Saskatoon Public Schools Reads for Middle Years
A companion document to the
Saskatchewan English Language Arts Curriculum
for Grades 4-8
adapted from Saskatchewan Reads
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Saskatoon Public Schools created *Saskatoon Public Schools Reads for Middle Years* basing their work on *Saskatchewan Reads*. Thank you to the Provincial Reading Team (PRT) for their efforts. Below is the list of the PRT members who created *Saskatchewan Reads*:

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Introduction

The teaching of reading is just as important in middle school and high school as it is for elementary students. Tovani states, “Unlike a scope and sequence, the list of thinking strategies used by proficient readers doesn’t change as students progress through the grade levels. What does change is the difficulty and sophistication of the text. Every year students are expected to read faster and better. Their reading load increases and so does its difficulty. For this reason it is imperative that each grade level gives students the means and the time to use strategies to engage in complex thought. The cold, hard truth is that explicit strategy instruction needs to take place at every grade level because each year students are expected to read more and more difficult text. Knowing how to use strategies flexibly to meet the demands of the reading allows students to not only recognize and repair confusion, it also helps them think more critically about content (p. 178)”. Understanding is the essence of reading. Students must know we are always reading for meaning and understanding.

Saskatchewan Reads for Middle Years is a companion document to the English Language Arts Grades 4 to 8 curricula. It was modified by Saskatoon Public Schools from the original Saskatchewan Reads document and based on sound research, specifically in reading, focusing on instructional approaches, assessment and intervention in the middle years. Some of the key authors referenced include; Allington, Tovani, Fountas and Pinnell, Davies, Routman, Fisher & Frey to name a few. Furthermore, it showcases the diversity of promising practises that have proven successful in school divisions and First Nations communities within Saskatchewan.

The motivation to create Saskatchewan Reads came from the need to improve student reading in this province as outlined in the Premier’s vision document, Saskatchewan Plan for Growth: Vision 2020 and Beyond. All 28 school boards in the province and the Government of Saskatchewan approved the development and deployment of Saskatchewan Reads.

Several Saskatchewan publications, along with documents from other provinces, were referenced when creating Saskatchewan Reads. As a result of this work, and more importantly, the skill and talent of our teachers in this province, our students will become proficient readers.
How to Read this Document

You will find the following symbols throughout the document:

**Reflection Question**
These questions are included as a starting point for reflection and discussion. The answers to these questions may be found within the document or they may be larger questions that cause the reader to reflect on classroom practice.

**Thought Bubbles**
These bubbles are meant to give insight into the thinking of a teacher using Saskatchewan Reads. They represent the realizations, or “Aha!” moments of the teacher after reflection and after implementing the instructional approaches.

**Check it out!**
Key print and web resources are listed that were referenced when creating that section of the document. “Check it out!” also contains resources that allow teachers to expand and deepen their background knowledge in that area.

**Glossary**
Terms defined within the glossary appear in bold the first time they occur in the document.

These picture icons occur throughout the document to represent the following instructional approaches:

- **Modelled Reading**
- **Shared Reading**
- **Scaffolded/Guided Reading**
- **Independent Reading**
Curriculum Connections

“The K-12 aim of the Saskatchewan English Language Arts curricula is to help students understand and appreciate language, and to use it confidently and competently in a variety of situations for learning, communication, work, life and personal satisfaction.”

(Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010a, p. 5)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

• How have I accounted for the diversity of my students and included First Nations and Métis content and perspectives in my teaching of curricular outcomes and indicators?
• How am I communicating the expectations of the curriculum to my students and their families?
• How do I help all of my students work towards grade level achievement of outcomes?
The starting point for improving Saskatchewan students’ reading literacy is the Saskatchewan English Language Arts curricula. It includes the philosophical underpinnings of the area of study and provides the knowledge that students are expected to know, understand, and be able to do at the end of their grade level.

**An Effective English Language Arts Program:**

- provides meaningful contexts that address “big ideas” and questions for deeper understanding;
- focuses on grade-specific outcomes to achieve the K-12 aim and goals of the program;
- focuses on language and helps students understand how it works;
- teaches students through powerful cognitive and communication strategies;
- includes a range of texts (oral, print, and other media); and
- encourages student inquiry, social responsibility, and self-reflection.

(Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010b, p. 1)

All choices for assessment and instruction begin with a solid understanding of curricular expectations, including the infusion of First Nations and Métis content and perspectives.

Reading is the focus of this support document, Saskatchewan Reads. The provincial English Language Arts curricula provide details regarding the interconnection of all the language arts goals and outcomes in supporting students’ reading literacy.

“Authenticity is the key to everything we do and say each day when we seek to engage students, teach reading and writing, give feedback, and assess. No matter their age, students learn and retain more when they can apply engaging classroom instruction to real-world issues, they can collaborate with peers, they can participate in active learning, and they are taught how to learn, not just what to learn.”

(Routman, 2014, p. 41)
All teachers, from kindergarten through grade 12 must feel responsibility for the reading achievement of the students they teach. Every teacher should have an understanding of their subject area and reading process to make meaning from the text they are choosing to use with their students. Taking the time to orally discuss strategies, review vocabulary or discuss a reading passage with their students helps to enhance content knowledge and helps students to understand it more readily.

“We need to teach two things at the same time: reading to learn and learning to read. Students must know right from the start that we are always reading text for meaning and understanding.”

(Routman, 2014, p. 128)

In successful content-area classrooms, teachers organize instruction in routine ways that:
• Reinforce conceptions of reading as a meaning-making process;
• Provide guided support for making sense while students are engaged in acts of reading;
• Shift responsibility for thinking and making sense of texts to students themselves through guided supports in both small and whole group work;
• Sequence discipline-specific inquiry tasks and the reading of a range of discipline-focused texts in ways that build knowledge over time;
• Focus classroom talk on how students make sense of texts and how they use what they learn from texts to carry out discipline-specific thinking tasks;

Provide consistent supports so that students experience success and develop or reinforce their sense of efficacy as readers.

(Lee, C.D., Spratley, A., 2010)
"The environment...conveys the message that this is a place where adults have thought about the quality and instructive power of space. The layout of the physical space is welcoming and fosters encounters, communication, and relationships. The arrangement of structures, objects and activities encourages choices, problem solving and discoveries in the process of learning."

(Curtis & Carter, 2003, p. 13)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

• How does the classroom environment reflect all students as capable, competent learners?

• How do my students see themselves and their interests reflected in the classroom environment?

• How can my classroom library include levelled text without being a levelled library?
The learning climate must include positive personal relationships that enhance development through meaningful conversations, and a sense of care for the whole student that goes beyond academic concerns. Saskatoon Public has pursued these goals through its focus on Domain 2 of the Assessment for Teaching document. As educators we understand the critical aspect that relationships play in student learning. The nurturing classroom meets the holistic needs of students – social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual. “Positive relationships are opportunities for students to create a sense of self, identity, and belonging while learning about the world around them” (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2009a, p. 3).

**Positive Relationships:**

- respect the dignity, worth and uniqueness of students in the context of family, culture and community;
- develop connections with people, the environment, ideas and beliefs;
- engage students, parents/guardians, families and the community in program planning;
- encourage students to confidently share ideas and insights;
- involve the co-construction of expectations both behaviourally and academically; and
- foster positive interactions between students (buddy reading, strategic groupings, big buddies, etc.).

I understand that strong relationships and a sense of belonging are critical for an effective learning environment. I need to start building relationships on the first day with my students, among my students, and with my families.
Educators understand that the learning environment they create has the power to influence the quality of learning within that space. A classroom should reflect the belief that students are capable and competent learners. “Creating environments for learning is more than simple room arrangement. Learning environments include [stimulating and dynamic] spaces and resources...in addition, the environment supports the routines, materials and interactions that occur within the space...” (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2009b, p. 1). The learning environment demonstrates that it is a place where students are valued as unique literate and capable learners.

