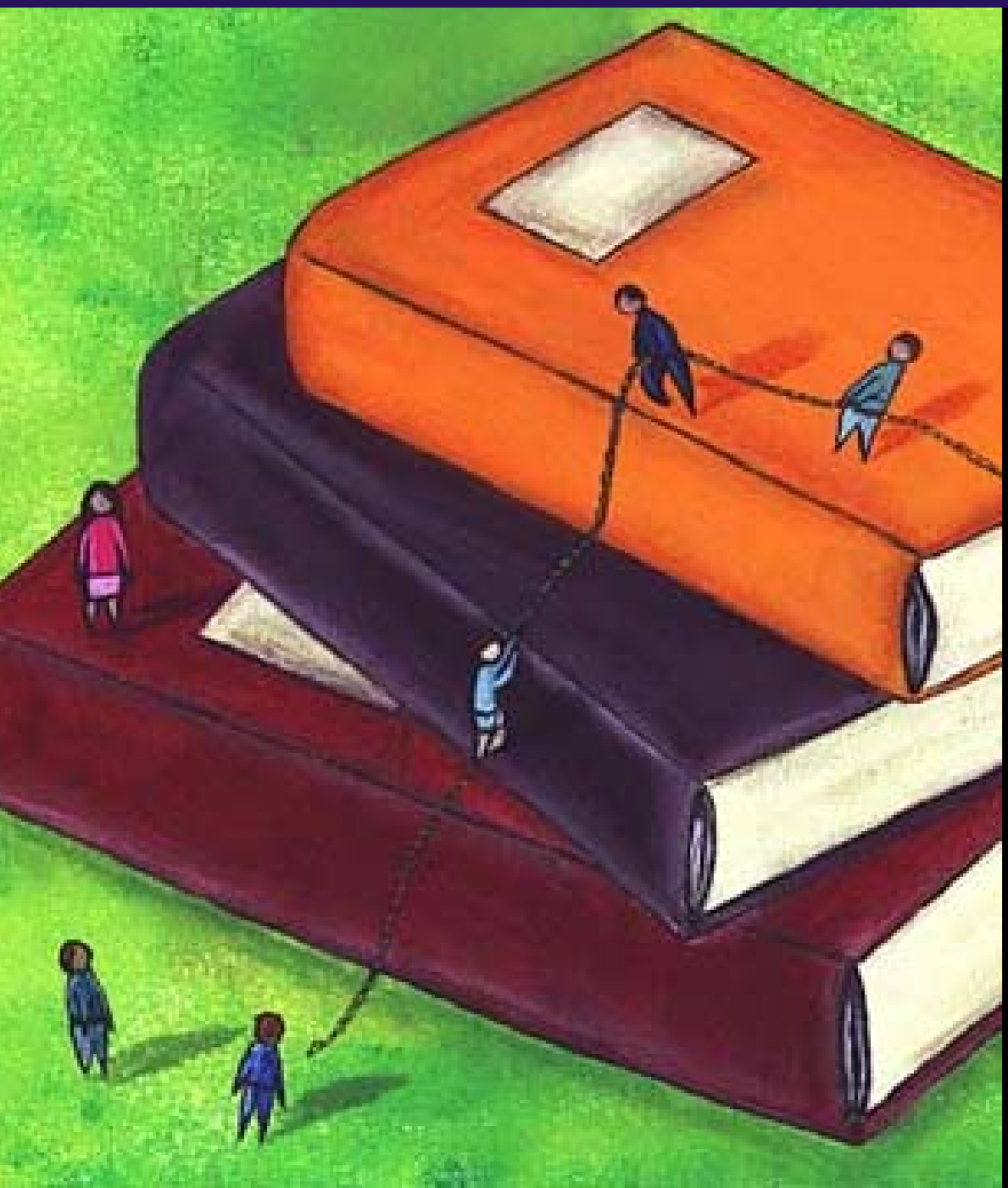
ADOLESCENT LITERACY WALK-THROUGH FOR PRINCIPALS

A Guide for Instructional Leaders



CENTER ON INSTRUCTION

ADOLESCENT LITERACY WALK-THROUGH FOR PRINCIPALS

A Guide for Instructional Leaders

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CENTER ON INSTRUCTION

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Many states have begun to incorporate adolescent literacy goals into their plans for raising student achievement.

Although the most recent report of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007) revealed positive growth in reading achievement for both fourth and eighth-grade students from 1992 to 2007, this growth occurred in numbers of students performing at or above the *Basic* level; there was no meaningful increase in student performance at or above the *Proficient* level. NAEP reading scores are based on a definition of reading that involves developing a general understanding of written texts, interpreting texts, and using texts for different purposes. *Basic* represents partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at a given grade; *Proficient* involves solid academic performance and demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter. The 2007 NAEP results report that a startling 27% of eighth graders and 34% of fourth graders do not even have the basic skills necessary for grade-level reading; they score *Below Basic*. Another 34% of fourth graders and 43% of eighth graders score *Basic*, still not skilled enough to achieve *Proficiency*.

Many states have begun to incorporate adolescent literacy goals into their plans for raising student achievement. This requires going beyond the customary focus on reading instruction in the primary grades toward more extensive literacy plans that address academic literacy development in grades four through twelve (Snow, Martin, & Berman, 2008). These literacy plans offer guidance, incentives, and support to districts and schools for extending the state literacy focus through secondary school.

With the implementation of school-, district-, and statewide reform efforts to improve student reading achievement, the principal's ability to influence

literacy instruction has become increasingly important. In most situations, this leadership role must include others who share leadership responsibilities, but school-level leadership is critical to increasing the consistency and quality of classroom instruction. Research has shown that when principals or other school leaders spend more time in classrooms, observing and conferencing with teachers, teacher performance will improve (Frase, Downey, & Canciamilla, 1999).

One challenge states face is ensuring that school leaders have tools and training to be effective in their roles as literacy leaders in their buildings (Glasman & Nevo, 1988). The present document was prepared to assist technical assistance providers in their work with states to improve educational policy and practice in adolescent literacy by offering guidance on using a principal's reading walk-through as part of effective literacy leadership practices.

The purpose of this *Adolescent Literacy Walk-Through for Principals (ALWP)* is to help principals monitor and support adolescent literacy instruction in their schools more effectively. To meet the goals of improving adolescent literacy in grades four through twelve, principals must be familiar with what literacy instruction should include and how to assess the quality of classroom literacy instruction quickly and effectively. The *ALWP* can be used to build a secondary school leader's literacy knowledge and to provide guidelines for structuring schoolwide professional development. As they work with teachers to improve instruction, school leaders could use this guide to help monitor literacy instruction in (1) late elementary school, (2) content-area classes in middle and high school, and (3) intervention groups or classes. The information gathered may be useful in planning and implementing ongoing professional development to support effective literacy instruction in individual classrooms and across grade levels and subject areas.

This document assumes more than a beginning level of knowledge of reading and reading instruction. It summarizes research in adolescent literacy instruction and provides a resource to help convey the messages of state policy and research-based reading instruction through templates that principals may use. This *ALWP* is offered as a scaffold to build principals' understanding of scientifically based reading instruction, both as a means for gathering information about the quality of literacy and reading intervention instruction in a school, and as a data collection guide for planning targeted professional development and resource allocation. Policies and materials to support policies

can influence classroom implementation when (1) teachers have opportunity to learn what the policy means for their practice, (2) there is coherent interpretation within the state framework of policies, but also from the classroom to the state level, and (3) support is available for innovation, even when it requires considerable effort (Cohen & Hill, 2001).

This *ALWP* can fit into a state's effort to improve reading instruction as a tool to support the implementation of policies that call for scientifically based reading instruction in secondary schools. In a review of cases of turnaround schools that quickly improved student achievement, several recommendations support the idea of a principal's reading walk-through (Herman et al., 2008). First, such a walk-through signals strong leadership for instructional change by making the school leader highly visible in classrooms. Second, the principal's reading walk-through may help maintain a consistent focus on improving instruction by establishing priority areas for instructional focus and strengthening teaching and improving learning in those areas. Third, it may play a role in professional development based on analyses of achievement and instruction by helping states build a common vocabulary to support discussions and expectations for reading practices in adolescent literacy instruction.

In a review of cases of turnaround schools that quickly improved student achievement, several recommendations support the idea of a principal's reading walk-through.

We first offer a brief history of the classroom walk-through (CWT), a tool that has been widely used to improve instruction, then provide a few examples of CWT models, along with some challenges involved in using walk-throughs effectively. Next, we introduce our concept of a principal's walk-through for adolescent literacy instruction (grades 4–12), including a section for reading interventions in grades 6–12. We offer brief descriptions of the elements of instruction that research suggests will improve overall student reading achievement. For each element, or category, of instruction we also provide brief classroom examples of what a principal might expect to see in the classroom. Finally, we offer sample *ALWP* templates for states, districts, and schools to use or adapt.

HISTORY OF THE CLASSROOM WALK-THROUGH

We offer here a brief history of one tool that has been widely used to improve instruction, the classroom walk-through (CWT), and some examples of CWT models currently in use. Although there is no empirical research on the use of walk-throughs for improving adolescent literacy instruction, current research on improving reading instruction suggests that a link between instruction and student achievement is forged by effective principals who engage in sound instructional leadership behaviors (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004) and that school leaders need to be highly visible in classrooms (Marzano, 2004).

