



## Academic Interventions to Support Students Struggling with the Expectations of the Common Core in Elementary School

*Dr. Esther Klein Friedman*  
*Executive Director*  
*Literacy and Academic Intervention*  
*Division of Teaching and Learning*

# Workshop Objectives

**To review academic intervention requirements, delivery challenges, and suggested protocols**

**To define four areas of challenge in CCLS-aligned literacy instruction and interventions that can address them:**

- **Engagement**
- **Metacognitive behaviors related to close reading**
- **Need for frontloading of vocabulary and prior knowledge**
- **The readability gap**

# Academic Intervention Services (AIS) vs. Response to Intervention (RTI)

AIS (regs date back to 1999)	Rtl (regs date back to July 2012)
All students in any tested areas are entitled if they are under grade level	Intervention is provided in increasingly intense formats if there is insufficient response
Historically provided on long-term basis	Urgency
Purpose is to provide academic recover	Purpose is to ensure that if students are referred to special education, it is due to disability, not instructional failure
Parents notified at start and exit (no permission required)	Parents notified at start (no permission required)
Universal screening, diagnostic assessment, progress monitoring	Universal screening, progress monitoring

# WHAT INTERVENTIONS DOES YOUR SCHOOL USE?

C

S

# WHAT CHOICES DO SCHOOLS HAVE?

Consider the Five Pillars and The Fifteen Elements of Effective Literacy Programs  
(The *Reading Next* Recommendations)

## Instructional Improvements (Content)

- 1) Direct, explicit comprehension instruction
- 2) Effective instructional principles embedded in content
- 3) Motivation and self-directed learning
- 4) Text-based collaborative learning
- 5) Strategic tutoring
- 6) Diverse texts
- 7) Intensive writing
- 8) A technology component
- 9) Ongoing formative assessment of students

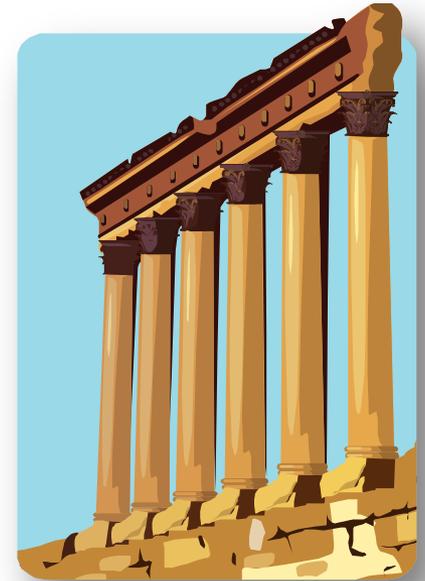
## Infrastructure Improvements (Structure)

- 10) Extended time for literacy
- 11) Professional development
- 12) Ongoing summative assessment of students and programs
- 13) Teacher teams
- 14) Leadership
- 15) A comprehensive and coordinated literacy program

# Do You Have Intervention Options in Each Pillar of Reading?

The Report of the National Reading Panel (2000) delineates five component areas of reading:

- **Phonemic Awareness**
- **Phonics**
- **Fluency**
- **Vocabulary**
- **Comprehension**



Most struggling students will have challenges in several or all of these areas.

# Any Delivery Challenges?

- **Time**
- **Budget**
- **Capacity**
  - **in both people and knowledge**



# Where a Few Challenges and Pitfalls Lie in Relation to CCLS and Intervention

Among the many ‘new’ methodologies that have sprung up around the new standards, some instructional protocols have been either overlooked or have been addressed without taking into consideration research-based practice recommendations. A few of these to consider when thinking about students who struggle academically:

- Active engagement
- Metacognitive involvement in the act of close reading
- Frontloading of vocabulary and background knowledge
- The ‘gap’ – the distance between the student’s reading level and the readability level of the text



We'll mention a bit about the first three, but focus mainly on the challenge of the readability gap.

# Active Involvement and Engagement

What observational methods do we use during lessons to determine if students are engaged?

