



The Meadows Center
FOR PREVENTING EDUCATIONAL RISK
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

10 KEYS

10 Key Policies and Practices for Reading Intervention

—with strong evidence of effectiveness from high-quality research—

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Reading difficulties affect students' academic success through the K–12 years and beyond, making a preventive approach essential. Reading intervention in the early grades is the strongest preventive action schools can take. For many students who experience early difficulties with reading, intervention puts them on track to succeed later. However, it is important to maintain intervention options throughout the K–12 grades because many students continue to struggle with reading beyond the elementary grades. Intervention programs that provide specialized reading instruction outside the classroom are prevalent, but these programs are not feasible in many schools due to a lack of resources, personnel, or space, so interventions take place within the classroom. Both approaches can yield positive results.

For examples of these strategies in action, turn to page 5.

1 Protect scheduled small-group time.

School assemblies, assessment schedules, special projects, and other activities should never take away from intervention time. To deliver high-quality reading intervention, it must be a high priority, with teachers and students ready to engage in small-group intensive instruction for uninterrupted periods. This takes planning. Classroom routines and schedules are essential to ensuring consistency and quality of intervention. Cancellation of reading intervention should be a rare occurrence.

Build school schedules to minimize interruption of intervention times for both pullout and in-classroom models. Students with reading difficulties should receive a minimum of 30 minutes of high-quality intervention 3 to 5 days per week.



2 Use universal screening to identify students experiencing reading difficulties.

Catching reading difficulties early is an important step in preventing serious and pervasive academic difficulties. Universal screening means assessing **all** students in the early grades to ensure that no student with reading difficulties goes unnoticed. Valid and reliable screening measures provide valuable information about who needs intervention and in what skill areas. Appropriate screening measures should assess critical skills for a given grade level. Most screening tools have norms or guidelines established by research to aid in interpreting results and accurately identifying students at risk for reading difficulties.

3 Use informal diagnostic assessment to identify gaps in students' reading skills.

The purpose of intervention is to fill the gaps in students' reading skills. Informal assessments include simple skill-based measures and a process of error analysis while a student reads aloud. Lengthy formal assessments are not necessary; the point is to find students' specific skill gaps and plan instruction to address them.

4 Group and regroup students for intervention based on similar assessed needs.

Effective teachers group students for intervention based on similar reading levels and skill needs to maximize the ability to focus instruction on targeted student needs. For within-classroom intervention, it may be difficult for teachers to schedule more than one or two small groups. In this case, it is still possible to do some individualized instruction within a small group. For example, in a group of six students, the teacher may engage four students in partner reading for a few minutes while teaching sight words to two students who really need it. For pullout programs, grouping by similar instructional needs is easier, but there may be scheduling barriers that result in some mixed-ability groups.

5 Frequently monitor progress to track individual students and set reading goals.

Progress-monitoring assessments conducted at regular intervals, often weekly, provide essential information about catch-up growth. Simple progress-monitoring charts or graphs tell teachers, students, and parents whether students are making sufficient progress toward goals. When students are making progress, intervention should move on to new skills. When students are not making growth, intervention instruction may need to be intensified in some way to get students back on track. Most experts recommend weekly progress checks as a rudder to steer the intervention.

6 Provide explicit instruction with modeling and ample opportunities to apply skills.

Equipped with knowledge of student needs and grade-level expectations, intervention teachers plan lessons that target specific skills in reading and provide ample opportunities for students to practice applying those skills. The quality of instruction matters in intervention; instruction should be specific, explicit, systematic, and deep. Specificity of instruction is a defining feature of high-quality intervention. Teachers need to model and explain concepts and tasks in ways that make them concrete and visible. It is important to use clear language when defining the concept or task, explaining the steps or key features, and demonstrating how to perform it. Teachers should provide examples to connect what students already know to current learning. Instruction should move systematically from simple to complex, and students should have ample opportunities to perform the task, rather than passively listening.

7 Provide systematic instruction with scaffolding.

Systematic instruction involves guiding students from one step to the next through an organized and sequential set of tasks and goals. Clearly communicating the goal or expectation for learning focuses student attention on the learning process. We often think of systematic instruction as moving from the known to the new, as students build on existing skills and knowledge to achieve the goal. Scaffolding student learn-

ing involves providing assistance as students perform a task, but only when they are unable to successfully complete it on their own. Effective prompts and supports allow students to internalize new learning and become independent with executing a skill. Teachers diminish the use of prompts and modeling as students acquire the skill and become independent.

