



**Rebuilding the Foundation:**  
**Effective Reading Instruction for 21st Century Literacy**

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**Study Guide**

This study guide is a companion to the book *Rebuilding the Foundation: Effective Reading Instruction for 21st Century Literacy*, edited by Timothy Rasinski. *Rebuilding the Foundation* examines effective reading instruction—from materials to curriculum, teaching strategies, and assessment. The distinguished contributors to this volume provide multiple perspectives and a rich source of ideas K–12 practitioners can use to examine and enhance their practice for achieving students, struggling readers, and English learners. Each chapter contributes to a sound conceptual framework and offers strategies for rebuilding and reconceptualizing what it means to provide effective instruction in reading to all students at all levels—instruction that really does work!

This study guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or to focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It is designed to help you benefit from and apply the ideas presented in *Rebuilding the Foundation*. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or an entire faculty.

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We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope that this guide proves to be a useful tool in your efforts to provide effective reading instruction to all students.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Principles of Effective Reading Instruction**

*P. David Pearson and James V. Hoffman*

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1. Describe how, according to the authors, teaching is reduced to “doing” and effective teaching to “doing the right thing.” Do you agree?
2. Describe the philosophy of pragmatism in education according to Dewey.
3. What is a *practicing teacher* as defined by the authors?
4. Briefly describe the ten general principles—the principle of praxis, the principle of purpose, the principle of serendipity, the principle of exploration, the principle of reflection, the principle of community, the principle of service, the principle of flexibility, the principle of caring, and the principle of reward—to guide the practicing teacher.
5. Briefly describe the ten specific principles—the principle of reading in a literate environment, the principle of reading as meaning making, the principle of reading as social practice, the principle of reading as a developmental process, the principle of reading as balance, the principle of reading as a strategic process, the principle of scaffolding reading processes, the principle of reading assessment as consequential, the principle of adaptability in teaching reading, and the principle of teaching reading as a tool—to guide the practicing teacher of reading.
6. Why do the authors align themselves with John Dewey and the philosophy of pragmatism?

## **Chapter 2**

### **Motivation in the School Reading Curriculum**

*Linda B. Gambrell*

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1. How does the author define *motivation to read*?
2. Several different theories of motivation are mentioned in this chapter. Which theories do you think are most relevant to your classroom, and why?
3. Compare and contrast *extrinsic* and *intrinsic* motivation. What are your beliefs about the role of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards or incentives?
4. The author presents seven classroom practices that are associated with motivation to read and reading achievement. Consider these seven practices, and put them in order of importance relative to your students.
5. This chapter presents seven questions to guide teachers, principals, and other educators in assessing the motivation-to-read climate of their classrooms. Evaluate the motivational climate of your classroom using these seven questions.
6. Think about the beliefs and behaviors of students who are more or less motivated to read. What can you do to nurture and support motivation to read for these students?
7. Interview your students about their motivation to read. What do they say motivates them?
8. Brainstorm ways you can increase the variety of reading materials available to students in your classroom.

9. Research suggests that students who take ownership of their literacy development grow more rapidly in knowledge and skills. To encourage that growth, what can you do to increase student choices, provide interesting reading tasks, and include collaborative learning experiences about text?
10. Make a list of the ways that you currently reward or recognize the reading performance of your students. How can you develop incentives that support, rather than undermine, reading motivation?
11. Develop a list of ideas on how to create more authentic literacy experiences in your classroom. For example, how can you provide opportunities for students to choose what they read, engage in discussions, and write about text that are more “real life,” rather than just giving them teacher-assigned literacy tasks?

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Materials in the School Reading Curriculum**

*Junko Yokota and William H. Teale*

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1. The authors recommend what two steps for teachers before selecting reading materials?
  2. Define and describe the importance of *instructional* and *independent* reading levels.
  3. Why are content, topic, genre, appeal, and format critical in selecting reading materials for students?
  4. How do world knowledge and content knowledge, as well as cultural content, impact reading comprehension?
  5. List some recommendations the authors make for selecting reading materials for elementary, middle school, and high school readers. How do you think these recommendations would influence student reading?
  6. How do audiobooks and digitized books/digitally developed books impact student reading, and what are some implications and possibilities of these materials for the future—for example, “genre blurring”?
  7. Why is it important for teachers to be engaged readers themselves?

