To put it bluntly, the traditional approach to teaching struggling readers by focusing on remediation and teaching isolated skills does not work. The U.S. Department of Education Reading First Impact Study (2009) reported that after eight years of implementing No Child Left Behind reading instruction based on the Report of the National Reading Panel Reading Panel’s (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) evidenced-based recommendations for what has been called the “Five Pillars” (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), there were “No measurable gains in comprehension.” Students became better decoders and learned more sight words but they did not demonstrate increased understanding of what they read. In contrast, the U.S. Department of Education What Works Clearinghouse (2012) gave its highest Reading Improvement Index rating to Reading Recovery, which uses an accelerated, integrated, authentic approach that aligns with ongoing assessment. This recognition is not surprising because it is a one-to-one intensive 12-20 week program with daily 30 minute instruction that includes reading familiar books, reading yesterday’s new book and taking a running record, working with letters and/or words using magnetic letters, writing a story, assembling a cut-up story, and reading a new book. (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2012). But, it is also due to the accelerated instruction that focuses on multiple learning experiences using an integrated approach with authentic reading, writing, and word study. This approach has been strongly supported by brain research
(Lyons, 2003) that showed increased neural activity when an accelerated, integrated, authentic approach was used in contrast to a remedial approach that showed decreased neural activity. This chapter focuses on creating a paradigm shift that builds on the philosophy of authentic, accelerated, enriched, integrated instruction. (See Figure One).

**Figure One: New Paradigm for Teaching Struggling Readers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discredited Paradigm</th>
<th>New Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills/Drill Instruction</td>
<td>Authentic Reading and Writing Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remediation/Deficit Instruction</td>
<td>Accelerated/Enriched Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated Instruction</td>
<td>Integrated Instruction/Active Inquiry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instead of implementing the discredited skills/drill, remediation/deficit, isolated instruction model we use an authentic reading and writing, accelerated/enriched, integrated instruction model that includes active inquiry. This new paradigm has resulted in significant increases raising in reading achievement for struggling readers enrolled in our campus-based reading clinic that serves students in grades 1-8 and uses a variety of flexible groupings. We call our program a "Summer Literacy Camp" because we fill each day with a plethora of enriching, rewarding, fun learning activities that reach and teach all our students. Most importantly, I will focus on how this new paradigm can be implemented in classrooms and reading intervention programs in schools.

**Successful Reading and the Reader’s Toolbox**
The shift begins with a conceptualization of reading that rejects the NCLB “Five Pillars” isolated instructional approach and replaces it with a Reader’s Toolbox conceptualization of reading that focuses on comprehension as the overarching goal for every reading lesson with the teaching of all essential skills and strategies to accomplish this goal using a comprehensive balanced-literacy approach (See Figure Two).

**Figure Two: Successful Reading and the Reader’s Tool Box**

The overarching goal of reading is thoughtfully comprehending what was read and being able to construct the meaning(s) that identify the BIG IDEA(s) or messages that teach life lessons. To accomplish this goal, the reader needs to integrate many tools in the reader’s toolbox that must work together. These tools that go into the Reader’s Toolbox include motivation and engagement; background knowledge; vocabulary; automatic sight word recognition; fluency; phonemic awareness; phonics; print problem-solving strategies using the cueing systems (Does it make sense? Does it look right? Does it sound right?); comprehension strategies (including self-monitoring for understanding and stop-and-think opportunities to focus on thoughtful comprehension); reading/writing connections, new literacies skills; and metacognition to reflect on learning.
Just as a house builder has a tool box with hammers, screw drivers, pliers, wrenches, and more, the key is knowing how to effectively use all those tools to build a house. The tools are useless if they cannot be used to achieve the overarching goal of building a house.

