

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS FOR STRUGGLING READERS

A Project

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ABSTRACT

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Research shows several effective strategies for helping students struggling with reading. The literature reviewed illustrated ways of using volunteers to help teachers who often do not have adequate time to meet the needs of all their students. This project came out of necessity as the author's school did not have a volunteer handbook. The author of this project is a second-grade teacher who has 21 years of teaching experience, primarily in kindergarten through 3rd grades. Teachers were spending too much teaching time training volunteers, reducing time spent with students on core curriculum and volunteers were wasting waiting for the teachers and students.

The first part of the project is a handbook for schools to train volunteers who help in the schools. The project was intended to provide a basic training structure for

volunteers regarding the school's comportment expectations, rules, and procedures and to make the volunteers feel they are a critical part of the school and its success. The second part of the handbook provides several effective strategies, based on the literature reviewed, to help 1st and 2nd grade students. There are various sight word games, reading phrases for fluency, comprehension questions, strategies for reading leveled books, sight word lists from pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade, and a volunteer tutor checklist for communication with the classroom teacher after each tutoring session. The goal of the handbook is to effectively retain volunteers on a long-term basis who can help students grow in their reading skills.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Project

Teaching students to read is the single most important task in education. Students must be literate to make their way in the world. Teachers are tasked with the grand responsibility to ensure students can read. Teaching reading is no easy task. Fortunately, this task has had decades of scientific research on the best, most effective and efficient ways to teach students to read. Even though there are plenty of gurus on the science of teaching reading, it is still not an exacting skill taught in a one-size-fits-all approach. Because each student brings his or her own unique variabilities into the classroom, the teacher must find the best means necessary in teaching each individual student to read that best suits their learning style and what they already know about reading coming into the classroom. Consequently, time is limited in the school day and year to meet the unprecedented expectations for students' learning (Duke & Block, 2012). Moreover, learning to read normally occurs in a progression. This progression includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and finally, reading comprehension. Unfortunately, not all students have success in learning to read with the regular classroom curriculum being taught. Often, when teachers have extra adults in the classroom, they are there to help the students in their educational endeavors. Some classroom

volunteers (volunteers) have been tasked with trying to close the achievement gap by providing extra reading practice time with struggling students (Wasik, 1998). There have been studies reporting the effectiveness of volunteers and what can be done in the tutoring sessions for students to make growth in reading. Research reports have stated the effectiveness of a mentor-to-mentee relationship and its positive results in reading for the student being mentored (Craft Al-Hazza & Gupta, 2006).

Because the public education system is taxed and has fewer resources than necessary, volunteers often help in elementary classrooms to supplement the teaching. Having volunteers in the classroom can be an effective means of helping struggling readers if the teachers are able to facilitate for the volunteers what they should be doing to spend their time most efficiently (Elliott, Arthurs, & Williams, 2000). There is significant research on how to help struggling readers. There is also notable research on the use of volunteers. The effectiveness of these volunteers, however, has had mixed results for a variety of reasons. The purpose of the project is to use the literature reviewed to find the most salient strategies to design a usable reading partners program in the classroom for primary teachers to use for the volunteers to effectively help struggling readers make growth in reading. Furthermore, this project was designed to provide a helpful handbook for teachers in 1st and 2nd grade classrooms to give to their volunteers.

After teaching for 21 years, it has become a great concern of mine to ensure that my volunteers, whether they are working community members, retired people, parents, or grandparents, are spending their time in the most effective and efficient manner as

possible. As valuable as the volunteer's time is, it is equally valuable for my students to spend time with a volunteer. I did not want volunteers to feel their time spent in my classroom was wasted or that they were not making a difference. Additionally, students' time away from the general classroom activities while working with a volunteer must be a well-planned and valuable trade-off. I have witnessed volunteers who visit the classroom often because they felt needed and their work was important to the students. However, volunteers in the classroom can create extra work for the teachers who must spend additional time gathering materials for the volunteer to use.

The theoretical bases upon which this project have been constructed are the main facets of teaching a student to read. Schema theory uses the context of what the reader is trying to read, along with the reader's background knowledge which helps the reader understand new information. Additionally, the literature reviewed has provided strategies to guide volunteers, so their time spent inside the classroom is time well-spent and helpful for the struggling reader as well as the classroom teacher. The literature review analyzes the variety of theories that support how to teach children to read. It will contain an analysis of what researchers have concluded about how best to train volunteers who help children to learn to read.

Description of the Project

The project is meant to be a handbook for elementary school teachers and their volunteers. It contains a section on training and retaining volunteers and obtaining clearance for them to work in the classroom. It also has a recommended structure for

training the volunteers whether the training comes from the classroom teacher, the literacy coach, or some other school personnel. The first part of the handbook is in the format of a one-hour training for prospective volunteers. The second part of the handbook contains the various strategies discussed to be effective within the review of the literature. For example, it has options for practicing fluency, a list of 300 sight words with accompanying games and strategies, a menu of ways to read a book with a student, and accompanying comprehension questions. This handbook is meant to be used as a manual for the volunteers so that their time is being utilized in the most effective and efficient manner.

Significance of the Project

Students have struggled with learning to read for years. Not all students struggle, but when they do, it leaves educators the task of trying to close the achievement gap. Even those who are not struggling can benefit from additional time spent reading with an experienced tutor. Teachers are already overworked, overwhelmed, and have many responsibilities outside of teaching. Due to these constraints, some struggling readers may not always receive the help and interventions needed in order to be brought up to grade level in reading. Outside help in the form of volunteers can be a viable solution to help close the achievement gap in reading for struggling students (Elliott et al., 2000). However, not all help is created equal. Volunteers need guidance and support to be effective (Craft Al-Hazza & Gupta, 2006). This project will provide a

menu of strategies for volunteers in the classroom to help struggling readers make growth in reading as well as a format for training volunteers.

Research Questions

1. What does the literature say about the effective use of volunteers?
2. What are the most effective strategies for volunteers to help struggling readers make improvements in reading?
3. How are volunteers prepared to support students in their literacy development?

Limitations of the Project

There are some limitations to this project. I had to get background clearance for volunteers to work in my classroom. This process is done through the local police department and in a timely manner. For the purpose of helping struggling readers by using volunteers, it is difficult to get volunteers who can commit to specific days and times to work with the struggling readers. Another limitation of the project is the strategic physical placement of the volunteer in the classroom to work with the struggling reader to lessen distractions and make the most progress in each tutoring session. Moreover, money could pose a limitation. Money is needed to purchase leveled books for emergent readers that are decodable, contain high-frequency words, and are of high interest. This project is based on the use of highly competent volunteers, and with time being a factor, there is not always ample time to find and retain volunteers. For the volunteer handbook to make a positive impact on struggling readers, the classroom teacher

needs dedicated time to prepare materials for the volunteer, as well as meet with the volunteers to train them to ensure the lessons being delivered are the most effective use of the students' and volunteers' time. There needs to be regular communication and oversight by the classroom teacher of what the volunteers are doing in each tutoring session with the students.

The project was designed to meet the needs of my students who are not at grade level in reading.

Terms and Definitions

Alliteration - In literature, alliteration is the conspicuous repetition of identical initial consonant sounds in successive or closely associated syllables within a group of words, even those spelled differently. For example, "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers." (Wikipedia, Alliteration).

Alphabetic principle - Letters and combinations of letters are the symbols used to represent the speech sounds of a language based on systematic and predictable relationships between written letters, symbols, and spoken words (Wikipedia, Alphabetic principle).

At-risk readers - A student who requires temporary or ongoing intervention in order to succeed academically (Wikipedia, At-risk readers).

Automaticity - In reading, when seeing words and being able to read them largely or wholly involuntarily.

Blend – A group of two or more consecutive consonants that begin a syllable (Wikipedia, Consonant cluster).

Code – A system of symbols (such as letters) used to represent assigned and often secret meanings (Meriam-Webster, Code).

Decode – To discover the underlying meaning of sounds in words (Kelly).

Differentiated reading groups – To develop differential or distinguishing characteristics in reading skills (Reading Rockets, Differentiated instruction for reading).

Emergent reader – Arising as a natural or logical consequence in the progression of learning to read; beginning to learn the sound / symbol relationships starting with consonants and short vowels and can read consonant-vowel-consonant words as well as several high-frequency words (Moats, 1998).

Explicit instruction – Fully revealed or expressed without vagueness, implication, or ambiguity; leaving no question as to meaning or intent (Meriam-Webster, Explicit).

Expository text – Writing that is done to explain or inform about something (Study.com, What is Expository Text?).

Fluency – In reading, the ability to speak (read) easily and smoothly (Reading Rockets, Fluency).

Guided reading – Small group instructional context in which a teacher supports each reader's development of a systems of strategic actions for processing new texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty (Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Blog).

High-frequency words – The words most commonly found in written language (Learning A-Z).

Narrative text – A story with complication or problematic events and it tries to find the resolutions to solve the problems while written in narrative mode (Duoulala.blogspot.com).

Phonemes – Any of the perceptually distinct units of sound in a specified language that distinguish one word from another, for example, p, b, d, and t in the English words pad, pat, bad, and bat (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, Phonemes).

Phonemic awareness – A subset of phonological awareness in which listeners can hear, identify, and manipulate phonemes, the smallest mental units of sound that helps to differentiate units of meaning; the ability to hear and manipulate individual phonemes (Reading Rockets, Phonological and phonemic awareness).

Phonics – A method of teaching reading by correlating sounds with letters or groups of letters in an alphabetic writing system (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, Phonics).

Running records (RR) – A way to assess a student's reading progress by systematically evaluating a student's oral reading and identifying oral reading patterns; on-going assessments used to judge readers' strengths and weaknesses to plan lessons specifically for them (TeacherVision).

Scaffolding – A teaching method that enables a student to solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal through a gradual shedding of outside assistance (Pinantoan, 2013).

Sight words – Words taught to beginning readers to know by sight so they can recognize them immediately (within three seconds) and read them without having to use decoding skills (Sight Words).

STAR Reading Assessment – A comprehensive examination that tests the range of students' knowledge of reading and language. Questions on this test cover forty-six reading skill areas spread across five domains. Reading domains include analyzing literary text, word skills and knowledge, analyzing argument and evaluating text, comprehension strategies and constructing meaning, and understanding author's craft. It is a computer-adaptive test constantly adjusting the difficulty in real-time depending on a student's earlier responses (Study.com, What is the STAR reading test?).

Text complexity – Three factors used to determine the complexity of a text are qualitative measures, quantitative measures, and considerations relating to the reader and task, all of which must be based on grade-level appropriateness (Generation Ready).

Text structure – How the information within a written text is organized. This strategy helps students understand that a text might present a main idea and details; a cause and then its effects; and / or different views of a topic (Adlit.org).

Zone of proximal development – ZPD was developed by Soviet psychologist and social constructivist Lev Vygotsky and refers to the difference between what a learner

can do without help and what he or she can achieve with guidance and encouragement from a skilled partner (SimplyPsychology).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Foundational Skills Needed in the Beginning Reader

Learning to read typically happens on a continuum. The beginning stages of reading start with oral language development in infancy. Being able to understand and eventually communicate verbally is the basis of learning to read. Infants and toddlers actively engage with their caretakers by listening to stories being read aloud to them, singing, talking, dramatic play, and even drawing.

Later, in preschool and kindergarten, phonemic awareness becomes an important factor in the early emergent reading stage. Phonemic awareness is the ability to rhyme words, blend letters and sounds, break apart, or segment, sounds and manipulate spoken words into chunks, or syllables. These sounds make sequences of speech sounds. Having a strong phonemic awareness is key for the next step of learning to read. Additionally, learning to manipulate the sounds is essential for cracking the reading code of the alphabetic writing system. This gives readers the readiness they need for print. Being able to manipulate sounds orally primes readers to approach sounding out and reading new words in an effective manner. Phonemic awareness is difficult. There are 26 letters, approximately 40 sounds, and around 250 different spellings in the

English language. The sound units must be explicitly taught because they are not distinctly separate from each other (Center on Teaching and Learning, University of Oregon).

Phonemic awareness does not involve any print; instead, it is all sounds, or phonemes. This is also the phase in reading where students begin to read print around them such as stop signs, restaurant signs, and logos. This is called environmental print. Additionally, students begin to pretend-read books and start to recognize sound and symbol relationships. Having a good foundation of phonemic awareness leads to a strong correlation or predictor that the student will be successful in his or her early reading experiences (Ward, 2011). Students who struggle with phonemic awareness typically cannot group words with similar sounds, blend or segment syllables apart or put them together, or manipulate sounds to make different words such as changing the first sound in cat (/c/) to /r/ to make a new word, rat. After students have a firm grasp of phonemic awareness, it is time to move onward in the developmental reading continuum to phonics.

Next in the continuum is phonics. Phonics is the connection between sounds and letters or print. The relationship of the sounds to the letters is what bridges phonemic awareness into phonics. Students in the emergent reader stage begin to read simple consonant-vowel-consonant words such as mom, dad, cat, dog, and man. They also start to recognize high-frequency or sight words that come up most often in print such as the, and, a, on, to, go, and in. Students understand the alphabetic principle and have begun

making connections between spoken sounds, letters, or words and what the print says in books. The phonics stage of reading is where students really begin to make those connections forming sounds into letters into words and, ultimately, into sentences. When students in the emergent reader stage begin decoding, they are reading words from left to right that are simple and regular words. Each sound is made from the letters and they are blended together to form words that are recognizable. In reading regular words, students move from sounding out each sound, then saying the whole word, to sight word reading, and then to automatic word reading. Once students have a good command of regular word reading, they begin to tackle irregular words. Irregular words cannot be decoded. The words have sounds that do not result in the correct pronunciation of the word such as done or fight (Center on Teaching and Learning, University of Oregon). Additionally, irregular words could potentially contain letter sounds the students do not yet know. Irregular words are sometimes called sight words or high frequency words. Students are taught that these words do not follow the rules or play fair. They need to know these words by sight in order to increase reading fluency while reading decodable words within the sentences as well.