The classroom walk-through is a structured observation undertaken by the principal or other school leaders or teams who visit classrooms frequently to look at instructional practices and student learning. This brief visit is separate from the formal teacher evaluation process. The walk-through was never intended as an evaluative tool; instead, it is intended to serve as a catalyst for creating a collaborative school environment. Such environments are characterized by common, clear expectations for teaching and learning by staff members, including both teachers and principals, who participate in reflective dialogues about their work. First introduced in the business world as *management by walking around* (MBWA), the formal walk-through process created by Hewlett-Packard in the 1970s was intended to train managers in developmental management skills and make them visible to employees (Peters & Waterman, 1984). Research by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman revealed that the managers of the most successful companies in America stayed close to the customers and workers; they were involved in the daily routines of the business.

Educators extended this idea in a variety of ways over the past twenty years in educational CWTs focused on a range of instructional categories such as curriculum, instructional routines, student engagement, student behavior, and the physical classroom environment. In these CWTs, leaders gather and use data to inform decisions about professional development and plans for school improvement, and to provide feedback and instructional support for an entire faculty and to individual teachers. Four models of CWTs and how they are used in schools are described below.

FOUR MODELS OF CLASSROOM WALK-THROUGHS

MODEL 1

The Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through

According to Carolyn Downey, co-author of *The Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through: Changing School Supervisory Practice One Teacher at a Time*, a principal's primary responsibility is to be an instructional leader who promotes student achievement (Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, & Poston, 2004). This responsibility requires principals to become familiar with what is happening in classrooms by spending time visiting those classrooms. They must further spend time in conversation with their staff, engaging teachers in collaborative, reflective dialogue. With this leadership responsibility as the impetus, Downey and her colleagues designed a two- to three-minute classroom walk-through to help principals conduct short, focused, informal observations of curriculum and instruction. Not an evaluation, this model is meant to provide a structure for gathering information in order to foster and facilitate reflective thinking and collaboration. Paper records are not kept, and no checklist is used. The goal of each brief observation is to prompt a useful suggestion or thought that might improve practice; each observation is an opportunity for feedback and teacher reflection. Downey recommends intermittent follow-up, with feedback given only when the principal knows it will prompt reflective inquiry on the part of the teacher. The desired result is a reflective conversation that leads to professional growth for the teacher and promotes a culture of high work performance and self-generated change (Downey et al., 2004).

MODEL 2

Three Cs and an E

The Spokane School District (Sather, 2004) has implemented a process in which central office staff and building administrators together conduct walk-throughs to look for "three Cs and an E": **C**urriculum content being taught, level of expected **C**ognitive ability according to Bloom's taxonomy, classroom and lesson **C**ontext, and evidence of student **E**ngagement. Teachers receive feedback in the form of the walk-through committee's shared perceptions and questions designed to encourage the teachers to think deeply about their teaching strategies and curriculum. Principals share their perceptions with the teachers as well, often providing reflective questions to prompt a continuing

dialogue about teaching practices. The purpose of these walk-throughs is to provide a snapshot of a group of classrooms that will inform supervisors of the demands and challenges in their schools.

MODEL 3

Data Analysis by Walking Around

A unique application of the walk-through process is in place in the Palisades School District in Philadelphia (Barnes, Miller, & Dennis, 2001). This district has developed a biannual walk-through (fall and spring) whose purpose is to improve the core of educational practice. Teachers, administrators, parents, and educators from nearby districts gather as a team of 25 interviewers to conduct a walk-through of a school. After meeting with the principal, reviewing the data collection process, and confirming the schedule, each interviewer is assigned to specific classrooms to select and individually interview approximately 20 students. After the interviews, the team gathers to compile observations and summarize comments for presentation to the school's faculty. Data given to the principal may be used later to adjust teaching strategies or to plan professional development. Each walk-through has a districtwide focus on expectations for learning, linking classroom practice to what students are expected to learn (e.g., use of graphic organizers in content-area classrooms), and participants look for specific evidence to support these expectations.

MODEL 4

Data in a Day (DiaD)

In a best practices study (National Center for Educational Accountability, 2005) in California's Central Union High School District, Data in a Day (DiaD) is used for 25-minute classroom observations four times per year. This instrument was developed to help improve instruction and to collect evidence of what is going on in the classroom. Visitation teams of two, comprising administrators, teachers familiar with the instrument, and teachers learning about it, use DiaD to count frequencies and note evidence in five categories: instructional practices, engagement, levels of thinking (using Bloom's taxonomy), the connection between the teaching and curriculum standards, and the classroom climate. The five categories are explicitly defined so that team members can note occurrences with some degree of fidelity.

After the team agrees on what it observed, the counts are tallied and graphed and the results are shared in grade-level, content-area, or schoolwide faculty meetings. Confidentiality is maintained since the teams discuss individual classroom data only with the teacher who is observed. Aggregate scores are shared with each department and used to help focus school improvement, including plans for professional development. The DiaD process includes goal setting, scheduled observations, new teacher training on the instrument and the process, and dissemination of information gathered. It is intended to be used as a collaborative learning tool for school improvement.

These examples illustrate a variety of formats, time frames, and purposes for a classroom walk-through, all of which include a principal or administrator. In the past, administrators typically visited classrooms two to three times per year, following an evaluation protocol prescribed by state or district policy. Today's administrators are "learning leaders" who also participate in collaborative professional learning experiences to improve teaching and learning in their schools. One benefit of advancing to the use of more frequent walk-throughs is that principals become more familiar with the school's curriculum and teachers' instructional practices, teaching patterns, and decisions teachers are making (Downey et al., 2004). They are better able to gauge the school climate, student engagement, and the cross-curricular concepts that are part of teaching. These visits aid in developing a team atmosphere when teachers and administrators use them as a basis for collaborative work that examines instruction, student motivation, and achievement and establishes a common goal for professional development. Frequent, short, unscheduled walk-throughs can be used to gather information that will in turn be used to encourage focused, reflective, and collaborative adult learning. The results provide a way for schools to develop and use a common language for quality instruction, establish clear and consistent expectations for the principal's presence in classrooms, and provide a way for principals to communicate their expectations to staff members and the school community.

Along with new accountability practices, the traditional model of the teacher operating independently behind closed doors has been changing, and classroom doors are opening to literacy coaches, teacher mentors, peer teachers, and principals. Impelled by a range of school improvement policies, schools are gradually becoming places of public practices (Bloom, 2007). Properly implemented, classroom walk-throughs can give principals and teachers

information to support and extend teacher learning as a means to increase student achievement. Walk-throughs also promote dialogue with and among teachers as they become responsible and self-analytical, continuously improving their practice.

CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM WALK-THROUGHS

A number of practical challenges can make it difficult to implement classroom walk-throughs effectively. They include:

- ***Agreement about their use from all participants.*** It is essential that all walk-through procedures be clearly communicated, that all stakeholders know what to expect, and that the roles of each participant are visible and consistent. Lack of attention to the significance of teacher buy-in can produce hostility and distrust. When classroom walk-throughs are conducted without a predetermined focus or purpose, there is the added danger of collecting superficial data that are not used (Downey et al., 2004).
- ***Union restrictions.*** Collective bargaining is controlled by state law with variation from state to state (Sergiovanni, Burlingame, Coombs, & Thurston, 1987). Teacher evaluation is often an important bargaining issue and some districts or states are restricted by union mandates about what can or cannot be recorded or annotated in a classroom. Conflict could arise between evaluating for improvement purposes and evaluating for continued employment. One alternative in states with these kinds of restrictions is to conduct a walk-through without using a written format.
- ***Time constraints.*** School administrators daily face urgent matters requiring their immediate attention. Research shows that principals spend very small portions of their day in classrooms or working with teachers on curriculum and instructional problems (Frase, 1998). Dedicating time for conducting classroom walk-throughs, along with the follow-up components of providing reflective feedback, and encouraging open, ongoing, and collaborative grade-level, subject-area, or whole-staff dialogue present further challenges to fitting classroom walk-throughs into a principal's duties. Because principals are overloaded with demands on their time, observations are more likely to happen if they are scheduled as part of the daily routine.
- ***Training.*** Professional preparation for both teachers and administrators has not typically included the classroom walk-through approach, so careful

consideration must be given to developing and supporting the practice within a school climate. Training, facilitation, and release time for teachers and staff are considerations for preparation. Additionally, some process should accommodate training new teachers who enter school after the initial training.

- ***Teacher beliefs.*** More specific to our concept of a principal's reading walk-through, one challenge in the effort to improve literacy instruction in secondary schools arises in the belief systems of the teachers themselves (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991). Historically, the priority of middle and high school teachers has been academic content; they do not consider improving literacy to be part of their role (Mallette, Henk, Waggoner, & DeLaney, 2005). Furthermore, most secondary teachers have received little or no pre-service coursework in methods for teaching literacy skills (Jacobs, 2008). For a principal's reading walk-though to be effective, teachers must understand that the process will not be used as an evaluation, but rather as a tool to help them improve their instructional practices. As instructional leader, the principal must undertake the responsibility for ensuring that academic literacy instruction is provided in all classrooms in an accepting atmosphere. The information gathered in a series of reading walk-throughs can provide cumulative evidence of instructional strengths and weaknesses that can then be used to plan professional development and to evaluate its effects.