## **Chapter 4**

### **Developing Effective Reading Curricula for Beginning Readers and the Primary Grades**

*Lesley Mandel Morrow*

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1. Research tells us that excellent teachers are one of the primary factors that determine if children learn to read and write well. Describe what the research says about the characteristics of exemplary teachers.
2. The classroom environment sets the scene for good instruction. If an early childhood teacher is to create a literacy-rich environment, what might that classroom look like, and why?
3. The center activities allow children to practice skills independently while the teacher instructs small groups. Describe six center activities—three for comprehension and three for decoding—that would engage children actively and socially. Include some challenges and successes for first and second graders. Include the skill being taught, the materials used, and the accountability for the activity by the child.
4. What are small guided reading groups? How does the teacher select them? What happens during small guided reading group meetings?
5. What is the difference between small-group instruction in kindergarten and first grade, and in first and second grade?
6. In the language arts programs described in this chapter, the kindergarten and first, second, and third grades are involved with a theme or unit of study during their

- literacy time. In kindergarten and first grade, it is Healthy Bodies and Healthy Minds, and in second and third grade, it is Regions in the United States. What is the value of having thematic units in the development of reading and writing?
7. The writing workshop should occur several times a week, and the time period should be long enough for children to complete the work since writing takes time. Select a theme and writing skill to teach in a mini-lesson. Describe the lesson and how the teacher carries out the rest of the workshop with conferences, sharing, evaluating, revising, editing, and other important activities.
  8. Select a primary grade, and a theme and skills to teach. Write your own language arts block. Describe your centers, and be sure to include children in whole-group, small-group, independent, guided, shared, interactive, and content-area reading and writing.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Developing Effective Reading Curricula Beyond the Primary Grades**

*Timothy Shanahan*

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1. What is the “disappearing reading act” in education that the author describes? Do you agree with this explanation?
2. Describe the two aspects of reading—essential and aspirational—that the author outlines.
3. What specific literacy skills should students acquire at the earliest levels and in the upper grades, and why?
4. What is *coherence* in reading comprehension, and how can teachers facilitate and enhance it?
5. What is the problem with the teaching of question types, according to the author? What are the author’s recommendations for questions for students?
6. What are some suggestions for effective comprehension strategies in the upper grades? Why do these strategies often fail?
7. Why is vocabulary an essential part of any upper-grade reading curriculum? Why should students’ understandings of words be more like encyclopedia entries than dictionary definitions, according to the author? Do you agree?
8. What is the goal of fluency instruction?

## **Chapter 6**

### **Developing Effective Reading Curricula for Struggling Readers**

*Richard L. Allington and Patricia M. Cunningham*

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1. What did you think of the Read and Ride program that began this chapter? Were you impressed by this school's ability to think outside the box and find a way to increase students' enthusiasm for reading without needing additional funding? Would your struggling readers view reading differently if they could take a reading and riding break each day? Can you imagine any variation of the Read and Ride program that could be implemented at your school?
2. In many classrooms, good readers spend most of their time reading silently while struggling readers spend most of their time taking turns reading aloud. Is that one of the differences in instruction you see in your classroom or school? Do you agree that struggling readers need to learn to read silently and develop self-monitoring strategies? If this discrepancy exists in your school, what tangible steps can you take to be sure struggling readers spend more of their time reading silently?
3. The authors suggest that the difference between questions that provoke conversations and those that are interrogations is whether or not the teacher knows the answer to the questions. Think back to the questions you pose for your students. Do you ask your good readers more conversation questions and your struggling readers more interrogation questions? If your answer to this question is "yes," why do you think this is so and how can you change this?

4. What do you think about think-writes? Would your struggling readers be willing to engage in these quick, ungraded, low-stakes writing activities? Do you believe they would likely learn more science and social studies content if they thought more deeply about what they were learning? Can you make up a think-write prompt to use with a science or social studies unit you are teaching?
5. The authors claim that “Good readers read well because of the ways we teach them; poor readers can become achieving readers, too.” Do you agree with this bold statement? What teaching practices do you see in your school that are different for good and poor readers? How can you change them?
6. The authors end the article with three suggestions to change the current situation for our struggling readers: 1) Provide struggling readers with easy access to interesting materials they can and want to read and frequent opportunities to read these texts silently and engage in literate conversations around these texts. 2) Ensure that struggling readers read independently in and out of school. 3) Engage struggling readers in activities that require them to write (and think) about what they are learning. What is the current situation in your school or classroom related to these three suggestions? How can you move toward making these suggestions a daily reality for all students?