Fluency is another key factor in being a reader. Fluency is the ability to read words without any noticeable cognitive or mental effort. It is having such a command of word attack skills that it is automatic. Students begin to become fluent readers once they learn the sound-to-letter relationships, as well as a significant amount of irregular words. Fluency is the combination of accuracy, as well as being able to read effortlessly

with a natural sounding quality of intonation and expression (Center on Teaching and Learning, University of Oregon). Students can improve in fluency and accuracy by practicing reading passages designed for this purpose. When students can read fluently, this does not mean their reading skills are complete. It simply means they are more apt to comprehend their reading because they are freeing up mental resources to process the meaning of the text. Students who demonstrate automaticity quickly identify letter-sound relationships and familiar spelling patterns to increase decoding accurately and efficiently. Unlike students in the emergent or decoding reading stages, fluency begins developing emergent readers into early readers.

Fluency does not ensure better comprehension, rather, fluency gives extra time to the executive system to direct attention where it is most needed – to infer, to understand, to predict, or sometimes to repair discordant understanding and to interpret a meaning afresh. (Wolf, 2008, p. 131)

Oral reading fluency in context is one of the most salient markers of reading ability (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985). Contrary to context reading, the literature states that for students who are less fluent readers, context-free reading skills make a larger contribution (Jenkins, Fuchs, van den Broek, Espin, & Deno, 2003). However, dysfluent reading interferes with comprehension processes (Jenkins et al., 2003).

Conversely, readers who are more fluent tend to use comprehension skills such as contextual influences which speed up their word recognition (Jenkins et al., 2003). Additionally, Duke and Block (2012) stated that students who have cognitive flexibility, meaning they can simultaneously consider letter-sound and semantic, or

meaning, information about words are better at comprehension in the short- and long-term. When students are taught ways in which to do both important things at once, their reading comprehension is greatly improved (Duke & Block). One example of teaching this is by teaching students about multiple-meaning words—one strategy where vocabulary is enriched.

Students with greater vocabulary tend to be better at reading comprehension (Wright, 2018). After a review of the literature, there were several studies that have shown that very little vocabulary instruction occurs within primary classrooms. Wright noted, in 600 hours of observations, that teachers in over 55 kindergarten classrooms had no planned vocabulary instruction. Teachers provided meanings to some words, but there were no repeat exposures to the words or purposeful teaching of vocabulary. Instead, vocabulary instruction was opportunistic rather than planned (Duke & Block, 2012). According to research by the Center on Teaching and Learning at the University of Oregon, there were meaningful differences in vocabulary knowledge for students entering school due to relative economic advantages. Some students whose family status was listed as “welfare” heard approximately 616 words per hour (Center on Teaching and Learning). Conversely, students whose family status was listed as “professional” heard an average of 2,153 words per hour (Center on Teaching and Learning). The students who have heard more words versus the ones who have heard fewer have a disparate gap in vocabulary knowledge upon entering school. Additionally, students whose vocabulary knowledge is deficient need instruction in conceptual knowledge to

build their repertoire (Duke & Block). Conceptual knowledge includes vocabulary about and understanding of the world (Duke & Block). This type of vocabulary instruction and background knowledge immensely aids in reading comprehension across subject matters such as social studies and science. Informational text is seen more readily in grades three and above. However, Duke and Block stated,

The neglect of informational text in the primary grades constitutes a missed opportunity not only to build social studies and science knowledge through text but also to build knowledge about this type of text (including indexes, diagrams, maps, tables, and glossaries). (p. 60)

The evidence suggests the relationship between vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension is causal, and this is especially true in the later elementary school years when vocabulary knowledge is more important than mere word reading as a predictor of reading comprehension (Baumann, 2009).

Ultimately, comprehension is the essence of reading. It is the active and intentional thinking in which the meaning is constructed through interactions between the text and the reader (Durkin, 1978). There are myriad reader-based factors which impact reading comprehension such as phonemic awareness, alphabetic understanding, fluency with the code, vocabulary knowledge, prior or background knowledge, and engagement and interest. Additionally, text-based factors also affect reading comprehension such as whether the text is narrative or expository, which genre the text is, the quality of the text, and the density and difficulty of the concepts within the text (Center on Teaching and Learning, University of Oregon). With decoding in place, students can

comprehend well. The more time students spend reading in class, outside of the classroom, and independently, the better they are at comprehending the texts they read. Students who struggle with reading comprehension may have one or more issues to explain the cause (Kame'enui & Simmons, 1990). For example, the student may have received inadequate instruction, had insufficient exposure and practice, has deficient word recognition skills, or deficient memory capability and functioning. There could also be significant language deficiencies, inadequate comprehension monitoring and self-evaluation, unfamiliarity with the texts' features and the demands of the task, and undeveloped attentional strategies (Kame'enui & Simmons).

Reading comprehension is not something that comes naturally to most students. Comprehension, like the abovementioned reading skills, is just that, a learned skill. It must be taught in a variety of ways such as with comprehension self-monitoring. For example, "Did I just understand what I read?" Also, using cooperative learning strategies to foster discussion amongst peers, using mental imagery or mnemonics, summarizing, and learning the main idea and details of a text are all ways to enhance comprehension (Center on Teaching and Learning). Additionally, graphic and semantic organizers are other means of facilitating improved reading comprehension. Story maps, question answering, or question generating are all examples of semantic organizers (Center on Teaching and Learning, University of Oregon). Teaching higher levels of reading comprehension include drawing conclusions, making inferences, and analyzing or synthesizing the information in the text. These strategies typically come once students

have a strong command of reading overall in 3rd grade (sometimes 2nd) and above (Center on Teaching and Learning).

Second Grade Reading Standards

According to the Common Core State Standards Initiative website (2018), 2nd grade readers are expected have a command of reading literature and informational text in several categories. First, Key Ideas and Details is a subcategory under reading. The skills include asking and answering questions such as who, what, where, when, why, and how in order to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. Another literature reading skill includes recounting stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determining their central message, lesson, or moral. In informational text the skill includes identifying the main topic of a multi-paragraph text, as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text. The last part of reading literature in Key Ideas and Details is to describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges. In reading informational text, this includes describing the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.

The second subcategory under reading is Craft and Structure. This skill requires the 2nd grade reader to describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song in literature. In informational text, it is similar except that the meaning of words to be determined in a text is relevant to a 2nd grade topic or subject area.

Another skill under the subcategory of Craft and Structure within reading literature is to describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action. In reading informational text, the reader must know and use various text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.

Lastly, in Craft and Structure within reading literature, the skill is to acknowledge the differences in points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud. In reading informational text, the reader must identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.

The third subcategory in reading is Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. The skill within reading literature requires students to use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot. Similarly, for reading informational text, the reader must be able to explain how specific images contribute to and clarify a text such as a diagram showing how a machine works. An additional skill is to compare, as well as contrast, two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures in literature. Likewise, the comparing and contrasting of the most important points presented by two texts on the same topic is a skill for 2nd grade readers to learn while reading informational text. Additionally, the reading of informational text

requires the reader to describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text.

The final subcategory of reading is Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity. The literature reading skill states that by the end of the grade year, students can read and comprehend literature, including stories and poetry, in grades 2-3 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. Equally, for reading informational text, by the end of the year students read and comprehend informational texts, including history/ social studies, science, and technical texts.

Struggling Readers

For various reasons, beginning readers sometimes struggle to crack the code and become independent, fluent readers. Second grade can be a pivotal time for readers because they should have received the foundational skills to become readers in kindergarten and 1st grade (Center on Teaching and Learning). Each student brings his or her own set of skills to school. Often, readers struggle from lack of experience. Other times, there may be underlying learning variabilities interfering with the student's reading success, or English may be their second language. Second grade teachers must do course-corrections with struggling readers (Lipp & Helfrich, 2016). This is not an easy task as each student is different. Teachers must use many differing strategies to help their struggling readers become proficient, fluent readers (Lipp & Helfrich).

Approaches for Struggling Readers

While teaching small groups of students in guided reading groups, teachers must be able to assess students' reading and know how to conduct and read running records (Picard, 2005). They must also be able to write guided reading lesson plans to the guided reading groups' specific needs, as well as prompt the students as they problem-solve unknown words they come across while reading (Picard).

Reading consists of various skills and strategies in order to make it all come together smoothly. Tan and Nicholson (1997) stated, "... the reader has to use a number of different cognitive processes involving word recognition, access of word meanings, parsing of sentences, semantic analysis of sentences, and interpretation of the overall text." For most students, this comes naturally as with language comprehension. However, one process which is not a normal linguistic skill, is word recognition. This is a skill that must be taught. It takes years of "extensive reading practice" (Tan & Nicholson, p. 276) for beginning readers to become proficient at word recognition so there is automaticity. The rationale behind teaching readers automaticity is that when decoding is slow or inefficient, comprehension, as a result, is less efficient. In Tan and Nicholson's study on speeded word-recognition training, struggling readers showed a statistical advantage in reading comprehension when they were given a post-assessment. The training study showed a causal relationship between rapid decoding and reading comprehension. This did not necessarily mean the readers produced automaticity of word recognition. However, the use of flashcards for word recognition is an effective use of supplementing

phonemic awareness skills and letter-sound relationships. Flashcards aid in improving speed and accuracy of specific word recognition thus leading to more practice and over-learning to make greater progress in reading (Tan & Nicholson).

Another skill proven to be effective for struggling 2nd grade readers is using the Oral Recitation Lesson (ORL) for fluency development to enhance reading comprehension (Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1993). In Reutzel's and Hollingsworth's study with 2nd grade students, half were given the ORL to improve reading fluency, while the other half were given the Round Robin (RR) reading method. ORL is a fluency training routines-based strategy which includes a reading and presentation phase (routine 1), rehearsal and practice phase (routine 2), and performance and recitation phase (routine 3). The ORL method involves direct instruction in each of the routines. In RR reading, two preselected literature books were read and practiced each week in small groups leveled by reading ability. Reutzel and Hollingsworth found that

the ORL is an effective means of developing second-grade students' oral reading fluency, and the performance of students in the ORL group was superior to that of the RR group in three out of four comprehension measures, showing a strong effect of fluency development on second-graders' reading comprehension. (p. 329)

In another study conducted by Nelson and Morris (1992) using ORL, substantial gains were reported for low-achieving 2nd and 3rd grade readers in an inner-city setting. Nelson and Morris reported the ORL strategy showed the gains in "word recognition accuracy and context and word-list reading for students who had previously made little or no gains in reading."

The two studies suggest strong evidence for helping struggling readers by using ORL as a strategy to show improvement in reading.

Similarly, fluency instruction helped urban 2nd grade readers in an experimental study. Fluency development lessons (FDL) were given to 2nd grade students for 10 to 15 minutes daily for six months. FDL consists of some of the key aspects which contribute to effective fluency instruction. Rasinski (1989) identified six key principles to effective fluency instruction: modeling fluent reading, giving direct instruction and feedback, giving the reader support while reading, repeated readings, cueing phrase boundaries, and giving students slightly easier text to read. In 1994, Rasinski and Padak conducted a study in which students who were given FDL showed gains in reading fluency, as well as positive responses from all teachers involved in the study. FDL involves the teacher introducing the text and inviting predictions, modeling fluent reading to the class, leading a class discussion about the text as well as the fluency (rate, phrasing, expression, and intonation), chorally reading the text several times, partnering students up to read three times and provide feedback to each other, and reconvening back together to read the text to the class as individuals, partners, or small groups. Lastly, the teacher encouraged the students to practice rereading the text independently throughout the day and take it home to read to their families. Another effective means of increasing reading comprehension can be made through daily, directed fluency practice.

Expository, that is, non-fiction or informational, text is often difficult for emerging readers because the content of the material is not necessarily related to any

personal connections the students may have with the text. Expository text is also more difficult to read because of the complexity of the structure (Duke, 2010). The Common Core State Standards initiative calls for half of all text in elementary schools to be expository. Beyond students being given opportunities to listen to their teachers reading expository text or reading independently, content area instruction in social studies and science also improves reading proficiency (Williams, Kao, Pao, Ordynans, Atkins, Cheng, & DeBonis, 2016). Close Analysis of Texts with Structure (CATS) is an intervention that uses explicit instruction of text structure with primary-grade students for reading comprehension and content-area instruction. The CATS study had two goals at the 2nd grade level:

To ensure that students can use their knowledge of the basic rhetorical structures in reading as they use it in listening and to lay the foundation for further development of their comprehension of structures in both listening and reading. (p. 1062)

In 2nd grade, analyzing “well-structured paragraphs by looking at the strategies of using clue words, generic questions, and graphic organizers” allows students to become familiar with basic structural patterns (Williams et al., 2016, p. e1063). CATS is embedded in the curriculum and not meant to be a stand-alone strategy. In Williams et al.’s year-long study with at-risk 2nd graders, the purpose was to integrate reading and social studies instruction using all five of the basic text structures: description, sequence, comparison, cause-effect, and problem-solution. The study showed the performance of the text structure group as being significantly higher than the other groups. The main takeaway is

that primary grade students do benefit from explicit instruction in the higher order task of comprehension. The researchers confirmed their beliefs that younger students, when given highly structured texts such as main ideas used in the first sentence, are better able to understand the premise that there is a main idea.

In addition to the abovementioned effective reading comprehension strategies, Berninger and Abbott (in press) conducted another study on low-achieving, or at-risk, 2nd grade students. The students were put into four groups based on word recognition, reading comprehension, both word recognition and reading comprehension combined, and lastly, a practice control. The supplemental reading intervention was delivered to the groups of students for 20 minutes, twice-weekly, totaling 24 lessons. The highly-trained tutors who facilitated the reading intervention sessions used a series of lesson plans (Berninger & Abbott) that explained step by step how to implement each of the treatments. Results were noteworthy in the combined group. The first four minutes were used for word recognition training where correspondences between letters and sounds were taught explicitly. The next six minutes of the lesson were used for practice in applying the correspondences in alphabetic principal to decoding single words. During the last ten minutes of the combined experimental group, reading comprehension was the focus. The tutors used Levels of Language Cueing (Kintsch, 1998) to develop text-based comprehension, which is aimed at information explicitly stated in the text which always contains word-level prompts, sentence-level prompts, and text-level prompts.