THE ADOLESCENT LITERACY WALK-THROUGH (*ALWP*) FOR PRINCIPALS

The concept of the *Adolescent Literacy Walk-Through for Principals (ALWP)* offered in this publication is similar in scope to the classroom walk-through processes described above. However, it has a specific focus on effective academic literacy instruction and the expectation that research-based literacy instruction will be consistently seen in all classrooms. It includes reading and/or intervention classrooms and content-area classrooms with a disciplinary focus on science, social studies, math, or literature. Table 1 on page 14 shows the areas of focus for the four models described and for the *ALWP*. Note the *ALWP*'s unique focus on specific academic literacy instruction.

While limited to three- to five-minute observations, the *ALWP*'s brevity is balanced by more frequent visits. Over time, and within subject areas and grade levels, a cumulative overview may reveal instructional patterns of strength and weakness (Downey et al., 2004). While many walk-through formats are designed to gather information pertaining to a number of areas (specific state standards, class size, grouping format, classroom configuration, behavior management, instructional materials, and classroom environment), we designed the *ALWP* to focus only on academic literacy instruction.

In our earlier guidance document on instruction in adolescent literacy (Torgesen et al., 2007), we described our focus on academic literacy:

> *Academic literacy is usually defined as the kind of reading proficiency required to construct the meaning of content-area texts and literature encountered in school. It also encompasses the kind of reading proficiencies typically assessed on state-level accountability measures, such as the ability to make inferences from text, to learn new vocabulary from context, to link ideas across texts, and to identify and summarize the most important ideas or content within a text. Put simply, this is the kind of reading skills that students need to be successful in middle and high school content classrooms. Notice that the definition of academic literacy includes not only the ability to read text for initial understanding but also the ability to think about its*

meaning in order to answer questions that may require the student to make inferences or draw conclusions. Although writing is also an important aspect of literacy, this document focuses primarily on reading skills.

Instruction in academic literacy must be provided by content-area teachers because texts are used pervasively in these classrooms to convey important information (Alvermann & Moore, 1984; Torgesen et al., 2007). Content-area teachers have the best knowledge of the reading, writing, listening, discussion, and deep thinking skills that are required to understand texts in their content area. Content-area teachers must not only ensure that students learn the essential content in their disciplines, but also help students acquire the sophisticated reading strategies and thinking processes that are essential to comprehending the increasingly complex text they encounter in middle and high school.

During the years from grades four through twelve, successful students develop the skills that will help them become independent and strategic readers, such as the ability to make inferences from text, to learn new vocabulary from context, to link ideas across texts, and to identify and summarize the most important ideas of content within a text (Torgesen et al., 2007). Content areas often present different literacy demands, although they can share some academic language (Schleppegrell, 2004). While some important general reading strategies are useful across content areas, there is also an emerging consensus about the existence of other text processing strategies that have particular application in specific disciplinary domains (Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, & Morris, 2008; Mosborg, 2002; Leong & Jerred, 2001). Comprehension of content-area text requires students to approach different text with different lenses (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). While there is no formal evidence base to support this approach, emerging research in this area suggests some generalizations. For example, math reading requires a precision of meaning; science learning requires the transformation of information from one form to another; and students of history must make careful note of the author or source when reading and choose and analyze evidence.

The research base from *Academic Literacy Instruction for Adolescents* (Torgesen et al., 2007) informed the descriptions of effective literacy instruction in the *ALWP*. Research has documented effective instructional practices that

contribute to growth in academic literacy for adolescents. These practices include (1) building essential content knowledge, including vocabulary; (2) explicit instruction and supported practice in the use of comprehension strategies; (3) sustained discussion of reading content; and (4) a focus on motivation and engagement with reading (Torgesen et al., 2007). The instructional routines to support these practices will not simply be introduced at the beginning of a year or course, but will be used throughout the year.

The *ALWP* is intended to provide upper elementary and secondary school principals with guidance for recognizing effective academic literacy instruction in content-area and intervention classrooms and for gathering evidence to inform the organization and implementation of professional development to support effective literacy instruction. While it is clear that content-area teachers cannot be expected to teach struggling readers basic reading skills, they can help students develop the knowledge, reading strategies, and thinking skills to understand and learn from increasingly complex text in their content areas.

While it is clear that content-area teachers cannot be expected to teach struggling readers basic reading skills, they can help students develop the knowledge, reading strategies, and thinking skills to understand and learn from increasingly complex text in their content areas.

Beginning on page 16, we describe the effective instructional practices that contribute to growth in academic literacy for adolescents in grades 4–12. The practices are grouped by category: Vocabulary and Content Knowledge Instruction, Comprehension Strategy Instruction, Discussion of Reading Content, and Motivation and Engagement, and are accompanied by notes on the research background and descriptions of classroom examples.

This section is followed on page 29 by descriptions of advanced word study and fluency instruction that research suggests might benefit both students in grades 4–5 and struggling older readers. On page 37, we then discuss intervention protocols and instructional materials for intervention classes in grades 6–12 designed to augment the effective instructional processes found in content-area classrooms with deeper and more focused instruction in word study, fluency, and vocabulary. Reproducible *ALWP* templates begin on page 43.

Table 1: *ALWP* Compared with Four Other Walk-Throughs

	Three-Minute CWT	Three Cs and an E	Data Analysis by Walking Around	Data in a Day (DiaD)	*ALWP*
Time	3 minutes	Not specified	Not specified	25 minutes	3–5 minutes
Purpose	Gather information to prompt a suggestion to improve teaching practice	Develop a snapshot of a group of classrooms at a particular time	Improve core of educational practice	Collect evidence of classroom procedures	Recognize effective academic literacy instruction Inform plans for professional development to support literacy instruction
Goal	To encourage reflective collaboration around teaching practice	To inform supervisors of demands and challenges within school sites	To adjust teaching strategies To inform plans for professional development	To improve instruction	To improve student literacy outcomes through effective literacy instruction
Who	Principals	Principals and central office staff	Teachers, principals, parents, educators in teams of 25	Principals and teacher	Principals
Observe	Curriculum and instruction	Curriculum content Level of Bloom's taxonomy Lesson context Student engagement	Personal interviews with students	Count frequency of: Instructional practices Engagement Levels of Bloom's taxonomy Curriculum standards Classroom climate	Research-based academic literacy instruction in grades 4–12 classrooms: Vocabulary and content-knowledge instruction Comprehension strategy instruction Discussion of reading content Motivation and engagement Research-based academic literacy instruction in 6–12 reading intervention classrooms: –Advanced word study –Reading fluency –Intervention protocols –Instructional materials

Table 1: *ALWP* Compared with Four Other Walk-Throughs (continued)

	Three-Minute CWT	Three Cs and an E	Data Analysis by Walking Around	Data in a Day (DiaD)	*ALWP*
Records	None	None	Notes	Observation form	*ALWP* template
Follow-up	Intermittent: suggest questions that promote reflection	Committee's perceptions and questions presented to teachers	Summarized comments presented to faculty	Results are tallied, graphed, and shared in grade-level, content-area, or schoolwide faculty meetings as focus for school improvement and planning professional development	Frequent repeated observations Principal feedback shared individually with teachers and presented collectively to faculty Results are used to plan professional development

ALWP INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

In this section, pages 16–28, we take a close look at four parts of a typical Adolescent Literacy Walk-Through that would be used in grades 4–5 classrooms, grades 6–12 content-area classrooms, and grades 6–12 reading intervention classrooms:

- **Page 17**
  Vocabulary and Content Knowledge Instruction
- **Page 21**
  Comprehension Strategy Instruction
- **Page 25**
  Discussion of Reading Content
- **Page 27**
  Motivation and Engagement

See the sample templates, beginning on page 44, that can be used as instruments in actual principal walk-throughs.

This section focuses on the instructional practices highlighted in the *ALWP*, listing key indicators, discussing the research background for each, and concluding with brief classroom examples.

Each instructional practice is prefaced by the statement that the teacher *provides the students with explicit instruction, including clear goals and directions, modeling, and guided and independent practice.* Research on features of effective instruction to improve student learning indicates that teachers must provide clear directions and explanations that help students learn to apply appropriate strategies to increase their understanding of what they are reading (Mastropieri, Scruggs, & Graetz, 2003). One example is found in the gradual release model of instruction, or scaffolding (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The teacher models strategy use by showing how he or she would try to understand the text. This modeling is followed by guided practice, which allows students to confirm what they have learned with guidance from the teacher. Teacher guidance during the learning of a new strategy will ensure that students are practicing a skill or learning a concept correctly. Some students may need numerous opportunities to practice with guidance from the teacher. Once students have mastered the strategy in guided practice, they are ready to move on to independent practice opportunities. The goal of independent practice is for students to develop mastery of a strategy or skill, including taking responsibility for determining whether or not they are applying the strategy appropriately (i.e., self-monitoring). Once the strategy or skill becomes a habit, it will be easier for students to generalize its application to text in many content areas.

