



Literacy Links

May-June, 2009
Volume 5, Number 9

Monthly E-Newsletter of Maine Reading First

Spotlight on...

Purposeful Text Selection: Scaffolding Reading Instruction so that Practice becomes Permanent



Not paying attention to the needs of the learner is like leaving for the airport without the passenger....so that you'll get there on time.

- Madeline Hunter

A critical component of reading instruction is the purposeful selection of texts that enable young readers to practice applying the skills and strategies they are learning. While text selection is important across the school day during read aloud, shared, guided reading, and independent reading, the focus of this edition of Literacy Links will be about purposefully selecting reading texts for small-group differentiated reading instruction. Guided reading instruction has been evolving in recent years to include a variety of differentiated, small group lesson approaches that run along a continuum from skills-focused instruction to guided application of skills and strategies in connected text. The underlying goal of small group, differentiated reading instruction is to provide children with targeted instruction in reading skills and strategies that are responsive to their development as readers, and to enable children to apply their learning of these skills and strategies to the reading of connected text. For more detail about the continuum of small group reading instruction design, check out:

<http://www.fcrr.org/assessment/pdf/smallGroupAlternativeLessonStructures.pdf>. A key question for educators to ask when planning small group differentiated instruction is, "Which 'type' of text is best suited to achieve 'what' purpose with 'whom', and 'when'?" (Brown 2000).

In order to make good text selections for small group instruction, teachers must:

- Use data to identify students' reading levels and be able to select a focus or foci for instruction.



Upcoming Maine Reading First Events

August 19-20
2009

*Note: August 19 is
full, but August 20
still has room!*

Debbie Diller is returning to Maine in August 2009! The Maine Reading First initiative will be sponsoring day long workshops with Debbie Diller on August 19 and 20. Her focus will be small group differentiated instruction. On August 19 she'll work with K-3 educators and on August 20 with grade 4-6 educators. Both sessions will be held at the Waterville Elks Lodge. Registration materials are available at: <http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/materials.html>

- Understand why matching text types to support instructional objectives is important, and
- Know about different text types, and be able to identify their features and instructional uses.

Why is using all data to identify readability and lesson focus objectives important?

Data driven teaching should be the basis of text selection. Teachers use data to identify common instructional needs and to form subgroups based on these needs. Small groups can be formed initially by using text levels; then more finite groups can be formed based on specific instructional skill needs. For example, perhaps a first or second grade teacher has 10 students who can read text at approximately the same level based on oral reading checks of leveled materials; but a collection of skills focused assessments show that 4 of these students need more work with blending and segmenting and the other 6 students do not. The remaining 6 students need fluency practice as evidenced by timed oral reading checks and routine benchmark assessments. So what is the logical grouping? One group could be composed of 4 students using instructional level text with an instructional focus on blending sounds to problem solve words. One group could be composed of 6 students using instructional level text with an instructional focus on oral reading fluency to promote comprehension. With both groups, the final outcome should be learning foundational skills to deepen comprehension.

As with all small group targeted teaching, students should be progress monitored to track growth in the targeted instructional areas of their reading development. The choice of a focus for each small group should be repeatedly taught and practiced to automaticity with application in connected text; and then students' progress should be monitored. For example, using the two groups formed above, the group of 4 students who are working on blending could be progress monitored using a quick blending assessment (e.g. a Curriculum Based Measure (CBM) like DIBELS Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)). The group of 6 students working on fluent reading could be monitored using an oral reading fluency assessment (e.g. a Curriculum Based Measure like DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)). Both groups should also be monitored through routine oral reading checks for automatic word-solving, application of self-monitoring strategies, and reading prosody.

The Maine Reading First Literacy Leaders' Network (LLN) is being planned for the 2009-10 school year. To express topics of interest for next year or to learn more about the LLN, visit: <http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/materials.html> or contact: Leeann.Larsen@maine.gov



Let our advance worrying become advance thinking and planning.

--Winston Churchill

Why is matching text types to instructional objectives important?