Explicit instruction in both word recognition and reading comprehension significantly improved phonological decoding over practice alone (Berninger, Vermeulen, Abbott, McCutchen, Cotton, Cude, Dorn, & Sharon, 2003). As Berninger, Abbott, Vermeulen, Ogier, Brooksher, Zook, and Lemos (2002) stated,

These results are significant because at-risk beginning readers, who are the most likely candidates for supplemental reading instruction, are most likely to be impaired in phonological decoding and to benefit from explicit instruction in phonological decoding. (p. 73)

Berninger, Abbott, Vermuelen, & Fulton (2006) conducted a study on varying paths to reading comprehension in 2nd grade students who were deemed at-risk readers. The authors suggested there are links between the steps which occur in sequential order of mastery. The main finding was the involvement of relating spoken and written language. The steps include the alphabetic principle of phoneme-spelling correspondences, accurate and then automatic phonological decoding, accurate and then automatic real-word reading, and accurate then fluent oral reading of text. In Study 1,

... the efficiency of reading words both in and out of context was significantly and uniquely related to reading comprehension. Study 2 also demonstrated that instruction that integrated phonological decoding, real-word reading, text reading, and reading comprehension improved reading fluency ... (p. 348)

The focus of at-risk 2nd grade readers needs to be on the development of vocabulary, mastering the alphabetic principle, decoding phonologically and reading real-words both accurately and quickly as well as having fluency and accuracy in text reading alongside specific comprehension strategies (Berninger et al., 2006).

An effective means of helping struggling readers make improvements is by teaching small, guided reading groups. Guided reading groups are based on the common skill sets or deficiencies the students need to work on. Teachers use leveled readers to teach guided reading lessons in small, differentiated reading groups. Some of the skills students are taught include thinking about the text before reading, or making predictions, attending to the meaning of the text while reading, and sharing their thinking after reading. The variety of texts coupled with thoughtful conversation enriches students' reading comprehension (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Figure 1 illustrates the basic composition of a guided reading lesson plan. The focus is on the critical role of the texts coupled with skillful and knowledgeable teaching. It is also dually important to keep the grouping flexible and not static. Once students have shown evidence of their progress, regrouping is needed to better meet their needs for new skills to focus upon. One way to find evidence of growth is by administering ongoing running records to continually adjust to the needs of each of the guided reading groups. It is important to take running records for the needier (at-risk) readers more frequently than the higher-leveled readers.

As important as the leveled texts to meet the needs of each differentiated group is the responsiveness of the teacher to facilitate the means to guide the students in engaging with the text by problem-solving to expand his or her reading power (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Teachers must use precise language to help students in this

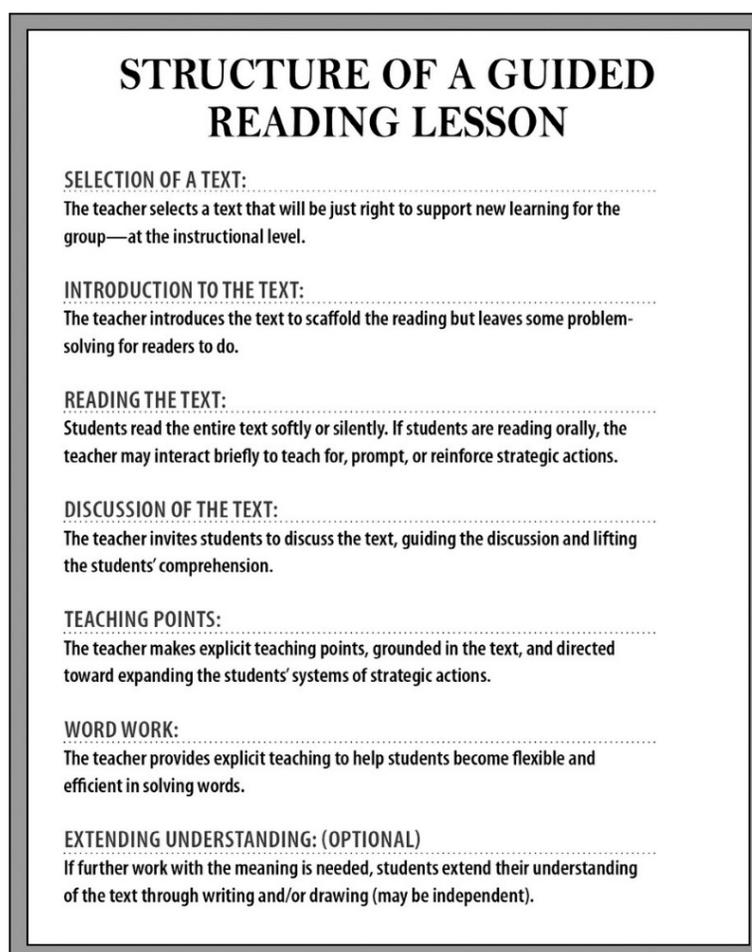


Figure 1. Structure of a guided reading lesson. Reprinted with permission from Fountas, I.C., & Pinnell, G.S. (2012). Guided reading: The romance and the reality. *The Reading Teacher*, 66(4). © 2012 International Reading Association.

process as they become self-regulating readers (Clay, 2001). Teachers can be specific to demonstrate, show, prompt, or reinforce with their language. As Fountas and Pinnell stated,

Skilled teachers of guided reading have the pleasure of seeing shifts in their students' reading ability every week—sometimes every day. Through guided reading, students can learn to deeply comprehend texts. And, perhaps most importantly, they experience the pleasure of reading well every day. (p. 274)

When looking more in-depth at what works well while sitting around the table in a guided reading group, Reading Recovery strategies have proven to be effective. Reading Recovery is a “short-term intervention that provides one-on-one tutoring to first-grade students who are struggling in reading and writing” (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Reading Recovery (Clay, 2001) has collected over 30 years of positive, extensive data to support its effectiveness (Lipp & Helfrich, 2016). Some Reading Recovery strategies to use while teaching guided reading groups are to focus on fluency by having the students reread familiar texts more than once or twice. Experts suggest starting each guided reading group with rereading a familiar text from the past day or two. This provides an encouraging warm up. In keeping the focus on fluency during this time, ensure the texts are easy enough and students aren’t putting too much effort into decoding or word solving. To practice reading fluently, each student should have his or her own anchor text. Again, this is a book (poem, passage, etc.) the student can read with phrasing and intonation in a fluent manner. Reminding the students how they sound while reading their anchor texts is an effective way to segue into the new text. Equally important is the teacher modeling what fluent reading sounds like. The instructor should give students the opportunity to read the text afterwards by whisper-reading to themselves, reading to a partner, or reading chorally. Some prompting a teacher may use while the students are reading would be to encourage the students to match the teacher’s pace or to slow down a bit to solve an unknown word and then pick the pace back up once the word is solved. Another strategy is to encourage finger pointing,

which is one-to-one correspondence with each spoken and written word, but in a flexible manner. When emergent readers have started using one-to-one matching, a return sweep, and can easily locate known words on the page encourage them to start reading with their eyes only. They can use their finger when needed, but it no longer needs to be for each word as this ultimately will slow down their pace (Lipp & Helfrich). Next, introduce the new book with pizzazz and excitement. Build up the excitement for the new book by encouraging the group to work hard to be able to get to the new book at the end of the lesson. When introducing a new book, engage the students in conversation about what they are about to be reading to give them a familiarity with the book, the plot, unfamiliar words, phrases, or names, and even words that may be known but in the story are used in an unfamiliar way such as multiple meaning words. Asking questions to encourage students to think beyond the text, making predictions, and creating suspense as part of introducing a new book are all effective Reading Recovery strategies. Because the texts being introduced should be at their instructional level, there may be some need to prompt whether it be for processing or to give the student information that he or she does not yet have. After the introductory phase of the new book or text, give students opportunities to read the book in a choice of ways keeping side conversations to a minimal. Only interject when needing to prompt in order to help them in each situation by saying, for example, "Do this," "What did you notice?" "Why did you stop?" or "Think about what you know that might help." These are all Reading Recovery prompts. The prompting needs to be specific for each given situation. Prompts need

to refer to the meaning, structure, or visual information from the book to help the reader along (Lipp & Helfrich). Another significant Reading Recovery strategy is observing the students while taking running records and noting their skills and reading behaviors.

Running records give information to the teacher for further teaching. Some key areas to focus on are how the reading sounds, what do the students control, what do they do at difficulty, what do they do when they must be told a word, and, lastly, who is doing the work? It is important to “balance strategic teaching with high expectations of accountability for students” (Lipp & Helfrich, p. 645).

Reading comprehension is the goal in learning to read. According to Pardo (2004), background knowledge can be one of the most important characteristics of a reader having success with comprehending the book. There are several ways in which teachers can support readers to be more successful as aforementioned. As a reminder, there are some key strategies to help struggling readers. Teach decoding skills, help students build fluency, build and activate prior knowledge, teach vocabulary words, motivate students, and engage students in personal responses to text. Teach text structures that vary among different reading genres such as fairy tales and non-fiction. Model for students how to appropriately select texts or books they will read independently. These are called “just-right” books. Lastly, provide students with regular independent reading time. The teacher’s role within the transaction between the reader and the text is very important.

Teachers provide explicit instruction of useful comprehension strategies, teach students to monitor and repair, use multiple strategy approaches, scaffold support, and make reading and writing connections visible to students. (Pardo, 2004, p. 277)

The literature reviewed revealed many ways in which to help students learn how to read. One major strategy mentioned was motivation. While motivation is not a new term in teaching reading, it has been widely recognized by teachers as an important factor. Attitude and achievement are linked, and it is evident this is the case for learning to read. The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) (McKenna & Kear, 1990, p. 628) measured students' attitudes about recreational and academic reading. The authors found that after taking the survey, teachers could better tailor their instructional programs to meet the needs of their students. According to McKenna and Kear,

Class averages for recreational and academic reading will enable the teacher to characterize the class generally on these two dimensions. Scores for individual students may suggest the need to further explore the nature, strength, and origins of their values and beliefs.

The ERAS should be given at the beginning and end of each school year to help guide the teacher in making instructional decisions. It is also helpful to share this data with the volunteers to help build a rapport with the student being tutored.

Classroom Volunteers

Bromley, Winters, and Schlimmer (1994) noted several positive results in a study they conducted on book buddies where graduate students were partnered with at-risk elementary school students who were 6 to 12 months below grade level in reading. This was a collaborative partnership between a university and an elementary school

whose reading teacher organized the literacy program. The reading teacher created journals for the reading buddies to share back and forth by writing letters, creating webbing for folktales, and reading folktales to write about the story elements. Initially, the students' average score was 1 out of 6 on the pretest on story elements. At the end of the ten-week program, the students scored an average of 5.5 out of 6 on the same post-test. The students were originally unenthusiastic about reading and were disconnected from learning. They also struggled with writing. By the end of the session, the students' attitudes had improved as data showed from a pre-and post-Reading Attitude Survey. The students' teachers also noticed marked improvements in reading, writing, and overall excitement for learning. Additionally, the graduate students saw benefits such as learning about students in that age group, how they learn, and what motivates them. Several of the pairs continued their relationships after the ten weeks because they had developed a bond with one another.

Craft Al-Hazza and Gupta (2006) created a reading tutor checklist. They discussed some effective volunteer tutoring techniques that were implemented in Book Buddy programs. The three main components of effective intervention programs that were critical to success were adequate tutor training, quality supervision of tutors, and well-planned tutoring sessions. Craft Al-Hazza and Gupta focused on the last component and the protocols for the volunteer tutors to use while tutoring to ensure the sessions were well-planned and a valuable use of time. A reading tutor checklist was the focus of the article and made to give the volunteers a structure in which to use their time

effectively and efficiently. It gave tutors quick pointers, activities, and ideas to use during the session instead of relying on worksheets, the teacher's manual, or looking through books. The checklist was broken down into ten separate categories from guided reading to comprehension. The checklist served as a communication tool between the teachers and tutors. Consequently, the checklist was also useful in training parents how to read at home with their own students.

Miller, Connolly, and Maguire (2012) highlighted the effects of a large-scale trial done in Northern Ireland with over 500 students in a volunteer mentoring program, Time to Read. It was run by Business in the Community, an organization of involved local community business members and volunteers. The program was two times per week with 30-minute sessions for an entire school year. This program was meant to complement rather than replace any reading improvement strategies that teachers in the schools used. One important aspect of the program was that it trained the mentors in literacy and relationship building. The trial showed positive results for students in decoding, reading rate, and reading fluency. The study also made it clear that the specialized teachers are who make the most significant improvements in students' abilities in the areas of reading comprehension. It suggested the need to be realistic in the expectations surrounding volunteer reading programs.

Torgenson, King, and Sowden (2002) reviewed eight various reading volunteer programs in the UK and the US to determine whether there were positive results for the students being tutored. Although not statistically significant, results of the study

suggested support for using volunteers in helping students learn to read. One probable factor in the results was that the intervention times were relatively short in most of the studies. Another inference was that the techniques used by the volunteers may have been ineffective. The results of the review were that there is little evidence that volunteers help students learn to read.

From the author of this paper's perspective of an experienced, reading teacher it appears the effectiveness of this specific program was being measured by students' reading comprehension scores. However, this is not something that should be focused on when students are just learning to read. Reading is taught on a continuum, and if students are working on sight word recognition and decoding simple vowel-consonant-vowel words while simultaneously learning to find a love for reading, then the end goal of reading comprehension is too lofty. The success of this program should have been measured by the processes leading up to reading comprehension.

Elliott, Arthurs, and Williams (2000) researched the long-term impacts of having volunteers serve as extra helpers for reading support to students in primary grade classrooms. There were no long-term positive effects three years after the study, but important implications were gleaned from the research. First, the researchers proposed that students needed to receive reading interventions at an earlier age and stage in reading, namely in phonological awareness and letter knowledge. In addition, the volunteers tended to be separated from the teachers, frequently not communicating with them regarding skills, the students, or support. The overall take away was that the

students were mostly doing similar activities with the volunteers that were occurring in the classroom, but that the students received individualized time and attention with the volunteers. Another finding was that the volunteer reading intervention program may have not been for a long enough time period. A full year could have potentially seen more positive results. Similarly, the study concluded that the students who needed the reading volunteer the most appeared to have the greatest difficulties with the volunteers, possibly due to the students' restlessness or unresponsiveness. Although the long-term study did not lead to positive results, there were several practical implications in creating a future volunteer reading program.

Wasik (1998) developed guidelines to support the America Reads Challenge Act of 1997. The act was a program put into place by the Clinton administration in response to the literacy problem faced by America's students, intended to give support to the schools by using volunteers to tutor students by helping them learn to read. Wasik named eight components that are essential in developing an effective volunteer reading program, based on four well-researched tutoring programs: Reading Recovery, Success for All, The Howard Street Tutoring Program, and Book Buddies:

1. A certified reading specialist needs to supervise tutors (p. 565). The reading specialist supervises the volunteers, assesses the students, gathers materials, develops the lesson plans, and provides feedback and support to the volunteers while they work with the students.

