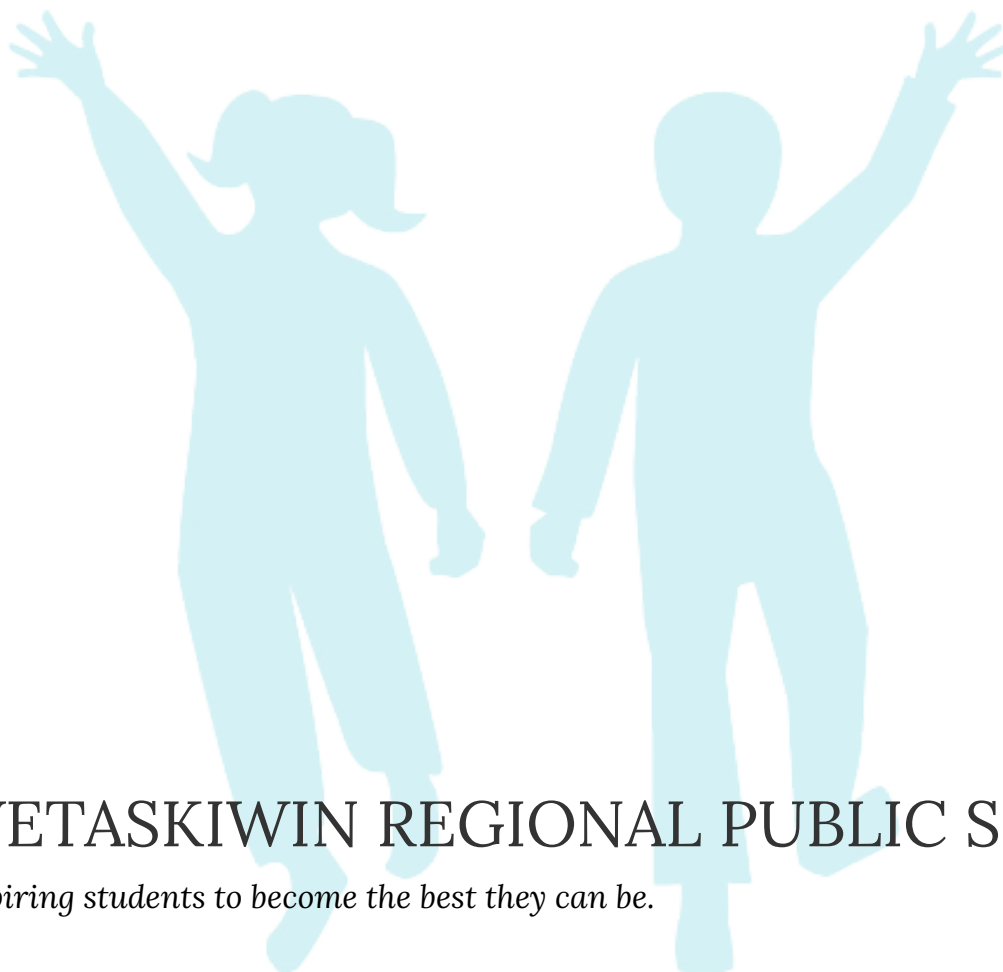


K-12 LITERACY GUIDING FRAMEWORK

June 2023



WETASKIWIN REGIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Inspiring students to become the best they can be.

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FORWARD

The Priority of Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools (WRPS) is to strive to ensure successful high school completion for our students.

At Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools we see our purpose as providing high-quality teaching and responsive support to ensure students will successfully complete school each day and be prepared with 21st century competencies.

Our district is committed to focusing its resources and the talents of staff to achieve this priority.

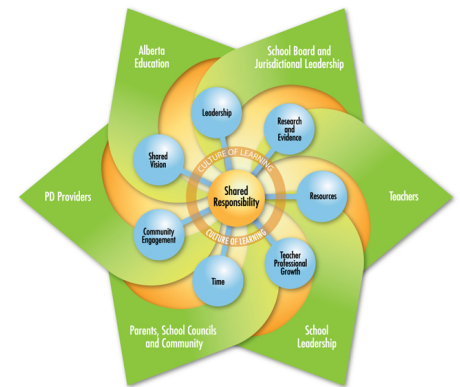
Working together collaboratively to achieve a strong foundation in literacy is a key element of this strategy.