So it is with a reader! The key is knowing how to effectively use all the tools in the reader’s toolbox to understand what is being read. The tools are useless if they cannot be used to achieve the overarching goal of thoughtfully comprehending what was read and identifying BIG ideas.
**Cycle of Failure; Cycle of Success**

The paradigm shift also recognizes that struggling readers experience a Cycle of Failure (Shaw, 2008) which takes place over time and can eventually lead to dropping out of school and criminal behavior. According to Dosomething.org (2012), every year more than 1.2 million students drop out of high school in the United States, a figure that equates to 7,000 students per day. In addition, more than 75% of all crimes are committed by high school dropouts. It is not simply that struggling readers find reading and writing hard; it is that the day-in and day-out frustrations transform children and adolescents from passionate, enthusiastic, motivated learners they once were in the early grades into frustrated, disempowered, defeated, unmotivated, often angry learners who believe that they are fated to a world of failure. In a few short years of school, many struggling readers and writers experience the devastating *Cycle of Failure* (Shaw, 2008) (See Figure Three) that paralyzes them from being active learners who achieve reading success and transforms them into passive or resistant non-learners that will lead to a life of shut doors and closed opportunities.
The first, and most important, step in teaching struggling readers is reversing this cycle by beginning to build the *Cycle of Success* (Shaw, 2008) (See Figure Four) used by successful readers because experiencing success creates motivation and engagement (Cambourne, 1995), builds empowerment, and
creates a commitment to achieve success through active learning. As motivation and engagement increase, comprehension also increases (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). This then leads to a commitment to read more which, in turn, continues to significantly increase reading achievement (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989).

**Figure Four: Cycle of Success**

History of Successful Experiences;

Reward for Effort;

Recognition of Achievement

Continued Success;

Continued Reward

For Effort;

Continued Achievement

Continued Empowerment

Empowerment;

High Self-Esteem

(Expectation to Succeed)

Willingness to Take Risks;

Commitment to Learn;

"Stick-to-it-ive-ness;”