2. Tutors need ongoing training and feedback (p. 565). The volunteers need background information about concepts of print, decoding versus sight-word learning, and common problems that new readers face.

3. Tutoring sessions need to be structured and contain basic elements (p. 566). The first element should be rereading a familiar story or text. Next, there should be word analysis. This is for students to practice words they know, learn new words, and understand the meaning of new words. In addition, writing activities should be used to give students the opportunity to make the connection between reading and print. Lastly, new stories should be introduced based on the student's current reading level.

4. Tutoring needs to be intensive and consistent (p. 567). Students need at least one and one-half to two hours per week of intensive tutoring. They also need the same tutor, so trust and relationships are built between the two.

5. Quality materials such as easy-to-read stories and basic supplies such as paper, sentence strips, and markers should be used (p. 568).

6. Assessment should be ongoing (p. 568). Students need to be monitored for their progress regularly. This allows for the tutors to make continuous adjustments as needed for the student. The assessments should be relevant to the concepts that were focused upon during the tutoring sessions such as oral reading, concepts of print, word analysis, and phonemic awareness.

7. Find ways for the schools to ensure the volunteers attend regularly (p. 569).

When volunteers are appreciated, they will be more committed, so finding ways to give them recognition helps in the long-term.

8. Coordinate the classroom instruction alongside the tutoring (p. 569). When teachers and volunteers align their instruction, the students benefit and are more successful.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In my school district, I have had myriad volunteers over the decades-long course of my career. Each volunteer comes with his or her own set of unique skills and has varying levels of comfort in working with children. After building a rapport with volunteers and having discussions with them, I concluded that the volunteers mostly felt unprepared. They did not know what was expected of them or how to do some basic procedures. Learning to navigate the school culture for a volunteer was a daunting task for most. Why? Perhaps, these hang-ups could be keeping excellent community volunteers away from the schools or keeping them from returning.

I took copious notes on the conversations I had with them. These experiences guided me in the training of volunteers. Some volunteers did not feel comfortable working with the students and preferred to make copies, correct spelling papers, play with the students at recess, or collate book orders. This was not the best use of volunteers. After going through the classroom volunteer binder which I have used over the years to keep records of volunteers, their hours served, and the activities they completed, I was able to determine some commonalities regarding training. Most spent time with the

students doing activities in a one-on-one or small group of two to three students. Volunteers spent time wandering around the classroom assisting students who needed extra guidance. Some volunteers were inconsistent in their schedules. I spent several minutes of my teaching time talking to volunteers about what to do.

After interviewing other teachers in my school, within my district, and in the broader education realm regarding the activities of their volunteers, I drew the following conclusions: teachers felt hurried training the volunteers, they felt they repeated themselves too much, and they did not use their volunteers' time efficiently. Volunteers often spent as much as 10 to 15 minutes waiting for the teacher or students to be ready to engage with them. Some volunteers needed to be prompted on how to praise students, how to wear proper attire, how to be on time and reliable, where to stow their valuables, and where the adult restrooms were located. The teachers were spending too much time away from their students to train volunteers.

These were my own findings as well as those taken from my volunteer binder. In the past few years, many new teachers have become employed in our school district. One of the most common comments made was that they felt nervous about utilizing a volunteer. Like the other teachers, they were unsure, at times, what to do with the volunteers so that the students were not missing out on core classroom instruction. Many new teachers stated they often had the volunteers move around the classroom helping students working independently because the teachers had nothing pre-planned for them to do. Veteran teachers also had similar experiences with volunteers.

Overwhelmingly, teachers, new and veteran alike, stated they were always pressed for time and did not have the spare time to properly train their volunteers.

Volunteers have had inconsistent experiences working in the classrooms in my school district. The school district has few requirements to volunteer in the classrooms: a police clearance process (after filling out an agreement form; fingerprinting is not required because it is cost-prohibitive); sign in and out of the school office; and wear a volunteer sticker. My school district does not have a set way of preparing volunteers. It has always been the teacher's responsibility to handle all training of volunteers.

The need for a training handbook came out of necessity. Our school district does not have any training guide and retaining good volunteers is beneficial. Retaining good volunteers is worthwhile. The literature reviewed highlighted the benefits of having volunteers as being complementary. The students, volunteers, and teachers are the beneficiaries and all benefit from this relationship (Wasik, 1998).

The design of this project was a handbook that encompassed two components: volunteer training and student tutoring of effective practices to help 1st and 2nd grade struggling readers in one-on-one tutoring.

The volunteer training is a collection of the information given to me by district administration, teachers, and volunteers. The training would be offered either at the district office or the school sites at the beginning of each school year, and all volunteers would have to receive the training before being permitted to volunteer. This ensures continuity among the schools and individual classrooms for basic expectations. In

today's climate, safety is of utmost concern. As previously mentioned, it is important for volunteers to understand how to react in an emergency to keep the children safe.

The student tutoring component is based on the needs of 1st and 2nd grade students who struggle with reading coupled with the reviewed literature that demonstrated the most effective techniques in aiding such students. In all my years of teaching, I have only had a trained teacher volunteer in my classroom on three occasions. Two teachers were currently working in the profession and their children were students in my classroom, and one was a retired teacher. After interviewing volunteers and teachers and observing many one-on-one tutoring sessions, it became evident that the sessions needed to be streamlined.

The literature reviewed provided several strategies on teaching children how to read (e.g., Fountas & Pinnell, 2012; Rasinski, 1989). The factors used to determine which strategies are best for volunteers included ease of use and implementation, activities that could be completed in a short amount of time, and exciting games to motivate the students. Volunteers needed guidelines to anchor their time and keep the focus on one objective: helping struggling readers. Because phonics is typically an early stage when students struggle in reading, I felt it best to leave this job to the classroom teachers. There are too many facets of phonics, and the children all work at varying levels of readiness. Teaching phonics in specific stages such as short vowels, syllabication, and consonant digraphs is very technical. It is the teacher's responsibility to know where each child in his or her class is on the phonics continuum. Therefore, I deemed it

inappropriate to expect a volunteer to meet the phonics needs of each child with whom they worked.

A large part of the tutoring section was designed to introduce and teach sight words. According to the literature, having a robust sight word knowledge and greater rates of fluency are both factors in helping struggling readers (Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1993; Tan & Nicholson, 1997). Because sight words make up anywhere from 50-75% of all words read within a text, it is imperative that struggling readers learn the sight words (Rasinski, 2003). Included in the sight words lesson are games which encourage students to engage with the words in interesting and motivating ways by using different modalities of learning. All the games in the handbook have been used by me in my classroom for many years. These games came from an online website that was chosen because of ease of use for volunteers (Sight Words). Every game has directions and game boards or sheets that can be copied for use with each child. The child's sight word list is specific to the words on which he or she is working. In addition to sight words games, fluency phrases, repeated readings, beginning level comprehension questions, and strategies in the use of leveled readers are included.

Students' time with a volunteer should be limited to a maximum of 20-30 minutes since at this age they need to be able to get back to the core curricular activities in the classroom and their attention spans are stretched too far beyond that amount of time. Therefore, because the activities needed to move rapidly, I included quick

activities to keep each game about 7-8 minutes long. The volunteer can choose from a menu of activities in the handbook best suited for a tutoring session.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The volunteer handbook was used during the 2018-2019 school year. Three volunteers worked with five to six struggling readers from my classroom and another 2nd grade class approximately once or twice per week in 30-minute sessions from September through March. STAR reading comprehension scores and sight word screeners were used monthly and each trimester, respectively, to monitor the progress of the students. What was most successful were the students' scores on their sight words tests. The students who worked with the volunteers improved by 20 to 112 additional sight words learned. One student, however, made zero growth in sight word reading. The STAR reading comprehension scores remained in a year or more below grade level with all students who received tutoring. However, with the STAR reading comprehension test, students really will not start scoring higher until after they have mastered more than 100 sight words. Only one student has recently scored over 100 sight words. He still has not started showing upward progress on the STAR reading comprehension test, but I suspect he will soon. As I stated previously, gauging beginning readers' growth or lack thereof on a reading comprehension test is not a valid measure of success.

The volunteer training part of the handbook has not been implemented yet as it is pending administration and school board approval. The second part of the handbook, student tutoring, was used and revised throughout the school year, adding and omitting parts and pieces that took too long, were too difficult for a classroom volunteer to implement, or needed too much explanation.

Conclusion

Several primary teachers reviewed the handbook to give preliminary input. There was a range of teachers who taught from kindergarten through 3rd grade as well as an instructional coach who gave feedback about the handbook. Their teaching experience ranged from 3 to 29 years. Overall, their feedback was positive and all of them agreed that a handbook such as this was long overdue in our school and classrooms. Many were excited about its implementation. Some of the comments made in the handbook were that serious and devoted volunteers would love to have the guidelines prior to coming into the classrooms. Another teacher stated the handbook would help build volunteers' confidence and dedication and create motivation to keep returning. Additional comments were that the handbook is comprehensive, easy-to-follow, beneficial, explains the rationale behind why things such as sight words are taught the way they are, and provides an avenue for building relationships with the students through fun tutoring activities. The teachers also stated the idea of a group training for volunteers is an excellent way to provide them with clear, descriptive guidelines about how they are

expected to behave on campus, thus empowering them and letting them know that volunteers are an integral part of the school community.

The specific feedback given was considered valuable and incorporated into the handbook. For example, the handbook has comprehension questions for the volunteer to ask the student while reading a text together. The questions should also ask things such as “How do you know?” and “Why do you think that?” so students get used to providing textual evidence for their answers. The Tutor Checklist communication form that is to be handed to the teacher after each tutoring session was stated as a “good addition” to close the communication gap between teachers and volunteers and to save time.

There were three volunteers who provided feedback for the handbook who have had a range of 3 to 9 years of classroom volunteer experience. I specifically chose volunteers who have a longstanding relationship with the school. These volunteers have been reliable and consistent with their volunteer duties and are making positive impacts within the classrooms in which they are working, according to the classroom teachers. Some excellent recommendations came from their input. The volunteers stated that a questionnaire given to them at the beginning to ask them questions such as their reason for volunteering, type of work or grade level preferred, and special skills or talents would be good information for the school. The volunteers also added that the questionnaire should include asking the volunteers what they had no interest in doing. That was excellent feedback and was added to the handbook in part 1. An additional suggestion

by the volunteers was to have a list of all the possible volunteer opportunities available. Also, more specifically, the volunteers wanted guidance on their expectations during recesses and lunch breaks. These ideas were also incorporated into part 1 of the handbook.

The handbook will become a fixture in my classroom for volunteers, and the students will be in tutoring sessions doing activities based on some of the most effective practices. This school year has been useful in determining what worked best in the sessions. In conclusion, the utilization of the handbook by classroom volunteers has been successful in helping struggling readers learn to read better because I have seen meaningful growth in those students' sight word reading scores. Furthermore, I have provided some of the games, lists, and phrases for parents to help support their children at home. Another success I noticed was the level of motivation exhibited by the students when their volunteer came into the classroom to have a tutoring session. The relationship between the volunteers and the students was amazing to watch unfold throughout the school year. The volunteer stayed accountable by coming back regularly as expected, and the student was always excited when getting the opportunity to work with the volunteer.

The significance of this project is of great value to me in my practice, but it would be of greater value if I am able to share it with my colleagues so they may use the handbook in their 1st and 2nd grade classrooms. Getting feedback from colleagues on the handbook helped in making revisions.

Recommendations

1. All volunteers be given ample time to meet with the classroom teacher to answer any questions after the initial school-wide training has been completed. I suggest that one training session is scheduled for all prospective volunteers to go through the handbook together, including a tutoring session with a student so that volunteers can observe and take notes. Volunteers can also take turns practicing with the student to become familiar with the different activities. This lessens the apprehensions they may be having about following the strategies in the handbook.

2. Decide which volunteers will be using the handbook based on reliability, consistency, and professionalism. If volunteers do not display these attributes, then they should be given other tasks to complete such as copying, correcting, filing, checking out books, and collating book orders. High school or college-aged students could also be volunteers.

3. Helping struggling readers is a long process. Ideally, a volunteer should meet with a student two times a week for 20-30 minutes each session. Time slots should be chosen so as not to disrupt core learning time.

4. Books appropriate to the students' reading level should be clearly labeled and accessible to the volunteers. These books should be changed out when needed once they have been used at least 4-5 times. This can be done by reviewing the tutor checklist as well as using data from running records or other leveled reading tests to determine appropriate levels for the children. Other materials should be readily available such as

index cards for the sight words and timers to keep the pace of the session moving quickly. Several copies of the games should be copied onto card stock, laminated, cut out, and taped together to be ready to use at any time. Otherwise, the time during the tutoring session could be wasted on prepping the materials. Any game pieces such as bean bags, chalk, markers, etc. should also be kept in the designated tutor tub or area. Each student should have his or her own special folder in which to keep his or her sight words, games, and books. None of the tutoring time should be wasted searching for or prepping materials or books. If this is not something the classroom teacher has time to do, then have the volunteer spend his or her first few tutoring sessions getting the materials ready and becoming familiar with the handbook. This may also be a good time for the volunteer to observe the way the classroom functions, the way rules and procedures are implemented, and for the students and volunteers to get to know one another.

5. Varied school populations should be explored to examine the effectiveness of the project.

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APPENDIX A

HANDBOOK

Part I Training the Volunteers

Volunteer Training (to be given at the beginning of each school year and as needed throughout the year)

- Welcome and Introductions (2 mins.)
- Volunteers introduce themselves and state in which capacity they will be volunteering. If a very large group, have them get into groups of 4-5 people to share with one another while trainer walks around listening in. Keep timer going to stay on track. (5 mins.)
- Housekeeping business: (15 mins.)
 - You must check in with the school office each time you volunteer by signing in and wearing a badge that is always visible, according to the school district's policy.
 - All visits must be approved and scheduled by the teacher or staff member in advance.
 - Always park in designated areas. Never leave your car unattended in a loading (yellow) or bus zone.
 - Restrooms: Please use the adult restrooms. If you are unsure of where these are located, please ask the office staff.
 - Please ask the teacher what you should do and where to go during recess or lunch break. There may be activities for you to complete or students who need support during these times.
 - Smoking: There is no smoking, vaping, or use of any tobacco products permitted on school property which also includes the parking lot.
 - Personal Belongings: Please do not bring items of value to school. Coats, umbrellas, etc. may be kept in the classroom where you are working.
 - Siblings/ Other family members: Please do not bring siblings, other family members, or friends with you for your volunteer time.
 - Faculty/ Staff Room: The faculty/ staff room is for staff members only. It is important that staff members have a place to go where they can speak privately with one another.
 - Animals: No dogs are allowed on campus. Thank you for being respectful to those who suffer from allergies and for helping to keep our play areas clean. This is also a matter of insurance liability.

