

Oregon's Early Literacy Framework

A Strong Foundation for
Readers and Writers (K-5)



OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

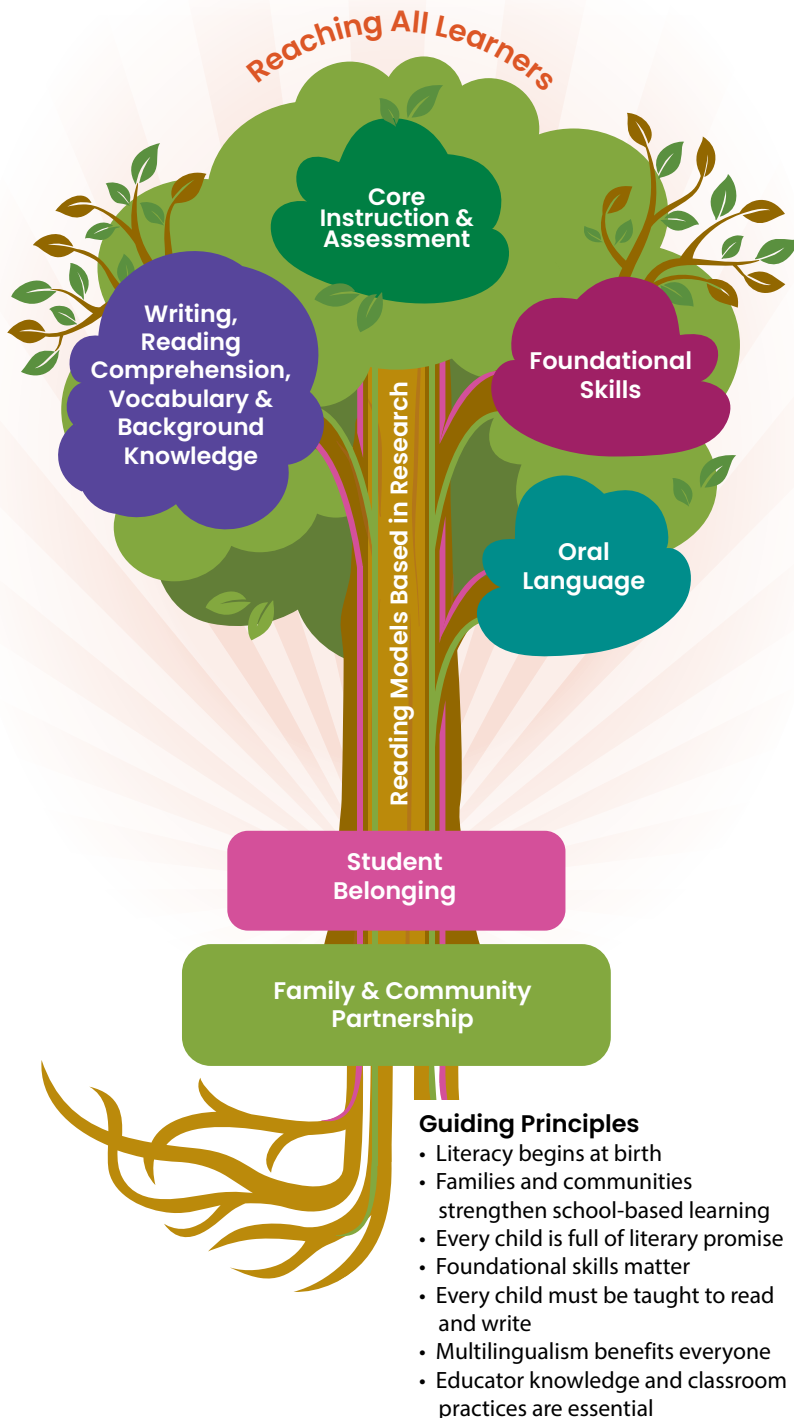
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Framework Overview



Oregon's Early Literacy Framework includes eight sections that work in reciprocity with one another to help reinforce culturally responsive practice and reading science as fundamental to children's literacy and multilingual development.

- ▶ **Section 1: Student Belonging – A Necessary Condition for Literacy Learning**
- ▶ **Section 2: Family & Community Partnerships**
- ▶ **Section 3: Oral Language as the Root of Literacy Development**
- ▶ **Section 4: Reading Models Based in Research**
- ▶ **Section 5: Foundational Skills**
- ▶ **Section 6: Writing, Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, & Background Knowledge**
- ▶ **Section 7: Core Instruction & Assessment**
- ▶ **Section 8: Reaching All Learners**

Figure 1 reflects the reciprocal and interconnected relationship between the sections and reinforces the importance of the ways in which all sections of the framework co-exist in relationship with one another.

This framework builds momentum and capacity for strengthening belonging and literacy instruction in every elementary classroom so that all children leave elementary school proficient in reading and writing in at least one language. It speaks to the comprehensive nature of literacy instruction and underscores the complexity of learning to read and write.

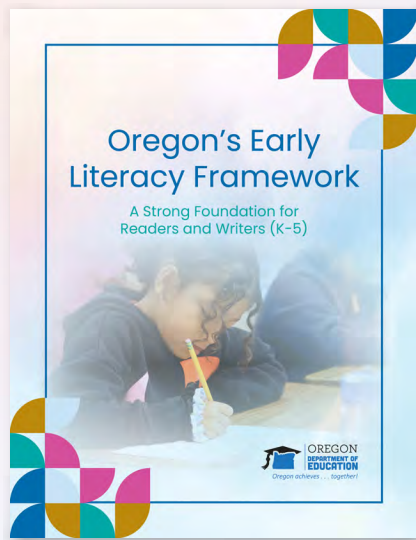
Figure 1. Oregon's Early Literacy Framework Graphic

This framework aims to be a foundational literacy resource (or mentor text), for K–5 classroom teachers, specialists, elementary school principals/K–8 principals, superintendents, district leaders, and education service district leaders. More broadly, it is relevant for all who are committed to seeing literacy learning maximized for every student through high-quality instruction.

Navigating the Framework & Playbook

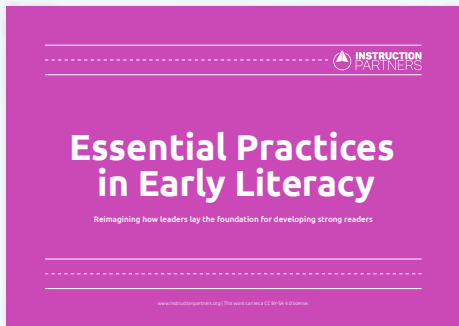
Early Literacy Framework + Early Literacy Playbook = Leading for Literacy Learning Improvement

Put simply, the framework provides the “why” and the “what” for literacy improvement, while the playbook provides the “how.”



The Why & What

Oregon's Early Literacy Framework builds momentum and capacity for strengthening belonging and literacy instruction in every elementary classroom so that all children leave elementary school proficient in reading and writing in one or more languages, with as many opportunities to build on their funds of knowledge in additional languages as possible. It speaks to the comprehensive nature of literacy instruction and at its core, is designed to be used as a primary resource (or mentor text) for district leaders and school leaders. The framework is designed around eight sections that work in reciprocity with one another to help reinforce culturally responsive practice and reading science as fundamental to children's literacy and biliteracy development.



The How

Instruction Partners' Early Literacy Implementation Playbook¹ provides ready-to-use, step-by-step guidance. Early literacy leaders and educators can use this playbook to strengthen and monitor literacy development in their school or system, whether building the essential implementation practices from scratch or tuning up what they already have in place.

Overall, the playbook aligns closely with the content of Oregon's Early Literacy Framework, with a few exceptions. As is true when using any resource, there will be opportunities for calibration and potential adaptations. For example, while the playbook indicates K-2, it can (and should) be easily adapted for K-5.

The playbook is organized around five essential implementation practices² (Vision, Materials, Data, Team, Time) in early literacy and includes workbooks for four phases of work designed to follow a three-five year arc of deep literacy strategy and implementation.

1 [Instruction Partners, 2021a](#)
2 [Instruction Partners, 2021b](#)

Key Terminology

While an extensive [glossary](#) lives at the end of this framework, these key terms are highlighted at the beginning of the framework to provide clarity and reinforce shared meaning-making.

CORE INSTRUCTION

Core instruction: high-quality instruction in the general education setting that is aligned to grade-level standards, centered around grade-level-aligned materials, and inclusive of every student in the classroom, regardless of performance level.³ Sometimes also referred to as Tier I Instruction, this is the primary prevention for reading and writing difficulty. It maximizes learning by providing access to peer learning models, the classroom teacher, and grade-level aligned texts and tasks.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

Culturally responsive: the implicit recognition and incorporation of the cultural knowledge, experience, and ways of being and knowing of students in teaching, learning, and assessment. This includes identifying, valuing, and maintaining a high commitment to students' cultural assets in instruction and assessment; diverse frames of reference that correspond to multifaceted cultural perspectives/experiences; and behaviors in the classroom that can differ from White-centered cultural views of what qualifies as achievement or success.⁴

Note: The term “culturally responsive practices” centers the importance of affirming students’ intersectional cultural identities. However, there are other terms and bodies of research that are important to uplift: culturally sustaining pedagogies, linguistically responsive instruction, and culturally relevant pedagogy. While each of these terms and bodies of research vary in their definitions (see the glossary for a full definition of each), they all reinforce the importance of creating and cultivating a learning environment where students feel seen, heard, and valued – where students know they belong and can show up and learn as their full and authentic selves.

EARLY LITERACY

Early literacy: skills outlined by Oregon’s English Language Arts and Literacy Standards for grades K–5, inclusive of reading foundational skills (e.g., print concepts; phonological awareness; phonics, decoding, and word recognition; fluency); comprehension; language and vocabulary; writing; speaking and listening. These standards reflect the literacy skills and knowledge that begin developing before students enter kindergarten and lay a foundation for more advanced literacy development in later grades.

EVIDENCE-BASED LITERACY PRACTICES

Evidence-based literacy practices: instructional practices with a proven record of success based on reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence that when implemented with fidelity result in adequate gains in literacy achievement for students.^{5 6}

FOCAL STUDENT GROUPS

Focal student groups: students of color; students experiencing disabilities; emerging bilingual students; students navigating poverty, homelessness, and foster care; and other students who have historically experienced disparities in our schools.⁷

3 [Bowen, 2021](#)

4 [ODE, n.d.-a](#)

5 [Dyslexia-Related Training: Definitions, 2018](#)

6 ODE defines evidence-based in a range of ways given the complex bodies of work across the K-12 system.

7 [Oregon Department of Education \(ODE\), 2022c](#)

MULTILINGUAL LEARNER

Multilingual learner: a student who, by reason of foreign birth or ancestry, speaks or understands languages other than English, speaks or understands little or no English, and/or requires support in order to become proficient in English.⁸ “Multilingual learner” is used intentionally to promote multiliteracy and honor the process of language and literacy development in two or more languages. While English Learner is the formal term used most often in K–12 policy, this term is inadequate and reinforces a deficit view of multilingual students. To reinforce the cognitive benefits of multilingualism and the importance of neutralizing language status, additional terms (such as multilingual learners and emergent bilinguals⁹) bring an asset orientation necessary to ensure children are valued for the language(s) developed in their home and community context.

Note: Oregon’s Early Literacy Framework is primarily written from the lens of developing literacy for multilingual learners within an English instructional model. Wherever possible, best practices for multilingual learners participating in dual language education with biliteracy as the intended outcome is incorporated throughout the framework. With the understanding that best practice for supporting multilingual learners’ literacy development is to build upon their linguistic repertoire through multilingual instructional programs such as dual language education, the current reality is that the majority of multilingual learners in Oregon are developing literacy within English instructional programs.

RESEARCH-BASED LITERACY PRACTICES

Research-based literacy practices: models, theories, and practices that are based on the best research available in the particular field of study. These practices differ from evidence-based in that they have not been researched in a controlled setting to measure efficacy.

SCIENCE OF READING

Science of reading: research that is aligned with “neurological and cognitive science studies of how brains process written words¹⁰,” and includes a broad collection of research from multiple fields of study including cognitive science, learning sciences, literacy research, and instructional science and research broadly.¹¹

Note: Within Oregon’s Early Literacy Framework, this definition of the science of reading reinforces the essential role it plays in informing literacy instruction. Reading research provides fundamental information about reading and it deserves to be recognized as such. Furthermore, it underscores the complexity and richness of literacy instruction. Amanda P. Goodwin, co-editor of the academic journal Reading Research Quarterly, describes the science of reading as: “not just phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension but also language development, motivation, dyslexia, the reading of digital texts, multilingual literacy, the literacies of Black students and other historically minoritized student groups...”¹²

Ultimately, the term “science of reading” can be interpreted in divisive ways or in informative ways; the goal in this framework is to use the science of reading as a term to bring clarity and common ground to move Oregon forward in supporting the literacy development of all students.

See [Appendix C: Glossary](#) for additional terms.

8 [NYSED, 2019](#)

9 [García, 2009b](#)

10 [Shanahan, 2021](#)

11 [National Center on Improving Literacy, 2022](#)

12 [Heller, 2022](#)

Introduction & Purpose

When a child first comes to school, they arrive brimming with literary and linguistic strengths that are ready to be seen and expanded. Children begin literacy learning in their homes and communities, where language, culture, and identity are affirmed by families and caregivers who serve as important first teachers and storytellers. Students' accumulated familial, cultural, and linguistic experiences, or funds of knowledge,¹³ serve as the foundation for building rich literacy skills and experiences and finding deeper joy, meaning, and purpose in the larger world.

"Literacy is inseparable from opportunity, and opportunity is inseparable from freedom. The freedom promised by literacy is both freedom *from*—from ignorance, oppression, poverty—and freedom *to*—to do new things, to make choices, to learn."

Koichiro Matsuura

Children need literacy instruction that guarantees proficiency, addresses individual strengths and needs, and provides learning conditions and content exposure that honors linguistic and cultural assets and lived experiences. The significance of literacy cannot be overstated; it has been described as a social determinant of health, with literacy deficits leading to lifetime impacts.¹⁴ Oregon's Early Literacy Framework emphasizes core instructional practices that benefit all students, with an intentional emphasis on how those practices can be leveraged to best serve students in focal groups who have historically been marginalized by education systems.

This framework delivers an approach to comprehensive literacy instruction that, if used well, will meet the strengths and needs of all students. Far too often and with far too much predictability, students in underserved focal groups in Oregon may be farthest away from literacy success due to systemic inequities, implicit bias, racism, lack of access to high quality instructional and reading materials that reflect the diversity of our students and lack of instructional opportunity.

¹³ Moll et al., 1992 (see [Appendix C: Glossary](#))

¹⁴ Hutton et al., 2021

To nourish our children in ways that lead to literary empowerment requires collective commitment. From the local library to Relief Nurseries, community partners to child care providers, preschools to higher education, local businesses to teacher preparation programs, and elders to neighbors: literacy is a community commitment. Moreover, the Oregon Department of Education, education service districts, school districts, and public charter schools hold an essential responsibility to ensure every child in Oregon reads and writes with confidence and competence in at least one language.

To realize this promise, significant strides are needed to improve the quality of literacy instruction and to ensure the experience of belonging in classrooms. This means ensuring that every student receives classroom instruction aligned to grade-level standards and scaffolded for their success (see [Appendix B: Companion Guidance Documents & Resources](#)) and informed by research and culturally responsive practices, and cultivating and strengthening community partnerships and family engagement to meet students' strengths and individual needs.

THE CORE PURPOSE OF THIS FRAMEWORK IS TO:

- Build statewide coherence, clarity, and common ground.
- Fuel action and improvement.
- Support districts and schools in the implementation of a comprehensive literacy vision and plan.
- Serve as a shared north star for educators, leaders, and community, in alignment with the Governor's vision for improving student literacy outcomes.

In support of strong readers, writers, and thinkers, Oregon's Early Literacy Framework provides a statewide call to action, and lays out a research-based instructional vision including the essential building blocks for K-5 educators to grow every student's literacy skills. At its heart, Oregon's Early Literacy Framework is intended to build momentum and capacity for strengthening belonging and literacy instruction in every elementary classroom so that all children leave elementary school proficient in reading and writing in one or more languages, with as many opportunities to build on their funds of knowledge in additional languages as possible.

The following Institute of Education Sciences, "What Works Clearinghouse" Practice Guides informed the development of Oregon's Early Literacy framework.

- [Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade](#)
- [Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade](#)
- [Preparing Young Children for School](#)
- [Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners](#)
- [Assisting Students Struggling With Reading: Response to Intervention \(RtI\) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades](#)
- [A First Grade Teacher's Guide to Supporting Family Involvement in Foundational Reading Skills](#)
- [Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers](#)

Guiding Principles

Persistent opportunity gaps in nearly all aspects of our educational system invite a collective interrogation of the beliefs and mindsets that underlie student learning outcomes. The Guiding Principles in this framework provide a call to action for increased internal accountability and a necessary redesign of the literacy learning experience.

The following guiding principles anchor Oregon's Early Literacy Framework:

- **Literacy begins at birth:** The first sounds a child may hear or see (signed) are the voices of the people in their home environment, building neural pathways and serving as the initial source of knowledge about language and their world. Families and caregivers are essential first partners in oral language development that cultivates later success in literacy and life.
- **Families and communities strengthen school-based learning:** Outside of school, children spend most of their lives at home or in the community. Parents and caregivers have a role to play in reinforcing the learning that happens at school as much as possible at home, and they must be supported as full partners in their children's literacy development. Children's literacy learning is deepened through their lived experiences, where language, culture, and identity are affirmed by families and caregivers who serve as important first teachers.
- **Every child is full of literary promise:** School systems and instructional practices must be designed around a fundamental belief that children can be taught to read and write, supported by high expectations and ongoing feedback. Adults must have a mindset that sees children as brimming with literary, cultural, and linguistic strengths ready to be seen and expanded.
- **Foundational skills matter:** Literacy is not possible without foundational skills, systematically taught in an organized order that builds on one another. Across the K-5 continuum, literacy instruction must explicitly and systematically build students' foundational skills alongside the application of vocabulary, comprehension, and writing.
- **Every child must be taught to read and write:** This responsibility is met by effective literacy instruction rooted in reading and writing research; culturally responsive and inclusive practices; Oregon's learning standards; high-quality instructional materials; and targeted support.
- **Multilingualism benefits everyone:** When families' cultural and linguistic assets become an integral part of the instructional experience, children's literacy skills and dispositions deepen. Culturally responsive instructional practices that serve multilingual students are proven strategies to accelerate and deepen learning for every child.
- **Educator knowledge and classroom practices are essential:** Teacher and leader professional learning must be comprehensive and designed to include training on foundational skills, oral language, writing, vocabulary, and background knowledge, as well as professional learning around culturally responsive practices and student belonging. Professional learning must be inclusive of literacy strategies that benefit students who experience disability, students with dyslexia, and multilingual learners. Educators are most successful when professional learning, time for planning and collaboration, as well as consistent encouragement and formative feedback, are present.

Section 1: Student Belonging – A Necessary Condition for Literacy Learning

While evidence-based, systematic, and explicit literacy instruction is foundational for students' literacy success, research also tells us that equally important are the conditions in which this teaching and learning takes place. Building inclusive and supportive environments in schools is essential to growing readers and writers. This is a shared responsibility for all staff members. School leaders set the tone so that classroom teachers, specialists, and support staff can successfully build such environments. We must be all in to create the conditions for students to thrive.

For children to thrive, they need a sense of belonging and safety. When children experience belonging at their school, they are not only more engaged and more motivated to learn, but they are also likely to take risks in their learning and experience higher academic achievement.¹⁵ Children keenly perceive how others receive them within their school environments and whether their ways of knowing, speaking, being, and learning are affirmed and reflected at school. They know and can feel when they are taught by educators who believe they can learn at high levels and when they are provided with learning opportunities that honor their language, community, and culture.

“Belonging is a fundamental human need. People search for a sense of connection with the people and places in their lives. Students spend a huge portion of their time during childhood and adolescence at school, which makes it essential that the learning environment cultivates a sense of belonging for students. A recent review by Kelly-Ann Allen and her colleagues of the academic research on belonging found evidence of our need to connect embedded in our genetic code.”

Ralph, 2022



¹⁵ [REL Northwest, 2018](#)

Culturally Responsive Practices

Culturally responsive practices are research-based approaches that provide learning environments that foster belonging and enable students to see the relevance of reading and writing in their own lives.¹⁶ When students are in an environment that incorporates culturally responsive practices, they see themselves in the learning and in the curriculum, providing experiences that affirm their culture, home language, lived experiences, and identity as assets to be sustained, not erased and replaced.¹⁷

“Reading science has shown us what needs to be amplified in early reading, but for this practice to be equitable for students, we must also address the how. ... To implement foundational skills programs equitably, we also must ensure that in addition to holding high expectations for all students that all students have access to a full range of supports, culturally relevant content and practices, and aligned instructional materials.”

Pimental & Liben, 2021

School leaders who implement culturally responsive practices design school-wide systems and environments to support and learn alongside staff to deliver culturally affirming instruction. Educators who use culturally responsive practices believe that all students are capable of reading and writing and they align literacy instructional practices, text selections, and formative assessment approaches with what they know about their students. As such, culturally responsive practices require support and time for educators to explore how their perspectives and lived experiences shape decisions that influence student learning. Educators who embrace culturally responsive practices take time examining their own identities and biases. Anchored in a deep belief that all students can engage in meaningful and connected literacy, culturally responsive teachers value their students' identities, including their race, ethnicity, ability, gender, home languages, religion, and lived experiences.

Children come to school in their full humanity (inclusive of but not limited to their culture, race, ethnicity, gender identity, language, ability, sexual orientation, and religion). If educators and school systems see students through a single lens, they are only seeing a partial picture of students' lived experiences. For students to feel known, it is important that educators learn to see and acknowledge students' intersectional identities, especially when they do not reflect the dominant culture. When educators understand and reflect on their own identities and teach about identity and intersectionality,¹⁸ they are more likely to embrace students' multiple identities and recognize that a single social identity does not fully represent or define a child. Culturally responsive teaching creates the experience of belonging as the neurobiologically vital state in which each student becomes available for the work of learning as well as utilizing instructional strategies to build the intellectual capacity to apply that learning in academic contexts. Educators who attend to cultural frames for information processing help to simultaneously reinforce learning and belonging. This may include, for example, using call and response, rhythm, music and storytelling as central practices in literacy acquisition. Instruction and engagement are maximized when educators leverage what they know about a child and honor their intersectional identities – this has the potential to fundamentally shift access to literacy learning.¹⁹

16 Hammond, 2015

17 Gay, 2018

18 Crenshaw, 1989

19 Gay, 2018

High Expectations with Responsive Support

An essential tenet of culturally responsive practice is that educators hold consistently high expectations for every student, accompanied by responsive support. In literacy environments, this means providing all students, including students experiencing disabilities and multilingual learners, with access to grade-level standards,²⁰ texts, tasks, and experiences while also providing robust support for students to grow.

When educators use culturally responsive practices, they see each child’s brilliance and potential; they believe all students are capable of academic success.²¹ These educators have been described as “warm demanders,” a term to describe an educator who expects a great deal from their students while also conveying warmth, care, and unconditional acceptance.²²

In literacy instruction, this means explicit modeling of skills with ample scaffolding and practice that provides students with the tools they need to reach grade-level literacy learning goals. While instructional strategies may vary, the message in the approach to teaching with high expectations and high support is the same: every child in the classroom can achieve at high levels and participate in the cognitive richness and joy that comes from robust literate experiences.