Purposeful text selection enables teachers to scaffold students' reading development. By matching different types of text with students' development, teachers are able to work in readers' changing zones of proximal development--the bridge between what they know about the reading process and what they still need to learn (Brown 2000). When children are able to apply the skills and strategies they are learning to successful reading of connected text, the use of these skills and strategies is reinforced. If a group of children is learning about a particular word family pattern or a new comprehension strategy, but the text in which they are expected to practice does not present the opportunity to apply this new learning, children may not have the opportunity to practice application of what is being taught. It would be like trying to learn a new swimming stroke on land, but not having the opportunity to get into the water to practice it. Texts bring with them a variety of characteristics which present themselves as both supports and challenges for young readers. Teachers need to be able to recognize these characteristics, and match them to the strengths and needs groups of readers bring to the act of reading. Texts should be a **tool** that supports explicit and systematic reading instruction.

What are the basic text types, their features, and their instructional uses?

Texts can be categorized in a variety of ways. For the purpose of this article, the categories suggested by Brown (2000) are presented: simple predictable texts, transitional texts, decodable texts, easy readers, and authentic literature. This chart outlines the characteristics of each text type, the reading strategies and skills required by the text type, and suggestions for the most effective instructional uses of each type of text.

Text Types	Text Characteristics	Reading Strategies and Skills the Text Requires	Most Effective Instructional Uses
Simple predictable texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty increases gradually across levels of text Text controlled to emphasize repetition, rhythm, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using memory Tracking print with finger Using context clues Using illustration clues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To model the concept that print has meaning To model "how books work" (e.g., directionality,

UPCOMING EVENTS



Institute for Designing Whole School Plans for Response to Intervention, K-8

This institute will be sponsored by the University of Maine College of Education and Human Development on **August 10-12, 2009**. Contact Amy Cates at 581-2438 for more information and registration materials.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and rhyme Often includes polysyllabic and low-frequency words Simple sentence structures Illustrations support and extend text Limited plot/information Restricted amount of text per page 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the first sound and making an educated guess Using sight word knowledge Using prior knowledge to construct meaning Monitoring comprehension (does it make sense?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> concept of word) To provide independent practice in print awareness To develop students' oral reading fluency and expression For enjoyment during shared and independent reading
Transitional Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty increases gradually across levels of text Text controlled to provide diminishing predictable support (e.g., memorable refrain) Text controlled to provide increasing decoding support (e.g., familiar spelling patterns) Simple sentence structures Limited plot/information Illustrations support and extend text Restricted amount of text per page 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diminishing use of memory and context to identify words Blending of letter-sounds (/b/-/a/-/t/=bat) Using a chunking strategy with simple spelling patterns (if I know <i>bat</i>, then this is <i>flat</i>) Using sight word knowledge (e.g. <i>said, come, was</i>) Using prior knowledge to construct meaning Monitoring comprehension (does it make sense?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop students' letter-sound and simple spelling pattern knowledge To provide independent practice in using blending and chunking strategies To model decoding strategies while reading aloud to students To develop students' oral reading fluency and expression For enjoyment during independent reading
Decodable Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty increases gradually across levels of text Text controlled to emphasize letter-sound, spelling patterns, and high-frequency irregular sight words Simple sentence structures Simple, familiar story line Limited plot/information Illustration support and extend text Restricted amount of text per page 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blending of letter-sounds (/b/-/a/-/t/=bat) Using chunking strategy with simple spelling patterns ("If I know <i>bat</i>, then this is <i>flat</i> ^") Using sight word knowledge (e.g. <i>said, come, was</i>) Using prior knowledge to construct meaning Monitoring comprehension (does it make sense?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop students' letter-sound and simple spelling pattern knowledge To provide independent practice in using blending and chunking strategies To model decoding strategies while reading to students To develop students' oral reading fluency and expression For enjoyment during independent reading
Easy Readers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty increases gradually across levels of text Text less controlled than simple predictable, transitional, or decodable texts in word choice and sentence structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic word identification automaticity Using a chunking strategy with more complex spelling patterns (e.g., "If I know <i>fought</i>, then this must be <i>thought</i>") and polysyllabic words (e.g., <i>fright-en-ing</i>) Using sight word knowledge Using prior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop students' oral reading fluency and expression To model comprehension strategies while reading aloud to students For enjoyment while reading aloud to students and during independent reading

**MORE
RtI Training
Opportunities**

Summer 2009:

USM is offering an online graduate level course on RTI:

RTI Methods for General and Special Education.

