

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 471 063

CS 511 264

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TITLE Improving Reading Achievement through the Implementation of a  
Balanced Literacy Approach.  
PUB DATE 2002-05-00  
NOTE 88p.; Master of Arts Action Research Project, Saint Xavier  
University and SkyLight Professional Development Field-Based  
Master's Program. Appended photographs may not reproduce  
adequately.  
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses (040) -- Reports - Research (143)  
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS Action Research; Elementary Education; Instructional  
Effectiveness; Reading Achievement; Reading Comprehension;  
\*Reading Fluency; \*Reading Improvement; \*Reading Instruction;  
\*Reading Motivation  
IDENTIFIERS Accelerated Reader Program; Balanced Literacy; Four Blocks  
Approach

## ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for increasing students' reading fluency and comprehension by giving them a variety of skills and strategies. The targeted population consisted of two elementary schools in a growing, lower to middle class community, located in central Illinois. The problems of lack of reading strategies were documented through data revealing the number of students who performed below average or showed little growth on assessments, checklists, and anecdotal records. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students reported frustration when reading from teacher assigned materials. Data also revealed students' lack of confidence with reading ability. Faculty reported a lack of engagement and motivation, inability to apply concepts across the curriculum, and failure to see the relevance of material being studied. Review of literature revealed limited approaches in combination with the lack of strategies inhibit student literacy success. Socioeconomic background also plays a large role in their success. A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of two major categories of intervention: increasing reading achievement, and stimulating the desire to read. The action research team explored a defined approach for increasing reading achievement and motivation in the targeted classrooms. The post intervention data indicated that student responded well to a variety of strategies and activities that were presented to them. Reading achievement and motivation towards reading increased through developing a series of reading strategies incorporated through the Four Block Approach to Balanced Literacy, distributing weekly and monthly newsletters, and utilizing Accelerated Reader to motivate students to read more. Appendixes contain a monthly newsletter, a brochure for parents, and activity sheets. (Contains 28 references and 8 tables.) (Author/RS)

ED 471 063

# IMPROVING READING ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A BALANCED LITERACY APPROACH

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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School  
of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master's of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University & SkyLight

Field-Based Masters Program

Chicago, Illinois

May 2002

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Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students reported frustration when reading from teacher assigned materials. Data also revealed students lack of confidence with reading ability. Faculty reported a lack of engagement and motivation, inability to apply concepts across the curriculum, and failure to see the relevance of material being studied. Review of literature revealed limited approaches in combination with the lack of strategies inhibit student literacy success. Socioeconomic background also plays a large role in their success.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of two major categories of intervention: increasing reading achievement, and stimulating the desire to read.

The action research team explored a defined approach for increasing reading achievement and motivation in the targeted classrooms. The post intervention data indicated that students responded well to a variety of strategies and activities that were presented to them. Reading achievement and motivation towards reading increased through developing a series of reading strategies incorporated through the Four Block Approach to Balanced Literacy, distributing weekly and monthly newsletters, and utilizing Accelerated Reader to motivate students to read more.

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## CHAPTER 1

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

#### General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted elementary classes exhibited a lack of reading strategies that inhibited their reading fluency. Evidence for the existence of the problem included low standardized test scores, teacher observations, and communication between parents, teachers, and students.

#### School A

School A had students enrolled in kindergarten through sixth grade. Each grade level consisted of one or two heterogeneously grouped classrooms. The average class size was 24 students. The student population was 85 % Caucasian, 7 % African American, 7 % Hispanic, and 1 % Asian. Student attendance rate was 95 % with mobility among students at 11%. There were no chronic truants. The targeted school enrollment included 23 % low-income families. Low income students were from families receiving public aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, being supported in homes, depending on public funds, or eligible to receive free or reduced-priced lunches.

A full-time principal administered the targeted school. The staff consisted of 17 certified teachers. This number included 10 regular classroom teachers, 2 special education teachers that serviced the physically handicapped, a part-time special education teacher who serviced resource

students, a part-time gifted teacher, a part-time speech and language clinician, 2 specialists in physical education and music, a part-time counselor, a reading aide, and 5 special aides. The average experience among the teaching staff was 17 years.

Office staff consisted of a full-time secretary. A full-time aide ran the library. The classroom teacher and the building supervisor assisted students in the computer laboratory. Three food-service employees served lunch.

There were two intervention teams that supported staff, students, and parents. The diagnostic team consisted of a school nurse, a school psychologist, and a social worker. The Teacher Assistance Team consisted of an administrator, a building counselor, and three regular education teachers.

School A had many activities and special programs. The fifth grade students participated in the Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program (D.A.R.E.) sponsored by the local police department. All students participated in an eight-week cultural arts program and the Junior Achievement Program. Community volunteers visited assigned classrooms once a week during the school year. Certified teachers received training in Four Block instruction. This program, as well as Direct Instruction, placed an emphasis on language arts. The mathematics program used manipulatives and centered around cooperative learning. The school improvement team worked to align curriculum and state standards. School A also has a special education resource room, two additional resource rooms that maintained the handicapped, and the T.A.T. that helped develop individualized student plans for learning. Weekly staff development, such as Four Block literacy instruction and math remediation and enrichment, as well as monthly staff development in the areas of school improvement, provided an important learning foundation for the students.



Special characteristics of targeted School A included being recognized by the state as having a great majority of the students who have met or exceeded state standards. A special honor was bestowed upon the targeted school, which acknowledged that an external review was not required by the state due to the high academic achievement that had been obtained.

### School B

School B had students enrolled in kindergarten through sixth grade. Each grade level consisted of one or two heterogeneously grouped classrooms. The average class size was 21 students. The student population was 9% Caucasian and 91% African American. Student attendance rate was 94% with mobility among students at 30%. Chronic truants numbered 1%. The targeted school enrollment included 98% low-income families. Low income students were from families receiving public aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, being supported in homes, depending on public funds, or eligible to receive free or reduced-priced lunches.

A full-time principal administered targeted School B. The staff consisted of 20 certified teachers. This number included 11 regular classroom teachers, 2 full-time self-contained instructional special education teachers, a full-time resource specialist, a part-time gifted teacher, a part-time speech and language clinician, 2 specialists in physical education and music, a full-time counselor, a full-time Title I teacher, a full-time reading aide, 2 instructional aides that assisted in the special educational instructional rooms, and 2 classroom aides. The average experience among the teaching staff was 17 years.

The office staff consisted of a full-time secretary. A full-time library aide managed the library. The classroom teacher assisted students in the computer laboratory. A full-time and part-time building custodian serviced the school. Three food-service employees served lunch.

There were two intervention teams that supported staff, students, and parents. The diagnostic team consisted of a school nurse, a school psychologist, and a social worker. The Teacher Assistance Team consisted of an administrator, a building counselor, a Title I teacher, and five regular education teachers.

School B had many activities and special programs. The fifth grade students participated in the Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program (D.A.R.E.) sponsored by the local police department. All students participated in an eight-week cultural arts program and The Junior Achievement Program. Community volunteers visited assigned primary classrooms once a week during the school year. Certified teachers received extensive training in Four Block instruction. This program enriched their basal reading series in language arts. The mathematics program used manipulatives and centered around cooperative learning. The School Improvement Team worked to align curriculum and state standards. Other instructional strategies for the building were two special education resource rooms and the T.A.T. that helped develop individualized student plans for learning. Weekly staff development, such as Four Block literacy instruction and math remediation and enrichment, as well as monthly staff development in the areas of school improvement, provided an important learning foundation for the students.

Special characteristics of targeted School B included an outstanding music program and setting the precedent for outstanding usage of the Four Block literacy program in the district.

Primary issues and concerns for targeted Schools A and B included students' lack of appropriate social skills and limited parent involvement. Some concerns that needed to be addressed included maintaining and increasing I.S.A.T scores and the acceptance of student responsibility towards increasing academic achievement.

### Description of Surrounding Community

The targeted school district was located in a large metropolitan area. A river in the western region of the state divided the area. The community served a population of 40,680 people. Of this total, 51 % were female and 49% were male. The targeted schools were located in a middle class community with a prosperous economy. The unemployment rate for the community was 4%. The major employment opportunities included such areas as manufacturing agricultural equipment, production of footwear, selling of insurance, and food processing industries. One of the largest employers was a major government agency. The median household income was \$34,890 annually. The median age was 34 years. The ethnic make-up of the city was 79% Caucasian, 18% African American, 2.5 % Hispanic and .5 % Asian. Located within the city were a four-year college and a two-year junior college. The area also offered many cultural and entertainment choices such as museums, a zoo, a civic center, several professional sports teams, and drama and musical events.