Culturally responsive teaching means teaching with students’ “academic prowess” at the center. Zaretta Hammond describes this as changes in instruction that actually increase students’ cognition. This involves teacher expectations of student achievement, teacher comfort with challenge and productive struggle, and intentional partnership with families toward the acquisition of skills. In this way, culturally responsive instruction requires changes in instruction that actually increase student’s cognition and scaffold every child’s ability to develop stamina for problem solving and practice with synthesis and analysis of content.²³

Diverse Texts²⁴

Culturally responsive literacy instruction includes the selection of a high-quality literacy curriculum and supplemental materials that include characters, settings, and authors which are reflective of the abilities, identities, and cultures of the full range of students and their communities. When curriculum and materials reflect and honor student identity, home languages, and culture, they contribute to a welcoming and affirming classroom environment. Throughout early literacy, concepts and characters in culturally and linguistically diverse texts also provide opportunities for students to engage in discussions about numerous topics, including their culture and identity, as well as to explore power dynamics in society and to consider how choices affect others.²⁵ This exposure encourages reflection and connection through the exploration of language, including writing, which can build relationships while inviting the understanding of someone else’s perspective.

“Seeing ourselves in stories and other texts is a powerful human need. Being able to say, ‘Look, there I am!’ feels good. It helps us know that who we are is recognized and validated and that we are not alone.”

National Council of Teachers of English, 2021

20 ODE, n.d.-g

21 [Krasnoff, 2016](#)

22 Delpit, 2013; and Hammond, 2014

23 Hammond, 2015

24 Aukerman & Chambers Schuldt, 2021

25 Schlund, 2019

Culturally responsive instruction in literacy builds awareness of various perspectives, addressing the experiences of diverse populations, while also exposing and disrupting negative stereotypes that may be present in materials. When reviewing early literacy curricula and supplemental materials, it is important to go beyond superficial representation and to carefully avoid common biases in materials that can include harmful stereotypes. Oregon’s English Language Arts instructional materials evaluation tool²⁶ as well as the Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard Toolkit from New York University²⁷ are resources to support the review and evaluation of literacy curriculum materials. Each of Oregon’s Student Success Plans (African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Latino/a/x & Indigenous, and LGBTQ2SIA+)²⁸ reference the importance of culturally responsive curriculum as part of their plans.

“Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books.”

Bishop, 1990

Social and Emotional Learning

Children learn best when they are part of a positive school climate where everyone feels and is safe, seen, valued, and respected: when an asset-based orientation permeates teacher-student interactions and informs instructional decisions. Social and emotional learning²⁹ advances educational equity and excellence through authentic school-family-community partnerships that establish culturally responsive learning environments and experiences. Implementing social and emotional learning in schools creates caring, just, and affirming environments that support student learning.³⁰ Using this approach during early literacy instruction promotes student voice and agency, fosters well-being, and dedicates time and space for students to make sense of their learning and experiences. Centering the transformative social and emotional learning³¹ constructs of identity, agency, belonging, curiosity, and collaborative problem-solving throughout students’ literacy development can provide rich context and conditions for authentic student engagement.

Incorporating culturally responsive practices and social and emotional learning are more than strategies to create the necessary conditions for student learning to flourish: they are the epitome of belonging. Classrooms with culturally and linguistically affirming learning environments, where children are encouraged and challenged, provide the most fertile soil for reading, writing, speaking, and listening to occur. The classroom centering social-emotional learning offers young learners the opportunity to take risks, consider their own learning strategies and engage in academic discourse with their peers. The necessary energy to engage and persist with challenging material is exponentially increased when that energy is fed by peer-to-peer engagement and reflective practice.

26 [ODE, 2018b](#)

27 [The Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative \(EJ-ROC\), 2020](#)

28 [ODE, n.d.-b](#)

29 [ODE, n.d.-e](#)

30 Durlak et al., 2011; Greenberg, 2023

31 [CASEL, n.d.](#)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Belonging is a baseline condition for risk taking, thereby rendering it a nonnegotiable prerequisite for classrooms that maximize learning.
- Culturally responsive practice centers mutual relationship and care as conditions that foster a sense of belonging. “I am seen as unique and I am a part of a whole community.”
- Culturally responsive practice requires study and reflection regarding identities and cultural reference points brought to the classroom by BOTH educators and students.
- The culturally responsive educator sees and learns about each member of the classroom community. Culturally responsive literacy practice invites students' identities and cultural reference points into the daily rhythm, literacy content, strategies and discourse of the classroom.
- Culturally responsive practice provides literacy instruction centering access for all children to the experience of, and practice with, the full range of literacy skills: phonemic awareness, explicit systematic phonics, vocabulary and language development, comprehension and fluency.
- High expectations for literacy success requires time and support for educators to repeatedly examine biases as they work to ensure literacy engagement, growth and achievement for every child.
- Every child deserves access to grade-level standards. Grade-level expectations are made doable when teachers know children well enough to both set challenges and scaffold challenges through partnership with students and families.
- Maximizing literacy learning includes providing rich and complex texts inviting children to both see themselves and learn about others.
- The social and emotional skills and context provided in the classroom allow children to practice peer-to-peer listening and speaking and normalizes the “risk, fail, try again” stamina that supports literacy achievement.

LEARN MORE

- [The Science of Reading is Culturally Responsive](#)
- [Ready for Rigor: A Framework For Culturally Responsive Teaching](#)
- [Culturally Responsive Instruction for Native American Students](#)
- [Culturally Responsive Literacy Resources](#)
- [Supporting Gender Expansive Students \(from ODE\)](#)
- [Transformative SE \(from ODE\)](#)
- [Oregon's Student Success Plans \(from ODE\)](#)

Section 2: Family & Community Partnerships

Parents and families are the first, most important teachers in a child’s life. Before a child learns to read and write, they learn to listen and speak. Literacy learning starts at home in a child’s first three years of life – in the lap of a trusted and caring adult. Brain science tells us that children are developing these skills from birth, which is why support for children to gain early literacy skills is absolutely critical even in the first few years of life – long before they enter preschool or kindergarten.

Preschool and kindergarten-aged children learn best through intentionally planned activities and meaningful play that provides ample opportunities to explore and discover. As noted in Oregon’s Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines, “providing these opportunities does not preclude academics, but rather enhances the delivery of academic content through means that are most effective for young children. This approach is often referred to as developmentally appropriate practice.”³²

Across almost every facet of literacy development, support and collaboration with families, tribes, and community-based organizations strengthens student literacy development and serves as accelerators for student success.³³ When planning how to support early literacy, it is important to consider questions such as, “How do we leverage the skills, capacities, and strengths within our community as we design learning experiences that meet the needs of our learners?” and “How might we support parents and caregivers as essential partners in their children’s literacy learning?”

This section is intended to provide guidance to district and school leaders and classroom educators to guide approaches to partnering with families regarding early literacy. It is not intended to be a comprehensive guide for community-based organizations or sovereign tribal nation leaders on how to support parents with literacy. These purposes will be met, instead, by tools that are co-created by communities for the communities they intend to serve.



³² [ODE, 2017, p. 4](#)

³³ Dearing et al., 2004; Cronan et al., 1999

Literacy Starts at Home

Language development is increasingly understood as a process that begins during infant brain development. This development is connected with oral language in any language, and it may be impacted by genetic, medical, and environmental factors.³⁴ The human brain is hardwired for language development.

Language development occurs before and alongside literacy development, in home environments, and throughout children’s daily experiences, including play and storytelling in the context of family traditions, first language, and culture. Engaging in conversations, over a shared meal, in the car, or in other settings, singing, cooking together, growing and harvesting food, and reading and telling stories, can help children develop oral language skills as listeners and speakers. Intentional literacy engagement before kindergarten lays the groundwork so that elementary school instruction can then advance. For multilingual learners, language development in a child’s home language in addition to English, supports both language acquisition and brain development.

Families and caregivers want their children to succeed and are one of the most important allies in advancing student learning. When families, caregivers, and communities are mobilized to support literacy learning, they can serve as champions to advocate for striving students, while creating more consistent, coordinated efforts to boost student learning.³⁵

Together families and educators can leverage evidence-based early literacy practices inside and outside the classroom.³⁶ Engagement with books and opportunities to write and draw from an early age promotes excitement about reading and writing.³⁷ The positive interactions that young children have when they read with adults and see adults engaged in authentic reading and writing increases their motivation to read and write more.

Many evidence-based practices in support of early literacy begin at home and in early learning settings. For instance:³⁸

- Regular, intentional, engaging practice focused on social-emotional skills.
- Strengthening children’s executive function skills using specific games and activities.
- Planned activities to build children’s vocabulary and language.
- Building on children’s knowledge of letters and sounds.
- Use of shared book reading to develop children’s language, knowledge of print features, and knowledge of the world.

34 Hutton et al., 2021

35 [Regional Education Laboratory Pacific, 2015](#). For more information about effective home-school partnerships and family engagement see Mapp & Kuttner, 2013; Epstein et al., 2018

36 [Caspé & Lopez, 2017](#). For more information on early literacy evidence-based practices at school and at home, see [Shibre, 2021](#).

37 [Michigan Department of Education, 2021](#)

38 Foorman, Lee, & Smith, 2020

Literacy Learning Before Kindergarten

Paying attention to the literacy and learning that happens prior to children entering kindergarten ensures that children have a more seamless transition to kindergarten. Oregon’s Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines³⁹ are an integral resource for schools, districts, and families to consider when planning for literacy and learning before and up through kindergarten. The guidelines include a continuum of development and learning in five domains: approaches to learning, social–emotional development, language and communication, literacy, and mathematics. The guidelines are designed to:

- Align Oregon’s existing preschool guidelines and kindergarten standards and clarify the learning progressions from early childhood to elementary school.
- Support all adults who work with children by showing the progressions of what children know and are able to demonstrate in early childhood,⁴⁰ at kindergarten entry, and at the end of kindergarten.
- Provide caregivers with information on developmental milestones. Caregivers can use this information to provide experiences that support children’s learning and development.
- Provide a framework for early education and care providers to plan high-quality facilitated play and individualized instruction and support services.
- Inform family engagement and professional development regarding the learning and development of children.
- Strengthen the relationship between early learning and K–12 so that schools are ready for children and children are ready for school.

Supporting Literacy Through Expanded Learning

Parents and caregivers have a role to play to supplement and reinforce the literacy learning that happens at school as much as possible at home. To create those conditions, it’s natural for parents and caregivers to need and want support, tools, and information, including knowledge of their child’s strengths and needs from educators’ perspectives. This knowledge and communication about their child helps parents make informed decisions and ensures they are empowered to support their child’s literacy development before school, after school, and during the summer.

The Role of Libraries

Public libraries and school libraries are an integral component of children’s literacy development. Extensive research supports the role school libraries⁴¹ play in the health and success of the school community.⁴² A well-equipped library, staffed by a full-time, certified teacher-librarian, contributes significantly to gains in student learning.⁴³ High-quality school libraries staffed by trained librarians not only help students read more, but they also help them learn how to use and process information and to perform better on achievement tests.⁴⁴ Levels of library funding, staffing levels, collection size and range, and the librarian’s instructional role all directly impact student achievement, regardless of student socioeconomic status.

³⁹ [ODE, 2017](#)

⁴⁰ For more information on learning development for children ages birth to five, see [Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, 2022](#)

⁴¹ [Oregon Library Association, n.d.](#)

⁴² [Library Research Service, 2013a](#)

⁴³ [Library Research Services, 2013b](#)

⁴⁴ [Lance & Kachel, 2018](#)

One purpose of school libraries is to provide access to books, with research confirming that access is associated with raising student test scores in all aspects of literacy.⁴⁵ Access to culturally relevant and responsive books fosters an early love of learning and a sense of belonging while also positively affecting reading achievement and appears to offset the impact of poverty. This research points to the importance of ensuring that all students, no matter their socioeconomic status, have equitable access to library resources because all aspects of literacy improve when children have access to books.⁴⁶ With reliable access to diverse books, students are more likely to read them and to read them for longer periods of time. School libraries can bridge the opportunity gap for students from historically and systemically marginalized communities by providing equal access and resources for learning through culturally relevant and responsive books and instructional materials. Cultivating a library that is welcoming and creates an enriching learning environment ensures that students have ready access to culturally relevant and responsive books.⁴⁷

Another purpose of school libraries is for teacher-librarians to provide valuable instruction and support by responding to needs and requests from teachers and students, as well as providing much-needed instruction in the areas of information literacy, media literacy, digital citizenship, and more. Just as with content area instruction, teacher-librarians rely on standards when designing instruction (see [Appendix B: Companion Guidance Documents & Resources](#)).

In addition to school libraries, public library programs are an excellent resource for teachers, students, parents, and the broader community. Public libraries serve many roles in their communities and offer early learning and literacy engagement opportunities, summer and after-school literacy programs for students, and adult literacy learning.

Hours Outside the School Day⁴⁸

Reading and writing before and after school are important for literacy development. Educators can encourage children to spend more time reading and writing outside of the school day by creating a culture of literacy that extends beyond the school building. To do this, schools can make books available for borrowing, encourage book reviews and student writing to be shared during school announcements, and organize book clubs and writing groups as after-school activities. Guiding students to read independently or with a buddy while riding a bus to and from school is another way for a school to encourage more time for reading. Educators can also provide families with strategies to use when reading with their children after school. Some strategies include reading aloud together, providing writing materials to use at home, and giving guidance on how to talk with children about what they read.

Collaborating with community systems of care (e.g., tribal governments, community-based organizations, libraries, parks and recreation centers, culturally-specific organizations, early learning hubs, STEM/STEAM hubs, housing agencies, area chambers of commerce, business and industry, public agencies) that provide opportunities for formal and informal learning is another way to extend literacy learning outside the classroom. Examples of how schools can support these activities include announcing library events or working with local businesses (such as barbershops, hair salons, and laundromats) to provide books for children to read while they wait.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ [Scholastic, 2016](#)

⁴⁶ [Library Research Service, 2013a](#); [Gretes, 2013](#)

⁴⁷ [ODE, 2023](#)

⁴⁸ [Michigan Department of Education, 2021](#)

⁴⁹ For more examples of how to build and sustain school-community partnerships, see the Colorado Education Initiative's [toolkit](#).

Literacy During Summer and School Breaks

Schools can support student literacy throughout the year during summer and school break by providing independent reading and extra support for literacy skills during summer and school break time through informal and formal reading opportunities. Summer programs may be perceived and designed to feel like punishment to students who have not been adequately supported in their literacy development. It is therefore critical that summer programs be intentionally designed to counter that narrative. In part, effective strategies may involve creating programs that are fun and engaging to student interests, and which also include a literacy component.

Encouraging students to find opportunities to read every day is one of many ways informal learning can happen outside the classroom. Daily reading outside of school is critical, with young students reading with an adult and older students reading independently. To strengthen reading skills, it is recommended that children in grades 2 and below read with an adult for at least 20 minutes daily outside of school time; while children in grades 3 and above read at least 30 minutes daily outside of school time, either with or without an adult. This additional reading builds fluency, vocabulary, stamina, and background knowledge, all necessary to develop literacy skills. Families can be encouraged to support their child's reading without concern for the length of text or genre. Novels, short stories, comic books, cooking recipes, and poetry provide reading opportunities.⁵⁰

Strategies for supporting student literacy year-round include:⁵¹

- Local libraries can provide book suggestions and engaging summer reading programs that encourage independent reading throughout the year.
- Teachers can provide personalized lists of books students may like to read that connect to their interests.
- Families and students can share reading experiences, practice skill development that was learned during class, and discuss prompts for older children who can read independently.

Formal reading programs involve face-to-face learning, virtually or in person. Summer reading programs can be offered by the school or school partners, like community-based organizations and libraries. Summer learning programs provide unique opportunities to build relationships, spark joy, and deepen natural curiosity to promote learning, growth, and success for every student. Well-rounded summer learning is individualized to a student's assets, needs, and goals; intentional to meet learning goals and apply evidence-based instructional methods; and integrated into rigorous high-quality course content and meaningful study.⁵²

50 [Michigan Department of Education, 2021](#)

51 [Michigan Department of Education, 2021](#)

52 [ODE, 2021c](#)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Parents and families are the first, most important teachers in a child’s life. Before a child learns to read and write, they learn to listen and speak.
- Language development begins as the brain develops in response to genetic, medical, and environmental factors.
- Parents and caregivers have a role to play to supplement and reinforce the literacy learning that happens at school as much as possible at home. To create those conditions, it’s natural for parents and caregivers to need and want support, tools, and information, including knowledge of their child’s strengths and needs from educators’ perspectives.
- Paying attention to the literacy and learning that happens prior to children entering kindergarten ensures that children have a more seamless transition to kindergarten.
- Across almost every facet of literacy development, support and collaboration with families and community-based organizations strengthens student literacy development and serves as accelerators for student success.⁵³
- Engagement with books and opportunities to write and draw from an early age promote excitement about reading and writing.
- Encouraging children to spend more time reading and writing outside of the school day can begin with creating a culture of reading and writing inside the school building.

LEARN MORE

- [Toolkit: Tribal Best Practices](#)
- [Ways to Become More Culturally Responsive in Engaging American Indian and Alaska Native Families](#)
- [Tips for Supporting Reading Skills at Home](#)
- [Honoring Family in the Class](#)
- [Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines \(from ODE and DELC\)](#)
- [How Parents and Families Support Oral Language and Vocabulary](#)
- [Toolkit: Families and Schools Partnering for Children’s Literacy Success](#)
- [Addressing Challenged Materials in K-12 Education \(from ODE and State Library of Oregon\)](#)
- [Family Engagement Resources \(from ODE\)](#)
- [Toolkit: Community Engagement \(from ODE\)](#)
- [Toolkit: Jump Start Kindergarten \(from ODE\)](#)

53 Dearing et al., 2004; Cronan et al., 1999

Section 3: Oral Language as the Root of Literacy Development

Language is essential for children as they make sense of the world, develop relationships with others, and understand their role in their homes, schools, and communities.⁵⁴ When educators understand the role of oral language and dialect in literacy acquisition, they can leverage students’ oral language skills in any language or variation of English. Educators further students’ literacy development by intentionally providing scaffolding to support the simultaneous development of language and literacy skills. Skilled educators map new learning onto existing knowledge, thus building on linguistic strengths and accelerating literacy learning.

The Role of Oral Language in Early Literacy Development

Literacy development is increasingly understood as a process that begins as the brain develops language – hence the increasingly familiar refrain “literacy begins at birth.” As infants hear more sounds from their home language(s), their brain connections become stronger, and they become more adept at recognizing the sounds of their home languages. These first sounds a child may hear or see (signed) are the voices of the people in their home,⁵⁵ which serve as the initial source of knowledge about language and their world. In turn, learning to read involves learning about print, specifically how words known from speech are represented in a visual-graphical code or written language.⁵⁶



54 [Herrera et al., 2022](#)

55 Seidenberg, 2017

56 Seidenberg, 2017

EARLY LITERACY FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS

“Early and consistent access to a language is vital to its acquisition and continued development. Hearing loss complicates access to language. However, there are several strategies that are most often employed to build communication skills. There is no single test or exam that can determine which strategy is right for an individual. Understanding and spending time exploring options will allow the child to own the strategy best suited for them.”⁵⁷

The Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness, 2017

See also: [Early Reading for Young Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children: Alternative Frameworks and Foundations for Literacy: An Early Literacy Intervention for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children](#)

A child’s ability to read and write is predicated on oral language because of the primary role oral language plays in laying the groundwork for foundational literacy skills.⁵⁸ In fact, research supports that reading, writing, and oral language are highly related.⁵⁹ It is also true that oral language is highly correlated with comprehension, which can be explained by the overlap in word recognition and oral language skills.⁶⁰ Students’ comprehension of spoken language is critical for their reading comprehension — the ultimate purpose of reading. This is also true of cultivating students’ writing ability.⁶¹ While some children may develop oral language skills quickly and effortlessly, others may struggle with acquiring oral language. Factors such as genetics, environment, and early experiences all play a role in a child’s language development. Children who experience disability have brilliant minds that can process information at different speeds, rates, and patterns. This can create what systems frame as developmental delays or presents challenges that are best met through differentiated and inclusive instruction. It is important for parents, caregivers, and educators to be aware of these individual differences and provide appropriate intervention and support to help children reach their full potential in language acquisition. These needs should be considered within the context of each individual student’s needs and strengths, as described in [Section 8: Reaching All Learners](#). The larger context of how oral language is situated within, and interacts with, other elements of literacy is explored further in [Section 4: Reading Models Based in Research](#), [Section 5: Foundational Skills](#), and [Section 6: Writing, Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, & Background Knowledge](#).

Oral Language Skills and Text-Based Language Skills are Interrelated

Oral language includes semantics, which is essential to vocabulary development. It also includes phonemic awareness, which is critical to reading. When children learn to blend sounds into words and segment words into sounds (phonemic awareness) in English, they can then connect the sounds with corresponding letters (phonics) to sound out words and begin to master the alphabetic principle to identify words accurately. Accurate decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling) of words leads to high-quality representations of words in memory so that the words can be recognized instantly.⁶² Such efficient recognition is critical to reading fluency and to comprehension.

57 [The Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness, 2017](#)

58 [Foorman et al., 2016](#); Seidenberg, 2017; National Research Council, 1998

59 Mehta et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2011

60 Foorman et al., 2018b; Lonigan et al., 2018

61 [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \(DESE\), n.d.](#)

62 Dehaene, 2009; Ehri, 2020; Perfetti & Helder, 2022; Seidenberg, 2017

Multilingualism Supports Oral Language & Literacy

A growing number of Oregon’s children are learning more than one language resulting in multilingualism being one of their many strengths. There are many cognitive benefits to learning multiple languages. Multilingual students outperform monolingual students on tasks that use cognitive flexibility.⁶³ Multilingual students’ brains get an extra workout because navigating more than one language requires the brain to use problem-solving and task-switching skills. The multilingual brain, therefore, is wired for powerful literacy and language learning.

"Children who are learning English as a second language will become literate more easily if they have a strong foundation in their home language."

National Association for the Education of Young Children & International Reading Association, 2009

Effective literacy instruction is rooted in an asset-based approach in which teachers value the linguistic strengths students bring to the classroom, while also paying close attention to student instructional needs. For multilingual students developing two or more languages, "this plurality of languages provides a multi-textured way of viewing, understanding, and interacting in and with the world...literacy development is nested within this larger picture of first and second language acquisition and use. Children’s oral language practice and development in all languages is foundational to their literacy development."⁶⁴

An Expansive Perspective of Oral Language

Oral language plays a critical role in learning about self, culture, and tradition. When educators learn about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the children in their care and learn from families, they can then draw connections, build from linguistic strengths, and better support a student who may not yet be fluent with written text.

Since Time Immemorial: Honoring Indigenous Language and Knowledge

Indigenous communities have centered story and oral language since Time Immemorial, passing information and carrying meaning and connection over generations without it being transcribed or written. These Native stories share traditional knowledge and connection to the land and help to carry culture and important teachings; such stories are often connected to seasons and the natural world. Oral tradition has kept Native languages and ways of knowing alive for thousands of years. Due to colonization and forced assimilation, the number of surviving Oregon tribal languages and dialects has dwindled from an original base of approximately one hundred to about eight. Tribal Elders often say that when a language goes extinct, a library dies.⁶⁵

"Our Language is as old as time itself. For countless generations our people lived out their lives speaking our words. In all that time, our words were never written. They were carried in the hearts and minds of our ancestors. They were learned by each generation and in turn taught to the next."

