Running records for early literacy assessment
Session 2

October 5, 2020

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Training and Technical Assistance Associate

Sheila Rodriguez
Research Associate
Welcome!

Please introduce yourself in the chat box.
- School
- Position
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• You have the option to dial into the phone line or listen through computer audio.

• Click on the Chat box to ask questions for the presenters or let us know about any technical issues.
Today’s agenda: Session 2

• Welcome and introductions
• Evaluating running records data
• Activity: Practice evaluating running records data
• Identifying evidence-based practices to address literacy needs
• Wrap-up and evaluation
Today’s goals

- Learn to evaluate running records data.
- Practice evaluating running records data.
- Identify evidence-based practices to address literacy needs.
Today’s presenters

Jameela Conway-Turner, Ph.D.
Researcher
REL Midwest

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Training and Technical Assistance Associate
REL Midwest

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Research Associate
REL Midwest
Evaluating running records data
Steps for evaluating data

Collect
- Make a plan to allow you to collect the information you will need in an accurate, efficient manner.

Organize
- Filter, sort, and display the data in a way that allows you to see trends.

Analyze
- Before making inferences, begin by listing what the data is telling you and what additional questions you have.

Evaluate
- Determine how to respond to what you learn from the data and how to answer your additional questions.
Organizing running records data

Step 1: Score the running record: Calculate the accuracy score and the self-correction ratio.

Step 2: Analyze the errors and self-corrections: Note any patterns.

Step 3: Select interventions to address gaps.
Step 1: Scoring running records

• Calculate the accuracy score.
  – Mark errors with tallies.
  – Total errors.
  – Subtract errors from running words.
  – Divide by running words.
  – Convert to percentage.

Example:
• Running Words = 34
• Errors = 3
• 34 – 3 = 31
• 31/34 = .911
• .911 × 100 = 91.1%
Step 1: Scoring running records

• What does the score mean?
  – Provides information on reading levels.
  – Easy (95%–100%)
  – Instructional (90%–94%)
  – Hard (Below 89%)
Step 1: Scoring running records

• Calculate the self-correction ratio.
  – Mark self-corrections with tallies.
  – Total self-corrections.
  – Add self-corrections and errors.
  – Divide sum by self-correction total.
  – Provides a self-correction to error ratio.

• What does this mean?
  – Rate of self-corrections per errors.
  – Reveals use of monitoring strategies.

Example:
• Self-corrections = 3
• Errors = 3
• \( 3 + 3 = 6 \)
• \( 6/3 = 2 \)
• Self-correction ratio = 1:2
Analyzing running records data

Step 1: Score the running record: Calculate the accuracy score and the self-correction ratio.

Step 2: Analyze the errors and self-corrections: Note any patterns.

Step 3: Select interventions to address gaps.
Information sources

Meaning
Does it make sense?

Structure
Does it sound right?

Visual
Does it look right?

Pete the **cat.**
Pete the **kitty.**

Pete **loved** his white shoes.
Pete **loved** his white shoes.
Pete **loves** his white shoes.

Pete **loved** his white shoes.
Pete **liked** his white shoes.
## Connect to essential reading skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decoding</strong></td>
<td>The ability to translate a word from print to speech, usually by employing knowledge of letter-sound relationships; also, the act of deciphering a new word by sounding it out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word analysis</strong></td>
<td>Segmenting words into pronounceable word parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word recognition</strong></td>
<td>Recognition of sight words and nondecodable words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accuracy</strong></td>
<td>The ability to read a given passage of text aloud correctly but without regard to reading rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fluency</strong></td>
<td>The ability to read a passage of text aloud accurately, at an appropriate rate, and with expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehension</strong></td>
<td>The ability to follow, process, and understand the text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Analyzing running records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Information Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Example Entries:

- **The family drove and drove.**
  - [ ] checkmark for "dove" under E, [ ] for "drive" under SC

- **They stopped for a picnic.**
  - [ ] checkmark for "lunch" under E, [ ] for "lunch" under SC

- **Mom opened the trunk.**
  - [ ] checkmark for "car" under E, [ ] for "car" under SC

- **Fly Guy flew out.**
  - [ ] checkmark for "flies" under E, [ ] for "flies" under SC

- **Dad said, "How did he get in here?"**
  - [ ] checkmark for "says" under E, [ ] for "says" under SC

---

### Information Used:

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
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- **Dad said, "How did he get in here?"**
  - [ ] checkmark for "says" under E, [ ] for "says" under SC
Analyzing running records

• What did we learn? Patterns of information used and errors made?
  – Minimal self-corrections.
  – Meaning used consistently.
  – Visual and structure used some.

