INFUSING READING INTO THE CONTENT AREAS

Every teacher who wants to be a facilitator of learning should also be a reading teacher, because reading is essential in every subject. All teachers know some students struggle to read their texts, while other students sail through material. The learners' reading difficulties become more apparent as they encounter increasingly complex texts and materials in the content areas as they progress through the grade levels. Students need to receive help to develop the skills and strategies necessary to be comprehending, fluent readers and succeed in school and in life.

SAILING INTO DIFFERENTIATED READING INSTRUCTION

Differentiating instruction for reading is similar to the preparation needed for a sailing adventure. The captain identifies each crew member's specialty and talent so assignments can be made in the individual's areas of expertise to make the journey a success. Likewise, all readers have unique skills and talents, as well as the right to learn all the information they possibly can. For this to occur, learning experiences are personalized and individualized during the reading journey.

Teachers are the captains who set the course for the reader's journey, deciding how each one will travel and what each will learn along the way. Differentiated instruction for smooth sailing toward learning and accomplishment is based on effective preassessments of the learner's knowledge, skills, and abilities. It is student centered and flexible because it intervenes and responds to the changing needs of all readers.

Don't you wish you could wave a magic wand and turn every student in your classroom into a comprehending, fluent reader? At the current time, too many learners struggle to read text assignments. Unfortunately, there is no prepackaged, magic formula for teaching students to read. However, educators have the power to create strategies that work for readers of all ability levels by using differentiated instruction. Remember, it is never too late to move students toward their reading potential.

Too much valuable time is expended blaming former teachers, parents, textbook companies, and curriculum programs for the reader's problems. This time and energy can be used productively by diagnosing the student's reading ability and designing customized, successful reading experiences in daily content lessons.

Too often we hear educators beyond the early childhood grades say, "I have too much to do to teach students to read because I have to teach my standards. They should have learned to read in the early grades." This frustration is easy to understand, but remember, the students were taught the skills. They just were not developmentally ready or did not have the strategies for mastering the information.

We cannot afford to let these students go through another academic year without knowing how to read. Reading instruction is a priority in all classrooms. Use every opportunity to intervene and improve a student's reading ability. Transform a struggling student's self-doubt from "I know I can't read," to "I can read!" The smallest improvement has the potential to create a miraculous change in the learner's reading journey.

THE GOALS OF THIS BOOK

This book is designed to assist educators in meeting the unique learning needs of each reader through differentiated instruction. The goals of this resource are to provide the following:

- Reading activities, strategies, and tips for teaching vocabulary, phonics, and comprehension skills
- Techniques and tips for establishing an effective and intriguing reading environment
- Assessment ideas for diagnosing the reader's problems quickly, with suggested prescriptions for solutions
- Memory strategies for a reader to apply to commit information to long-term memory
- Planning tools, including templates, checklists, and guides, to use in reading across content areas

All of our strategies, activities, and ideas are designed to infuse basic reading skills into the content areas. Adapt these tools in planning to meet the needs of individual readers, and make a difference in each learner's academic and personal endeavors.

This resource is grounded in brain-based research, which provides the rationale for the strategies and approaches used. The research includes effective practices related to establishing the learning environment, understanding the reader's problems, and finding solutions.

Our mission in writing this book is to assist teachers in implementing differentiated reading strategies in daily lessons across the curriculum. We hope the activities challenge, actively engage, and empower each struggling student to become an eager, successful reader.

Problems of the Struggling Reader

In our work in classrooms, we have identified four areas that can be barriers for struggling readers. Here we present these areas of concern with some underlying causes for each one.

Vocabulary: Identifying the Word and Its Meaning

- Lack of exposure
- Poor background knowledge
- No prior experiences
- Limited mental word banks
- Minimal knowledge of context clues
- Unable to use dictionaries and glossaries

Decoding: Unlocking the Pronunciation

- Insufficient understanding of letter-to-word relationships
- No ability to identify letter sounds
- Inadequate knowledge of the rules for syllabication
- Insufficient ability to identify root or base words
- Inadequate recognition of prefixes and suffixes

Comprehension: Unlocking Meaning From the Passage or Text

- Inability to find important facts
- Weak inference skills
- Difficulty processing and retaining information
- Calling words without understanding
- Difficulty in getting the "gist" or summarizing
- Lack of strategies and skills to apply automatically

