

[Narrator] Let's take a look at how the components of reading instruction come to life in the classroom.

[Teacher and students] I went walking.

[Narrator] Every day in schools across the nation, teachers are providing the kind of effective early reading instruction that gives every child an opportunity to succeed in reading.

[Teacher] Okay boys and girls, let's go to our centers.

[Narrator] During the next few minutes, we'll take you inside these classrooms to see how teachers use systematic, explicit instruction to teach the major components of reading. Let's begin with phonemic awareness. As early readers recognize spoken words are made out of individual sounds, or phonemes, they begin to learn how to segment words into sounds and put them back together.

[Students] /k/, /ei/, /k/

[Teacher] How many sounds did you hear in that word? Ashley?

[Ashley] Three.

[Teacher] Good job. Now let's put all that together and say the word.

[Students] Cake.

[Teacher] Good.

[Narrator] Teachers plan phonemic awareness activities that help students make the connection between sounds and letters.

[Teacher] Find the letter that says /l/ and name it.

[Students] L.

[Teacher] Place it in the bottom pocket.

[Narrator] As students learn to link sounds and letters, they can apply this knowledge to reading and spelling. Now let's take a look at another component of reading instruction: phonics and word study. Explicit, systematic phonic instruction includes teaching letter-sound relations.

[Teacher] Name the letter?

[Teacher and students] V.

[Teacher] The key word?

[Teacher and students] Valentine.

[Teacher] The sound is?

[Teacher and students] /v/

[Narrator] This first grade teacher teaches his students how to blend sounds to read words.

[Teacher] We're going to do the r family, I want you to decode the word, blend the sounds together, and then say the word, okay?

[Student] B-ar bar, c-ar car...

[Narrator] He systematically assesses each child's progress, collecting information about the student's skills that will help him develop further instruction to meet each child's needs. Students need opportunities to practice and apply what they've learned, so it's essential to provide reading texts that include decodable words, that is, words that students can sound out and read using their phonics knowledge. Word study lessons teach students to identify spelling patterns, word parts, and other phonics elements, strengthening their ability to read and spell words. Research shows through systematic, explicit phonics instruction students improve their reading and spelling skills. Next, let's see how effective fluency instruction helps students become better readers. When children read fluently, it means they're able to read words quickly and accurately with little effort.

[Student] They're too far away, too big, and very, very hard.

[Narrator] They're able to take what they've learned about letter sounds and word parts and put it all together to automatically recognize words and phrases.

[Student] "What can those strange bumps be?" asked Owl.

[Teacher] Great expression, Nathaniel.

[Narrator] Students develop fluency through repeated reading activities, reading a familiar text several times.

[Student] "Hooray! I can go with my brother to the park."

[Narrator] Partner reading is one research-based fluency activity. A strong reader is paired with a less able reader and each student takes turns reading the same passage. The stronger reader begins, providing a model of fluent reading. Both students benefit from the extra practice with the text.

[Students] "What am I going to do?" he said to himself.

[Narrator] With the whole class together, this teacher models fluent reading.

[Teacher] Boys and girls, we're going to be doing some echo reading so that we can become even better readers, more fluent readers. "Once upon a time in a big cave past the volcano on the left, lived the grunt tribe."

[Students] "Once upon a time in a big cave past the volcano on the left, lived the grunt tribe."

[Narrator] Teachers may work with a small group of students with similar instructional needs in order to provide support and feedback. As with all elements of reading instruction, ongoing classroom-based assessment is essential. For fluency, that includes regular assessments of a

student's reading rate and accuracy. This teacher shows the student how to keep track of improvement in his reading rate as he reads a passage several times. Teachers chart a course toward reading success for their students when they plan fluency-based activities that provide opportunities to read and re-read a wide variety of appropriate level texts. Research tells us that fluency has a strong impact on comprehension, and that's the next component of reading instruction we'll observe. Comprehension instruction is more than just asking questions to assess students' understanding. To be effective, it takes direct teaching and modeling of procedures, along with guided student practice before, during, and after reading. This teacher uses comprehension question cards to demonstrate the kinds of questions students can ask themselves while they read to improve their understanding. Before reading, the teacher previews the text.

[Teacher] What do ya'll already know about the topic, Morgan?

[Morgan] Um, it's going to be about dinosaurs.

[Teacher] What do you already know about dinosaurs?

[Morgan] They became extinct.

[Narrator] During reading, the teacher shows how to use questions to trigger thinking that enhances comprehension.

[Teacher] Why would meat-eaters have to be faster than plant-eaters? Cole?

[Cole] So they could catch their prey faster.

[Teacher] So we answered this questions, does this make sense?

[Narrator] Follow-up questions help the students sum up what they learned from reading and stimulate new questions that could lead to further reading and research. From teacher demonstration to independent practice, these students are learning when and how to use comprehension strategies. Teachers develop student thinking and speaking skills as they discuss what they read.

[Teacher] Does this cover remind you of anything, maybe a place that you've been?

[Narrator] Effective comprehension instruction includes teaching students to recognize text structures, identifying the beginning, middle, and end of a story along with the characters, setting, problem, and solution. And teachers demonstrate strategies that students can use to identify the main idea of a text and write a summary.

[Teacher] If you go back to the beginning and read all of the sentences that we have made and we have gotten the gist of all of the small parts of the story, we take all those main ideas and we put them all together and we have a summary of the story. You see how we have a little bit from here, and a little bit from there? Did we re-tell the whole story? No, we didn't re-tell the whole story, we just had the gist and we got the most important part and this is a good way to summarize a story.

[Narrator] Of course, understanding word meanings, vocabulary, is an important part of reading comprehension.

[Teacher] Who can tell me something about this word that has to do with a penguin? William?

[William] One million penguins can live in a rookery.

[Teacher] Exactly. That's a lot of what?

[Students] Penguins.

[Narrator] Teachers provide direct instruction in vocabulary along with time to read a wide range of texts to expand students' knowledge of words. Through systematic vocabulary development and explicit instruction of comprehension strategies, along with the other major components of reading we've seen, teachers are giving these young learners a solid foundation for reading success.

[Student] I'm going to read this again!