Total Engagement;
The Research Base for the Shifting Paradigm

Many researchers, including Gaskins (1998), Primeaux (2000), and Allington (2005) have identified the need to rethink the skills/drill approach that has been traditionally used to teach readers who struggle. These researchers emphasize that it is important to provide authentic instruction that explicitly and systematically teaches skills and strategies used by successful readers. As Gaskins (1998) notes in her directorship of the Benchmark School for readers who struggle, recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a school of excellence, “Quality instruction at Benchmark means meeting students where they are with respect to affect, motivation, and cognition; explicitly teaching them strategies for taking charge of tasks, situations, and personal styles; and scaffolding the successful completion of academic tasks,” (p. 536). They use the Gradual Release of Responsibility model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) that immerses students in systematic, authentic reading experiences through daily lessons that include a continuum of teacher support and scaffolding to guide students into independence through read aloud/think alouds, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading. We have learned that instruction for readers who struggle should not be a different type of instruction than is provided for all students, but that we need to be more systematic and explicit through multiple demonstrations, and that we need to provide more intense opportunities for guided and independent practice to reinforce skills and strategies. Figure Five identifies the knowledge, skills, and strategies that successful readers know and use that we need to teach readers who struggle, and effective methods for teaching these readers.
## Figure Five: What Good Readers Know; What To Teach Struggling Readers To Be Successful, Effective Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT SUCCESFUL READERS KNOW</th>
<th>WHAT TO TEACH STRUGGLING READERS TO BE SUCCESSFUL</th>
<th>EFFECTIVE METHODS FOR TEACHING STRUGGLING READERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Reading is the process of constructing meaning from text. | To focus on constructing meaning from every text they read. | • Use story map.  
• Set purpose for reading.  
• Focus on identifying author’s message.  
• Focus on making personal connections. |
| Reading is purposeful activity to accomplish goals. | To determine purpose every time they read. | • Set purpose for reading.  
• Focus on identifying author’s message. |
| Reading is rewarding...we get a payoff from reading...it brings us joy. | To choose books that enable them to experience success and enjoyment. | • Create an independent reading program, including book clubs and literature discussions.  
• Teach students how to make wise choices for independent reading so they can comprehend and enjoy the reading experience (e.g., five-finger rule). |
| The reading experience consists of pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading thoughts and actions that enable the construction of meaning. | To understand and apply what good readers do before reading, during reading, and after reading. | • Explicitly teach before reading, during reading, and after reading strategies by thinking aloud and demonstrating  
• Have students reflect on every reading experience. |
| Reading is an active, transactional process that centers on thinking and self-monitoring for meaning. | To self-monitor for meaning while reading. | • Model self-monitoring for meaning, including rereading.  
• Explicitly teach students to integrate three curing systems to read for meaning: Does it make sense? Does it sound right? Does it look right? |
| Readers think about the BIG ideas in texts that relate to one’s own life and the world. | To think about what the author wanted to communicate that relates to one’s own life and the world. | • Focus on the author’s intended message.  
• Reread the ending of a text because this is where the author most often emphasizes the message.  
• Note for young children that animal stories are often intended to teach human lessons (e.g., fables, fairy tales, folk tales). |
| Good writers leave the reader with more questions than answers | To question the author…I wonder… | • Demonstrate generating questions…along with demonstrating potential answers. |
| Comprehension depends on fluent, expressive reading with attention to punctuation. | To read fluently and expressively with attention to punctuation. | • Model fluent reading.  
• Communicate how fluent reading enables readers to read for meaning. |
|---|---|---|
| Reading centers on the application of a repertoire of strategies that enable the construction of meaning. | A repertoire of pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading strategies that enable them to problem-solve in order to read for meaning. | • Explicitly introduce before reading, during reading, and after reading strategies.  
• Demonstrate strategy use through read aloud/think aloud lessons.  
• Explain how before reading, during reading, and after reading strategies support reading for meaning. |
| Reading is contextual...we create an environment that supports reading. | To create the environment that allows them to focus on their reading. | • Create a risk-free environment that supports all readers |
| Reading depends on prior knowledge of content and concepts. | To activate their prior knowledge before reading, and to fill in gaps in their knowledge base. | • Create before-reading strategies that activate prior knowledge and teach new essential knowledge (e.g., class discussion, quick-writes, K-W-L, semantic mapping, using Internet sites) |
| Reading depends on an extensive vocabulary and sight word knowledge. | Strategies to expand vocabulary and increase sight word knowledge. | • Introduce essential vocabulary words  
• Teach sight word identification at all levels  
• Teach strategies for figuring out new vocabulary words in context (e.g., “Blank unknown word and substitute known word that makes sense.”) |
| Reading depends on knowledge of our alphabetic system. | Phonemic awareness and decoding strategies. | • Teach phonemic awareness, phonics, and decoding skills within authentic reading contexts.  
• Create activities that enable students to apply phonemic awareness and phonics skills in activities that include authentic reading and writing activities.  
• Create socially interactive activities to support learning. |
| Reading depends on prior knowledge of text structures and organization. | To have reading experiences in a wide variety of genres that have a wide variety of text structures and organization. | • Focus on the importance of text structures and organization, including a nonfiction scavenger hunt that requires students to locate specific text elements. See Robb (2003) |
| Reading is personal, social, and cultural...We construct meaning on the basis of our life experiences. | To interact with others, and to understand and value multiple perspectives. | • Create think-pair-share experiences.  
• Create literature discussion groups  
• Create socially-interactive learning centers. |
| We read a lot !!! | To read a lot !!! | • Provide many opportunities for independent reading, including literature discussion grogs.  
• Create school/home connections to encourage independent reading. |
The keys for successfully reaching and teaching struggling readers centers on implementing the new paradigm day-in, day-out; day-in, day out; day in, day-out by focusing on learning experiences that motivate and engage students; explicitly teaching before, during, and after reading strategies; using ongoing authentic assessment to monitor progress; using a comprehensive balanced-literacy approach that emphasizes modeling and demonstrating, guided practice, and independent application using the Gradual release of responsibility model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983); teaching students to be reflective learners; and creating school/home connections.