Well-designed learning environments:

• have intentionality and purpose that is carefully planned prior to instruction;
• are functional and adaptable;
• are organized to support the use of instructional approaches, including areas for whole class, small group and individual learning;
• reflect the strengths, needs and interests of all students; and
• are aesthetically inviting to students because their interests, cultures, learning and work are present within the walls of the classroom.

This classroom represents my students. They can see themselves within the classroom environment I have created.
Language-Rich Environment

Educators are literacy models providing rich demonstrations, interactions and shared literacy experiences, which include supporting genuine conversations with peers and adults. “Learners must have opportunities to respond to their reading every day by talking, writing, and drawing about their thinking. Nothing enhances our understanding more than talking about what we are reading and learning.” (Harvey and Daniels, 2009, p.34)

**Oral language** can be developed through:

- meaningful conversations (listening and expressing ideas);
- open-ended questions; and
- reflective discussions (offering opinions).

“Dialogue is seen as an essential tool for learning, student involvement is what happens during and not 'at the end' of an exchange, and teachers can learn so much about their effect on student learning by listening to students think aloud.” (Hattie, 2012, p. 83)

“Discussion is central to learning in all areas, but it is critical to the development of reading comprehension. Through extended discussion, students expand their understanding of texts they have read or heard read aloud. They develop the ability to remember the necessary details of texts and to think beyond and about them.” (Fountas and Pinnell, 2014, p. 189)
Print Rich Environment

A print-rich environment embeds literacy outcomes and curricula throughout the environment (Early Reading Strategy, 2009). A print-rich environment is critical to students who may have limited access to literacy resources outside of school.

“In active learning classrooms, we flood the room with text and resources that spur wonder and excitement. Kids need text they can and want to read in school every day. Our big job is to immerse kids in an ever-increasing variety of text and resources and teach them how to find material that will engage and hopefully enlighten them as they search for information.”
(Harvey and Daniels, 2009, p. 80)

The environment includes:

- a reflection of the culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds of the students within the classroom (Early Reading Strategy, 2009);
- a variety of high-quality texts that are thoughtfully presented to support reading literacy learning and development;
- a reflection of First Nations and Métis content and perspectives, as well as students’ daily lives, interests and inquiries;
- text types that reflect the Saskatchewan context and include materials by and about First Nations and Métis peoples;
- relevant, co-constructed anchor charts and word walls that reflect students’ literacy development; and
- materials and information that are supportive and accessible for students during inquiry based learning.
Knowing Families

Classrooms are made up of many kinds of families. They bring diverse assets, experiences, knowledge, languages and values. Getting to know each family’s stories builds positive relationships. These stories empower teaching and purposeful literacy instruction.

By understanding families, educators:
• develop a relationship that honours the family as the child’s first teacher;
• engage families in literacy experiences that are meaningful and respectful; and
• recognize the importance of sharing knowledge in a variety of ways and languages.

Information about reading literacy can be shared with families through direct face-to-face conversations, both formally and informally. Invitations can be extended to families to participate in family literacy activities that reflect families’ cultures, strengths, needs and interests. Resources, including both strategies and materials, are readily available for families to access to support their child’s early literacy and learning development. These would include website links and community resources.

Opportunities for Parent Engagement:
• Newsela.com - news at lower reading levels
• Book and Bagel
• Book Swap Meet
• Literacy Games Night
• Home Reading Programs
• Saskatoon Public Library - Tumble books
• Remind 101 - text based communication

All parents, regardless of income, education level, or cultural background, are involved in their students’ learning and want them to do well in school.
Building Supportive Communities

Building communities of literacy learners takes time and collaboration among educators, families, the school and the community. Relationships among the educator, students, families, Elders and community groups must be thoughtfully developed.

Educators build these relationships by:

- inviting community groups into the classroom to share their expertise; and
- sharing resources and supports for literacy learning with students and families.

Opportunities are provided for community involvement in reading literacy and learning through:

- inclusion of community members and Elders in school-wide literacy events;
- invitations and encouraging community groups to participate in and support literacy events;
- family accessible community resources and supports (e.g. Saskatchewan Literacy Network, provincial literacy hubs, Public Libraries, Gabriel Dumont Institute, Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, Newcomer Centres); and
- community literacy events hosted by School Community Councils (SCC).
The classroom environment plays a critical role in early reading literacy, and learning development and growth. Students need:

- to be surrounded with a rich selection and quantity of texts that provide great variety for readers;
- daily opportunities to practice authentic reading with print and non-print resources;
- multiple opportunities for reading, appropriate “just right” self-selected text for various purposes, including practicing the processes and habits of effective readers;
- engagement in meaningful conversations about what they have read and have learned from reading; and
- a safe and accepting environment that encourages risk-taking and builds competent, confident learners.

Teachers need to model processes and habits of effective readers and guide students toward independent application. Through an engaging reading literacy and learning environment, teachers can foster and promote the passion for and joy of reading.

“Teenagers want to read - if we let them. Students who I believe are determined nonreaders become committed, passionate readers given the right books, time to read, and regular responses to their thinking. The pathway to difficult reading begins with books they enjoy. Once they’re reading, together we can reach for the challenging literature I want them to know. Rich and rewarding reading lives are within reach for all our students.”

(Kittle, 2013, p. 1)

I have created an environment for learning that honours culture, worldviews, and identity for all my students, including First Nations and Métis.
The Classroom Library

Classroom libraries are one important aspect in providing a literacy-rich environment. They offer opportunities for students to engage with texts that reflect their interests by including a range of topics and genres; and to read more by having easy and equitable access to texts located not only on a bookshelf, but displayed throughout the classroom. Students can play an integral role in the development of the classroom library by being involved in the continual, revolving selection of texts. Student ownership and participation in the classroom library fosters reading engagement (Early Reading Strategy, 2009).

School libraries play an important role in supporting and engaging students as readers. “They provide environments rich in information, literature, and technology that, together with effective instruction, enable students to achieve curriculum learning outcomes and acquire the attitudes and skills for lifelong learning” (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 1).

“Make excellent classroom libraries one of your highest priorities - ahead of the latest technology, resources, programs and standards. It is only through wide, self-selected reading that we will produce proficient and joyful readers as well as writers.”

(Routman, 2014, p. 99)

Tips for Building a Classroom Library:

• Collaborate with your teacher librarian regularly to build multi-genre text collections to rotate through your classroom library.
• Infuse student and class created books into your classroom library.
• Create a wish-list of text titles for families and community groups to consider donating to the classroom library.
• Collaborate with your School Community Council to build classroom libraries (e.g.; book drive, fundraise, community sponsors, corporate sponsors).
• Connect with your local library to borrow books for your classroom library.
My classroom library needs to reflect the diversity of my classroom - my students’ interests, abilities, experiences and cultures.

For more information on classroom libraries please refer to the Consistency of Practice: Classroom Library.

https://spslearn.spsd.sk.ca/centraloffice/cp/Shared%20Documents/Classroom%20Library.pdf


*See References section for complete citation.
Big Ideas of Reading

What is important to understand about reading?

“Becoming literate is best understood as a continuum. Even as adults, we learn new skills that enable us to navigate a new array of texts – the Internet, e-books, our cell phone instruction booklet. Learning how to read and using reading to learn are inseparable.”

(Mountas and Pinnell, 2001, p. 190)

“Children learn to read by reading… but not without instructional support. It’s well known that in order to become thoughtful, strategic, proficient readers, children need to read a lot. When children read extensively, they learn about themselves, other people, and the world; they learn that reading is something they can do that empowers them to control their lives, connect with each other, and make the world a better place.”

