    a. Design a focused curriculum for the student groups to follow and include:
        - Rules for interacting
        - Structured tasks for the tutor to guide the tutee in completing
        - Specific procedures for pairs to follow
        - Methods for the tutor to provide corrective feedback for incorrect responses and positive reinforcement for correct responses
        - Methods for documenting instruction and learning
    b. Directly teach and reinforce the tutoring procedures by:
        - Training students in the procedures
        - Utilizing the Model-Lead-Test strategy as a method to teach and reinforce the procedures
        - Spreading training over several sessions
        - Monitoring students as they implement the procedures
- Reinforcing the teaching/learning behaviors that occur during the session. Before beginning the peer-tutoring activity teachers should:
    a. Develop a plan for encouraging and reinforcing desired behaviors
        - In classwide peer tutoring, dividing the pairs into teams and awarding points for following procedures, answering correctly and interacting appropriately is one way of supporting desirable peer tutoring behavior
    b. Develop a plan for addressing off-task or disruptive behaviors for the tutor and the tutee

Types of Activities to Implement

Although many types of activities can be implemented using peer tutoring, the following types of peer tutoring activities have been researched for use with early readers:

Letter/ Sound Identification:

As letters sounds are introduced, partners practice identifying the new letter sound and reviewing previously taught letter sounds. This format can also be used when teaching and practicing letter blends.

Rhyming:

Using picture cards or sheets, partners work together to identify words that rhyme. Playing word games with onset rhyme and using word sorts to identify word families are other rhyming activities that can occur during peer tutoring.

Blending & Segmenting:

Peer partners can use a blending activity called "Say it Slow. Say it Fast" where one partner holds up a word card and the other partner sounds out the word slowly (e.g. /rrrrr/aaaaa/ttttt/) and then says it fast (e.g., /rat). Another activity involves sound boxes. Sound boxes can be anything from small blocks to linking cubes. A student drags one box down for each sound that is said. The boxes are lined up as the word is completed. For example, for the word "hat" you would drag down three boxes—/hhhhhh/ /aaaaaaaaa/ /t/.

Partner Reading:

Readers are paired such that the slightly higher reader of the pair acts as a model for the lower reader. Passages are read aloud with help given by the partner as needed. The lower reader then reads the same passage. Students may find it rewarding to chart the number of words they read per minute. This form of repeated reading has been found to help increase reading fluency.

Predicting:

With their partner, prior to reading, the student can make predictions based upon the story title, a scanning of story pictures, or from past experience with the topics, themes, or characters in the story. (Also see Comprehension Strategies STAR Sheet)

Summarizing:

Summarizing in the form of paragraph shrinking is appropriate for the end of first grade and beyond. This technique is designed to help students identify the main idea of a paragraph or story. Students are asked to name the who or what of the story. Then they are asked to determine the most important thing about the who or the what. Finally, they need to say it in ten words or fewer. (Also see Comprehension Strategies STAR Sheet)

Sight Words:

Students can work in pairs with flash cards or word sheets to practice new sight words (high frequency or irregular words) and review previously taught words. This practice can include individual words and short sentences containing the sight words.

Keep in Mind

- The purpose of peer tutoring should be to reinforce concepts or skills that have previously been taught.
- It is important that students practice the sounds correctly when working independently of the teacher. To ensure correct practice, the front of the flash card could have the letter and the back of the flash card could have a representational picture. For example, on the back of the "s" card could be a picture of Sam the Snake.
- Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of reciprocal tutoring in which the stronger student acts as a tutor and the lower achieving student as the tutee. After correctly completing or responding, the lower achieving student assumes the role of tutor.
- Tutors should be provided prompts of how to respond when the partner answers incorrectly (e.g., the tutor may be instructed to state the correct answer and then have the tutee restate the answer, or the tutor may be provided a hint or a reminder statement to use when the tutee is having difficulty).
- Tutors should have the correct answer available to them and students should document the number of correct and incorrect responses that occur during a session.
- One of the reasons peer tutoring is effective is the existence of a strong peer model, but research has shown that the most important element is the increased, focused instructional time that this one-on-one model fosters.
- Quality peer tutoring sessions are less dependent upon the high/low match than they are on the structure of what occurs during that tutoring session.