**Keys for Reaching and Teaching Struggling Readers to Achieve Reading Success**

**Motivation and Engagement**

Researchers have documented a strong correlation between motivation, engagement, and increases in comprehension (Gambrell, 2011); Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, Allington, 2005). Pinnell & Fountas, (2009) identify the following factors that generate motivation:

- **Self-efficacy**: Confidence and belief that one can be successful
- **Successful Processing**: Smooth, fluid, accurate reading that enables the mind to focus on understanding text
- **Engaging Texts**: Texts based on interest and at a level that enables successful reading
- **Shared understanding through talk**: The learning community provides opportunities to respond to texts through writing and discussion
- **Social Motivation**: Opinions are valued and respected. (p. 473)

Similarly, Gambrell (2011) created Seven Rules of Engagement:

1. Reading tasks and activities are relevant to students’ lives
2. Students have access to a wide range of reading materials that guide students to make thoughtful choices
3. Students have ample opportunities to engage in sustained reading
4. Students have opportunity to make choices about what they read and how they engage in and complete literacy tasks
5. Students have opportunities to socially interact with others about texts they are reading
6. Students have opportunities to be successful with challenging tasks
7. Students have classroom incentives that reflect the value and importance of reading (p. 175)

In addition, Cambourne’s (1995) Conditions for Learning identify three factors that support engagement:

1. Learners view themselves as successfully doing what they are being taught to do through demonstrations and guided practice.
2. Learners believe that engaging with demonstrations will further the purposes of their lives.
3. The learning environment is nurturing and supportive, free from physical or psychological hurt. (p. 187)

The findings are not a surprise. When we are interested in something, we want to learn more about it by being guided by a knowledgeable, caring teacher who will demonstrate how to be successful; guide us to practice what we are learning; provide specific, positive feedback, and move us to be successful independent readers.

We have found the following factors create a very high level of motivation and engagement which lead to significant increases in reading achievement in our Summer Literacy Camp:

- **Achieving Success**: One of my mantras is, “Every reading lesson must lead to success.” As noted previously, this supports building a Cycle of Success. That means we need to carefully scaffold the learning process as we observe engagement in order to provide support. We might have to provide more support than we had expected, but the experience of success will empower the learner to continue wanting to learn. This means that in the next lesson the student will be increase independent application. Learning isn’t a race with one winner” All children learn at different rates and in different ways.
• **Valuing and Celebrating Every Student Every Day:** The Cycle of Success is built on human interactions between students and teachers that values the whole child and his/her life outside school as well as in the classroom, and creating a culture that creates a community of learners. Teachers are always affirming effort through talk as well as written messages to students. They also value the whole child by I coined a phrase that is the hallmark of this affirmation: “**You make my heart have a BIG smile.**”

• **Enrichment Activities:** Our approach highlights a variety of real world enrichment activities that motivate and engage students in literacy learning. Examples include reading to trained therapy dogs; having a reading pajama party; celebrating National Ice Cream Day with a party that includes read-alouds about the history of ice cream; learning about the environment with a biology professor who takes our students to a local creek to catch fish that they then bring back to the lab for observation and study that is extended with Internet research; adding musical instruments to reader’s theater to create “musical reader’s theater;” podcasting reading of original writing; having a family reading party where I model an interactive read-aloud that is followed by parents reading to their children (for older students this is done as a shared interactive reading) which we celebrate with a party; collecting money to support a school in Tanzania that teaches students about living in a poor country in Africa, develops world citizenship, and develops a commitment to help those in need (students write letters to students that we include with our donation); and arranging field trips to a local zoo and children’s museum.
• **Building on Student Interests**: All students do projects of inquiry based on personal interest. They build on what they already know, generate questions, and learn the research process using both printed texts and the Internet. Teachers embed reading and writing instruction in these projects and scaffold instruction to ensure success. At the end of the program we have a celebration where all students present a Power Point of their research to other students and families. The teachers then give each student a Certificate of Achievement to recognize their effort and achievement. See Figure Seven for examples of projects from last summer.