WHY THIS FRAMEWORK HAS BEEN DEVELOPED:

- To support a commitment of all teachers and administrators to use this framework as a cornerstone for engaging in meaningful growth conversations that lead to improved teaching and learning in WRPS.
- To support school teams and staff to have meaningful and focused conversations about instructional practices, through common language and understanding.
- To define and identify essential conditions that support effective classroom instruction, a common understanding of assessment practices in literacy, and that these principles are embodied in all WRPS schools.
- To acknowledge the quality work already being done by WRPS teachers and support continuous growth in our instructional practices to improve student learning.
- To ensure that all WRPS students receive highly effective literacy instruction in powerful learning environments.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION

Successful implementation is possible when education stakeholders share the responsibility to address essential conditions- shared vision, leadership, research and evidence, resources, teacher professional growth, time and community engagement.



SHARED VISION: Stakeholders share an understanding of and commitment to the intended outcome(s).

LEADERSHIP: Leaders at all levels have the capacity to champion the shift from the current reality to the intended outcome(s).

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION INFORMED BY RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE: Current research, evidence and lessons learned to inform implementation decisions.

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: Teacher knowledge, skills and attributes are enhanced through ongoing professional learning.

RESOURCES: Human resources, materials, funding and infrastructure are in place to realize the intended outcome(s).

TIME: Time is provided to support the implementation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Parents, school councils, students, community members, businesses, industry and post-secondary institutions are partners in supporting implementation.

SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION REQUIRES SYSTEM COHERENCE:

Successful implementation across the district is complex work requiring coherence among all stakeholders and priority areas based on research and evidence-informed practice. Clarity and understanding of what are best practices in literacy instruction for all stakeholders will ensure that all students have equitable learning opportunities.

BEGINNING WITH THE END IN MIND

Profile of the Literate Graduate

Literate graduates shall possess a wide range of literacy competencies (reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing) that will allow them to communicate effectively and solve problems in a variety of contexts.

To be prepared for success, students will be competent and confident to navigate vast amounts of information in multimodal, digitally rich environments and be equipped with the skills and knowledge to think critically and innovatively.

They will possess the skills to understand the world around them, create meaning, take initiative, and engage in lifelong learning opportunities.

They will be able to express themselves and engage with their environments and successfully meet many and varied communication needs.

Students will develop an appreciation of the value of reading and writing and will possess the skills to achieve their personalized goals. They will be inspired to continually develop their knowledge and participate fully in society.

DEFINITION OF LITERACY

"Literacy involves acquiring and applying the understanding and skills necessary to decode, construct, evaluate, and logically communicate ideas, using oral, written, visual, and multimedia sources. Literacy is embedded in learning across all subject areas. It is foundational to living, learning, and working as knowledgeable, active participants in a democratic society."

Alberta Education Guiding Framework

"Literacy is about more than reading and writing - it is about how we communicate in society. It is about social practices and relationships, about knowledge, language and culture. Literacy ...finds its place in our lives alongside other ways of communicating."

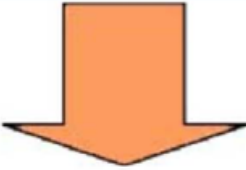
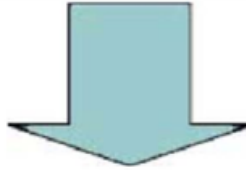
*UNESCO statement for the United Nations
Literacy Decade, 2003-2012*



"A classroom that is functioning successfully as the third teacher will be responsive to the student's interests, provide opportunities for students to make their thinking visible and then foster further learning and engagement" (Capacity Building Series , 2012)

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 1: Powerful Literacy Learning Environments:

Utilizing a UDL (Universal Design for Learning) approach which aims to change the design of the environment to reduce barriers and allow all learners to engage in rigorous, flexible meaningful learning.

Representation Principle 1	Action and Expression Principle 2	Engagement Principle 3
Presenting information and course content in multiple formats so that all students can access it	Allowing students alternatives to express or demonstrate their learning	Stimulating students' interests and motivation for learning in a variety of ways
		
<i>Examples</i> • Provide alternatives for accessing information (e.g., visual, auditory) • Provide or activate background knowledge in multiple ways (e.g., pre-teaching concepts, using advanced organizers)	<i>Examples</i> • Provide options for responding (e.g., keyboard instead of pen to complete a writing assignment) • Provide options for completing assignments using different media (e.g., text, speech, film, music)	<i>Examples</i> • Provide options that increase the relevance and authenticity of instructional activities (e.g., using money to teach math, culturally significant activities) • Provide options that encourage collaboration and communication (e.g., peer tutoring)

Graphic Above: Universal design for learning (UDL) principles Image from The Star Legacy Module: UDL: Creating a Learning Environment That Challenges and Engages All Learners (The IRIS Center for Training Enhancements, 2009).