8 Provide high-quality feedback while students practice new skills.

After introducing a new skill or concept, effective intervention teachers guide students through participation and practice opportunities. This allows students to integrate new learning into their existing skill set. Initially, students should engage in “guided practice,” performing the task while the teacher talks them through it. In subsequent intervention sessions, students should practice the skills with less and less prompting, eventually reaching independence.

Much of learning occurs through timely, specific feedback that leads to a change in understanding. Effective feedback may be immediate, especially for discrete tasks such as spelling or sounding out a word, to avoid any misunderstanding. Feedback may also occur after a short delay for more complex tasks, such as writing a paragraph, to allow students to think through the process. Timely feedback has three purposes:

- To prevent inaccurate practice
- To increase the rate of student mastery
- To ensure successful, efficient learning

9 Equip teachers with the knowledge and resources to provide high-quality intervention.

Teacher knowledge about reading intervention consistently predicts positive student outcomes in research studies. Educational leaders must ensure that teachers receive high-quality professional development and ongoing support to deliver effective intervention. Research indicates that teachers must experience deep learning about the reading process and effective practices for teaching struggling learners. Effective professional development has three important aspects:

- High-quality content to build teacher knowledge
- Ongoing, contextualized support for implementation
- Collaborative planning and reflection to refine practices

10 Ensure that intervention is supported by high-quality curriculum materials that use evidence-based practices.

Teachers who provide reading intervention need access to high-quality instructional materials. However, it is also important to equip teachers with an array of tools to target the specific skills that students need.



The Key Strategies in Action

1 Protect scheduled small-group time.

Scheduling Option A: Cross-Grouping With Collaborating Teachers

Teachers within grade-level teams coordinate their intervention blocks and have students move between their classrooms to join groups based on identified needs. One or more of the teachers directs large-group activities and workstations for nonintervention students, perhaps aided by support personnel or volunteers. Every few weeks, the teachers examine individual students' progress and regroup.

Cross-Grouping Example

Four second-grade classrooms have a common 45-minute period called "mixing time" immediately following recess. Ms. Maxie and Ms. Roberts go to one classroom with 18 students for reading intervention. The other teachers implement writing, reading, and extension activities with other students. In the intervention setting, Ms. Maxie and Ms. Roberts have formed three groups based on students' reading levels and skill needs. The groups rotate through all of the stations in 15-minute "reading blocks." As several English language learners are in this group, the teachers build in opportunities to develop language and vocabulary during reading intervention activities.

Word-study station: Ms. Maxie provides intensive and explicit word study and spelling instruction tailored to each of the three groups. Guided by phonemic awareness and decoding assessment data, she addresses each group's common word-level skill needs and provides instruction that targets their skill gaps. She makes sure that students have ample practice applying word decoding skills.

Text-reading station: Ms. Roberts conducts a small-group read-aloud with teacher feedback that is designed to build fluency and comprehension. She also conducts timed readings and charts students' fluency progress. She is aware of the word-level skills students are working on and reinforces the decoding skills that Ms. Maxie teaches. She also emphasizes vocabulary development for English language learners.

Partner reading station: Students operate independently with an established partner reading routine that is taught by all teachers early in the school year. Students take turns reading to a partner and follow explicit routines for giving peer praise and feedback. All four teachers use the same partner reading routine in their classrooms outside of intervention time, providing an additional opportunity for these students to read with peer feedback. The level of reading materials is controlled so that it is within reach for these struggling readers. The partner reading activities are designed to provide extended practice with word and text reading.

During intervention in the classroom, how do I keep the class meaningfully engaged while I focus on a small group?

- Set clear behavioral and academic expectations for uninterrupted intervention time.
- Provide agendas with a list of tasks that students can check off as they go.
- Provide options when students need help:
 - Ask a peer.
 - Switch to another task.
 - Look at teacher samples posted in the room.
- Post visual aids that explain how to complete an assigned task or activity.
- Establish rewards for accomplishing learning goals and meeting behavioral expectations.
- Spend a few minutes preteaching what students are supposed to do in each station or independent task.