**Figure Seven: Examples of Projects of Inquiry:**

- Jack—Canaries
- Nikhil and Christian—Dinosaurs
- Erin—Ballet
- Jesse—Komodo Dragons
- Matthew—Legos
- Luca—Baseball Pitchers Featuring R.A. Dickey
- Jocelyne—Cockapooos
- Michael M, Ciara, and Lauren—Greek Gods and Their Link to The Lightning Thief

**Explicitly Teaching Before Reading, During Reading, and After Reading Strategies**

As noted, all reading instruction is embedded in a comprehensive balanced literacy program that centers on daily strategy instruction using the Gradual Release of Responsibility model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) that includes in-depth demonstrations, guided practice, and opportunities for independent application. Before Reading strategies teach children that you need to activate your knowledge so that you use what you know to support comprehension (and the teacher needs to build the essential knowledge base when it is lacking), get a sense of the structure and organization of the book, and set a purpose for reading.
During reading strategies are essential for reading success because students learn to monitor their understanding and reread when comprehension breaks down, and use all-important stop-and-think times to slow reading down, focus on deep meaning, and respond to text either through discussion or writing. After reading strategies focus on using accurate literal retellings (or important information in nonfiction texts) that lead to personal connections and identifying BIG IDEAS in the text (Fiction: What life lesson did the author want us to learn that goes beyond the specific story?; Nonfiction: What is the BIG IDEA that the author wanted us to think about and learn beyond all the facts? Students learn that in virtually all texts the BIG IDEA comes at the end and we explicitly teach them to read the ending **two times.** Figure Eight shows essential strategies we teach.

**Figure Eight: Essential Before Reading, During Reading, After Reading Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before Reading</th>
<th>During Reading</th>
<th>After Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Activate Prior Knowledge</td>
<td>• Visualize And use Other Sensory Images</td>
<td>• Retell, Summarize, and Synthesize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clarify Essential Vocabulary And Concepts</td>
<td>• Self-monitor For Understanding – Use Fix-Up Strategies (Rread)</td>
<td>• Identify BIG IDEAS: Author's Purpose (Life Lessons) and use References to Text for Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Preview Text (Picture Walk, Table of Contents, Blurb, Nonfiction Text Features and Organization) and Predict</td>
<td>• Stop-And-Think To Focus on Comprehension (post-it notes, graphic organizers, response book)</td>
<td>• Extend Reading Through Talk, Writing, Art, Other Readings, Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Set Purpose For Reading</td>
<td>• Make Personal Connections (Text-To-Self; Text-To-Text, Text-To-World)</td>
<td>• Reflect on Oneself as a Reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Figure Out New Vocabulary Using Context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ongoing Authentic Assessment/Teaching

Ongoing, authentic assessment is the key for monitoring progress and making instructional decisions to build on student strengths and address student needs. My assessment mantra is, "Make every assessment an opportunity to teach." Goodman (1996) pioneered this approach when she created the Miscue Retrospective Analysis where teachers code oral reading and then have students listen to audiotapes of their reading to examine their thinking based on reading as a meaning-making process. The teacher then uses this information to gain insight into the thinking processes of readers and use the findings to teach students effective methods for increasing their accuracy that will lead to more accurate comprehension. We have extended this approach by using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) (Pearson, 2012) that uses authentic leveled reading texts to assess accurate reading and, most importantly, comprehension at both the literal level and higher-level thinking level. We go beyond the scripted instructions to implement this assessment as a guided reading lesson that guides students to stop-and-think after reading sections of a text using post-it notes or oral discussion. The rationale for this decision is that we can get essential comprehension information as students work through a text rather than potentially finding out after a complete text was "read" that they did not construct meaning, and we can then intervene with teaching opportunities. The scripted approach provides assessment information, but we lose the opportunity to teach whenever we gain insight into a breakdown of the meaning-making process during the reading process. Using this new paradigm approach, we gain the same essential assessment information identified in the
teacher materials, but we are also able to immediately teach comprehension strategies when needs arise. All too often, reading assessments are used to create a data-base of information rather than immediately using assessment findings to teach. Our approach places teaching and learning at the center of assessment. We need to go beyond the scripted instructions of published assessments.