We Support Literacy Learning In WRPS By:

- Employing culturally responsive instructional practices that acknowledge and value the backgrounds and strengths of all students.
- Providing daily reading and writing opportunities implemented across all subject areas each day.
- Ensuring that literacy lessons are relevant, relatable, and practical for students.
- Cultivating strategic and flexible learner groups with scaffolded instruction in the five key areas of literacy instruction.
- Inviting and encouraging risk-taking and persistence for all students.
- Fostering a safe environment where divergent thinking, beliefs and opinions are encouraged and celebrated
- Creating authentic and flexible opportunities for students to demonstrate literacy learning with no risks.
- Creating and nurturing opportunities for students to want to engage in reading and writing activities.
- Protecting the dignity of all students through varied instructional approaches such as small group instruction.
- Creating and nurturing vibrant school and classroom libraries that are carefully curated and provide students with a wide range of text forms that support learning in all curriculum areas.
- Ensuring that literature selections are intentional and strive to foster a sense of belonging for all students and align with curricular outcomes.
- Ensuring that all students are provided access to a range of materials and technologies that offer developmentally appropriate challenges and allow students to flexibly explore topics of interest to them.
- Providing students with diverse and innovative ways to engage with literature (podcasts, online books, digital text, videos)
- Embracing and enacting the Foundational Principles for High School Redesign
- Strengthening literacy skills and knowledge in all subjects through employing a disciplinary literacy approach.
- Striving to meet all students at their learning level and build upon on their strengths

- Intentionally ensuring that metacognition skills are actively taught to students to explain and apply what they have learned within and in other circumstances.
- Ensuring the literacy progressions are clearly understood by both teachers and parents.

Literacy Progressions

Culturally responsive teaching is defined as "teaching that recognizes all students learn differently and that these differences may be connected to background, language, family structure and social or cultural identity." (Gay 2000, Villegas & Lucas 2002)

"Culturally responsive educators hold positive and affirming views of their students and their ability to learn and achieve academic success. They demonstrate genuine respect for students and their families as well as a strong belief in their potential. They consider the broad social identities of students as assets rather than as deficits or limitations"

*K-12 Capacity Building Series
Ontario Ministry of Education*

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 2: Shared Vision

Stakeholders share an understanding of and a commitment to effective literacy instruction in all schools and classrooms in WRPS.

In Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools We Believe:

- Literacy is a shared responsibility of all teachers, every day, all day.
- A system - wide commitment to high quality literacy instruction is essential.
- School, home and community partnerships enhance literacy learning.
- Every student is capable of success in literacy.
- Instruction must be research - based, evidence - informed and verified by classroom practice.
- Balanced and ongoing assessment drives instructional decision making.
- Teachers' practices are strengthened through ongoing professional learning.
- All schools must have access to quality literacy resources for teachers and students.
- The collaborative response framework supports literacy instruction and intervention by using data to inform decision making.
- Organizing and compiling literacy information to support teachers is honoring of their time and helps to support the complexity of meeting a wide variance of student needs.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 3: Leadership

Leaders at all levels have the capacity to champion and actively lead, support and promote high leverage literacy learning. Leaders of literacy will work collaboratively across the system to ensure student success in literacy.

In Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools Literacy Leaders At All Levels Will:

- Have a strong understanding of literacy development for students.
- Provide effective and ongoing support quality literacy instruction and intervention.
- Highlight and engage in meaningful dialogue with staff about research-based literacy practices.
- Support and help create powerful learning environments that foster the literacy development of all students.
- Support all colleagues and be ambassadors for the culture of literacy in our schools.
- Nurture the conditions that foster teacher growth and build capacity in literacy instruction.
- Collect, analyze and act upon literacy data for the purpose of student learning.
- Value, highlight and celebrate the literacy success of students.
- Model lifelong learning and professional learning of literacy instruction and leadership.
- Support a literacy-focused direction across the division, supporting and improving pedagogical capacity, cultivating collaborative cultures and ensuring a focus on results are the right drivers for literacy success for all students.
- Involve literacy guiding coalition members in providing guidance for effective literacy practices and instruction across WRPS.