• What would we teach?
  – Self-monitor more consistently.
  – Practice with decoding, word analysis, and word identification.
Analyzing running records

Fluency:
• Expression.
• Use of punctuation.
• Pace.
• Phrasing.

Comprehension:
• Retelling prompts.
• Beyond text connections.

Looking at classroom-level data

### Running Records Data Organization Sheet Template

Teacher: ___________________________ Time period of assessment (week/month/quarter): __________________

Group (e.g., level, age, English as a second language status): __________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student name</th>
<th>Running records data</th>
<th>Information sources used</th>
<th>Additional notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text level</td>
<td>Accuracy score</td>
<td>Self-correction ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Handout
Evaluating running records data

Step 1: Score the running record: Calculate the accuracy score and the self-correction ratio.

Step 2: Analyze the errors and self-corrections: Note any patterns.

Step 3: Select interventions to address gaps.
Identifying evidence-based practices to address literacy needs
Linking data to evidence-based practices

What Works Clearinghouse practice guides

• Review existing research.
• Provide educators with information to inform evidence-based decisions.
• Answer: What works in education?

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/21
What’s in the practice guide?

- **Recommendations**: four foundational skills.
- **Interventions**: how to carry out the recommendation.
- **Teaching techniques**: specific approaches related to the interventions.
- **Example activities**: lessons that illustrate the teaching techniques.

**Using the practice guide**

1. **Step 1**: Identify the recommendation that best matches the identified needs.
2. **Step 2**: Review the specific interventions that the evidence shows can be effective.
3. **Step 3**: Look at suggested teaching techniques and additional information provided.
4. **Step 4**: Examine the examples provided and consider how you might incorporate these types of activities into your lesson plans.
Activity: Selecting evidence-based practices to address student needs
Activity: Selecting evidence-based practices to address student needs

What are the data telling us?

In small groups:
• Step 1: Find the section of the practice guide related to this recommendation—page iii.
• Step 2: Review the specific interventions—page 22.
• Step 3: Look at suggested teaching techniques and related information—pages 23–30
• Step 4: Examine the examples provided—pages 23–30

Which teaching techniques and examples best address the gaps?
Breakout session
Sample small-group data

Sample Running Records Data Organization Sheet

Teacher: ____________________________ Sample: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________

Time period of assessment (week/month/quarter): ____________________________ 02/20

Group (e.g., level, age, English as a second language status): __________________ Guided Reading Group: A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student name</th>
<th>Running records data</th>
<th>Information sources used</th>
<th>Additional notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text level</td>
<td>Accuracy score</td>
<td>Self-correction ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcus</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>1:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonya</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>1:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taj</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>1:3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selecting evidence-based practices to address student needs

• Step 1: Which *recommendation* best matches the identified needs?
## Table of Contents

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

**Table of Contents**

Introduction to the *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade* Practice Guide ........................................... 1  

**Recommendation 1.** Teach students academic language skills, including the use of inferential and narrative language, and vocabulary knowledge ........................................... 6  

**Recommendation 2.** Develop awareness of the segments of sounds in speech and how they link to letters ........................................................................................................... 14  

**Recommendation 3.** Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words ........................................................................................................... 22  

**Recommendation 4.** Ensure that each student reads connected text every day to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension ......................................................... 32
Selecting evidence-based practices to address student needs

• Step 2: Review the specific **interventions** that the evidence shows can be effective.

• Step 3: Look at suggested **teaching techniques** and additional information provided.

• Step 4: Examine the **examples** provided and consider how you might incorporate these types of activities into your lesson plans.
Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words

1. Teach students to blend letter sounds and sound–spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce a recognizable pronunciation.

2. Instruct students in common sound–spelling patterns.

3. Teach students to recognize common word parts.

4. Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text.

5. Teach regular and irregular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently.

6. Introduce non-decodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words.
How to carry out the recommendation

1. Teach students to blend letter sounds and sound–spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce a recognizable pronunciation.

Teach students how to read a word systematically from left to right by combining each successive letter or combination of letters into one sound. This is called **blending**. Start with simple consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words that are familiar to students. Demonstrate how to blend, and provide feedback as students begin to apply it independently. Then, as students show progress in learning the skill, gradually progress to longer words and words that are new to the students.