Scheduling Option B: Staggered Intervention to Maximize Support Personnel

Staggering teachers' classroom intervention times allows schools to strategically schedule aides or volunteers. During scheduled intervention time in each classroom, an aide or volunteer is responsible for supervising classroom activities, freeing the teacher—the person with the most expertise in reading instruction—to provide intensive and uninterrupted intervention. For example, in a 30-minute block, an aide could move between students, giving feedback and encouragement to keep them engaged in their independent activities. Teachers must ensure that support personnel clearly understand their responsibilities so the teacher can focus on intervention.

Staggered Intervention Example

This school has three third-grade classrooms. Ms. Hartwell, an instructional aide, provides assistance for 30 minutes daily in each classroom during scheduled intervention blocks. The classroom teachers are responsible for planning the classroom activities in accordance with the school's adopted reading program.

9:30–10:00 a.m., Ms. Rodriguez's Classroom

This classroom has an organized system of independent seatwork and free reading during intervention time. Ms. Rodriguez posts an agenda of “must-do” tasks on the board. Students copy the agenda into their own notebooks and check off each task as they complete it. Here is a sample must-do agenda:

1. Read *Turtle Tales* (a decodable book from the reading curriculum) twice.
2. Write a paragraph about how to care for a turtle.
3. Write as many words as you can that have the suffix *-ment*.

Ms. Hartwell moves around the room, keeping order and providing support as needed. If time allows, she listens to individuals read aloud. She rewards students for being on task. When students complete their agenda, they read from their free-reading book in their desks, do a word puzzle, or write a story.

10:00–10:30 a.m., Mr. Hardy's Classroom

While Mr. Hardy teaches an intervention group, Ms. Hartwell sits at a table in the back and listens to rotating groups read aloud for 10 minutes each. Typically, the students are rereading a passage already covered in the day's English language arts lesson. Ms. Hartwell provides feedback on oral reading and asks comprehension questions. When students are not in a reading group, they work independently on tasks assigned by Mr. Hardy. Ms. Hartwell gives students classroom points for good behavior and work completion and is designated as the adult to intervene if an issue arises.

10:30–11:00 a.m., Ms. Beard's Classroom

Ms. Beard works with an intervention group while the remaining students rotate between three stations in small groups for 10 minutes each. Ms. Hartwell sets a timer, supervises the stations, and provides help as needed. Ms. Beard changes the activities every few days to enhance student interest and engagement.

Word play station: In this activity, students are given word parts and put them together to make words. They get 5 points for every real word they create and bonus points for writing sentences with the words. Ms. Hartwell checks for accuracy.

Word sort station: Students work together to sort a set of word cards. Usually, Ms. Beard assigns them a “closed sort,” where she lists the criteria for sorting. For example, if they are learning prefixes and suffixes, she will direct them to sort by affixes. After sorting, students read their word lists together. Occasionally, Ms. Beard assigns an “open sort,” allowing students to come up with their own criteria for sorting. For

example, with a given set of words, students might sort by vowel sounds, plural versus singular, beginning sounds, or related word meanings.

Faster phrases station: In this fluency-building activity, each student reads a list of common English phrases as quickly as possible and then passes the list around the circle until each student has read each list.

Scheduling Option C: Pullout Intervention Program

When intervention is provided by an intervention teacher, classroom teachers and interventionists work together to coordinate the schedule so that students do not miss essential parts of classroom reading instruction. At the same time, intervention teachers need to schedule pullout groups with similar instructional needs so that instruction focuses on needed skills. This takes careful planning. It is helpful to establish meeting times or electronic communication channels to share information and track students' progress.



Pullout Intervention Example

Ms. Kim, a reading specialist, provides Tier 3 intensive intervention for students who experience the most severe reading difficulties. She has built in three time slots for additional individual instruction and assessment. Ms. Kim works closely with each teacher to coordinate with classroom schedules. In most cases, students go to intervention at times when the class is engaged in independent work or station rotations.

2 Use universal screening to identify students experiencing reading difficulties.

Universal Screening Example

Using fall universal screening assessments, the second-grade teachers at Greenwood Elementary School have identified several students who meet reading intervention criteria. Four students are in Ms. Martin's class. She used an informal decoding survey to pinpoint specific skill areas of need. The four students are having similar difficulty with long-vowel spelling patterns and vowel diphthongs. Additional timed readings with leveled passages showed that reading fluency is an area of need. This information will help Ms. Martin plan intervention sessions to boost these skill areas.