"Schools that have successful literacy programs show evidence of strong principal leadership, with focused attention on setting a literacy agenda, supporting teachers, accessing resources and building a capacity for further growth" (Booth & Rowsell, 2002)

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 4: Pedagogy Based on Research and Evidence

The implementation of literacy programming is based on current research, evidence and lessons learned.

Gradual Release of Responsibility: The GRR model is a particular style of teaching that is a structured method of pedagogy framed around a process devolving responsibility within the learning process from the teacher to the eventual independence of the learner.

This instructional model requires that the teacher, by design, transitions from assuming 'all the responsibility for performing a task to the students assuming the responsibility.

The ideal result is a confident learner who accepts responsibility for their own learning.

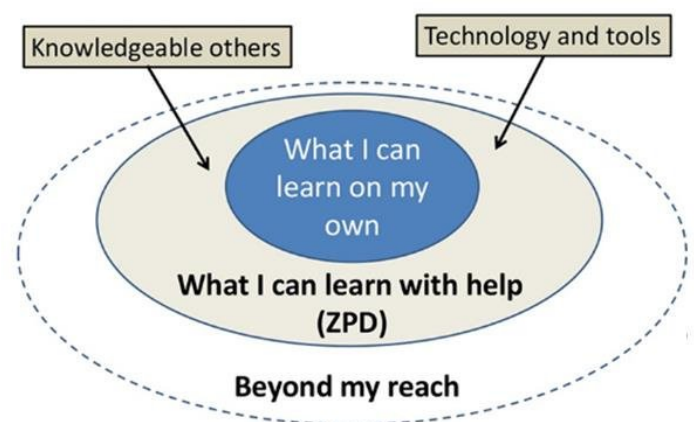
It is a successful model and has been documented as an effective approach in teaching many subject areas and a variety of content, from writing achievement, reading comprehension and literacy outcomes for English language learners.



The Zone of Proximal Development:

One element that is crucial to the success of the GRR model is the notion related to instructional scaffolding which is grounded in Vygotsky's concept of the 'zone of proximal development'. This is defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under

adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky), moving each student forward in a planned and organized manner.



We Support Literacy Learning In WRPS Through Attending To Speaking and Listening

All students should be encouraged to express and develop ideas, engage in healthy debate, and advocate for their needs.

Oral language development is essential and necessary for the continuous literacy development of all students K-12.

Oral language competence is referred to as a set of listening and speaking skills which develop in childhood and continue to be refined throughout school and life.

Students need to be provided meaningful, relevant, frequent and multiple opportunities to engage in conversations with teachers and peers.

Oral language is the foundation of written language and intentional development of oral language enhances a student's writing ability.

Reading is a language-based skill and the relationship between oral language and reading is reciprocal - each influencing the other to varying degrees as students progress through school.

Active listening skills must be explicitly taught and modeled.