(Miller & Moss, 2013, p. 1)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

• How do the overarching principles of reading connect to my philosophy of effective instruction?
• How do I address comprehension, engaged reading and fluency with my students every day?
• How do I explicitly teach reading for understanding?
Overarching Principles

Saskatchewan Reads is based on current research in learning to read and teaching reading. The following overarching principles guided the work of this document (Saskatchewan Education, 2002; Manitoba Education, 2004; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003).

All students can read.

• All students have the capacity to learn to read and understand the process readers use to understand, reflect and connect reading to their daily lives.

• Teachers need to show students that they believe in the students’ potential as readers. By building self-confidence and self-acceptance, teachers can help students gain a sense of confidence and capability.

Middle years teachers are essential in a student’s success in learning reading.

• It is essential for teachers to engage students in reading and promote a love of reading.

• Ongoing formative assessment is used to guide instruction.

• It is important to provide authentic reading time with quality reading material that incorporates a balance of teacher and student selected texts to allow for choice, voice, level and interest.

• Teachers need to be aware of and respond to the developmental level of each student. By recognizing where students are as language learners, teachers can provide responsive instruction and experiences that will build upon what students know and can do.

• As reflective and responsive practitioners, teachers use their knowledge of students, the curriculum and language development to guide decisions about classroom instruction. Teachers learn about the effectiveness of their teaching when they reflect on the results of learning opportunities and consider possible adaptations to help students achieve curriculum expectations.

• Teachers are culturally and linguistically responsive to the needs of their students.

• Teachers fulfill the curricular expectations to infuse Métis and First Nations content, perspectives, values and lessons.

Oral language is the foundation of literacy.

• Oral language is a strong predictor of learning. Language and literacy have a reciprocal relationship.

• Through listening and speaking, people communicate thoughts, feelings, experiences, information and opinions. They learn to understand themselves and others.

• Students use oral language to learn, solve problems and reach goals. To become discerning, lifelong learners, students need to develop fluency and confidence in their oral language abilities.

• Oral language carries a community’s stories, values, beliefs and traditions.
Balance is important in reading instruction.

- An integrated English Language Arts program provides balance in all of the language strands (listening, viewing, reading, speaking, representing and writing).
- Effective instruction utilizes an appropriate balance of learning to read (skills/decoding) and reading to learn (meaning making).
- Reading skills (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension) are taught intentionally in context, not in isolation.

Family and community are critical partners in a student’s reading success.

- Families are a students’ first teacher. Learning to read happens at home and at school.
- A collaborative working relationship and effective communication through informal conversation between school and home will move students toward further engagement in reading, better fluency and higher comprehension.
- It is important for schools and families to identify and utilize groups and community partners that support literacy development.
- Schools should promote an appreciation of the cultural values and heritages of all members of the school community.

I believe that all students can achieve high standards given sufficient time and the right support.

Tovani, C. (2004). Do I really have to teach reading?
Gear, A. (2015). Reading Power

*See References section for complete citation.
goals of proficient reading represent the purpose and focus of reading instruction (Allington, 2012; Fountas & Pinell, 2009; Routman, 2009, Wilhelm, 2001):

• engaged readers;
• comprehension; and
• fluency.

Proficient readers incorporate all three goals when reading.

Engaged readers believe they are capable and choose to read for a variety of purposes (to learn, seek specific information, and for enjoyment). They persevere through reading challenges and apply appropriate strategies for comprehension.

Comprehension is an interaction between the reader and text to extract and construct meaning. It occurs before, during and after reading. Comprehension is a lifelong process that develops and changes based on the complexity and purpose of the text, as well as the use of metacognitive processes.

Fluency involves automaticity and prosody (phrasing, pausing, rate, stress, intonation and integration of these five factors) in a way that demonstrates understanding. See grade level Saskatchewan English Language Arts Curriculum for fluency rates.

The goals of proficient reading are achieved using the gradual release of responsibility model, purposeful instruction, curriculum expectations, and various forms of assessment. Using the four instructional approaches (see page 27), teachers can model, observe, and support students as they become proficient readers.

Oral Reading Rates per Grade Level

Grade 4 - 100 - 140 wcpm
Grade 5 - 110 - 150 wcpm
Grade 6 - 120 - 160 wcpm
Grade 7 - 130 - 170 wcpm
Grade 8 - 140 - 180 wcpm

“I see that fluency is more complex than simply decoding. My readers need to be taught not only to read the words, but to think about the meaning behind the text.”

(Tovani, 2004, p. 35)
Assessment and Evaluation

How will I find out what my students know and are able to do?

“In our view, the most important use of assessment is to inform instruction. Even while administering and analyzing a benchmark assessment, you will find yourself thinking about what the child needs in terms of instruction. When you have completed the assessment, you will have valuable categories of information that will allow you to link your findings directly with instruction.”

(Fountas and Pinnell, 2011, p. 109)

**Reflection Questions**

- How do my assessment practices identify the strengths and gifts of my students, as well as their areas of need?

- In what ways are my assessment practices reflective of holistic learning, multiple intelligence, and diverse ways of responding?

- How have I provided opportunities for students to take a more active role in assessment?
Assessment for, as, of Learning

Assessment and evaluation requires thoughtful planning and implementation to support the learning process and to inform teaching. All assessments and evaluation of student achievement must be based on the outcomes in the provincial curriculum and allow for flexibility determined by the needs of the student.

There are three interrelated purposes of assessment. Each type of assessment, systematically implemented, contributes to an overall picture of an individual student’s achievement.

Assessment for learning (formative assessment) involves the use of information about student progress to support and improve student learning, inform instructional practices and:
- is teacher-driven for student, teacher, and parent use;
- occurs throughout the teaching and learning process, using a variety of tools; and
- engages teachers in providing differentiated instruction, feedback to students to enhance their learning, and information to parents in support of learning.

Assessment as learning (formative assessment) actively involves student reflection on learning, monitoring of his/her own progress, and:
- supports students in critically analyzing learning related to curricular outcomes;
- is student-driven with teacher guidance; and
- occurs throughout the learning process.

Assessment of learning (summative assessment) involves teachers’ use of evidence of student learning to make judgements about student achievement and:
- provides opportunity to report evidence of achievement related to curricular outcomes;
- occurs at the end of a learning cycle using a variety of tools; and
- provides the foundation for discussions on placement or promotion.

Evaluation compares assessment information against criteria based on curriculum outcomes for the purpose of communicating to students, teachers, parents/caregivers, and others about student progress; and to make informed decisions about the teaching and learning process.

(Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010b, p. 33)
Principles of Assessment

The following assessment principles (Davies, 2007; Cooper, 2010) are to be considered and applied to assessment opportunities within reading.

Assessment involves a balanced approach that is planned and purposeful.

- **Triangulation of data** involves collecting evidence from different sources including conversations, observations and products. This includes qualitative and quantitative assessment data.
- Assessment serves different purposes at different times.

Assessment informs instructional decisions.

- Assessment and instruction are inseparable.
- Information gathered through assessment informs day to day instructional decisions.

Assessment focuses on individual students in order to differentiate instruction.

- Assessment is a collaborative process involving students, teachers and caregivers.
- Students need to be aware of expectations and be provided with timely descriptive feedback.
- Feedback is focused on areas of strength and opportunities for growth.
- Teachers need to consider a student’s language and culture.
- Student self-assessment based on clear criteria and exemplars ensure the focus stays on learning.

Assessment begins and ends with curriculum.

- Curricular outcomes provide the starting point for instruction.
- **Diagnostic assessment** informs differentiation required for individual students to achieve outcomes.
- Students are aware of and help create criteria used for assessment.
- Assessment provides evidence to evaluate the achievement of outcomes.