Vocabulary and Content Knowledge Instruction

Use in grades 4–5, 6–12 content-area, and 6–12 reading intervention classrooms

Research Background

VISITS 1	2	3	Vocabulary and Content Knowledge Instruction Indicators	NOTES & REFLECTION
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Builds student background knowledge	
			Teaches domain-specific vocabulary	
			Teaches all-purpose academic words	
			Teaches multisyllabic word reading strategies	
			Teaches content concepts	
			Teaches content facts	

A substantial body of research documents the influence of content knowledge and vocabulary on the comprehension of complex text (Hirsch, 2006). Invariably, students are better able to construct the meaning of text better when they have deep knowledge of the content area addressed in the text. Improvements in levels of adolescent literacy depend critically on improvements in how content-area teachers teach the vocabulary, concepts, and facts that are most important in their knowledge domains.

Building student background knowledge

Research has demonstrated that students with lower general verbal ability can comprehend and remember text as well as students of higher general verbal ability if they are equally familiar with and knowledgeable about the material they are listening to or reading (Schneider, Korkel, & Weinert, 1989). This is powerful evidence for the importance of helping students build background knowledge, or tapping their prior knowledge when teaching new concepts. When students are familiar with the topic of the text they are reading, they are better able to comprehend, think about, and remember new information.

Domain-specific and all-purpose academic words

Strong vocabulary develops through wide reading, direct teaching of high-utility words, instruction in how to learn words independently while reading, and instruction in activities that increase word consciousness (Graves, 2006). Each year students in upper elementary grades and above will encounter 10,000 or more new words, most of which are multisyllabic, in their content-area texts (Nagy, Berninger, & Abbott, 2006). Student learning of new vocabulary after third grade depends largely on exposure to new words during reading

(Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). Each content area has its own specialized vocabulary. Research suggests that explicit and systematic instruction in carefully selected words relevant to content (domain-specific words) should be part of efforts to increase adolescent reading proficiency (Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986); these academic words may be specific content-area words or all-purpose academic words. All-purpose academic words (Snow, Porche, Tabors, & Harris, 2007) include words for thinking (e.g., *hypothesize, evidence, criterion*), classifying (e.g., *vehicle, utensil, process*), communication (e.g., *emphasize*, *affirm*, *negotiate*), and expressing relationships (e.g., *dominate, correspond, locate*) and may be found within and across content-area classes.

Multisyllabic word reading

Morphologically complex words are more common in text than in spoken language, and especially in the academic language found in content-area textbooks (Nagy et al., 2006). To compound this difficulty, the number of morphologically complex words increases with each grade. Students may need additional strategies to deal with these complexities, especially in content-area texts, which may have spellings unique to word origin, complex word structures, and unfamiliar, low-frequency words (Henry, 2003). In content-area instruction, teachers should focus on teaching base words, prefixes and suffixes, and compound words related to the new content-area vocabulary introduced. Vocabulary instruction in the content areas should call attention to morpheme patterns that specifically relate to content vocabulary. For example, Latin words are found in literature as well as informational text and are most often composed of a root and a prefix or suffix (e.g., *intuition, antebellum*, and *distorted*) (Henry, 2005). Students begin to read Greek-based words in their science and math textbooks around the third grade (Henry, 2005). These words are often formed by joining roots to make a word (e.g., *anthropoid, amphibious, diameter*, and *paramecium*). Instruction in frequently used morphemes will build students' vocabulary, spelling abilities, and decoding strategies.

Because it is not possible for teachers to directly teach every word that a student needs to know, it becomes important for teachers to prioritize instruction. Content-area vocabulary instruction will serve students best if it focuses on words that students will see often and across several subjects. Words that are especially important for comprehending textbook material, literature, and academic lectures and conversations are referred to as all-purpose academic words (Snow et al., 2007) and should be taught across the

curriculum. An effective teacher will preview text that students are going to read and pre-teach academic and domain-specific words that students must understand in order to comprehend that text. Another means of prioritizing vocabulary instruction is to select words based on how important they are to understanding the content that students are expected to read.

Content concepts and facts

Different academic disciplines require different literacy skills, such as understanding conventions, text structures, vocabulary, and content-specific ways of thinking and writing (National Adolescent Literacy Coalition [NALC], 2007). If students are to master these literacy skills and become critical readers within their disciplines, then teachers need to offer students explicit details about how to be strategic readers (Jacobs, 2008). While content-area teachers may not feel they are qualified to teach reading skills, they are clearly the experts in their content areas.

Research has shown that by adopting a few well-specified instructional routines, teachers can improve the way their students learn essential content concepts and facts in all subject areas (Bulgren, Schumaker, & Deshler, 1994). There are many instructional routines, including a variety of comprehension strategies and graphic organizers in which teachers actively and explicitly guide students in comprehension of subject matter, that are significantly more effective than the customary lecture format (Bulgren, Lenz, Schumaker, Deshler, & Marquis, 2002). Content-area teachers can integrate literacy instruction by clearly defining their discipline's essential literacy skills, and providing specific strategies to facilitate content-area learning. By teaching content with the support of specific learning strategies, they will improve students' comprehension, vocabulary, and study skills (Jacobs, 2008).

One common misconception is that every chapter in a textbook must be covered during the school year. However, the research referenced in this section suggests that curriculum guidelines integrate essential content and skills through their relationships to big ideas or central issues within each discipline. In effective vocabulary and background instruction, teachers identify key concepts, vocabulary, and principles that represent the most essential information in a unit of study, inform students of the learning goals, and monitor students' acquisition of key vocabulary, concepts, facts, and ideas.

Classroom Examples

In the course of a three- to five-minute walk-through, a principal will not be likely to see all the parts of the integration of essential content and skills; however, over the course of several walk-throughs in the same teacher's classroom, and across several classrooms or disciplines, a principal will see a trend toward or away from teaching the big ideas. Teachers will incorporate background knowledge-building activities prior to introducing new lesson topics and teach a range of vocabulary necessary for understanding the big ideas in a given domain. Specific content-related vocabulary (i.e., the challenging words found in science and social studies classes) will be taught through direct instruction that focuses on simple definitions, examples and non-examples, and the use of semantic organizers that reflect the likely source and possible uses of a new word. Additionally, it would be beneficial to see a schoolwide effort to teach academic vocabulary words across all content areas (Marzano, 2004). A principal would expect to see the use of graphic organizers suitable for the content concepts and facts, such as semantic feature analysis in science, cause-effect organizers in social studies.

Comprehension Strategy Instruction

Use in grades 4–5, 6–12 content-area, and 6–12 reading intervention classrooms

Research Background

VISITS 1	2	3	Comprehension Strategy Instruction Indicators	NOTES & REFLECTION
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Teaches comprehension monitoring	
			Explicitly teaches or models the use of:	
			– graphic organizers	
			– semantic organizers	
			– summarization/paraphrasing	
			– question asking	
			– question generating	
			– knowledge of text structure	
			– knowledge of text features	
			– making inferences	

Comprehension monitoring

A comprehension strategy is any activity a student might engage in to enhance comprehension or repair it when it breaks down. In fourth grade and beyond, students learn how to be strategic readers. They expand their abilities to monitor their own reading comprehension and make changes when understanding breaks down (Langer, 1982). Teachers must provide clear directions and explanations that help students learn strategies they can apply appropriately to increase their understanding of what they are reading.

Comprehension strategies

Reading comprehension involves using a variety of reading strategies before, during, and after reading a passage. Because different subjects may require different literacy skills, reading is not the same in all content areas. However, several categories of comprehension strategy instruction identified by the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000) have general applicability across content areas and genres. They include cooperative learning, comprehension monitoring, the use of graphic and semantic organizers, recognizing story structure, question generation, question answering, summarization and paraphrasing, and combining these strategies concurrently to enhance comprehension.

The National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) found considerable scientific support for the effectiveness of teachers' providing explicit instruction in multiple strategy use. One key technique is the gradual release model of

instruction (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The teacher models strategy use by showing how he or she would try to understand the text. Teacher modeling is followed by guided practice, which allows students to confirm what they have learned with guidance from the teacher. Teacher guidance during the learning of a new strategy will ensure that students are practicing a skill or learning a concept correctly. Some students may need numerous opportunities to practice with guidance from the teacher. Once students have mastered the strategy in guided practice, they are ready to move on to independent practice opportunities. The goal of independent practice is for students to develop mastery of a strategy or skill, including taking responsibility for determining whether or not they are applying the strategy appropriately (i.e., self-monitoring). Once the strategy or skill becomes habitual, it will be easier for students to generalize their new knowledge to reading in any class.

Other research-supported strategies include, but are not limited to, selective rereading, using explicit knowledge of text structure and text features to aid understanding, and inference and prediction (Snowling & Hulme, 2005). Countless examples of comprehension strategies can be found in books, articles, professional development, and online. For examples see *Adolescent Literacy Resources: An Annotated Bibliography—Second Edition 2009*, available on the Center on Instruction's website: http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/COI%20Annotated%20Biblio.pdf. One rich source of information developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (2007), the *Adolescent Literacy Toolkit*, provides many useful, content-specific examples of the research-supported comprehension strategies mentioned above. One caution is to avoid introducing too many strategies at one time. Evidence supports the use of combinations of a *few* reading strategies in natural learning situations (NICHD, 2000).