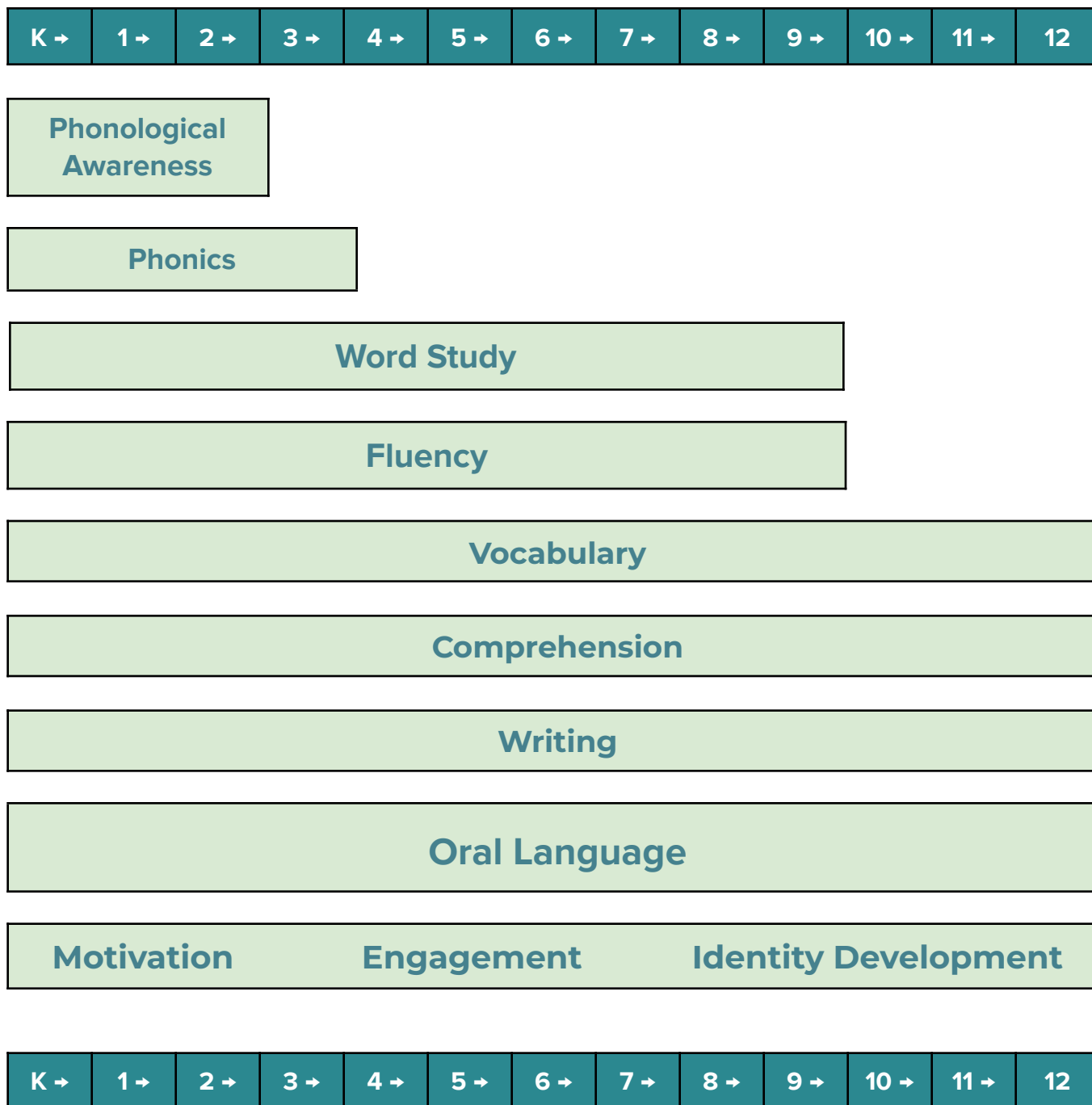
Research has shown that oral language—the foundations of which are developed during the early learning years—has a critical impact on children's readiness for kindergarten as well as their reading and writing success throughout their academic career.

Oral language skills provide the foundation for fluency and comprehension.