![Formative Assessment to Responsive Instruction Cycle](image)

Assessment follows a continuous cycle of observing, analyzing, differentiating, and reviewing.
Continuous gathering of assessment and using multiple methods of meaningful, authentic tasks in real reading situations tracks students’ learning over time and is essential in developing a comprehensive picture of student learning. The purpose of the assessments determines whether it will be used in a formative or summative way. The following are examples of assessment tools:

- checklists;
- co-constructed criteria (i.e., anchor charts);
- portfolios;
- conferring;
- interviews to probe student thinking;
- self-assessments;
- student goal setting;
- running record;
- video of reading moments, audio recordings;
- direct observation;
- continuums;
- anecdotal records;
- levelled benchmark assessment (Fountas & Pinnell, Jerry Johns, work samples (i.e., retellings);
- rubrics;
- exemplars; and
- Common Framework of Reference for EAL Learners (CFR).

For more information on conferring and to see conferring in action please refer to Reading Grade 3-8 Assessment Video Library.

https://portal.spsd.sk.ca/sites/Literacy/lit/Reading%20Assessment%20Video%20Library/Forms/Thumbnails.aspx

I need to capture my students’ reading ability and the strategies they use. I need to watch them, talk to them and conduct ongoing assessments.
**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

- Have I included conversations, observations and products in my ongoing assessments?
- How do I use this information to differentiate reading instruction?
- In what ways have I involved students in setting and reflecting on their reading goals?

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**Data grids are an effective tool to plan for flexible groupings to provide students with the support they require to meet the learning target. They identify levels of performance on a four point scale with descriptors of the attributes of that level of performance.**

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**Cooper, D. (2010). Talk about assessment.**

**Davies, A. (2007). Making classroom assessment work.**

**Fountas, I., & Pinnell, G. (2011). The continuum of literacy learning, grades PreK-8: A guide to teaching.**

*See References section for complete citation.*
Instructional Approaches

How do I use the gradual release of responsibility to teach reading?

“Considering the complexity of the reading process, students need ongoing instruction even after they understand the essence of reading. They must adjust their strategies as they read for different purposes or encounter new genres. They need to learn how to organize their knowledge in order to summarize or draw inferences from increasingly difficult texts. We cannot expect them to expand their reading abilities on their own, even if they are given time to read. Explicit instruction is essential for most students and will make reading more powerful for all students.”

(Fountas and Pinnell, 2001, p. 191)

“Structured teaching requires that teachers know their students and content well, that they regularly assess students’ understanding of the content, and that they purposefully plan interrelated lessons that transfer responsibility from the teacher to the student.”

(Fisher & Frey, 2014, pp. 16 - 17)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

• How do I use ongoing assessment to make instructional decisions for students?
• How do I ensure that I am consciously moving students towards independence?
• As I gain confidence with the gradual release of responsibility, how do I ensure that it is a recursive process?
Gradual Release of Responsibility

As teachers gain confidence with the instructional approaches, teachers will find these are not sequential but recursive. The gradual release of responsibility model is not prescribed or scripted and allows for teachers to use ongoing assessments to make instructional decisions. It is also important to note that reading takes place across all curricular areas.

According to Fisher and Frey (2014), effective teachers have engaged students in purposeful instruction designed to meet the needs of individual and smaller groups of students. A way that teachers can achieve this is by using the gradual release of responsibility model. The gradual release of responsibility model has been documented in research as an effective approach for improving literacy achievement. The teacher gradually transfers increased responsibility to the students. Teachers ensure that each step of the process is supported and that students are prepared for the next steps in learning (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

The four instructional approaches are described in the following gradual release of responsibility list:

| Modelled Reading | Teacher to Students “I do it”.  
| Teacher models the thinking processes through think alouds. |
| Shared Reading | Teacher with Students “We do it”.  
| Teacher shares reading experiences and responses to the material read. |
| Scaffolded/Guided Reading | Students with Teacher “We do it together”.  
| Coaching and guiding students in their application of strategies. |
| Independent Reading | Student “You do it”.  
| Providing students with opportunities to read independently, asking questions, practising strategies, and expressing their responses to the material read. |
### Gradual Release of Responsibility - Instructional Approaches

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Teacher's Role</th>
<th>Student's Role</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Modelled Reading</td>
<td>Teacher to Students</td>
<td>- Communicates clear instructional goal based on curriculum expectations</td>
<td>- Understands purpose for reading (comprehension, engaged reading, fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I do it&quot;</td>
<td>- Plans and identifies appropriate texts (which may be above student independent level)</td>
<td>- Participates by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Brief, focused lesson will occur within the selected text</td>
<td>- Communicates clear instructional goal based on curriculum expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- During reading, pause and explain what is going on in teacher's head (think aloud) to model proficient readers do (comprehension, engaged reading, fluency)</td>
<td>- Participates by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- As teachers gain confidence with the instructional approaches, teachers will find these are not sequential but recursive. The gradual release of responsibility model is not prescribed or scripted and allows for teachers to use ongoing assessments to make instructional decisions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Reading</td>
<td>Teacher with Students</td>
<td>- Communicates clear instructional goal based on curriculum expectations</td>
<td>- Understands purpose for reading (comprehension, engaged reading, fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;We do it&quot;</td>
<td>- Plans and provides opportunities for:</td>
<td>- Participates by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- selecting, revisiting or creating appropriate texts visible to all</td>
<td>- Communicates clear instructional goal based on curriculum expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- interacting with text (which may be at student instructional level) based on purpose</td>
<td>- Participates by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Revising and reflecting on the text (comprehension, engaged reading, fluency)</td>
<td>- Understands purpose for reading (comprehension, engaged reading, fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaffolded/Guided</td>
<td>Student with Teacher</td>
<td>- Determines instructional goal based on observed student's needs and</td>
<td>- Determines which students to confer with based on formative assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>&quot;We do it together&quot;</td>
<td>plans and provides opportunities for:</td>
<td>- When conferring with a student, plan and provide opportunities for:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- individual copies of text (student instructional level)</td>
<td>- supporting a student with self-selection of appropriate and &quot;just right&quot; texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- flexible and varied groupings as needed (individual or small group)</td>
<td>- converting with individual reading, fluency (comprehension, engaged reading, fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- gathering individual assessment data</td>
<td>- discussing evidence from observations and conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- immediate descriptive feedback</td>
<td>- gathering evidence from observations and conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Student(s) with teacher sets reading goals</td>
<td>- Daily blocks of extended time for independent reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Determines which students to confer with based on formative assessment</td>
<td>- Student(s) with teacher sets reading goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Identifies higher purpose for reading (enjoyment, information, etc.)</td>
<td>- Identifies higher purpose for reading (enjoyment, information, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- When selecting appropriate texts, students' needs and interests in the text</td>
<td>- Identifies higher purpose for reading (enjoyment, information, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- building stamina, comprehension, fluency</td>
<td>- Identifies higher purpose for reading (enjoyment, information, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Independent reading must include:</td>
<td>- Daily blocks of extended time for independent reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- self-selection, and reads appropriate and &quot;just right&quot; texts</td>
<td>- Student (s) with teacher sets reading goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- depending on reading strategies</td>
<td>- Teachers gain confidence with the instructional approaches, teachers will find these are not sequential but recursive. The gradual release of responsibility model is not prescribed or scripted and allows for teachers to use ongoing assessments to make instructional decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Students are guided in reading and re-reading texts at their own rate</td>
<td>- Students are guided in reading and re-reading texts at their own rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- As teachers gain confidence with the instructional approaches, teachers will find these are not sequential but recursive. The gradual release of responsibility model is not prescribed or scripted and allows for teachers to use ongoing assessments to make instructional decisions.</td>
<td>- Students are guided in reading and re-reading texts at their own rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Students are guided in reading and re-reading texts at their own rate</td>
<td>- Students are guided in reading and re-reading texts at their own rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As teachers gain confidence with the instructional approaches, teachers will find these are not sequential but recursive. The gradual release of responsibility model is not prescribed or scripted and allows for teachers to use ongoing assessments to make instructional decisions.
Modelled Reading

The teacher purposefully plans, models and explicitly demonstrates the important cognitive strategies for comprehending and responding. During a modelled read, the teacher may ‘think aloud’ to demonstrate the use of reading comprehension processes or word identification strategies.