Lewis, 2018

63 [Barac et al., 2014](#)

64 [Herrera et al., 2022](#)

65 [Lewis, 2018](#)

Efforts such as Native language revitalization programs led by the [Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde](#) and the [Northwest Indian Language Institute at the University of Oregon](#) as well as Oregon’s Tribal History Shared History⁶⁶ curriculum, underscore the importance of honoring Indigenous languages and restoring value and shared understanding about the role of oral language and survivance⁶⁷ in Native culture. For example, the Tribal History Shared History curriculum includes a 4th-grade lesson⁶⁸ on the importance of oral storytelling: “Indigenous stories provide essential knowledge required to sustain and maintain certain ways of knowing and being. Each tribal nation has its own oral history, and these histories are just as valid as written records. Oregon Tribal Nations work hard to protect their lifeways and celebrate their ways of being and knowing.”⁶⁹

The Importance of Storytelling

Storytelling has the power to create connections between humans, animals, and the land, to pass on traditions, entertain, and affirm identity. A uniquely situated form of literacy, oral storytelling’s power is found through gestures, emotions, and voice. Many cultures use oral traditions to recite poetry, chants, and to connect through song. For the identities of all children to be fully seen and honored in early grades, there is an essential role for story and oral history. In early literacy, the cadence, flow, and rhythm of how the story is told supports early language development for young children.⁷⁰ A research study from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute emphasizes the importance of recognizing and capitalizing on storytelling skills to help young African American children with their early reading development.⁷¹ As Gholdy Muhammad explains within her historically and culturally responsive literacy framework, as children learn and grow, they engage in extensive identity exploration, trying to make sense of who they are, who others say they are, and who they desire to be. To support this effort, educators can structure literacy experiences that hold space for storytelling while centering learning opportunities that affirm and bring to life students’ (and their ancestors’) histories, cultures, and traditions.⁷² Using oral language to honor cultural identity while simultaneously creating foundational literacy skills is critical for each and every child.

Recognizing and Honoring Dialects

It is also important to recognize and honor children developing fluency in various dialects of English. They bring unique and valuable strengths to literacy learning, such as translanguaging, by “accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential.”⁷³ For example, when a learning environment cultivates language varieties such as African American English, students’ bicultural and bidialectal identities and lived experiences are affirmed.⁷⁴

It is important that teachers understand that language varieties are linguistically equal, even when they are not socially equal.⁷⁵ “Standard English” is not a language. It is one variety of English, and it is not linguistically superior to other varieties. Linguistic complexity is a profound area of research, often illuminating ways in which regional dialects or situational dialects require an amazing array of cognitive and social skills. This is true across race, social class, gender, and region.⁷⁶

66 [ODE, n.d.-h](#)

67 Sabzalian, 2019

68 [ODE, n.d.-c](#)

69 [ODE, n.d.-c](#)

70 [Programmatic Assistance for Tribal Home Visiting \(PATH\), n.d.](#)

71 Gardner-Neblett & Iruka, 2015

72 Muhammad, 2020

73 [García, 2009a](#)

74 [Washington & Seidenberg, 2021](#)

75 Darder, 1991

76 [Grieve, 2022](#)

“Most languages have several within-language varieties. An inclusive way to think about language varieties is that they occur along a continuum from those that differ little from the general variety to those that are more distant. This framing includes all communication practices across all speakers and does not consider one variety to be superior. It allows us to put languages and speakers in their proper perspective as equally valued, especially as we support children learning to read and write. All children need to have the skills to make linguistic choices across contexts: formal, informal, home, school, speaking, reading, or writing.”

Washington & Seidenberg, 2021

Awareness of early literacy strategies supporting multidialectal students is vital for teaching, learning, and assessment. These strategies allow educators to promote students' academic achievement while recognizing and honoring the value of the student's home dialect.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Literacy development is increasingly understood as a process that begins as the brain develops language – hence the increasingly familiar refrain “literacy begins at birth.”
- Learning to read involves learning about print, specifically how words known from speech are represented in a visual-graphical code or written language.⁷⁷
- A growing number of Oregon’s children are learning more than one language and can add multilingualism as one of their many strengths.
- Transformative literacy instruction is rooted in an asset-based approach, in which teachers value the linguistic strengths students bring to the classroom.
- Indigenous communities have centered story and oral language since Time Immemorial, passing information and carrying meaning and connection over generations without it being transcribed or written.
- All varieties of English (dialects) are valid, valued, and deserve to be recognized as such.
- Oral language plays a critical role in learning about self, culture, and tradition. A child’s ability to read and write is predicated on oral language because of the primary role oral language plays in laying the groundwork for foundational literacy skills.⁷⁸

LEARN MORE

- [Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines \(from ODE\)](#)
- [Oral Language | National Association of Education of Young Children](#)
- [Telling and Retelling Stories: Learning Language and Literacy](#)
- [Supporting Early Language Development for Diverse Learners](#)

⁷⁷ Seidenberg, 2017

⁷⁸ [Foorman et al., 2016](#); Seidenberg, 2017; National Research Council, 1998

Section 4: Reading Models Based in Research

Learning to read and write is complex; yet, literacy researchers have made significant strides in working to demystify these processes. The science of reading represents over five decades of research, inclusive of studies across the world and spanning multiple disciplines (i.e., cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, education, implementation science, linguistics, neuroscience, school psychology). This body of knowledge informs how reading skills develop and describes the cognitive processes that occur in the brain when students learn to read. It also sheds light on why some students have difficulty, how educators can most effectively assess and teach, and how data can be used to improve student outcomes.

SCIENCE OF READING

The Science of Reading

The Basics

There are so many pieces to the Science of Reading that it can be difficult to know where to start. Here are a few highlights about what the Science of Reading IS and what it IS NOT. This knowledge will help you on your journey to teaching all children, including those with diverse needs and cultural backgrounds, to read.

What it IS

A Collection of Research

Research, over time, from multiple fields of study using methods that confirm and disconfirm theories on how children best learn to read.

Teaching Based on the 5 Big Ideas

Phonemic Awareness - The ability to identify and play with individual sounds in spoken words.

Phonics - Reading instruction on understanding how letters and groups of letters link to sounds to form letter-sound relationships and spelling patterns.

Fluency - The ability to read words, phrases, sentences, and stories correctly, with enough speed and expression.

Vocabulary - Knowing what words mean and how to say and use them correctly.

Comprehension - The ability to understand what you are reading.

Ever Evolving

There is new research and evidence all the time. As populations, communities, and approaches evolve, so should practice.

Science of reading is aligned with “neurological and cognitive science studies of how brains process written words,”⁷⁹ and includes a broad collection of research from multiple fields of study including cognitive science, learning sciences, literacy research, and instructional science and research broadly. The “science of reading” captures this comprehensive, ever-evolving, research base that informs literacy instruction for all learners.⁸⁰

Within Oregon’s Early Literacy Framework, this definition of the science of reading reinforces the essential role it plays in informing literacy instruction. Reading research provides fundamental information about reading and it deserves to be recognized as such. Furthermore, it underscores the complexity and richness of literacy instruction. Amanda P. Goodwin, co-editor of the academic journal Reading Research Quarterly, describes the science of reading as: “not just phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension but also language development, motivation, dyslexia, the reading of digital texts, multilingual literacy, the literacies of Black students and other historically minoritized student groups...”⁸¹

Ultimately, the term science of reading can be interpreted in divisive ways or in informative ways; the goal in this framework is to use the science of reading as a term to bring clarity and common ground to move Oregon forward in supporting the literacy development to all students.

What it IS NOT

A program, an intervention, or a product that you can buy.

The Science of Reading could be considered an approach to teaching reading that is based on decades of research and evidence. It is NOT a specific program.

Phonics-based programs that drill phonics skills.

Phonics is an integral part of teaching reading based on science, but it is just one of the five big ideas that should be taught so all children can learn to read.

Complete and no more study needs to be done.

As with any science, it is never complete. We can always know more. More study happens all the time and researchers, teachers, and families can work together to bring the best research into classrooms.

Research information is hereby reported to the National Center of Reading Research from the Oregon Department of Education in partnership with the Office of Statewide Educator Program Award # 1080020064. This report is also reported as part of the authors and staff of the National Center of Reading Research, U.S. Department of Education. Visit www.ncrel.gov for more information on the National Government Copyright Clearance Center.

Figure 2. The Science of Reading

79 [Shanahan, 2021](#)
 80 [National Center on Improving Literacy, 2022](#)
 81 [Heller, 2022](#)

Five Models of Reading and the Essential Components of Literacy

The following five reading models reflect past and present research findings and hold important insight into how children acquire literacy skills that are paramount for shaping and reshaping how literacy instruction is approached and designed. While there are many models of reading, these are commonly used models to illustrate the core ideas of reading research:

1. The Five Pillars of Reading
2. The Simple View of Reading
3. Scarborough’s Rope
4. The Four-Part Processing Model
5. The Active View of Reading

These models are not methods, techniques, or programs; however, they help educators understand the interrelated components, or smaller parts, that comprise reading and writing. No single reading model captures all of the components; for this reason, it is important to draw from multiple models.

Several components of literacy from across these models are reinforced throughout the framework: oral language, concepts of print, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, alphabetic principle, fluency, automaticity, background knowledge, vocabulary, text comprehension, and writing (written expression and spelling).

This section describes how each model contributes to the interplay and interdependence of these components. [Section 3: Oral Language as the Root of Literacy Development](#), [Section 5: Foundational Skills](#), and [Section 6: Writing, Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, & Background Knowledge](#) examine more closely the components elevated by these models, describe the relationship between the components, and support the connection of theory to practice by highlighting instructional implications for each.

1. The Five Pillars of Reading

In 2000, the National Reading Panel identified five components as part of a comprehensive system for English literacy instruction:

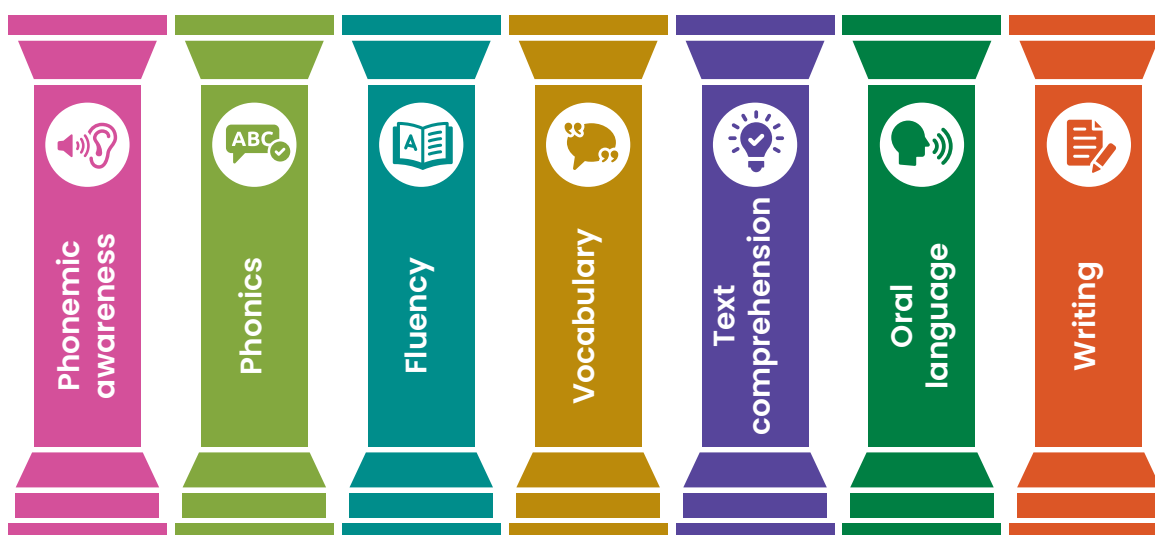
- **Phonemic awareness:** an awareness of, and the ability to, manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.
- **Phonics:** the study and use of sound/spelling correspondences and syllable patterns to help students read written words.
- **Fluency:** reading text with sufficient speed, accuracy, and expression to support comprehension.
- **Vocabulary:** the body of words and their meanings that students must understand to comprehend text.
- **Text comprehension:** the ability to make meaning using specific skills and strategies, vocabulary, background knowledge, and verbal reasoning skills.

Over the last two decades, research has built on the above original components to include oral language and written expression as additional ingredients to cultivate students' literacy development:⁸²

- **Oral language:** "Sometimes called spoken language, oral language includes speaking and listening—the ways that humans communicate with one another. Oral language skills provide the foundation for word reading and comprehension. They are at the heart of listening and reading comprehension, serving as a predictor for both."⁸³ (See [Section 3: Oral Language as the Root of Literacy Development](#))
- **Writing (written expression and spelling):** Writing was added, "due to the reciprocal relationship between written expression and text comprehension."⁸⁴ (See [Section 6: Writing, Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, & Background Knowledge](#))

Figure three represents the original five pillars of reading and two additional components.

Figure 3. Pillars of Reading (adapted to include writing and oral language)



2. The Simple View of Reading

As its name implies, this model reinforces a straightforward interpretation of reading that continues to inform a core conceptual idea around reading in which decoding and language comprehension are both essential to reading comprehension and skilled reading. This model is widely used and referenced in relation to the science of reading and empirically validated in over 150 scientific studies.⁸⁵ It includes two key components, decoding (or word recognition) and language comprehension (the ability to understand spoken language). Both must be present for reading comprehension to be possible. This reinforces the importance of early oral language development composition, both before and during the early grades – beginning formal schooling with strong oral language paves the way for reading comprehension as students begin to learn how to decode and recognize words. Figure 4 represents the Simple View of Reading.

⁸² [Graham & Hebert, 2011](#)

⁸³ [Literacy How, 2020](#)

⁸⁴ [Colorado Department of Education, 2020](#)

⁸⁵ [The Reading League, 2022](#)

Figure 4. Simple View of Reading



Based upon more recent advances in reading research, the decoding "side" of the equation may be referred to as fluent word reading, acknowledging the importance of automaticity and fluency in word recognition.⁸⁶

The Simple View is most useful for understanding the abilities that underlie early reading comprehension and may help in understanding both how to design effective reading instruction and the source of reading struggles for some students. Intervention for children who are not yet skilled readers is most effective when it addresses the specific area of need, which may be decoding, language comprehension, or both.⁸⁷ For example, the Simple View can also inform an understanding of skilled reading and three different types of reading difficulties:⁸⁸

- A typically developing reader has both strong word recognition skills and strong comprehension of oral language. This leads to strong reading comprehension or skilled reading.
- Students who are not yet strong readers need support in both areas.
- Hyperlexic students can read words at a level above their oral language comprehension. These students read quickly and accurately, but have difficulty comprehending what they just read.
- The term dyslexic is used to refer to students with strong language comprehension, but weak word recognition (decoding) skills.

Identifying students' individual needs through this lens can help inform teachers' instructional next steps and ensure that interventions are appropriately matched to a student's area(s) of need. For more information on supporting students with reading difficulties, see [Section 8: Reaching All Learners](#).

THE SIMPLE VIEW OF READING AND MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS⁸⁹

Research has shown that English learners can achieve word reading proficiency that matches their English monolingual peers when they receive evidence-based instruction that responds to their linguistic strengths and needs.⁹⁰ While all students should receive instruction in both fluent word reading and language comprehension to secure solid reading comprehension,⁹¹ multilingual learners benefit from more of both, with considerations for how a focus on those skills is culturally responsive and ensures a well-rounded learning experience.

86 [DESE, 2022b](#)

87 Snow, 2018

88 Gough & Tunmer, 1986

89 [DESE, 2022b](#)

90 Vargas et al., 2021

91 Verhoeven & van Leeuwe, 2012

3. Scarborough's Reading Rope⁹²

Scarborough's Reading Rope is a visual metaphor for developing skills over time that expands upon the essential components of the Simple View of Reading. This model asserts that, for either of the two essential components of reading (decoding and language comprehension) to develop successfully, students need to be taught the skills necessary for each of those two domains. In their development, these subcomponents intertwine and become increasingly strategic and automatic over time to develop fluent, skilled reading. This interweaving of skills can occur early in literacy development and continues as students become more skillful readers.

Figure 5. Scarborough's Rope Representation⁹³

Language Comprehension

Background Knowledge
(facts, concepts, etc.)

Vocabulary
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

Language Structures
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

Verbal Reasoning
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

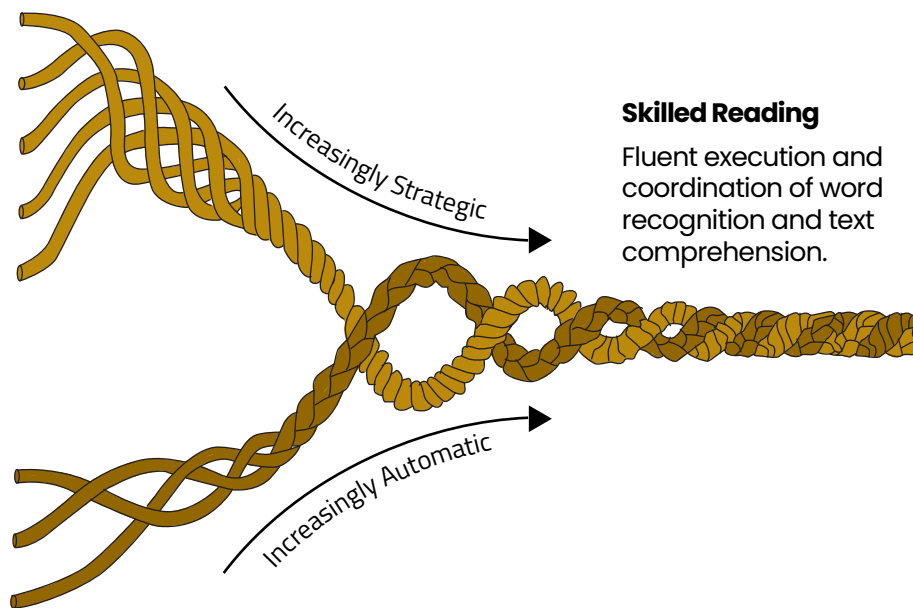
Literacy Knowledge
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

Word Recognition

Phonological Awareness
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

Decoding
(alphabetic principle,
spelling-sound
correspondences)

Sight Recognition
(of familiar words)



Recent research supports that reading, writing, and oral language are so highly related that they can be thought of as a single literacy category⁹⁴ and that proficiency in reading comprehension can be explained by the overlap in word recognition and oral language skills.⁹⁵ This research expands the Simple View of Reading and also provides an empirical base for the strands of language and word recognition that become interwoven in Scarborough's reading rope.⁹⁶ Importantly, this research also expands the five components of the National Reading Panel Report⁹⁷ to include oral language (not just vocabulary) and writing (spelling and written expression).

92 Scarborough, 2001

93 [Duke & Cartwright, 2021](#); Scarborough, 2001

94 Mehta et al., 2005

95 Foorman et al., 2018b; Lonigan et al., 2018

96 Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Scarborough, 2001

97 [National Reading Panel, 2000](#)

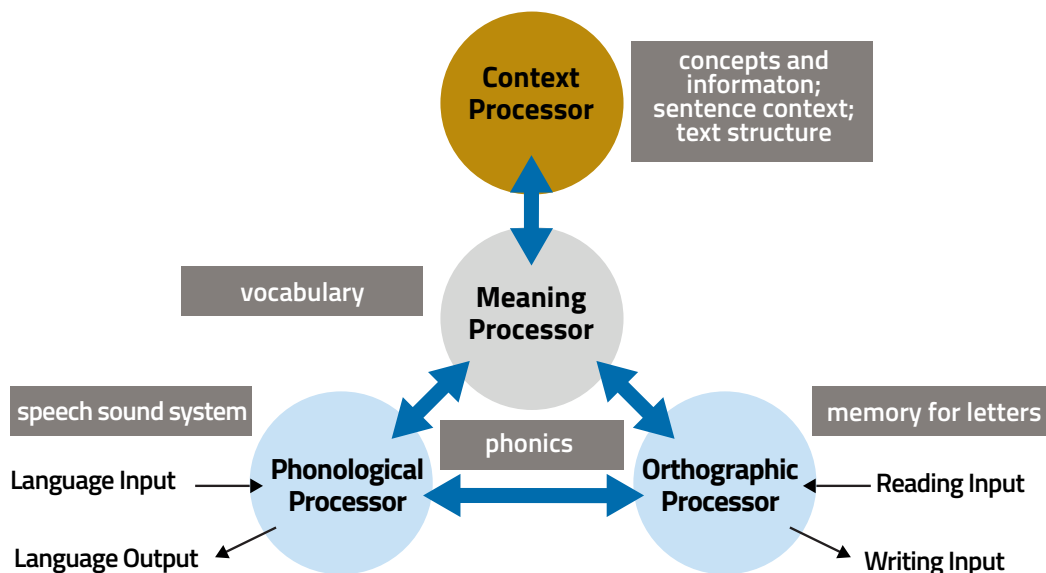
4. The Four-Part Processing Model⁹⁸

The Four-Part Processing Model for word recognition is a model that illustrates how the brain reads or recognizes words and can be useful in guiding educators' understanding of the underlying processes involved in word recognition, language comprehension, and overall reading comprehension. The model describes four processors, or areas in the brain, that are active when reading:

- **Phonological Processor:** Detects, recalls and understands sounds that make up spoken words and controls the production of sounds and words in spoken language.
- **Orthographic Processor:** Recognizes, stores and recalls the letters and combination of letters used in written language and stores print information needed to efficiently recognize and recall words when reading and writing/spelling.
- **Meaning Processor:** Interprets word meanings and organizes words into meaningful categories according to spelling patterns, concepts, word relationships, word meanings, and; meaningful parts of words
- **Context Processor:** Supports the meaning processor by interpreting words based on other language in the text, experiences, and background knowledge

The orthographic and phonological processors first work together to decode a word by connecting the word's speech sounds to its symbols (phonics). Once the word is read, the meaning processor considers all possible definitions of the word (vocabulary), while the context processor helps support the meaning processor by applying context and background knowledge about what is being read.

Figure 6. **Four Part Processing Model of Word Recognition**⁹⁹



The Four Part Processing Model helps to illustrate how different elements of instruction support the different brain processes required for reading and writing, and can inform how to provide additional support for students struggling to read.

⁹⁸ Seidenberg and McClelland, 1989 and Dehaene 2013

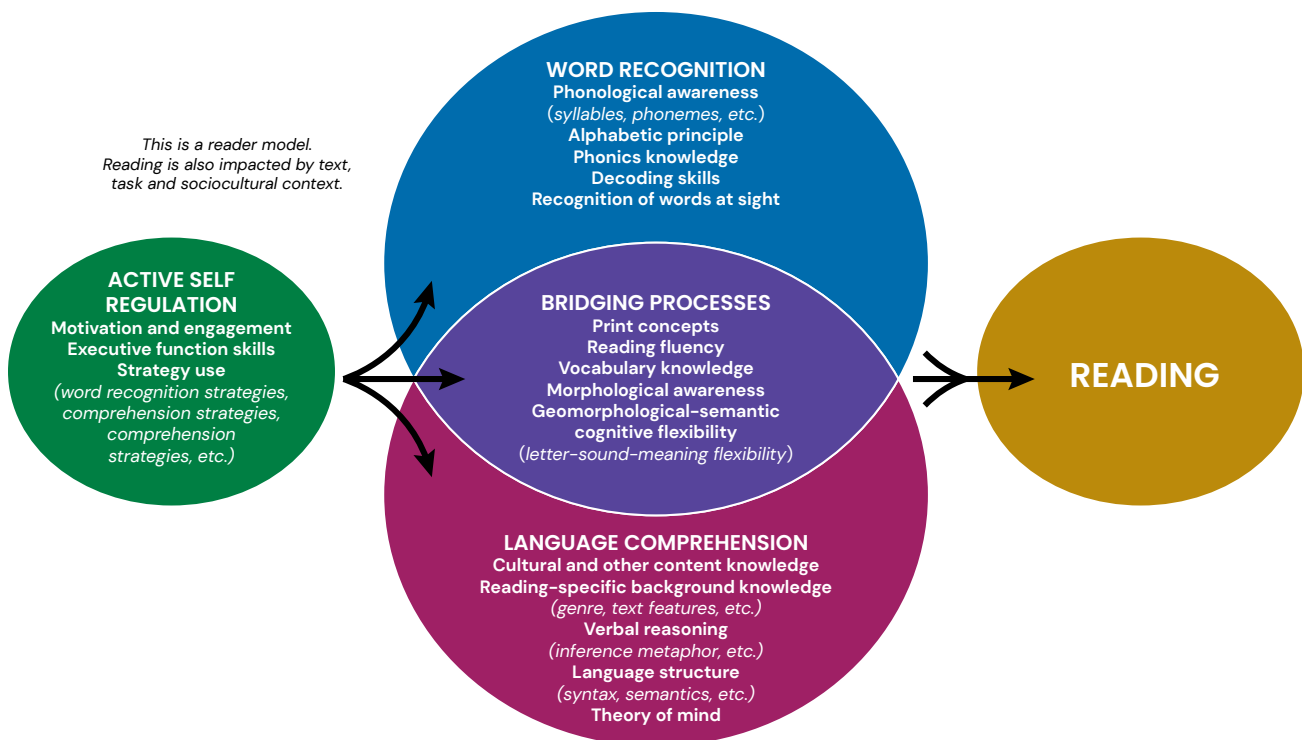
⁹⁹ [Wyoming Department of Education, 2019, p.13](#)

5. The Active View of Reading

The Active View of Reading is a recent model of reading that expands the Simple View of Reading to add text, task, and sociocultural context.¹⁰⁰ This model also incorporates research on executive function skills¹⁰¹ and comprehension monitoring¹⁰² and depicts a multidimensional context for literacy.¹⁰³ At its core is the belief that more than just word recognition and language comprehension are needed for children to develop as “active readers” (readers with the literacy skills to successfully navigate text while feeling empowered and engaged). Key ideas supported by the Active View of Reading follow:

- In addition to decoding and language comprehension, executive function skills, comprehension strategy use, and motivation support reading comprehension.
- Reading processes, such as vocabulary and morphological awareness (understanding parts of words, like Latin roots or prefixes), help bridge decoding and language comprehension.
- Cultural knowledge and content knowledge are constructs that contribute to reading success.