- **Workroom:** The workroom contains the copy machines, die cutter, laminator, and paper supplies. If you are to be using these machines, a staff member will train you in their proper use. The front office can help you if you need help finding something. Additionally, please notify them immediately if a machine is malfunctioning. Sometimes there can be a lot of demand for the copy machines. Priority is given first to teachers, then to paraprofessionals, and finally, to volunteers. If you are using a machine, and a teacher needs it, please make it available for him or her to use. Also, please clean up your area in the workroom once you are done using it.
- **Cell Phone Usage:** Refrain from the use of any portable electronic devices while on campus unless there is an emergency. Taking pictures or videos or audio recordings are prohibited unless specifically requested by the teacher. An example of when this may be appropriate would be on a field trip. Volunteers should not post students' photographs or images on social media, the internet, etc. without the express permission of the teacher. Not all parents have granted permission to allow their child's voice to be recorded or their image to appear in such things as videos, photographs, social media, websites, or newspapers. Please keep your cell phone on silent mode and stowed away while volunteering at school.
- **Field Trips:** Field trips can be especially challenging. Teachers recommend that volunteers act as authority figures. It is the volunteer's responsibility to help the teacher out, not socialize. Impart NO special favors. Abide by and reinforce the parameters set forth by the teacher and be mindful of the time. Additionally, be alert and always keep track of the students in your group. As previously stated, all rules regarding cell phones, sibling, and guests apply when on a field trip.
- **Opportunities:** Staff will offer volunteers opportunities to help in various capacities such as helping with reward parties, assemblies, book fairs, extra adult help on the playground, family nights, special occasion parties, etc. in addition to classroom volunteer jobs.

Expectations from the Staff

- District staff will clearly explain the volunteer's responsibilities for the supervision of students in the classroom, on the playground, other common areas, as well as field trips.
- It is the staff's responsibility to discipline students for behavior. The welfare of the students is the ultimate responsibility of the staff and school principal.
- Volunteers will be provided a student handbook on rules and policies.

Expectations from the Volunteers

- Reinforce the school and classroom rules but use the teacher's guidance to help address inappropriate behaviors.

- Report behavior problems to the teacher or staff member with whom you are working.
- *Never* put your hands or any other part of yourself on a student, except in a life or death emergency.

Emergency Response

- If there is a real crisis or a drill whether it be a fire drill, a lockdown drill, or an advisory drill, please always follow the teacher's lead to maintain safety.
- Make yourself familiar with evacuation routes and exits in the areas where you will be working.
- Do not attempt to administer first aid or give emergency assistance as there are staff members trained to do this.
- The only people authorized to administer medication to students are the school nurses.

Dependability

Please show up prepared and on time for your scheduled volunteer time slot. The teachers are relying on you and have put effort into arranging activities knowing you will be present. If you cannot make it, please be courteous and let the office staff know as soon as possible so they can relay that information to the teacher. Likewise, the teachers will be responsible for letting you know if there has been a change in the schedule and if you need to come at a different time or not at all on that day.

Support

- You are in the capacity of a support position as a school volunteer. Your main role is to support the teacher who you are working with.
- Remain loyal to the school to maintain a good working relationship. The school staff's goal is to build good working relationships with the volunteers because we see what value the volunteers bring to helping the teachers educate the students. The volunteer time should be a positive learning experience for both the student as well as the volunteer.
- If issues arise, such as problems with a student or scheduling, please speak directly with the teacher first to maintain open communication. If you have any questions about policies or procedures please ask the teacher, the principal, or the office staff. Be mindful of the teacher's time as well.

Equality

Students are from all different backgrounds. Please accept them as they come. These values, beliefs, views may be different from your own. Be consistent with the students and treat them all with kindness and respect.

Volunteer Code of Ethics

- Confidentiality: The most vital part of our code of ethics is confidentiality. This includes all facets of the school, including, but not limited to, student performance and behavior, conversations heard between staff members, concerns with teachers or staff, incidents involving students, any medical or healthcare issues, and parent/guardian information. Legal litigation has occurred because of lapses in confidentiality. Additionally, Congress has enacted the FERPA law, Family Educational Rights and Policy Act, regarding privacy-related concerns of educators, parents, and students.
- Always maintain dignity to gain the respect of the students. Be mindful of what you say and your influence on young, impressionable children's minds. Keep your personal values, religious beliefs, and political views private. If students ask you for this personal information, please politely decline to answer by simply stating that it is personal information. Set a good example.
- As a volunteer, you are a part of an educational team. All information regarding children, teachers, staff, and the school is confidential and should not leave the school's setting.
- Dress Code: There is no dress code for adults, however, you are expected to dress in a manner that promotes a safe and respectful learning environment. Clothing should not show or imply any profanity, obscenity, violence, or symbols of hate. Clothing cannot promote alcohol, drugs, gang-related signs, etc. Underwear should not be showing. No bare feet. No skin should be showing between upper chest and the mid-thigh. If you are unsure about your clothing, please ask the office staff when you check in. Bring a backup to put on in case it does not meet the school's expectations.
- Attitude: Come to school with a professional and positive attitude so the students see from you that they are special, cared for, and that you are grateful to have been given the opportunity to work with them. Find the positives in the students by focusing on their strengths. Volunteers are expected to show decorum in their actions, speech, and dress. Treat the teachers, staff, and students respectfully and expect the same from them in return.
- If other parents, community members, or the press ask your opinion on the school, teachers, discipline, etc., please refer them to the principal if they would like answers to their questions. The school is always open to communicating with the community, but the confidentiality of the students is of utmost importance. Thank you for supporting our efforts.
- By spending time in the school as a volunteer, there may be things you witness about a student's academics or behavior that are to remain confidential. There may be times when you have access to students' education records when you may be grading (such as spelling tests) or entering grades for a teacher. This is all to remain confidential. Students have a right to expect privacy and confidentiality while at school. This also includes conversations you have with the students. Please report any suspicious

conversations to the teacher regarding abuse or neglect, as the teachers are mandated reporters.

- Refrain from hallway conversations. This is disruptive to the students and the staff. If you need to speak with a parent, please do so quietly outside the office.
- If there are two or more volunteers working in the classroom at the same time, please do not have side conversations. This is disruptive to the classroom environment.

Parent Requests

Teachers may or may not have you work with your own child. This is at the teacher's discretion. Additionally, please do not take up the teacher's time to discuss your child while you are here to volunteer. If you need to discuss your child, please follow the proper channels by scheduling an appropriate time to sit down and have a conversation with your child's teacher.

Adherence to Guidelines

Staff members are expected to refer any problems arising with confidentiality, effectiveness, disruptions, etc. to the school principal. Every possible effort will be made to retain school volunteers, however, there may be specific reasons for immediate dismissal such as breaking school policies, mistreating a student, inappropriate language or behavior, breaking confidentiality, or anything else deemed necessary by the school principal.

Volunteer Questionnaire

What is your reason for volunteering? _____

Do you have a grade preference? _____

What are some of your hobbies or interests? _____

Do you have special skills or talents? _____

Do you speak any other languages besides English? _____

Which areas are of NO interest to you? _____

Which type of work do you prefer? _____

Do you have a family member at school? If so, who? _____

What is your availability? Which days/times are you able to volunteer? _____

Part II

Classroom Volunteer Activities for Growth in Reading

Part II of the training is relevant to volunteers wishing to work in a first- or second-grade classroom. This training will be held at a separate time and be facilitated by a certificated personnel member and an experienced volunteer, if available. The time allotment for this training shall be approximately one hour broken down as follows:

- Sight Words Lesson/ Corrections (5 minutes)
- Sight words games (25 minutes)
- Phrases and Short Sentences for Repeated Reading Practice (5 minutes)
- Reading Leveled Books (15 minutes)
- Comprehension Extension (5 minutes)
- Tutor Checklist (5 minutes)

Sight Words Lesson

- Review sight words already taught (after the first lesson). Sight words will need to be covered many times before the child really knows them well. Each child is different, so go at a pace that works for the child you are working with. Use the **See and Say** technique to review the words. If a child misses a word, do the remaining four techniques for that word as well. If the child struggles with more than two of the sight words, then set aside the new words and use the lesson format to go through each of the five techniques using the review words the child is struggling with. After the child has a good grasp of a word, it can be replaced in the lesson with another word.
- Introduce new sight words. Use a maximum of three new sight words in one sitting. Hold up the flash card for the first word and go through all five techniques in order. Continue doing this will all three new sight words.
- Never use the phrase “Sound it out” when working with sight words.
- Keep the pace moving quickly (10 minutes) so there is time to play a sight words game.
- Follow this format to review and teach new sight words.
 1. See and Say
Child sees the word on the flash card and says the word while underlining it with his or her finger.
 2. Spell Reading
Child says the word, spells the word, then says the word again.
 3. Arm Tapping
Child says the word, taps each letter on his or her arm while saying the letters, then says the word again.

4. Air Writing
Child says the word, writes the letters in the air in front of the flash card, then says the word again.
5. Table Writing
Child writes the letters on the table while looking at the flash card, then repeats without looking at it.

These techniques activate different parts of the brain by using combined repetitions of each word (seeing, hearing, speaking, spelling, and writing) with physical movements that focus the child's attention and commit the words to long-term memory.

Sight Word Corrections Procedure

When a child makes a mistake reading a sight word, you need to correct them on the spot. If you wait until later, the correction is less likely to "stick" in the child's memory. Use this script and be sure to have it with you every time you do a sight words lesson or game.

ADULT: That word is should. What word?

CHILD: Should.

ADULT: Again. What word?

CHILD: Should.

ADULT: Yes, should! We should brush our teeth before bed. What word?

CHILD: Should.

After the correction, simply continue with the activity.

*Dolch Sight Words Listed by Category*Pre-Kindergarten

a	find	is	not	three
and	for	it	one	to
away	funny	jump	play	two
big	go	little	red	up
blue	help	look	run	we
can	here	make	said	where
come	I	me	see	yellow
down	in	my	the	you

Kindergarten

all	do	no	she	well
am	eat	now	so	went
are	four	on	soon	what
at	get	our	that	white
ate	good	out	there	who
be	have	please	they	will
black	he	pretty	this	with
brown	into	ran	too	yes
but	like	ride	under	came
must	saw	want	did	new
say	was			

First Grade

after	fly	how	open	then
again	from	just	over	think
an	give	know	put	walk
any	going	let	round	were
as	had	live	some	when
ask	has	may	stop	by
her	of	take	could	him
old	thank	every	his	once
them				

Second Grade

always	does	made	tell	why
around	don't	many	their	wish
because	fast	off	these	work
been	first	or	those	would
before	five	pull	upon	write
best	found	read	us	your
both	gave	right	use	buy
goes	sing	very	call	green
sit	wash	cold	its	sleep
which				

Third Grade

about	eight	if	only	ten
better	fall	keep	own	today
bring	far	kind	pick	together
carry	full	laugh	seven	try
clean	got	light	shall	warm
cut	grow	long	show	done
hold	much	six	draw	hot
myself	small	drink	hurt	never
start				

Nouns

apple	children	flower	money	sister
baby	Christmas	game	morning	snow
back	coat	garden	mother	song
ball	corn	girl	name	squirrel
bear	cow	goodbye	nest	stick
bed	day	grass	night	street
bird	doll	hand	party	table
birthday	door	head	picture	thing
boat	duck	hill	pig	time
box	egg	home	rabbit	top
boy	eye	horse	rain	toy
bread	farm	house	ring	tree
brother	farmer	kitty	robin	watch
cake	father	leg	Santa Claus	water
car	feet	letter	school	way

cat	fire	man	seed	wind
chair	fish	men	sheep	window
chicken	floor	milk	shoe	wood

Fry Sight Words Listed by Groups (first 400 words)

1st 100 Words

a	each	it	out	to
about	find	like	part	two
all	first	long	people	up
an	for	look	said	use
and	from	made	see	was
are	get	make	she	water
as	go	many	sit	way
at	had	may	so	we
be	has	more	some	were
been	have	my	than	what
but	he	no	that	when
by	her	not	the	which
called	him	now	their	who
can	his	number	them	will
come	how	of	then	with
could	I	oil	their	words
day	if	on	these	would
did	in	one	they	write
do	into	or	this	you
down	is	other	time	your

2nd 100 Words

after	does	letter	over	such
again	end	line	page	take
air	even	little	picture	tell
also	follow	live	place	things
America	form	man	play	think
animal	found	me	point	three
another	give	means	put	through
answer	good	men	read	too
any	great	most	right	try
around	hand	mother	same	turn
ask	help	move	say	us

away	here	much	sentence	very
back	home	must	set	want
because	house	name	should	well
before	just	need	show	went
big	kind	new	small	where
boy	know	off	sound	why
came	land	old	spell	work
change	large	only	still	world
different	learn	our	study	years

3rd 100 Words

above	earth	hear	never	song
add	eat	high	next	soon
almost	enough	idea	night	start
along	every	important	often	state
always	example	Indian	once	stop
began	eyes	it's	open	story
begin	face	keep	own	talk
being	family	last	paper	those
below	far	late	plant	thought
between	father	leave	real	together
book	feet	left	river	took
both	few	let	run	tree
car	food	life	saw	under
carry	four	light	school	until
children	girl	list	sea	walk
city	got	might	second	watch
close	group	mile	seem	while
country	grow	miss	side	white
cut	hard	mountains	something	without
don't	head	near	sometimes	young

4th 100 Words

across	early	hundred	problem	sun
against	easy	I'll	products	sure
area	ever	king	pulled	table
become	fall	knew	questions	today
best	farm	listen	reached	told
better	fast	low	red	top
birds	field	map	remember	toward
black	figure	mark	rock	town
body	fire	measure	room	travel

certain	fish	money	seen	true
cold	five	morning	several	unit
color	friends	music	ship	upon
complete	ground	north	short	usually
covered	happened	notice	since	voice
cried	heard	numeral	sing	vowel
didn't	himself	order	slowly	war
dog	hold	passed	south	waves
door	horse	pattern	space	whole
draw	hours	piece	stand	wind
during	however	plan	step	wood

Note: The following board games are provided under the *Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License* which permits you to use the resources, provided you leave the attribution hallmark (our logo) on the resources. We would be happy to see the materials used in the classroom, in the home, as part of your tutoring business, or however else you feel is appropriate. You do not need to contact us for permission to use the materials. We want you to use them!