“Students benefit when they see how we select texts to read, hear us read fluently, observe us struggle to figure out words and meanings, hear us reread and slow down for clarification, and listen as we think aloud and grapple with challenging concepts.”

(Routman, 2014, p. 122)

Choosing Texts

The teacher looks for passages that:

- represent many viewpoints that reflect the perspectives, cultures and ways of knowing of First Nations, Métis and other cultures;
- include strong examples of cues and conventions or comprehension strategies to be highlighted; and
- reflect formative assessment data and incorporate curricular expectations across disciplines.

Purpose

Modelled reading serves a variety of purposes, including:

- expanding content knowledge;
- promoting oral language and vocabulary development;
- modelling fluency;
- modelling before, during and after strategies for comprehension (see Appendix A);
- developing motivation and appreciation for reading;
- modelling effective reading behaviours;
- introducing different genres, text structures and writing styles; and
- demonstrating reading for a purpose.

Trelease, J. (2013). The read aloud handbook

*See References section for complete citation.*
### Modelled Reading Is... | Modelled Reading Is Not...
--- | ---
Explicitly planned to demonstrate specific reading behaviours. | Simply reading a story aloud with no intentional purpose.
Verbalizing thinking and explaining what proficient readers do as they process text. | Reading without sharing or explaining his/her thinking.
Effective when used prior to students being asked to practice the skill or strategy. | Listening to text and not giving students the opportunity to practise the skill or strategy.
Integrating a variety of contexts across curricula. | Confined to English Language Arts instruction.
Pre-reading texts to identify teaching points. | Randomly selecting text.
Brief and purposeful. | Lengthy reading of a text.
Demonstrating the skill or strategy many times and then practiced by students during shared, scaffolded/guided, and independent reading. | Demonstrating the skill or strategy only once before moving to a new skill.

**Assessment**
- Formative assessment of a student’s application of the skills and strategies explicitly demonstrated in a modelled read can be assessed through teacher observations, conversations with students and student products.

**Reflection Questions**
- What evidence do I have that modelled reading is making a difference in student learning outcomes? (conversations, observations and products)
- How do I collect evidence that students are applying the skills and strategies demonstrated in modelled reading?
Shared Reading

The teacher invites students to share in the demonstration of cognitive strategies for comprehending and responding. It is this participation that helps build confidence in the development of new and previously taught skills. Interaction is fostered in a variety of settings, including whole group, small group, and partner. Shared reading texts, based on curricular expectations and purpose, are selected, revisited or created.

Choosing Texts

The teacher looks for texts that:

- represent many viewpoints that reflect the perspectives, cultures and ways of knowing of First Nations, Métis and other cultures;
- include strong examples of cues and conventions or comprehension strategies to be highlighted; and
- reflect formative assessment data and incorporate curricular expectations across disciplines.

"Shared read-aloud is also highly effective for middle school and high school students, not just in language arts but also in physics, history, and other content-area classes. Using texts in their discipline, content teachers model reading like, for example, a scientist, a historian, or a mathematician."

(Routman, 2014, p. 131)

Purpose

Shared reading serves a variety of purposes, including:

- exposing students to a wide range of text forms and genres;
- engaging students in supported reading so that the whole class can share the reading experience;
- increasing students’ exposure to text;
- teaching before, during and after reading strategies (see Appendix A);
- integrating content of other curricula areas;
- intentionally teaching concepts of print, phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency in context;
- sharing responsibility toward the goal of independent reading; and
- engaging students in conversation.

Reflection Questions

- How do I activate and build upon students’ prior knowledge and experiences?
- How will I monitor my students’ level of engagement?
### Shared Reading Is... vs. Shared Reading Is Not...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared Reading Is...</th>
<th>Shared Reading Is Not...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using a text that is visible and accessible for all students in the class.</td>
<td>Reading aloud with a text that is only visible to the teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a variety of texts including different genres, digital, and visual texts.</td>
<td>Favouring one genre or text type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping students apply strategies in authentic reading experiences.</td>
<td>Having students practise skills in isolation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting students to join the teacher in reading often.</td>
<td>One student reading at a time while other students follow along (round-robin reading).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing teacher thought processes while demonstrating a skill or strategy.</td>
<td>Choral reading without a purpose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assessment

- Formative assessment of a student’s application of the skills and strategies explicitly demonstrated in a shared read can be assessed through teacher observations, conversations with students and student products.
- Teachers utilize checklists and/or anecdotal records to record observations and conversations on students’ use of strategies.

### Check it out!


*See References section for complete citation.*
Scaffolded/Guided Reading

The teacher scaffolds students’ learning as needed by building on and reinforcing students’ strengths and needs, previously taught strategies, and providing feedback to move students towards independence. The teacher facilitates small group instruction as the students practise skills and strategies based on their strengths and needs. Within the research, there are variations of the structure of scaffolded/guided reading. These variations include time, formation of groups, and selection of texts.

“Guided reading done well – through whole-group instruction, small differentiated groups, and one-on-one – helps students cement a repertoire of strategies, habits, and behaviors that promote self-monitoring and independence as readers.”

(Routman, 2014, p. 132)

Choosing Texts

The teacher looks for texts that:

• represent many viewpoints that reflect the perspectives, cultures, and ways of knowing of First Nations, Métis, and other cultures;

• provide exposure to rich authentic literature, including a variety of genres, and may include levelled texts;

• support and align with a student’s individual needs (skills and strategies) based on assessment; and

• reflect formative assessment data and incorporate curricular expectations across disciplines.

Purpose

Scaffolded/guided reading serves a variety of purposes, including:

• expanding students’ content knowledge;

• practising and consolidating before, during and after strategies (see Appendix A);

• developing students’ motivation and appreciation for reading;

• guiding the improvement of students’ reading through phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension in context; and

• releasing responsibility toward independent reading.

Check it out!


Rog, L. (2013). Guiding readers: Making the most of the 18-minute guided reading lesson.

*See References section for complete citation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scaffolded/Guided Reading Is...</th>
<th>Scaffolded/Guided Reading Is Not...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continually changing <strong>flexible groupings</strong> to meet the learning needs of students.</td>
<td>Establishing static groups that remain unchanged for long periods of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varying instructional time based on student needs.</td>
<td>Each student receiving the same amount of instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsive teaching based on observations of the reader and the opportunities offered by the text.</td>
<td>Teaching the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating a variety of contexts across curricula.</td>
<td>Confined to English Language Arts instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-centred.</td>
<td>Teacher directed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students practising reading for the majority of the time.</td>
<td>Explicitly teaching skills to the whole group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each student having their own text and processing text at their own pace.</td>
<td>One student reading at a time while other students follow along (round-robin reading).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a variety of texts that may be levelled.</td>
<td>Labelling students as text levels.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Guided reading groups change as students develop. I see how this also helps build the classroom environment and student relationships.*
Assessment

• Student data gathered through a variety of diagnostic and formative assessments (assessment for learning), along with curriculum outcomes, should be the consistent starting point when planning for scaffolded/guided reading.

• Teachers will know the scaffolded/guided reading lessons are effective when students use the specific skills and strategies during scaffolded/guided and independent reading activities across the content areas.