The targeted school district served 7,000 students and employed 430 teachers with a 19 to 1 pupil-to-teacher ratio. The average experience of the teachers was 15 years. The ethnic background of teachers was 91.3% Caucasian, 7.5 African Americans and 1.2 % Hispanic. The ethnic background of students in the district was 62.7% Caucasian, 30.8% African American, and 5.6 % Hispanic and 7% Asian. The district included an interdistrict preschool, Head Start, 12 elementary schools, 2 junior high schools, a high school, and an alternative school.

### National Context of the Problem

A lack of student reading strategies in a classroom is not only a problem at the local level but has gained national attention as indicated by topics covered in professional journals and educational conferences. Throughout the years there have been four major approaches to

teaching reading: phonics, basal series, literature, and language experience programs. According to Cunningham and Allington (1999), the question of which approach is best is difficult to answer. While each method has undeniable strengths they also have weaknesses.

The California Department of Education (1995) found that children arrive at school with literacy experiences that range from zero to 2000 hours. Some children speak multiple languages, and all children bring a variety of different background experiences with them. Given these realities, a multilevel approach is needed to allow all students to learn what is necessary to help them grow academically. Educators need to implement different strategies that can inspire students to have a higher success rate in attaining literacy skills.

Johns and Lenski (1997) reported that instilling a positive attitude toward reading and inspiring the desire to read are overwhelming challenges for teachers. “Teachers often become perplexed and frustrated when they attempt to find techniques and strategies that will encourage students to read books and other types of printed materials” (p 1).

The primary goal of a reading program is to foster love of reading in students. Students who want to read and choose to read will become life long readers. Reading motivation is important because students who are motivated to read become better readers (Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990).

## CHAPTER 2

### PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

#### Problem Evidence

Academic standards and expectations continue to rise making it imperative that children become good readers. In order to do this, it is necessary that teachers create classrooms in which all children learn to read and write. According to Cunningham and Allington (1999), the classroom teacher is the most important factor in the success or failure of at-risk children in the school. Teachers are responsible for minute-by-minute instruction. Often it is the instructional decisions and the support teachers' provide that make the difference between success and failure.

The targeted elementary schools experienced low reading scores and disinterested students who were not working up to their potential. Evidence for the existence of this problem included the results from the S.T.A.R. Reading Assessments, surveys, checklists, and anecdotal records. The targeted population consisted of 55 students in grades one, three, and six in the elementary schools. The lack of interest in reading was evident by surveys and checklists given to students in 2001. One such survey included "My Ideas about Reading." Table 1 indicates students' lack of interest in reading. Based on the data presented in Table 1, some students felt insecure about their reading abilities. The results also indicated little motivation towards reading for enjoyment, with 65% of the students who indicated that books were too long or boring.

There was not much surprise when 67% of the students reported that reading was not fun to them. In fact, when given a choice, a majority of the students preferred to watch T.V. rather than read a book.

Table 1

Percent of Responses on the Reading Survey Administered to Targeted Elementary Student.

Statement	Agree %	Disagree %
Reading is a good way to spend spare time.	73	27
Most books are too long and boring.	65	35
There should be more free reading in school.	49	51
Reading is fun.	33	67
I learn from reading.	72	28
I would rather read than watch television.	7	93
Teachers ask me to read books that are too hard.	4	96
I am not a very good reader.	16	84
I read for fun at least once a day.	19	81
My parents spend quite a bit of time reading.	14	86

n =55

In addition, results as posted in Table 2, indicated that students felt as though they were not good readers. Many students did not possess printed materials for recreational reading nor did they use the classroom library. Table 2 results also indicate students rarely shared reading experiences with their peers or in class discussions.

Table 2

Percent of Items from Teacher Observation Checklist of Targeted Elementary Students

Statement	August		
	I	S	A
Possesses printed materials not assigned	86	9	5
Uses classroom library	67	10	23
Checks out books from school library	0	7	93
Talks with other students about reading	94	6	0
Seems to have a favorite author	95	5	0
Requests more reading about topics	83	10	7
Uses reading to satisfy personal interests	71	24	5
Reads for recreation	62	21	17
Applies ideas from reading to his/her life	87	11	2
Seems to enjoy reading	15	47	38
Participates in classroom book club	93	3	4
Parents report reading at home	5	43	52

n=55

Teachers in the targeted schools noticed lower than average scores on S.T.A.R. and Running Records. As noted in Table 3, several students in the targeted grades scored below grade level. With the exception of the sixth grade class very few of the students scored above grade level range.

Table 3

Initial Results of the August S.T.A.R. Assessment of Reading by Grade Level

Grade	Below Grade Level	At Grade Level	Above Grade Level
First	11	6	3
Fourth	7	7	3
Sixth	8	4	6

Furthermore as indicated in Table 4, additional results from The Running Records and The Beginning Reading Inventory showed half of the student were below grade level while the other half were at or above grade level.

Table 4

August Frequency of Initial Running Records and Beginning Reading Inventory Results by Grade Level

Grade	Below Grade Level	At Grade Level	Above Grade Level
First	10	5	5
Fourth	10	5	2
Sixth	7	8	3

## Probable Causes

Many students in the targeted schools had lower than average reading achievement due to the lack of engagement and motivation, inability to apply concepts across the curriculum, and failure to see the relevance of material being studied. Furthermore, many students who came from a low socioeconomic background were especially at risk for attaining successful reading



skills. Limited approaches to teaching literacy and a lack of effective instructional strategies inhibited student literacy success.

One out of every four children in schools today lives in poverty, and this figure may continue to rise. Cunningham, Hall, and Sigmon (1999) found that poverty, while not the only factor that determines if a child is at risk for reading difficulties, is a most pervasive factor. Children who are not academically successful may not be motivated to continue with school. The cycle of poverty and academic failure may continue. Teachers must create classrooms that facilitate success.

Cunningham and Hall (1995) reported that “Decades of research support the idea that children need phonics but that children who are taught phonics only until they “get it” don’t suddenly get transformed into eager, meaning-seeking, strategic readers” (p 2). While phonics is an important part of literacy instruction, it is not all that matters. While a child may be able to sound out a word, reading is not just based on sound. Children need to understand, learn, think, and enjoy the process of reading in order to experience all the benefits of reading.

According to Paris, Lipson, and Wixon (1983), many students experience difficulties in reading because they do not use appropriate strategies. Often they do not possess important knowledge about reading. Children have individual learning styles. Some children do learn to read by reading; others learn to read through writing.

Researchers have found that teachers want their students to become independent readers. Students should be able to apply reading strategies across the curriculum. Strategic readers must be able to plan, monitor, analyze, and regulate their reading and must be able to activate their background knowledge and to set goals for reading, while learning how to check their comprehension during reading. Educators have the responsibility to instruct students both

directly and indirectly about which strategies are appropriate while reading for a variety of purposes. Students must also know how to use the strategies and how to determine the effectiveness of those strategies.

CHAPTER 3  
THE SOLUTION STRATEGY  
Literature Review

Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998) stated that “reading is a complex developmental challenge that we know to be intertwined with many other developmental accomplishments such as language and motivation. Reading is not only a cognitive psycholinguistic activity but also a social activity.” (p15). If educators want to ensure that children’s educational careers are not threatened because they do not read well enough to guarantee understanding they must prepare them to meet the demand of an increasingly competitive world.

Upon review of the literature, two factors were identified as the primary focal points of the solution strategy: increasing reading achievement, and stimulating the desire to read. Miller (1988) reported “most reading specialists consider school-related causes to be much more commonly related to reading difficulties. These causes can generally be grouped into four major categories: educational, physical, intellectual, and socio-emotional” (p10). While these factors appear to be all-encompassing, studies have shown that lack of reading achievement and poor motivation among students is really a combination of these causes. According to Frager (1993), one major problem occurs when students who are quite able readers choose not to read selections of content area texts assigned by the teacher. Of equal concern is when students do read the

assigned texts but fail to employ reading strategies that are conducive to learning and understanding.

One of the leading causes of reading difficulties is the lack of educational stability. This includes inadequate readiness, inappropriate reading instruction, and improperly paced reading instruction. It is crucial to have stability when teaching students how to read. Without a strong knowledge base it is difficult for students to find success. Wong and Wilson (1984) reported that students read more slowly because they are less inclined to notice the structure of text. Since efficient comprehension is based on the reader's ability to visualize the pattern or the movement that the author is taking, parents and teachers can assist these readers by allowing more time to build prior knowledge. Often, completing something as simple as a graphic organizer can assist readers immensely.

Improperly paced reading instruction, along with large class sizes, students' absences, and high mobility among students, leads to educational cause for lack of reading achievement. Some children read accurately but have difficulties with comprehension. The reason for their reading dilemmas could be due to a small vocabulary bank, a weak understanding of print, or poor background knowledge. In addition, they may lack the skills that allow them to synthesize or summarize information, draw conclusions, make generalizations, or relate information drawn from texts to their own knowledge (Dare, 2001).