- Some lesson protocols we have employed over the last few decades to increase student involvement include peer-assisted learning and other models such as **PALS, cooperative learning, Reciprocal Teaching, Questioning the Author, Collaborative Strategic Reading, and providing student choice in selecting text** along with others.
- These continued to be supported by the research on engagement (and on comprehension). More recent additions to these include other protocols that relate to response formats and partner work

# Active Involvement and Engagement Moves

- Verbal Response Procedures
  - Choral
  - Partner
  - Teams and Huddle Groups
  - Individual
- Written Response Procedures
  - Types of Writing Tasks
  - Whiteboards
  - Response Cards/Response Sheets
- Action Response Procedures
  - Acting Out/Simulations
  - Gestures
  - Facial Expressions
  - Hand Signals



-- Archer and Hughes, 2012

# Active Participation Procedures

The active participation procedure should:

1. Match the **purpose** for eliciting the response
2. Include **all students**
3. Be used **routinely**

# What's a Possible Misconception in this Area?

That if students are engaged in partner or group discussion, then they are fully engaged and involved.

In one engagement tactic, SLANT, it is easy to see how students might engage in part of the strategy, but not the parts that are critical to real involvement:

**S:** Sit up

**L:** Lean forward

**A:** Activate your thinking

**N:** Name it (reword in your mind what you have just heard)

**T:** Track the talker

# Metacognitive Involvement in Close Reading

The misconception in this area is straightforward and widespread:

Specifically, many students feel that close reading is always indicated, especially on tests. They do not question when we should do close reading and when we should read in other ways?

**Close Reading**  
(What interventions do we typically provide for complex text that requires close reading?)

**Other Reading Formats (skim, scan, light reading for pleasure, reading for narrative sequence, etc.)**

Have we stopped teaching students how to do other kinds of reading besides close reading and WHEN to do each?

Might this be something we discuss with students each time we embark on a close reading activity? Should we explain why we are doing a close read with a particular passage? When can students determine this on their own (in a gradual release of responsibility model)?

# The Role of Frontloading Vocabulary and Background Information

Read or listen to this passage and think about what makes it challenging and what might help make it more understandable:

**Improved vascular definition in radiographs of the arterial phase or of the venous phase can be procured by a process of subtraction whereby positive and negative images of the overlying skull are imposed on one another.**

-From a neuroanatomy text (found in Background Knowledge by Fisher and Frey)

# The Role of Frontloading Vocabulary and Background Information

How do you determine if frontloading is even needed? One widely-used protocol is KWL. Among other features, it provides you with knowledge of the group's or individual's knowledge of the topic:

What do you know about this topic?	What do you want to find out about this topic? (What questions do you have?)	What did you find out after you learned about the topic?



# The Role of Frontloading Vocabulary and Background Information

Another spin on the protocol is KWE. Use the familiar KWL format, but consider changing the K to “what I *think* I know” and W to “what I wonder.” The last column could be E for “what ELSE do you want to know

What I think I know?	What I wonder/do you want to find out about this topic? (What questions do you have?)	What else do you want to know?



# How and When Do You Frontload?

## HOW:

- Define -- select no more than 8-10 words (Archer)
  - Use student friendly definitions
- Show and narrate (Hasselbring)
- (Embedded glossary)



Can you describe it?

## WHEN:

- Where needed based on assessment of group or individual (using protocols such as KWL) or anticipating need based on rigorous level of text vocabulary or concepts

# Some Conventions in Vocabulary Instruction

Frontloading all needed concepts prior to listening or reading (anchored instruction)

- You cannot activate what is not there

Student friendly definitions (put 'you' into the sentence)

Clustering words in categories where possible

Use of examples and non-examples (Freyer model)

Distributed practice

Vocabulary lists posted in classroom

Personal vocabulary lists in notebook

Limiting reliance on 'go look it up in the dictionary'

Using context clues **where they are available**

Word consciousness taught explicitly

Method of repeated readings

After you say the word, make them say it (and say it and say it)

Mix of explicit and implicit instruction

**Is greatly aided by wide reading in typically-developing readers**

# Vocabulary Instruction

- a) Introduce the word
- b) Present a student-friendly explanation
- c) Illustrate the word with examples
- d) Check students' understanding
- e) Review the words

# Vocabulary Instruction

These instructional steps can be used:

## A. Introduce the word.

Write the word on the board or show it on a screen.

Pronounce the word or guide students in using their decoding skills to determine the pronunciation of the word.

Have students pronounce the word, repeating the word a number of times if the word is unfamiliar or difficult to pronounce.