Some students may lack understanding of text structure, or the way ideas are organized in text. Because content-area textbooks contain unique language that is often dense and technical, filled with formulas, symbols, and complex sentences, teachers must figure out how to provide students with explicit instruction about text structures relevant to their discipline (e.g., cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution, temporal/sequence, story grammar). This instruction will draw students' attention to a text's organization and help them analyze how the structure of the text follows specific ways of thinking and reasoning (Fang, 2006). Attention to text features (e.g., captions, illustrations, diagrams, headings, titles, italic or bold words, glossary, index) may help focus

students on important and key ideas. Instruction on text structure should precede readings, and be a part of a teacher's general introduction to any new text or text type.

To demonstrate high levels of proficiency when reading both fiction and nonfiction, students must be able to think deeply about questions that address such concepts as theme, plot structures, multiple points of view, causal relationships, and logical connections. Simply answering teacher questions—the instructional routine regularly observed in most classrooms—is not enough for students to learn how to think effectively about text. Instruction in identifying types of questions and how to answer questions in all disciplines and all content-area classrooms is necessary for many students to learn how to find answers available in the text. Instruction in how to generate good questions about text also teaches readers to self-question while reading a text.

Classroom Examples

Classroom teachers demonstrate, model, and guide students in their use of comprehension strategies during reading. As students practice using strategies with teacher assistance, they will gradually internalize the strategies and use them independently. A principal observing a classroom might expect to see a teacher modeling his or her own awareness of the difficulties encountered while reading text. In guiding students to monitor their own comprehension, the teacher may initially think aloud to illustrate his or her own thought processes. This helps students understand that figuring out a difficult text requires effortful work and helps them begin to develop their own inner dialogue as they read. Students will then use the same method to identify the causes of their own comprehension difficulties. This scaffolding of instruction will not happen in one lesson, but may take place over many days; in a three- to five-minute walk-through a principal will likely see only parts of this instructional routine.

Teachers will explicitly instruct students in the use of a variety of graphic and semantic organizers and comprehension strategies, modeling their use before asking students to use them collaboratively, first with the teacher, then in small student groups or pairs, and eventually on their own. Students will learn why these organizers or strategies are useful, how to use them flexibly, and which work best in specific learning situations or subject areas. Strategy use is most meaningful when it is presented as the means to an end; the end

is reading comprehension and increased learning in the content area. Some instructional strategies included in this category may be used in all content area classrooms; others may be most useful in specific disciplines. For example, in a science classroom, a principal would expect to see students gathering and interpreting data, making predictions, and conducting experiments. Graphic organizers that help with data collection and analysis are regularly used in science classrooms. In a social studies classroom, students will use strategies to facilitate comprehension of relationships and connections from one period of history to another.

Discussion of Reading Content

Use in grades 4–5, 6–12 content-area, and 6–12 reading intervention classrooms

VISITS 1	2	3	Discussion of Reading Content Indicators	NOTES & REFLECTION
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Provides opportunities for discussion-oriented instruction of text subject matter including assisting and encouraging students in:	
			– taking a position	
			– using others' questions and comments to build discussion	
			– expressing opinions	
			– making connections across time and subjects	
			– questioning the author	

Research Background

Research supports the importance of discussion for promoting deep comprehension during classroom instruction (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran, 2003). Most studies that examined instruction in comprehension strategies point out the importance of practicing those strategies in the context of discussions about the meaning of texts. Discussion plays an important part in helping students move from a literal and shallower level of knowledge to more thoughtful participation, which serves to build their ability to generalize ways of thinking. Although much of observed classroom discussion is characterized by teacher-structured factual questioning, text discussions structured by students have proven beneficial for student learning gains. Wolf and colleagues (Wolf, Crosson, & Resnick, 2004) used classroom observations to investigate the effects of the quality of teacher and student talk on the rigor of reading comprehension. Their results suggest the importance of explicit instruction in the use of appropriate turn-taking in classroom discussion, ensuring that all students are engaged, and the need for teachers to increase opportunities for students to elaborate their reasoning during classroom discussion. Instructional approaches such as Reciprocal Teaching (Palinscar & Brown, 1984), Collaborative Strategic Reading (Klingner, Vaughn, & Schumm, 1998), Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (Guthrie et al., 2004), and Questioning the Author (Beck, McKeown, Hamilton, & Kucan, 1997) have successfully demonstrated the value of extended discussions of text meaning in improving reading comprehension for typical as well as struggling readers.

A teacher may lead and facilitate discussions by interpreting the questions, ideas, and connections that students produce, and by helping students listen to one another and connect to one another's ideas. Teachers and students will use

discussion (speaking, listening, responding to, and challenging one another) to uncover multiple perspectives that enrich their understanding of a text or topic. It is helpful for teachers to provide students with prompts (e.g., "I agree with," "I want to add to the comment," "I have more evidence for," "I have a question about") and rubrics or criteria to ensure that all students are engaged with and actively listening to the discussion (Adler & Rougle, 2005; Beck et al., 1997). Teachers will facilitate discussion by using open-ended "why" and "how" questions that elicit in-depth responses, and by using follow-up questions to extend conversation. Specific discussion formats may be used to provide for turn-taking and for students' taking on various roles, such as discussion leader, predictor, etc.

Classroom Examples

When looking for classroom discussion, a principal will expect to see students expanding upon, questioning, clarifying, or relating to another student's response; having sustained exchanges with the teacher or other students that go beyond simply answering teacher questions; presenting and defending their own interpretations and points of view; using text content, background knowledge, and reasoning to support interpretations and conclusions; and listening to the points of view and reasoned arguments of others.

Motivation and Engagement

Use in grades 4–5, 6–12 content-area, and 6–12 reading intervention classrooms

Research Background

VISITS 1	2	3	Motivation and Engagement Indicators	NOTES & REFLECTION
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Focuses students on important and interesting learning goals	
			Provides a range of activity choices	
			Provides interesting texts at multiple reading levels	
			Provides opportunities for student collaboration in discussion and assignments	
			Maintains a positive, rewarding classroom atmosphere	

Motivational support is crucial in keeping learners focused on learning at a period in their lives when many find school subjects irrelevant, boring, or unrewarding. Research (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004) has identified four instructional practices found to enhance motivation and engagement in reading: (1) providing interesting content goals for instruction, (2) providing choices and supporting student autonomy, (3) providing interesting texts to read, and (4) providing opportunities to collaborate with other students. These classroom practices complement and intersect with many of the practices involved in comprehension strategy instruction. Cooperative learning, the use of multiple strategies, and open and sustained discussion of content all provide students with collaborative opportunities that increase motivation and engagement.

As students transition from elementary to middle and high school, they are dramatically changing in many ways. Adolescents typically experience an increased desire for autonomy and social acceptance, are focused on identity issues and peer relationships, and begin to develop the ability to think in more abstract terms (Eccles et al.'s study as cited in Snow et al., 2007). Teachers can organize their instruction in ways that support these changes by giving students choices, involving students in setting their own goals, and allowing them to monitor their own progress.

Classroom Examples

While there are occasions when students work quietly on individual reading or writing assignments, a motivating classroom will more likely exhibit a lively and engaging atmosphere. Students will be actively involved in discussions and activities, sometimes led by the teacher and sometimes working in groups

or pairs. Cooperative and collaborative learning will be the rule and not the exception. While teachers cannot offer unlimited choices, they may offer choices within an assignment, choices of text, or choices of grouping partners. In addition, a diverse collection of materials to support instruction will include magazines, newspapers, videos, Internet resources, and related texts at varying levels of readability. Learning goals will be clearly stated, easily understood, and relevant to student interest.

ELEMENTS OF AN *ALWP* FOR GRADES 4–5 AND 6–12 READING INTERVENTION CLASSROOMS

In addition to the elements of instruction described for content-area teachers in middle and high school (powerful teaching of vocabulary and content, comprehension strategy instruction, extended discussions of text, and practices to increase motivation and engagement), teachers in the upper elementary school grades and middle and high school reading intervention classrooms may need to address other dimensions of instruction, such as advanced word study and fluency, for many of their students. These additional elements are explained in this section. This type of advanced word study will only be necessary for students in those classes whose individual assessment results indicate the need for additional instruction in word reading skills.

Along with content-area instruction to support literacy development, some students in grades 6–12 will require instruction to improve foundational reading skills. The elements of intervention and instructional materials presented in this section describe approaches that skilled reading intervention teachers may incorporate into instruction to address specific student needs.

In this section, pages 29–41, we take a close look at the parts of a typical *ALWP* for grades 4–5 classrooms and grades 6–12 reading intervention classrooms. While advanced word study instruction and reading fluency instruction are parts of both walk-throughs, intervention protocols and instructional materials pertain only to reading intervention walk-throughs.