There are a number of physical deficits that have been related to reading problems. These deficits include visual, auditory, neurological, speech defects, and gender differences. According to The Child Development Institute, (2001) "Some children have auditory discrimination problems. This may have been the result of having chronic ear infections when they were young" (p 3). Others have visual perception problems. They may actually reverse letters or words.

They have difficulty matching the word image on the page with the previously stored image in their brain. Language development problems may contribute to poor reading and listening comprehension along with difficulty in verbal and written expression.

General health also plays a large part in students' reading achievement. If children are malnourished, they may not have the ability to devote their full attention to the task of learning to read. The same can be said of children who are chronically fatigued due to inadequate rest. Many types of chronic illnesses such as colds, asthma, diabetes, headaches, stomachaches, and vomiting, can cause frequent school absences, which may lead to reading problems because of missed instruction.

When dealing with the intellectual causes of reading difficulties two aspects of this cause are addressed: students who cannot read, and students who can read but choose not to read. Students with an inadequate abstract intellectual ability may often have particular difficulty with interpretive comprehension in critical reading. Many struggling readers who have the capabilities of becoming good readers need a great deal of self-motivation to learn to read. According to Webb (1992), an optimistic attitude on the part of the student is vital to the treatment of problems in reading and learning. Most disabled readers whom the reading teacher may see in the classroom may be average or above average students who simply are not achieving up to their potential.

Another cause in looking at reading difficulties is the social-emotional issue. Success in the beginning stages of reading requires that the child be curious, emotionally mature, responsible, and able to follow directions. Children who do not possess one or more of these characteristics, will not necessarily have reading difficulties in school, but must generally possess most of these personal characteristics to be successful in reading.

A deprived home environment can influence a child's reading achievement. Pinnell, et al. (1995) revealed that students who read fluently and who reported reading at home, scored higher on reading achievement tests. A child from a home with little or no reading experiences or few reading materials at home may develop reading problems. Poverty can further influence reading achievement because a poor child tends to be malnourished. Environments such as these can foster the need for survival skills rather than promote the need for developing successful reading habits.

According to Resnick (2001), competence in learning does involve strategies, but more importantly, it seems to involve knowing when to use which strategies and being motivated to do so. Therefore, equal attention must be given to self-monitoring and motivation, as well as to the strategies themselves. In order to promote greater reading achievement and increase student motivation, Cunningham and Hall (1998) suggested that when looking for an optimal way to teach reading, some educators reject the reality or possibility of meeting individual needs. Cunningham, Hall, and Defee (1998) stated "children do not all learn in the same way and consequently approaches with particular emphasis are apt to result in some children learning to read and others not" (p 652). Studies have concluded that the teacher is more instrumental than the method, but in general several approaches work better than any specific approach (Bond & Dykstra, 1997).

Cunningham, Hall, and Defee (1998) suggested the following framework for reading instruction:

- Meet the needs of the children with a wide range of entering literacy levels without putting them in ability groups;
- Find a way to combine a way to combine the major approaches to reading instruction

- Avoid the pendulum swing;
- Divide language arts time into four major historical approaches- guided reading, self-selected materials, writing activities, and working with words; and
- Provide instruction within each block multilevel. (p 652-653)

According to McCarrier, Pinnell and Fountas (2000), “the great challenge for us as teachers is to provide the right support for each child, support that acknowledges diverse background and needs” (p 3). The multilevel instruction of the Balanced Literacy Approach, also synonymous with the Four Block model, gives teachers a chance to plan instruction and activities that can meet a range of needs. According to Sigmon (2001), “the multilevel instruction of the Four Blocks Model gives teachers an opportunity to plan instruction and activities that can meet a range of needs....Multi-approach and multilevel are the ways that Four Block Teachers will accomplish their goals – helping all students to be better readers and writers” (p 5). Multi-approaches and multilevel are the ways that Four Blocks teachers will accomplish their goals, helping all students to be better readers and better writers.

The first component of the Balanced Approach to Reading, the word study block, teaches students to decode and manipulate text to help them read. According to Fountas and Pinnell (2001), “The phonemes are mapped onto the graphemes, which are letters or letter clusters that represent sounds. When we read, understandings related to all language systems-meaning, syntax, and phonology-are connected with the written symbols that make up print” (p 309). This awareness is strongly related to success in reading and spelling acquisition and is a powerful indicator of reading achievement. In order to benefit from phonics instruction, students require at least some basic level of phonological awareness. According to Gunning (1996), no matter how they are taught, all students must grasp the abstract concepts that words are composed of

separate sounds and that individual letters and combinations are used to represent those sounds. Adams (1990) emphasized that effective reading instruction is based on direct phonics instruction, which focuses on the sound patterns of the English language, as well as giving an introduction to reading materials and providing the time to apply reading strategies.

The purpose of guided reading is to meet the varying instructional needs of all students in the class, enabling them to greatly expand their reading powers. According to Harvey and Goudvis (2000), “when readers interact with the texts they read, reading becomes important. Reading shapes and even changes thinking” (p 5). It is crucial to have readers become responsible for thinking as they are reading. It is the goal of guided reading to have readers be able to reflect upon their reading and use strategies when they come across a problem with their reading. Guided reading is a teaching approach designed to help individual students learn how to process a variety of increasingly challenging texts with understanding and fluency. The teacher selects and introduces texts to readers, sometimes supports them while reading the text, engages the readers in a discussion, and makes teaching points after the reading. Sometimes, after reading a text, the teacher extends the meaning of the text through writing, text analysis, or other learning experiences. The lesson may include work with words based on the specific needs of the group. Guided reading helps teachers move students forward in their reading development.

Writing is a component of the Balanced Literacy Approach that lends itself to successful reading experiences. According to Lenski and Lenski (2000), writing can be the intentional act of using knowledge about words, sentences and paragraphs. These skills can be learned through a balanced instructional program that includes a variety of types of writing activities, experiences, and instructional lessons. Often for struggling children, the first thing they can read is their own writing. During the writing block the teacher begins with a mini-lesson. While



modeling the lesson it is important for the teachers to draw the children's attention to spelling patterns from words that they already know and apply these patterns so that they can write troublesome words. This will reinforce concepts of decoding that were taught during guided reading. After the mini-lesson, students work on their own writing. While the children write, the teacher conferences with individuals. This block ends with the students sharing their published pieces. This give the students a chance to show off their writing, to read orally to their classmates, and to build their self-esteem.

When focusing on the self-selected reading block, it is crucial to work on the development of comprehension. One valuable activity for developing children's comprehension is reading itself. The amount of reading that children do is directly related to the amount of growth in reading comprehension throughout the school years. Through reading, students experience new words, new expressions, and new information. Beyond that, however, they meet new thoughts and ways of thinking that they might never have been exposed to before. On a regular basis all students should be motivated to read a wide range of books and be able to reflect upon what they have read.

According to Cunningham, Hall, and Sigmon (1999), "In the Four Blocks framework, children spend half their time in the self-selected reading and writing blocks, in which there is no limit of the level on which they can read and write. When there is no limit on how fast they can learn, the best readers, year after year, show surprising results. It is clear now that being in reading groups was as limiting for those at the bottom half of the bottom group" (p 170).

When trying to increase reading comprehension, raising student motivation towards the reading process is crucial. Cunningham and Allington (1999) stated that increasing students' motivation is a difficult challenge faced by most educators. Readers having difficulty must not

only develop positive attitudes towards reading and writing, but must also transform the negative and often hostile attitudes that these children bring along with them. This is not an easy task and may require a great deal of determination and stamina. Using the Balanced Literacy Approach should greatly improve student motivation toward reading. The Balanced Literacy Approach may help to teach students different strategies, which will help them become better decoders making reading more of an enjoyable pastime and not a labor of effort.

### Project Objective and Processes

As a result of using The Four Block Literacy Approach and Accelerated Reader, during the period from August 2001 through December 2001, the targeted first, third, and sixth grade students will increase reading fluency, comprehension, and motivation when reading for a variety of purposes as measured by surveys, Running Records, assessments, and teacher observation.

In order to accomplish this objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Apply the four component of the Four Block Literacy Approach as the foundation of the literacy project.
2. Develop a series of activities that utilize strategies in the areas of word study, guided reading, self-selected reading, and writing.
3. Distribute weekly and monthly newsletters (Appendix A) that provide activities for parents to complete with their child at home.
4. Utilize Accelerated Reader to stimulate students' their desire to read.

### Project Action Plan

This action plan was designed to increase reading achievement in the targeted classrooms. This action plan focused on two areas of reading achievement: implementing a Balanced Literacy Approach to reading and using different strategies to increase motivation

among students. The action plan covered the months of August 2001 through December 2001. Many of the interventions implemented would be continued until the completion of the school year.