Figure 7. Active View of Reading representation¹⁰⁴



This model reinforces a bridging process between word recognition and language comprehension development. In other words, the relationship between word recognition and language comprehension represents an equally important function of reading. For example, a strong vocabulary improves the ability to decode unfamiliar words. Similarly, knowledge of another language may influence word recognition in English.¹⁰⁵

100 [Duke & Cartwright, 2021](#)

101 Kieffer & Christodoulou, 2019

102 Castles et al., 2018; [Shanahan et al. 2010](#)

103 [Duke & Cartwright, 2021](#)

104 [Duke & Cartwright, 2021](#)

105 [Duke & Cartwright, 2021](#)

The Active View also reinforces the role of active self-regulation in the reading process and reinforces the larger sociocultural context of reading. Competent and confident readers not only have strong word recognition and language comprehension skills, they actively self-monitor in order to apply skills and strategies while they read so that they can actively make meaning and read fluently. Most importantly, the Active View of Reading model provides substantial grounding for culturally responsive practice as an influencing factor in learning to read and write.¹⁰⁶

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Reading research, often termed “the science of reading,” studies how reading skills develop and helps us to understand what happens in the brain when students learn to read.
- The following five reading models reflect past and present research findings and hold important insight into how children acquire literacy skills that are paramount for shaping and reshaping how literacy instruction is approached and designed:
 - The Five Pillars of Reading
 - The Simple View of Reading
 - Scarborough’s Rope
 - The Four-Part Processing Model
 - The Active View of Reading
- Generally, these reading models emphasize the interaction between:
 - word-identification, and
 - language comprehension.
- This interaction results in reading comprehension through:
 - knowledge of the English writing system;
 - linguistic knowledge;
 - background knowledge; and
 - the type of text, nature of the task, sociocultural context, and executive functions.
- Executive functions of memory and attention can be enhanced by teaching self-monitoring strategies and motivating students to engage with text.
- A major roadblock to comprehending text is fluency. These models emphasize the importance of accurate and efficient word identification and recognition so that executive skills can be devoted to comprehending text.

LEARN MORE

- [Which Reading Model Would Best Guide School Improvement?](#)
- [The Impact of Word Knowledge Instruction on Literacy Outcomes in Grade 5](#)
- [The Science of Reading Progresses: Communicating Advances Beyond the Simple View of Reading](#)
- [What is the Science of Reading?](#)

¹⁰⁶ [Duke & Cartwright, 2021](#)

Section 5: Foundational Skills

Foundational skills refer to the tightly interrelated but discrete sub-skills (e.g., phonics, phonological awareness, concepts of print, fluency) specific to each language. They are the smaller, interconnected pieces that allow a child’s brain to break the alphabetic code in order to read fluently and make meaning of words on the page. Foundational skills in the teaching of literacy are essential. Unlike oral language, which develops naturally through incidental learning in the home and community, learning to read and write requires explicit instruction in foundational skills (print concepts, phonics, and phonemic awareness). For this reason, school leaders and educators design schoolwide systems to provide students with ample opportunities (especially in early grades) to practice foundational skills in culturally responsive contexts and receive consistent feedback as skills progress is paramount to ensuring that students learn to read.

Although this section is separate from and precedes [Section 6: Writing, Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, & Background Knowledge](#), it would be inaccurate to imply that grades K–2 are all about foundational skills and grades 3–5 are all about background knowledge, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing. The reading models help convey this point of overlap.¹⁰⁷



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107 B. R. Foorman, personal communication, March, 10, 2023



Overview of Foundational Skills¹⁰⁸

Each foundational skill is described below in Table 1, along with commonly associated terms, to promote shared understanding and clarity. Reading and writing skills in English will need to be adjusted for multilingual learners based on the target language of instruction. For example, phonological awareness skills can transfer across languages when students have opportunities to build these skills in their native language and English. Additionally, multilingual learners developing literacy in English instructional programs will need a strong foundation of oral language development in order to reach higher levels of English reading fluency, whereas multilingual learners in dual language programs will already have the oral language skills to develop reading fluency if the literacy instruction is in their home language. [Section 8: Reaching All Learners](#) of this framework adds and further addresses the development of foundational skills for multilingual students.

Table 1. The Foundational Skills (A cursory look)¹⁰⁹

Foundational Skill	Description	Related Skills & Concepts
<p>Print Concepts</p>	<p>Print concepts include understanding the features and organization of printed texts, letter formation, and recognizing distinctive features of letters. These include some discrete skills and others that overlap with phonological awareness and phonics activities over time, such as recognizing that sentences consist of words and spoken words are represented by groups of letters. Print concepts are primarily a kindergarten skill, aside from a focus on the features of a sentence (capitalization, punctuation) in first grade.</p> <p>Print concepts are supported when basic fine motor and perceptual skills are developed (i.e. how to write upper/lower case letters and distinguish between similar letters like b/d/p.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return sweep: moving your eyes from the end of one line of text to the start of another line. • One-to-one correspondence of words: matching the printed word to the spoken word. • Letter recognition: visually recognizing the name of a printed letter.

¹⁰⁸ Derived from [Foorman et al., 2016](#)

¹⁰⁹ Adapted from [Student Achievement Partners, 2020](#)

Foundational Skill	Description	Related Skills & Concepts
<p>Phonological Awareness</p>	<p>Phonological awareness refers to awareness of the segments of sound in words.¹¹⁰ Phonological awareness is entirely oral and forms the building blocks for later reading before print is even introduced.</p> <p>Phonemic awareness is a subgroup of phonological awareness that refers to the specific ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. Phonemes are the smallest unit of sound within words. Phonemic awareness, including blending sounds into words and segmenting words into sounds, has a direct and significant effect on learning to read and spell. Like phonological awareness, phonemic awareness is entirely oral.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral Rhymes and Alliteration: recognizing the beginning and ending sounds of words. (Example: The end of the word “cast” sounds just like “blast”. These words rhyme.) • Words: hearing and counting the number of words when we read or speak. (Example: I hear five words in the sentence “I ran to the cone.”) • Syllables: A syllable is a word or word part that contains a vowel or, in spoken language, a vowel sound (Example: I hear two syllables in the word “kitten.”) • Onset/Rime: the part of a syllable before the vowel (onset) and the vowel and the consonants that follow (rime). • Phonemes: an individual unit of speech in a word that can be heard discreetly. There are 44 phonemes in the English language: 25 consonants and 19 vowels. • Segmenting: breaking, or segmenting a word into its separate sounds (cat= /c/ /a/ /t/) • Blending: combining, or blending the separate sounds in a word to say the word (/c/ /a/ /t/= cat) • Manipulating: adding, deleting, or substituting sounds in a word

110 Foorman et al., 2016

Foundational Skill	Description	Related Skills & Concepts
<p>Phonics and Word Recognition</p>	<p>Phonics consists of learning sound and spelling patterns in a distinct sequence that allows students to identify the relationship between sounds of spoken language and the letters that represent those sounds in print. Phonemic awareness connects directly to phonics, as students must be able to distinguish the sounds in order to recognize them in written form. In phonics instruction, decoding and encoding go hand-in-hand.</p> <p>The goal of phonics instruction is to help children to learn and be able to use the alphabetic principle. The alphabetic principle is the understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds. Phonics instruction helps children learn the relationships between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decoding: Translating a word from print to speech by using knowledge of phoneme-grapheme, or sound-symbol correspondences. • Encoding: Translating speech into print (writing) using knowledge of phoneme-grapheme, or sound-symbol correspondences. • Automaticity: the ability to decode words in print correctly and instantly. As automaticity increases, readers are able to focus more attention on constructing meaning from text rather than decoding. • Word Recognition: Quick identification (recognition) of a previously learned word and its meaning; recognizing words in the moment of reading. • Graphemes: a letter or combination of letters that represent a sound (phoneme) in a syllable or word. • Sound and Spelling Pattern: the phonics-based skill of focus in a scope and sequence, usually a letter, letter pair, or word part.

Foundational Skill	Description	Related Skills & Concepts
<p>Alphabetic Principle</p>	<p>Children's reading development is dependent on their understanding of the alphabetic principle – the idea that letters and letter patterns represent the sounds of spoken language. Learning that there are predictable relationships between sounds and letters allows children to apply these relationships to both familiar and unfamiliar words, and to begin to read with fluency.</p> <p>Children whose alphabetic knowledge is well developed can identify and name letters with ease and can begin to learn letter sounds and spelling patterns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alphabetic Awareness: Knowledge of letters of the alphabet coupled with the understanding that the alphabet represents the sounds of spoken language and the correspondence of spoken sounds to written language. • Alphabetic Understanding: Understanding that the left-to-right spellings of printed words represent their phonemes from first to last. • Decodable Text: Text in which the majority of words can be identified using their most common sounds. • Regular Word: A word in which all the letters represent their most common sound, in which the alphabetic principle can be applied. • Irregular Word: A word that cannot be decoded and must be identified by sight.
<p>Fluency</p>	<p>Reading fluency encompasses accuracy, the speed or rate of reading, and the ability to read materials with expression, and comprehension. Expression, or prosody, includes timing, phrasing, emphasis, and intonation. Fluency is built through word recognition that is automatic and fluid, allowing readers to focus on comprehension of the text. Teaching systematic phonemic awareness and phonics and applying these skills to texts allows students to build automaticity in word reading (and thereby comprehension). To build fluency over time, and to connect reading to meaning, it is important to build from a focus on accuracy for readers. Fluency represents the essential link between reading words quickly and accurately and understanding text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuracy: the ability to read words correctly. Over time, accuracy will lead to developing a bank of “sight words,” or words that are correctly and instantly recognized without applying decoding knowledge. • Rate: the speed at which a person reads. Fluent reading is not speed reading; an appropriate rate reflects an understanding of what is read and varies based on grade-level. • Prosody: reading with appropriate expression. Components of prosody include timing, phrasing, emphasis, and intonation. • Comprehension: the ability to synthesize, or make meaning from text.

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Instructional Considerations for Foundational Skills¹¹¹

Foundational skills instruction must be a part of the core curriculum and materials, and be integrated into protected daily literacy instruction, with opportunities to practice and apply these skills up to and beyond grade five as necessary. They cannot only be added as a supplementary component. Providing it only as supplemental content is not only inadequate for most students learning to read, but it can be especially detrimental to students who need additional support learning to break the code of written language.

Specific Strategies

More specifically, the following strategies help all students develop strong foundational skills, especially students with foundational reading and writing difficulties:¹¹²

- **Explicit instruction:**¹¹³ Emphasize active participation for students while providing modeling (I do), scaffolding (we do), and prompting (you do) until students can apply a skill independently.
- **Systematic instruction:** Teach skills intentionally and in a carefully planned sequence with each foundational skill presented in a logical and recommended sequence, beginning with simple skills and moving to more complex skills.
- **Precise, simple, and replicable language:** Use precise, simple language and ensure that instructions and explanations are short and clearly stated; use consistent language when modeling a reading skill or conducting a “think aloud.” Think-aloud effectively allows the teacher to demonstrate orally how a skilled reader thinks about a literacy task.
- **Repeated opportunities to practice, build fluency, and review:** Provide opportunities for teacher-supported guided practice of a previously taught skill, as well as opportunities for independent practice in which students work individually or in small groups. Embedded practice across the curriculum increases the maintenance and generalization of newly learned skills. This includes providing a “double dose” of instruction in which a previously taught skill is retaught, using small group or one-on-one instruction, and/or using technology to facilitate reading practice.¹¹⁴
- **Adequate time and exposure to decodable text:** When students read and re-read decodable texts, they apply skills practice in real-time and connect their phonics and decoding instruction to reading. Once students are able to apply their decoding skills with fluency, they can transition away from decodable texts to authentic texts that are written to inform, explain, entertain, or elicit a response. Focusing first on decodable texts to build and practice decoding skills provides a pathway for students to grow into texts that are not controlled by phonics.
- **Frequent opportunities to respond and interact:** Engage students by providing opportunities to respond in small groups. Active participation strategies include choral responses, whiteboards, response cards, or partner talk. For students with the most intensive needs, research suggests that groups of two to four students or one-on-one instruction may be the most effective.¹¹⁵
- **Specific error correction and high-quality feedback:** Provide students with both positive feedback and error correction.¹¹⁶ When students make errors, provide specific and precise feedback on the exact part of the incorrect process to ensure they do not continue to practice and solidify errors. Additionally, model the correct response and provide students with opportunities to practice the skill correctly to help cement the new learning.

¹¹¹ Derived from [Foorman et al., 2016](#)

¹¹² [Weingarten et al., 2018](#)

¹¹³ [Special Education Resource Project, n.d.](#)

¹¹⁴ Gersten et al., 2008

¹¹⁵ [Vaughn et al., 2012](#)

¹¹⁶ Hattie & Timperley, 2007

When teaching foundational skills, Table 2 provides a series of important pivots and shifts.

Table 2. Teaching Foundational Skills¹¹⁷

Instead of This:	Do This:
Loosely tending to the order of foundational skills and allowing for classroom-to-classroom variance...	Follow a clear, intentional scope and sequence based on the learning progression for foundational skills (Figure 8).
Spending a few minutes a day on foundational skills...	Ensure adequate instructional time is spent on teaching foundational skills, including related practice with decodable texts and writing. The amount of foundational skill instruction should be responsive to student needs and strengths.
Focusing only on English...	Make connections between English and a child's home language so that they can leverage existing knowledge and skills. Whenever possible, create opportunities for children to learn to read in their home language.
Patching together an assortment of favorite lessons and randomly sourced supplemental materials...	Select and implement high-quality instructional materials for core instruction that provide guaranteed and viable curriculum across the school and district.

Learning Progressions

Across the K–5 continuum, literacy instruction must systematically build students' foundational skills alongside the application of meaning-making skills and knowledge. Once students receive instruction in particular skills based on a learning progression, they will progress more quickly when provided with opportunities to apply those skills in the context of connected text and authentic reading and writing.¹¹⁸ Just as literacy learning progresses in complexity over time, the teaching also responsively advances instruction in complexity to ensure continuity and alignment in the arc of a student's literacy trajectory.

It is also important to note that skills may develop beyond the grade level suggested in the progression, and students may need intensified instruction in skills that need more development.

THREE KEY RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE USE OF LEARNING PROGRESSIONS INCLUDE:

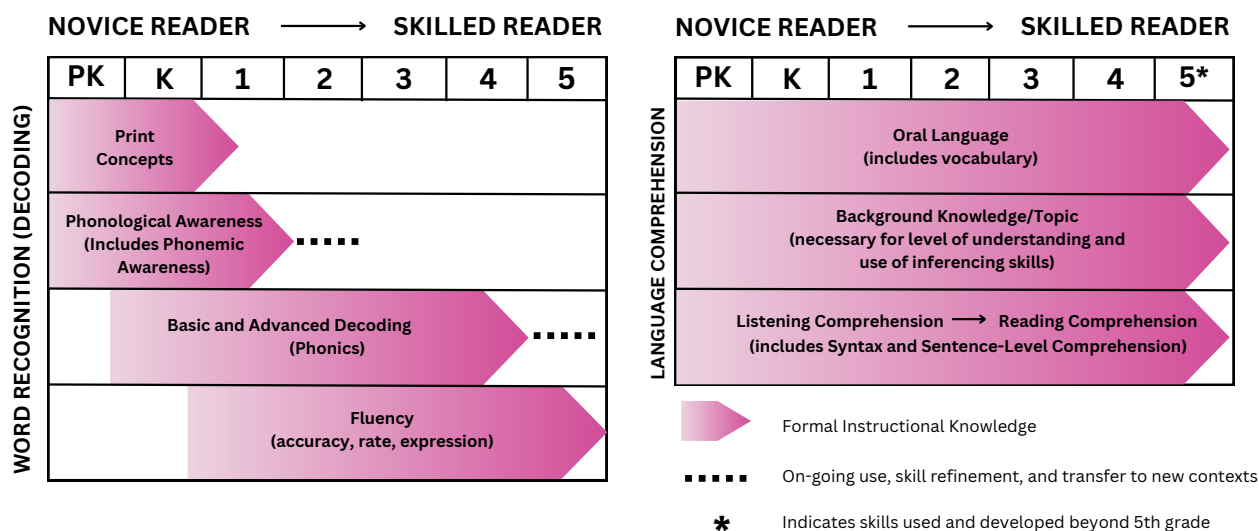
- [Oregon's ELA K-5 Foundational Reading Skills Progression](#) – serves as an instructional support tool for planning purposes to assist foundational reading skills development.
- Achieve the Core's [Foundational Skills Guidance Documents: Grades K-2](#) provide examples and guidance for planning literacy instruction in K-2.
- Head Start's [Planned Language Approach](#) provides resources for education staff and families to support language and literacy development for children ages birth to five in the key skill areas of Alphabet Knowledge and Early Writing; Background Knowledge; Book Knowledge and Print Concepts; Oral Language and Vocabulary; and Phonological Awareness.

¹¹⁷ [Student Achievement Partners, n.d.-a](#)

¹¹⁸ Armbruster et al., 2006; Blevins, 2016

Figure 8 outlines a learning progression, informed by reading research, which is designed to develop novice readers into skilled readers spanning pre-kindergarten through 5th grade. The progression of foundational skills (for word recognition/decoding) is presented with the progression for the elements of language comprehension to illustrate how the design of instruction throughout students' development and grade levels work together to support skilled reading over time. Each bar represents an evidence-based estimate for when typical readers master these skills. These learning progressions give educators a guide to the elements of literacy they need to prioritize, including foundational skills, when sequencing their instruction to meet the needs of a broad range of learners.

Figure 8. Foundational Skills Learning Progression¹¹⁹



High-Quality Instructional Materials

Access to high-quality instructional materials is a key lever for supporting literacy teaching and learning, and this is especially true for teaching foundational skills. All approved materials provide explicit and systematic instruction and diagnostic support in concepts of print, letter recognition, phonemic awareness, phonics, word awareness and vocabulary development, syntax, and fluency.

A growing and compelling research base suggests that high-quality instructional materials can yield significant improvements in students' learning¹²⁰ especially when paired with high-quality professional learning that supports implementation. Given this, effective curriculum adoptions are also paired with high-quality professional learning for strong implementation.

Oregon's language arts instructional materials adoption criteria for grades K-2 and grades 3-5 include foundational skills. Additionally, to be included on the state-approved list,¹²¹ the adopted core language arts curriculum must also include high-quality texts, text-dependent discussions and writing, building knowledge, text-dependent questions and tasks, supports and scaffolds for all learners, cultural representation, and accessibility. Every curriculum on the State Board-approved adoption list meets this minimum criterion. Any adopted instructional materials should be evaluated for culturally responsiveness and adapted or supplemented to meet the strengths and needs of the classroom community. Reviewing, adopting, and supporting the implementation of high-quality instructional materials is one of the most important jobs of education leaders.

¹¹⁹ [Student Achievement Partners, 2020a](#)

¹²⁰ [ODE, 2022b](#)

¹²¹ [ODE, 2018b](#)

Explicit and Systematic Instruction

To learn to read, the majority of children require explicit instruction and practice with foundational reading and multiple opportunities with differentiated scaffolding to gain fluency with grade-level texts. Explicit and systematic instruction targeting foundational skills can also help prevent students from experiencing reading difficulties and mistakenly being identified as needing special education.

Structured literacy is an approach to literacy instruction that incorporates the science of reading research and employs explicit, systematic, diagnostic, and responsive teaching of the language and literacy skills needed to be a successful reader.¹²² The components and methods of structured literacy instruction are beneficial for all, but critical for students with reading disabilities, including dyslexia.

“Structured literacy describes an approach to reading, writing, speaking, and listening instruction that is explicit, systematic, and intensive. In structured literacy, teachers logically sequence the presentation and integration of language components that contribute to skilled writing and reading comprehension. Instruction directly addresses skills, follows a continuum of skill complexity, and is supported with clear models, step-by-step demonstrations, and ongoing review. Research supports the use of structured literacy to maximize the learning of all students, including English Learners, those with dyslexia, and children with other learning disabilities. If implemented in core (Tier 1) instruction and tiered interventions, structured literacy may prevent or remediate reading difficulties in the vast majority of students at risk for academic concerns.”

ALL Ohio, 2022

Explicit and systematic foundational skills instruction includes:¹²³

- Fostering students’ phonemic awareness and knowledge of letter names and sounds in early grades, including:
 - Developing awareness of the segments of sounds (phonemes) in speech and how they link to letters.
 - Teaching students to recognize and manipulate segments of sound in speech (phonemic awareness).
 - Teaching students letter–sound relationships (phonics).
 - Using word–building and other activities to link students’ knowledge of phonemic awareness and its relationship to letter–sound knowledge.
- Teaching students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words, including:
 - Looking at letters from left to right within a word, blending corresponding sounds into words using continuous blending. Instructing students in common sound–spelling patterns.
 - Recognizing common word parts.
 - Reading decodable words in isolation and text.

Note: The practice of reading discussed here is not the same in all languages, rather there are languages that are read with different directionality e.g. Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, Urdu, Kashmiri, Pashto, Uighur, Sorani Kurdish, Punjabi, Sindhi, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese as well as languages that have character based systems e.g. Kanji. It is therefore important that classroom teachers work closely with the English language development teacher in their school or district to ensure that multilingual learners are provided proper language supports to ensure that they are both developing their native language (L1) as well as English.

¹²² [International Dyslexia Association, 2020](#)

¹²³ Foorman, 2023.

Foundational Skills Development for Multilingual Learners

Multilingual learners’ literacy outcomes, as with all learners’ literacy outcomes, are directly related to the quality of evidence-based instruction they receive. The quality of instruction includes how the teacher responds to the student’s linguistic strengths and needs. Effective foundational literacy instruction builds upon the student’s home language and a diverse linguistic repertoire.