This course will also be offered on campus, for dates and further information contact The Professional Development Center at (207) 780-5055 or <http://www.usm.maine.edu/eps>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text more controlled than authentic literature or nonfiction in word choice and sentence structures Illustrations support and extend text More complex plot/information than simple predictable, transitional or decodable texts More text per page than simple predictable, transitional, or decodable texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge to construct meaning Monitoring comprehension (does it make sense?) 	
<p>Authentic literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade book collections-both fiction and non-fiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word choice and sentence structure not controlled for beginning reader accessibility Illustrations support and extend text Complex plot/information More text per page than predictable or decodable books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced word identification automaticity Using a chunking strategy with unfamiliar words of all types Using sight word knowledge Using prior knowledge to construct meaning Comprehension monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To model comprehension strategies while reading aloud to students To motivate students to become better readers For enjoyment while reading aloud to students

Adapted from Brown 2000, Reading Teacher

What are the guiding questions for making informed text selections?

When planning for targeted small group instruction, teachers need to consider the strengths and needs of students based on the most current assessment data and an appropriate continuum of instructional objectives. As teachers select texts for instructional purposes, they should consider these questions:

- Which 'type' of text is best suited to achieve 'what' purposes with 'whom', and 'when?'" (Brown 2000)
- Are the embedded examples of the skills and strategies being taught integrated in the text to foster over-learning and reading for meaning?
- Can the text be used to provide repeated practice?



Save the Dates

Grade 5-9
Teachers

*You'll Reach
Every Reader
When You
Differentiate
Instruction*

Laura Robb, veteran educator, author and literacy coach, is coming **September 11, 2009**. This workshop is sponsored by and will be held at the University of Maine College of Education and Human Development. Contact Amy Cates, Orono at 581-2438 for registration information.

Diller (2007) reminds us of an effective process to follow when planning small group lessons:

1. Form groups using data.
2. Choose a data-based lesson focus using a readable (instructional) text level.
3. Select Materials: Look at books available to you—
 - Leveled readers
 - Phonics Readers (Decodable Readers)
 - Little Books from Core Program materials
 - Picture Books with multiple copy sets
 - variety of genres/increasing number of nonfiction

Then ask: "Does it (the book) match your lesson focus?" She advises, "Book choice is everything! Choose a book the students can comprehend (and is at their instructional level). Consider students' background knowledge, connections, interest/attention (engagement), and vocabulary."

4. Choose three books that enable students to apply the skills and strategies you've selected for the instructional focus/foci. Use these texts to plan instruction for several successive lessons, recognizing that adjustments to lesson plans will be made as you work with the students and observe their learning.
5. Always have comprehension questions prepared that relate to the focus of the lesson and ask these questions first; then move on to deeper comprehending (Diller, MRF May 2009).

For more details and explanations of purposeful text selection see the books suggested in the Professional Text Section of this issue and in:

Brown, K.J. (1999/2000). *What kind of text-For whom and when? Textual scaffolding for beginning readers*. *The Reading Teacher*, 53(4), 292-307.

Description of Instructional Ideas...

Sample Small Group Lesson

The targeted small group lesson offered here is adapted from lesson models available from Sharon Walpole, Michael McKenna and others at: <http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/reading/projects/garf> (February 2008). We have taken the liberty to use one of their lesson samples to build a lesson planning example for targeted small group instruction by integrating lesson elements for target small group and guided reading teaching from Diller (2007), Tyner and Green (2004), Dorn (1998), and Fountas and Pinnell (1996).