Teachers can instruct students to blend either by **chunking** sounds or by **sounding out** each letter individually and then saying the sounds again quickly.

In the chunking approach, students combine the first and second letter sounds and lettersound combinations (multiple letters producing one sound) and practice them as one chunk before adding the next sound to form another chunk. Students add each successive sound to the chunk they created just before it to build the complete word, as in Example 3.1.

**Blending** is the process of reading a word systematically from left to right by combining each successive letter or combination of letters into one sound.

**Chunking** is a type of blending in which students read the sounds from left to right but add each sound to the previous sound before going on to the next sound in the word.

**Sounding out** a word is a type of blending that involves saying the sound of each letter or letter combination one by one until the end of the word, and then saying them all together again quickly.
### Example 3.1. Blending *hat* by chunking and sounding out

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chunking</th>
<th>Sounding Out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher:</strong> How does this word start?</td>
<td><strong>Teacher:</strong> How does this word start?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student:</strong> /h/</td>
<td><strong>Student:</strong> /h/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher:</strong> Then what's the next sound?</td>
<td><strong>Teacher:</strong> Then what's the next sound?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student:</strong> /a/</td>
<td><strong>Student:</strong> /a/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher:</strong> What sound do you get when you put those two together?</td>
<td><strong>Teacher:</strong> And then what sound comes next?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student:</strong> /ha/</td>
<td><strong>Student:</strong> /t/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher:</strong> And then what sound comes next?</td>
<td><strong>Teacher:</strong> What happens when you put them together?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student:</strong> /t/</td>
<td><strong>Student:</strong> /h/ /a/ /t/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher:</strong> What happens when you add /ha/ and /t/?</td>
<td><strong>Teacher:</strong> What is the word?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student:</strong> Hat!</td>
<td><strong>Student:</strong> Hat!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example 3.2. Blending by chunking with a pocket chart and letter tiles

pocket chart and letter tiles

1. H A T
2. H A T
3. H A T

(24)
2. Instruct students in common sound-spelling patterns.

Demonstrate to students how letters are often combined to form unique sounds that appear in multiple words (e.g., -ng; see Example 3.3 for a list of types of sound-spelling patterns). Present letter combinations to students one at a time, with ample time to focus on each combination and its pronunciation, and with plenty of examples from familiar words to illustrate the pronunciation. Begin with initial consonant patterns, and as students advance, introduce...

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**Example 3.3. Consonant, vowel, and syllable-Construction patterns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consonant patterns</td>
<td>Consonant digraphs and trigraphs (multi-letter combinations that stand for one phoneme)</td>
<td>th, sh, ch, ph, ng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blends (two or more consecutive consonants that retain their individual sounds)</td>
<td>tch, dge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Silent letter combinations (two letters: one represents the phoneme, and the other is not pronounced)</td>
<td>sCR, st, cl, ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowel patterns</td>
<td>Vowel teams (a combination of two, three, or four letters standing for a single vowel sound)</td>
<td>oa, oo, a, iugh, eigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vowel diphthongs (complex speech sounds or glides that begin with one vowel and gradually change to another vowel within the same syllable)</td>
<td>oi, ou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R-controlled vowels or bossy r's (vowels making a unique sound when followed by r)</td>
<td>ar, er, ir, or, ur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long e</td>
<td>ee, ea, e, e, ey, ea, ey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long a</td>
<td>a, a, i, oy, a, y, e, ea, oy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllable-Construction patterns</td>
<td>Closed syllables (a short vowel spelled with a single vowel letter and ending in one or more consonants)</td>
<td>in-sect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VCe (a long vowel spelled with one vowel + one consonant + silent e)</td>
<td>com-pete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open syllables (ending with a long vowel sound, spelled with a single vowel letter)</td>
<td>pro gram, tor-na-do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vowel team (multiple letters spelling the vowel)</td>
<td>train-er, neigh-bor-hood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vowel-r (vowel pronunciation changing before /r/)</td>
<td>char-ter, cir-cus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consonant-ble (unaccented final syllable containing a consonant before l followed by a silent e)</td>
<td>dir-ble, puzz-ble</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example 3.4. Building words with Elkonin sound boxes

Select a series of words that demonstrate a recently taught sound-spelling pattern. Provide students with a worksheet of sound boxes where each sound-spelling pattern has its own box. Silent e’s should be placed outside the series of boxes, as they do not contribute to a sound corresponding to their placement within the word. Either have students write the words in the boxes as you say them, or provide them with a collection of letter tiles that includes all the letters and spelling patterns needed to create the words. Say the words one at a time, and have students create the words by writing letters or moving letter tiles into the appropriate boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students write in boxes</th>
<th>Students move letter tiles into boxes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t r ee</td>
<td>m igh t y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c a k e</td>
<td>kn ee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sh ou t</td>
<td>S a t ur d ay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Teach students to recognize common word parts.