“Effective approaches recognize that early literacy development is occurring in the context of first and second (or subsequent) language development and leverage the dual language development process as children are introduced to the skills and practices of literacy.”

Herrera et al., 2022

When designing and implementing instruction for multilingual learners, the following considerations will help foster success.

In All Languages: Start with Oral Language

Oral language proficiency and listening comprehension play a significant role throughout all stages of literacy development, increasingly so as students progress through the grades and the English-language demands of reading and writing increase.¹²⁴ When students have strong oral language skills and vocabulary in their home language, they are set up to recognize the sounds, words, and structures in another language. Multilingual learners are simultaneously developing their foundational literacy skills alongside their understanding of language. As a result, a stronger emphasis on the meaning of words in the language of instruction ensures they are able to make connections between the meaning of what they are reading and the skill of decoding words and text.¹²⁵ Additionally, multilingual learners need frequent opportunities to practice new language skills and concepts to support retention.¹²⁶

In All Languages: Build Phonological Awareness

Research suggests that the same principles of systematic and explicit phonologically-based support that undergird instruction for English-proficient students also benefit literacy development for students learning English.¹²⁷ Phonological awareness can be supported in early childhood classrooms through activities such as listening to and creating rhymes and word and language games. While there may be differences between languages, these activities can be practiced in both the home language and English. These strategic moves are effective ways to support children in focusing on the sounds of language, which prepares them for skills such as decoding words.

Different languages have different sets of phonemes, so it is especially important for multilingual learners to understand the similarities and differences in the two systems. “As children are introduced to the alphabet and exposed to text, the phonological distinctions between the sounds of their two languages become an essential element in preparing for foundational phonics skills and decoding in two languages.”

Herrera et al., 2022

124 Goldenberg et al., 2020

125 Goldenberg et al., 2020; Perfetti & Hart, 2002

126 [Baker et al., 2014](#)

127 [August & Shanahan, 2010](#)

In All Languages: Develop Wide Vocabulary

Research is clear that high-quality vocabulary development be an intentional focus throughout a multilingual student’s instructional day.¹²⁸ As children are developing language, it is important that they are exposed to books and texts that provide expressive and precise vocabulary in all of their languages. When educators can help students recognize the relationship between vocabulary in the home language and English, students benefit.¹²⁹ If the linguistic transfer involves a simple concept or a one-to-one correspondence between the student’s primary language, teachers may be able to help students even when the teacher may know very little of the primary language. But if the concepts are difficult or there is no clear word for the concept in the student’s native language, teachers will need more extensive knowledge of the primary language to be able to help the student.¹³⁰

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Foundational skills in the teaching of literacy are essential.
- While oral language begins to develop naturally through incidental learning in the home and community, learning to read and write requires explicit instruction in foundational skills (print concepts, phonics, and phonemic awareness).
- Effective teaching of foundational skills requires explicit, systematic reading instruction and follows an intentional progression that:
 - moves early readers and writers along a continuum in the areas of print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency, and
 - provides daily opportunities to practice foundational reading and writing skills and to gain fluency with grade-level text (see Figure 8).
- Structured literacy instruction employs explicit, systematic, diagnostic, and responsive teaching of the language and literacy skills needed to be a successful reader and writer. This approach is beneficial for all, and critical for students experiencing reading disabilities, including dyslexia.
- Developing oral language, phonological awareness, and vocabulary across each language is particularly important for multilingual learners.
- Foundational skill areas are addressed in the Oregon English Language Arts and Literacy Standards for students in grades K–5.
- Reviewing, adopting, and supporting the implementation of high-quality instructional materials is one of the most important jobs of education leaders.

LEARN MORE

- [English Language Arts and Literacy Standards \(from ODE\)](#)
- [Structured literacy instruction](#)
- [Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade](#)
- [Reading 101: A Guide to Teaching Reading and Writing](#)
- [Evaluating Materials for Culturally Responsive Practices](#)
- [Reading Foundational Skills Key Concepts and Terms](#)
- [Planned Language Approach](#)
- [English Language Arts Curriculum Reviews](#)
- [Developing Foundational Reading Skills in the Early Grades](#)

128 [Baker et al., 2014](#)

129 [Herrera et al., 2022](#)

130 [Baker et al., 2014](#)

Section 6: Writing, Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, & Background Knowledge

Foundational skills are essential to breaking the code of written language; without the integration and connection to other literacy skills, however, they are insufficient for deep literacy learning. Despite the common refrain that children are “learning to read” in K-2 and “reading to learn” in 3-5, this framing separates building foundational skills from the application of foundational skills in ways that are misleading. The necessary relationship and sequencing of reading skills is illustrated in Figure 8.

It is true that as students increase their ability to automatically recognize letters, sounds, and words they have more access to understanding and expressing complex ideas and vocabulary. It is also true that the reciprocal relationship between foundational skills, background knowledge, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing is vital to a child’s literacy development K-5. The reading models underscore the interdependence of foundational skills alongside writing, vocabulary development, and language.¹³¹ Given this, reading and writing for purpose, engaging with authentic texts, building background knowledge and vocabulary, and writing are all skills that are just as “foundational” to developing literacy skills.

Engaging students in literacy learning means being clear about why reading and writing matter. Creating purpose for literacy includes engaging students in learning about themselves and their world. Equally important is spotlighting actual examples where reading, writing, listening, and speaking have empowered people toward making a positive difference in their communities and the world. When students understand and experience the ways in which literacy correlates to agency and joy, purpose takes root. Part of being an effective reader and writer is understanding the uses and purposes of text as well as the power of text to communicate, convey information, narrate, and entertain. Children become readers and writers because they experience print as useful and books as beneficial or enjoyable.¹³²

¹³¹ B. Foorman, personal conversation, March 24, 2023

¹³² [Herrera et al., 2022](#)



“[T]he relationship between letters and sounds is necessary and nonnegotiable when learning to read in alphabetic writing systems... Yet reading scientists, teachers and the public know that reading involves more than alphabetic skills.’ Good literacy instruction teaches these skills explicitly while building on what students already know (including their culture and home language); building background knowledge about the world to support reading comprehension; and integrating reading, writing, speaking and listening to provide reinforcement for understanding.”

Darling-Hammond, 2022

Text-Rich Environment and Connected Text

Students should spend a substantial portion of their day engaged in listening to, reading, thinking, talking, and writing about texts. This means that each student should read connected text (starting with relatively short phrases, then sentences, then multiple related sentences, paragraphs, and longer narratives) every day to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.¹³³ The amount of time students spend reading and listening to text is a major contributor to the improvement in students’ vocabulary and comprehension.¹³⁴ One of the most efficient ways to learn vocabulary, in addition to receiving explicit vocabulary instruction, is to acquire it while reading. Recent research demonstrates that students learn up to four times as many words when they are reading texts about conceptually coherent topics for a period of time.¹³⁵ The selection of texts for classroom instruction will vary depending on the instructional purpose and the student’s reading ability. In general, students should have access to diverse genres and wide-ranging content, including both narrative and informational texts.

“Building knowledge need not—and should not—wait until students possess some level of foundational reading skills.”

ASCD, 2023a

Building Background Knowledge & Vocabulary

As described in many of the models in [Section 4: Reading Models Based in Research](#), background knowledge and vocabulary play critical roles in students’ reading and writing abilities.

Background Knowledge

There is a vast body of research that supports the role of background knowledge learned through oral language or print,¹³⁶ in students’ ability to make meaning of and comprehend text.¹³⁷ Developing knowledge allows students to, for example, choose between multiple meanings of words and make inferences from a text that require background knowledge. Background knowledge is key to understanding various elements of language, such as idioms, especially for emergent multilingual students.¹³⁸ Just as high-quality instructional materials are important in developing foundational skills, they are also critical to effectively building background knowledge over time.

133 [Foorman et al., 2016](#); Foorman, 2020

134 Wegenhart, 2015

135 Landauer & Dumais, 1997

136 [ASCD, 2023a](#)

137 [Student Achievement Partners, 2015](#)

138 [Neuman et al., 2014](#)

“[O]nce print has been decoded into words, reading comprehension and listening comprehension requires the active construction of inferences that rely on background knowledge and are implicit in the text.”

Neuman et al., 2014

Designing a school day that includes a broad range of subject areas, such as science and social sciences, is important for a well-rounded education. It also enhances a student’s exposure to vocabulary and content knowledge on a broad range of topics. This leads to an increased ability to understand and build knowledge through creating connections to and between new texts, having a compounding effect on students’ reading comprehension.¹³⁹

Equity Implications of Knowledge as a Critical Component of Literacy

In many classrooms, instruction and assessments can privilege those with knowledge of certain elements of a dominant culture or pattern of topics.¹⁴⁰ Regardless of cultural or economic background, all students enter classrooms with a wealth of knowledge that is steeped in culture and ways of being. By affirming this and acknowledging that background knowledge is not fixed, educators can extend what students already know through inquiry, careful planning, and purposeful engagement. Because background knowledge plays a pivotal role in reading comprehension, educators need to continually reflect on the question, “Whose knowledge is being privileged, and how do we ensure we are working from the background knowledge of each student and developing shared understandings?”

For multilingual learners, connecting literacy instruction to students’ background knowledge is critical. Multilingual learners often encounter concepts or events in texts that are outside their cultural and life experiences, yet students can grasp many of these concepts by identifying larger themes that correlate with their own lived experiences.

Strategies for Building Knowledge

It is important that building knowledge does not result in simply having students memorize facts, but rather engaging students in activities that develop “knowledge networks” that are grouped and related in domain-specific ways for current and future learning.

¹³⁹ [Willingham, 2006](#)

¹⁴⁰ [Neuman, 2019](#)

Some strategies for building knowledge include the following:¹⁴¹

- Teach words in categories, prompting students to generate and identify patterns.
- Teach concepts and related categories through contrasts, comparisons, and analogies.
- Encourage reading and writing not only across a wide range of topics, but also widely within a focused topic, preferably aligned with student interest.
- Leverage multimedia and experiential learning to provide knowledge and word-rich learning experiences for all students.
- When selecting instructional materials, consider how the curriculum is designed to build student knowledge throughout their early grades and beyond.
- Ensure a well-rounded learning experience for students that avoids “curriculum narrowing,” or teaching only a narrow set of subjects.
- Elicit and build on students’ existing background knowledge to make connections and when teaching new topics or concepts.

Additional shifts in instructional practice that build knowledge are described in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Building Knowledge & Vocabulary¹⁴²

Instead of This:	Do This:
Selecting texts based on what texts are most familiar and known to the teacher...	Ensure that the texts and topics used reflect the full range of identities in the classroom and community, serving to affirm all students’ lives, languages, perspectives, and histories.
Providing multilingual learners with lower-level or simpler texts and prompts...	Make use of texts and topics where students can use and leverage knowledge from their lives and experiences. This can also be done through the use of paired texts, where knowledge is built in both languages of instruction.
Regularly reading aloud “on-level” student texts with limited opportunities to grow knowledge and vocabulary...	Select books for read-aloud that are far more complex than students can read on their own (1–3 years above what most students can read independently).
Planning read-alouds to teach isolated skills, strategies, or standards (e.g., “This week is author’s purpose week...”)	Keep the text at the center of your planning. Plan standards-aligned questions, tasks, and activities that help students unpack the ideas of the text while drawing on their own funds of knowledge and many skills, strategies, and modes of co-constructing meaning.

¹⁴¹ [Neuman et al., 2014](#)

¹⁴² [Student Achievement Partners, n.d.-a](#)

Vocabulary

The richness of children’s oral language serves as an important precursor to their active working vocabulary, generating a repertoire of academic language and translating directly to their ability to actively understand and enjoy what they read. Most vocabulary growth occurs when children encounter new words in texts or talk and activate their schema to infer the meaning of the word. The more expansive a child’s vocabulary is in early grades, the easier it is for them to decode text, read with fluency, and comprehend at grade level. “Word and world knowledge are reciprocal and mutually reinforcing” and support reading comprehension.¹⁴³

Morphology refers to “the knowledge of meaningful word parts in a language (typically the knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, and/or roots and base words).” Knowledge of word structure and how words are formed is linked to both greater vocabulary development and stronger reading comprehension. Research has shown that in children as young as first grade, knowledge of word parts has influenced their literacy development .

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2023

Vocabulary and morphology knowledge are supported by explicit teaching in word meaning, word parts, and spelling. Current vocabulary research confirms the benefits of explicit teaching over implicit teaching in promoting vocabulary development.¹⁴⁴ Research also demonstrates that “teachers need to show the spellings of new vocabulary words when they discuss their meanings. Similarly, students need to stop and pronounce unfamiliar words rather than skip them during independent reading.”¹⁴⁵

Intentional and ambitious efforts to build vocabulary include the following strategies:¹⁴⁶

- Select grade-level academic vocabulary words to teach from read-alouds of literature and informational texts and content area curricula.
- Introduce word meanings to children during reading and content area instruction using child-friendly explanations and provide opportunities for children to pronounce the new words and to see the spelling of the new words.
- Provide repeated opportunities for children to review and use new vocabulary over time, including discussing ways that new vocabulary words relate to one another and children’s existing knowledge, addressing multiple meanings or nuanced meanings of a word across different contexts, and encouraging children to use new words in meaningful contexts (e.g., discussion of texts, discussions of content area learning, semantic maps).
- Encourage talk among children, particularly during content area learning and during discussions in response to a text or new learning.
- Teach morphology (i.e., the meaning of word parts).

“Instructional implications are that teachers should include written words as part of vocabulary instruction and that students should pronounce spellings as well as determine meanings when they encounter new vocabulary words... Students who see the spellings of words actually learn the meanings of the words more easily — orthographic knowledge benefits vocabulary learning.”

Rosenthal & Ehri, 2008

143 [ASCD, 2023b](#)

144 [Butler et al., 2010](#)

145 Ehri & Rosenthal, 2007

146 [Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators General Education Leadership Network Early Literacy Task Force, 2016](#)

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension describes the process of constructing meaning through interaction with a text to understand what an author has stated, explicitly or implicitly. This interaction and meaning-making also draws on what the reader brings to the text, including their background knowledge, abilities, and experiences.¹⁴⁷ The comprehension of written language (i.e., reading comprehension) requires that the components of language and components of the alphabetic principle be activated along with background knowledge, executive function, and motivation.¹⁴⁸ Comprehension and knowledge building should work synergistically with foundational skills learning (see Figure 8). The following strategies come from the Institute of Educational Science practice guides.¹⁴⁹

Teach students how to use reading comprehension strategies. Examples of effective reading comprehension strategies include activating prior knowledge, questioning, visualizing, monitoring, clarifying, drawing inferences, and summarizing. When teaching comprehension strategies, do not overfocus on or teach the strategy in isolation; stay text-focused and ensure that the purpose of strategy instruction is for a deeper understanding of a complex text. When engaging in a text together, the teacher can model and explain when, how, and why to implement a particular strategy to help with understanding, and then they can guide students through practice until students learn to use the strategies themselves.¹⁵⁰

Teach students to identify and use the text’s organizational structure to comprehend, learn, and remember content. Reading research indicates that being able to identify and use text structures can be an important skill in comprehending text. For example, the RAND Reading Study Group¹⁵¹ concluded that text structure is an important factor in fostering comprehension. Students who are aware of text structure organize the text as they read, and they recognize and retain the important information the text reveals.

Simply put, text structure refers to the characteristics of written material and the way that ideas are constructed and organized. In other words, text structure is the arrangement of ideas and relationships among the ideas. Text structure organization exists in both narrative and expository structures. Oregon’s K-12 English Language Arts and Literacy Standards call for equal attention to fiction and nonfiction text; therefore, it is critical that students learn to recognize and use strategies for both types of texts. Many students start school with an awareness of narrative text structures, but fewer students have an awareness of expository text structure. This is due, in part, to the fact that most of the reading that parents and early childhood teachers do with their preschool children is from storybooks.

Most students enter school with a basic understanding of narrative structure, although some students with less exposure to storybooks may need to be taught this structure directly. Narrative text follows a singular general structural pattern, often referred to as story grammar. This often includes the elements of setting and main character, an initiating event and reaction, solution attempts, the outcome of these attempts, and the ending reaction.

147 [Shanahan et al., 2010](#)

148 [Foorman, 2023](#)

149 [Foorman et al., 2016](#); [Graham et al., 2012](#)

150 [Shanahan, 2018](#)

151 [Snow, 2002, p. 40](#)

When teaching expository text structure, many researchers reference five primary text structures, including¹⁵²:

- **Collection:** The author lists items or events in some manner. A listing becomes more organized when it is sequenced by time of occurrence.
- **Description:** The author provides information about a certain topic, e.g., attributes, characteristics, etc.
- **Causation (Cause/Effect):** The author delineates one or more causes and then describes the ensuing effects.
- **Problem/Solution:** The author poses some type of problem or question and then generates the answer.
- **Compare/Contrast:** The author compares and contrasts two or more similar events, topics or objects.

Although this classification system makes distinctions between these five different types of text structures, in reality, most texts include a mixture of these structures. The rationale behind teaching text structure is that by teaching students to recognize common patterns within different types of structures, they will be better able to identify the macrostructure formation or gist of the text including main ideas and how these ideas fit together which, in the end, will result in improved comprehension.

Guide students through focused, high-quality discussions on the meaning of text. Research shows that teachers should give students ample opportunities to respond to higher-order questions that require them to reflect on the text and engage in discussions with peers.¹⁵³ Reading comprehension improves when teachers ask students follow-up questions and encourage students to refer back to the text. Authentic classroom discussion allows students to share and expand their thinking and use language in new ways. Specifically, discussions about texts provide opportunities for students to collaboratively build knowledge that supports their literacy development and strengthens their reading and writing skills. Multilingual students especially benefit when they are able to have these discussions in multiple languages. Students' overall reading development is supported when they have opportunities to respond to texts both verbally and in writing.¹⁵⁴

Select complex and diverse texts purposefully to support comprehension development. Reading comprehension should be taught using multiple genres of texts that reflect and positively affirm the lives, languages, perspectives, and histories of the students in the classroom and all members of society. All students should have ample opportunities to read and/or listen to complex texts that provide an appropriate level of rigor, align with grade-level standards, and support the purpose of instruction. For instance, the complex texts selected should represent a range of narrative and informational genres to support students' development of knowledge and vocabulary.¹⁵⁵ Providing students access to complex texts through independent and shared reading experiences generates opportunities to stretch their literacy skills while simultaneously building their world knowledge and vocabulary. Research also recommends utilizing complex texts that integrate other disciplines to support the balance of skills-based and knowledge-based competencies in early literacy instruction.¹⁵⁶

Establish an engaging and motivating context to teach reading comprehension. Motivation and engagement play an important role in reading comprehension. The following teaching practices can support student motivation: making literacy experiences more relevant to students' interests, everyday lives, or important current events; providing a positive learning environment that promotes student choice and autonomy in learning; acknowledging and affirming student success (self-efficacy); encouraging collaboration with peers; and planning thematic units that draw connections between content areas. Teachers spark students' interests by choosing texts with themes that are relevant and engaging.

152 Meyer & Freedle, 1984

153 [Murphy et al., 2009](#)

154 [Graham & Hebert, 2011](#); Wegenhart, 2015

155 Wegenhart, 2015

156 [Shanahan et al., 2010](#)

Writing

Good writers are good readers. Writing gives voice to children’s inner thoughts, lived experience, and creative imagination and allows a way for them to be expressed and shared with the world. As a form of communication, writing can transcend time and is a way to pass stories from generation to generation. Writing is an essential component of children’s learning, not only for the value it has for literacy development, but for the value it has as a medium for expression, discovery, and creativity. Writing nourishes the human spirit.

“Children want to write. They want to write the first day they attend school. This is no accident. Before they went to school, they marked up walls, pavements, newspapers with crayons, chalk, pens or pencils...anything that makes a mark. The child’s marks say, ‘I am.’”

Graves, 1983

Writing focuses students on phonics, comprehension, mechanics, developing voice or perspective, word choice, and communicating a perspective to others. Through writing, they learn more about the alphabetic principle and they also discover their writer’s voice and learn to articulate their ideas, their opinions, and their feelings. Writing accelerates language and reading skills, and serves as a catalyst for students to solidify foundational skills and as a creative outlet for them to emulate story and text structure. Schools can deepen literacy learning by providing high-quality, standards-aligned¹⁵⁷ explicit instruction in writing throughout the school day, both integrated into content learning through disciplinary literacy practices and as its own discrete instructional time.

Writing and Reading as Reciprocal, Complementary Processes

Writing and reading are reciprocal practices that mutually reinforce a student’s literacy learning.¹⁵⁸ Reading pulls words and ideas off a page to give them meaning; writing moves ideas, arguments, and dreams from the writer’s heart and mind onto the page, to be shared with others. Reading is a receptive domain of literacy, while writing is the expressive or productive domain of literacy. Because reading and writing in English both require knowledge and familiarity with the alphabetic orthography of the language, it is not surprising that these two fundamental literacy skills are closely related. Table 4 includes examples of the similarity in how students process various information when writing and reading.

Table 4. Common Ground Between Writing and Reading

Strategic Processing	Writer	Reader
Searching for meaning	Generates ideas with an audience in mind	Uses print to construct meaning
Monitoring for meaning	Checks that the message makes sense	Checks that the message makes sense
Searching for structure	Anticipates the order of words based on how book language and oral language sound	Groups words together in phrases to represent the intended message

¹⁵⁷ ODE, 2019

¹⁵⁸ Sedita, 2019

Strategic Processing	Writer	Reader
Monitoring for structure	Checks the order of words supporting the intended message	Re-reads (out loud or holding the message in the mind) to check that the word order communicates the intended message
Searching for graphophonic information	Uses knowledge of how letters, words, and print work to record the message	Seeks out graphophonic input from print in relation to meaning and structure
Monitoring for graphophonic information	Checks and detects any discrepancies between anticipated message and graphophonic input	Checks and detects that the print represents the message
Self-correcting	Detects and corrects	Detects and corrects

Explicit instruction in writing is needed in addition to explicit instruction in reading, because although these language tasks may rely on similar processes, they are nonetheless independent skills that require students to apply their knowledge of the grapho-phonemic code, spelling, and other elements of reading.

The connection between reading and writing is also evident in the Oregon English Language Arts and Literacy Standards¹⁵⁹ for students in grades K–5.

Writing Skills

Writing skills can also be thought of in two interrelated groups, transcription and translation.¹⁶⁰

Transcription (handwriting, spelling, conventions, keyboarding): Transcription is the process of transferring one’s thoughts and ideas into words and putting those words on paper or typing them on a keyboard. Transcription skills include letter formation, handwriting and keyboarding fluency, spelling, and conventions, including punctuation and capitalization. These skills are the technical foundation of written composition. Students need explicit instruction in these skills and time to process them and develop and apply the skills for meaning. Spelling in English relies on attaching sounds to letters, breaking words into syllables, and attending to the parts of words that have meaning, such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes. Automaticity of transcription can accelerate written expression and increase both the length and quality of written work. Students who struggle with transcription skills may have difficulty expressing their ideas in writing.

Translation (grammar, sentence structure, writing process, text structure): Translation involves generating and organizing ideas into written words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. It focuses more on the process of writing, which includes planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Translating can be taxing for beginning writers, so direct instruction and time to practice are important for writing success. Students who have not mastered transcription skills might require greater teacher support throughout the planning process. Supports can include providing writing prompts, modeling translation behaviors, and providing sentence stems and paragraph frames along with graphic organizers. For students to achieve full mastery of writing, educators provide instruction across various genres (narrative, informative/explanatory, and opinion), with an explicit focus on the different text structures and sentence composition qualities of each genre.