Advanced Word Study Instruction

Use in grades 4–5 and 6–12 reading intervention classrooms

Research Background

VISITS 1	2	3	Advanced Word Study Instruction Indicators	NOTES & REFLECTION
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Based on individual student assessment data, the teacher provides instruction in word reading skills:	
			– consonant and sound spellings	
			– vowel sound spellings	
			– segmenting words into syllables	
			– identifying syllable types	
			– creating words using syllables	
			– learning base/root words	
			– recognizing inflections	
			– recognizing affixes (prefixes/suffixes)	

Advanced word study

While almost all students in grades four and above are proficient at reading single syllable words in text (e.g., *split, grand, more*), they encounter an increasing number of multisyllabic words (e.g., *integer, adversarial, dissolution*) that are potentially more challenging (Archer, Gleason, & Vachon, 2003). If students lack word recognition automaticity, it is important for them to learn how to decode words in units rather than letter-by-letter (Henry, 2003). Research demonstrates that older students who struggle with reading at the word level benefit from instruction in word study (Wexler, Edmonds, & Vaughn, 2008). At this level, instruction in word analysis and word recognition is often termed *advanced word study* (Curtis, 2004; Templeton, 2004). Students who have difficulty decoding words should receive instruction in advanced word study regardless of their grade. Advanced word study includes instruction in syllabication, morphology, and strategies for decoding multisyllabic words, plus vocabulary and spelling instruction (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2007). Students who become adept at these skills will be able to read words in text more accurately and fluently.

In order to identify recognizable word parts within long words, students must know that these words are made up of pronounceable word parts called *syllables* and that each syllable contains one vowel sound. Syllabication involves applying knowledge of the six syllable types (closed, open, vowel-consonant-e, vowel pair, vowel-r, and consonant-le) as well as some general guidelines about syllable division to decode multisyllabic words by breaking them into smaller units. For example, if a reader sees the unfamiliar word, vector, but determines

that it consists of two closed syllables, *vec-* and *-tor*, he can decode each syllable individually and then blend them together to form the word *vector*. This process can be helpful because smaller units or "chunks" of words are often more familiar and therefore more easily decoded (Henry, 2003; Moats, 2000; Shefelbine, 1990).

Morphological analysis is an alternative approach to decoding words. Morphology is the study of meaningful word parts (morphemes) and how they combine to form words (Moats, 2000). Learning morphemes helps students who struggle with word reading skills in fourth and fifth grades and beyond as they encounter more unfamiliar and morphologically complex words in textbooks as well as in spelling tasks (Green et al., 2003). Morphemes may be free, which means they can stand alone and have meaning (e.g., *turn*). These are sometimes referred to as base words. Morphemes may also be bound, which means they need to combine with other morphemes to make a word (e.g., *-im* in *impossible*). Bound morphemes are composed of prefixes, suffixes, and roots. Suffix morphemes are broken down further into inflectional and derivational. Inflectional suffixes change the number or verb tense (e.g., *-s* in *dogs*, *runs*). They are usually learned before or shortly upon entering elementary school and include: *-ed*, *-s*, *-es*, *-er, -est*, *-ing*. Derivational suffixes change the part of speech or role (e.g., *-logy* in *geology*) (Templeton, 2004). Explicit instruction in morphemes can add to more effective decoding and increased vocabulary development (Templeton, 2004).

Lessons and activities that teach strategies for decoding multisyllabic words can be useful to students as they encounter more unfamiliar multisyllabic words. One common strategy for decoding multisyllabic words is to identify any prefixes, suffixes, and the base word or root, decoding each individual part and then blending the parts together into the word. For example, a student encounters the word *antidemocratic* and identifies the prefix *-anti*, suffix *-ic*, and base word *democrat*. After identifying and decoding each part, the student blends the parts together to form the word *antidemocratic* (Moats, 2001). Advanced word analysis activities give students the opportunity to practice and reinforce these skills.

Classroom Examples

Three advanced word analysis activities for fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms and middle and high school reading intervention classrooms are instruction in

and practice with variant correspondences, syllable patterns, and morpheme structures. In the first, students practice identifying and producing words with different spelling patterns, often referred to as *variant correspondences*. It is important to note that vowel spellings are more difficult for students to identify and represent in writing because vowels have many more orthographic representations (letter combinations that represent the same vowel sound) than consonants (Treiman, 1993). In a second activity for reinforcing learning of syllable patterns, students practice segmenting syllables into words, identifying the six syllable types, and producing words using syllables. Finally, when learning morpheme structures, students practice identifying and producing words with base words, roots, and affixes (prefixes and suffixes). These foundational skills—an important part of the reading process—can be viewed in more detail by accessing the *Student Center Activities Grades 4–5 Teacher Resource Guide* available through the Florida Center for Reading Research at http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/G4-5/45TRGPartOne.pdf.

Reading Fluency Instruction

Use in grades 4–5 and 6–12 reading intervention classrooms

Research Background

VISITS 1	2	3	Reading Fluency Instruction Indicators	NOTES & REFLECTION
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Provides opportunities for reading fluency practice such as:	
			– repeated timed readings	
			– partner reading	
			– student-adult reading	
			– choral or unison reading	
			– tape-assisted reading	
			– teacher read aloud	
			– readers theatre	
			– reading connected text with corrective feedback	

The ability to read text effortlessly, quickly, accurately, and with expression is a critical element of becoming a competent reader. In order to continue to meet grade-level expectations for reading fluency, students must increase the range of words they can read at a single glance. Jan Hasbrouck and Gerald Tindal at the University of Oregon (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006) have collected data from thousands of students across the country to establish average oral reading fluency (ORF) norms for students reading grade-level text in grades 1–8.

We include ORF data from three percentiles in grades 4–8 in the table below. Mean ORF scores are reported in percentiles from the 10th to the 90th as words correct per minute (WCPM) in the fall, winter, and spring. For example, average ORF scores for students in the 50th percentile in the fall are: fourth grade=94; fifth grade=110; sixth grade=127; seventh grade=128; and eighth grade=133. Because reading fluency continues to explain substantial variance on reading comprehension tests even in high school (Schatschneider et al., 2004), awareness of an individual student's ORF scores can provide helpful information for fourth- and fifth-grade teachers when planning instruction and selecting materials.

Table 2: 2006 Hasbrouck and Tindal Oral Reading Fluency Data

Grade	Percentile	Fall WCPM*	Winter WCPM*	Spring WCPM*
4	90	145	166	180
	50	94	112	123
	10	45	61	72
5	90	166	182	194
	50	110	127	139
	10	61	74	83
6	90	177	195	204
	50	127	140	150
	10	68	82	93
7	90	180	192	202
	50	128	136	150
	10	79	88	98
8	90	185	199	199
	50	133	146	151
	10	77	84	97

* Words correct per minute

Only modest changes in fluency growth occur after sixth grade. As a result, unless students are struggling readers who are not meeting the fluency goals for their grade, specific strategies to improve fluency instruction are unlikely to be needed in middle and high school classrooms. However, fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms are expected to include instructional practices that build and support reading fluency for students who need it. Moreover, research shows that secondary school struggling readers can improve their reading fluency when provided with instruction that highlights reading practice with different kinds of texts (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). In a recent synthesis of secondary fluency instruction, Wexler, Vaughn, Edmonds, and Reutebuch (2008) found that students who received repeated reading interventions that incorporated opportunities to preview text with a model of good reading or someone to provide corrective feedback made more gains in rate than students who did not preview the text. It is important to note that for struggling secondary readers, improved reading rates do not always result in improved comprehension (Rashotte & Torgesen, 1985). It may be more beneficial for these students to combine fluency practice with instruction using comprehension strategies that are demonstrably effective.

Classroom Examples

Instructional practices designed to improve reading fluency in fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms or in reading intervention classrooms in higher grades include the following activities:

- ***Timed repeated readings.*** The teacher selects a short passage at the student's grade or instructional reading level, sets a goal for reading rate, and has the student reread the passage until he or she reaches the goal. Typically, students count the number of words read correctly in one minute and chart their own progress.
- ***Student-adult reading.*** The student reads one-on-one with the teacher, a parent, a classroom aide, or a tutor. While the student follows along in the text, the adult reads the text aloud, providing the student with a model of fluent reading. Then the student reads the same passage to the adult as the adult provides assistance and encouragement. Sometimes called *echo reading*, in this activity the student rereads the passage until the reading is fluent.
- ***Choral or unison reading.*** Students read aloud as a group along with the teacher. Students must be able to see the same text by following along with their own copies. For choral reading, a teacher should choose a passage that is not too long and is at most students' independent reading level.
- ***Reading aloud.*** Effortlessly and with expression, the teacher models for students how a fluent reader sounds during reading. A teacher may invite other adults to the classroom to read aloud to students and encourages parents or other family members to read aloud at home. Reading aloud to students has multiple benefits; it increases their (a) knowledge of the world, (b) vocabulary, (c) familiarity with the structure and flow of written language, and (d) interest in reading.
- ***Partner reading.*** Two students take turns reading aloud to each other. For partner reading, more fluent readers can be paired with less fluent readers. The stronger reader reads a paragraph or page first, providing a model of fluent reading. Then the less fluent reader reads the same text aloud. The stronger student gives help with word recognition and provides feedback and encouragement to the less fluent partner. The less fluent

partner rereads the passage until he or she can read it independently. In another form of partner reading, children who read at the same level are paired to reread a story that they have received instruction on during a teacher-guided part of the lesson. Two readers of equal ability can practice rereading after hearing the teacher read the passage.