Sight Words Snakes and Ladders

This twist on the classic Chutes & Ladders board game incorporates sight word reading into the game play. The game gives the child many opportunities to repeatedly read the sight words he or she is working on while the board game format keeps it fun and engaging for the child.

Materials:

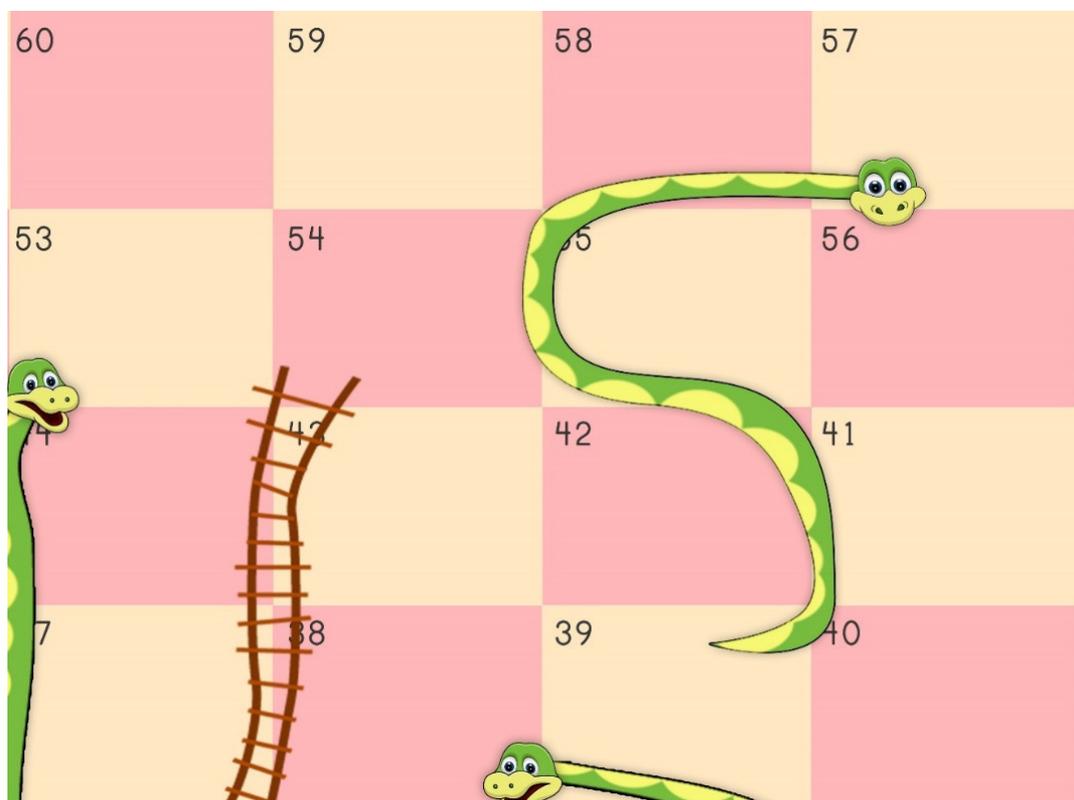
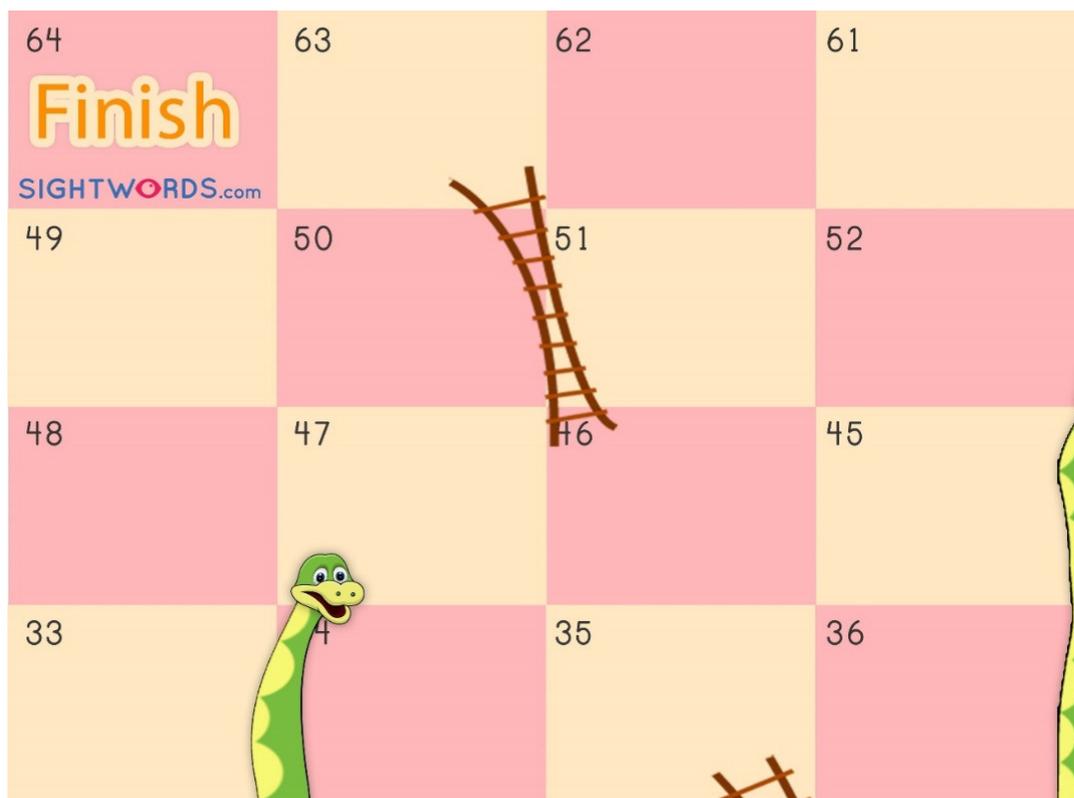
- Snakes and Ladders board
- Game pieces (checkers, pennies, small blocks, etc.)
- Die

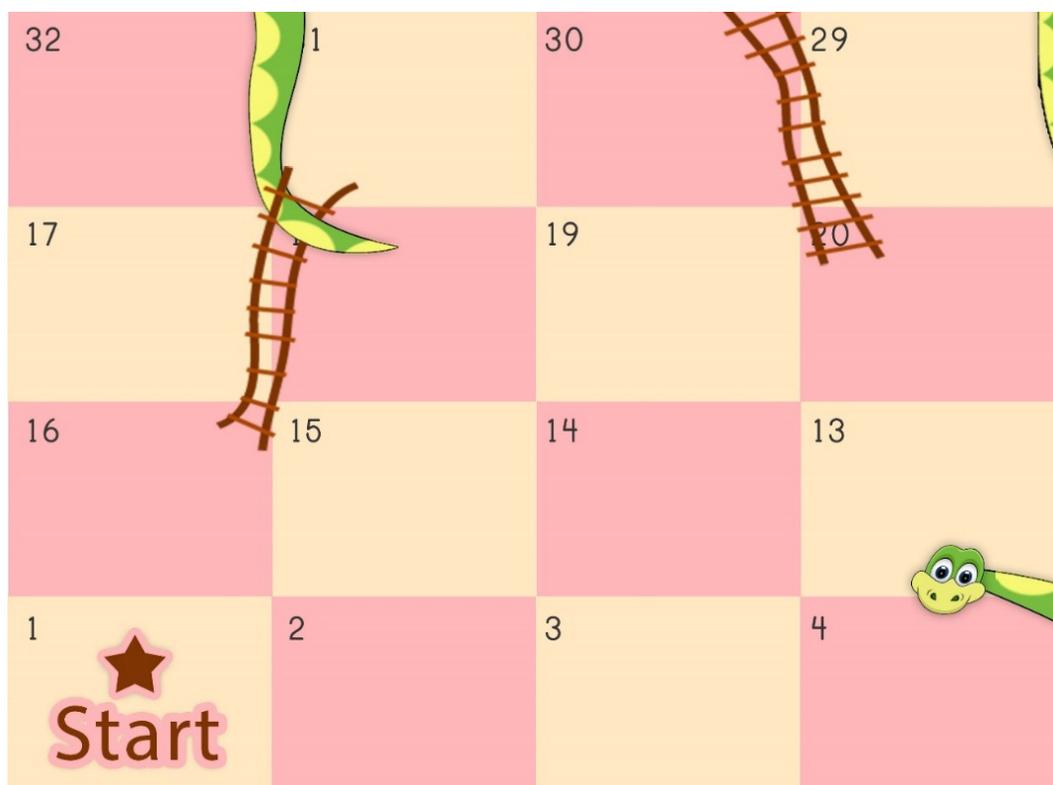
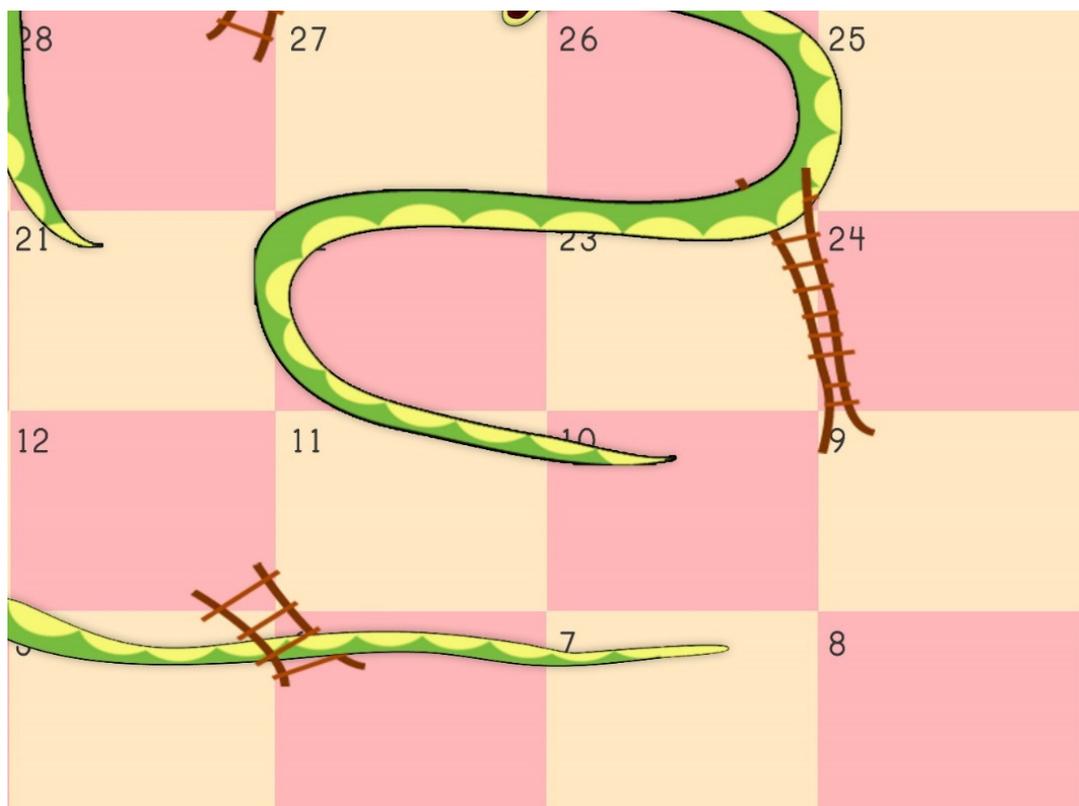
Directions:

- Copy the pages of the game sheets onto card stock for durability.
- Cut out the sheets by trimming the edges, tape them together to form a game board, and laminate them so they can be used multiple times with a dry-erase marker and individualized for each child and his or her current words.
- The child begins by placing his or her game pieces on the START square. The first player (the child) rolls the die and moves forward that number of spaces. On each space the player needs to say the word written on the space in order to keep moving. If they don't know a word or can't say the word in less than 10 seconds, then their turn stops. Do a quick correction to help them practice the word.
- If the player rolls a number that lands them at the bottom of a ladder and they get the word correct, they may "climb" to the square at the top of the ladder. If the player rolls a number that lands them on the head of a snake, then they "slide" down to the square at the snake's tail.
- The game finishes when both players (child and tutor) get to the FINISH square, with the first player to the end being declared the winner. An exact number does not have to be rolled to finish the game.

Variations:

If the last roll puts the player over the finish line rather than exactly on it, go back the overage. For example, if player is on 63 and rolls a 4, there would be 1 move to finish, then back 3 more to 61. This allows lots of catch up to someone far behind.





Sight Words Fly Swat

There are many variations on this exciting game. Using a real (new) fly swatter is another way to capture a child's interest and motivation by making it more exciting. The child must SPLAT the fly that has the sight word written on it. It builds confidence and speed with identifying sight words.

Materials:

- Fly swatters
- Fly pages, cut and laminated

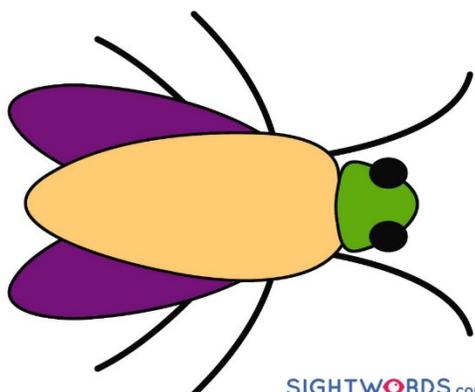
Directions:

- Copy the flies onto card stock, cut them out, and laminate them for multiple uses. Make as many as you intend to use at once plus a few extras as a backup.
- Use a dry erase marker to write the words the child is practicing with.
- Make sure the fly cards are all identical except for the words printed on them. This forces the child to look at the word itself.
- Place the fly cards facing up on a table, well-spaced apart.
- Adult calls out one word at a time. The child must find the word with their fly swatter and "splat" the word while repeating the word aloud. In the beginning, start with only five words, then as confidence is built, add more cards.
- When the child gets the word correct, offer occasional praise and encouragement. If the child gets an answer wrong or takes longer than ten seconds to find a word, use the Sight Words Correction to help the child review the word.
- Play for 5-10 minutes to cycle through each of the words several times.