¹⁵⁹ [ODE, 2019](#)

¹⁶⁰ [Michigan Department of Education, 2021](#)

Spelling

As with all literacy skill-building, each student has their own unique needs. Spelling reinforces other literacy learning. Learning the rules of spelling can help students understand phonics, orthography, morphology, and vocabulary.¹⁶¹ Many of the same rules apply to reading as to spelling.¹⁶² While English may seem to be less patterned than some languages, most word spelling can be accounted for by meaning, language of origin, part of speech, and sound-spelling combinations.¹⁶³ Students benefit from explicit instruction in the rules of spelling, so that they need not rely on memorization alone to be successful spellers. While most basal instructional materials include spelling words, these words will not necessarily meet the needs of all students. Rather, it is recommended that teachers find differentiated materials in order to engage in developmentally appropriate spelling instruction.¹⁶⁴

Some research-based recommendations for teaching spelling include:¹⁶⁵

- Establishing weekly routines for spelling instruction.
- Giving students ample opportunities to practice words and providing immediate feedback.
- Creating explicit connections between word knowledge and content learning.
- Providing students opportunities to generalize their spelling skills to writing.

Instructional Design for Teaching Writing

Four evidence-based recommendations for writing instruction follow:¹⁶⁶

- **Provide time daily for students to write, including time for explicit instruction in writing skills.** This writing instruction should be appropriate to the students' grade level and can be embedded within other content areas of instruction through disciplinary literacy practices, such as science report writing, historical fiction as part of social science, or describing the process used to solve a math problem. School leaders and classroom teachers must ensure that sufficient time is dedicated each day for both writing instruction and student writing practice, with writing occurring across the curriculum. Instructional time at the elementary level should focus on increasing fluency in foundational skills including spelling and handwriting. However, instruction should not focus exclusively on the mechanics of writing; rather, it should also teach higher-level writing skills such as strategies for planning, writing, and revising text as well as other grade-specific standards.
- **Teach students to use the writing process for a variety of purposes** and to understand that planning and specific strategies help writing meet its goals.
 - **Writing strategies.** Although an informal instructional approach may be all the support some students need, many other students need explicit and scaffolded instruction from the teacher in order to become proficient writers. Teachers can develop a plan for the explicit instruction of writing strategies across the grades and within grades in order to address students' immediate growth opportunities. Strategy-based instruction has been shown to have a substantial effect on the quality of students' writing. Writing strategies can range from strategies for brainstorming and revising to strategies designed to develop writing-specific genres such as personal narratives, persuasive essays, or research reports. The ultimate goal of strategy development is for students to achieve automaticity in using these strategies independently. These strategies will, in essence, become the "invisible knowledge" that students carry in their heads while engaging in writing tasks.

161 [Institute for Multi-Sensory Education \(IMSE\) Journal, 2020](#)

162 [Moats, n.d.](#)

163 [Moats, n.d.](#)

164 Schlagal, 2007

165 Troia & Graham, 2003

166 [Graham et al., 2012](#)

- **Diverse genres of writing.** Introduce students to multiple genres of writing beginning in the early elementary grades alongside a discussion about the different purposes those genres can accomplish. The practice of reading a variety of books to young children has been shown to support their beginning acquisition of genre knowledge, and, as genre knowledge grows, so do children’s abilities to apply that knowledge to their own writing.¹⁶⁷
- **Teach students to become fluent with handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, and typing.** Effortless proficiency in basic writing skills allows students to focus on organizing their thoughts and exploring deeper meaning making; elementary school is the time when students develop these essential skills. Many students who struggle with handwriting may also struggle with automatic keyboarding. Teachers should therefore provide explicit instruction in both handwriting and keyboarding.
- **Create an engaged community of writers.** Students who see themselves as writers feel greater motivation to apply the skills and internalize the writing process. Student learning is helped by sharing their written work with an authentic audience, seeing their words in print, collaborating on writing projects, and learning to give and receive feedback about writing.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Foundational skills are essential to breaking the code of reading; however, they are insufficient for deep literacy learning without the integration and connection to other literacy skills.
- As students master foundational skills, instructional time shifts toward the development of other literacy skills as students begin to use texts to learn content.
- Building background knowledge should be enacted in culturally responsive ways by asking questions like, “Whose knowledge is being privileged?” then ensuring multiple perspectives are included.
- Building vocabulary ensures students are able to make meaning of the words and comprehend the text they are reading.
- Building and expanding students’ background knowledge allows them to comprehend the words they are reading as they develop foundational skills.
- Writing practice helps students solidify and make sense of foundational skills, allows them a creative outlet to emulate story and text structure, and creates opportunities to connect in meaningful ways with the world around them.
- Reading comprehension and writing instruction permeates all grades.

LEARN MORE

- [Core \(TIER 1\) Instructional Strategies to Improve K-4 Reading Comprehension](#)
- [Early Literacy Development](#)
- [Self-Regulated Strategy Development](#)
- [Looking to Research for Literacy Success](#)
- [Promoting Preschool Writing](#)
- [Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers](#)
- [Comprehension Research and Resources](#)
- [Importance of Writing Instruction](#)

¹⁶⁷ Donovan & Smolkin, 2006

Section 7: Core Instruction & Assessment

Core instruction is the highest-leverage investment for improving early literacy. Whether a teacher is using whole group instruction, differentiated small group instruction, guided instruction, or providing independent practice, the core literacy block provides critical access to standards-aligned learning experiences. Additionally, the use of high-quality instructional materials provides a common foundation for schools to align their curriculum to standards and collaborate on any needed adjustments or supplementary materials. When schools design professional learning systems that provide educators with opportunities to reflect on lesson design and examine instructional practices, literacy instruction is strengthened, and students benefit.¹⁶⁸ Consistent access to core instruction, which includes exposure to grade-level text, tasks, and talk, is a key equity lever for children learning to read and write.

Supporting Students in Accessing Core Instruction

All students should receive core instruction that is differentiated to address individual needs. While some students will have their needs met through core instruction alone, others may need the additional support provided through supplemental, targeted, skill-based small group instruction in addition to the core (core + more).

In order to reach and respond to the learning needs of each student, educators need to know what those needs are. It is through assessment that educators gain this knowledge and are therefore able to tailor the instructional experience. When instruction matches where students are in their learning and is provided in an inclusive, culturally and linguistically responsive, and identity-affirming context, it creates an optimal learning environment. Additional support and interventions may be needed to build upon core instruction to support individual student needs.



¹⁶⁸ [Gates Foundation, 2017](#)

Core + More

Equitable access to core instruction necessitates that all educators understand the elements of instructional design. Educators need to know and understand how reading develops, how to align instruction to grade-level standards, how to identify where each student is on the learning progression, and how to effectively use differentiated practices and tiered instructional supports to move students forward in their literacy learning.

It is important to ensure coherence in high-quality instructional materials, strategies, language of instruction, and routines across the support continuum to avoid “curricular chaos” and to create a connected literacy learning experience for students. Instruction at all levels should be explicit and systematic, provided by highly-qualified educators, and focused on leveraging students' strengths while addressing their needs.

IS CORE+MORE REALLY TALKING ABOUT MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS)?

The phrase Core+More captures the central purpose of MTSS as an organizing framework designed to responsively meet the strengths and needs of all students. It highlights the importance of every student receiving strong core instruction while also providing specific, targeted skill instruction as needed. Core+More describes the data-informed intensification of instruction that happens within a multi-tiered system of support.

“MTSS is a framework for how school districts can build the necessary systems to ensure that each and every student receives a high quality educational experience. It is designed to support schools with proactively identifying and addressing the strengths and needs of all students by optimizing data-driven decision-making, progress monitoring, and the use of evidence-based supports and strategies with increasing intensity to sustain student growth.”¹⁶⁹

Starting planning from the vantage point of how individuals learn makes instruction more effective for all. Application of the Universal Design for Learning Guidelines¹⁷⁰ is especially helpful in this, as they prompt educators to consider engagement, representation, action, and expression when designing instruction. High-quality core literacy instruction for all students can be supplemented and extended to support individual needs through differentiation and small-group instruction.

When core instruction and targeted, strategic support is insufficient to meet a student’s individual needs, then more intensified and individualized support (core + more + more), based on progress and patterns of response, is needed. All instructional support for students with reading and writing difficulties should be provided in addition to high-quality core literacy instruction. An effective tiered instructional support plan will ensure that the right instruction is delivered with the right level of intensity and duration to the right students at the right time.

The National Center on Intensive Intervention [Tools Chart](#) provides information about published intervention programs that can aid in a district’s design of a continuum of academic supports. The Florida Center on Reading Research’s Student Center Activities¹⁷¹ are sets of discrete low-resource activities that students can complete independently or in small groups, organized along the progression of foundational reading skills. These activities may be used to supplement core instruction in areas where student differentiation needs are not matching offerings within the district’s curriculum.

169 [DESE, 2020](#)

170 [CAST, 2018](#)

171 [Florida Center for Reading Research \(FCRR\), 2021](#)

Assessment as an Accelerant for Learning and Prevention

The term “assessment” comes from the Latin term *assidere*, which means to “sit beside.” It draws a picture of a child and teacher, connected through a relationship and focused on helping the child identify their strengths and their next learning steps. When assessing students, educators have the opportunity to uplift a child’s sense of self and agency as a learner by highlighting what they can do well and what they are ready to learn next. The relationships between educator and student are nurtured through honoring the knowledge students bring from their own lived experiences and cultures, their home language, and interests. Assessment in its purest form serves to accelerate student learning, contribute to student efficacy and engagement, identify areas for further support, and deepen the relationship between teacher and learner.

Assessment Guiding Principles:¹⁷² These overarching principles situate assessment practice within a larger set of values to ensure maximum access and learning opportunity for children.

- Assessments should be used to determine how to bring students into grade-level instruction, not whether to bring them into it.
- The formative assessment process is the strongest tool to support and accelerate learning and growth.
- Targeted checks using curriculum-based assessments will support instruction; use of diagnostic assessments and/or formative practices are essential.
- All assessments should be given within a larger context that supports students’ social, physical, and emotional wellbeing, honors relationships, and uses culturally responsive practices.

Both general education teachers and specialists use assessment data to learn about student needs and offer increasing levels of support through differentiated core instruction within the general education setting. Progress monitoring data gathered through curriculum-based measures and other formative and interim assessment tools help general education teachers and specialists plan and adjust instruction.

ASSESSMENT AND MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

Multilingual learners need effective and appropriate assessment and instruction. Lacking this, they risk becoming long-term English learners who suffer diminished opportunities to learn and fall so far behind their English-speaking peers that it is difficult for them to catch up and graduate high school. Literacy assessments that are designed for bilingual learners and responsive to their native language are desperately needed to promote effective literacy instruction for dual language learners and English learners to avoid the over or under-identification of multilingual learners for special education.

Adapted from Escamilla et al., 2022

Formal tests are designed for a specific purpose. It is important to consider the responsible uses described in Table 5; when used in other ways, these test results—especially the foundational skills screeners—could lead to inappropriate groupings that remove learning opportunities. Additionally, all tests include error, and no score should be deemed objectively true. When multiple methods are used for their intended purpose, the data can help educators understand where students are in the learning process overall and can identify the next instructional moves.

¹⁷² Adapted from [Michigan Department of Education, n.d.](#)

Formative Assessment Practices

Formative assessment information is immediately useful for instructional decision-making and provides important depth when interpreting test data. The cloth of effective early literacy instruction is woven with the threads of the formative assessment process.¹⁷³ Formative assessment is a planned process to elicit evidence of student learning in order to improve student understanding of the intended learning outcomes. Formative assessment is a process of collecting and responding. The information gained about student learning is used in the course of instruction to respond to and adjust instruction. In addition, formative assessment practices support students to become more self-directed learners.¹⁷⁴

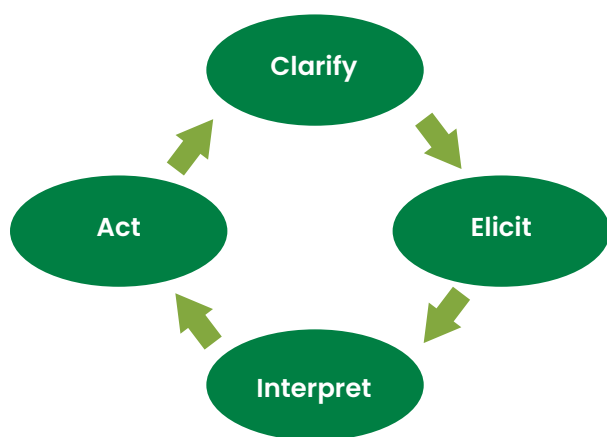
Formative assessment answers the questions:

- “Where are we going as students and teachers?”
- “Where are we now?”
- “How do we get to the learning target?”

The fundamental principles of the definition provided above is that formative assessment:

- is a planned, ongoing process
- occurs during teaching and learning
- intended to elicit and use evidence of student learning
- focused on disciplinary learning
- supports students becoming more self-directed learners

Figure 9. Formative Assessment Process



This planned, ongoing formative assessment process starts with **clarifying** learning expectations, then **eliciting** evidence of learning and **interpreting** that evidence in order to understand the status of the student’s learning. Based on this information, the educator and student can then make an informed decision about the next learning experience for the student (**act**). In early literacy instruction, this may look like showing a student how to shape their tongue to make a “t” sound and pressing the tongue against the front teeth, asking the student to show the teacher what that looks like, then asking the student to make the “t” sound and discussing how close to success they got.

Examples of formative assessment in practice:

- Journals or learning logs to show growth over time in a portfolio
- Academic conversations to explain new learning
- Graphic organizers to structure note-taking
- Student-teacher conference or small group discussions to recount learning

¹⁷³ [Smarter Balanced, 2022](#)

¹⁷⁴ [Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers \(FAST\) State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards \(SCASS\), 2018](#)

- Exit slips to show “I think..”, “I wonder...”, “I still want to know...”
- Fill-in-the-blank or “cloze” activity using sentence frames
- Reciprocal teaching
- Recording student language through technology
- Drawing or role playing
- Gallery walk of student work where students give each other feedback on stickies
- Word or concept sorts based on unit themes or student-created categories
- One word or one phrase response using whiteboards
- Self-checklist or peer-checklist
- Label or sequence visuals like pictures, photos or realia (real life objects)
- Student-generated questions for peers

Formative assessment practices rely on multiple feedback loops, including conversations between learners and their teachers. Providing and accepting feedback is most effective when conducted with an asset-based approach, as students who are on the edge of their learning need to know that they are capable of reaching the next level in their learning progression. When providing effective corrective feedback, educators communicate that they are holding the learner to high standards because they believe the student is capable and can meet those standards. They also provide the student with specific actionable steps to work on. This type of asset-based and actionable feedback is an effective strategy for all student learning, and especially important for students who have been historically underserved.¹⁷⁵

ASSET-BASED FEEDBACK PROTOCOL ¹⁷⁶

1. Begin with rapport building check-in. Take time to connect.
2. State explicitly the purpose of your meeting and affirming your belief in the student’s capacity as a learner. Provide evidence by citing progress and growth in other areas.
3. Validate the student’s ability to master the learning target while acknowledging high demands of the task. Analyze the task together, identifying the easy and hard parts.
4. Deliver feedback that is specific, actionable, and timely. Restate what the final goal is and what mastery looks like and then show them where they are in relation to the goal.
5. Create space for them to react to what they heard and how they feel about it.
6. Provide specific actions to take to improve, and ways to track their progress.
7. Ask the student to paraphrase what they heard you say- what is wrong, what needs to be fixed, and how to go about fixing it.
8. Offer emotional encouragement and restate your belief in them. Do not skip this part.
9. Set up a time to follow-up and check progress.

The [Formative Assessment Rubrics, Reflection, and Observation Tools to Support Professional Reflection on Practice](#) is a peer assessment resource that educators can use to support one another in developing robust early literacy formative assessment practices in the classroom.

¹⁷⁵ [Cohen et al., 1999](#)

¹⁷⁶ Adapted from Hammond, 2014

Early Literacy Tests

Some tests are helpful for seeing how learning is progressing and finding out where to get curious about specific student needs. For example, this could include recording student oral reading skills and noting errors in a reading passage then tracking progress over several weeks. State and district summative tests, by contrast, show how well systems are meeting the needs of groups of students and can be used to identify patterns that speak to inequities and places where additional evidence and inquiry is needed. Norm-referenced tests compare a student to others; criterion-referenced tests compare a student to domain proficiency; and, individual, or ipsative assessment compares a student to their previous performance. Table 5 provides information about these different kinds of tests and purposes.

The [Evidence-based Assessments in the Science of Reading Cheat Sheet](#) speaks to the how, why, what, and when of early literacy assessments, as well as providing an analogy and example of each. In many ways, this “cheat sheet” effectively summarizes Table 5.

Table 5. Applied Purposes and Uses of Common Early Literacy Tests

Applied Purpose	Descriptions and Responsible Use
Universal Screening	<p>Description: Help determine where to be curious and find out more about where student learning needs acceleration through diagnostic evaluation processes. Relatively fast and efficient to administer. These screenings may occur early in the year, mid-year, and at the end of year.</p> <p>Responsible Use: Most impactful when teachers observe or conduct the screening process and document specific areas of strength and identify those early literacy skills that need more attention by watching what students are able to do and where their learning edges are during testing. Universal screeners do not encompass the full breadth of English Language Arts standards; therefore, they should not be used as the <i>only</i> tool for placing students into reading-level groups or for determining program eligibility.</p>
Diagnostic	<p>Description: Informal or formal. Designed to assess specific skills or components of reading, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary, that individual students may need more support with. Results inform core instruction and possible opportunities for support.</p> <p>Responsible Use: Identify specific skill areas that a student needs to master in order to expand further learning opportunities. <i>Used sparingly and intentionally. Few students need this kind of in-depth reading test, so use should be rare.</i></p>
Progress Monitoring	<p>Description: Short, targeted assessment approaches that are aligned to a specific skill and can be given at regular intervals to track student change over time.</p> <p>Responsible Use: Reviewing a student’s progress toward acquiring specific, discrete skills taught. Best when used efficiently and in combination with other sources of information to help guide instruction.</p>

Applied Purpose	Descriptions and Responsible Use
Interim	<p>Description: Periodically administered tests that target specific chunks of content, typically a unit or related set of units. This includes approaches that some educators call “classroom summative” tests, which come at the end of a unit or term, as they are within-school-year practices. What educators in Oregon often refer to as “Common Formative Assessments” are actually interim tests (formative assessment is a process, not a test).</p> <p>Responsible Use: The most effective tests can be used by students and educators alike, and are best used as tools to determine how well students responded to the instruction they just experienced. Interim tests are best used as tools in the hands of teachers, informing how well students are learning what is being taught periodically throughout the year.</p>
State Summative	<p>Description: Oregon’s summative English language arts test blueprints include multiple standards: reading (40% of items), writing (40% of items), research (10%), and listening (10% of items). The test scores are thus indicative not just of reading, but of literacy. Oregon’s state English language arts summative tests are criterion-referenced tests that do not assess foundational skills in literacy; they generally focus on comprehension and writing of grade-level text. State summative tests are designed to sample all grade-level standards in their full depth, breadth, and complexity within a specific content area or domain, providing evidence of how well curriculum and instruction have been designed to meet the reading, writing, research, and listening learning needs of all student groups annually as part of program evaluation.</p> <p>Responsible Uses: Program evaluation, longitudinal review of trends for student groups, identification of where to invest resources. State summative test results should not be used to set goals for teacher evaluation or to make high-stakes student decisions (e.g., course placement, Talented and Gifted identification, etc.).</p>

Coherent, Comprehensive, & Continuous Assessment Systems

Strong assessment systems tend to the 3Cs of effective assessment: coherent, comprehensive, and continuous.¹⁷⁷

- **Coherent:** All aspects of early literacy assessment and instruction align with Oregon’s language arts standards. The assessment system provides clear information about learning, so educator instructional practices align with what students need to learn next.
- **Comprehensive:** The approach taken to early literacy assessment provides multiple types of tests (universal screening, diagnostics, progress monitoring, interim tests, and summative tests) and is rooted in robust formative assessment practices. Informed decisions can be made in the moment, periodically throughout the year, and annually to drive improvement of literacy curriculum and instruction.
- **Continuous:** Early literacy assessment allows for assessment practices that drive the collection and review of the evidence of reading and writing learning that connects to prior learning and identifies the next steps across the school year.

¹⁷⁷ [Marion et al., 2019](#)

When the 3Cs are in place, the basic conditions are established for educators to use data and evidence from multiple sources to improve practice and make informed decisions about student learning. When clear alignment to the full depth, breadth, and complexity of standards is present across assessment practices, coherent responses to test data are feasible.

Leadership helps to create the conditions for classroom educators to be successful and reflective about their literacy instruction by 1) providing data review protocols and protocols for observing practice and reflecting and 2) creating time for grade-level data teams to meet and discuss both data and practice. In addition, another important condition is creating a data culture where unequal test results are seen as evidence of unequal learning experiences. In such a context, data sparks a determination to identify ways to improve the systems meant to serve students.¹⁷⁸

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Guaranteed access to quality core instruction matters; consistent, uninterrupted access to core instruction, inclusive of exposure to grade-level text, tasks, and talk is a core equity issue for children learning to read and write.
- It is important to ensure coherence in high-quality instructional materials, strategies, language of instruction, and routines across the support continuum to create a connected literacy learning experience for students.
- The formative assessment process is the strongest tool to support and accelerate learning and growth.
- To design effective literacy instruction for all students, educators need skill and understanding in several key areas: how reading develops, how to align instruction to grade-level standards, how to identify where each student is on the learning progression, and how to effectively use differentiated practices and tiered instructional supports to move all students forward in their literacy learning.
- All instructional support for students with reading and writing difficulties should be provided in addition to high-quality core literacy instruction.
- It is important to ensure coherence in high-quality instructional materials, strategies, and routines across the support continuum to create a connected literacy learning experience for students.
- It is through assessing student learning on multiple occasions using multiple methods that a true picture of student strengths and their learning edges are revealed.
- At their best, formative assessment practices and literacy tests can help learners understand where they are in the learning process and identify their next moves in reading and writing.

LEARN MORE

- [Formative Assessment Resources](#)
- [Limitations of Norm-Referenced Tests](#)
 - [Training Materials](#)
- [Culturally Sensitive, Relevant, Responsive, and Sustaining Assessment](#)
- [Anti-Racist Assessment Practices](#)

¹⁷⁸ Cole, 2008

Section 8: Reaching All Learners

All students deserve to actively engage in literacy learning. This gives them the power to shape ideas through acts of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. In many ways this framework serves as a resource for the instructional core, or Tier 1, instruction. In this section, however, thoughtful adaptation for literacy instruction that meets the strengths and needs of all students is explored.

With appropriate support, careful planning, and adult mindsets that are asset-based, students can fully engage in the general education classroom during core literacy instruction. Successful adaptation may include: sheltering instruction, adapting materials, previewing learning, personalizing learning goals, peer tutoring, compacting curriculum, and co-teaching. Reaching all learners requires understanding and applying the ideas described in previous sections, while also adjusting and considering the unique strengths and needs of each student.

All students have the right to learn something new every day, whether they are in regular classrooms or in special education, language acquisition, or gifted programs. And every student will benefit from being pulled up to go beyond the curriculum at times.¹⁷⁹

Supporting Multilingual Learners

Every student, whether they communicate in one language or multiple languages, is a language learner. From this lens, the inherent commonality around language learning helps to ensure that students who are navigating the world through more than one language are affirmed in the additional cognitive and socio-linguistic lift they navigate daily. When children are honored as multilingual learners and provided opportunities to build from their linguistic assets, it contributes to literacy growth, motivation, and efficacy.



¹⁷⁹ [Tomlinson et al., 2003](#)

Oregon’s Early Literacy Framework is primarily written from the lens of developing literacy for multilingual learners within an English instructional model. While best practice for supporting multilingual learners’ literacy development is to build upon their linguistic repertoire through multilingual instructional programs such as dual language education, the majority of multilingual learners in Oregon currently learn to read in monolingual English settings. Wherever possible, best practices for multilingual learners participating in dual language education with biliteracy as the intended outcome is incorporated throughout the framework.