Resources

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About the Strategy

Repeated reading of familiar text is a strategy to increase reading fluency. A fluent reader has developed automatic word recognition skills, which allows the reader to spend more of his or her energy on comprehension and less on decoding (Levy, Coleman, & Alsman, 2002).

What the Research and Resources Say

- Repeated reading has been shown to assist students reading below grade level to make gains in fluency and reading comprehension skills (Bos & Vaughn, 1998).
- Students who struggle to decode words have less short-term memory available for comprehension (Taylor, Harris, Pearson, & Garcia, 1995).
- Fluent readers practice reading (Levy et al., 2002).
- Reading rate and accuracy rates increase using repeated reading (Taylor et al., 1995).

Strategies to Implement

- Provide explicit instruction on the repeated reading procedure.
- Keep passages short and interesting.
- Individual words or short sentences can also be used during repeated reading practice.
- Monitor student progress by assessing the number of words read correctly per minute. For example, have students count the number of words read correctly per minute and then graph their word counts. Both the teacher and student can then monitor the student's progress.
- Remind students that comprehension is important.
- Review comprehension questions or reading discussions after the repeated reading practice.
- Repeated reading can be implemented using a partner reading or a group repeated reading format (Taylor et al., 1995).
  a. Partner Reading: Partner reading is a form of peer tutoring (see accompanying STAR Sheet). To practice fluency, the passage should be on the reading level of the less fluent reader. The higher-level reader reads a passage first to act as the model. The less fluent reader then reads the passage with help from the partner as needed (Levy et al., 2002).
  b. Group Repeated Reading: First, the teacher reads the passage line-by-line acting as the model reader while students follow along in their books. Next, students echo each sentence or paragraph that the teacher reads. Finally, the teacher and the students read the passage together. For early readers it is best that the passage has a strong rhyme, rhythm, or sequence pattern. Once the full passage is read as a group, the students can continue to practice the passage during partner reading or independent practice (Taylor et al., 1995).

Types of Activities to Implement

Word Wall:

Create a word wall for sight words (high frequency or irregular words). Make use of the word wall by creating games and activities that encourage or require students to use the wall. Additionally, encourage students to refer to the wall during independent reading or writing activities.

Word Wall Activities:

1. Use the words in a sentence—Connect the words with meaning by modeling the word in a sentence and having students create their own sentences with the words. These sentences can then be used during partner reading.
2. Chant the words—Create a rhythm through clapping, snapping, or chanting for the students to say the words. This is a great opportunity for students to be out of their seats! Include spelling the word along with stating the word in your chants.

Flash Cards:

Create flash cards with the sight words on them. Students can work in pairs—one "flashes" the card and the other one reads the word. Students can place the correctly identified words in one pile and missed words in another. Points can be assigned for correctly identified words and students can track their gains on a chart.

Reader's Theater:

Young students enjoy acting out stories they read. Repeated reading can be implemented as children practice reading their parts with partners or in small groups. The students can then act out the story for the rest of the class or for their parents (Levy et al., 2002).

Keep in Mind

- Make sure that students can correctly say new words and have ample opportunities for practicing the words correctly prior to having the words appear in repeated reading passages.
- To avoid boredom, the same passage should be read only three to five times in a single lesson.
- Passages should begin at a reading level that students can read with relative ease.
- Students can use recorded books on tape during repeated reading practice by using the recording as the model and then recording themselves reading the same passage. Students can listen to themselves and count the number of words they read correctly.
- Taping students as they read also provides a record for the teacher to use to assess progress.

Resources

Bos, C.S., & Vaughn, S.(1998). *Strategies for teaching students with learning and behavior problems* (4th ed.).Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

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Reading Resources

These **reading resources** are research-based reading programs that are available. Each program is described and a Website provided. In addition, each program is tied to the STAR strategy(ies) with which it corresponds.

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) is a research-based program developed by Janette Klingner, Jeanne Schumm, and Sharon Vaughn of the University of Texas. In CSR, the teacher models specific comprehension strategies (preview, click and clunk, get the gist, and wrap up) to the whole class and the students practice these strategies in small cooperative groups. For more information see the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk at: http://www.meadowscenter.org/library/resource/collaborative-strategic-reading-for-adolescents-with-ld. Informational materials are also available on the IRIS Website in the module CSR: A Reading Comprehension Strategy: https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/csr/.

★ COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Direct Instruction (DI) is a research-based method of instruction developed by Siegfried Engelmann, PhD, of the University of Oregon. DI is explicit, intensive, and teacher-directed. The instructional materials are scripted, sequenced, and provide for frequent verbal responses from students. For more information on DI see the National Institute for Direct Instruction at: http://www.nifdi.org

★ MODEL-LEAD-TEST

National Center on Improving Literacy provides parent brochures on tips to help children read. Brochures can be requested or downloaded from the Website at: https://improvingliteracy.org/family.

★ INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

PALS (Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies) is a highly researched form of classwide peer tutoring that was developed by Doug Fuchs, PhD, and Lynn Fuchs, PhD, professors of special education at Peabody College of Vanderbilt University. The strategy is designed to complement existing reading curriculums in kindergarten through sixth grade classrooms. There is also a PALS program for the high school level. For more information see the PALS Website at: https://frg.vkcsites.org/what-is-pals/. Informational materials are also available on the IRIS Website in the Module PALS: A Reading Strategy for Grades K-1 http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/palsk1/

★ COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

★ REPEATED READING

Project I Can Read (or ICARE) involves teachers using research-based instructional procedures

that help struggling students learn specific reading skills during small group instruction. These instructional procedures include modeling, guided practice, and independent practice. This program is being researched and developed by Dr. Diane Pedrottry Bryant of the University of Texas.

★ COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

★ MODEL-LEAD-TEST

★ REPEATED READING

Reading Mastery Plus (SRA) is a reading program incorporating the Direct Instruction method. The fundamentals of reading are the focus of the activities, including oral language, phonemic awareness and phonics skills. The instructional method is clear, explicit, and requires active participation from the students. To learn more, review the What Works Clearinghouse at https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/InterventionReports/wwc_readmast_081010.pdf.

★ COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

School-Home Links Reading Kit is an online activity kit to provide teachers with literacy activities for parents to complete with their children at home. It was developed by the Compact for Literacy Initiative from the U.S. Department of Education. Activities are available online for kindergarten through third grade and can be located at: https://www.readingrockets.org/guides/compact-reading.

★ INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

★ EARLY READING

Background

Student: Luke
Age: 6.8
Grade: 1
Focus: Phonemic Awareness

Scenario

Phonemic awareness is the ability to identify the sounds that make up words. Phonemes are the individual sounds that make one word distinct from another. When we write out phonemes, or the sounds of words, letters or words are placed between slashes (/t/). For example, the word "cat" would be represented by /k/ /a/ /t/ in phonemic spelling.

By the middle of the school year, most first graders are able to demonstrate their phonemic awareness through the following kinds of activities: (a) creating rhyming words; (b) identifying initial and final sounds in spoken words; (c) adding, deleting, or changing selected sounds in words (e.g., "Change the /s/ in /sun/ to /r/" or "Say /bat/ without the /b/"). Luke has difficulty with all of these tasks, and is beginning to show his frustration by disrupting class during reading activities, complaining, and roaming around the room. Luke does well during math class, likes to be read to, and enjoys helping others. His teacher attended an inservice on instructional strategies and wants to use these new strategies to help Luke achieve his goals:

- Generate a corresponding rhyming word when presented with a three- phoneme prompt (e.g., cat–hat; fish–wish)
- Identify initial and final phonemes in three-phoneme words
- Blend and segment three-phoneme words (e.g., /d//o//g/, /f//i//sh/)

Possible Strategies

- Model-Lead-Test
- Independent Practice

✎ Assignment

- Read the STAR sheets on each possible strategy.
- Select one strategy and write a summary of the strategy.
- Describe how the selected strategy would help Luke meet his goals.

