



SAMPLE MATERIAL

Five Essential Reading Components

Cornell Elementary School, Iowa

Topic: Response to Intervention in Primary Grade Reading

Practice: Systematic Skill Instruction

The Iowa Department of Education's Instructional Decision Making (IDM) framework supports systemic data use to match curriculum and instructional strategies directly to the need of each student. Heartland Area Education Agency (AEA) 11 has trained staff at Cornell Elementary School to focus on five essential components of literacy in core reading programs: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Teachers at Cornell Elementary School use this concise summary chart, developed by the Iowa Department of Education, to improve their understanding of each of the five components and the linked high priority skills. In addition, the chart provides examples of teaching strategies and research-based instructional guidance.

**Iowa Department of Education
Instructional Decision-Making (IDM)**

Five Essential Reading Components – Summary Sheet (2008-09)

| Essential Component | Definition | High Priority Skill | Examples | Research-Based Instructional Guidance |
|---------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Phonemic Awareness | Awareness that spoken words are made up of individual sounds. | <p>Blending 2 and 3 sounds to make spoken words.</p> <p>Segmenting spoken words into individual sounds</p> | <p>Teacher places three pictures on the board. She says three sounds out loud that represent the name of one of the pictures. Student listens and says the word.</p> <p>Students move three chips into the sound boxes as they say single sounds of the word /h/ /ou/ /se/ (house).</p> | Make sure students know meanings of words that are used in sound blending and sound segmenting activities. |
| Phonics | Understanding that words are made up of letters, sounds are connected to letters, and can use these letter and letter combinations to read and spell unfamiliar words. | Blends sounds in printed words together and reads words as a whole accurately. | <p>Teacher tells students –dge and –ge both stand for /j/ at the ends of words. Students sort 20 –ge and –dge words to determine when –dge spelling is used. Students read the words when done.</p> <p>The teacher points to the written word matador and asks the student how many syllables or parts are in the word.</p> | Keep the end in mind. Have students apply phonics skills daily in reading and writing activities. |

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| Essential Component | Definition | High Priority Skill | Examples | Research-Based Instructional Guidance |
|----------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Fluency | Ability to read words in grade level text accurately with automaticity and with proper expression. | Read 110 words correct in a minute with phrasing and appropriate expression. | Teacher models reading of a passage explicitly teaching smooth reading and pausing at punctuation. Children pair up and do repeated reading of a passage to improve automaticity and phrasing. | Use relatively brief sessions (15-20 minutes) with texts that students are reading with 90-95% accuracy. |
| Vocabulary | Understanding and use of words to acquire and convey meanings (mental dictionary) | Learns and uses unfamiliar words introduced in stories and informational text. | Students list as many meanings for as they can think of for the word, <i>main</i> . Students attempt to define the word <i>burden</i> by reading it in a sentence. | Repetitions and multiple exposures (4-12) to a word in a variety of contexts. |
| Comprehension | Complex process of listening/reading and reacting to spoken/written text in a meaningful way. | Retell the main idea of stories and informational text. Answers, literal, inferential and evaluative questions about a passage. | Before reading an informational passage, the teacher has students make predictions about what they think they will learn. During reading students stop and discuss at predetermined spots in the passage what the gist of the passage is. | Explicitly teach rather than mention or assess. Teaching students to be strategic will take time. |