More information about universal screening reading assessments:

- National Center on Intensive Intervention: <https://intensiveintervention.org>
- Building Capacity for Response to Intervention Implementation: <https://buildingrti.utexas.org>
- RTI Action Network: www.rtinetwork.org/essential/assessment/screening
- Center on Response to Intervention: <https://rti4success.org/essential-components-rti/universal-screening>

Leaders often fall prey to clever marketing that promises extraordinary results with trendy programs that do not have demonstrated efficacy. Instead, educators must ensure that reading intervention is grounded in evidence-based practices.

Skills to Assess	Examples of Assessment
Phonemic awareness	Oral segmenting and blending of phonemes
Decoding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal phonics survey, including pseudo-words (to ensure student is not reading from memory) across the range of vowel spelling patterns • Error analysis of passage reading
Word study or advanced decoding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word lists of multisyllabic words that contain prefixes and suffixes • Error analysis of passage reading
Sight word reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of common sight words • Error analysis of passage reading
Spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling inventory from simple to complex words • Sentence dictation • Analysis of writing sample
Reading fluency	Timed oral reading of leveled passages, checking for accuracy and rate (words correct per minute)

Valuable resources for diagnostic assessment tools:

- Reading Rockets: www.readingrockets.org
- The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk: www.meadowscenter.org/library
- Center on Teaching and Learning: <https://dibels.uoregon.edu/assessment/index>
- National Center on Intensive Intervention: <https://intensiveintervention.org/intensive-intervention/diagnostic-data>

Error Analysis

Listening to students read aloud is the only way for teachers to observe and analyze students' use of reading skills. Instructionally, small-group intervention sessions provide time for teachers to give corrective feedback and encouragement on reading, but savvy teachers also use this time diagnostically to observe and record patterns of errors.

Error Analysis Example

Ms. Park listened to Isabella, a third-grader, read a grade-level passage. Isabella's accuracy is only 89%, or 82 correct out of 92 words. Ms. Park determined that Isabella's comprehension is compromised by inaccurate reading. Furthermore, most of the words she missed carry significant meaning in this science passage.

Ms. Park recorded Isabella's reading errors in a simple error analysis chart to look for patterns of errors. This will help Ms. Park understand where the reading process is breaking down for Isabella.

Error Analysis Chart

Word / Error	Error Type			
	Beginning Sound	Ending Sound	Vowel Pattern	Multisyllabic
storm / <i>st-urm</i>			×	
hurricanes / <i>no attempt</i>				×
oceans / <i>ocean</i>		×		
scientists / <i>sk-int</i>	×		×	×
patterns / <i>pat-ten</i>		×		×
stronger / <i>strong</i>		×		×
harm / <i>h-ame</i>			×	
measure / <i>no attempt</i>				×
warn / <i>wern</i>			×	
dangerous / <i>no attempt</i>				×

Accuracy Guidelines

Frustration Level	Instructional Level	Independent Level
93% accuracy and below	94%–96% accuracy	97%–100% accuracy
Fair or poor comprehension	Good or satisfactory comprehension	Good or excellent comprehension



4 Group and regroup students for intervention based on similar assessed needs.

Grouping Example: Decoding Assessment (scores in percentages)