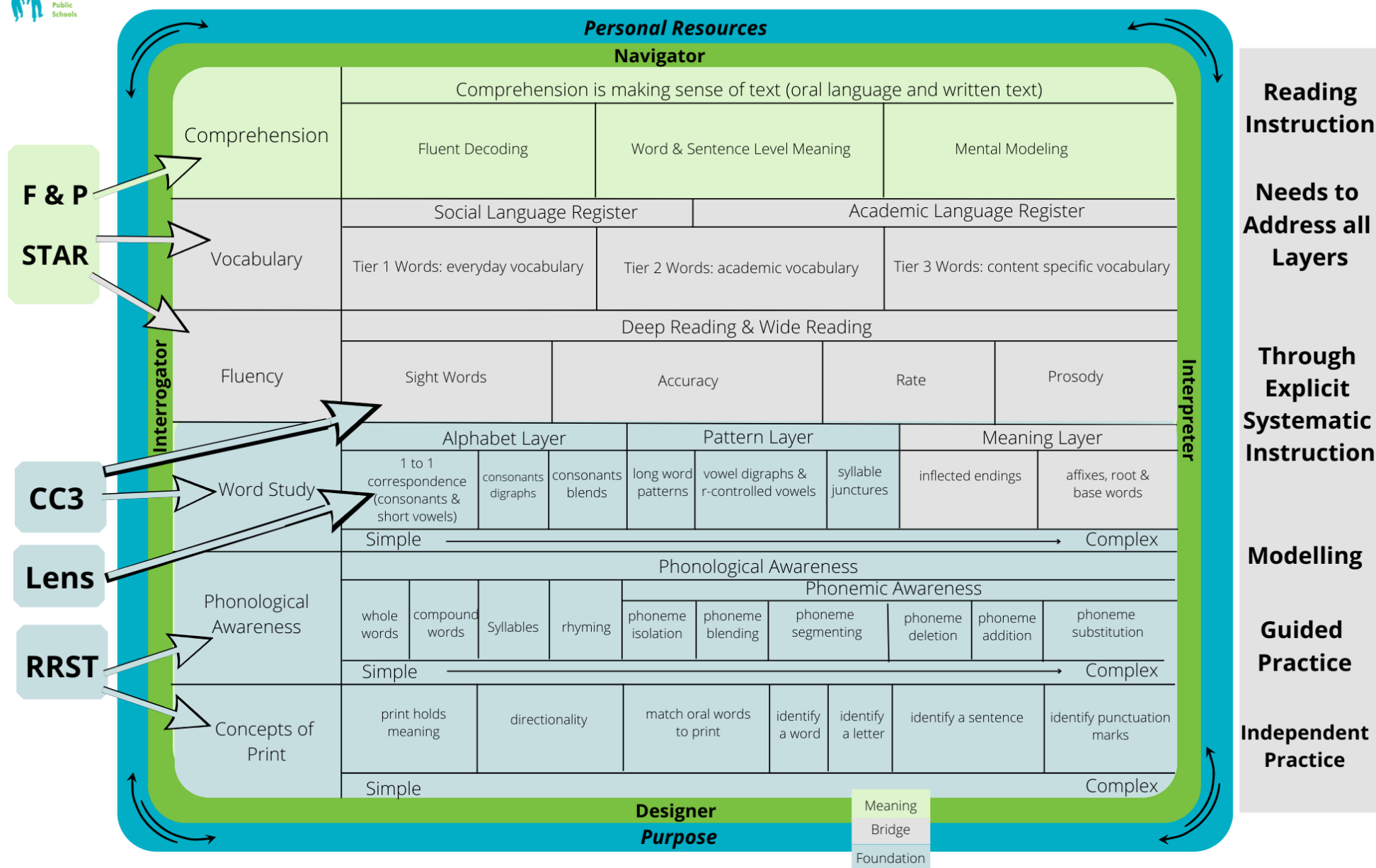
GLOSSARY OF LITERARY TERMS

Pillars of Reading Instruction (K-12)



- WRPS supports the research and pedagogy described in The Layers of Reading Development Model developed by Dr. Miriam Ramsey and Michelle Bence (University of Calgary)

THE LAYERS OF READING DEVELOPMENT



(Source: Ramzy & Bence, in press - recreated with permission)

Navigator (to break the code)

Interpreter (to construct unique meaning from the text)

Designer (to use the text to represent their ideas)

Interrogator (to consider what the author's purpose was and what influences the text may convey)

Core Process	Description
Concepts of print	Understanding how books and print work, such as reading from left to right and top to bottom. This construct represents children's earliest experiences with text.
Phonological awareness	Developing conscious attention to the sounds in spoken language, including words, syllables, onsets, rimes and individual phonemes.
Word study	Understanding orthographic patterns of the English language. This includes the ability to associate graphemes (letters) with phonemes (sounds) and to blend those phonemes to produce a word. It also includes knowledge of specific phoneme-grapheme relations (for example, knowing that the letters <i>sh</i> together typically represent the sound heard at the beginning of the word <i>ship</i>). Understanding, recognizing and applying long vowel patterns and syllable types (applies to reading and writing). Developing awareness and knowledge of the smallest meaningful units in language (for example, recognizing that the word <i>returnable</i> has three morphemes: <i>re</i>, <i>turn</i> and <i>able</i>).
Fluency	Reading with accuracy, rate and prosody. If a child can read with fluency, it means that they are able to identify/read a word automatically (sometimes referred to as reading by sight).
Vocabulary	Understanding the meanings of words and phrases, and their role in both social and academic language registers. This includes how words relate to one another, semantic understanding, concept knowledge, and connotative meaning, all of which aid in understanding text.
Comprehension	At the text level - The organization of language to convey meaning, such as how words are ordered within a sentence (syntax). Some aspects of language structure are encompassed in other constructs. Beyond the text level - Reasoning about aspects of text moving beyond vocabulary and printed text, such as when making inferences or when interpreting the nonliteral meanings of metaphors and figures of speech.