## B. Provide a student-friendly explanation of the word.

Be sure that the definition contains only known words and is easy to understand.

## C. Illustrate the word with examples.

The examples can be concrete, visual, or verbal.

Verbal examples were used to illustrate concentrate, impressed, and educated.

## D. Check students' understanding.

Use one of these methods:

- > Ask “deep processing questions”.
- > Have students discern between examples and non-examples.
- > Have students generate examples.

# The Readability Gap – The Bazinga

What has been suggested so far among the CCLS experts to address this?

- Reading from easy to more and more difficult text on the same topic, leading up to the target text
- ‘Scaffolding’
- ‘Multiple entry points’ (UDL?)
- Reading text aloud to students

Do these moves increase reading ability or just support a student through a particular piece of text used in the lesson?

For which reader – slightly below, below, far below?

# What we know about the factors that affect reading comprehension

Proficient comprehension of text is influenced by:

- Accurate and fluent word reading skills
- Oral language skills (vocabulary, linguistic comprehension)
- Extent of conceptual and factual knowledge
- Knowledge and skill in use of cognitive strategies to improve comprehension or repair it when it breaks down.
- Reasoning and inferential skills
- Motivation to understand and interest in task and materials

-- Dr. Joseph K. Torgesen

Summer Reading Conference, Pennsylvania, June 2004

# The Readability Gap – Where Exactly Is It?

In which pillar(s) does the gap lie?

**Phonological awareness**

**Phonics (low and high!)**

**Fluency**

**Vocabulary**

**Comprehension**

In students reading at about a grade 3 level and below, word-level issues prevail.

# The Readability Gap

## The problems of our poorest readers (<gr.3):

1. Cannot decode novel words accurately because they are weak in phonics skills, and cannot read fluently because their “sight vocabulary” is restricted
2. They frequently have relatively weak vocabularies because they have not been able to read widely during previous school years; they have broad knowledge deficits
3. They have not practiced comprehension strategies because of limited reading experience, and because of their struggle with words
4. They frequently have given up on the idea of ever becoming a good reader

-- Dr. Joseph K. Torgesen

Summer Reading Conference, Pennsylvania, June 2004

# The Readability Gap

The problems of mid-level readers (grades 4-6):

Can usually “sound out” short novel words with reasonable accuracy--frequently stumble on multi-syllable words

They are relatively disfluent because they have not had enough reading practice

Vocabulary is frequently relatively low because of lack of broad and deep reading-other knowledge deficits as well

Comprehension strategies are usually inadequate because of lack of instruction and practice

They often say they “don’t like to read” because reading is still relatively difficult for them

-- Dr. Joseph K. Torgesen

Summer Reading Conference, Pennsylvania, June 2004

# The Readability Gap

The primary issues for children who are below grade level but not seriously behind (grade 6 and up):

1. Often have a somewhat restricted sight vocabulary which leads to mild lack of fluency in reading
2. Often fail to apply active comprehension strategies during reading. Haven't learned to monitor their comprehension or engage in productive thinking while reading.

-- Dr. Joseph K. Torgesen  
Summer Reading Conference, Pennsylvania, June 2004

# The Readability Gap

Since one goal of the CCLS is knowledge building, how do we differentiate for the various levels of students within the readability gap?

Alfred Tatum stresses the need to keep building knowledge for students for whom the readability gap is large. Simultaneously build foundational and other reading skills at the same time that you are building background knowledge through entry points other than direct reading of the text by students. (What does this mean in real life?)

Avoid accumulated deficit (Matthew effects) and Tatum's acute angle



# Learning to Read vs. Knowledge Building?

While we must address the reading issues directly, we must find ways to build the lexicon while that is happening – otherwise we risk

**MATTHEW EFFECTS (ACCUMULATED DEFICIT)  
in BOTH areas**



**The rich get richer, the poor get poorer  
or**

**The further behind you are, the further behind you get  
(unless effective intervention occurs)**

# Is There a Fire in the House? Oh, Yeah.

In a typical high-poverty urban school, approximately half of incoming ninth-grade students read at a sixth- or seventh-grade level OR BELOW!

(Balfanz et al., 2002)



# Q and A

Ask now or later.



[efriedm@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:efriedm@schools.nyc.gov)

Intervention Workshops Link:

<http://www.eventbrite.com/o/new-york-city-department-of-education-5771493618>