- ***Tape-assisted reading.*** Students are prompted to follow along with a tape, pointing to each word in the text as it is read on the audio recording. Next, the students read aloud along with the tape. Reading along with the tape should continue until the student is able to read the text fluently without the support of the tape.
- ***Readers theatre.*** Students rehearse and perform a play for peers or others. Students read from scripts derived from books rich in dialogue, taking the parts of characters who speak lines or a narrator who shares necessary background information. Readers theatre provides readers with a legitimate reason to reread text and to practice fluency. It is also motivational because it promotes cooperative interaction with peers and makes the reading task appealing.

Intervention Protocols

Use in grades 6–12 reading intervention classrooms

Research Background

VISITS 1	2	3	Intervention Protocol Indicators	NOTES & REFLECTION
			Students in small groups share the same reading difficulties	
			Instruction in the reading intervention is explicit and direct	
			Instruction is fast-paced and highly engaging	
			All students have multiple opportunities to respond to questions	
			Students receive clear feedback	

Apart from decoding and fluency skill, differences between older skilled readers and struggling readers are apparent in the skilled readers' proficiency in using independent reading skills. As the NAEP results suggest, there are large numbers of students in grades 4–12 who have only partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at a given grade (Lee et al., 2007). Unless their reading growth is significantly accelerated by strong and focused instruction, these students will continue to struggle. The first tier of these students may improve quickly when provided with increased, appropriate literacy support in the regular classroom; a second tier will require additional brief and focused intervention designed for a specific reading difficulty as well as classroom support for literacy as detailed in the *ALWP*. The third tier of struggling readers lacks the basic skills necessary for grade-level reading; these students will require instruction in a broad range of reading skills that is powerful enough not only to improve but also to accelerate their reading growth. That is, they must acquire the necessary skills as quickly as possible in order to comprehend grade-level material. This instruction will likely take place outside the content-area classroom in a reading intervention classroom offered in addition to regular classroom instruction (Dickson & Bursuch, 1999; McMaster, Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2005; Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, & Hickman, 2003). Many school districts and states have set requirements for reading intervention placement. Some schools may provide this intervention before or after school hours; some may substitute a reading intervention class for an elective class; some replace a content-area class with a reading intervention class.

Research reports a range of effects for the types of ongoing instructional adjustments for struggling readers we mention here. Future research that directly addresses these instructional procedures through experimental studies

would prove valuable and increase our confidence in recommending these intensive intervention approaches (Wanzek & Vaughn, 2007). Scheduling is a necessary consideration, but more critical are the design of the intervention and matching instruction to the individual needs of each student. Intensive reading intervention for this third tier of students is most effective when provided to small groups of students who share the same reading difficulties (Torgesen, 2005). The intensity and duration of the reading intervention is based on the degree of reading risk. Extra time for intervention must be scheduled daily in well-planned, regular small-group sessions over a long period of time (Wagner & Torgesen, 1987; Torgesen et al., 2001). Student enrollment should be fluid.

That is, formative and diagnostic assessment will help determine student placement in an intervention classroom and frequent progress monitoring will determine when a student has mastered the basic skills or goals which were lacking when he or she entered the intervention. When mastery occurs, the student should immediately return to the regular classroom and be monitored regularly to ensure sustainability of the gains achieved as a result of the intervention. Reading intervention includes instruction in all the components of reading as needed based on assessment and frequent monitoring of progress; it is direct, explicit, fast-paced, and highly engaging (Curtis, 2004; Archer et al., 2003; Snow et al., 1998). Furthermore, effective intervention provides students with many opportunities to respond to questions, followed by clear, corrective feedback (Kline, Deshler, & Schumaker, 1991; Swanson & Hoskyn, 2001).

Some important characteristics of a reading intervention classroom are beyond the control of the teacher and so would not be included in an *ALWP* form. These characteristics include a small teacher-to-student ratio (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001), the assignment of the most highly qualified teacher to the neediest students, the resources needed to purchase intervention materials, and the scheduling of students who share similar reading difficulties into the same class. These characteristics necessitate coordinated planning by the principal, curriculum specialist, scheduling personnel, and other school administrators.

A principal's lack of knowledge of reading may hinder use of the *ALWP* in an intervention classroom, especially because instruction is necessarily individualized and will not resemble instruction seen in content-area classrooms. It is highly recommended that a principal communicate frequently

with the reading intervention teacher, the school's reading coach, or the reading specialist to help identify a main instructional focus he or she might expect to see during a walk-through. Some reading intervention classes, even those including older students, may focus on basic word reading skills including phonemic decoding strategies. Many older struggling students will benefit from explicit vocabulary instruction in strategies for identifying complex, multisyllabic words (Curtis, 2004; Archer et al., 2003). Other middle and high school struggling readers may require the kinds of fluency practice usually observed in elementary classrooms (Snow et al., 1998; Curtis, 2004). Research has shown that struggling readers need explicit instruction in how to use comprehension strategies (Swanson, 1993). It is likely that all reading intervention classes will provide extensive reading comprehension strategy instruction along with increased practice opportunities (Nokes & Dole, 2004; RAND Reading Study Group, 2002; Underwood & Pearson, 2004).

The *ALWP* for reading intervention classrooms will resemble the *ALWP* for content-area classrooms, with the addition of sections for observing intervention protocols, instructional materials, as well as deeper and more focused instruction in word study, fluency, and vocabulary as indicated by student assessment. Reading intervention teachers will often collaborate with content-area teachers on students' daily assignments and provide support for content-area knowledge and vocabulary through added instruction and guided practice opportunities. Absent from this list are phonemic awareness and phonics. For most older readers, instruction in advanced word study, or decoding multisyllabic words, is a better use of time than instruction in the more foundational reading skills (such as decoding single-syllable words) which many older readers have accomplished (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Of course, we recognize that older readers possess a range of knowledge and skills, and there may be older readers who would profit from instruction in the more foundational skills.

Classroom Examples

As mentioned above, some intervention protocols, such as the number of students per class, scheduling, and available curricula, are beyond the control of the reading intervention teacher. Other protocols are observable teaching approaches that skilled intervention teachers will incorporate into their instruction and that knowledgeable principals will recognize. Reading

intervention must address the following components of reading as needed (based on student assessment and frequent monitoring of student progress): phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Instruction in the intervention will be clear, specific, paced to student needs, and engaging. All students must have multiple opportunities during each class period to respond to questions and receive clear feedback (Curtis, 2004; Moats, 2004). Finally, student enrollment in reading intervention class will be fluid; that is, students will be moved in and out of interventions based on ongoing assessments of their progress. The intensity and duration of the reading intervention are based on the degree of reading risk.

Instructional Materials

Use in grades 6–12 reading intervention classrooms

Research Background

VISITS 1	2	3	Instructional Materials Indicators	NOTES & REFLECTION
			Comprehensive and/or supplemental reading intervention curricula	
			Leveled texts matched to student reading ability and interests	
			Technology designed to provide practice support of specific reading intervention instruction	

Instructional materials vary based on student need and teacher knowledge. A research-based comprehensive reading program is recommended, but ought to be supplemented with leveled texts matched to a student's reading ability and interests. Supplemental reading materials and technology programs designed to provide practice in the specific reading skills and strategies taught are used as needed (Reinking, 1988).

There are many research-based and research-supported instructional curricula, supplemental curricula, and technology programs available for use in middle and high schools. The Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) and the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC, http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc) are two places that provide extensive reviews of many of these materials with adequate information for principals and teachers to make informed choices. In addition, an assortment of leveled texts matched to both student reading ability and interests are available to provide students with reading practice and motivation for reading.

Classroom Examples

As described above, an intervention classroom for reading instruction in grades 6–12 will appear both similar and dissimilar to literacy instruction in a content-area or fourth- and fifth-grade classroom. While the word analysis, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction may resemble the literacy instruction characteristic of regular classrooms, the class structure will certainly differ. Instruction will be provided to small, focused student groups. These groups will be provided with differentiated instruction informed through diagnostic testing and ongoing formative assessment. Students may be grouped to focus on a specific area of reading instruction or may work one-on-one with the teacher or other support staff. Although the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) suggested a benefit from using computers to support

classroom instruction, additional experimental research is needed to support this suggestion. However, technology programs specifically designed to support reading intervention instruction may provide practice in literacy skills and may increase the amount of targeted practice students receive.

CONCLUSION

Principals have been shown to be more effective in dealing with external elements than with monitoring a school's instructional program, but recent research has found that the amount of time principals spent in classrooms and the quality of their feedback to teachers were important predictors of school achievement (Duke, n.d.; Heck, 1992). Effective principals analyze instruction and student learning through regular classroom observations and provide feedback to teachers with the purpose of improving classroom instruction. This document and the accompanying *ALWP* sample templates are intended as guidelines for principals as they observe classrooms and participate with teachers in discussions and problem-solving regarding academic literacy, classroom instruction, and student achievement.