Multilingual learners deserve comprehensive literacy instruction alongside their monolingual peers, with the full guarantee of daily core instruction as an essential driver for literacy learning. The pervasive and misguided belief that multilingual learners must first demonstrate grade-level English proficiency before they can access grade-level work or text often results in multilingual learners being pulled out of core literacy instruction or assigned less rigorous tasks that reduce cognitive demand. This, in turn, creates less access to essential content and language-rich exposure, creating lasting impacts and long-term consequences for students’ self-efficacy and literacy proficiency.¹⁸⁰ The cumulative effect of limiting exposure to content and language-rich learning experiences for multilingual learners has deleterious and far-reaching effects. While additional explicit instruction might be needed for students to gain literacy proficiency, interventions or English Language Development support should not come at the expense of students’ access and exposure to quality, grade-level literacy learning. All students need opportunities to participate in challenging academic work that promotes deep disciplinary knowledge and encourages higher order thinking skills.¹⁸¹

Multilingual Learners in Monolingual English Settings

The majority of multilingual learners in Oregon are developing literacy in English instructional programs, as opportunities for dual immersion, native language learning, and/or bilingual programming have yet to be realized statewide. For multilingual learners in an English-only instructional context, language and literacy development must happen throughout the instructional day with continued and sustained opportunities to practice language across domains.

Comprehensive literacy instruction, inclusive of the following essential practices, supports multilingual learners in a monolingual English setting to develop proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The same components that accelerate and support language and literacy development for multilingual learners benefit all students’ language and content learning.¹⁸² Simply put, instructional practices that support multilingual learners also support monolingual English speakers. These include but are not limited to:¹⁸³

- Developing literacy within a comprehensive approach that includes language development, teaching foundational skills in context, and the integration of meaning-making across content areas.
- Strengthening oral language development through explicit connections to reading and writing instruction.
- Placing emphasis on comprehension as the primary goal of reading.
- Attending to the close relationship between reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
- Building upon and affirming students’ home language and cultural practices.
- Providing sheltered instruction to build on students’ background knowledge while leveraging comprehensible input as a core instructional strategy.

¹⁸⁰ García & Kleifgen, 2018

¹⁸¹ García & Kleifgen, 2018

¹⁸² [Escamilla et al., 2022](#)

¹⁸³ From [Escamilla et al., 2022](#)

- Recognizing that sociocultural factors play a major role in students' learning and promoting an asset-oriented school and classroom climate is essential to supporting literacy development.
- Encouraging families to continue literacy development in their home language through read-alouds and oral conversations.¹⁸⁴

Building strong foundational reading skills in language comprehension and word recognition is important, but insufficient, for multilingual students' overall reading and literacy development.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, when designing literacy instruction to support multilingual learners, students' literacy skills and language development need to be supported. To more successfully facilitate English literacy acquisition for multilingual learners, effective literacy instruction emphasizes explicit teaching of both oracy and literacy.¹⁸⁶ Intentionally designing English literacy instruction to support multilingual learners includes a focus on linguistic transfer, including cognates; explicit instruction about phonemes that are not present within a student's home language; and incorporating students' home language(s) when possible through paired readings.¹⁸⁷

Lastly, while multilingual learners in monolingual settings benefit from foundational skills that are taught and reinforced in the context of the core literacy block, it is not appropriate for foundational skill practice to comprise the entirety of English language development. Multilingual students benefit most from cognitively demanding context-embedded English language development instruction designed to develop vocabulary, scaffold discourse, build and reinforce reading and writing skills, and hone oral language skills.¹⁸⁸ English language development instruction should be intentionally aligned to English Language Proficiency standards¹⁸⁹ while taking into account each student's English language proficiency in order to design learning experiences that are within their zone of proximal development.

Multilingual Learners In Bilingual/Dual Immersion Settings

To recognize and build from the assets of multilingualism, understanding multilingual learners' lived experiences, how they learn, and how they acquire English is essential.¹⁹⁰ Literacy development for students with two or more languages is distinctly different from the literacy development of monolingual students. "The degree to which the dual language brain is leveraged or ignored spells a major difference between effective and ineffective/exclusionary literacy instruction for dual language learners."¹⁹¹

Multilingual learners who participate in dual language programs simultaneously develop literacy skills in their home language and in English. Dual language education promotes the explicit goal of biliteracy by developing foundational skills in the multilingual learner's home language, strategically aligning literacy instruction across two languages, and encouraging cross-linguaging, transfer, and metalinguistic skills. Importantly, dual language classrooms incorporate assessments in two languages, building from the strengths of the home language to develop fluency in the second language.¹⁹²

184 García & Kleifgen, 2018

185 [Escamilla et al., 2022](#)

186 Hoover et al., 2016

187 Cárdenas-Hagan, 2020

188 Cummins, 1984

189 Council of Chief State School Officers, 2014

190 [Herrera et al., 2022](#)

191 [Escamilla et al., 2022](#)

192 Abdelkader et al., 2022

Essential practices that promote biliteracy within dual language instruction include:

- Developing home language and literacy alongside English language and literacy.¹⁹³
- Integrating oral language and literacy instruction into content-area teaching¹⁹⁴ in both home language(s) and English.
- Teaching academic vocabulary intentionally using a variety of instructional activities.¹⁹⁵
- Providing regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills, alongside small-group instruction in areas of literacy and English language development.¹⁹⁶
- Leveraging cross-language connections that promote transfer and engage students in translanguaging.¹⁹⁷
- Implementing assessment practices such as screeners, and formative and summative assessments in the student’s home language and English.
- Encouraging families to continue literacy development in their home language through read-alouds and oral conversations.¹⁹⁸

It is widely understood that students’ English proficiency will take longer to reach in a dual immersion context than that of monolingual peers.¹⁹⁹ Assessment practices for multilingual learners supported in dual immersion settings must account for the 5–7 year timeline for multilingual learners to achieve parity with English speakers in terms of English literacy acquisition.²⁰⁰ For this reason, it is essential that students are provided multiple ways to demonstrate literacy proficiency, that progress in their home language is assessed and affirmed, and that students are not erroneously identified for special education simply because of latent English development.²⁰¹

While additional time, skills practice, oral language development, and explicit instruction may be necessary for students not yet reading in English at grade level, the student’s access to quality, grade-level literacy learning should not be limited or replaced by remedial efforts.²⁰²

“In general, education practitioners have had difficulty distinguishing between sociocultural/ sociolinguistic factors (including language development) and disabilities, which has prompted calls for specific training in this area.”

Herrera et al., 2022

193 August & Shanahan, 2006; Riches & Genesee, 2006

194 [Baker et al., 2014](#)

195 [Baker et al., 2014](#)

196 [Baker et al., 2014](#)

197 [García, 2009a](#)

198 García & Kleifgen, 2018

199 Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008

200 Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008

201 Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008

202 Kieffer, 2020; Kieffer & Thompson, 2018

While the literacy learning arc for students learning in multiple languages can be longer than students learning in monolingual instructional programs, the benefits are far-reaching. Impressively, the bilingual brain is stronger, more pliable, and demonstrates higher levels of synthesis and sense-making across content areas.²⁰³ Moreover, research supports that students in dual immersion settings gain additional social, cognitive, and familial benefits associated with becoming fully biliterate.²⁰⁴ Over time, multilingual learners participating in high-quality dual language programs perform at or above English-speaking students in English-only classrooms.²⁰⁵ The benefits of biliteracy are compelling—dual immersion instruction is a significant lever for increased literacy outcomes in Oregon.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

- All students are language learners. Multilingual learners simply require an intentionality in language instruction that is ultimately of benefit to all students in the classroom.
- Multilingual learners deserve affirmation and intentional linkage between known language and new skills.
- All students have a right to core literacy instruction. Any needed language interventions must be offered outside core literacy instruction blocks.
- Multilingual learners desire and deserve challenging content and context embedded language development alongside any needed foundational language skills.
- Literacy development for those with two languages is different from the monolingual speaker. Maximizing learning requires knowledge of each student’s language context.
- English proficiency may take longer to reach than that of monolingual peers. Assessment must be informed and nuanced to account for the possibility of language development range.
- Multilingual learners benefit from classroom settings where oral language use is emphasized, and student-to-student interaction is promoted.
- The benefits of multilingual language learning are varied and research supported.

LEARN MORE FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

- [Bilingual Site for Educators and Families](#)
- [Translanguaging to Support Students’ Bilingual and Multilingual Development](#)
- [Literacy for Multilingual Learners](#)
- [Supporting Early Literacy for Multilingual Learners](#)
- [Multilingual Learning Toolkit](#)
- [The Science of Reading Progresses: Communicating Advances Beyond the Simple View of Reading](#)
- [How Does the Science of Reading Apply to Teaching Multilingual Learners?](#)

203 Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008

204 [Baca, 2018](#)

205 Hamayan et al., 2013

Supporting Students with Reading Difficulties, Reading Disabilities, & Dyslexia

Supporting students experiencing reading difficulties, such as dyslexia, is crucial to ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive academically and personally. Dyslexia affects a portion of the population and can pose unique challenges for both students and educators. With comprehensive, evidence-based support, students with reading difficulties, including dyslexia, can achieve at the highest levels. Oregon has established a strong framework for early identification and prevention of reading difficulties through its dyslexia policies. Oregon dyslexia policies (OAR 581-022-2440²⁰⁶ and OAR 581-002-1805²⁰⁷) require both teacher training²⁰⁸ and universal screening²⁰⁹ as part of a comprehensive model of assessment and support for all students.

Select resources from ODE related to dyslexia and students experiencing disability: [Dyslexia Website](#), [Guidance on Screening and Instructional Support](#), and [Specially Designed Instruction and Least Restrictive Environment Considerations for IEP teams](#).

Oregon law requires universal screening for risk factors of reading difficulties, including dyslexia, beginning in kindergarten, although individual student circumstances could require earlier assessment of a child's strengths and needs. Identification of students with characteristics of dyslexia is a process that incorporates multiple steps and sources of information. Once universal screening results are analyzed, then students are provided with instructional support, progress monitoring, and additional assessment to guide more intensive instructional interventions. The success of this model depends upon the provision of explicit, systematic, evidence-based instruction provided by qualified educators across all tiers of support.

- **Step 1: Complete universal screening.** The role of universal screening in primary grades to identify students who are in need of reading instructional support has been widely studied. The old saying, "Just wait and they will catch up," does not hold up to all the empirical data and support for providing early intervention for struggling readers. Whenever possible, students should also be assessed in their native language, especially if they have had some formal native language instruction. Districts should gather additional information about the student's literacy background including exposure to English and the structure of the native language and use this information to help interpret screening results and to inform instruction.
- **Step 2: Provide instructional support for students who demonstrate the need for additional support and monitor their progress.** Schools should begin intervening early to address skill areas as indicated by the universal screening measures. Students should start receiving interventions of sufficient intensity based on student need as soon as possible. For many students, early intervention can be provided within the context of the core reading program through differentiated and small-group instruction. Other students may require additional instructional support beyond the core reading as described above. Student progress and growth should be closely monitored to see if the targeted intervention is effective for the student. This type of progress monitoring is targeted and specific for an individual student, and is more individualized than more general class progress monitoring described in [Section 7: Core Instruction & Assessment](#).

206 [Teacher Training Related to Dyslexia, 2018](#)

207 [Annual List of Dyslexia-Related Training Opportunities, 2018](#)

208 [ODE, 2018a](#)

209 [ODE, 2022a](#)

- **Step 3: Administer informal diagnostic measures and connect with families to learn more about family history relative to difficulty learning to read or write for students who do not make adequate progress.** Administering informal diagnostic assessments that identify a student's specific areas of strength and need will provide educators with information that is needed to further inform instruction. Informal diagnostic assessment consists of completing a more in-depth skills development inventory on a narrow skill area. In addition to gathering informal diagnostic data, school teams should screen for a family history of difficulty in learning to read if a student demonstrates risk factors for reading difficulties, including dyslexia. Because dyslexia is neurobiological in origin and often runs in families, this family screening may provide important information related to the potential source of a student's reading struggle. To support family engagement and therefore children's learning, educators and schools should center these important conversations within culturally responsive and supportive partnerships.
- **Step 4: Intensify instructional support as needed based on student-level assessment data and continue monitoring progress.** Using the data collected from the informal diagnostic assessments, school teams should provide more intensive instructional support to those students who do not make adequate progress despite the provision of evidence-based support in addition to core instruction. Instructional support and intervention may be intensified by factors such as: providing more time, reducing group size, increasing engagement strategies, and addressing a broader range of skills.
- **Step 5: Begin Individualized Problem Solving/Data-Based Individualization to adapt the intervention as needed and continue progress monitoring for students who do not make adequate progress.** This data-informed approach involves collecting detailed information about the curriculum, instruction, environment, and learner characteristics to develop a comprehensive plan of support. In this phase of support, teams continue to collect diagnostic data and implement validated interventions but use adaptation strategies to further individualize the support. If student-level data indicate that additional accommodations or specialized instruction beyond tiered instructional supports may be required, school staff may refer a student for a 504 plan or special education evaluation.

Although it reflects another state context, [Michigan Dyslexia Handbook: A Guide to Accelerating Learner Outcomes in Literacy](#) includes many helpful resources:

- An explanation of dyslexia.
- A graphic showing the myths vs. facts about dyslexia.
- Best practices to prevent reading difficulties associated with the primary consequences of dyslexia.
- Information about the assessment practices needed to inform instruction and intervention methods for learners with dyslexia characteristics.

Special Education Eligibility Processes

Culturally responsive teaching and problem-solving are essential elements of inclusive and equitable learning environments that can support appropriate special education eligibility processes. The following recommendations aim to reduce disproportionality in special education eligibility due to racial and linguistic bias while still ensuring that all students receive the support they need. Through the use of culturally responsive and comprehensive, coherent systems of instruction and assessment, school teams can more accurately identify students who are experiencing a specific learning disability.

Students may need more support than general education provides in order to achieve grade-level literacy expectations. By employing fair and sensitive approaches to problem-solving that respect and incorporate the diverse cultural backgrounds of all students, educational teams can accurately discern between students who have a specific learning disability and those who have not yet demonstrated grade-level skills because they have not been given appropriate instruction.

For example, sometimes a student may not make expected progress or may not respond to interventions as measured by progress monitoring data. In this scenario, staff should continue providing core instruction and targeted interventions while also initiating a problem-solving process.²¹⁰ This process leads teams to develop a more intensive, data-based and individualized instructional support plan based on student strengths and areas of need. Implementing this support plan may lead to improvement in student performance and may prevent inappropriate referrals to special education. However, it is important to note that this process cannot delay a timely initial special education evaluation for children suspected of having a disability. If the need for a special education referral arises, the information gathered from the problem-solving process can inform the special education evaluation and eligibility process.

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO INTERRUPT BIAS WHEN CONSIDERING THE NEED FOR INITIAL EVALUATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION:²¹¹

How is the education team...

- considering perspectives other than the initial presentation of the student concern? (*Presenting Initial Concern*)
- operationalizing an area of need that is focused on instruction, classroom management, student skills, and/or teacher skills? (*Identifying the Area of Need*)
- identifying a low-inference, alterable, and measurable hypothesis that explains why the problem is occurring? (*Identifying a Hypothesis for Area of Need*)
- using strategies to mitigate implicit bias, including in the collection of data? (*Collecting Data*)
- considering all the data and identifying common themes to verify the problem and confirm the hypothesis? (*Interpreting Data*)
- selecting an evidence-based intervention based on what the data reflects? (*Selecting Evidence-Based Interventions*)
- using strategies to improve the cultural responsiveness of the intervention during selection and progress monitoring? (*Improving Cultural Responsiveness of Intervention*)

Supporting Students Experiencing Disabilities Through Special Education

Most students, including those experiencing disabilities, benefit from deep learning in the general education classroom with appropriate supports such as accommodations, adapted materials, individualized goals or objectives, and co-teaching. In some cases, students need more direct, explicit, and targeted literacy interventions. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that students who experience disabilities have a free appropriate public education, often referred to as FAPE, that is individualized to meet their respective needs. As with all students, those who experience disabilities benefit most from inclusive, student-centered, and intentional instruction. When it is determined that students are eligible for special education services, they must have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), designed by an appropriate team, that enables access to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

²¹⁰ [The IRIS Center, 2022](#)

²¹¹ [Newell, 2017](#)

For students with specific reading and writing difficulties, the IEP provides an opportunity to work collaboratively to set goals for literacy and identify teaching and learning supports. A student experiencing a specific learning disability, such as dyslexia, may be eligible for an IEP if it is determined that special education is required. Additionally, not all disabilities impact literacy in the same way. Although reading disabilities (e.g., dyslexia) are the most common specific learning disability, there are a variety of other disabilities that can impact students' literacy trajectories.

Specially Designed Instruction and Related Services²¹²

Students experiencing disabilities are general education students first and, unless another arrangement is required by their Individualized Education Program, they need access to whole group core instruction. In addition to general education support, Specially Designed Instruction and related services must be provided as mandated in each eligible student's IEP. In the context of literacy, related services may include speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, or physical therapy. Special education is intended to make high-quality core instruction accessible and enable students to meet their annual IEP goals.

IEP teams should take a broad view of instruction and carefully consider the special education required to enable the provision of free appropriate public education and access to the general curriculum for each eligible child. Special educators should adjust the content, methodology, or delivery of core instruction based on a student's IEP. Specially Designed Instruction should enhance and build upon general education curriculum and instruction.

Accessibility in the Early Literacy Classroom²¹³

One way to increase access and remove barriers for students experiencing disabilities is through the use of accessible materials, formats, and technologies. Universally designed classrooms should include multiple means of access to materials for all students, not just those students with specific accommodations listed on IEPs. The National Center on Accessible Educational Materials offers four categories to describe accessibility.

- **Accessible educational materials** are print- and technology-based educational materials, including printed and electronic textbooks and related core materials that are designed or enhanced in a way that makes them usable across the widest range of learner variability, regardless of format (e.g., print, digital, graphic, audio, video). Accessible educational materials make literacy core instructional materials accessible to all learners.
- **Accessible formats**²¹⁴ provide the same information in another form to address the barriers text-based materials can present for some learners. Examples of accessible formats include audio, braille, large print, tactile graphics, and digital text conforming to accessibility standards.
- **Accessible technologies** are the hardware devices and software that provide learners access to the content in accessible digital materials. These technologies are designed to be flexible and provide the support that benefits everyone – they are universally designed.
- **Assistive technologies** are technological systems and services that assist a student who experiences a disability to access their environment, resources, or materials. Some examples of assistive technology in the literacy learning environment include text-to-speech, speech recognition, and screen readers.

²¹² [ODE, n.d-f](#)

²¹³ [AEM Center, n.d.](#)

²¹⁴ [CAST, 2021](#)

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES, READING DISABILITIES AND DYSLEXIA

- The aims of literacy instruction apply to all children; with modifications, accommodations, supports, and technologies, every child must have access to literacy learning.
- Early screening matters. Districts must universally screen for risk factors indicative of reading difficulties, including dyslexia, in kindergarten.
- Prevention of early reading difficulties must include increasingly intensified and individualized instructional support matched to students' areas of strength and need.
- To the maximum extent appropriate, all instructional support for students with reading and writing difficulties should be provided *in addition to* high-quality core literacy instruction.
- Instructional supports must be informed by multiple data sources and matched to areas of strength and need.
- Identifying where each student is on the learning progression supports effective use of differentiated practices and tiered instructional supports.
- Ensuring accessibility through alternative formats and technology is an important way to enhance access.
- Through the use of culturally responsive and comprehensive, coherent systems of instruction and assessment, school teams can more accurately identify students who are experiencing a specific learning disability.

LEARN MORE FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES, READING DISABILITIES AND DYSLEXIA

- [MTSS for Reading Component Module Series](#)
- [The Universal Design for Learning Guidelines](#)
- [Literacy in the Inclusive Classroom](#)
- [Intensifying Literacy Instruction – Essential Practices](#)
- [High Leverage Practices in Special Education](#)
- [Data-Based Individualization: A Framework for Intensive Intervention](#)
- [The Pre-Referral Process: Procedures for Supporting Students with Academic and Behavioral Concerns](#)
- [Intensive Intervention \(Part 1\): Using Data-Based Individualization To Intensify Instruction](#)
- [Intensive Intervention \(Part 2\): Collecting and Analyzing Data for Data-Based Individualization](#)
- [Considerations When Planning Literacy Instruction for Students with Intellectual Disabilities](#)

Talented & Gifted Students

Gifted readers often develop reading skills easily and become proficient readers at an early age. It is not unusual for gifted readers to process text quickly, comprehend above-grade level text, and sustain reading for an extended period of time. Gifted readers may be highly verbal and use advanced language and vocabulary in any language with ease. They may also excel in creative writing, literary analysis, oral communication, linguistic and vocabulary development, and multilingual learning.

Early informal and formal classroom assessment may reveal students who already meet or exceed grade-level expectations for reading, writing, and other literacy skills. A child who is beyond grade-level proficiency in the area of reading or writing may or may not be officially identified as Talented and Gifted, yet deserves learning opportunities that foster their academic growth and provide appropriate rigor. Contrary to commonly held beliefs that talented and gifted students may be fine without additional instructional support, “gifted students have special needs; they are at risk of learning the least in the classroom.”²¹⁵

While there are several areas of giftedness identification, students who are gifted in reading and language share some common characteristics:²¹⁶

- Reading early and at an advanced level.
- Using metacognitive processes (thinking about thinking) in reading.
- Reading with enthusiasm for topics of interest.
- Demonstrating advanced language skills in any language and in any domain (i.e., oral, reading, and writing).

Multilingual learners are underrepresented in Talented and Gifted programs for many problematic reasons, including assessments contingent on proficiency in English and educator bias. Using native language ability and achievement assessments as indicators of potential giftedness, in addition to family interviews, are important pathways for Talented and Gifted identification of multilingual learners. Perhaps even more importantly, educators must develop new ways of seeing multilingual children as gifted, bringing an asset-based perspective that honors the incredible strength of the multilingual brain.

Giftedness can have varying meanings across cultures. Some researchers have re-defined giftedness among English language learners. Gifted English learners can display a wide range of skills, for example, the ability to:

- Acquire a second language at an accelerated rate
- Respect and appreciate languages and cultures that differ from their own
- Perform well in mathematics
- Switch between English and their native language with ease, sometimes referred to as code-switching
- Interpret the English language
- Grasp and use American idioms and expressions
- Adapt behaviors so that they are culturally relevant and appropriate

REL Northwest²¹⁷

215 Choice & Walker, 2011

216 [Reis, 2012](#)

217 [Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest, n.d.](#)

Table 6. Supporting Gifted and Talented Readers

Instead of This:	Do This:
Treating all gifted readers as a homogenous group who all love to read...	Acknowledge that gifted and talented readers are a diverse group with varied intellectual, emotional, cultural, and linguistic differences. Some may be reluctant readers, despite their giftedness.
Assuming gifted and talented readers are experts at text comprehension, and do not need specific reading instruction...	Provide instructional strategies for developing deeper insights into the subtleties of literary selections, understanding nuances of meaning, and mastering advanced-level informational content. Even though most gifted and talented readers have highly developed comprehension skills, especially in comparison to peers of their age, they still benefit from specific reading strategies.
Allowing gifted readers to be entirely autonomous in their learning and self-selecting all of their reading materials...	Encourage students to broaden their repertoire of reading material to ensure access to complex content, vocabulary, genre and text structure. While choice in reading materials is one of the essential components of a reading program for gifted and talented readers, it should be balanced with teacher-assigned reading
Providing talented readers with the same instruction...	Differentiate according to advanced readers' strengths and needs.