• Assessment data of students’ reading behaviours may be collected through:
  - running records of oral reading/miscue analysis;
  - observations using anecdotal records, checklists or criteria in rubrics;
  - reading conferences (conferring with a student); and
  - response to texts (oral retell, writing about reading or representing reading, Compose and Create outcomes).

How do my students’ reading processes influence the way I select texts for them?

How do I extend my students’ reading abilities to move them toward independent reading?

How do I know the scaffolded/guided reading has been successful?
Independent Reading

The student reads independently to achieve the three goals of proficient reading (comprehension, engaged reading, and fluency) using appropriate, just right self-selected text. The teacher is available as a support and confers with individual students to monitor student progress toward goals.

Choosing Texts

Through conferring and personal connection, a teacher gains information about individual students to foster a positive reading environment and a respectful classroom culture. The teacher is then able to provide a wide range of text that address students’ interests, daily lives and the world around them. Text should represent content from many viewpoints that reflect the perspectives, cultures, and ways of knowing of First Nations, Métis, and other cultures. Students self-select just right text with teacher guidance and support (see Online Resources - Appendix G).

Purpose

Independent reading serves a variety of purposes in the classroom setting, including:

- allowing students to consolidate, practice, and reflect on learned reading skills and strategies;
- fostering competent and confident readers;
- practicing skills to critically select just right text; and
- applying before, during and after reading strategies.

Assessment

- Student data is gathered through observation and conferencing with students.
- The teacher gathers evidence and provides feedback to students in areas such as:
  - problem-solving when processing text; and
  - student’s text selection; and
  - applying strategies independently; and
  - stamina.
- goal setting and progress toward goals;
- Other tools may include:
  - reading inventories and surveys; and
  - checklists; and
  - reader response;
- Evidence gathered in independent reading addresses assessment for, as and of learning.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How does the information gained through individual conferences impact whole and small group instruction?
- How do I organize my independent reading block to gather information and provide feedback in an effective way?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Independent Reading Is...</strong></th>
<th><strong>Independent Reading Is Not...</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active, with the teacher taking on an instructional and assessment role to move students forward.</td>
<td>Silent, as in SSR or DEAR, with the teacher always sitting and reading as a model for students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students self-selecting “just-right” texts with teacher guidance as needed.</td>
<td>The teacher choosing texts that students must read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing time students are reading (stamina) through daily, scheduled blocks of extended time.</td>
<td>An activity that students who have completed other work get to engage in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher observing individual students’ reading behaviours, <strong>conferring</strong> with students about their reading and keeping records of these observations and conferences.</td>
<td>Students left on their own to read without purpose, with the teacher sitting and reading as a model for students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the classroom library as an important instructional tool and an opportunity to engage students.</td>
<td>Having poor quality and limited reading materials within the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students setting goals in collaboration with the teacher and reflecting on progress.</td>
<td>Students reading silently and only listing the books that they have read without accountability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students responding orally or in writing to reading and sharing those responses with other students or the teacher.</td>
<td>Students reading in isolation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sustained Silent Reading (SSR); Drop Everything And Read (DEAR)

---

**Check it out!**

*See References section for complete citation.*

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**Allen, P. (2009).** *Conferring the keystone of reader’s workshop.*


**Miller, D., & Moss, B. (2013).** *No more independent reading without support.*
How do I further my students’ reading development?

“How do I further my students’ reading development?”

“An intervention is anything a school does, above and beyond what all students receive, that helps a child succeed in school.”

(Buffum, Mattos & Weber, 2012, p. 129)

“A small number of children may... require supplemental instruction. If classrooms produce too many children who seem to need extra help, then a central focus should be on improving the effectiveness of classroom instruction.”

(Fountas & Pinnell, 2009, p. 7)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

• How have I implemented the big ideas of reading and differentiated the instructional approaches in my classroom to meet the individual needs of my students?

• What do I know about the process within my school for assisting struggling readers? Who would I check with?

• How have I engaged parents/caregivers in the decision making around interventions for their child?

• How am I monitoring the effectiveness of the intervention?
Responsive Reading Instruction and Intervention

The purpose of the responsive reading instruction and intervention section within this document is to support students in achieving the curricular outcomes and in becoming engaged readers who comprehend and read fluently. The intervention should help build a student’s identity and belief in themselves as a reader. Intervention is not a program; it is a process that is focused on supporting an individual student’s learning needs.

The following overarching principles should be taken into consideration when responding to a student’s needs within all tiers of intervention:

- All students can read.
- The teacher is essential in a student’s success in learning to read.
- Oral language is the foundation of literacy.
- Balance is important in reading instruction.
- Family and community are critical partners in a student’s reading success.

The intent of Saskatchewan Reads is to provide a process to help support teachers in meeting a student’s needs through responsive instruction. Although intervention occurs within the three tiers of reading instruction, tier three reading interventions will not be addressed within this document. Each tier provides differing levels of support and the following principles of effective intervention apply to all three tiers.

Effective intervention should...

- support students in achieving their maximum potential;
- involve the child in successful reading experiences throughout the entire day;
- use high quality, purposely selected texts that are interesting and enjoyable and are at the appropriate reading level for the student;
- focus on effective reading instruction in the areas of oral language development, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, high frequency words, vocabulary and comprehension. Instruction should be based on student needs and embedded within authentic reading tasks;
- focus on meaning and on developing metacognition;
- develop positive personal relationships that go beyond the student’s learning needs. These relationships are key to responsive instruction;
- utilize formative assessment to understand a student’s learning needs;
- monitor progress frequently; and
- model strategies that are used by good readers.
In tier one intervention, instruction for all students occurs in whole-class, small group and individual settings. The teacher:

- knows his or her students, has developed positive relationships with them and created a supportive, nurturing environment that celebrates each student’s uniqueness;
- utilizes ongoing, authentic formative and summative assessment and the Saskatchewan curriculum to determine the needs of the student and differentiate within the instructional approaches;
- provides instruction designed to meet the specific needs of students in the classroom; and
- uses the four high impact instructional approaches: modelled reading, shared reading, scaffolded/guided reading and independent reading.

“The first line of instruction is always the classroom. No series of interventions - even highly effective ones - can take the place of good classroom instruction that builds a rich base and creates a community of learners.”

(Fountas & Pinnell, 2009, p. 497)

“The most powerful feature of schools, in terms of developing children as readers and writers, is the quality of classroom instruction.”

(Allington, 2012, p. 159)
### How do I provide intervention/differentiation at the tier one level within the four instructional approaches?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modelled Reading</th>
<th>Shared Reading</th>
<th>Scaffolded/ Guided Reading</th>
<th>Independent Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choose text that addresses a specific curricular context</td>
<td>Select text that activate background knowledge</td>
<td>Address individual needs within a small group</td>
<td>Different text choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alter group size/ composition based on areas of need through assessment</td>
<td>Introduce different text types with a similar target to reinforce skills</td>
<td>Focus on meaning while monitoring comprehension</td>
<td>Reading interest inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt length of session</td>
<td>Develop oral language by having students interact with one another and share understandings of the text with peers</td>
<td>Select just right text</td>
<td>Conferring with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select or revisit text with specific purposes based on observed student needs</td>
<td>Invite students to read aloud with teacher</td>
<td>Use effective prompts that assist the student in applying what they know</td>
<td>One-on-one instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on a specific think aloud and on sections of the text that address that target</td>
<td>Use shared reads to focus on literacy skills such as reading strategies</td>
<td>Supporting students as they practise applying reading strategies</td>
<td>Adjust the amount of reading time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use visual text with little or no print</td>
<td>Link shared writing to shared reads to reinforce specific areas of need</td>
<td>Guide the student in being able to verbalize strategies that are useful</td>
<td>Read with a partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model appropriate language</td>
<td>Ensure all students can see the text</td>
<td>Model language use</td>
<td>Use assistive technology (e-books, audio books)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorporate movement</td>
<td>Build background knowledge</td>
<td>Visual supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide movement break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Just right books</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Targeted Group Intervention - Tier Two

“...struggling students need more expert and more intensive instruction in order for their learning to keep pace with that of other children.”