*Taken from: Early Childhood Education, Vol 48, No. 1, 2022
Ramzy, M. Bence, M. (2022) Literacy Instruction Through The Layers of Reading Development Early Childhood Education 48 (1), 11-19*

Specific Tier One Universal Strategies for Reading Instruction Include:

- Read Alouds
- Shared Reading
- Guided Reading
- Independent Reading And Peer Reading
- Explicit Modelling and Instruction Of Reading Comprehension Strategies
- Explicit Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Word Work Instruction
- Explicit Ongoing and Intentional Vocabulary Instruction

Writing Instruction:

- The Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) is an effective approach for teaching writing (see Figure 2.5). It is sometimes referred to as an *I do it, we do it, you do it*, model of instruction
- During the *I do it* stage, the teacher provides explicit instruction of a writing skill, with modeling through think-aloud.
- During the *We do it* stage, students practice the skill individually, in small groups, or as a whole group (e.g., the class editing a paragraph together).
- The teacher should guide this practice and include corrective feedback. Students eventually reach the *You do it* stage when they are able to apply the skill independently.
- It emphasizes instruction that mentors students into becoming capable thinkers and learners in a scaffolded approach.
- This is not a linear model and teachers may cycle back to focus lessons and guided instruction when it is needed to support student growth.
- Ideally, there is a continual flow between guided writing instruction (skills taught), coaching, conferring and goal-setting (individualized support) and independent writing (skills practiced).
- Writing Exemplars are an integral part of a successful writing program benefiting both teachers and students.



Seven Teaching Principles For Writing Instruction

Gradual release of responsibility	This model of instruction is also referred to as an <i>I do it, We do it, You do it</i> approach to teaching. It includes explicit instruction using a direct approach to introduce and teach a new writing skill, strategy, or technique (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983).
Explicit instructions of writing strategies	Explicit instruction involves using structured and sequenced steps to teach a specific skill. It includes think-aloud, and providing guided practice with feedback. Teaching students strategies for planning, revising, and editing their compositions has shown a dramatic effect on the quality of students' writing. Strategy instruction may involve teaching more generic processes, such as brainstorming or collaboration for peer revising, or it may involve strategies for accomplishing a specific type of writing task, such as writing an opinion or argument piece (Graham & Perin, 2007).
Differentiated instruction	Differentiated instruction calls for designing instruction to suit individual student needs rather than using a standardized approach to instruction that assumes all students learn to write the same way.
Scaffolding	Scaffolding is assistance offered by a teacher or a peer to support learning a writing skill that a student is initially unable to grasp independently, and then removal of the assistance once the skill is learned. This is not the same as doing the work for the student. Scaffolding is a hallmark of differentiated instruction.
Opportunities for collaboration	Writing is a social activity and is best learned in a community. Collaborative writing has been found to have a significant effect on improving student writing (Graham & Perin, 2007). It involves instructional arrangements whereby students work together to plan, draft, revise, and edit their writing pieces.
Mentor text as models for writing	Writing models, also referred to as mentor text, should be used to show students what good writing looks like so they can emulate the style, language and structure of the text.
Increasing the amount students write in all subjects	Adequate time for students to write is essential to the development of writing skills, and that time can occur during content instruction (Graham et al., 2012). Writing is one of the major strategies to extend critical thinking about a subject-area topic. It is recommended that students write routinely in all subject areas, including short and long-term writing tasks.

Chart

Specific Tier One Universal Strategies for Writing Instruction Include:

- Daily Writing
- Modeled Writing
- Shared Writing
- Independent Writing
- Utilizing anchor charts and mentor texts
- Graphic Organizers

INTERDISCIPLINARY LITERACY

Slide Deck

"Interdisciplinary literacy" is an umbrella term for disciplinary literacy because it is essential for teachers to emphasize the importance of literacy within disciplines as well as across them. At the heart of disciplinary literacy is an understanding of the ways in which knowledge is constructed in each content area and how literacy (reading, writing, viewing, reasoning, and communication) supports that knowledge in discipline specific ways. (Lent & Voigt, pg 10)

"Disciplinary literacy practices are cultural constructions, and many of those practices are not learned simply by observation. Thus, middle school and high school teachers, who are already part of the disciplinary culture by virtue of their disciplinary preparation, need to help students into the culture by making explicit the discipline-specific literacy practices of their areas. (Greenleaf, Schoenbach, Cziko, & Mueller, 2001)

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 5: Teacher Professional Learning

Teacher knowledge, skills and attributes are enhanced through ongoing professional learning. Focused literacy professional learning will be supported at all levels of the system.