In addition, assessments often over-focus on student weaknesses to address in instruction rather than focusing on student strengths to build on. We note student strengths in their process of reading and use these strengths to increase comprehension. We honor Cambourne's (1995) Model of Conditions for Learning that recognizes that miscues are "approximations" along the road to success rather than evidence of failure. Our approach empower struggling readers to actively engage with reading to increase their comprehension and build success.

Adapting Thoughtful Literacy Instruction to Meet the Needs of Struggling Readers

Using the new paradigm to teach struggling readers to become thoughtful comprehenders of text that will increase their reading achievement centers on using what we know to teach all readers to achieve success and taking very specific steps to meet the particular needs of struggling readers. The goal is the same for all readers: Use all skills and strategies identified in the reader's toolbox to focus on thoughtful comprehension of texts that identify BIG ideas. Figure Nine shows special needs for struggling readers and specific initiatives to meet those needs to achieve success.

**Figure Nine: Similarities and Differences Between Teaching All Readers and Teaching Struggling Readers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emphasis for All Readers</th>
<th>Special Needs for Readers who Struggle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals: Success, Empowerment, Achievement, Enjoyment</td>
<td>Creating Motivation and Engagement by Cheerleading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Standards and Expectations...Achievable Challenges</td>
<td>Scaffolding to Support Reading of Complex Texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing “Managed Choices” to Choosing “Just Right” Books that Enable Reading Success</td>
<td>More Immediate Reading “Payoffs” By Affirming and Celebrating Effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building the Essential Knowledge Base When Prior Knowledge is Lacking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explicit Instruction of Strategies That Support Thoughtful Comprehension and Guided Practice</th>
<th>More Explicit Instruction, Demonstrations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Guided Practice of Strategies That Support Thoughtful Comprehension, Repeated Readings (e.g. Reader’s Theater)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Small-Group Guided Reading and Shared Reading Instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More 1:1 Reading Conferences That Link Careful Assessment (Kid Watching) with specific feedback, discussion, and reflection (“What Did You Do That Good Readers Do? What Do You Need To Practice?”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation of Difficult Texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using “Power Tracking” of Print to Support Accurate Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stop-and-Think Opportunities to Support Comprehension and Self-Monitor for Understanding</th>
<th>More Stop-and-Think Opportunities to Support Comprehension and Self-Monitor for Understanding Including, if Necessary, Sentence-by-Sentence Monitoring or Paragraph-by-Paragraph Monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embedded Word Study (Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Automatic Sight Word Knowledge)</th>
<th>More Explicit, Embedded Word Study Linked to Assessed Needs Emerging From Text Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicitly Teaching Integration of the Cuing Systems (Does it Make Sense? Does it Look Right? Does it Sound)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td>Personalized Word Lists or Word Boxes for Daily Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Explicit Demonstrations Followed by Guided Practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Opportunities for Oral Reading, Including Reader's Theater and Poetry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording Oral Reading for Collaborative Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Word lists of Synonyms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicitly Teaching Using Context to Figure Out New Words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalized Vocabulary Lists or Vocabulary Boxes for Daily Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughtful Discussions Around Texts...The Best Reading Instruction Flows on a Sea of Rich Discussion...and Thoughtful Reading/Writing Connections...Writing to Deepen Understanding</td>
<td>Extensive Opportunities for Oral Discussion and Written Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership and Independence</td>
<td>Provide Managed Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Lots of Opportunity for Independent Reading and Response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Involvement</td>
<td>Frequent Positive, Affirming Communication with Parents That Focuses on Progress and Provides Ways that Parents can Help Their Children at Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read-at-Home Programs with Incentives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Role of the Teacher**