Once students have learned a few common spelling patterns, show them how to analyze words by isolating and identifying meaningful word parts within them that share a similar meaning or use.\(^\text{18}\) Breaking down words into smaller, meaningful word parts can enable young readers to effectively read more challenging words. Students can also use their knowledge of the meaning of different word parts to infer meaning for a multisyllabic word.

Recommendation 3 (continued)

Teach students about suffixes (e.g., -ed, -ing, -est), contractions (e.g., aren’t, it’s, you’re), forms of prefixes (e.g., dis-, mis-, pre-), and basic roots (e.g., aqua, cent, unit), and how to combine them to create words. Have students practice the new word parts by writing words or manipulating parts of the words to create new words (e.g., adding the suffix -ing to the words park, call, and sing), and then read the words aloud.\(^\text{18}\) The panel also recommends having students practice building and modifying words by adding prefixes and suffixes to words in an exercise that expands on the earlier work with Ellkonin sound boxes (see Example 3.5).

Help students decode more complex words by teaching a word-analysis strategy: identify the word parts and vowels, say the different parts of the word, and repeat the full sentence in which the word appears (as illustrated in Example 3.6).\(^\text{18}\) Model the word-analysis strategy by using words that students have recently encountered in text, and mark individual word parts on the board.

Example 3.5. Manipulating word parts

Select a series of words that demonstrate a recently taught suffix, prefix, or root. Provide students with a worksheet of roots to which students can add prefixes and suffixes. Have students write the words in and around the boxes as you say them. Say the words one at a time, and have students create the words.
Example 3.6. Word-analysis strategy

1. Circle recognizable word parts. Look for prefixes at the beginning, suffixes at the end, and other familiar word parts.

2. Underline the other vowels.

3. Say the different parts of the word.

4. Say them again fast to make it a real word.

5. Make sure the word makes sense in the sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>revisiting, unhappiness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>revisiting, unhappiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>re-vis-it-ing, un-happ-i-ness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revisiting, unhappiness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When students read the word, have them adjust the vowel sounds as needed to achieve a recognizable word when said at speed. For example, they may need to pronounce vowels with the schwa sound that usually sounds like a short u or sometimes a short i (e.g., the o in harmony). As students apply the steps independently, post instructions on the classroom wall or provide students with written instructions to use as a reference.
4. Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text.

Provide students with opportunities to practice the letter sounds and sound-spelling patterns taught in the classroom using word lists, decodable sentences, short decodable texts, or texts that contain many examples of words spelled with recently learned letter sounds or sound-spelling patterns. Give each student a copy of a word list and/or connected text passage for the letter combination being taught, or write or display the words and passage on a board for the whole group to read together. Ask students to underline the letter combination in each word in the word list, and then in the appropriate words in the passage. Example 3.7 shows a sample word list and a short passage of connected text that a teacher could use with students who have recently learned the letter combination oi (a diphthong).

Example 3.7. Sample word list and connected text for a lesson on oi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word list</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>join</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avoid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Connected text passage**

Sam went out to buy foil from the store. He lost his coins on the way. He looked for his coins, but he could not see them.

Sam asked Luis to join him and help look for the coins. They could not find them.

Then, Sam and Luis heard a voice. It was Mia. She found Sam's coins! Sam, Luis, and Mia went to the store together to buy the foil.
5. Teach regular and irregular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently.

Help students learn to quickly recognize words that appear frequently in all kinds of text, known as high-frequency words. Because these words occur so often in text, learning to recognize them quickly will speed up the reading process so that students can focus more on the meaning of the text.