## August

### I. Increasing Reading Achievement

- A. Administer Running Records and Beginning Reading Inventory
- B. Administer S.T.A.R. in targeted grades
- C. Introduce students to the Four Block Balanced Approach to Literacy
- D. Give pamphlet (Appendix B) explaining the Four Block Approach to Balanced Literacy to parents at Open House and Parent Informational Night
- E. During guided reading students will learn strategies focusing on main idea and facts and details. (Appendix C)
- F. Making Words (Appendix D) and Rivet (Appendix E) will be taught for decoding strategies
- G. Provide a variety of reading material for self-selected reading
- H. Create a literacy center and model how to use this area
- I. Send home material for parents about model reading (Appendix F)
- J. Students were introduced to journal writing during the writing block

### II. Motivation

- A. Administer Student Attitude Survey (Appendix G) towards reading
- B. Create a book nook (Appendix H) where students find favorite reading material
- C. A guest speaker will address students as to the importance of reading in their work and daily lives
- D. Use incentive charts (Appendix I) to promote the number of books read this month

- E. Select a student of the month to write about their reading successes
- F. Introduce the Accelerated Reader Program
- G. Start a buddy reading (Appendix J) system with a partner class
- H. Send home a monthly newsletter indicating student successes in reading
- I. Provide a variety of reading materials (Appendix K)
- J. Read to student daily
- K. Checklist for Students' Attitudes and Personal Reading

## September

### I. Increasing Reading Achievement

- A. During word study do Guess the Covered Word (Appendix L) and Word Splash Activities
- B. During guided reading build sequence (Appendix M) and predicting outcomes for added strategies
- C. In the literacy center write about everyday things, autobiographies, mystery descriptions
- D. Provide a variety of reading materials

### II. Motivation

- A. Distribute midterm reports
- B. Use incentive charts to record number of books read each month
- C. Distribute monthly newsletter
- D. Hold conferences to help determine student interest
- E. Provide reading materials which will accomplish a task of interest
- F. Hold monthly reading challenges using Accelerated Reader
- G. Read to students daily (Appendix N)
- H. Checklist for Students' Attitudes and Personal Reading

## October

### I. Increasing Reading Achievement

- A. During word study do Name Brand Phonics (Appendix O) and vocabulary sort
- B. During guided reading build problem solving skills and prior knowledge strategies (Appendix P)
- C. In the literacy center use personal journals to promote self discovery
- D. Provide a variety of reading materials
- E. Hold parent-teacher conferences

### II. Motivation

- A. Use incentive charts to record the number of books read by students
- B. Distribute monthly newsletter
- C. A Reading Riot will be held
- D. Hold monthly reading challenges using Accelerated Reader
- E. Provide plenty of reading material that varies in genre, difficulty, and content
- F. Read to students daily
- G. Checklist for Students' Attitudes and Personal Reading

## November

### I. Increasing Reading Achievement

- A. During word study complete tongue twisters and mystery word match
- B. During guided reading self-monitoring and text structures will be taught
- C. In the literacy center use a two column response chart to expand meaning of literature
- D. Provide a variety of reading materials

## II. Motivation

- A. Use incentive charts to record the number of books read by students
- B. Distribute monthly newsletter
- C. Provide plenty of reading material that varies in genre, difficulty, and content
- D. Read to students daily
- E. Hold monthly reading challenges using Accelerated Reader
- F. Students will participate in a paperback book exchange
- G. Distribute midterms
- H. Checklist for Student's Attitudes and Personal Reading (Appendix Q)

## December

### I Increasing Reading Achievement

- A. Administer Running Records and Beginning Reading Inventory
- B. In word study complete What Looks Right and Word Cycle
- C. In guided reading students will focus on processing text
- D. In the literacy center use learning logs to learn content material
  - A. Provide a variety of reading materials
  - B. Distribute report cards
  - C. Administer S.T.A.R. for final records

### II. Motivation

- A. Use incentive charts to record the number of books read by students
- B. Distribute monthly newsletter
- C. Provide plenty of reading material that varies in genre, difficulty, and content
- D. Hold monthly reading challenges using Accelerated Reader

- E. Read to students daily
- F. Administer Student Attitude Survey towards reading
- G. Set up a display for student book picks and their reviews that will be maintained through the year
- H. Checklist for Students' Attitudes and Personal Reading

#### Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the efforts of the interventions regarding reading achievement and motivation presented, surveys, Running Records, and Accelerated Reading Tests were developed and administered. Teachers also kept checklists based on observations made in the targeted classrooms.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROJECT RESULTS

#### Historical Description of the Intervention

The primary objective of this Action Plan was to increase reading achievement in the targeted first, fourth, and sixth grade classrooms. Students were exposed to various activities from each of the Four Block components, which would give strategies to help them become independent readers. The plan was designed to increase reading fluency, comprehension, and motivation. The intervention strategies included applying the Four Block Literacy Approach, developing a series of reading strategies, distributing weekly and monthly newsletters, and utilizing Accelerated Reader to motivate students to read more.

The action plan was placed in effect from August 2001 to December 2001. During the first month, a parent informational night was held to familiarize parents with the Four Block Literacy Approach. Pamphlets were distributed and discussions were held to explain how each component of the Four Blocks built upon each other to help their child become successful readers. Parents were also given material that would help them in assisting their child at home. The material showed consistency to what teachers were implementing in school with the Four-Block approach.



Students were introduced to the Four Block Literacy Approach in all of the targeted grades. As a beginning of the year activity, all teachers of the targeted grades established a classroom schedule with the students to introduce them to each of the components in the Four Block Approach. During the guided reading component, students were introduced to strategies that would help them focus on main ideas, facts, and details as they were presented in various types of literature. As a part of the word study block students were exposed to RIVETS and making words lessons. A literacy center was created to provide to a variety of reading materials for self-selected reading. Students were taught how to use the literacy center. Teachers originally planned on having a guest speaker come in and talk about the importance of reading but with all the commitments that occurred during the first month of school, the staff agreed to reschedule the guest speaker for the beginning of the new year. During the writing block, students were given journals to write about personal thoughts. This activity served as a reflection of their learning.

Students were asked to complete a survey concerning their attitudes about reading in the targeted schools. In addition, information about students' reading ability was gained through the use of Running Records and the beginning reading inventory. Incentive charts were introduced to all targeted students as a means to promote their independent reading achievements. Students were selected to write about their reading achievements in each of the targeted classrooms' newsletters, which were sent home to parents. A buddy reading system was established where intermediate students worked with primary students using the Accelerated Reading Program to encourage reading. Teachers read to students daily exposing them to a wide variety of reading materials and experiences. In addition, the teachers at the targeted schools preferred to have had

the parent informational night the first few weeks of school but due to lack of staff support this was not possible.

In September, students were introduced to “guess the covered word” and “word splash” activities during the word block. The teacher modeled what good readers do as they come to an unfamiliar word. While guessing the covered words, students were taught the word needed to sound right, look right, and fit right. To give students additional practice with the main idea and details, areas that were focused on in August, students were introduced to the “word splash” activity. This activity required them to select terms from a reading passage, which were then randomly displayed on a chart, and students were asked to make complete statements predicting relationships to the main idea of the reading passage. The students seemed to respond well to the new activities that were presented to them. A variety of reading materials were provided in the literacy center, including autobiographies and mysteries, which the students were able to use in their writings and self-selected reading.

Midterm reports were distributed to parents of students who were not meeting grade level expectations. Teachers worked closely with students who received midterm reports to determine learning interests. This information assisted the teacher in supplying appropriate reading material in the book nook to be chosen by students during self-selected reading. Conferences were held weekly with students in order to monitor progress. The use of incentive charts and Accelerated Reader was continued to help students monitor their reading. Results were reported in the monthly newsletter. Parent teacher conferences were held during the month of October. At these conferences, teachers shared students’ personal journals that promoted self-discovery. Many guided reading strategies were introduced, some of which included building problem solving skills and activating prior knowledge. Students were taught the importance of building a

strong background of information to help them retain information being presented to them.

During the word study block, students completed “Name Brand Phonics” activities. This activity taught students how to use words they saw in common everyday products to decode or write unfamiliar words. Eating at the end of the lesson was an added bonus. Another activity students focused on during the word study block was sorting vocabulary terms related to selected reading passages.

Teachers updated the book nook with new reading material. The material in the book nook held a variety of genres, (Appendix R) difficulty levels, and content. As another means of trying to increase motivation in students, teachers read orally from picture books that were selected by students. Students continued to participate in monthly reading challenges. Results were posted on incentive charts and information was sent home to parents in the monthly newsletter. After discussion with the staff the “Reading Riot” was cancelled due to time constraints with parent teacher conferences and the fall break.

A mystery word match was introduced in November. This was a game in which students tried to guess a mystery word, which used two-to-three clue words to get students guessing. In the literacy center students utilized a two-column response chart to expand meaning of literature. This activity allowed students to see the importance of self-monitoring while they read. Students added to the variety of reading material by composing tongue twisters about themselves to be compiled in a class book. The classroom book was added to the book nook for self-selected reading purposes.