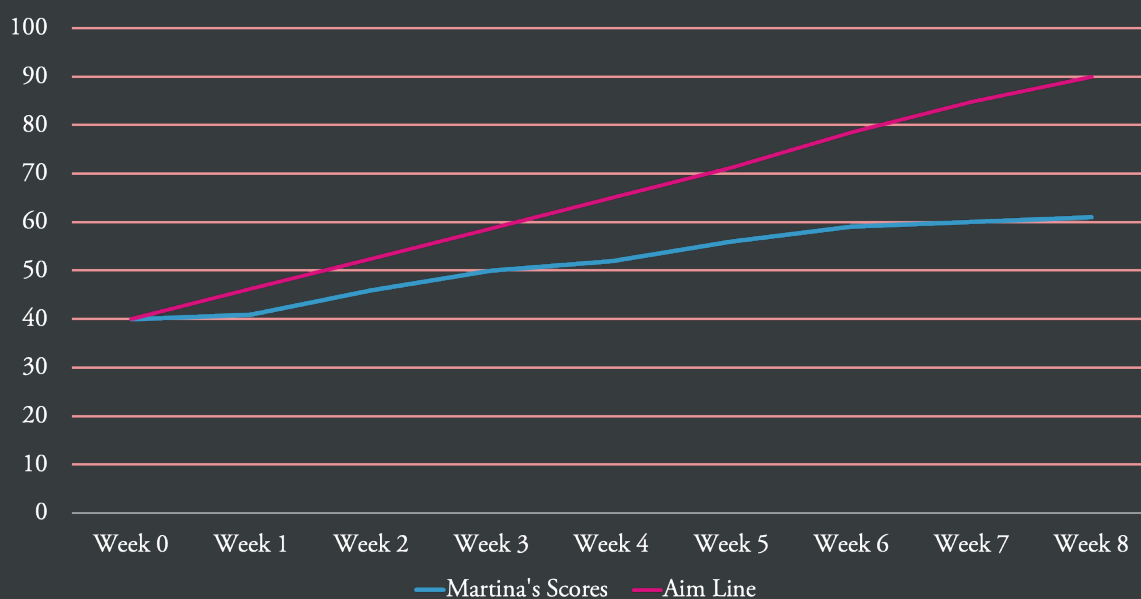
	Decoding Skills	Greg	Maria	Tomas	Andrew	Brandi	Christian
	CVC	100	100	100	100	80	100
	Digraphs	90	80	100	100	80	80
	Consonant blends	95	85	100	100	80	95
	Long vowels	70	70	90	80	60	80
Targeted Needs	Diphthongs	30	10	40	60	20	70
	R-controlled	40	30	60	70	20	90
	Multisyllabic	50	20	50	40	0	60

In this chart, we can see three common areas of skills needed—vowel diphthongs, *r*-controlled vowel patterns, and multisyllabic words. However, looking across students, we can also see that Christian does not fit the same profile as the other students, even though his overall reading level is the same. If possible, the teacher may place Christian in a different group.

5 Frequently monitor progress to track individual students and set reading goals.

The Building Response to Intervention Capacity website offers a guide for creating progress-monitoring line graphs, such as the one used in the following example: <https://buildingrti.utexas.org/instructional-materials/progress-monitoring-line-graph>

Progress-Monitoring Example: Fluency Line Graph



This graph shows Martina's weekly fluency progress, measured as words correct per minute (WCPM). Her scores are increasing weekly, but the real measure of progress comes from examining the gap between a reasonable goal and her actual performance. The red line indicates what would be considered reasonable progress toward a goal, or "aim." In this case, reaching 90 WCPM in 8 weeks is a reasonable goal for second-grade reading. Comparing Martina's weekly scores with the aim line shows that the gap is increasing. Though Martina's scores are increasing, she is not keeping up with the expected growth, indicating a need to make a change in the intervention plan.

For some reading goals, such as advanced decoding skills, no progress-monitoring tools are readily available. In this case, teachers can use teacher-made progress-monitoring tools, or curriculum-based assessment. Intervention teachers may create simple tools to measure progress in specific skills not included in other assessment tools. For example, Max, a fourth-grader, has a goal of increasing his ability to read multisyllabic words. His teacher created lists with 10 words that include the prefixes and suffixes he has been learning. Each week, Max reads a list and records how many words out of 10 he was able to read. After 6 weeks of instruction, Max can consistently read all 10 words. The teacher can now set a new goal for Max.



6 Provide explicit instruction with modeling and ample opportunities to apply skills.

How to Plan and Provide Explicit Instruction

- **Define the skill:** What would students say or do if they were to demonstrate this particular skill? Build an explanation and model how you define the skill.
- **Design the activity:** Create a learning task or activity that targets the skill. The task should include multiple opportunities for the student to actively practice the skill.
- **Model the skill:** "I do it."
 - Introduce the skill by telling students what they will learn and why it is important.
 - Capture student attention and demonstrate the skill, explaining exactly what you are doing.
- **Provide guided practice:** "We do it together."
 - Tell students to perform the task along with you. Use "teacher talk" to guide the students through the process as needed.
 - As students engage in the task, carefully observe and provide support and feedback as needed.
 - Repeat until students appear comfortable with the task.
- **Provide independent practice opportunities:** "You do it on your own."
 - Provide ample opportunities for independent practice or pair students for peer support.
 - While observing student performance, give praise and corrective feedback.
- **Engage students in self-monitoring and reflection.**
 - Ask students reflective questions to guide self-reflection and self-monitoring.
 - In discussion, tie current skill with past and future learning.