Teach students high-frequency words with irregular and regular spellings (see Example 3.8).\textsuperscript{109} Irregular words have exceptions to the typical sound–spelling patterns and are not easy for early readers to decode. Teach these words \textit{holistically}—that is, as whole words, rather than as combinations of sound units.\textsuperscript{110} For regular words, have students apply their letter–sound skills—for example, using Elkonin sound boxes—to identify the word initially. Have students practice reading the words frequently until they learn to recognize them quickly.\textsuperscript{111}
Example 3.8. High-frequency words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Irregular words</th>
<th>Regular words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the</td>
<td>in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there</td>
<td>did</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was</td>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>want</td>
<td>then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from</td>
<td>had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>said</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have</td>
<td>that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friend</td>
<td>down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of</td>
<td>him</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers can use the following activities to teach and provide practice on high-frequency words:

- Use flashcards to directly teach any new words. Show students a word and pronounce it. Have students repeat the word, spell the word, and then say the whole word again. Then mix up the cards and provide practice so students learn to recognize the words quickly.

- Select a small number of high-frequency words that students have just encountered in a text. Read a word aloud, and then ask a student to point to the word in the text, spell the word, and repeat the word aloud.\(^{112}\)

  - Create a word wall of high-frequency words in the classroom. Have students read the word wall with a partner. Refer to the wall often, and ask students to point out a word on the wall when they come across it.

  - Present students with a list of new high-frequency words to learn. Teach each word. Then ask students to write the words on large cards or construction paper, with different students writing different words. Have them add the words to the word wall in the classroom.

  - Write the words on flashcards and have students practice them in small groups, as in Example 3.9.

  - Have students practice their high-frequency words outside of their regular literacy instruction, as in Example 3.10.
Example 3.9. High-frequency word practice with flashcards

1. Create flashcards for a small number of words students have been introduced to recently; include both words that students are beginning to recognize and words they still struggle with.

2. Present the flashcards, and ask students in small groups to take turns identifying words correctly within 3 seconds.

3. If students do not correctly read a word within 3 seconds, tell them the word and place the word on a “teacher pile.” If students do correctly identify the word within the time period, place it on a “student pile.”

4. Repeat steps 2 and 3, decreasing the allotted time to 2 seconds, then 1 second, then asking students to identify the words immediately.

5. At the end of the activity, reteach and provide practice in all the words in the “teacher pile.”
Example 3.10. The “Star Words” activity

1. For each student, the teacher puts three to five high-frequency words on individual cards and connects the cards with a ring.
2. Throughout the week, other adults (aides, other teachers, or parents) ask the student to read the words on the ring.
3. For each word the student reads correctly, the adult puts a star on the card.
4. When the student receives three stars on each card, more high-frequency words can be added to the ring.
6. Introduce non-decodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words.

Non-decodable words are comprised of irregular sound–spelling patterns or sound–spelling patterns that students have not yet learned. Books may include complex words that contain sound–spelling patterns that students have not learned, but that are important to the story or information (e.g., *Tyrannosaurus rex*, *pigeon*, and *villain*). Before introducing a new text, determine if it includes any non-decodable words and, if so, identify a few that are repeated often within the text, are meaningful, and that students will encounter in future texts or settings. Introduce these non-decodable words to students in advance of reading the new text, including their spelling and meaning. Teaching non-decodable words expands students’ reading opportunities beyond decodable texts. The panel recommends limiting the number of these words introduced at a time, because learning them holistically places considerable demands on students’ memory.
Potential obstacles to implementing Recommendation 3 and the panel’s advice

**Obstacle 3.1.** My students often invent spellings for words when I am not able to respond to their questions immediately. Should I discourage this habit?

**Panel’s Advice.** When students, particularly kindergartners and 1st-graders, are writing independently, encourage them to try to spell words on their own, even if they might spell the word incorrectly. This provides them with an important opportunity to practice applying their letter-sound knowledge. As they develop spelling and language skills, students should use invented spelling less frequently. Remind students to use their knowledge of sound-spelling patterns to inform their spelling and writing. Encourage students to review how they spelled words to see if the spelling is logical and looks correct, and to attempt a different spelling if the first spelling looks incorrect. By the time students are in 3rd grade, ask them to use the number of syllables in a word to help determine whether their spelling appears logical. Words that appear frequently in writing, especially irregular high-frequency words and words that students misspell frequently, can be posted on a word wall and/or added to students’ personal dictionaries or writing journals.

**Obstacle 3.2.** Students are able to identify the sounds of the letters in a word, but they have trouble arriving at the correct pronunciation for the word.