(Allington, 2012, p. 175)

In many situations, providing differentiated support for students may be sufficient. Other students may require targeted/group instruction.

- In **tier two intervention** and instruction, students that have been identified through ongoing and frequent formative and summative assessment receive additional opportunities to improve comprehension, fluency and engagement.

- Once students have been identified, a collaborative team approach is crucial to planning supports for students.

- Tier two intervention and instruction does not replace the instruction that happens in tier one. Instead, it offers additional support so students can meet curricular outcomes. The intervention should align with the classroom instruction.

“Providing high quality professional development for classroom teachers was as effective as providing expert tutorial support for struggling readers.”

(Allington, 2012, p. 159)

**Effective tier two intervention should...**

- be built on positive relationships between the teacher and the students and occur within a supportive, nurturing environment;

- employ a reduced student teacher ratio allowing for increased opportunities to provide individualized feedback and scaffold instruction (ideal 1-3 students);

- provide instruction that is embedded in authentic reading opportunities;

- supplement quality reading instruction in the classroom supported by sound research;

- occur on a daily basis, be short term and occur within or outside the classroom;

- encourage connections to the home to increase the amount of reading time and practice. This is not a requirement to participate in the intervention;

- provide a quiet learning space with little or no distractions;

- engage students in reading for the majority of the lesson; and

- provide opportunities for students to read at their instructional and independent reading level during the intervention and throughout the day.

(Fountas & Pinnell, 2009; Allington, 2012)

The goal of targeted small group intervention is for students to be engaged readers who read fluently, comprehend grade level texts and no longer require support.
It is important to have a process to follow to meet the needs of students who are not currently meeting reading outcomes within classroom instruction.

Dufour’s Professional Learning Community questions are helpful to guide a process for intervention (Dufour, Eaker, Dufour & Many, 2010).

- What is it we expect students to learn? (outcomes)
- How will we know when students have learned it? (assessment)
- How will we respond when some students don’t learn it? (possible intervention)
- How will we respond when students already know it?


*See References section for complete citation.*
The following process will guide teachers in supporting students within their classroom. It is meant to determine when intervention beyond the classroom is necessary and when other professionals could be consulted. This may be used as an example when addressing student needs.

**Step One: Classroom-based Intervention within Instruction (Tier One)**
- Pre-assess students using a division or benchmark reading assessment to determine a student’s current reading skills, fluency and comprehension.
- Plan instruction based on student needs; this may include adaptations and differentiation.
- Implement the four powerful instructional approaches - modelled reading, shared reading, scaffolded/guided reading, independent reading.
- Apply best practices in strategic reading instruction.
- Monitor student progress through on-going formative assessment.
- Adjust instruction as needed.
- Confer and set learning goals with students.
- Inform parents of progress.
- Document strategies used and their impact on student learning.
  - Repeat above if progress is evident – this step is cyclical.
  - If student growth is not evident based on division benchmarks and assessments, proceed to targeted group intervention.

**Step Two: Targeted Group Intervention (Tier Two)**
- Consult school-based team.
- Review documentation and strategies implemented in classroom instruction.
- Develop a plan for targeted group instruction based on the needs of the students.
- Communicate with families about instructional options and engage them in the plan.
- Implement the plan, ensuring daily intervention occurs in addition to English Language Arts minutes for a limited number of weeks.
- Monitor and assess students continually through running records, division, and/or benchmark formative assessments.
- Document strategies utilized.
  - If student growth is evident, the intervention is successful and no longer required.
  - If student growth is not evident, proceed to planning for intensive individual intervention.

**Step Three: Individual Intervention (Tier Three)**
- School and division-based team (e.g., families, classroom teacher, student support services teacher, administrator, speech and language pathologist, psychologist, occupational therapist) meets to discuss the plan for intensive individual intervention.
- Review documentation of classroom and targeted group instruction.
- Determine whether further assessments and referrals are needed to assist student learning.
- Develop and implement an action plan.
- Team monitors the plan and makes adjustments as needed.
Conclusion

This document is meant to provide a framework for Saskatoon Public School teachers in planning for high impact teaching strategies in instruction, assessment and intervention. The document comes alive through the many examples of promising practice that have been successful in our school division and in educational research.

“I am committed and determined to teach every child to read...because I know they can.

“Keep your focus on what’s most important, and do not allow yourself to be diverted. Use your knowledge, expertise, common sense, and courage to make your voice heard and your actions positive on behalf of everyone - students, teachers, and leaders. We can make a positive, lasting difference and help students excel. Our students and their families are counting on us.”

(Routman, 2014, p. 282)
Glossary

Anchor charts are charts that are co-created by teachers and students to make students’ thinking and learning visible and concrete. Anchor charts make students’ thinking visible for future reference and study. Anchor charts can also be used to list processes and procedures for a particular activity. When deciding to use an anchor chart consider the purpose, student usefulness and how it will support ongoing learning. When creating an anchor chart focus on one key idea, co-construct it with students, make it readable, clearly organize and write in words students can read with ideas they can understand. (Miller, 2008, pp. 88-90 and http://www.edugains.ca/newsite/aer2/glossary.html)

Anecdotal records provide ongoing information about a student’s performance with tasks, their needs and their strengths, and language development over time. Methods of keeping anecdotal records on individual students, small groups or the entire class vary. All observations should be dated and focused on what students know and can do. (English Language Arts: A Curriculum Guide for the Elementary Level (K-5), 2002)

Approach(es) is an effective instructional practice that has an evidence of success that is both reliable and valid. The use of effective instructional approaches has been found to be successful in teaching students to read and leads to measureable growth and improvements in student learning.

Authentic (text, conversations) means genuine and meaningful in both conversation with/among students and in text selection. It is something personal that offers connections to the reader or speaker. (Miller, 2012, pg. 72)

Concepts of print are defined as what students [children] know and understand about the printed language (Clay, 2000). Students develop concepts of print based on their experiences from home and their early print experiences in environments such as story-time at the library, grocery shopping and school.

Co-constructed criteria means teacher and students working together to create the specific terms, in language meaningful to students, necessary to successfully complete a task or project. Co-construction of criteria deepens understanding of what successful task accomplishment looks like. During task completion, students can continuously reflect on their understandings and progress by referring to the established criteria.

Conferring is a one-on-one meeting between teacher and a student. Conferring helps the student understand, remember, extend meaning and make reading experiences memorable. It uncovers a student’s attitude and helps teachers discover a student’s reading stamina, work ethic and helps explore a student’s reading process. Conferring helps the teacher gather data for assessment and evaluation. It is how a student describes what he/she knows and is able to do. (Allen, 2009, p. 34)

Conferring involves brief interactions between teacher and student(s) that support the student’s comprehension, word solving and other reading strategies. (Fountas & Pinnell, 2009)

Convention(s) is an accepted practice or agreed-upon rule in representational, spoken or written language. (Saskatchewan ELA Curriculum, Grade 3, 2010)

Cues are clues built into the structure or patterns of communication texts. (Saskatchewan ELA 3 Curriculum, 2010)

Diagnostic assessment is used to determine an individual’s understanding of language concepts and ability to use language skills and strategies. These assessments allow the teacher to determine how to build or deepen the student’s understanding of the concepts, skills or strategies. Diagnostic assessments include miscue analysis, informal inventories and individual reading, listening, speaking, writing, viewing and representing tasks. (English Language Arts: A Curriculum Guide for the Elementary Level (K-5), 2002)
Differentiation is a teacher’s response to a student’s needs. It is making sure each student learns what he/she should learn by establishing clear goals, assessing persistently to see where each student is relative to the goals and adjusting instruction based on assessment information so that each student can learn as much as possible as effectively as possible. Differentiation is not a set of strategies; it is a way of planning for effective targeted teaching and improving student learning. Strategies are tools to accomplish the goals of differentiated instruction. (Tomlinson, 2010)

Environmental print is the print seen in our immediate surroundings and used in our everyday lives. Environmental print stimulates and supports literacy behaviours of students while motivating them to explore and understand more about print. Environmental print serves a purpose – print is intentionally selected, limited and placed throughout the classroom at students’ eye-level; it is accessible and directly relates to the learning, interests and cultures of students.