Explicit Instruction Example

- **Define the skill:** Reading words with common prefixes (*re-*, *un-*, *dis-*)
- **Activity:** Using prefixes and base words written on index cards, construct words, identify meaning, and use the words in a meaningful context.
- **Model the skill:** Say: “I have three prefixes, *re-*, *un-*, and *dis-*. We have learned these before. *Re-* means ‘again.’ *Remake* means ‘to make again.’ *Un-* means ‘not.’ *Unkind* means ‘not kind.’ *Dis-* also means ‘not.’ *Disagree* means ‘to not agree.’ Watch me make a word by putting a prefix with a base word. (Place *re-* with *heat*.) *Re-* plus *heat* makes *reheat*.”
- **Provide guided practice:** Ask students to pick up their copy of the prefix *re-* and select a base word that would work with this prefix. As students work on the task together, offer scaffolding and support as needed. Repeat with different prefixes until students seem comfortable.
- **Provide independent practice opportunities:** Ask students to work alone or with a partner to make as many words as they can. Instruct students to think about whether they have heard the word because not all prefixes work with all base words. Students should write the words they construct on paper or a mini-whiteboard.
- **Engage students in self-monitoring and reflection:** Ask: “How did you do? Was making a word with prefixes difficult or easy? Why? How do you think this will help you to be a better reader?”

7

Provide systematic instruction with scaffolding.

Scaffolding Example

In the prefix activity previously described, Ms. Marks, an intervention teacher, noticed that Andrew was having difficulty, especially with the prefix *dis-*. To scaffold his learning, she pulled aside the *dis-* prefix card and three base words, two that would make real words and one that would not.

Ms. Marks: Andrew, this prefix is *dis-*. Now you say it.

Andrew: *Dis-*.

Ms. Marks: That’s right. Now, two of these base words will work and one will not. Can you put *dis-* with these words and figure out which one is not a real word? Let me hear you say them.

Andrew: *Dis...agree*. I think that is a word. *Disagree*.

Ms. Marks: You’re right, Andrew! *Disagree* means “to not agree with something or someone.” Now, try another one.

Andrew: *Dis...heat*. *Disheat*. I don’t think that is a word. Right?

Ms. Marks: Right again, Andrew. Now, try the third one.

Andrew: *Dis...appear*. *Disappear*. I know that is a word because my sock disappeared this morning.

In this example, the scaffolding Ms. Marks provided was just enough to set Andrew up for success. She simplified the task for Andrew by telling him that two base words work and one does not. She also focused on only one prefix, walking him through the task step by step.



8 Provide high-quality feedback while students practice new skills.

- When a student performs a learning task, provide specific praise using carefully chosen language that indicates what the student did correctly. Rather than using general wording such as “good job,” highlight what the student did correctly: “Yes, you made a good word with that prefix and base word. *Remake* means ‘to make something again’.”
- When a student makes an error, provide feedback on the exact part of the process that was incorrect and then ask the student to repeat the task correctly: “You put the prefix *re-* with the base word *like*, but *relike* is not a word. It doesn’t make sense to like something again. Let’s try another prefix with *like*.”
- Corrective feedback can take multiple forms. In each case, it is important to ask the student to perform the task again after the corrective feedback.
 - Tell the student that there is an error and ask the student to try again.
 - Point out the incorrect part and ask the student to try again.
 - Demonstrate the correct procedure and then ask the student to repeat the task.

9 Equip teachers with the knowledge and resources to provide high-quality intervention.

Professional Development Example

Mr. Rodriguez is 1 of 25 teachers who participated in districtwide professional development for reading intervention teachers. In 3 initial days of training, he acquired knowledge from current research on the reading process and how it breaks down for struggling readers. He also learned about effective intervention practices and received high-quality and practical resources.

Over the course of the school year, a reading expert went from school to school to provide on-site coaching, offering demonstration lessons, planning sessions, and feedback. The district provided opportunities for collaboration across schools through an online set of resources, including a discussion forum for sharing ideas and concerns. Midyear, the district held a half-day “booster” session for teachers to follow up and solidify their learning.

10 Ensure that intervention is supported by high-quality curriculum materials that use evidence-based practices.

Selecting High-Quality Materials

Ask the following questions when selecting high-quality curriculum materials.

- Are the practices in this curriculum evidence-based?
- Do the instructional routines foster explicit instruction?
- Is there a logical scope and sequence of skills development that systematically builds reading skills?
- Does the curriculum include opportunities to practice word-level skills in passage reading?
- Are there frequent opportunities to review prior learning?
- Do the materials align with the needs of your students?