**Panel’s Advice.** Students should be taught to sound out or blend sounds smoothly, without stopping between sounds, as described in the first component of Recommendation 3. Teachers should listen for students who add a schwa sound after stop sounds (e.g., /b/ becomes buh) and should work with those students to reduce or eliminate the schwa sound. When teaching students to sound out or blend a multisyllabic word using the method described in the second component of Recommendation 3, teachers should encourage students to be flexible with their vowel pronunciation in order to arrive at a recognizable word.
Best practices for teaching beginner readers: Infographic
On course for reading success: Best practices for teaching beginning readers

The early literacy skills that students develop set them on course to gain reading proficiency by grade 3, which is a strong indicator of later academic success.

This quick reference draws on What Works Clearinghouse™ practice guides to identify research-based instructional practices for supporting beginning readers, along with the level of evidence behind the practices and core literacy skills to target for early screening and progress monitoring.

Research shows that beginning readers need to master many skills in multiple domains to be proficient in reading. Three important reading domains are alphabets, reading fluency, and reading comprehension.¹
**Alphabets**

Ability to identify and manipulate units of oral language, identify letters, and apply an understanding of letter-sound relationships to correctly pronounce written words.

**Evidence-based practices for core reading instruction:**

1. **Recommendation:** Develop awareness of the **segments of sound in speech** and how they link to letters. WWC Level of Evidence: Strong / ESSA Tier 1
   - Teach students to recognize and manipulate segments of sound in speech.
   - Teach students to understand sound relations.
   - Use word-building and other activities to link students’ knowledge of letter-sound relationships with phonemic awareness.

2. **Recommendation:** Teach students to **decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words.** WWC Level of Evidence: Strong / ESSA Tier 1
   - Teach students to blend letter sounds and sound-spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce a recognizable pronunciation.
   - Instruct students in common sound-spelling patterns.
   - Teach students to recognize common word parts.
   - Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text.
   - Teach regular and irregular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently.
   - Introduce non-decodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words.

**Skills to target for early screening and progress monitoring:**

- Letter naming fluency
- Phoneme segmentation
- Nonsense word fluency
- Word identification

**Reading fluency**

Ability to read text accurately, automatically, and with expression, including appropriate pauses and response to punctuation, while gaining meaning.

**Evidence-based practices for core reading instruction:**

1. **Recommendation:** Ensure that each student reads connected text every day to support accuracy and fluency. WWC Level of Evidence: Moderate / ESSA Tier 2
   - As students read orally, model strategies, scaffold, and provide feedback to support accurate and efficient word identification.
   - Teach students to self-monitor their understanding of the text and self-correct word-reading errors.
   - Provide opportunities for oral reading practice with feedback to develop fluent and accurate reading with expression.

**Skills to target for early screening and progress monitoring:**

- Oral reading fluency (also called passage reading fluency).

**Reading comprehension**

Ability to understand the meaning of text, including the ability to decode words, understand word meanings, and interpret language.

**Evidence-based practices for core reading instruction:**

1. **Recommendation:** Teach students **academic language skills,** including the use of inferential and narrative language, and vocabulary knowledge. WWC Level of Evidence: Minimal / ESSA Tier 4
   - Engage students in conversations that support the use and comprehension of inferential language.
   - Explicitly engage students in developing narrative language skills.
   - Teach **academic vocabulary** in the context of other reading activities.

**Skills to target for early screening and progress monitoring:**

- Vocabulary and oral language
- Passage comprehension
Endnotes

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

2. *Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades*

See the What Works Clearinghouse for early reading programs and interventions shown to have a positive impact on children’s development of skills in *alphabolics, reading fluency,* and *reading comprehension.*
Running records and the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS)

Phonological Awareness

Child shows increasing awareness of the sounds (elements) that make up language, including the ability to manipulate them in language.

Language and Literacy Development (LLD)

Building Earlier
- Engages actively in play with sounds in words or rhymes, or sings simple songs, or repeats nursery rhymes

Building Middle
- Demonstrates awareness of larger units of language (e.g., words, syllables)

Building Later
- Blends larger units of language (e.g., compound words and syllables) with or without the support of pictures or objects; segments larger units of language (e.g., compound words and syllables) with or without the support of pictures or objects

Integrating Earlier
- Blends smaller units of language (e.g., onsets and rhymes), with or without the support of pictures or objects; segments smaller units of language (e.g., onsets and rhymes), with or without the support of pictures or objects

Integrating Middle
- Matches initial and final sounds of words; segments and blends initial and final phonemes of words

Integrating Later
- Isolates the initial sound, middle vowel, and final sound in three-phoneme (consonant-vowel-consonant) words
Wrap-up and evaluation
We Listen to You!

Your feedback is essential to our work. Please take our survey to help us improve.
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