We Support Literacy Learning In WRPS By:

- Engaging in purposeful professional learning in a safe environment
- Developing teacher capacity - facilitating professional learning
- Surveying staff about areas for professional learning.
- Creating opportunities for collaboration of staff across the district (same grade, divisions, vertical teams, department heads).
- Supporting communities of practice focused on key elements of literacy instruction.
- Mentorship opportunities for all staff.
- Yearly focus on opportunities for teachers to enhance and strengthen their understanding of literacy instruction.
- Professional learning focused on effective use and interpretation of diagnostic assessments.
- Ongoing and annual training for staff in key areas of assessment and instruction.
- Professional learning centered on whole group and small group instruction to best meet the needs of all students.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 6: Resources and Time

Human resources, materials, funding, and infrastructure are in place to realize the intended outcomes. Time is provided to support Implementation.

We Support Literacy Learning In WRPS By:

- Leveraging In-House Expertise (Early Literacy Teachers, Department Heads, Inclusion Coaches, Success Coaches, Specially Trained Staff)
- Employing strategic personnel to further support literacy growth.
 - (Speech-Language Pathologists, Specialized Support Worker, District Psychologist)
- Ensuring that all schools have quality literacy resources for Tier One Instruction
- Ensuring that all schools have researched intervention resources to address needs that are realized from assessment data.
- Ensuring staff have adequate professional learning time to understand literacy assessment data and respond appropriately upon literacy gaps that become realized from assessment data.
- Embedded time for professional learning for teachers to collaborate and enhance their professional capacity in literacy.
- Strategic timetabling for optimal literacy instruction.
- Collaborative planning time is provided to staff to enhance literacy instruction.
- Celebrations of literacy growth are evident and visible in all schools.
- Ensuring that literacy standards and progressions are clearly understood by both teachers and parents.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 7: Community Engagement

Parents, school councils, students, community members, businesses, industry and post-secondary institutions are partners in supporting effective literacy programming.

We Support Literacy Learning In WRPS By:

- Intentionally seeking and building stronger school-home relationships to learn about and understand the diverse backgrounds and cultural facets for all of our students.
- Welcoming greater family involvement in schools and classrooms allows for integrating locally situated and relevant aspects of students' lives, backgrounds and prior knowledge into instruction and the learning process.
- Recognizing that it is our staff who are ultimately the bridge between the students' world, theirs and their family's funds of knowledge, and the classroom experience. (Moll et al, p 137).
- Intentionally using knowledge about students and families to design and develop instruction that encompasses and connects to broad lived experiences of students and their families.
- Organizing Celebrations of Learning / Celebrations of Growth / Literacy Weeks - highlighting student success
- Focusing on assisting families to support literacy development (Parent Nights)
- Sharing resources with parents (websites/google classroom/newsletters literacy corner)
- Partnering with community agencies to complement and support literacy

"Culturally responsive literacy is defined as "instruction that bridges the gap between the school and the world of the student, is consistent with the values of the students' own culture aimed at assuring academic learning ...and encourages teachers to adapt their instruction to meet the learning needs of all students." (Callins, p 63).

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 8: Successful Implementation

The development and operationalizing of WRPS Continuum of Supports - Collaborative Response.

We Support Literacy Learning In WRPS By:

- Supporting teacher collaboration opportunities for ongoing growth in literacy instruction.
- Using evidence-based and research-informed assessment tools.
- Implementing consistent measures across grades and schools to allow for clear and understandable monitoring and tracking of student growth over a school year and from year to year.
- Assisting teachers and school learning support teams with reliable information to determine students at risk and those requiring further targeted interventions.
- Utilizing data systems at each school to allow for school teams to carefully monitor student progress over time in a variety of areas pertaining to literacy development.
- Having school learning teams collect and analyze literacy assessment information to inform the provision of responsive instruction and intervention.
- Utilizing ongoing literacy assessments throughout the grade levels to allow school staff to monitor and adjust instruction, provide intervention and support based upon identified areas of need and support students' strengths.
- Recognizing that the best formative assessment is learner-driven, not just data-driven, and includes student self-assessment.

[AP 360 Classroom Assessment](#)

[WRPS Literacy Assessment Guidelines](#)

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