

IER COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY FRAMEWORK

LANGUAGE AND WORD STUDY COMPONENTS

Phonemic Awareness

- Phonemic awareness is an auditory process involving the student's ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.
- The understanding that spoken words are made up of sounds improves the student's ability to read, comprehend, and spell. It provides the foundation needed in order to learn phonics.
- Phonemic awareness can be taught and learned, and it should be a regular part of literacy instruction for children in primary grades. Teachers focus on activities that manipulate spoken words by segmenting and blending phonemes. Unlike phonics, instruction in phonemic awareness involves the oral manipulation of sounds.

Literacy skills vary in children of all ages; therefore, we need to assess the phonemic awareness of students from kindergarten through middle school to determine their ability to hear and manipulate sounds. Through flexible grouping, older students who need further assistance in developing these skills should be provided with instruction to meet their needs.

Phonics

- Phonics is the relationship between written letters (graphemes) and spoken sounds (phonemes).
- Phonics gives children the understanding of the predictable relationship between letters and sounds. For many children, it provides the foundation for reading and writing words.
- Phonics instruction should be systematic and explicit, introducing a set of letter-sound relationships in a clearly defined sequence. Phonics instruction also gives children substantial practice in applying knowledge of these relationships as they read and write. Throughout phonics instruction,

students must carry over phonics skills into meaningful contexts. This may include teaching decoding strategies during guided and shared reading instruction as well as shared writing, guided writing, and independent writing.

Letter/Word Concepts

- This component of the Comprehensive Literacy Framework covers many of the technical aspects of reading and writing, such as spelling, handwriting, and the knowledge of print features. Teachers use instruction in letter/word concepts to teach children to identify and analyze the structure of words and print.
- Instruction in letter/word concepts allows the child to learn the many aspects of written language that are required in order to make sense of reading and writing.
- Students should have experiences with alphabet centers, word walls, quality literature, and word study activities that help them develop reading and writing strategies. Systematic word study (Ganske, 2000) is an effective way to teach the complexities of spelling. Students need guided practice in forming letters and words to communicate clearly in writing. Beginning with learning that we read from left to right all the way to learning to use complex features of middle school textbooks, students need to gain awareness of the features of print that support their reading.

Vocabulary

- Vocabulary instruction provides students with the meaning of words they must know to read and communicate effectively.
- In order to gain meaning from their reading, students must have a vocabulary that supports their understanding of the written word. Students must know most of the words they read in order to understand the text.
- In order to be effective, vocabulary knowledge should be taught in meaningful contexts. Teachers may provide specific instruction of vocabulary that students will use in a particular text or area of study. Children learn the meaning of most words indirectly through daily oral

language experiences. Teachers can best expose children to a wide variety of words through read alouds, modeled/shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading.

Grammar

- Grammar is the study of conventions of language and punctuation.
- A strong understanding of grammar allows students to communicate effectively in writing and speech and to clearly process text.
- Grammar conventions ideally should be taught through mini-lessons that are part of meaningful reading and writing activities rather than as separate, direct instruction. When planning standards-based instruction, teachers should be mindful of the importance of language conventions, identify which conventions should be introduced at various grade levels, seek ways to embed them in literacy instruction, and devise ways to monitor students' progress in the use of conventions.