While many of the strategies listed below are appropriate for all students, they are especially effective for supporting literacy growth for Talented and Gifted students:²¹⁸

- Utilize assessment practices to determine curriculum compacting.²¹⁹
- Provide access to challenging reading materials that include both depth and complexity.
- Deepen reading comprehension skills using a framework such as Webb's depth of knowledge to increase the complexity of thinking.²²⁰
- Model and expand students' metacognitive processes (thinking about thinking) while they are actively reading text.
- Develop critical thinking and analysis skills through reading and comparing a variety of genres and modes and encouraging writing in response to reading.
- Include representation of students' identity by offering diverse, multicultural literature across multiple genres.
- Intentionally provide opportunities for group discussion of selected texts, using readiness grouping or precision pairing designed to drive and elevate student discourse and growth.
- Foster student agency by providing opportunities for students to choose texts based on genre preference or advanced study on topics of interest.
- Encourage creative reading behaviors, including writing and dramatic interpretation.

218 [Wood, 2008](#)

219 [National Association for Gifted Children, 2014](#)

220 [Webb, 1997; Webb, 2002](#)

To meet the strengths and needs of gifted learners, differentiated instruction should account for their current proficiency level, depth of knowledge, critical and creative thinking skills, and accelerated rates of learning. Not all literacy-gifted students are the same; each student needs appropriately designed instructional strategies that reflect their learning profile.²²¹ Differentiation is critical for all students, and especially for students who are considered twice-exceptional, also referred to as “2E.” Students who are twice-exceptional are gifted, and may also experience a special need or disability. When planning for literacy instruction for twice-exceptional students, coordination between general education staff, special education specialists, and the Talented and Gifted coordinator is critical to ensure that children who are twice-exceptional are provided appropriate targeted support.²²²

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR TALENTED AND GIFTED

- Multilingual learners are disproportionately underrepresented in Talented and Gifted programs. It is important, therefore, for educators to be responsive to ways that multilingual learners demonstrate giftedness.
- Students may enter the classroom meeting and exceeding grade-level benchmarks; they deserve access to strategic instructional practices that provide appropriate academic challenges and opportunities to foster academic growth.
- Differentiating instruction, including depth of knowledge, critical and creative thinking skills, and accelerated rates of learning is critical to sustain engagement for gifted readers.
- Ultimately, giftedness is more than a reading level or an enrichment activity. When teachers look at a gifted student's needs, they need to assess the whole student, and be aware of students who may be twice-exceptional.

LEARN MORE FOR TALENTED AND GIFTED

- [Improving the Identification of English Learner Students for Talented and Gifted Programs](#)
- [Advanced Learner Multi-Tiered System of Support Guide](#)
- [National Association for Gifted Children: A Position Statement](#)
- [Gifted and Dyslexic: Identifying and Instructing the Twice Exceptional Student](#)
- [Booklists for Talented Readers](#)
- [Talented and Gifted Education \(from ODE\)](#)
- [Tips for Identifying Gifted English Learner Students](#)

221 [Wood, 2008](#)

222 [National Association for Gifted Children, 2015](#)

Appendix A: Acknowledgments

Thank you, first and foremost, to every Oregon student, our most important focus. As you strive forward in writing, reading, speaking, listening, and thinking deeply, you inspire those around you. The world wants to hear your voice, which is why Oregon cares about your literacy achievement.

Thank you to families and caregivers; as your child's first teacher you are seeding language and literacy through song, story, and the languages of your home.

Thank you to every educator and literacy leader making literacy come alive for Oregon children, taking ideas from paper into practice. You are doing powerful and important work; we see you and honor you.

Thank you to everyone who read the Preview Draft version of Oregon's Early Literacy Framework and provided feedback and suggestions. Additionally, thank you to all 152 participants who participated in more than 21 focus groups to provide feedback on the framework. Your input made the final version of the framework stronger and better.

Thank you to the specialists within the Oregon Department of Education whose work directly connects to literacy and who tirelessly contributed to this effort—sharing their insights, feedback, and synthesizing the latest research. Thank you, too, to countless ODE colleagues who helped in the creation of this document. It would not have been possible without you!

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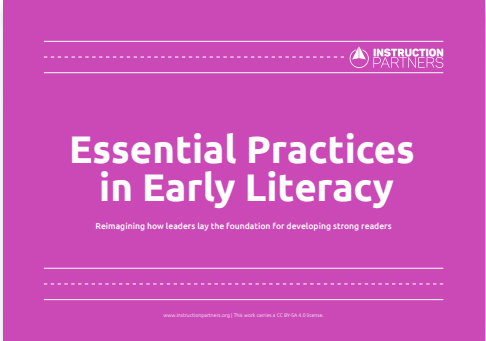
We are also grateful for and credit the work done by the National Committee for Effective Literacy and their generosity in terms of time and content. Likewise, we are thankful to the Instruction Partners for creating such a thoughtful playbook for implementing early literacy practices and for openly licensing it.

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Thank you to Governor Kotek for her call to action around literacy learning in Oregon, recognizing that when students develop essential early literacy skills it makes all other learning possible. With a focus on centering families as children's first teachers, ensuring classrooms are culturally responsive, and highlighting the importance of supporting educators in on-going professional learning, Governor Kotek is clear that Oregon must commit to early literacy success. Her advocacy for literacy and endorsement of this framework is foundational to realizing real change for young readers and writers in Oregon.

Appendix B: Companion Guidance Documents & Resources

Document

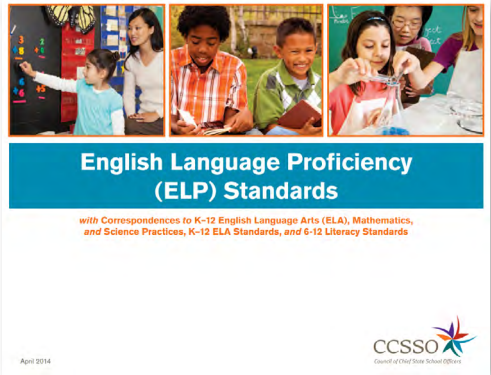


Description

Instruction Partner’s [Early Literacy Implementation Playbook](#) provides ready-to-use, step-by-step guidance. Early literacy leaders and educators can use this playbook to strengthen and monitor literacy development in their school or system, whether building the essential implementation practices from scratch or tuning up what they already have in place.



[English Language Arts and Literacy Standards](#): Oregon’s most recent English Language Arts and Literacy standards were adopted in 2019. These standards are grounded in research and align with the science of reading. They set the expectations for classroom teaching outcomes.



[English Language Proficiency Standards](#): The State Board of Education approved the latest English Language Proficiency standards in October 2013. The English Language Proficiency Standards highlight and amplify the critical language, knowledge about language, and skills using language that are necessary for multilingual learners to be successful in schools.

Document

Oregon's Dyslexia Legislation

- [Oregon Dyslexia Advisory Council \(ODAC\)](#)
- [Senate Bill 1003 - Legislative Report](#)
- [Oregon Dyslexia Legislation Update 2019 \(video\)](#) - The International Dyslexia Association - Oregon Branch
- [ORS 326.726](#)
- [OAR 581-002-1800 - Dyslexia-Related Training, Definitions](#)
- [OAR 581-002-1805 - Annual List of Dyslexia-Related Training Opportunities](#)
- [OAR 581-002-1810 - Waiver from Teacher Training Requirements](#)
- [OAR 581-002-1815 Universal Screening for Risk Factors of Dyslexia, Definitions](#)
- [OAR 581-002-1820 List of Approved Universal Screeners for Risk Factors of Dyslexia](#)
- [OAR 581-002-1825 Waiver for Universal Screening of Risk Factors of Dyslexia in a Student's Native Language](#)
- [OAR 581-022-2440 - Teacher Training Related to Dyslexia](#)
- [OAR 581-022-2445 - Universal Screenings for Risk Factors of Dyslexia](#)

Category	Oregon Education Criteria	Subcategory	Publisher	Program Title	Copyright Date	LEVEL	ISBN	Page Count	ISBN-10	ISBN-13	ISBN-10	ISBN-13	ISBN-10	ISBN-13
Category 1 - Grade K-2	MEPTE	100	100 Family Education	100 Family Education	2020	Kindergarten	9781602620000	160	160	9781602620000	160	9781602620000	160	9781602620000
Category 1 - Grade K-2	MEPTE	100	100 Family Education	100 Family Education	2020	Kindergarten	9781602620000	160	160	9781602620000	160	9781602620000	160	9781602620000
Category 1 - Grade K-2	MEPTE	100	100 Family Education	100 Family Education	2020	Kindergarten	9781602620000	160	160	9781602620000	160	9781602620000	160	9781602620000

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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EARLY LEARNING DIVISION

Oregon's Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines

DASL SCHOOL LIBRARY GRADE-LEVEL LEARNING GOALS

STRAND: INFORMATION LITERACY
The changes for finding, selecting, assessing, understanding, analyzing, using, and evaluating information, within physical and digital information environments.

Standard 1: Use skills, resources and tools to discover, think critically and gain knowledge

INDICATOR	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9-10	11/12	13	14
ILL 1.1.A
ILL 1.1.B

Description

Oregon's Dyslexia-Related Requirements: Oregon's dyslexia legislation outlines two main requirements for school districts: universal screening to identify students with risk factors of dyslexia and training at least one teacher in each K-5 school in content in the following three areas:

- Using evidence-based practices to systematically and explicitly teach the foundational skills in reading;
- Understanding and recognizing dyslexia; and,
- Intensifying instruction to meet the needs of students with severe reading difficulties, including dyslexia.

English Language Arts Approved Instructional Materials:

The State Board of Education adopted the English Language Arts approved Instructional Materials list in October of 2021. The list includes core basal materials for grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

Soon to be revised **Early Learning/Kindergarten Standards:**

The Oregon Department of Education and the Early Learning Division leadership created a statewide workgroup to align Oregon's early learning and kindergarten standards. Developing clear and consistent expectations for what children should know and be able to do as they transition from early learning into kindergarten is foundational to improving children's transition from early learning settings into kindergarten and ultimately invigorating K-3 instruction to ensure that 95 percent of children read proficiently by the end of grade 3.

The Oregon Association of School Libraries' **School Library Standards** were updated in 2019, including strands for information literacy, reading engagement, and social responsibility.

Additionally, the standards include grade-level learning goals for grades K through 14.

Appendix C: Glossary

For alignment, we have defined the following terms as they are used within the Oregon Early Literacy Framework.

- **ALPHABETIC PRINCIPLE:** sounds in speech (phonology) relate intentionally and conventionally to the letters of the English alphabetic writing system (i.e., orthography). English has a deep orthography where levels of phonology and awareness of meaningful units (morphology) are critical to learning to read. Levels of phonology are the word, syllable, onset-rime (medial vowel and final consonant as in *-at* in *cat*), and phoneme. Phonemes are the minimal unit of meaningful sound (e.g., the medial vowels in *pin* and *pen* are distinct phonemes denoting different words in most dialects of English but not in all dialects). Morphemes are the minimal units of meaning: prefixes, suffixes (inflectional or derivational), roots (*flex* in *flexible*), and base words (which can stand alone without other morphemes). The morphophonemic nature of English becomes apparent when noticing that *signal* consists of the base word *sign* plus the suffix *-al* (Foorman, 2023).
- **ASSESSMENT:** the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students.²²³
- **TEXT COMPLEXITY:** the level of difficulty in reading and understanding a text based on a series of factors: the readability of the text, the levels of meaning or purpose in the text, the structure of the text, the conventionality and clarity of the language, and the knowledge demands of the text.²²⁴ Complex texts are texts that provide an appropriate level of rigor aligned with grade-level expectations.
- **COGNATE:** words in two languages that share a similar meaning, spelling, and pronunciation.²²⁵
- **CORE INSTRUCTION:** high-quality instruction in the general education setting that is aligned to grade-level standards, centered around grade-level-aligned materials, and inclusive of every student in the classroom, regardless of performance level.²²⁶ Sometimes also referred to as Tier I Instruction, this is the primary prevention for reading and writing difficulty. It maximizes learning by providing access to peer learning models, the classroom teacher, and grade-level aligned texts and tasks.
- **COMPREHENSION:** intentional thinking about and understanding of the content of a text (comprehension is a summative skill that is supported by a student's aptitude in the other four pillars). One of the Five Pillars of Reading.²²⁷
- **CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY:** helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate.²²⁸
- **CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE:** the implicit recognition and incorporation of the cultural knowledge, experience, and ways of being and knowing of students in teaching, learning, and assessment. This includes identifying, valuing, and maintaining a high commitment to: students' cultural assets in instruction and assessment; diverse frames of reference that correspond to multifaceted cultural perspectives/experiences; and behaviors in the classroom that can differ from White-centered cultural views of what qualifies as achievement or success.²²⁹

223 [Great Schools Partnership, 2015](#)

224 [Louisiana Department of Education, 2014](#)

225 [Colorín Colorado, 2007](#)

226 [Bowen, 2021](#)

227 [National Reading Panel, n.d.](#)

228 Ladson-Billings, 1995

229 [ODE, n.d.-a](#)

- **CULTURALLY SUSTAINING PEDAGOGIES:** “[seeks] to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of schooling for social transformation.”²³⁰
- **DECODING:** Translating a word from print to speech by using knowledge of phoneme-grapheme, or sound-symbol correspondences.
- **DIAGNOSTIC TEACHING:** teaching that individualizes instruction based on information collected from the continuous assessment that includes a combination of informal diagnostic assessments and lesson observation.²³¹
- **DYSLEXIA:** a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition, or both, and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.²³²
- **EARLY LITERACY:** refers to the skills outlined by Oregon’s English Language Arts Standards for grades K–5 inclusive of reading foundational skills (e.g., print concepts; phonological awareness; phonics and word recognition; fluency); comprehension; language and vocabulary; writing; speaking and listening. These standards are reflective of the literacy skills and knowledge that begin developing prior to students’ entry into kindergarten and which will continue to develop over time and lay a foundation for further and more advanced literacy development in later grades.
- **ENCODING:** translating speech into print (writing) using knowledge of phoneme-grapheme, or sound-symbol correspondences.
- **ENGLISH LEARNER:** Oregon House Bill 3499, passed in 2015, defines English Learner as a student who has limited English language proficiency because English is not the native language of the student or the student comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the student’s level of English language proficiency.²³³ More recently, the term Multilingual Learners is sometimes preferred, as it decenters English and is more inclusive of all students who speak two or more languages.
- **EVIDENCE-BASED LITERACY PRACTICES:** refers to instructional practices with a proven record of success based on reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence that when the instructional practices are implemented with fidelity, students can be expected to make adequate gains in literacy achievement.^{234 235}
- **EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS:** higher-order self-regulatory neurocognitive processes used for complex tasks. These skills include cognitive flexibility, working memory, inhibitory control, attention, and planning.²³⁶
- **EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION:** direct, face-to-face teaching that involves teacher explanation, demonstration, and the provision of ongoing corrective feedback.²³⁷
- **EXPLICIT, SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION:** code-based foundational reading instruction that moves early readers and writers along a continuum of skills in the areas of print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency, which are key areas represented in the [Oregon English Language Arts and Literacy Reading Foundational Skills Standards](#) for students in grades K–5.²³⁸

230 Paris & Alim, 2017

231 [ODE, 2018c](#)

232 [Dyslexia-Related Training: Definitions, 2018](#)

233 [HB 3499, 2015](#)

234 [Dyslexia-Related Training: Definitions, 2018](#)

235 ODE defines evidence-based in a range of ways given the complex bodies of work across the K-12 system.

236 Dawson & Guare, 2018; Diamond, 2012; Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Johann & Karbach, 2019

237 [Dyslexia-Related Training: Definitions, 2018](#); [ODE, 2018c](#)

238 [Dyslexia-Related Training: Definitions, 2018](#)

- **FLUENCY:** reading text accurately and with sufficient pace, so that deep comprehension is possible. One of the Five Pillars of Reading.²³⁹
- **FOCAL GROUP:** aligned with [Student Success Act](#): “students of color; students experiencing disabilities; emerging bilingual students; and students navigating poverty, homelessness, and foster care; and other students who have historically experienced disparities in our schools.”²⁴⁰
- **FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS:** print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency. For a deeper dive around Foundational Skills Key Concepts and Terms, reference Achieve the Core’s: [Reading Foundational Skills Key Concepts and Terms](#).
- **FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE:** bodies of information developed within historical and cultural contexts that provide individuals and households the knowledge they need to maintain their well-being.²⁴¹
- **GRAPHEME:** the smallest unit of sound within our language system. A phoneme combines with other phonemes to make words.²⁴²
- **PHONEME–GRAPHEME CORRESPONDENCE:** matching of a spoken sound (phoneme) to its corresponding letter or group of letters (grapheme).²⁴³
- **HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:** instructional materials that include specific learning goals and lessons aligned to content standards, student-centered approaches to inquiry-based learning, research-based teaching strategies, teacher support materials, and embedded formative assessments to effectively help teachers implement instructional units and courses that are integrated, coherent, and sequenced.²⁴⁴
- **INCLUSIVE TEACHING:** any number of teaching approaches that address the needs of students with a variety of backgrounds, learning modalities, and abilities. These strategies contribute to an overall inclusive learning environment in which all students perceive to be valued and able to succeed.²⁴⁵
- **LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION:** teaching practices that support the learning, development, and engagement of children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. It includes support for continued development of children’s home or tribal languages by authentically incorporating children’s languages into the learning environment.²⁴⁶
- **LITERACY:** identifying, understanding, interpreting, creating, computing, and communicating using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context. It includes reading and writing, and also thinking, listening, and speaking.²⁴⁷
- **MORPHOLOGY:** the knowledge of meaningful word parts in a language, including prefixes, suffixes, and/or root words. Knowledge of word structure and how words are formed is linked to both greater vocabulary development and stronger reading comprehension. Research has shown that in children as young as first grade, knowledge of word parts has influenced their literacy development.²⁴⁸
- **MORPHOLOGICAL AWARENESS:** knowledge of the parts of words, such as prefixes, suffixes, and root words. Instruction in morphology is suggested to be an important complement to instruction in phonics and phonological awareness.²⁴⁹

239 [National Reading Panel, n.d.](#)

240 [ODE, n.d.-a](#)

241 Moll et al., 1992; [Nguyen & Commins, 2020](#); Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992

242 [University of Florida Literacy Institute, n.d.](#)

243 [University of Florida Literacy Institute, n.d.](#)

244 [ODE, 2022b](#)

245 [Center for Teaching Innovation, n.d.](#)

246 [Early Childhood Learning Center, 2019](#)

247 [International Literacy Association, n.d.](#)

248 [Foorman et al., 2016](#); [DESE, 2023b](#); Prince, 2010; Wolter & Green, 2013; Wolter et al., 2009

249 [DyslexiaHelp, n.d.](#)

- **MULTILINGUAL LEARNER:** a student who, by reason of foreign birth or ancestry, speaks or understands languages other than English, speaks or understands little or no English, and/or requires support in order to become proficient in English.²⁵⁰
- **ORTHOGRAPHY:** a language’s conventional spelling system.
- **ORTHOGRAPHIC MAPPING:** a process that involves the brain making connections between phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (spelling): this is what an emerging reader is doing when they confront a new word. Orthographic mapping is the process of forming connections between graphemes and phonemes, in order to store memories of spelling bonded to the pronunciation of words. Orthographic mapping is what allows readers to automatically comprehend what they are reading, so they can focus on content and meaning. Once words are “mapped” into the reader’s memory, there is no longer need for decoding letter by letter or grapheme by grapheme. Foundational reading instruction that assists learners in successfully decoding and mapping words can build a lifetime of reading success.²⁵¹
- **PHONEMES:** a letter or letter combination that spells a phoneme; can be one, two, three, or four letters in English (e.g., e, ei, igh, eigh).²⁵²
- **PHONICS:** the associations between sounds and print. One of the Five Pillars of Reading.²⁵³
- **PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS:** sensitivity to, or awareness of, the sound structure of words. One of the Five Pillars of Reading.²⁵⁴
- **PRAGMATICS:** In linguistics (the study of language) pragmatics is a specialized branch of study, focusing on the relationship between natural language and users of that language.²⁵⁵
- **RESEARCH-BASED LITERACY PRACTICES:** refers to models, theories, and practices that are based on the best research available in the particular field of study. These practices differ from evidence-based in that they have not been researched in a controlled setting to measure for efficacy.
- **SCIENCE OF READING:** neurological and cognitive science studies of how brains process written words,²⁵⁶ and includes a broad collection of research from multiple fields of study including cognitive science, learning sciences, literacy research, and instructional science and research broadly.²⁵⁷
- **SEMANTICS:** the meaning and interpretation of words, signs, and sentence structure.
- **SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL):** the process through which children and adults learn to pay attention to their thoughts and emotions, develop an awareness and understanding of the experience of others, cultivate compassion and kindness, learn to build and maintain healthy relationships, and make positive, prosocial decisions that allow them to set and achieve their positive goals.²⁵⁸
- **SYNTAX** The branch of grammar dealing with the way in which linguistic elements (such as words) are put together to form constituents (such as phrases or clauses).²⁵⁹
- **SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION:** a carefully planned sequence of instruction with lessons that build on previously taught information, from simple to complex.²⁶⁰ Systematic instruction builds on scaffolding as student knowledge grows.²⁶¹

250 [NYSED, 2019](#)

251 [Ehri, 2022](#)

252 [University of Florida Literacy Institute, n.d.](#)

253 [National Reading Panel, n.d.](#)

254 [National Reading Panel, n.d.](#)

255 [MasterClass, 2021](#)

256 [Shanahan, 2021](#)

257 [National Center on Improving Literacy, 2022](#)

258 [ODE, n.d.-a](#)

259 [Merriam-Webster, \(n.d.\), Definition 1](#)

260 [Dyslexia-Related Training: Definitions, 2018; ODE, 2018c](#)

261 [The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, 2020](#)

- **TARGETED UNIVERSALISM:** setting universal aims that are pursued by universal and targeted processes to achieve those aims.²⁶² Applying Targeted Universalism provides an operational pathway to lead for educational change in a way that bridges relationships and perspectives while maintaining dedicated and precise attention on focal students and their families.²⁶³
- **TIME IMMEMORIAL:** a point of time in the past that was so long ago that people have no knowledge or memory of it.
- **TRANSLANGUAGING:** “the discourse practices of bilinguals, as well as to pedagogical practices that use the entire complex linguistic repertoire of bilingual students flexibly in order to teach rigorous content and develop language practices for academic use.”²⁶⁴
- **UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL):** a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn.²⁶⁵ UDL provides a research-based framework for teachers to incorporate flexible materials, techniques, and strategies for delivering instruction and for students to demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways.²⁶⁶ Teaching materials and methods are the focus of change, instead of placing the burden on students to adapt to the curriculum.²⁶⁷
- **VOCABULARY:** The part of semantics concerning word meanings and word relations.. One of the Five Pillars of Reading.²⁶⁸
- **WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION:** an education that includes the arts, humanities, sciences, social sciences, language arts, and math. Background knowledge in these subjects allows students to transfer the ability to read into other subjects and experiences that require them to make meaning of what they read. Therefore, a content-rich curriculum is not just a necessary building block for educational attainment but for comprehension beyond the classroom.²⁶⁹

262 [ODE, 2022c](#)

263 [ODE, 2022c](#)

264 [Marrero-Colón, 2021](#)

265 [CAST, 2022](#)

266 [The IRIS Center, 2009](#)

267 [CAST, 2013](#)

268 [National Reading Panel, n.d.](#)

269 [Jimenez & Sargrad, 2018](#)

Appendix D: Reading Research & References

Appendix D contains sources cited within Oregon’s Early Literacy Framework, as well as sources that inform our work more broadly.

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