Case Study on Sylvia

In January, Sylvia's first grade teacher notices that she struggles with automatically solving sight words. She only uses initial and/or initial and final visual information. She has looked at the data and found the following.

DIBELS: She knows letters sound by sound, but she cannot blend on NWF (Nonsense Word Fluency). She is below benchmark in this area. Examination of her responses on this measure also show she confuses short and long vowels.

Running Records: She confuses high frequency words and is not fluent. She is currently reading at level 6/E.

Core Program Assessments : She confuses short and long vowels in reading and writing.

Informal Data/Teacher Observation: Teacher notices that Sylvia often mimics student answers at groups and confuses high frequency words like was/saw, on/no, here/he/her.

**Attention!!!
Attention!!!**

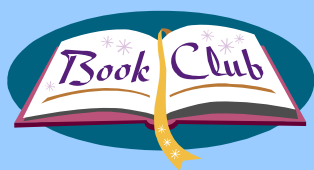
**Lester
Laminack is
coming to
MAINE on
October 23,
2009!**

Sponsored by
the University of
Maine College of
Education and
Human
Development.
Contact Amy
Cates, Orono at
581-2438 for
registration
information.

What does Sylvia need in small group instruction? In looking at all of Sylvia's data and her classroom performance, the teacher determines the group that would best meet Sylvia's needs will be a skills-focused reading group at her current text level (6/E). The lesson will be based on the foundational skills this group of students need:

- blending sounds to problem-solve words and
- becoming automatic with sight words that have been taught with gradual introduction of additional sight words.

An appropriately leveled decodable reader will be used as the text to insure that the students have enough opportunities to practice decoding the letter-sound patterns they are learning and to see high frequency words in connected text. The teacher will in fact select 3-4 appropriate decodable readers to use over the next series of lessons, to scaffold the learning of new sight words as she teaches and re-teaches this group how to blend CVC and CVCe words. In selecting the texts, the teacher uses the sequential hierarchy of sight words used in her core program as well as the CVC and CVCe patterns on which the students



The only true wisdom
is in knowing you
know nothing.

-- Socrates



need to focus as a guide. Additionally, the teacher will evaluate the content of each text to insure students will be able to connect prior knowledge and will seek texts with supportive language structure. In each lesson, a few previously taught sight words will be quickly reviewed and 1-3 new sight words will be introduced (depending on student performance). The teacher will also carefully select three or four words from each text that she will use to teach blending routines. The word work will occur before the reading of the new decodable text to pre-teach required skills and to allow for immediate application of new learning. Each lesson will have before, during, and after reading sections, as outline in the lesson framework below.

Note that this format allows for pre-teaching of skills, setting a purpose before reading, applying skills during reading and revisiting both the skills focus and comprehension focus after reading.

Skills Focused Lesson (Sylvia's group)

<u>Before Reading</u>	
Whisper reading using decodable text (used in a previous lesson)	3 minutes
Skills focus:	
• Sounding and blending practice	4 minutes
• Learn new high frequency words; Review old high frequency words	4 minutes
Introduce new decodable text and set purpose for reading	1-2 minutes
<u>During Reading</u>	
Whisper reading of NEW decodable text while teacher listens in to prompt skill and strategy use.	4 minutes
<u>After reading discussion:</u>	
Draw attention to use of skills taught and end with comprehension focus linked to reading purpose.	3-4 minutes
	(Adapted from McKenna & Walpole, 2008 and Diller, 2007)

Adjusted by S.Estabrook(2008), S. Greenlaw (2009)

Summary of Professional Texts...

Text Set to Support Targeted Small Group Lesson Design

- Opitz, Michael F. and Michael P. Ford (2008). **Do-able Differentiation: Varying Groups, Texts, and Supports to Reach Readers.** NH: Heinemann. ISBN-13 978-0-325-01283-4

Only when we are stopped in our tracks by a problem or situation that forces us to think or rethink is there the possibility of new learning.

---Eric Jen



I'm not afraid of storms, for I'm learning to sail my ship.