We are the most important component for making a difference in the literacy lives of our students who struggle with reading. It is our knowledge, understanding, and performance skill that will break the
**Cycle of Failure** and build the **Cycle of Success.** The International Reading Association (2000) states in its Position Statement that, “Every child deserves excellent reading teachers because teachers make a difference in children’s reading achievement and motivation to read.” (p. 1). Similarly, Linda Darling-Hammond’s (2000) research concluded that, “the effects of well-prepared teachers on student achievement can be stronger than the influences of student background factors such as poverty, language background, and minority status.” (p. 37).

Each of us must envision ourselves as a **literacy mentor** who is teaching literacy apprentices. Consider that all your excellent teachers served as your mentors. Examine more closely the roles of a mentor. What does it mean to be a mentor?

First, a mentor must motivate and inspire apprentices. How do we do this? We must share our passion for reading. We must be a cheerleader for reading. We must celebrate students when they are reading. We must make reading the center of the learning universe.

Second, we must be a role model for successful reading. This means that we must share our reading lives with our students, including the reading strategies we use to achieve reading success.

Third, we must respect and build on the **funds of knowledge** (Moll, 1994) our students bring to the literacy learning process. All students, including students who struggle with reading, bring rich family and community experiences to school that establish a strong knowledge base for learning. We must build bridges to the family and community lives of our students so that we can create links to reading. Thus, we must use texts that relate to student lives. We must encourage students to make personal connections between texts and their own experiences. We must empower students to teach us things they know and understand that we might not have experienced.
Fourth, we must challenge our students who struggle with reading to learn and achieve more than they think they know and can do. But our challenges must be achievable challenges that always lead to successful learning experiences. Thus, we must understand how to use assessment to determine each student’s current level of knowledge, understanding, and performance skill in order to plan instruction that teaches within each student’s zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) where we provide sufficient support to successfully scaffold learning (Bruner, 1983) in order to move students from a level of dependence to a level of greater independence. These achievable challenges center on the teacher making informed, thoughtful decisions regarding text choice, instructional focus, and literacy extension responses.

Fifth, we must systematically and explicitly teach, demonstrate, and model every skill and strategy we want students to learn. We tend to think of the phrase systematic, explicit instruction as applying to phonics instruction (National Reading Panel, 2000), but students who struggle with reading need to experience systematic, explicit instruction in all areas of reading that clearly explains and demonstrates applications of all the skills and strategies used by thoughtful readers. We need to continually model our own uses of these skills and strategies so that students can develop the schema that gives them the mental model they need to be able to apply these skills and strategies in their own reading (Rumelart, 1980).

Figure Ten identifies the essential roles of a literacy mentor.

Figure Ten: What Does It Mean To Be A Literacy Mentor?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A LITERACY MENTOR?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TO_motivate_and_inspire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO_BE_A_ROLE_MODEL</td>
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<td>TO_RESPECT_AND_BUILD_ON_THE_“FUNDS_OF_KNOWLEDGE”</td>
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LEARNERS BRING TO THE LITERACY LEARNING PROCESS