Flexible grouping(s) places students into temporary small groups based on their level of independence as learners and their personal interests that sustain independence. Qualities of these flexible groups are: groups are formed and re-formed to meet students’ needs as they arise, small groups vary in size, the organization, task and purpose of the group is understood by each student in the group. (Gambrell, Morrow & Pressley, 2007)

Gradual Release of Responsibility is an approach for moving classroom instruction from teacher-centered, whole-class instruction to student-centered collaboration and independent practice. (Fisher & Frey, 2014)

Instructional level is the highest level at which a student can still understand and make meaning with teacher support.

Inquiry learning provides students with opportunities to build knowledge, abilities and inquiring habits of mind that lead to deeper understanding of their world and human experience. The inquiry process focuses on the development of compelling questions, formulated by teachers and students, to motivate and guide inquiries into topics, problems and issues related to curriculum content and outcomes. Inquiry learning engages students in investigations that lead to understanding. Inquiry builds on students’ inherent sense of curiosity and wonder, drawing on their diverse backgrounds, interests and experiences. (Saskatchewan ELA 3 Curriculum, 2010)

Intervention involves more intensive or supported instruction, beyond whole group classroom instruction, provided to small groups or individual students who need extra support with an aspect of their learning.

Just right self-selected text consists of choosing a text that is ‘just right’ for the reader. This will depend on the reader’s purpose, interest, motivation, background knowledge and level. (Miller, 2013)

Levelled texts are texts that have literary merit and are suitable for the age, skill level and social maturity of students. Teachers typically use the following criteria to level texts: content and sophistication, length of text, sentence length and structure (pattern), vocabulary difficulty (sight words), predictability and illustration support. (English Language Arts: A Curriculum Guide for the Elementary Level (K-5), 2002)

Metacognitive process(es) is the ability to think about and reflect on one’s own thinking and learning processes. (Saskatchewan ELA 3 Curriculum, 2010)

Oral language includes the following components: vocabulary, sentence structure, understanding of story, social language skills, auditory skills, comparing and contrasting information and ideas and understanding concepts such as quantity, space, sequence.

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear specific sounds that make up spoken words. (Saskatchewan ELA 3 Curriculum, 2010)

Phonics is the ability to recognize the sound-spelling relationships associated with print. (English Language Arts: A Curriculum Guide for the Elementary Level (K-5), 2002)

Prosody provides a clue to a reader’s comprehension through expression, pausing, phrasing, pitch, rhythm, smoothness and stress all working together to create effortless movement through a text. Prosody presents an integrated way to reflect the reader’s interpretation of the text. (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006)
**Qualitative assessment** is a measurement process that focuses on the student in the world. Qualitative assessing involves collecting words, pictures, observations, artifacts, etc., in the attempt to make meaningful interpretations about the progress of a student.

**Quantitative assessment** is a process that collects numerical data and uses already developed measurements, adapts existing measurements or creates new measurements to gather data to determine the progress of a student.

**Reading inventories** are constructed from individually administered sets of structured reading assessment tasks that usually include word lists and oral and silent reading passages. Students read silently and orally, and retell what they recall and/or respond to a set of comprehension questions. Their reading of the word lists and their oral and silent responses are analyzed to establish independent, instructional and frustration levels for reading. (English Language Arts: A Curriculum Guide for the Elementary Level (K-5), 2002)

**Reader response** to text needs to be stimulated by the student’s use of strategies, concepts and skills to make meaning of their learnings from the reading. Responses need to be driven by the reader’s comprehension and passion. Student responses are usually not directed by a list of questions or activities that become a blueprint for all responses. Purposes for reader response are to: deepen students’ understanding and appreciation of the text read, motivate other students to read the text when student responses are shared, offer the teacher a deeper understanding of what the student is comprehending, guide teachers in furthering instruction; e.g., grouping students for further instruction, providing individualized instruction or revisiting specific strategy, concept or skill learning for whole group or small group.

**Responsive instruction/teaching** promotes the intellectual, social, physical and emotional development of all students. Responsive instruction adapts to students’ needs and presents students with a variety of developmental experiences, learning experiences and supports to advance their learning potential. Responsive instruction incorporates curriculum, instruction and assessment to support all students to achieve the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to succeed in school and in life. (Saskatchewan ELA 3 Curriculum, 2010)

**Running record** is a tool that is useful for assessing a student’s reading strategies and levels. Running records can be used any time a student is reading classroom texts. The student or the teacher selects a grade-appropriate book that is to be read. The teacher sits beside the student. As the student reads the text (at least a 100-word sample), the teacher records the oral reading behaviours of the student on a blank sheet of paper noting miscues and comprehension. (English Language Arts: A Curriculum Guide for the Elementary Level (K-5), 2002)

**Self-assessment** (assessment as learning) actively involves student reflection on learning and monitoring of her/his own progress. Self-assessment supports students in critically analyzing learning related to curricular outcomes, is student-driven with teacher guidance and occurs throughout the learning process. (Saskatchewan ELA 3 Curriculum, 2010)

**Stamina** is a student’s ability to engage in focused reading independently for an extended length of time. (Boushey & Moser, 2006)

**Strategy (strategies)** is a systematic plan for solving a problem or executing a task. (Saskatchewan ELA 3 Curriculum, 2010)

**Text(s)** is any form of communication, whether visual, oral, written or multimedia (including digital media), that constitutes a coherent, identifiable unit or artifact (e.g., poem, poster, conversation or model) with a definable communicative function. It refers to visual communications such as illustrations, video and computer displays, oral communications, (including conversations), speeches, dramatizations and printed communications in their varied forms. (Saskatchewan ELA 3 Curriculum, 2010)

**Think aloud** involves teachers verbalizing (out loud) their thoughts while reading. This provides wonderful
opportunities to model and monitor thinking, comprehension and metacognitive strategies. (English Language Arts: A Curriculum Guide for the Elementary Level (K-5), 2002)

**Tier one intervention** is embedded within effective instructional approaches. It builds on student strengths and creates a foundation for further learning and achievement. Instruction may occur in whole group, small group or individual settings. Students are assessed often and student progress is monitored regularly.

**Tier two intervention** identifies students through ongoing and frequent informative and summative assessment. Students receive additional opportunities to improve comprehension, fluency and engagement in small groups. Instruction is targeted and short term. The goal of tier two intervention is for students to be engaged readers who read fluently, comprehend grade level text and who no longer require support.

**Tier three intervention** involves planning by a school based team along with specialists (Speech and Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Educational Psychologist) who determine necessary further assessment and plan for intensive individual programming. An action plan is implemented that meets the need of the individual student.

**Triangulation of data** means using three different sources of data, including conversations, products and observations, to ensure sufficient proof of a student’s learning and an accurate description of a student’s progress.
References


Middle Years References


Routman, R. (2014). Read, write, lead: Breakthrough strategies for schoolwide literacy success. ASCD.


Overarching Principles of Reading

All students can read.
The teacher is essential in a student’s success in learning to read.
Oral language is the foundation of literacy.
Balance is important in reading instruction.
Family and community are critical partners in reading success.