--Louisa May Alcott

- Walpole, Sharon and Michael McKenna (2009). **How to Plan Differentiated Reading Instruction: Resources for Grades K-3 (Solving Problems in the Teaching of Literacy)**. NY: Guilford Press. ISBN-13: 978-1606232644
- McKenna, M & Walpole, S. (2007). **Differentiated Reading Instruction, Strategies for the Primary Grades**. NY: Guilford Press. ISBN-13:978-1-59385-412-6
- Diller, Debbie (2007). **Making the Most of Small Groups: Differentiation for All**. ME: Stenhouse. ISBN-13 978-1-57110-431-1
- Klinger, Vaughn and Boardman (2007). **Teaching Reading Comprehension to Students with Learning Difficulties: What Works for Special Needs Learners**. NY: Guilford Press. The ISBN-13 is 9781593854461.
- Hall, Susan L. ED.D. (2006). **I've DIBEL'd Now What? Designing Interventions with Dibels Data**. NY: Longmont. Sopris West, A Cambium Learning Co. ISBN-10: 1-59318-497-2

Children's Literature...

Children's Choice Award Finalists 2009

This awards program is based on Children's Choices, a joint project of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the Children's Book Council since 1975. Publishers submit hundreds of titles to be evaluated and voted on by 10,000 children. Throughout the school year, five review teams, located in different regions of the United States, work with their local classroom teachers and school librarians to incorporate the books into classroom activities. The most popular titles, as voted on by children whose teachers are involved in the project, are chosen as the finalists. The list is designed for use not only by teachers, librarians, administrators, and booksellers, but also by parents, grandparents, caregivers, and everyone who wishes to encourage young people to read for pleasure.

Winners were announced live at the Children's Choice Book Awards gala on May 12 in New York City as part of Children's Book Week (May 11-17, 2009), the oldest national literacy event in the United States. The finalists for each of the five categories are listed below. For book reviews and ISBN numbers go to www.amazon.com/childrenschoiceawards2009.

Grades K-2:

- **The Donut Chef (A Golden Classic)** By Bob Staake
- **Katie Loves the Kittens** By John Himmelman
- **The Pigeon Wants a Puppy** By Mo Williams
- **Sort it Out!** By Barbara Maricinda
- **Those Darn Squirrels!** By Adam Rubin



It's not my job to dream your dreams. It's my job to make your dreams become a reality.

- [Blanche Lincoln](#)

Grades 3-4:

- [Baby Mouse #8: Puppy Love](#) By Jennifer L. Holm
- [Underwear: What We Wear Under There](#) By Ruth Freeman Swain
- [Spooky Cemeteries \(Scary Places\)](#) By Dinah Williams
- [Willow](#) By Denise Brennan-Nelson
- [One Million Things: A Visual Encyclopedia](#) By Peter Chrisp

Grades 5-6:

- [100 Most Dangerous Things On the Planet](#) By Anna Claybourne
- [The Stone Keeper](#) By Kazu Kibuishi
- [Swords: An Artist's Devotion](#) By Ben Boas
- [The Big Field](#) By Mike Lupica
- [Thirteen](#) By Lauren Myracle

Favorite Author:

- [Breaking Dawn \(The Twilight Saga, Book 4\)](#) BY Stephanie Meyer
- [The battle of the Labyrinth \(Percy Jackson and the Olympians, Book 4\)](#) By Rick Riordan
- [Brisingr \(Inheritance, Book 3\)](#) By Christopher Paolini
- [Maximum Ride: The Final Warning](#) By James Patterson
- [Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules](#) By Jeff Kinney

Favorite Illustrator:

- [The Pigeon Wants a Puppy](#) By Mo Williams
- [Big Words for Little People](#) By Jamie Lee Curtis
- [Fancy Nancy: Bonjour Butterfly](#) By Jane O'connor
- [Smash! Crash!](#) By Jon Scieszka
- [Zen Ties](#) By Jon J. Muth

News from Maine Reading First...