Motivation: Having the Desire to Read

- Sees no need, purpose, or relevance
- Has no internal desire
- Does not make links and connections to his or her world
- Covers up for inadequacies
- Is bored, insecure, or frustrated
- Possesses physical, mental, or emotional blocks
- Has experienced too many prior failures
- Faces lengthy assignments beyond his or her success level

A teacher's major role is to provide the learner with the knowledge base to acquire the needed vocabulary with the essential decoding and comprehension skills to fuel and sustain the desire to read and learn. Design plans to encourage and guide the learner, using tools and strategies such as those outlined in Figure 1.1 (see page 4), until this desire becomes a personal motivating force. The educator's quest is to set an

Figure 1.1 Tools and Strategies for Infusing Reading Into the Differentiated Classroom

Creating the Climate	Knowing and Assessing the Reader	Differentiated Models and Strategies	Vocabulary	Art of Decoding	Comprehension and Flexible Grouping
Physical Environment • Print-rich • Ready resources • Ideal reading spot Affective Environment • Safe • Motivating • Stimulating • Respectful • Choice • Self-efficacy • Celebrating Community of Readers	Developmental Readiness Meet the Reading Characters • Nonreading Nancy • Word-Calling Wayne • Insecure Inez • Turned-Off Tom • Correcting Carl • Read-Aloud Renee • Silent-Reading Sam • Comprehending Carlos Developing the Eager, Fluent Reader Keys to Reading Success Five Views of the Reader • Learning preferences • Gardner's multiple intelligences • Sternberg's triarchic intelligences • Gregorc's learning styles • McCarthy's 4MAT model Assessing and Diagnosing the Reader • Formal and informal tools • Using assessments effectively The Grading Dilemma	Adjustable Assignment Model Curriculum-Compacting Model Centers and Stations Model Project-Based Models Problem-Solving Model Independent Choice Model Guided Reading Model Language Experience Model Shared Reading Model Read-Aloud Model Four-Block Model From Models to Implementation • Agendas/menus • Learning zones, centers and stations • Cubing • On the flip side • Choice	Identifying and Selecting Vocabulary Words Preassessing Vocabulary Words • Color my world. • Meet and greet! • Mystery word Learning New Words • *Vocabulary as vocabulary* • Word discovery • Adjustable assignments Twenty-five Ways to Teach Vocabulary Vocabulary Visuals Cues to Context Clues • Identifying context clues • Strategies for context clues Subject Terminology Overcoming Miscues • Miscue analysis • What to do with a miscue Master Multiple Meanings Student Mastery of Vocabulary • Mastered words: Check it out! • Teacher-made vocabulary checklists	Phonics Instruction The Phonics Dozen • Understand that letters are symbols for sounds. • Identify the consonants. • Recognize hard and soft consonants. • Recognize consonant blends. • Use the sounds of consonant digraphs. • Recognize long vowel sounds. • Apply the rules for the finale. • Recognize short vowels. • Know the sounds of phonograms. • Recognize vowel diphthongs. • Recognize the controlling r. • Use the proper sounds of y. Structural Analysis • Root words • Prefixes • Suffixes • Syllables • Accent rules and clues	Why Differentiate Comprehension Strategies? • Background knowledge • Interest levels • Ability • Approaches Barriers Levels • Literal • Inferential • Evaluative Before Reading: The Passage Preview During Reading: The Passage View Flexible Grouping Designs • T: Total group • A: Alone • P: Partner • S: Small groups • Differentiated grouping designs After Reading: The Passage Review Assessing Comprehension • Oral reading check • Comprehension checklist • Comprehension reflection self-check • My comprehending way: "How do I comprehend best?" • Running record Teacher's Role

effective course leading each individual to become a motivated, self-directed, successful reader. In the learning journey, each student needs this internal drive to reach his or her reading potential. Thrust is a must!

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES AND RELATED RESEARCH

This book presents strategies, activities, and techniques for improving the performance of all readers. Varied assessments, diagnostic tools, and strategies are emphasized. The following methods and approaches are grounded in brain-based research and effective practices related to teaching and learning. These approaches are essential to improving reading comprehension and are the foundations of the strategies, activities, and ideas in this resource.

Flexible Grouping

In years past, students were placed in ability groups for reading and remained there throughout the year. In today's classroom, ongoing assessment is used to identify strengths and needs. Students are grouped according to their needs as identified in a data analysis. The groups are fluid and flexible to provide the most effective interventions and instructional scenarios for the standard or skill.