## **Chapter 7**

### **Teaching Phonemic Awareness, Spelling, and Word Recognition**

*Shane Templeton and Donald R. Bear*

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1. The authors describe an integrated approach to instruction that involves three areas: phonemic awareness, spelling, and word recognition. How do these areas combine to form this integrated approach?
2. What is orthographic knowledge, and why is it important for teachers to understand their students' levels of orthographic ?
3. How does developing awareness and understanding of the relationship between sounds and the letters those sounds represent affect the ability to recognize and remember words in print?
4. How does the case study of the student Stan illustrate the recent response to intervention (RTI) paradigm?
5. How does the case study of the student Hakim illustrate the recent response to intervention (RTI) paradigm?

## **Chapter 8**

### **Teaching Reading Fluency**

*Timothy V. Rasinski*

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1. In your own words, define or describe *word recognition automaticity*, a key component in fluency.
2. In your own words, define or describe *prosody* or *prosodic reading*, the second key component in fluency.
3. According to the author, what are the key instructional components to effective reading fluency instruction?
4. Why do you think that reading fluency instruction was neglected by teachers, schools, and curriculum developers for so many years?
5. Why might teaching students to read quickly *not* be an appropriate way to teach fluency?
6. Develop a plan for making daily fluency instruction a priority in your classroom, school, or school district. How might that instruction look? What other considerations would you have to be aware of?
7. How might automaticity and prosody be assessed in your classroom or school?
8. Think of ways in which fluency instruction might be integrated with phonics or word decoding and comprehension instruction.
9. In what ways might fluency instruction be integrated into other content areas such as science, social studies, art, and music?

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10. Develop two or three frequently asked questions (and answers) that parents or the general public might ask about fluency in reading.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Teaching Vocabulary**

*Camille L. Z. Blachowicz, Peter J. Fisher, and Susan Watts-Taffe*

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1. Make a graphic to describe the essential components of a good classroom approach to vocabulary, and compare with your group. Take your graphic and propose examples for each component.
2. What are some ways that you might teach the connections between *export*, *import*, *porter*, *report*, *reporter*, *portable*, and *support*? How might instruction in morphology be combined with instruction in using context to determine word meaning?
3. Consider key vocabulary in your favorite subject area and think of some words with multiple meanings. What sort of confusion might students experience as they encounter these words in the context of content-area instruction?
4. The authors state that “learning words is a process of knowledge accrual” and “as teachers, the decision is to determine how much we need to teach initially.” What do they mean by this, and do you agree?
5. According to the authors, what are some ways in which teachers integrate technology into their vocabulary instruction? How have you seen technology used to support vocabulary learning?
6. According to the authors, what aspects of vocabulary learning might be enhanced by the use of technology? In your experience, which of these aspects receives the most attention in school? How might you bolster attention to another area that receives less?

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7. How is the development of a language-rich environment affected by new technologies?
8. Discuss the following statement: “Based on the research, it is our belief that teachers need to infuse vocabulary instruction across their curricula.”



## **Chapter 10**

### **Teaching Comprehension**

*Maureen McLaughlin*

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1. The author suggests that prior knowledge plays a key role in the constructivist nature of reading comprehension. How would you determine whether your students have prior knowledge of a given topic? Discuss ways in which you could provide background information for those students who have little or none.
2. The author suggests that reading online is a problem-based inquiry process. How does that apply to your reading online? To your students'?
3. The International Reading Association suggests that influential teachers play a significant role in students' reading. Would you characterize yourself as an influential teacher? What are your greatest strengths? Is there an area in which you would like to improve?
4. Research suggests that good readers are motivated to read widely. Discuss ways in which you motivate your students. What benefits might the students experience as a result of reading a wide variety of genres?
5. The author notes that explicitly teaching comprehension strategies provides opportunities for teachers to observe students in various stages of learning. What

would you expect to learn when observing students practicing reading comprehension strategies in small groups? With partners? On their own?

6. The author notes that in the Guided Comprehension Model students often respond through discussion and writing, but they also respond through other modes of representation, such as sketching, dramatizing, and singing. Consider the students in your class. How do you think they would benefit from using response modes such as sketching, dramatizing, and singing?
7. The author suggests that we differentiate our teaching in terms of content, process, and product. Choose a favorite picture book and an informational text. Work with a partner to determine how you would differentiate content, process, and product when using each of these texts.
8. The author notes that we comprehend at deeper levels when reading from a critical perspective. What value do you see in this? Work with a partner to develop a critical literacy resource, such as a list of books teachers at your grade level could use to examine a topic from multiple perspectives.