The following are important resources to assist educators in selecting high-quality materials.

- The What Works Clearinghouse, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, reviews products, programs, practices, and policies using rigorous standards to examine the evidence base for effectiveness: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>
- The National Center on Intensive Intervention provides tools to rate the quality of programs and assessments as well as professional learning modules and guidelines for implementation: <https://intensiveintervention.org>
- Evidence for ESSA provides information on successful reading programs: www.evidenceforessa.org/programs/reading

Intervention Curricula in Secondary Settings

Reading intervention is possible in middle school and high school settings with careful planning and preparation of teachers. The basic principles are the same: Provide consistent, high-quality, explicit instruction that is guided by assessment data and focused on students' skill gaps. However, there are additional factors to consider in secondary settings. Educators must work around the complexities of bell schedules and class requirements to ensure that students have access to high-quality intervention.

Let's take a look at how one middle school built a successful reading intervention program.

Intervention Curriculum Example

The teachers and leaders at Lincoln Middle School established reading improvement as a schoolwide focus. To accomplish this, they identified a set of evidence-based reading strategies to build into their daily instruction. However, they recognized the importance of reading intervention for many students who were lagging in reading performance. They formed a Reading Council to develop and monitor a reading intervention program with funding from the district. The program, called Reading in Action, is a semester-long intervention elective class built into the schedule across grades.

The program has five steps:

- **Identify students in need of extra support.** Identification is a two-step process. Students who scored below proficiency in reading on the most recent state testing are given a simple screening assessment during a designated class period to gather additional data on reading performance. The Reading Council reviews the assessment results and consults with the students' teachers and parents to create a final list of students eligible for intervention.
- **Schedule students into Reading in Action classes.** School administrators work with the identified students' parents to place students into a Reading in Action class for a semester. To the extent possible, students are grouped by reading level to enhance the teachers' ability to specifically target student needs. The school hires two teachers with expertise in reading intervention to staff the classes for grades 6–8.
- **Assess students' reading skills to identify skill needs.** During the first week of instruction, the intervention teachers assess students' word-level reading skills, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension using informal diagnostic tools. This information assists the intervention teacher in planning instruction that targets students' specific skill gaps. Most students in secondary reading intervention need word-level instruction as well as vocabulary and comprehension support.

- **Provide explicit, targeted instruction in small groups.** Intervention teachers follow the principles of high-quality explicit instruction described in this guide. Using reading materials known to be effective, teachers plan word-level activities to teach essential skills and then engage students in applying vocabulary and comprehension strategies in text. Below is an example of the lesson plan for one period of intervention.

Warm-Up With Words Review of prefixes and suffixes	5 minutes
Word-Building Time Teacher introduces two new prefixes and suffixes using explicit modeling and guided practice. Students work with a partner to build words using a list of prefixes, suffixes, and base words.	10 minutes
Fluency Practice Partner reading in timed 1-minute segments	5 minutes
Dig Into the Text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preview of essential words • Teacher-guided reading, focusing on main idea strategies for each paragraph • Partner reading and comprehension check 	30 minutes

- **Monitor progress and make next-step decisions.** Teachers use grade-level passages for 1-minute timed readings, using fluency norms to evaluate progress. Teachers also use leveled passages with comprehension questions and chart the percentage of correct responses on a weekly basis. As the semester comes to a close, teachers decide whether each student exits intervention, continues intervention, or is referred to other types of support.

Reading Intervention and Remote Learning

Online activities often include independent reading tasks that pose challenges for students with reading difficulties. If these students do not receive reading intervention, they will likely fall further behind. Here are few tips to keep in mind.

1. Provide small-group or individual reading intervention consistently, just as you would in the classroom, targeting students' skill gaps.
2. Online reading programs are not enough for students with reading difficulties. Students need to read aloud with teacher praise and specific feedback, just as you would in the classroom.
3. Ensure that any online reading intervention tools have evidence of effectiveness, not just ease of use.
4. Provide explicit instruction in how to navigate and use any online reading intervention tools.
5. Conduct progress monitoring to gauge student progress, just as you would in the classroom.





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For a list of research evidence supporting the recommendations in this document, visit
www.meadowscenter.org/library/resource/10-key-policies-and-practices-for-reading-interventions

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