Students were not able to participate in the paperback book exchange in November and it was rescheduled for December. Students were able to participate in the Accelerated Reader monthly reading challenge. Incentive charts continued to be used to record the number of books

read by students who did not have been exposed to a variety of genres. Newsletters and midterms were distributed to parents indicating difficulties with reading progress.

Running Records, Beginning Reading Inventory, and S.T.A.R. were administered during the month of December as post-measures of student growth. As part of the word study block, students were introduced to activities such as “what looks right” and “word cycle,” which helped them to focus on processing text. Learning logs were also implemented at this time to assist students in learning content material. Teachers continued conferencing with students during the self-selected reading block. Students and teachers worked together to set reading goal for the new-year. Due to an administrative decision, report cards were distributed in January instead of December. Students were also given the S.T.A.R. posttest.

A book display entitled “Book Picks of the Month”, was set up to provide an opportunity for students to share their thoughts and feelings about books they read. Teachers administered the student attitude survey to determine if there was a change of attitude towards reading behaviors. As in previous months, students were able to select from a variety of genres, reading levels and content area books. The results of the incentive charts and the reading challenges were sent home to parents in the monthly newsletter.

Teachers of the targeted students recorded final observations for the students’ attitude and personal checklist. Students from grades one and six participated in a book exchange during the month of December, which was very popular and a huge success.

#### Presentation and Analysis of Results

There were several methods of assessment used to ascertain the effects of the Action Plan. Each of these methods was used to determine the effectiveness of the Four Block Balanced Literacy Approach that was used to increase reading achievement in the targeted

classrooms. One of these methods was the Running Records and the Beginning Reading Inventory. The Running Records and Beginning Reading Inventory Assessments are used to measure vocabulary and comprehension levels of students. Results of this assessment are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

December Post Running Records and Beginning Reading Inventory Results by Grade Level

Grade	Below Grade Level	At Grade Level	Above Grade Level
First	4	8	8
Fourth	5	8	4
Sixth	3	11	4

Students showed an increased level of growth in December when the Running Records and the Beginning Reading Inventory were administered for a second time. Most of the students, when completing the posttest, scored at or above grade level. The greatest amount of growth was seen at the first and sixth grade levels. Students at the fourth grade level may not have seen as much growth due to a high mobility rate in that targeted classroom.

Another method of assessment was the S.T.A.R. Assessment of Reading. Students were given the S.T.A.R. to measure their growth after learning different strategies from the Four

Block Approach. Due to the holiday season students were excited about their upcoming vacation causing them to not focus on the test as much as the teachers desired. As a result, students did not show as much growth as anticipated. However, the S.T.A.R. scores did show growth when compared with the results in August. The greatest level of improvement was shown in first grade with the least amount at the sixth grade level. On an interesting note, some students scored lower on the posttest but still above grade level. Students seemed excited about receiving their results from this test. Many wanted to know if they showed improvement over their last S.T.A.R. test. This enthusiasm shown by students was encouraging to the teachers of the targeted classrooms because it demonstrated students cared more about their reading achievement now than in the past. The breakdown of the S.T.A.R. results is indicated in Table 6.

Table 6

December Post Results of S.T.A.R. Assessment of Reading by Grade Level

Grade	Below Grade Level	At Grade Level	Above Grade Level
First	4	9	6
Fourth	5	8	4
Sixth	6	4	8

Teachers administered a final student attitude survey in December to determine if there was a change of attitude towards reading behaviors. Teachers found the results were surprising and some answers when compared were almost exactly the opposite from when the survey was administered in August. There was a dramatic increase in the number of parents seen reading at home by students. This could be the result of parents being informed of the importance of reading to their children and demonstrating what good readers look like. In addition, students

indicated they felt reading was a good way to use spare time. This was a surprising change from the reading survey conducted in August. Many students reported they would rather read than watch television. It was encouraging to teachers in the target classrooms that students were finding value in their reading experiences. This was a dramatic increase from the results that were found in August. The greatest accomplishment, according to the survey, was teachers of the targeted classrooms learned students have a greater understanding that the process of learning from reading is valuable to their lives.

The survey also recognized that students felt much better about their reading abilities. Students were more likely to check out books from the library and share what they have learned with the parents and peers. It was also noted that students felt much more comfortable with reading material which was assigned to them by their teachers. Along with feeling more comfortable students also felt more confident with their reading skills. Many students reported they knew how to use different strategies that would help them with reading problems encountered. Results were tabulated and placed in Table 7.

Table 7

Percent of My Ideas about Reading Survey Administered December 2001 to Targeted Students

Statement	Agree %	Disagree %
Reading is a good way to spend spare time.	79	21
Most books are too long and boring.	53	37
There should be more free reading in school.	55	45
Reading is fun.	66	34
I learn from reading.	96	4
I would rather read than watch television.	16	84

Teachers ask me to read books that are too hard.	2	98
I am not a very good reader.	8	92
I read for fun at least once a day.	46	54
My parents spend quite a bit of time reading.	56	44

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n =55

As a final method of assessment, teachers' observations were recorded in the form of a checklist. The results from this final observation were also surprising. Many more students were observed possessing material that was not assigned reading from an academic subject. The greatest increase was seen in the usage of the classroom library and literacy center. Many more students were observed visiting this area of the room instead of participating in other free time choices. One interesting observation was the number of students checking out material from the school library stayed the same. Teachers have observed that since students have taken such a much greater interest in the classroom library this may explain why the percentage of students visiting the building library has stayed the same. Students have also been observed discussing their leisure reading selections with their peers. This was a great change from when observations were first made in August.

Students were also able to identify their favorite authors and be able to request specific books about topics on which they would like to gain more information. One area that saw little growth was a student making requests for specific books. Teachers of the targeted classrooms are not sure why this was observed unless their skills as researchers have not been fully developed. There was an increase in students reading about their personal interests. This was especially evident with the boys in the targeted classrooms. Many more students reported



reading for enjoyment over the fall intersession. This was also an increase from observations that were done in August.

Another surprising increase was the observation that students were able to make connections between their reading and their personal experiences. Teachers at the targeted schools were very encouraged by this new development because making these connections is a great strategy for students to use to help their comprehension improve. There was also an increase in the amount of students participating in reading book clubs. At the Holiday program many parents reported that their child was reading a lot more at home. This also was encouraging for teachers of the targeted classrooms to observe. The breakdown of teacher observations is in Table 8.

Table 8

Teacher Observation Checklist Administered December 2001 to Targeted Students

Statement	August		
	Infrequently	Sometimes	Always
Possesses printed materials not assigned	52%	33%	15%
Uses classroom library	2%	10%	88%
Checks out books from school library	0%	7%	93%
Talks with other students about reading	63%	21%	16%
Seems to have a favorite author	63%	12%	25%
Requests more reading about topics	67%	21%	12%
Uses reading to satisfy personal interests	23%	55%	22%
Reads for recreation	33%	44%	33%

Applies ideas from reading to his/her life	63%	14%	23%
Seems to enjoy reading	7%	16%	77%
Participates in classroom book club	72%	11%	17%
Parents report reading at home	2%	40%	58%

---

n=55

It also became evident to teachers that students had a better understanding of when they did not comprehend a specific skill and needed more help before moving on to another lesson or problem.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

The goal of implementing the action plan was to improve and strengthen students' reading and writing skills and to increase their motivation towards reading. Based on the presentation and analysis of the data, students responded well to the variety of strategies and activities that were presented to them. During this time, an intense effort was made to increase the targeted students' reading successes using the Four Block Literacy Approach. Motivation was also a key ingredient in getting students to become better readers. Students who want to read will usually remember more of what they have read. The following reading and writing strategies worked well to promote the use of different reading skills and to help students become more motivated: Guess the Covered Word, RIVETS, Name Brand Phonics, and recognizing main ideas and details. In addition, to the above-mentioned strategies, many activities were also completed to help stimulate the increase of students' reading achievement. These activities included providing parent informational brochures, monthly newsletters, incentive charts, and reading challenges. Many students responded favorably to learning the Four Block Literacy Approach to Reading as well as helping with students in younger grades to become better

readers. It is recommended teachers continue to utilize activities that will enhance the learning opportunities of students. Teachers at the targeted schools should continue to use strategies and motivational techniques that will keep students wanting to read.

In order to meet the needs of a group with widely diverse ability levels, students completed surveys and teachers made observations to determine what skills and strategies should be covered each month of the action plan. Upon review of the interest surveys, checklists and assessments the decision was made to implement the Four Block Approach to Literacy and to develop motivational activities for the targeted students.

To assist in getting parents and students interested and involved with the Four Block Literacy Approach, a parent informational night was held. At this event parents received an informational brochure explaining how the Four Blocks were implemented in the classrooms. Parents also had the opportunity to ask questions and learn about the motivational techniques, which would be used in the targeted classrooms. It was determined, that in order for students to have the most successful reading and learning experiences, parents should become completely involved with their child's education. Parents should learn as much about the curriculum being presented to their child so there can be more follow through at home.

