READING REVIVAL

K-2 Classroom Literacy Instruction Based on the Science of Reading

Evidence-based practices grounded in the science of reading improve student literacy outcomes. Word recognition instruction in K-2 classrooms that includes systematic and explicit phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary strategies build a reader's ability to read and comprehend texts. Teachers should incorporate those strategies into daily reading foundations instruction.

What should teachers do?	What does that mean?	What does that NOT mean?
Provide **daily** phonological awareness activities.	Phonological awareness (PA) activities incorporate the sounds of letters, not the written expression of the letters. PA activities are completely auditory. They only require speaking and listening skills. Practicing these skills daily, including working them into classroom routines and transition times, can strengthen decoding, encoding, and orthographic mapping processes.	PA activities do not include visual cues. They also do not include providing the letters or spellings that represent the sounds (that's phonics). PA activities are not boring or rote. They can be done anytime anywhere, and students who have mastered basic PA skills can be challenged with advanced PA skills such as sound deletion, substitution, and reversal.
Provide systematic, explicit phonics instruction.	Phonics instruction includes the phonemes and graphemes of letters and words. Phonics instruction advances from simple to more complex while spiraling in connected skills. Rather than only teaching phonics skills from a certain story, systematic and explicit phonics instruction improves overall comprehension.	Teachers should not wait to introduce phonics in response to a perceived student weakness. Teaching reading and spelling should follow a specific process of linking those graphemes to phonemes rather than promoting memorization, repetition, or using ineffective strategies like rainbow spelling.
Use the process of orthographic mapping to teach decoding and reading.	Orthographic mapping is when connections between phonemes and graphemes are stored in the brain and a reader advances from being able to decode and blend words to automatically recognizing words and reading them fluently.	Reading requires multiple areas of the brain including the language processing area. Research on how students learn to read shows that visual strategies such as cueing, flash cards, color coding, memorization techniques, and repetition are ineffective at sustaining fluent reading.

Teach decoding skills to provide the foundation for reading.	Start with phonemes (sounds) then add graphemes (spellings) to build and read whole words. They should master sound-spelling correspondence first. Teaching meaning is also an important step to round out this approach.	Teachers should not wait until students make errors to teach them phonics. That delays the orthographic mapping process.
Teach using letter-sound correspondence.	Teaching reading should focus on the sounds and the spellings of words. Fluent readers have a strong understanding of letter-sound correspondence and phoneme-grapheme mapping.	Visual and meaning cues such as, “Look at the picture to help you,” or “What makes sense here?” can lead to confusion and guessing and fails to strengthen decoding skills.
Practice skills with decodable texts.	Decodable texts that contain words that have been taught during the phonics lesson along with high-frequency words improve reading automaticity and fluency.	Leveled texts often include many words that do not follow phonics patterns that have been explicitly taught and, therefore, do not provide adequate practice with taught decoding skills.
Increase fluency through automaticity.	Automaticity is when readers can recognize and read words on sight after practicing the processes of decoding and blending. The result is fluent, accurate reading.	Relying on repeated readings leads to memorization rather than learning how to recognize and apply decoding and blending strategies.
Use sound walls instead of word walls.	Sound walls help with reading and spelling by representing all 44 sounds rather than just 26 letters. Sound walls support students in reading and retaining unfamiliar words on their own by promoting sound-spelling correspondence.	Word walls promote only the beginning letter of a word which may not match the sound. They do not show all the different spellings that can be used for individual sounds.
Build sight vocabulary through sounds-based instruction.	Sight words can be any word that readers learn to recognize on sight after systematic phonics instruction. Connect high frequency words to graphophonemic patterns previously taught when possible.	To build lasting sight vocabulary, use phonics strategies, not flash cards or videos. Words are stored in the brain through sound analysis rather than memorization.

Let diagnostic assessment drive instruction.	Diagnostic assessments provide teachers with specific skill data that effectively guides individualized instruction for readers by measuring phonological awareness and phonics skills, decoding, fluency, and comprehension.	Development Reading Assessments (DRAs) only measure reading levels rather than a student's ability to truly decode and comprehend text. Students may be able to read, but if they cannot retell what they read, there are underlying deficits that need to be addressed.
Arrange small group instruction by specific skill needs.	Analyze diagnostic data and focus on specific skill areas where readers may need more support or are ready to advance to another skill.	Looking only at an overall score or reading level can give a false report on a reader's ability to read with fluency and automaticity.