Background

Student: Tawanna

Age: 5.8

Grade: K

Focus: Rhyming Words

Scenario

Most students in the kindergarten class are able to identify rhyming words with short vowel sounds. It is November and Tawanna is still having difficulty rhyming CVC (consonant - vowel - consonant) words such as cat, hat, run, fun, hop, and mop. Tawanna is able to match upper and lower case letters and identify consonant letter sounds. However, when working on rhyming and vowel letter sound activities, Tawanna's frustration is beginning to show. Tawanna's teacher understands that the ability to rhyme words supports reading development, and she is going to try some strategies to help Tawanna achieve her goals, which are:

- Given a list of CVC words, Tawanna will match the rhyming words.
- Given a CVC word, Tawanna will produce rhyming words.

Possible Strategies

- Independent Practice
- Model-Lead-Test

✏ Assignment

- Read the STAR sheets on each possible strategy.
- Summarize the components of each strategy. Be sure to include how each strategy will support Tawanna and what the benefits are to using each strategy.
- Using one or more of these strategies, describe an independent practice activity that could be used to assist Tawanna in achieving her goals.

Background

Student: Greg

Age: 6.2

Grade: 1

Focus: Sight Words

Scenario

Most of the first graders in Greg's class are able to recognize common irregular and high frequency words like "and," "has," "is," "a," "the," "was," "to," "have," and "said." These words are often referred to as sight words. Greg still has difficulty when he encounters these words. His teacher met with his former kindergarten teacher early in the school year to review his progress. His kindergarten teacher reported that while he took more time to master reading goals compared to his peers, he worked hard and was able to achieve mastery. His teacher is concerned that though he is trying hard, he has not mastered the sight words for first grade. His teacher realizes that she must use new strategies to help Greg meet his instructional goal:

- Shown sight words, Greg will state the word automatically.

Possible Strategies

- Peer Tutoring
- Repeated Reading
- Independent Practice

✎ Assignment

- Read the STAR sheets for each of the three possible strategies.
- Summarize the components of each strategy. Be sure to include how each strategy will support Greg and what the benefits are to using each strategy.
- Using the Internet or a reading reference guide, find a list of sight words. Group the words into groups of five and decided which words you would introduce first, second, and so forth. Create a new list that reflects your grouping. Be sure to identify your source (Website or reference book).
- Then, select one strategy and describe an activity from this strategy that would help Greg meet his goal for the first group of five words from your list.

Background

Student: Orlando
Age: 7.0
Grade: 1
Focus: Comprehension

Scenario

Orlando is an active child who arrives to school every day with a smile and a hug for his teacher. He enjoys group activities and likes to sing and draw. Though the class has been working on comprehension skills all year, Orlando is unable to answer simple comprehension questions (e.g., main idea, main characters) when reading independently. As the end of the school year nears, his teacher has become concerned about his lack of progress. During a consultation with the reading specialist, several strategies were discussed and the following instructional goals were developed for Orlando:

- Given a brief reading passage on his instructional level, Orlando will read the passage and be able to retell the main events.
- Given a prompt, Orlando will be able to employ the following comprehension strategies: predicting, summarizing, questioning.
- Given a brief reading passage on his instructional level, Orlando will read the passage and be able to retell the main components of a story (e.g., characters, setting, outcomes).

Possible Strategies

- Graphic Organizers
- Repeated Reading
- Comprehension Strategies

✎ Assignment

- Read the STAR sheets for each of the three possible strategies.
- Summarize the components of each strategy. Be sure to include how each strategy will support Orlando and what the benefits are to using each strategy.
- Select a children's story (e.g., "The Three Little Pigs") and develop a graphic organizer to be used with the story to help Orlando identify the story's main components.

Background

Student: Teresa

Age: 6.0

Grade: K

Focus: Sequencing

Scenario

One of the most important aspects of reading comprehension is the ability to sequence a story. Most kindergarten students are able to sequence three or four events after listening to a story. Teresa is able to identify what happened at the beginning and the end of a story, but has difficulty sequencing the middle of a story. Most students have mastered sequencing skills and her teacher is concerned about Teresa's lack of progress. Teresa can identify and match upper and lower case letters and enjoys rhyming activities. Her teacher has developed the following goal for Teresa:

- After listening to a story, Teresa will recall three or four sequenced events.