Students became very engaged in the different activities that were taught to them. The exposure to these kinds of activities gave them the necessary strategies and fostered their self-confidence to help them become better readers and writers. The students were able to decode and comprehend a wide variety of reading material. Students were also involved in a variety of activities including completing incentive charts, monthly reading challenges and participating in the paperback book exchange. All of these activities proved to be great motivators for getting students to read and write more. It is recommended that there is a wide range of activities for

students to participate in when trying to increase their achievements. Students who are motivated to read more usually learn more.

Teachers made monthly observations of students' reading behaviors to determine if the students utilized the different reading skills and strategies being taught. Although these checklists proved to be helpful, they were very time consuming and would be hard to continue on a consistent basis. Other problems, which occurred at the targeted schools, were hosting the Reading Riot and having a guest speaker. These two events would have been worthwhile but finding the time to have them proved to be very difficult. In order for the targeted schools to find success with the Balanced Literacy Approach there must be effective use of time in implementing different activities. It would also be helpful if more of the staff members found the program valuable and worthwhile enough to implement into their own classroom to allow for continuity between the grades.

In order to broaden and strengthen reading, writing, and motivation of students, all components of the Four Block Literacy Approach must be used. The Four Block Approach was a good program not only in developing strategies but also motivating students by engaging them in high interest activities. The skills and strategies which are taught must be enduring and meaningful to students so they can self-monitor their own reading and writing. In order to have students carry their reading success from grade to grade, the Four Block Approach to Literacy must be implemented throughout the entire school population in both targeted schools. Students must have excellent strategies to fall back on as they read independently which is the key to becoming life long learners.

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**Appendix A**  
**Monthly Newsletter**



# December News

100  
100  
100  
100  
100

## Way to Go!!

Thanks to everyone that helped to make our All-American Fundraising go so well! We couldn't have done it without you!

## Important Dates

- 12/04 PTA Skating Party @ Skate Ranch 6:30-8:30
- 12/06 D.A.R.E. Silent Auction @ QCCA 6:30-8:30  
Spirit Day!
- 12/10-12/14 Student Council red, white, & blue  
suckers for sale from 8:25-8:35 in the gym
- 12/11-12/12 PTA Santa's Workshop
- 12/14 Circa '21 - Jack and the Beanstalk
- 12/20 Holiday Program and PTA Bake Sale/Raffle
- 12/21 Book Exchange & Last Day of School before  
Break

Our Christmas book exchange will take place on the last day of school before break. If your child chooses to participate they will need to purchase a book for \$3.00 or less and wrap it. We will draw for names on Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> to find out whom we will be exchanging with. Look for a participation form to come home later this week.



*Please send 2 packs of 3x5 index cards to school with your child.  
Thanks!*

# 100 Books

We have almost reached our goal of reading 100 books before the first day of winter. Scholastic will give each child a free book pick with a minimum order of \$15. Attached you will find the January order forms. Please have your child select his or her free book and any other books you would like to purchase. I will collect orders and monies until the last day of school. The books should be here when we get back from break.



November 5th -9th

**Reading Minutes:** Reading minutes were 5,190 for the week making our grand total so far for this year 78, 094 minutes read. We hit our goal and will have the pizza party next Friday. If your child qualified for the party please have them bring \$3.00 and a can of pop for the celebration. The following students qualified for the pizza party for reading minutes:

Brent Gordon

Katelyn Carlson

Ryan Rivers

Bryan Bebber

Ashley Wright

Jessica Kearney

Alex Luppen

Hannah Woodstock

Kara Moroni

Shaneeeka Evans

## ACADEMIC UPDATES

**Reading:** Students will be reading Under the Royal Palms from their basals this week.

**Writing:** Students have completed their written part of the Country Report Projects and are finishing up their timelines and PowerPoint presentations. Students will be presenting these projects during Grandadult Day / Visitor Day. Parents will also be able to view these presentations on Tuesday. This is also the night of the Ice Cream Social and Book Fair. Please fill out the attached sheet so your child will know when to expect to show their presentation to you.

**Math:** We will continue our study of geometry. Students will completing an assessment on tessellations

**Science:** During the last two weeks of this quarter we will focus on simple machines.

**Social Studies:** We will continue the study of Africa. (I know last week I wrote Asia but I was wrong.) We will cover it's geography and the overall history of this continent.


**Answer to last week's geography riddle:** Redwood National Park


**New Geography Riddle:** From my mouth I spew hot water from inside the earth. Magma heats me up HOT - every hour I rebirth. Pressure makes me explode and eject water into the air. Thousands of visitors gaze at me, for I am unusually rare. I'm in a northwestern state-in a national park I reside. When I explode toward the sky, amazement you cannot hide!


## Appendix B

### Four Block Brochure for Parents

# Taking A Walk Through The 4 Blocks Literacy Approach

Working  
With Words  
Block 

Guided  
Reading  
  
Block

Writing   
Block

Self-   
Selected  
Reading  
Block

Presented by:  
Cindy Arkebauer and  
Christine MacDonald

and

Crystal Palmer

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## Working With Words

In the Working with Words block, students learn to read and spell high-frequency words. They learn the patterns, which allow them to decode and spell more words. The goal of this block is to have the students automatically and fluently use phonics and spelling patterns while reading and writing.

### Working with Words Activities

- Be a Mind Reader
- Word Wall
- Rounding Up the Rhymes
- Making Words
- Guess the Covered Words
- Using Words You Know
- Reading and Writing Rhymes
- Word Sorts
- Word Wall Riddles
- Scrabble
- Nifty Thrifty Fifty
- Poetry Journals

## Guided Reading

The purpose of the Guided Reading Block is to teach comprehension. Also, the children are exposed to a wide range of literature and taught how to read material that increasingly more difficult. In this block, the students read a text selected by the teacher and explore it together through discussion, with the teacher's support and encouragement.

“The students are not just learning how to read... they are learning what to do with what they read.” – P. Cunningham

### Guided Reading Activities

- KWL Chart
- Graphic Organizers
- Story Maps
- Questioning the Author
- Act it Out
- Do A Play
- Book Club Groups
- Anticipation Guide
- Partner Reading

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## Writing

During the Writing Block students engage in various writing activities from beginning a new piece, finishing the piece, revising, editing, or illustrating. While students write, the teacher conferences with individuals who are getting ready to publish. This block ends with the "Author's Chair" in which children share their writing and respond to each other's writing.

### Writing Activities

- Draw a Picture
- Lists
- Stories
- Letters
- Journals
- News Stories
- Learning Log
- Reports
- Summary
- Play
- Poem
- Caption

## Self-Selected Reading

Self-Selected Reading is that part of the balanced literacy program in which students decide what they want to read. Opportunities are provided for students to share and respond to what they read. The purpose of Self-Selected Reading is to build fluency, to introduce all types of literature, and to motivate young readers.