TO CHALLENGE WITH ACHIEVABLE CHALLENGES

TO SYSTEMATICALLY AND EXPLICITLY TEACH, DEMONSTRATE, AND MODEL

TO GUIDE AND SUPPORT

TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR MEANINGFUL PRACTICE

TO CARE AND ENCOURAGE

TO CONTINUALLY ASSESS WHAT THE LEARNER KNOWS AND WHAT THE LEARNER NEEDS TO KNOW

TO RESPOND TO THE LEARNER’S INDIVIDUALITY BY BUILDING ON STRENGTHS IN ORDER TO OVERCOME WEAKNESSES

TO RESPOND AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK THROUGH HONEST, OPEN DIALOGUE

TO ACCEPT APPROXIMATIONS AS PART OF THE PROCESS OF LEARNING

TO MOVE LEARNERS TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

TO CELEBRATE EFFORT AND ACHIEVEMENT (“THE PAYOFF”)

Implementing This Approach Within the Classroom

Reaching and teaching struggling readers within the classroom or in reading intervention program is challenging. It requires a comprehensive, multifaceted approach using the new paradigm of authentic, accelerated, enriched, integrated instruction. As Gaskins (1998) notes, reaching and teaching readers who struggle involves a lot more than direct instruction; it involves a comprehensive approach that focuses on developing executive control of the reading process. It requires prioritizing what is most essential for these
students to learn that will make the greatest impact on their reading success. We cannot teach everything, so we must use ongoing, authentic assessment to help us create a small number of focused goals that directly impact on increasing comprehension. Teaching isolated skills is not the answer! Figure Eleven identifies the essential steps to make a difference in the literacy lives of our readers who struggle and summarizes steps all classroom teachers and reading specialists can take to increase achievement for struggling readers.

**Figure Eleven: Teaching Our Struggling Readers Requires A Comprehensive, Multifaceted Approach:**

- Focus on high-standards achievement for all students…while we adapt texts and instruction to meet the needs of struggling readers. All students must be guided to be thoughtful comprehenders of text who can use the information suggested in the text to identify big ideas and important messages, and can make personal connections to their lives, other texts, and the world, but struggling readers need more modeling and demonstrations, explicit instruction, and guided practice in “just right” books that make every reading lesson a successful experience that supports the “Cycle of Success.”

- Use authentic assessments at appropriate reading level based on running records and miscue analyses to identify student strengths and what students need to learn. Identify a few major goals that will make a significant impact on comprehension. Focus instruction on skills and strategies that will make the greatest impact.

- **Day In/Day Out: Model! Model! Model! Demonstrate! Demonstrate! Demonstrate!**

- **Find Ways to Have More 1:1 Instruction and Reading Conferences (During Guided and Independent Reading Time, Turn-and-Talk, Meeting When Other Students Are Not Present (Specials, Lunch Time, Extended Day Instruction)**

- Use differentiated instruction that provides appropriate texts, instruction, and assignments that enable *all* students to engage and achieve success.

- Communicate with support personnel to make sure that everyone is working together to focus on the same goals using authentic texts.

- Take a proactive outreach approach to parents to involve them in a partnership for the education of their children and teach them how they can help their children at home.

- Create motivation and engagement in order for students to become actively committed to improving their achievement because the texts and instruction lead to *experiencing success!*

- Create a classroom community of learners where all students feel valued, all perspectives and
voices are respected, and all students work together to learn...create reading partners where successful readers are coached to teach struggling readers

Successful readers bring a wealth of implicit knowledge and understanding to every reading experience. They know that reading centers on constructing meaning from text. They know that they are reading for a purpose. They know that they have important funds of knowledge to build on to make connections to what they read. They know that they have a repertoire of skills and strategies to use in order to achieve their reading goals. Successful readers implicitly do all of the above without thinking about it. They have internalized a metaunderstanding of all the factors that thoughtful readers have integrated to achieve reading success. Sadly, many readers who struggle have not internalized this metaunderstanding and/or have not internalized the repertoire of strategies required to get the BIG ideas from text and read for thoughtful literacy. Thus, our entire focus for reaching and teaching readers who struggle must be to focus on using this new paradigm to break their Cycle of failure and build their Cycle of Success.

REFERENCES