Possible Strategies

- Peer Tutoring
- Independent Practice
- Graphic Organizers
- Comprehension Strategies

✏️ Assignment

- Read the STAR sheets for each of the four possible strategies.
- Select one strategy and summarize its components. Be sure to include why you think this strategy will be effective for helping Teresa reach her goal.
- Choose one activity from the selected strategy STAR sheet. Describe the activity, explain how it will help Teresa, and outline what materials you would need to prepare or gather in advance in order to teach that activity to Teresa.

Background

    Student: Raymond

       Age: 6.1

     Grade: K

Scenario

Raymond is having difficulty mastering basic reading skills and his teacher is concerned. Most of the students are able to rhyme CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words. However, Raymond is having difficulty identifying rhyming words. He can match all upper and lower case letters and can identify all upper case letters. Raymond has trouble with lower case letters, he mixes up /b/ and /d/, /g/ and /j/, /m/ and /n/, and /p/ and /q/. His teacher is also concerned about Raymond's comprehension skills. He enjoys listening to stories and is able to identify the characters and setting of the story. He is able to identify what happened at the beginning and at the end of the story, but has difficulty sequencing the middle of a story. His teacher has spoken with his parents about the possible need for additional support and his parents have agreed to help at home with any activity the teacher sends home. The following are goals for Raymond to achieve:

- Given a list of CVC words, Raymond will match the rhyming words.
- Given a CVC word, Raymond will produce rhyming words.
- Identify lower case letters.
- After listening to a story, Raymond will identify the main idea(s).
- After listening to a story, Raymond will sequence three or four events.

Possible Strategies

- Model-Lead-Test
- Peer Tutoring
- Independent Practice
- Comprehension Strategies
- Graphic Organizers
- Repeated Reading

✎ Assignment

- Review the STAR sheets for each of the six possible strategies.
- Select two strategies that will help Raymond. Explain the rationale for selecting the strategies, including how Raymond would benefit from each and how you would implement them with him.
- Select one goal and describe an activity from each of the two strategies selected that Raymond's parents can use at home.

Background

Student: Amanda

Age: 6.5

Grade: 1

Scenario

Amanda has just transferred to a new school. It is the middle of the school year and her new teacher is concerned about Amanda's reading skills. Her school records have not arrived from her old school, but her parents reported that her previous teacher had asked to meet with them. They moved before the meeting could occur and are not sure what was going to be addressed at the meeting. Amanda completed some assessments for her new teacher, who noted some skill deficits. Most of Amanda's peers recognize sight words like "and," "has," "is," "a," "the," "was," "to," "have," and "said." Amanda has difficulty when she encounters these words. Amanda's oral reading is slow and labored. She often says the wrong letter sound or guesses at words. Amanda is unable to answer simple comprehension questions (e.g., main idea, main characters) after she has listened to a passage read aloud. Her teacher has scheduled a meeting with Amanda's parents to discuss the assessments. The teacher has the following instructional goals for Amanda:

- Given a letter or letter combination, Amanda will say the corresponding sound.
- Given a brief reading passage on her instructional level, Amanda will read the passage and be able to retell the main ideas.
- Given a CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) word prompt, Amanda will be able to say the word "slowly" (sounding it out) and then say it "fast" (reading as a whole word).
- After listening to a story, Amanda will recall three or four sequenced events.
- Shown sight words, Amanda will state the word automatically.

Possible Strategies

- Model-Lead-Test
- Peer Tutoring
- Independent Practice

- Comprehension Strategies
- Graphic Organizers
- Repeated Reading

✎ Assignment

- Read the STAR sheets for each of the six possible strategies.
- Sequence Amanda's goals in the order you would address them with her.
- For your first goal, identify a strategy and explain why or how it will assist in achieving the goal.
- Explain how you would involve Amanda's parents, and develop an activity from one of the strategies that Amanda's parents can use at home.