Information gathered in the *ALWP* is useful to inform principals as they work with individual teachers; in addition, when collected over time and computed across disciplines, grade levels, content areas, or schoolwide, the information can help principals identify areas of strength and weakness and access professional development needs for groups of faculty or for all faculty. While it is critical to remember that one brief visit is not enough to accurately portray the daily instruction that takes place, cumulative data gathered over a six- to nine-week period may enable a principal to make an informed case for instructional improvement and for planning professional development. Providing teachers with professional development that is focused on instructional techniques they can use to meet the literacy needs of all their students is the natural outcome of the analyses of data gathered in the *ALWP*.

SAMPLE *ALWP* TEMPLATES

Templates:

Because different walk-through formats may be used for different purposes, we include the following sample *ALWP* templates for adaptation by technical assistance providers, states, districts, and individual schools. A state, district, or principal may use all or part of the suggested format, or customize a template to focus on a particular setting or grade level.

The templates suggest one way to organize the indicators and list all indicators for the type of classroom (grades 4–5, 6–12, and reading intervention). Columns identify three different visit dates, with space to check the presence of an indicator at each visit. A space for notes may help a principal recall specific information to discuss with the teacher or to inform decision-making. Principals could also collate information from all observation forms for a particular grade, class type, content area, or across a school to find patterns and plan resources and supports for instruction.

There may be times when a principal wishes to gather information for only one component. Gathering information about a specific component can be useful when a school has placed special emphasis on that component (e.g., a principal might focus on Vocabulary and Content Knowledge indicators as part of a schoolwide initiative to teach academic vocabulary across all grades and content areas).

SAMPLE TEMPLATE

Adolescent Literacy Walk-Through for Principals

Teacher _____ **Classroom** _____

Visit 1 By: _____ Date _____ /_____ /_____ Time _____-_____

Visit 2 By: _____ Date _____ /_____ /_____ Time _____-_____

Visit 3 By: _____ Date _____ /_____ /_____ Time _____-_____

Instructions: Note the date and time of each visit. Place a check in the column for each indicator observed during the visit. Use the space provided to make any notes or reflections to facilitate follow-up discussion with the teacher.

VISITS 1	2	3	Grades 4–5 Classrooms	NOTES & REFLECTION
			Vocabulary and Content Knowledge Instruction Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Builds student background knowledge	
			Teaches domain-specific vocabulary	
			Teaches all-purpose academic words	
			Teaches multisyllabic word reading strategies	
			Teaches content concepts	
			Teaches content facts	
			Comprehension Strategy Instruction Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Teaches comprehension monitoring	
			Explicitly teaches or models the use of:	
			– graphic organizers	
			– semantic organizers	
			– summarization/paraphrasing	
			– question asking	
			– question generating	
			– knowledge of text structure	

VISITS 1	2	3	Grades 4–5 Classrooms	NOTES & REFLECTION
			– knowledge of text features	
			– making inferences	
			Discussion of Reading Content Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Provides opportunities for discussion-oriented instruction of text subject matter including assisting and encouraging students in:	
			– taking a position	
			– using others' questions and comments to build discussion	
			– expressing opinions	
			– making connections across time and subjects	
			– questioning the author	
			Motivation and Engagement Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Focuses students on important and interesting learning goals	
			Provides a range of activity choices	
			Provides interesting texts at multiple reading levels	
			Provides opportunities for student collaboration in discussion and assignments	
			Maintains a positive, rewarding classroom atmosphere	
			Advanced Word Study Instruction Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Based on individual student assessment data, provides instruction in word reading skills:	
			– consonant and sound spellings	
			– vowel sound spellings	
			– segmenting words into syllables	
			– identifying syllable types	
			– creating words using syllables	

VISITS 1	2	3	Grades 4–5 Classrooms	NOTES & REFLECTION
			– learning base/root words	
			– recognizing inflections	
			– recognizing affixes (prefixes/suffixes)	
			Reading Fluency Instruction Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Provides opportunities for reading fluency practice such as:	
			– repeated timed readings	
			– partner reading	
			– student-adult reading	
			– choral or unison reading	
			– tape-assisted reading	
			– teacher read aloud	
			– readers theatre	
			– reading connected text with corrective feedback	

SAMPLE TEMPLATE

Adolescent Literacy Walk-Through for Principals

Teacher _____ **Classroom** _____

Visit 1 By: _____ Date _____ /_____ /_____ Time _____-_____

Visit 2 By: _____ Date _____ /_____ /_____ Time _____-_____

Visit 3 By: _____ Date _____ /_____ /_____ Time _____-_____

Instructions: Note the date and time of each visit. Place a check in the column for each indicator observed during the visit. Use the space provided to make any notes or reflections to facilitate follow-up discussion with the teacher.

VISITS 1	2	3	Grades 6–12 Content-Area Classrooms	NOTES & REFLECTION
			Vocabulary and Content Knowledge Instruction Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Builds student background knowledge	
			Teaches domain-specific vocabulary	
			Teaches all-purpose academic words	
			Teaches multisyllabic word reading strategies	
			Teaches content concepts	
			Teaches content facts	
			Comprehension Strategy Instruction Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Teaches comprehension monitoring	
			Explicitly teaches or models the use of:	
			– graphic organizers	
			– semantic organizers	
			– summarization/paraphrasing	
			– question asking	
			– question generating	
			– knowledge of text structure	

VISITS 1	2	3	Grades 6–12 Content-Area Classrooms	NOTES & REFLECTION
			– knowledge of text features	
			– making inferences	
			Discussion of Reading Content Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Provides opportunities for discussion-oriented instruction of text subject matter including assisting and encouraging students in:	
			– taking a position	
			– using others' questions and comments to build discussion	
			– expressing opinions	
			– making connections across time and subjects	
			– questioning the author	
			Motivation and Engagement Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Focuses students on important and interesting learning goals	
			Provides a range of activity choices	
			Provides interesting texts at multiple reading levels	
			Provides opportunities for student collaboration in discussion and assignments	
			Maintains a positive, rewarding classroom atmosphere	

SAMPLE TEMPLATE

Adolescent Literacy Walk-Through for Principals

Teacher _____ **Classroom** _____

Visit 1 By: _____ Date _____ /_____ /_____ Time _____-_____

Visit 2 By: _____ Date _____ /_____ /_____ Time _____-_____

Visit 3 By: _____ Date _____ /_____ /_____ Time _____-_____

Instructions: Note the date and time of each visit. Place a check in the column for each indicator observed during the visit. Use the space provided to make any notes or reflections to facilitate follow-up discussion with the teacher.

VISITS 1	2	3	Grades 6–12 Reading Intervention Classrooms	NOTES & REFLECTION
			Vocabulary and Content Knowledge Instruction Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Builds student background knowledge	
			Teaches domain-specific vocabulary	
			Teaches all-purpose academic words	
			Teaches multisyllabic word reading strategies	
			Teaches content concepts	
			Teaches content facts	
			Comprehension Strategy Instruction Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Teaches comprehension monitoring	
			Explicitly teaches or models the use of:	
			– graphic organizers	
			– semantic organizers	
			– summarization/paraphrasing	
			– question asking	
			– question generating	
			– knowledge of text structure	

VISITS 1	2	3	Grades 6–12 Reading Intervention Classrooms	NOTES & REFLECTION
			– knowledge of text features	
			– making inferences	
			Discussion of Reading Content Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Provides opportunities for discussion-oriented instruction of text subject matter including assisting and encouraging students in:	
			– taking a position	
			– using others' questions and comments to build discussion	
			– expressing opinions	
			– making connections across time and subjects	
			– questioning the author	
			Motivation and Engagement Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Focuses students on important and interesting learning goals	
			Provides a range of activity choices	
			Provides interesting texts at multiple reading levels	
			Provides opportunities for student collaboration in discussion and assignments	
			Maintains a positive, rewarding classroom atmosphere	
			Advanced Word Study Instruction Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Based on individual student assessment data, provides instruction in word reading skills:	
			– consonant and sound spellings	
			– vowel sound spellings	
			– segmenting words into syllables	
			– identifying syllable types	
			– creating words using syllables	

VISITS 1	2	3	Grades 6–12 Reading Intervention Classrooms	NOTES & REFLECTION
			– learning base/root words	
			– recognizing inflections	
			– recognizing affixes (prefixes/suffixes)	
			Reading Fluency Instruction Indicators	
			Provides the students with explicit instruction, including:	
			– clear goals and directions	
			– modeling	
			– guided practice	
			– independent practice	
			Provides opportunities for reading fluency practice such as:	
			– repeated timed readings	
			– partner reading	
			– student-adult reading	
			– choral or unison reading	
			– tape-assisted reading	
			– teacher read aloud	
			– readers theatre	
			– reading connected text with corrective feedback	
			Intervention Protocol Indicators	
			Students in small groups share the same reading difficulties	
			Instruction in the reading intervention is explicit and direct	
			Instruction is fast-paced and highly engaging	
			All students have multiple opportunities to respond to questions	
			Students receive clear feedback	
			Instructional Materials Indicators	
			Comprehensive and/or supplemental reading intervention curricula	
			Leveled texts matched to student reading ability and interests	
			Technology designed to provide practice support of specific reading intervention instruction	

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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