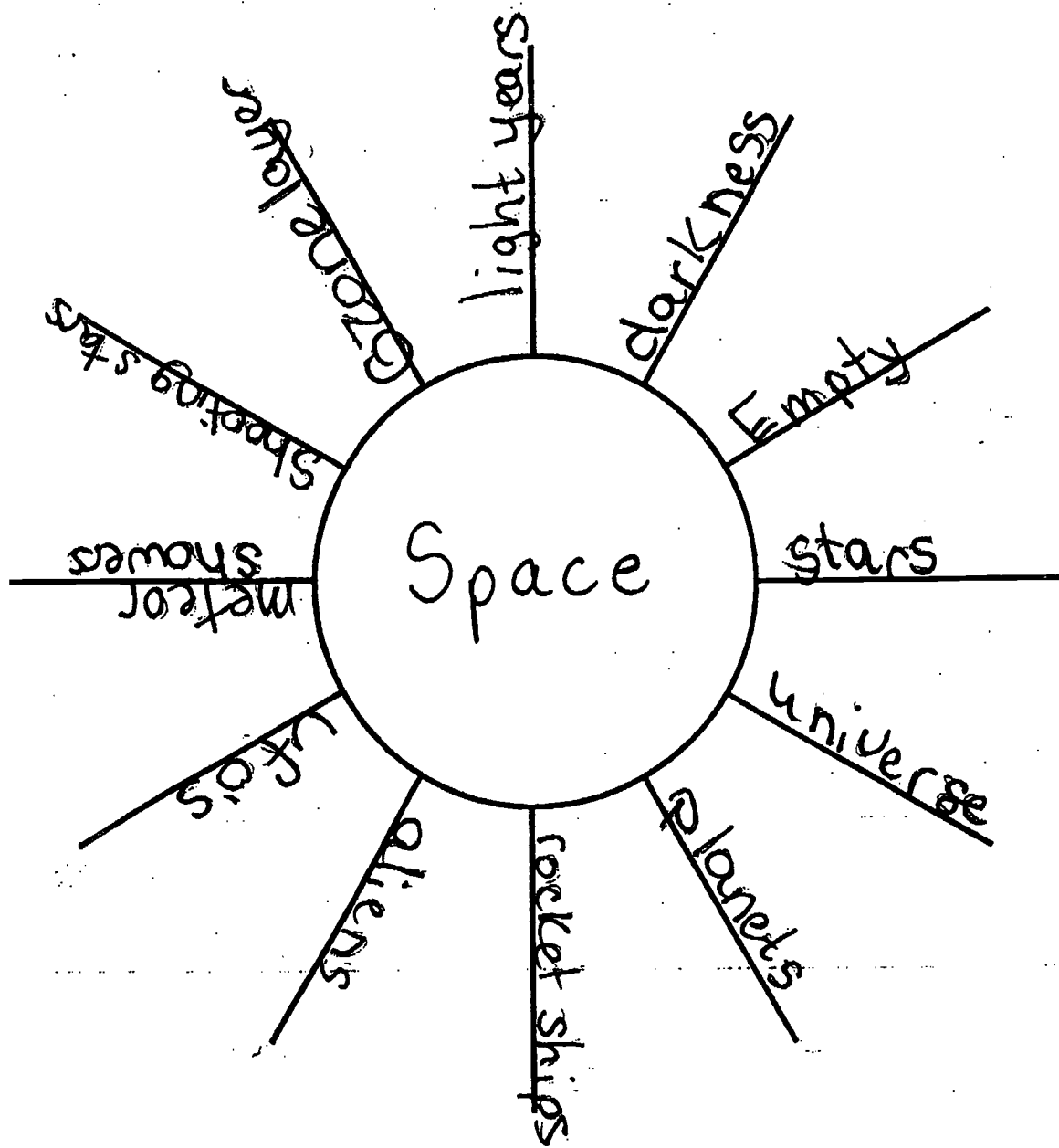
### Self-Selected Reading Activities

- Teacher read-alouds
- Individually chosen reading material
- Sharing
- Echo Reading
- Taped – book
- Read Along Centers
- Class Authored Books
- Bookmarks
- Book Tales
- Reading Party
- Pair / Share

## Appendix C

### Finding Main Ideas, Facts, and Details

# THE WEB



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## Appendix D

### Making Words Activity





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## Appendix E

### RIVET Activity

## -Activity

1. c \_ \_ \_ \_crayon  
carrotcolors  
copper2. c a \_ \_ \_carrot  
candlecactus  
cannon

calico

3. c a n \_ \_

cannon

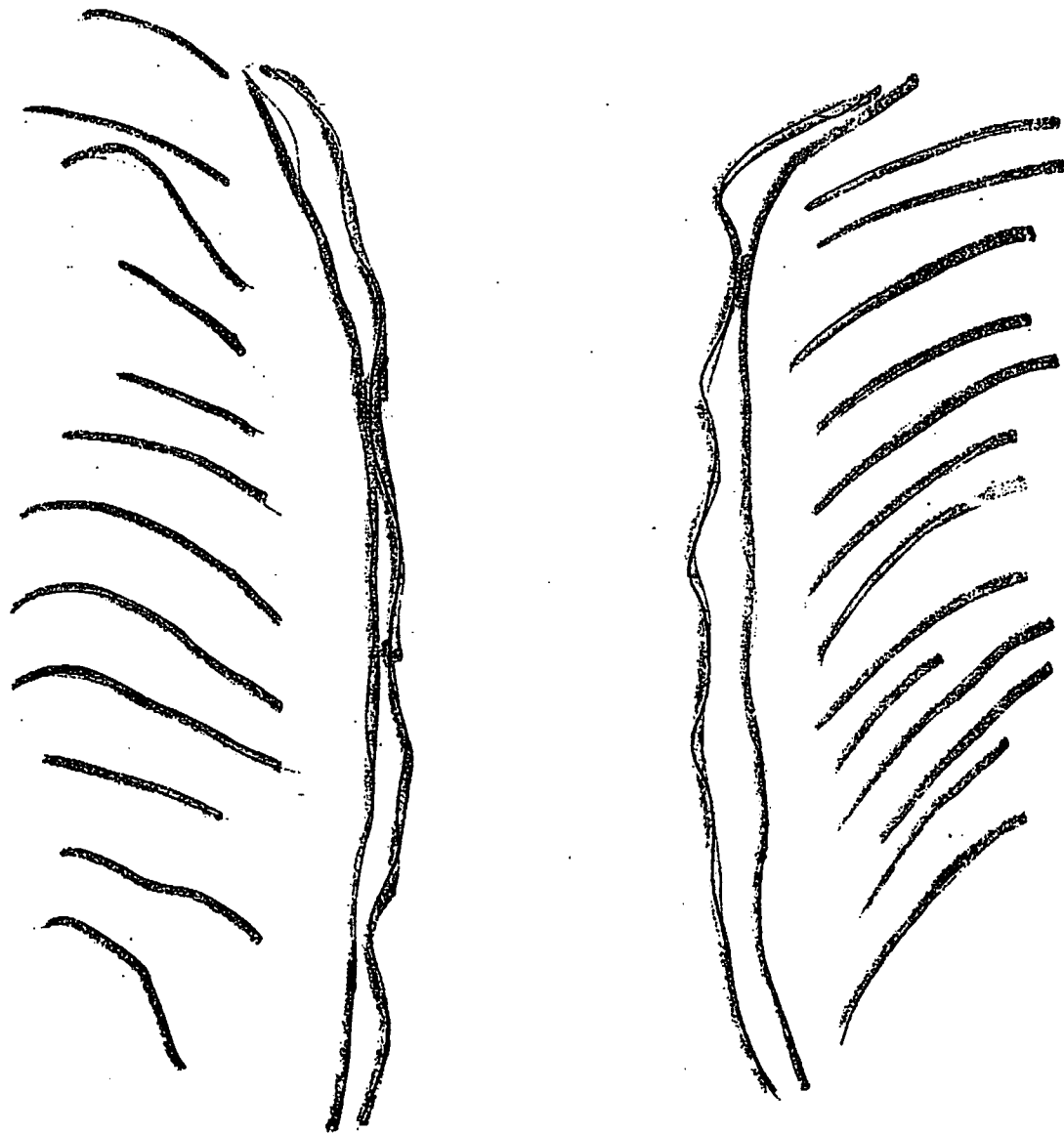
canvas

4. c a n y \_ \_

canyon

Canyon - a deep narrow  
valley with steep sides.

Canyon



## Appendix F

### Parent Information About Model Reading

# A World at Their Fingertips

## Read-Aloud Techniques



- \* Select books that you'll enjoy and that will spark your child's interest.
- \* Adjust your pace to the story and your child.
- \* Be responsive to your child's actions.
- \* Encourage your child's participation in the reading session - joining in repeating phrases, making comments, asking questions, predicting what will happen, or actually reading parts of the material.
- \* Allow time after reading for a relaxed discussion. Sharing reactions, not quizzing on facts.
- \* Both parents should take turns reading aloud. Fathers are important models, too. Make sure your child sees you read for pleasure.
- \* Never withdraw reading aloud as a punishment. That may destroy all the positive effects of reading aloud.



## Appendix G

### Students' Attitude Survey

## My Ideas About Reading

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** The 10 statements that follow will be read to you. After each statement is read, circle the response that tells what you feel or believe.

- |     |    |   |
|-----|----|---|
| Yes | No | 1. Reading is a good way to spend spare time.       |
| Yes | No | 2. Most books are too long and boring.              |
| Yes | No | 3. There should be more free reading in school.     |
| Yes | No | 4. Reading is fun.                                  |
| Yes | No | 5. I learn from reading.                            |
| Yes | No | 6. I would rather read than watch television.       |
| Yes | No | 7. Teachers ask me to read books that are too hard. |
| Yes | No | 8. I am not a very good reader.                     |
| Yes | No | 9. I read for fun at least once a day.              |
| Yes | No | 10. My parents spend quite a bit of time reading.   |