Overview of Kindergarten Skills

The following reading skills should be mastered by each student by the end of kindergarten:

✓ Participates and listens during reading situations
✓ Engages in talk about books and stories
✓ Uses book language while pretending to read
✓ Understands concepts about print and books
✓ Discusses meaning of stories
✓ Recounts through retelling details, events, and ideas
✓ Reads own dictated stories, pretends to read predictable books, and reads some community signs and billboards
✓ Identifies all letters of the alphabet, both upper and lower case
✓ Recognizes all consonant sounds
✓ Identifies likenesses and differences in sounds and structures of words

Background

Student: Jeff
Age: 5.9
Grade: K

Scenario

Jeff is an active and engaging kindergarten student who enjoys being a class helper. His teacher feels he tries hard and does his best with all of his assignments. Jeff has mastered most of the kindergarten math skills, and he likes art and hands-on science activities. However, Jeff has taken more time than the other students to master reading skills. Jeff's teacher has met with his parents several times during the school year. Even with help at home, Jeff is not making the needed progress in reading. His teacher knows that Jeff needs extra help and wants to try new strategies. The parents have agreed to meet with the reading specialist and school psychologist to talk about testing Jeff. The meeting is scheduled in three weeks and his teacher hopes that the new strategies will help Jeff and give her more information to discuss in the meeting. The skills he has mastered are listed below.

Areas of Strength

• Identifies upper case letters
• Identifies lower case letters
• Matches upper and lower case letters
• Understands that print conveys meaning
• Listens and participates during reading situations

✏ Assignment

Note: Assignments for this case study require the Research-based Reading Resources STAR sheet.

- Develop three or four goals for Jeff.
- Using the Early Reading STAR sheets, select a strategy for each goal and explain the benefit of using this strategy to address the corresponding goal.
- Select one goal and describe one hands-on activity that will assist Jeff in achieving that goal.
- Explore the Websites listed on the Research-based Reading Resources page. Select one program you feel would be helpful for Jeff's teacher and write a rationale for your choice.

Overview of First Grade Reading Skills

The following reading skills should be mastered by the end of first grade:

✓ Reads aloud with accuracy and comprehension from any text that is designed for first grade
✓ Uses letter-sound correspondence knowledge to sound out unknown words
✓ Decodes CVC words (e.g., sit, hat)
✓ Recognizes common sight words (e.g., have, said, where)
✓ Has a reading vocabulary of 300 to 500 words
✓ Monitors own reading and self-corrects when an incorrectly identified word does not fit with cues provided by the letters in the word or by context clues
✓ Creates own written text for others to read
✓ Reads and understands simple directions
✓ Answers simple comprehension questions
✓ Counts the number of syllables in a word
✓ Blends or segments the phonemes of most one-syllable words
✓ Spells three and four letter short vowel words
✓ Generates a corresponding rhyming word when presented with a three-phoneme prompt (e.g., /h//a//t/, /f//i//sh/)

Background

Student: Tyra
Age: 6.9
Grade: 1

Scenario

Tyra is a polite, friendly first grader who likes to work in groups with her peers. She enjoys school and has perfect attendance. Her teacher reports that she is easily distracted during instructional times but responds quickly when redirected back to task. During his fall review of Tyra's kindergarten record, Tyra's teacher noted that she took longer than her peers to master the kindergarten skills. Tyra struggles with some math skills, but her teacher is more concerned with her reading skills. After meeting with Tyra's parents in the fall, Tyra's teacher arranged for her to receive reading tutoring once a week during her after-school program. It is the end of first grade and her teacher's concern is that, even with the tutoring, Tyra has not made adequate progress in reading. Given her current reading skill levels, her teacher is not sure how well Tyra will do in second grade. He received consultation from the school's reading specialist and plans to implement new strategies with Tyra. Tyra has mastered the skills listed below.

Areas of Strength

- Generates rhyming words
- Blends and segments three-phoneme words (e.g., /r//u//n/, /w//i//sh/)
- Identifies the sound of the majority of consonants and some vowel sounds in isolation (consonants, all except d, g, p and b; vowels except u, o)
- Identifies a small number of sight words (if, I, is, and, me, cat, can)
- Answers first, next, and last comprehension questions

✎ Assignment

Note: Assignments for this case study require the Research-based Reading Resources STAR sheet.

- Develop three or four goals for Tyra.
- Using the Early Reading STAR sheets, select a strategy for each goal and explain the benefit of using each strategy to address the corresponding goal.
- Select one goal and describe an independent practice activity that will assist Tyra in achieving that goal.
- Explore the Websites listed on the Research-based Reading Resources page. Select one program you feel would be helpful for Tyra's teacher and write a rationale for your choice.