Individual Learning Plan

The first Individual Education Programs (IEPs) were used to design instruction for special education students. Currently, many schools design Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) as tools for differentiation to create a program for students at risk. The data gathered are used to target weaknesses and intervene with a plan designed to strengthen those areas. They may be used to customize and personalize instruction for students in general education programs. The information for the ILP may include test scores, learning styles, intelligences, tutoring schedules, mentors, extracurricular activities, academic interests, study habits, health factors, family structure, honors, hobbies, afterschool activities, and work schedules.

Intervention

An intervention is a new direction provided by the teacher for a learner. A new strategy, activity, or assistance is provided as soon as the reader's need is recognized. This is a continuous process for monitoring learning activities and providing improvement approaches as soon as a need is recognized. The need may be identified in a formal assessment or through informal assessments, including observations. An instructional plan is designed for the reader to overcome the deficiency. Often an intervention consists of a mini lesson, clarified directions, or immediate and direct assistance to keep the reader on the right track.

Data-Driven Decisions

Educators are using assessment data to guide the creation of instructional plans in order to reach and teach each reader. They are analyzing and diagnosing each

individual's needs to plan productive reading lessons. Students are becoming more involved in the assessment process with immediate feedback, reflections, and self-regulated learning. Data are used to plan independent assignments, to design groups, and to determine how much time is allotted to a specific standard or skill. Data-driven interventions and adjustable assignments maximize learning.

Inclusion

Inclusion meets the needs of a reader who has an identified disability in a regular classroom. The resource teacher or specialist and the classroom teachers work collaboratively to provide the most effective instruction for the student. They bring together the expertise of specialists, staff members, and administrators to benefit the learner.

The student's Individual Education Plan is created through the special education guidelines, which must be followed in daily lesson plans. The plans address the grade-level standards and content information. Each reading activity should be strategically planned to meet the unique requirements of students with special needs. The individual's strengths, including learning styles and intelligences, are engaged in strategies and activities. The reader is provided a supportive environment where he or she feels accepted and valued by all classmates and adults.

Exploring the Verbal Linguistic Intelligence

Howard Gardner (1983), a Harvard psychologist and educator, identified multiple intelligences. The verbal linguistic intelligence includes reading, writing, listening, speaking, and linking information. These abilities and skills are essential for academic achievement and lifelong success. Within this intelligence, a learner may have strengths and weaknesses. Gardner tells us that an area of weakness can be strengthened. This reinforces our belief that it is never too late for students to learn to read.

Schema Theories

Schema theories state new information is constructed to fit information currently existing in the mind. When a teacher introduces a topic, each student has a different schema, or mental picture, the result of prior knowledge and experiences. The new information must be presented so learners "fit" the new learning into their schemas. The ideas existing in a student's mind organize and create meaning from new experiences. This is why it is important to understand and use students' background knowledge to plan effectively for new learning (Piaget, 1952).

Constructivist Learning

Learners play a major role in constructing new knowledge. Vygotsky's and Piaget's work in the later part of the 20th century emphasizes the value of the individual student's role in the learning process. These are the four major components of Vygotsky's and Piaget's theories (Kauchak & Eggen, 2007):

1. Learners construct their own knowledge.

2. Prior knowledge is the foundation for new learning.

3. Social interaction enriches learning experiences.

4. Authentic learning generates personal meaning.

Memory Lanes

Marilee Sprenger (1999) points out that new information enters the brain through the senses. She identifies at least five pathways to memory. The explanations of each pathway can be adapted to teach readers at all grade levels strategies they can use to remember information:

Semantic: Understanding the meaning and purposes

Episodic: Recalling specific events and happenings

Procedural: Using the steps or sequence

Automatic: Applying mastered information without thinking

Emotional: Associating feelings

As you develop lesson plans for specific activities, identify the memory pathway readers can use to store and retrieve the information and skills.

Strategy Ownership

Strategy construction is the discovery of a procedure to use for processing information. Use intriguing strategies to assist readers in learning, storing, and retrieving information. Select activities to engage the readers in their favorite ways to learn. Select and design each one for the student to use independently as needed.

The learner "owns" a strategy when it is used automatically. When the reader takes ownership of a learning tool, it becomes a personal possession to use for a lifetime.

DIFFERENTIATION

The term *differentiation* is defined as a philosophy that enables teachers to plan strategically to reach the needs of diverse learners in classrooms to achieve targeted standards (Gregory & Chapman, 2007). Differentiation meets learners "where they are" in their ability and offers challenging, appropriate options for them to achieve success.