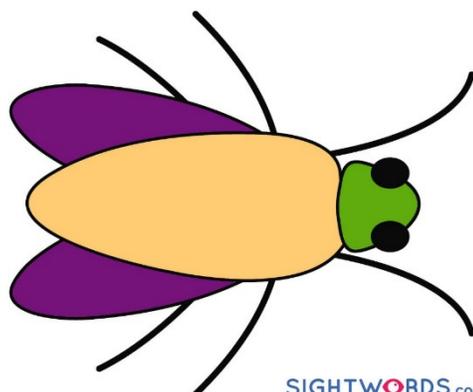
Variations:

- Make the game more difficult by calling out the words faster or adding more words. Make it easier by giving a bit more time to find the words or using fewer words.
- Instead of calling out only one word at a time, call out 2, or even 3-4 words. The child must splat the words called out in the correct order. Remember, the child must read the word as it is being splatted by the fly swatter.

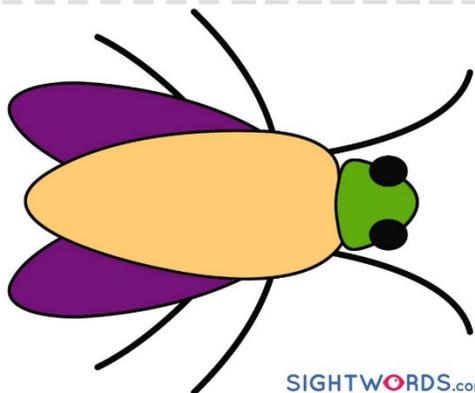
To reverse the game, the adult splats a fly and the child must read the word. Increase or decrease the rate of splatting to accommodate for the child's needs.



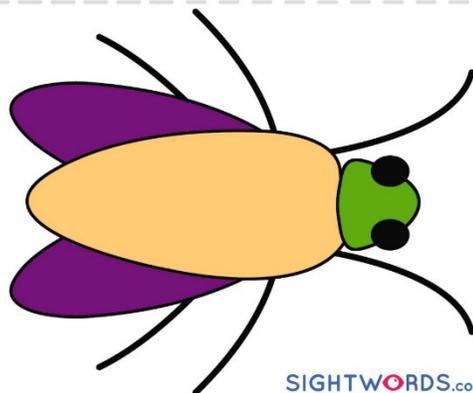
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Four in a Row

This is a variation of the game, Connect Four. If a real Connect Four game is available, then that may be used. The child must read a sight word correctly before they may place a marker on the board. The goal is for the child to read the sight words quickly while building their confidence through repetition.

Materials:

- Sight words flash cards (specific to the ones the child is working on)
- Four in a Row game board; copy onto card stock and laminate for durability and reuse. Or use a Connect Four game board.
- Four in a Row markers (checkers, pennies, counters, etc.)

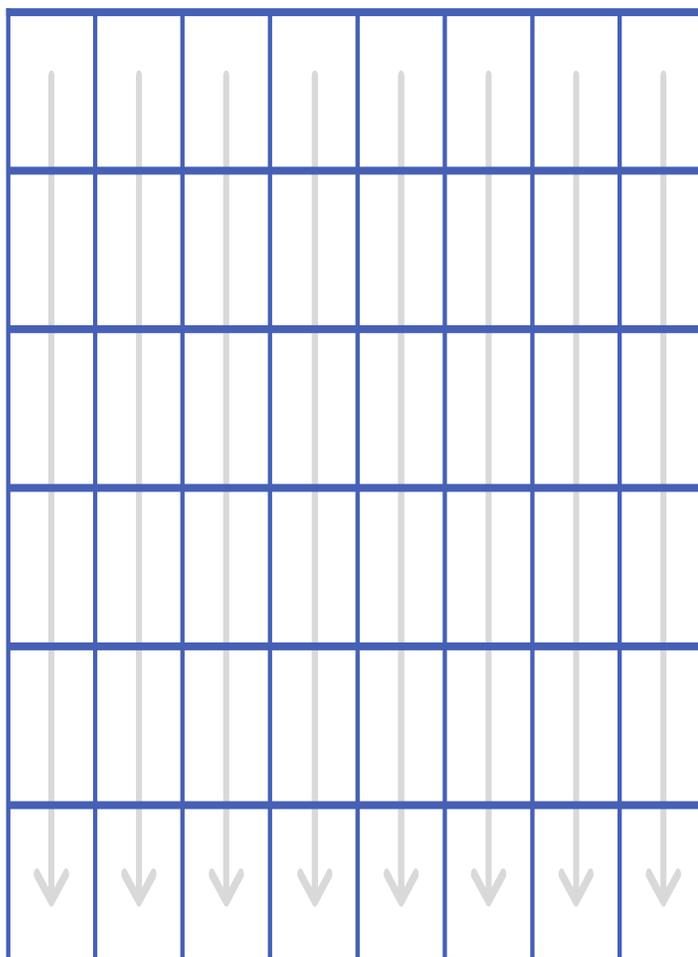
Directions:

- Put the Four in a Row game board between the adult and child. Shuffle the flash cards and place face down in a stack. Each player has his or her own marker color. Flip a coin to decide who goes first, or just let the child go first.
- Player A draws a card, reads the card out loud. If he or she cannot read it correctly within ten seconds, go through the sight words correction procedure to review and reinforce the correct word. Player A then loses that turn.
- If Player A correctly reads the word, he or she can put a marker on one of the squares of the game board. Next, it is Player B's (the adult's) turn. Ask the child to "help" read the word drawn.
- Remember, gravity is a part of Four in a Row the same way it is a part of Connect Four. A marker must "slide" to the bottom of a column on the game board (follow gray arrows), stopping at the lowest empty square and filling the game board from the bottom up.
- Keep taking turns until one person makes a row of four markers on the board – vertically, horizontally, or diagonally – or until all the squares are filled with no one getting four in a row.
- As the child gets the hang of the game and knows the words better, challenge him or her to read the words faster and faster until each word is read in one second or less.

Variations:

- As a confidence builder, ignore the gravity rule and let the child put his or her markers in any available square on the game board.
- The game could be shortened by requiring just three markers in a row to win.

FourinaFow



Sight Words Boom!

The object of the game is for each player to collect the cards they draw by reading the sight words correctly. If a Boom! card is drawn, the player loses all the cards collected and that player must start over.

Materials:

- Copy the Sight Words Boom! cards onto heavy card stock, cut them out, and laminate them. It is important that the cards cannot be seen from the back side.
- Use a dry erase marker to write the words on the cards the child is working on.

Directions:

- Shuffle the cards and put them face-down in a stack.
- Player A draws a card from the stack and reads the word, moving his or her index finger from left to right underneath the letters while reading it. Demonstrate how this is done before getting started.
- If the child reads the sight word correctly and within ten seconds, he or she keeps the card. If a player draws a Boom! card, he or she loses all the cards already collected.
- Player B (adult) takes a turn. If either player cannot read a word correctly, the other player gets the opportunity to read the sight word and keep it if correct. Remember to set this card aside for practice with the sight words correction routine.
- The Boom! cards are what make the game exciting and fun. If a child draws a Boom! card and loses all his or her cards, those cards, including the Boom! card get reshuffled and placed at the bottom of the stack of sight words cards.



Sight Words Tic-Tac-Toe

This game is taken from the original game of Tic-Tac-Toe but with the added twist of reading a sight word correctly before being able to place a game piece on the board. The goal of the game is to encourage the child to read sight words quickly while also building their confidence through repetition.

Materials:

- Sight Word flash card specific to which ones the child is learning
- Tic-Tac-Toe game board, 3x3 or 4x4
- X and O game pieces or checkers
- Or, paper and pencil for the game instead of the board and pieces

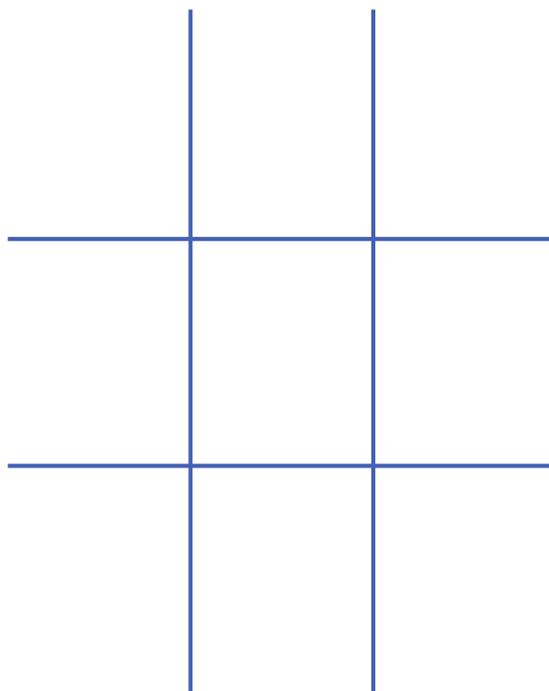
Directions:

- Shuffle the flash cards and place them face down in a stack. Player A (child) draws a card first and reads the word out loud. If the word isn't read correctly within a few seconds, use the Sight Words Corrections Procedure to review and reinforce the word.
- Once the word is read correctly, the child may place a game piece on one of the squares of the game board. Player B (adult) goes next and asks the child to "help" read the word drawn.
- Keep taking turns until one person makes a row of three or four pieces on the board- vertically, horizontally, or diagonally or until all the squares are filled with no one getting three or four in a row.

Variations:

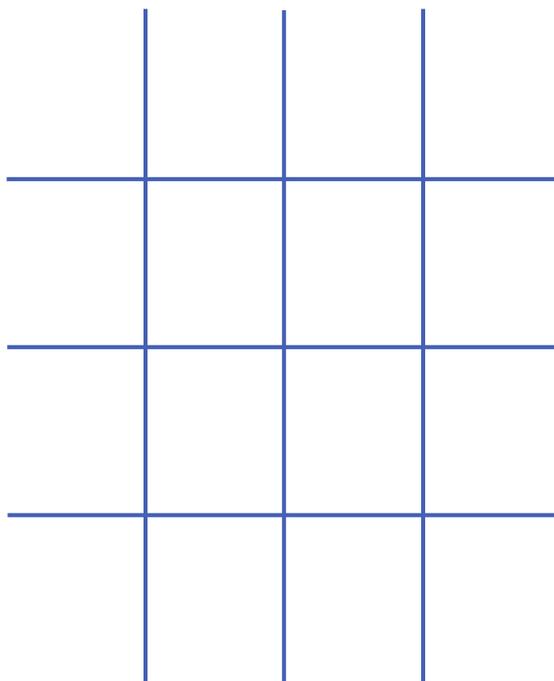
- As the child starts to know the words better, make it more challenging by having him or her read the words faster and faster until they can be read in one second or less.
- If either player reads a word incorrectly, the other player gets to place a piece on the board.
- For more of a challenge, use the 4x4 game board.

Tic-Tac-Toe

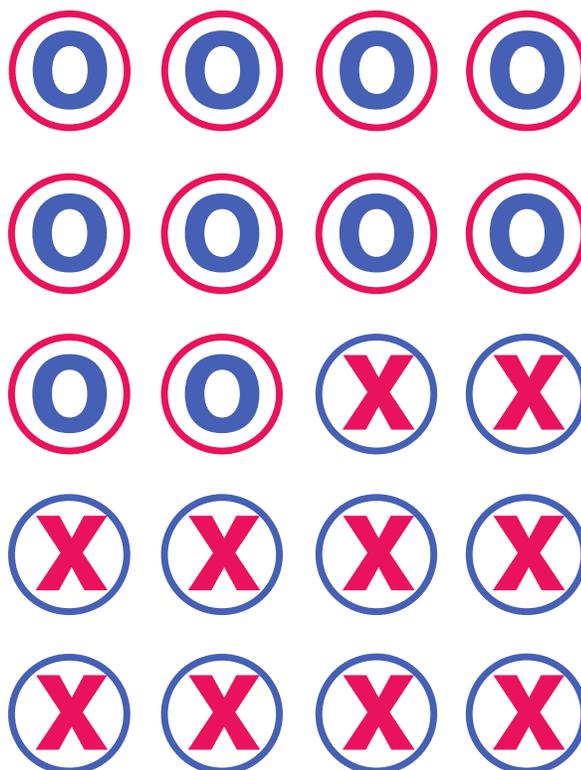


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Tic-Tac-Toe



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Sight Words Concentration

Materials:

- Up to 10 sight words written or printed using card stock onto flash cards in pairs. Cut them out.
- Laminate and write the words with a dry-erase marker so they can be re-used repeatedly.

Directions:

- This game is played the same way as the standard Memory or Concentration Card Game with the players being required to read the word on each card as they play the game. The goal of the game is to collect as many pairs of matching words as possible.
- Begin by shuffling all the sight words flash cards. Arrange them face down in a grid. For example, in a deck of 20 cards, arrange them in a 4x5 grid.
- The child picks one card, turns it over, reads the sight word, picks another card, turns it over, and reads the sight word. If the sight words match, the child keeps the two cards. If not, the cards are turned back over and put back into play in the same position they were originally. The turn then goes to the second player (adult).
- If the child is unable to read a word correctly within 10 seconds, give the child a bit of coaching to help them by using the Sight Words Correction Procedure.
- Play continues until all the words are matched and there are no cards left unclaimed.
- If the child is struggling with this game, read through all the sight word cards with him or her before the game begins to help refresh their recall of the words.

Variations:

- To make the game less difficult, use fewer pairs of sight word cards.
- To make the game more difficult, increase the number of sight word pairs so it becomes harder to find the matching cards.
- When the child finds a matching pair of word cards, have him or her use the word in a sentence before being allowed to add the cards to the “keep” pile.

Sight Words Go Fish

This sight words game is a variation of the classic Go Fish Card Game. It can be played with 2-4 players, but for one-on-one tutoring purposes, it will be played with the child and the adult. The goal of the game is to collect more pairs of matching cards than the other player.