## **Chapter 11**

### **Writing in the Reading Curriculum**

*Ruth E. Culham*

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1. What, according to Graham and Perin, is the “study of models” and what does it encourage students to do?
  2. The author mentions using favorite texts as mentor texts. Do you have any favorite texts you go back to time and time again that continue to teach you?
  3. The author gives examples of mentor texts and where teachers can look to find them. What are some examples of types of mentor texts? What types of mentor texts have you used in your classroom?
  4. The author identifies the six traits as “the language to move students forward in their writing” and mentor texts as “the fuel to keep them going.” What are the six traits of writing the author names, and how, according to the author, do mentor texts serve as a perfect match to teaching the traits?
  5. Describe the ideas trait and review the author’s questions to consider for this trait. What favorite authors or texts might you add to the list for this trait?
  6. Describe the organization trait and review the author’s questions to consider for this trait. What favorite authors or texts might you add to the list for this trait?
  7. Describe the voice trait and review the author’s questions to consider for this trait. What favorite authors or texts might you add to the list for this trait?
  8. Describe the word choice trait and review the author’s questions to consider for this trait. What favorite authors or texts might you add to the list for this trait?

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9. Describe the sentence fluency trait and review the author's questions to consider for this trait. What favorite authors or texts might you add to the list for this trait?
10. Describe the conventions trait and review the author's questions to consider for this trait. What favorite authors or texts might you add to the list for this trait?

## **Chapter 12**

### **Content-Area Reading Instruction**

*Richard T. Vacca and Maryann Mraz*

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1. The authors contend that content-area reading involves more than saying words on a printed page or screen or selecting snippets of information to answer questions on homework assignments. Instead they say that students must learn to “think with text.” What does this mean exactly?
2. How does Bandura define *self-efficacy*, and what are some characteristics of confident readers and engaged readers?
3. What strategies do the authors suggest for improving self-efficacy in students? Have you used these strategies in your classroom? If so, what was the outcome?
4. What does it mean to provide students with scaffolds to support their reading comprehension? Explicit strategy instruction provides students with the learning scaffolds they need in content-area classrooms. How does explicit strategy instruction differ from traditional approaches?
5. What are the four steps of explicit strategy instruction described by the authors and what is involved in each step?
6. Describe the B-D-A framework.
7. The authors provide several examples of strategy-based learning within the B-D-A framework. What is the value of using an anticipation guide, story impressions, word study strategies, semantic feature analysis, and discussion webs?

## **Chapter 13**

### **Assessing Reading**

*Peter Afflerbach*

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1. The author describes three purposes for assessment. What are these purposes? Do you agree that teaching students to self-assess is a critical step in their learning? How do you use student self-assessment in your classroom?
2. The author contends that a carefully planned reading assessment program serves the three purposes. He gives an example of reading assessment with the subject of vocabulary—a word-sort activity with three categories (“I don’t know,” “I am getting to know,” and “I definitely know”). What activity from your grade level and/or content area serves these three purposes?
3. Different audiences require different types of reading assessment information. Does your school or district reading assessment program seek to provide all audiences with assessment information that suits their needs—students, teachers, parents, school administrators, elected officials, and the general public?
4. What is the difference between *formative* and *summative* assessment? How does an effective reading assessment program use both types?
5. What is *consequential validity* and why is it an important aspect of any type of assessment?
6. The author notes that professional development is key so that teachers can build their assessment expertise. Reflect on your training in assessment. Do you feel prepared and trained in this area?

7. What strategy, according to the author, is one of the most flexible and effective means of assessing students' reading development? Do you use and model this strategy in your classroom?

## **Chapter 14**

### **The Reading Coach:**

#### **Professional Development and Literacy Leadership in the School**

*Rita M. Bean*

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1. What are the five general models of coaching as described by the author? Which of these models are in use in your school or district and with what level of success?
2. The author cautions that coaches should have expertise, but they should avoid being seen as experts who have all the answers. How is this important for coaches to build a sense of trust and rapport with teachers?
3. How might a coach work with the principal to establish an understanding of the coach's role and to gain the trust of the principal? How can coaches work to gain the trust of their teachers?
4. The author notes that literacy or reading coaches often do more than coach—they are literacy leaders in the school. How could a coach lead in this way in your school?