Differentiation shows respect for each reader's learning differences. Everyone has different experiences and brings varied emotions to each learning situation. Not only does the reader have to possess the desire to learn, the individual has to be ready for the information, understand the learning purpose, and make it fit in his or her unique mind.

Differentiating the Content

Educators need to be familiar with grade level standards and then analyze the data to make content selection decisions. Use formative and summative assessments to match the appropriate content with each learner. It is true there is no limit to what a

student can learn. If a learner knows the information, the individual needs to move to more challenging opportunities to explore unknown territory related to the current topic. The repetition of mastered information wastes valuable learning time for the student.

Students no longer need to learn the same information at the same time. If the content is too difficult or above the reader's ability level, it is easy for the learner to become frustrated and turned off to learning. This student often experiences the "I can't" feeling. Strategically plan lessons to fill in holes or gaps in learning. Think of the gaps as the missing pieces the reader needs to understand the grade-level standard. Teach the student using content-related materials and resources at the learner's reading level. Analyze the content-related reading material selected for an individual student using a checklist such as the following:

___ Targets the standard or skill.

___ Supports and enhances the current topic.

___ Serves as reference source.

___ Reflects the student's interest.

___ Presents the information in a different genre or format.

Differentiating With Assessment Tools

Use a variety of formal and informal assessment tools to obtain an accurate diagnosis of the reader's needs. If an informal tool provides the needed data, use it instead of the more time-consuming formal tool. With so many standards to teach, so much subject area to address, and so many diverse needs to meet, data-driven instruction is a necessity.

Use an effective preassessment to identify the reader's weaknesses and strengths related to the standard, concept, or skill. To meet the diverse needs of the learner, conduct a preassessment one to three weeks prior to the teaching of the information (Chapman & King, 2008). This provides time to analyze the results, gather materials, create instructional groups and plan strategically for the unique weaknesses and strengths of readers.

Informal assessment tools are quick and easy. Often they indicate how students feel about the information. For example, a teacher asks students to show "thumbs-up" if they understand the lesson segment, "thumbs-to-the-side" if they grasp some of the information, or "thumbs-down" if they do not understand it. The teacher knows immediately by observing where the students are in their understanding of the current concept.

Sometimes it is necessary to administer a more formal assessment to measure the knowledge base and areas of need. In this case, a pretest can be given before the lesson to target strengths and weak areas in the learning. If the same pretest is given to all students, design it so no one makes a perfect score, but for everyone to be able to answer some questions. Be sure the test addresses the needs of those who have little

knowledge of the topic, as well as those who are experts. Use the same assessment as a posttest at the end of the study to measure knowledge growth and learning accomplishments. Use a collection of formative and summative assessments to obtain a complete picture of the reader's progress.

During a performance assessment, the reader completes a task that provides evidence of knowledge and understanding. Assessment allows the student to demonstrate how the information is used. Recognize each reader's likes, dislikes, strengths, and weaknesses.

Choice provides the reader opportunities to select preferred ways to demonstrate learning. Identify the student's understanding by asking the reader to choose from a list of assessment options to demonstrate the learning. Encourage the student to use creative approaches to complete the task. Here are some examples of performance assessments:

Reenactments	Demonstrations	Explanations	Musical creations
Exhibits	Posters	Read alouds	Artwork

Differentiating Instructional Strategies

If I can think it, I can say it.

If I can say it, I can write it.

If I can write it, I can read it.

If I can read it, I can decide if I need it.

If I need it, I can decide where and how I can use it!

—Chapman and King

Use a variety of instructional strategies and select the most appropriate one to accommodate the reader's need. Plan assignments so students are actively engaged in the learning. Strategically design each lesson to provide the learner with opportunities to experience challenges, choices, and success to reach reading goals.

Varied instructional strategies target individual needs, using each reader's unique learning styles, modalities, and intelligences. Expectations are determined by standards and reached through strategies and interventions tailored for the reader.

Students need high-level, interesting reading materials and activities to be challenged. These opportunities build reading success. Everyone has a preferred way to attack a passage, solve a problem, and process and retain information. Plan reading experiences to accommodate these preferences and needs.

Make the reading event an exciting happening in the learning journey. Give the students opportunities to use information they have learned. Allow students to work independently in centers or workstations.

Open the door to reading success! Remember, a barrier to understanding is covering material instead of aiming for in-depth understanding. Give everyone's unique brain a true variety of experiences with differentiated instructional strategies.