Materials:

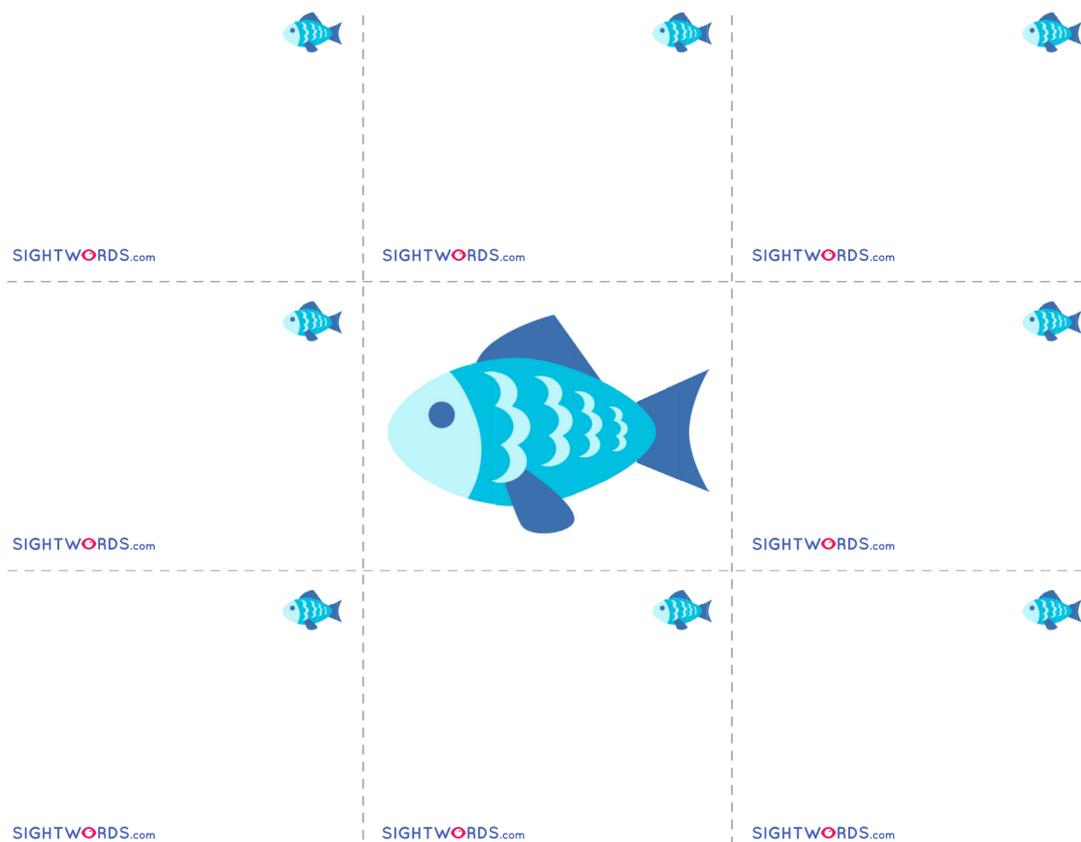
- Copy the Go Fish blank template onto card stock for durability. Laminate the pages, cut the cards out.
- Use a dry-erase marker to write the sight words the child is working on onto the Go Fish playing cards. Each word used for the game needs to have two cards. Be sure to use a mix of newer sight words that the child has not yet mastered as well as more familiar sight words.

Directions:

- For a two-player game, deal seven cards to each player (or fewer if seven cards is too many for the student to hold), then place the remaining cards face down in the middle of the players. The players look at their cards but do not reveal them to each other.
- Player A (child) takes the first turn. Player A selects one of his or her cards and reads the sight word out loud, moving his or her index finger from left to right underneath the letters while reading it. The adult should demonstrate this expectation at the beginning of the game to remind the child how to best read the word.
- Player A then asks Player B (adult) if they have any cards with the word "BEFORE". If Player B has a card with that word, they respond by saying, "Yes, I have a card with the word BEFORE," then hand the card to Player A who keeps it in a Keep Pile. Player A gets to go again if Player B has the card requested.
- If Player A struggles with a word, take a moment to go through the sight words correction procedure.
- If Player B do not have the requested card, he or she shouts, "Go Fish!" Player A must then draw from the stack. If the drawn card has the word he or she was looking for, he or she shows the card, reads it aloud, and gets to take another turn. Otherwise, Player A's turn ends, and it is Player B's turn.
- If a player collects both cards of a word pair, he or she puts them in a face-up stack in front of him or her. The game continues until someone has no cards left or the face-down stack runs out. The winner is the player with the most pairs of matching cards.

Variation:

- Use fewer pairs of cards to decrease the difficulty level for children who don't know as many words.
- Use more pairs of cards to increase the difficulty level.



Sight Words Bean Bag Toss

The goal of the Sight Words Bean Bag Toss is to provide continued exposure to a set of sight words, with opportunities for repetition and confidence building. The physical element of this game helps children use up some extra energy.

Materials:

- This game requires one or more bean bags and some sight words flash cards relevant to the ones the child is working on.
- For the sight words, use any sight words cards from any other game, or simply write out the sight words onto flash cards. Use whichever template is best for the child you are working with. It is best to print the blank pages out on card stock, laminate them, trim them, and use a dry-erase marker to write in the words specific to what the child has learned.

Directions:

- Spread the cards, face up, on the floor. They should be close together, but not touching each other. Have the child stand nearby and gently toss a bean bag toward the cards.

The child may aim for a specific card, but that is not necessary.

If the child lacks the coordination to toss the bean bag accurately, have him or her stand right next to the array of cards and simply drop the bean bag onto one of the cards.

- After the bean bag is tossed, the child should walk over and pick up the card his or her bean bag landed on top of or closest to. He or she should read the sight word on the card, using his or her finger to underline the word from left to right. If the word is read correctly, congratulate the child.
- If the word is not read correctly or within ten seconds, go through the sight words correction procedure to review and reinforce the correct word.

Variations:

- Make the game easier by using less difficult words or harder by using newer words.
- Adjust the distance the child stands from the cards as well as the size of the cards used to match his or her throwing ability and aim.
- Stop mid-game and rearrange the cards on the floor if the child is hitting the same cards repeatedly.

After the child reads his or her word played, the word could be removed from play to encourage the child to go through all the cards.



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Phrases and Short Sentences for Repeated Reading Practice

1st 100 Fry Words Within Context

These phrases contain the first 100 words from the Fry Instant Word List (1980), which represent 50 percent of all the words children encounter in elementary school reading. Repeated reading of a few phrases per week gives students practice reading high-frequency words and developing fluency and general proficiency. These phrases may be practiced with the child in a tutoring session.

The people	Look for some people.	Write it down.
By the water	So there you are.	Who will make it?
You and I	A long time	What will they do?
He called me.	Have you seen it?	We had their dog.
What did he say?	One more time	When would you go?
No way	All day long	A number of people
One or two	It's about time.	How long are they?
More than the other	Up in the air	Come and get it.
How many words?	Which way?	Part of the time
This is a good day.	He has it.	Can you see?
Sit down.	If we were older	Now and then
But not me	It's no use.	Go find her.
Not now	With his mom	At your house
From my room	As big as the first	It's been a long time.
Will you be good?	When will we go?	Give them to me.
Then we will go.	From here to there	Now is the time.
An angry cat.	More people	May I go first?
Write your name.	Go down.	This is my cat.
That dog is big.	Did you like it?	Get on the bus.
Two of us	When did they go?	Did you see it?
The first word	She said to go.	How did they get it?
I like him.	Each of us	Number two
Out of the water	What are these?	Look up.
We were here.	There was an old man.	All or some
Could you go?	It may fall down.	A long way to go
We like to write.	See the water.	Some of your people
Into the water	But not for me	The other people

2nd 100 Fry Words Within Context

Repeated reading of a few phrases per week gives students practice reading high-frequency words and developing fluency and general proficiency. These phrases may be practiced with the child in a tutoring session.

Over the river	A good man	My new place
After the game	Another great sound	Most of the animals
Take a little.	Our best things	Give it back.
Just the same	Only a little	My last name
It's only me.	That's very good	I know why.
Think before you act.	Three years ago	Mother says to now.
Live and play	Where are you?	I need help.
Try your best.	I work too much.	Move over.
Any old time	We found it here.	Through the line
Study and learn	Right now	Kind of nice
Mother means it.	Spell your name.	Same time tomorrow
The good American	Tell the truth.	Change your clothes.
A little boy	Play it again.	The following day
Back off.	We came home.	Give it away.
We want to go.	Answer the phone.	Show us around.
Turn the page.	Form two lines.	The air is warm.
A small house also	Read my letters.	Another old picture
It's still here.	Write one sentence.	Where in the world
Set it up.	We need more.	Put it there.
I study in school.	Where does it end?	I'm an American.
I don't feel well.	Such a mess	My home is large.
Point it out.	It turned out well.	Right now
Read the sentence.	It's a small world.	This must be it.
Big and small	Hand it over.	Home sweet home
Such a big house	Around the clock	Men asked for help.
Show and tell	A different land	You must be right.
They went here.	Tell the truth.	Get to the point.
Good and plenty	Because we should.	Help me out.
Even the animals	It turned out well.	It's your place.
I think so.	Good things	Read the book.

3rd 100 Fry Words Within Context

Repeated reading of a few phrases per week gives students practice reading high-frequency words and developing fluency and general proficiency. These phrases may be practiced with the child in a tutoring session.

Near the car	Stay a while.	Between the lines
A few good men	My own father	Don't open the door.
In the country	You might be right.	Add it up.
It seemed too good.	Read every story.	Along the way
Below the water	Next time	Plants and flowers
It's hard to open.	Will it last?	Something good
Keep it up.	For example	Plant the trees.
In the beginning	Light the fire.	Those other people
The light in your eyes	A group of friends	In my head
We got together	Under the earth	We left it here.
We saw the food.	Both children	Close the door.
It's my life.	The big city	Always be kind.
We started the fire.	Read the paper.	It never happened.
Run four miles.	A good thought	Once upon a time
Do it often.	We walked four miles.	Is it really true?
It's time to eat.	Until the end	Let me carry it.
A second later	Near the sea	Stop the music.
Talk to my father.	Read your book.	The young face
Sing your song.	The long list	State your case.
My family	I miss you.	I cut myself.
A very important person	Above the clouds	On my side
Watch the game.	I took the car.	The peaceful Indians
So far so good.	Without a care	The young girl
I like being on the team.	My feet hurt.	The tall mountains
The dark night	Next to me	A good idea
A few children	It began to grow.	A long life
Watch the river.	A group of Indians	White clouds
He started to cry.	Too soon	I hear the sea
Leave it to me.	An important idea	I hear the waves.
The first day of school	Almost enough	Almost four miles

Source: Rasinski, Timothy V. (2003). *The Fluent Reader*. New York: Scholastic Professional Books.

Reading Leveled Books

Book Review

Reread the book from the prior tutoring session as a warm-up and to practice reading fluently. The child should reread each book 3-4 times to improve fluency and understanding. The rereading should be done over the course of several tutoring sessions.

Book Selection

Select a book that is just right for the child to read with some support. The teacher will give guidance on the level of text appropriate to the individual child.

Book Introduction

Introduce the book by discussing the title, author, and looking through the pictures to make some predictions. If there are any other parts of the book that need discussed, do so. Think out loud for the child by asking questions such as, "Who do you think this story is about?" or "I am wondering what the problem in this story is going to be once I look at the picture on the cover."

Book Reading

The child reads the book aloud while the tutor listens in and offers prompts or strategies to help solve unknown words. For example, if the word is a sight word, the tutor may just need to tell the child the word. If it is a sight word that the child has been introduced to, then the tutor may simply need to remind the child they know that word. If the word is larger, encourage the child to break it up into chunks by using the finger and covering part of the word. If the word can be sounded out, tell the child to sound each part out then blend it into the word. Also, if the context of the sentence or the picture will help the child to solve the word, encourage them to think about what makes sense within the sentence. Ask the child if the word matches the sounds they see on the page. Lower level books are also picture heavy, so remind the child to look at the picture for clues as well. If the child is struggling with more than five words within the first page or two, perhaps this book is too difficult and move down a level.

Book Discussion

Discuss the book. Ask questions about predictions, characters, the problem and solution, the main idea with accompanying details, beginning, middle, and end of the book. If a child struggles to answer comprehension questions about the book, help the child look back into the book to find the answer to the question asked. It is important to model this strategy for the child to understand that going back into the book to look for an answer is a wonderful reading comprehension strategy. Additionally, use the Comprehension Questions for Beginning Readers as a guide to asking questions for extra support.

Comprehension Extension

Extend understanding of the book by making a drawing and writing a sentence or two about the book. This can be dictated by the child to the tutor, and the child can then copy down the sentence. Alternatively, have the child use inventive spelling to write his or her sentence by guiding them through each word. Encourage the child to use the Dolch or Fry sight words lists to spell sight words correctly.

Source: Fountas, I.C., & Pinnell, G.S. (2012). Guided reading: The romance and the reality. The Reading Teacher, 66(4). International Reading Association.

Comprehension Questions for Beginning Readers

Here are some guiding questions a tutor may ask a child while reading a book. The questions are general, but they may be tailored to fit each book. It is important to ask questions about the book before, during, and after reading. Because the children reading are struggling readers, the questions are mostly literal and basic.

What predictions can I make about the story?

What does the title tell about the story?

Were my predictions correct?

Where does this story take place? When?

Who is the main character in the story? Tell me about him or her.

How do you think the main character feels at the beginning of the story? At the end?

Who are the other characters in the story? What are their roles?

Is there a problem in the story? What is it? How is it solved?

Is there a picture in your head about what you are reading?

Can you make a connection to the story?

Does it remind you of anything in your life?

Does it remind you of any other books you have read?

Does it remind you of anything you have seen on T.V.?

Do you know any people like the characters in the story?

Tell me what the story is about. Start in the beginning, then the middle, then the end.

What is the main idea of the story?

What are 2-3 details that support the main idea in the story?

Are there any events in the story that could not happen in real life?

What is the story about?

Is there a lesson to be learned in the story? If so, what is the lesson?

Did you like this story? Give reasons why or why not.

If this is a non-fiction text, give two facts from the book.

Ask follow-up questions such as "How do you know" or "Why do you think that?"

This gets students used to providing evidence for their answers.

Is this a true story? Why or why not?

Why did the author write this book?

Do I need to go back and reread to clarify my understanding?

Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?

Tutor Checklist (to be handed in at the end of each tutoring session)

The purpose of the tutor checklist is to maintain ongoing communication with the supervising classroom teacher.

Volunteer: _____	Student: _____ Timeframe: _____ Date: _____
Check activities completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sight words ○ Fluency phrases ○ Reading leveled books, level _____ ○ Comprehension questions 	Questions for the teacher: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Sight words reviewed: Sight words introduced:	Materials request: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____