We want your suggestions! As you peruse the monthly editions of *Literacy Links*, you might have topic ideas for the spotlight, instructional strategy, children's literature, professional text, or web site resource sections. We'd love to hear your suggestions. Please email them to: geecon@fairpoint.net.

Check it out...

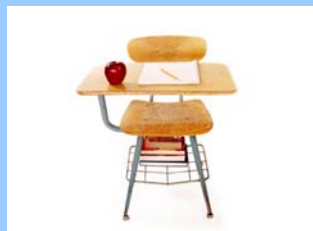
<http://dww.ed.gov>
Doing What Works.ED.gov

The goal of the **Doing What Works** website is to translate research-based practices into practical tools that support and improve classroom instruction. This government sponsored site is divided into three main sections that provide free tools and resources for schools:

Learn What Works: offers professionals deeper understanding and research-based recommendations to teach reading topics (e.g. vocabulary).

See How It Works: explores how schools are actually teaching the topic (vocabulary), using real-life school site videos and slideshows with interviews, and actual sample materials from these schools.

Do What Works: provides a collection of tools and ideas to help you improve your practice; including templates and guidance tools to implement best practices.



SNEAK PREVIEW

Coming soon!

IN 2010 Literacy Links—

- ❖ *Strategies for non-fiction comprehension*
- ❖ *Text Selection for vocabulary and comprehension intervention*
- ❖ *More on Morphology*

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/adlit_pg_082608.pdf

This Institute of Education Sciences (ies) site offers 10-12 research-based Practice Guides on a variety of literacy topics for Pre-school through High School. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, recently written guides for best practice in vocabulary and comprehension are included and additional Practice Guides are added as research is investigated. This is the same site that houses the *What Work Clearinghouse*. The link above will take you directly to current guidance documents for teaching a variety of literacy topics including comprehension and vocabulary.

Newsletter Archives

Earlier editions of *Literacy Links* available on the Maine Reading First website at <http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm>

Edition	Spotlight Topic
March, 2005	Maine Reading First
April, 2005	Maine Reading First Course
May, 2005	Reading Fluency
June, 2005	Vocabulary
September, 2005	Phonemic Awareness
October, 2005	Phonics
November, 2005	Comprehension
December, 2005/January, 2006	DIBELS
February, 2006	Literacy Centers

March, 2006	Interactive Read Aloud
April, 2006	Nonfiction
May, 2006	Word Walls
June, 2006	Classroom Design
September, 2006	Shared Reading
October, 2006	Automaticity
November, 2006	Using Assessment to Guide Instruction
December, 2006	Deepening Comprehension
January, 2007	Selecting Quality Children's Books (part 1)
February, 2007	Selecting Quality Children's Books (part 2)
March, 2007	Making Instruction Explicit
April, 2007	Motivation and Engagement
May-June 2007	Grouping for Instruction
September 2007	Making Instruction Systematic
October, 2007	Pacing Instruction
November, 2007	Managed Independent Practice
December, 2007	A Deeper Look at Phonemic Awareness
January, 2008	Phonics at the K-2 Grade Span
February, 2008	Phonics and Word Work Grades 3-5
March, 2008	Vocabulary Revisited
April, 2008	A Deeper Look at Vocabulary Instruction
May-June 2008	Fluency Revisited
August 2008	Fluency Assessment
September-October 2008	The Revised Maine <i>Learning Results</i> English Language Arts Standards
November 2008	Comprehending Comprehension
December 2008	Comprehension Strategies
January 2009	Response to Intervention (RTI)
February 2009	Multiple Tiers of Intervention
March 2009	Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring for RTI
April 2009	Collaborative Problem-Solving for RTI



For additional information about any of the items in this newsletter or to sign up to receive this e-newsletter, please email Leeann.Larsen@maine.gov

Click here to view the Maine Reading First website
<http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm>

The professional development opportunities and materials are listed in *Literacy Links* for informational purposes only and are not necessarily endorsed by the Maine Department of Education's Maine Reading First Initiative.