THE READING JOURNEY

When sailboats leave the shore, they usually have a destination. Often several vessels depart at the same time on their way to a predetermined place. Each craft takes its own course, because there are many routes to the chosen destination.

Curriculum is planned within units of focus because the brain works by making links and connections. The information to be learned during the journey is established, but the components introduced, taught, and explored in each classroom will vary. The standards, goals, and objectives for a given topic may be the same, but each journey will be unique. This is true from class period to class period, from teacher to teacher, and from year to year. The route of the learning journey depends on many factors, including the student's prior knowledge, experiences, and interests; the content information presented; and the teacher's knowledge and presentation skills.

The Captain and Crew

The captain maps the course to the destination. Throughout the trip, changes to the plan require problem solving and decision making. Each crew member on board is assigned specific jobs or roles. Some individuals are experienced; they may train rookie crew members. Teams work together to complete many tasks. Often crew members need to work independently. The captain remains at the helm and oversees the crew's duties and responsibilities.

The Teacher and Students

Like the captain, the teacher guides the learning journey. Educators need to know the reader, the standards, the assessment tools, and the content information to make classroom decisions and establish goals. Through continuous assessment and application of the data to planning, the learning course is designed. Individual and small-group assignments are often leveled or tiered to accommodate the reader's knowledge base, ability with a specific skill, and interest. The teacher is aware of the way each learner approaches a task, problem, or situation. The plans are adjusted through differentiated instruction and interventions to accommodate the reader's changing needs.

The reader's talents, experiences, interests, and prior knowledge are considered, because the individual is a distinct and unique crew member. Each student is responsible and accountable for learning. The reader is guided to be a thinker, doer, risk taker, problem solver, and inquirer. Everyone works well together in the learning community, applying his or her strengths and talents for success while developing a passion for reading.

Assessing the Crew/Revamping the Curriculum

Individual crew members report to the captain and receive feedback when things are going right or wrong. Often the captain doesn't assess the surroundings accurately or does not listen to or heed the danger signals from the crew. The *Titanic*'s captain thought his ship would never sink. He was experienced but did not pay attention to the warnings or the new, correct information. The use of a different maneuver would have placed the ship on another course and saved the vessel.

The teacher must be aware of warning signs, constantly checking with a variety of formal and informal assessment strategies so a different approach or intervention can be used as indicated. Individual reading needs cannot be ignored.

Data-driven plans are made using assessment before, during, and after learning to intervene and change directions. The teacher, as the captain, is in charge and makes the final life-changing decisions for the reader's success or failure.

Design the curriculum plan to create a fail-safe reading journey. The teacher designs the curriculum plan. Sometimes students do not understand the information. Their needs are usually obvious. When these signals indicate a need for review or reteaching for understanding, the students need a new way to work with the materials. Often students become interested in particular topic areas during the learning journey. Take advantage of these learning opportunities and add experiences to meet students' desire to fulfill their curiosity. Use differentiated instruction to provide a variety of strategies for deeper individual understanding and extended learning opportunities to each reader.

Staying on Course

When the destination at sea is not visible, the captain and crew find ways to keep moving in the right direction. They do not give up. They navigate their way to the predetermined goal. Hazards such as storms, high winds, or wave turbulence hinder the sailing vessel and extend the journey. Rerouting is necessary to avoid obstacles. When stormy seas appear, the captain reduces speed or changes routes. It is often necessary to lower the anchor beneath the surface of the water to decrease the vessel's speed. Or it may be necessary to lower the anchor to the sea floor for temporary repairs or adjustments.

Of course, many sailboats complete their excursion on calm seas without being deterred and have no need to make changes in the original plans. Smooth sailing with a "full speed ahead" signal is the ideal experience.

Chart the course for the reader's learning journey. When readers have difficulty with a concept or skill, direct them to the set goals by using a variety of learning strategies, materials, and resources. It may take longer to reach goals and objectives, but the extra time involved in learning a skill is worth it when the reader knows how to apply it and the skill becomes the foundation for new learning. Some readers reach established goals with very little assistance. Encourage students to set independent learning as their reading goal.

Summary

Educators now have the methods, strategies, and materials to assist students in their individual academic excursions in school and throughout life. No longer can we teach to students in the middle ability range and hope that all learners will receive something from the information. Customize experiences to match the reader's needs. The adage "One size does not fit all" reminds us of the need for a major paradigm shift for optimal learning to take place. Customize learning experiences as needed for the student's differentiated reading journey.