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## Appendix H

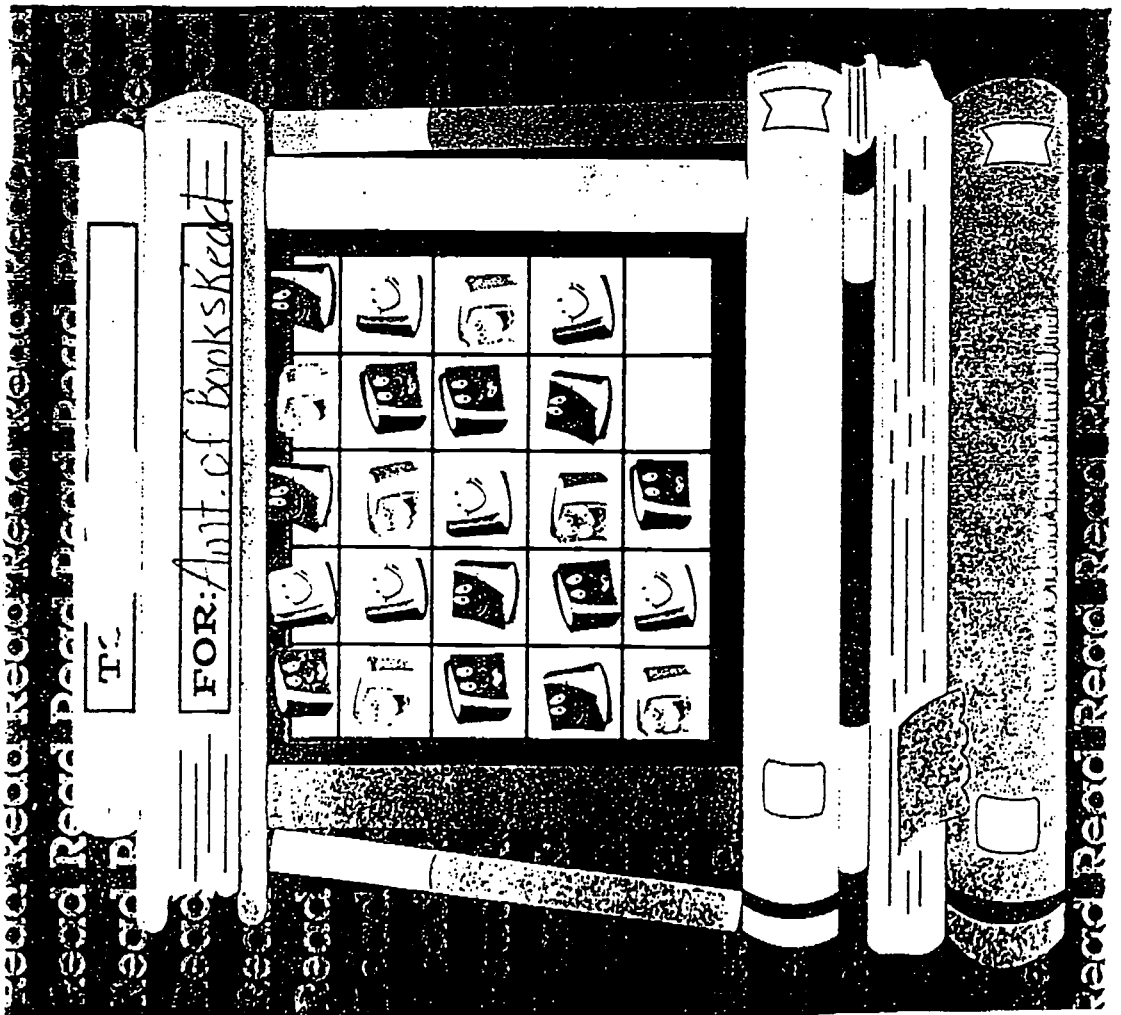
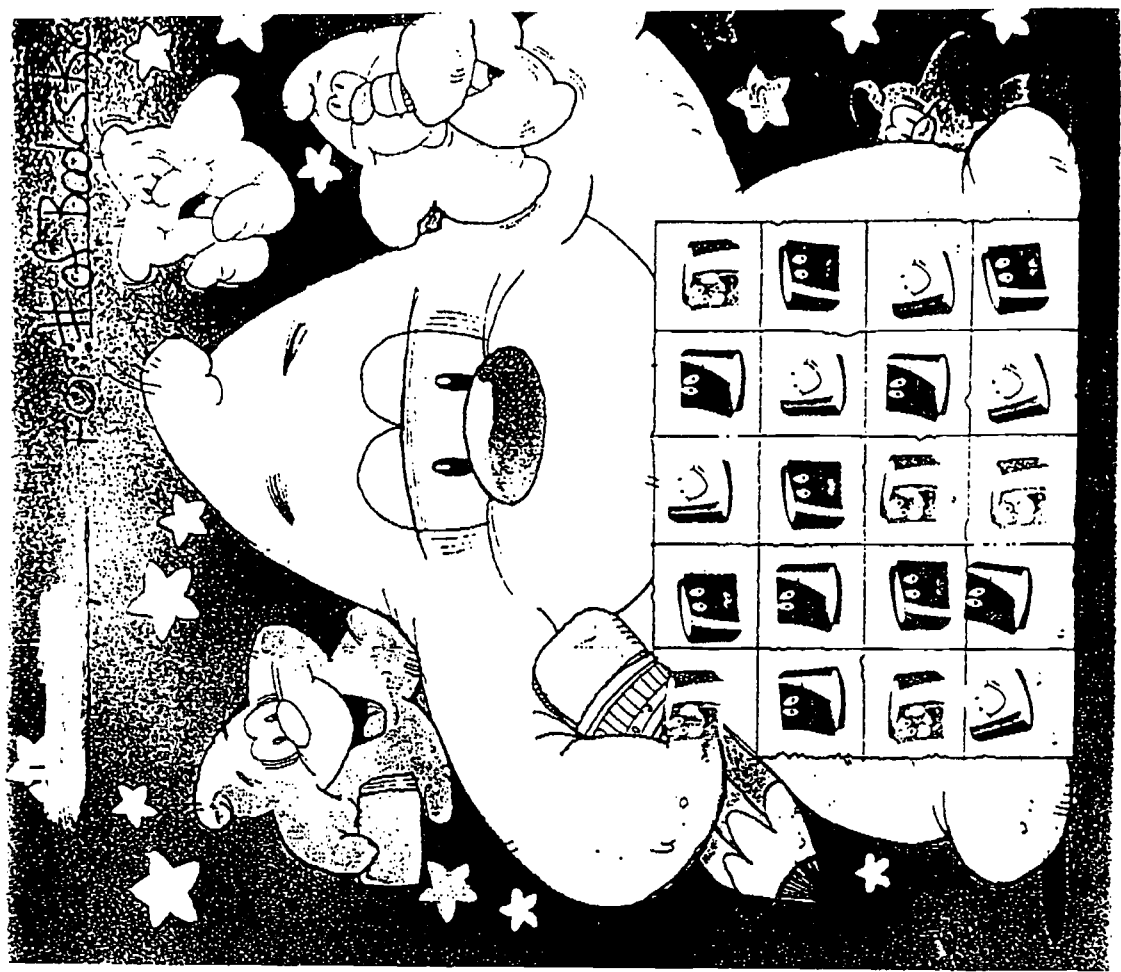
### A Book Nook



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## Appendix I

### Incentive Charts



**Appendix J**  
**Buddy Reading**



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## Appendix K

### Reading Materials of Interest



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## Appendix L

### Guess the Covered Word Activity

# Guess the Covered Word

Robert likes to play S\_\_\_\_\_ with his friends.

~~catch~~

soccer

~~car~~

~~basketball~~

~~slinky~~

~~scrabble~~

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## Appendix M

### Building Sequence Skills

Skill: Comprehension +  
Sequence Skills

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: On another sheet of paper write the sentences in the order in which they happened in the story.

- A. Jake improvises by banging on the door with the hammer.
- B. Through the clouds, they see the weather station on a ridge above them.
- C. Jake and Danielle are happy to be at the top.
- D. Next, Jake and Danielle start to climb up the icy trench.
- E. At first Danielle hits the rock with Dad's hammer.
- F. Danielle gets to the top of the trench first.
- G. Crying, Jake and Danielle hug each other.
- H. When they finally knock on the weather station door, ~~no~~ no one answers it.

## Appendix N

### Daily Reading



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## Appendix O

### Name Brand Phonics Activity

# Name Brand Phonics

61

Ginger Snaps	Wheat Thins
rap wrap scrap chap trap strap unwrap kidnap hubcap	grin skin thin chin dolphin pumpkin bearskin begin within

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## Appendix P

### Activating Prior Knowledge Lesson

**Predict-O-Gram**

Jack	Mother	sky	castle
beans	gold	money	cow
climb	beanstalk	food	happiness

<b>Setting</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>Goal or Problem</b>
<b>Action</b>	<b>Resolution</b>	<b>Other Things</b>

## Appendix Q

### Checklist for Student's Attitudes and Personal Reading

## Checklist for Student's Attitudes and Personal Reading

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

1. Possesses printed materials not assigned
2. Uses classroom library
3. Checks out books from school library
4. Talks with other students about reading
5. Seems to have a favorite author
6. Requests more reading about topics
7. Uses reading to satisfy personal interests
8. Reads for recreation
9. Applies ideas from reading to his/her life
10. Seems to enjoy reading
11. Participates in classroom book club
12. Parents report reading at home

Infrequently		Sometimes		Always	
Aug.	Dec.	Aug.	Dec.	Aug.	Dec.

## Appendix R

### Variety of Genres



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