



Transforming State Systems
to Improve Outcomes for
Children with Disabilities

Supporting Practice Guide Implementation: Providing Reading Interventions to Students in Grades 4–9

Research to Practice Spotlight Series: Session 1

Kim St. Martin, PhD (MiMTSS Center)

Laura Berry Kuchle, PhD, and Lauren Artzi, PhD (NCSI)

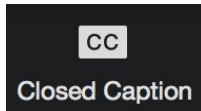
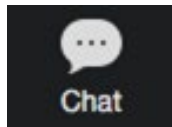
November 2023

Thank you for joining us today!

While we wait to start, feel free to share what brings you to this event and any questions you may have.



Zoom Housekeeping



- Microphones and videos are off for this event.
- Look for the flashing orange alert, which will take you to the chat box when it is active.
- Closed captions are available.
- This webinar is being recorded.

Agenda

- Welcome and Overview
- SEA Considerations for Supporting Intervention Implementation
- Review of Practice Guide
- SEA Considerations for Supporting the Recommendations
- Closing and Additional Resources

Welcome and Introduction to NCSI

The National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) supports states to transform systems to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.



Series Overview

- Unpacks key evidence-based practices to promote learning for students with disabilities and others struggling to learn reading and math
- Shares considerations for SEAs and LEAs to support educators with implementation



Introducing the Handout



Transforming State Systems to Improve Outcomes
for Children with Disabilities

Note-Taking Guide

Supporting Practice Guide Implementation: Providing Reading Interventions to Students in Grades 4–9

During the webinar, note key takeaways from each section (*what*), connections or implications for your role (*so what*), and key actions you might take (*now what*). Also, determine whether there are questions you would like to put in the chat for discussion during the webinar.

Recommendation	Key Takeaways (What?)	Connections to Make (So What?)	Actions to Take (Now What?)
1. Multisyllabic Word Reading			

Meet Kim St. Martin, PhD

- Director of Michigan's Multi-Tiered System of Supports Technical Assistance Center
- Practice guide panel member



SEA Considerations for Supporting Intervention

- How can SEAs support districts and schools in reviewing, selecting, and implementing reading interventions?
- What are special considerations for intervention at the secondary level?



Guiding Questions

- What questions do you have about the practice guide recommendations or how SEAs can support implementation?
- Do you have relevant experiences to share?



What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide on Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9

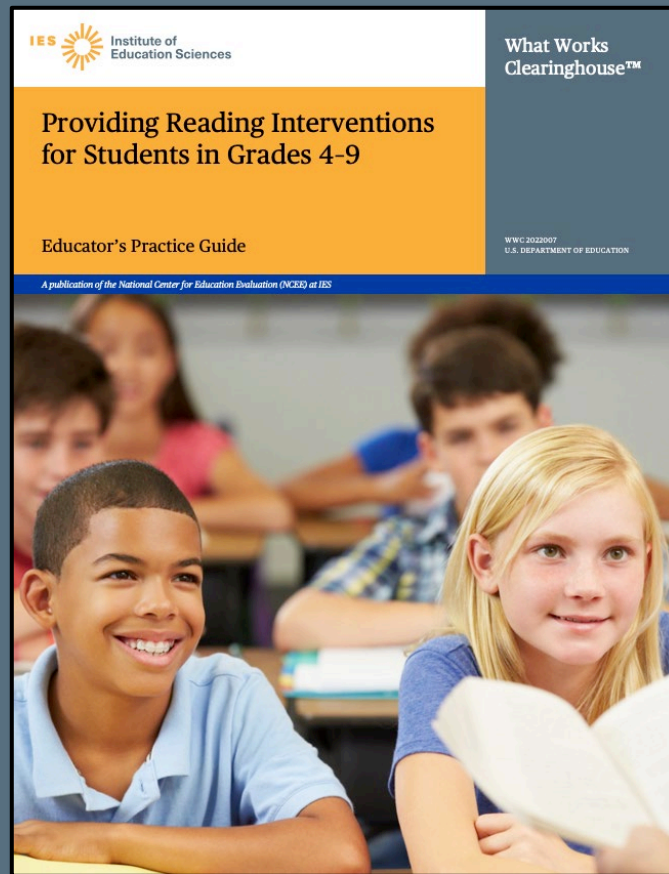
Kimberly St. Martin

Panel Member

MiMTSS TA Center

Michigan Department of Education

Introduction



Panel of Reading Experts

- Sharon Vaughn (Chair), *University of Texas at Austin*
- Michael J. Kieffer, *New York University*
- Margaret McKeown, *University of Pittsburgh*
- Deborah K. Reed, *University of Iowa*
- Michele Sanchez, *Ysleta Independent School District, El Paso, Texas*
- Kimberly St. Martin, *MiMTSS TA Center, Michigan Department of Education*
- Jade Wexler, *University of Maryland*

Purpose of This Guide

- Emphasis is on reading interventions (supplemental programs that are provided in addition to classroom English language arts instruction).
- Schools coordinate classroom English language arts instruction with reading intervention as a part of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).
- Policies to provide additional reading courses (e.g., elective reading courses) vary by states and districts/schools.

Who Might Find This Guide Useful

- Educators providing reading intervention or those who oversee MTSSs in reading
- Special educators, teachers, intervention teachers, reading specialists and coaches, and trained volunteers
- School, district, or state personnel involved in adopting intervention curricula
- Parents seeking to help their children

Levels of Evidence

- **Strong:** There is consistent evidence that meets WWC standards and indicates that the practices improve outcomes for a diverse student population.
- **Moderate:** There is some evidence meeting WWC standards that the practices improve student outcomes, but there may be ambiguity about whether that improvement is the direct result of the practices or whether the findings can be replicated with a diverse population of students.

There is also a **Minimal** level of evidence, which is not appropriate for this guide.

Recommendations and Corresponding Levels of Evidence

Practice recommendation	Level of evidence		
	Minimal	Moderate	Strong
1. Build students' decoding skills so they can read complex multisyllabic words.			✓
2. Provide purposeful fluency-building activities to help students read effortlessly.			✓
3. Routinely use a set of comprehension-building practices to help students make sense of the text.			✓
4. Provide students with opportunities to practice making sense of stretch text (i.e., challenging text) that will expose them to complex ideas and information.		✓	

Recommendation 1: Multisyllabic word reading

Build students' decoding skills so they can read complex multisyllabic words.

Level of Evidence: Strong

Recommendation 1: *Build students' decoding skills so they can read complex multisyllabic words.*

How-to Step 1: *Identify the level of students' word-reading skills in the intervention group and teach vowel and consonant letter-sounds and combinations, as necessary.*

How-to Step 2: *Teach students a routine they can use to decode multisyllabic words.*

How-to Step 3: *Embed spelling instruction in the lesson.*

How-to Step 4: *Engage students in a wide array of activities that allow them to practice reading multisyllabic words accurately and with increasing automaticity.*



Example: Activities to build students' automaticity with word reading.

1. As a warm-up provide practice in vowel combinations in the multisyllabic words that students are going to encounter in a word list or section of text for the session.
2. Read a list of high-frequency prefixes and suffixes aloud as a group (in unison or by taking turns).
3. Ask students to underline prefixes and suffixes in each word in a word list, and then read the prefixes and suffixes aloud as a group (in unison or by taking turns).
4. Ask students to write words by adding a prefix and/or a suffix to a base word.
5. Ask students to read a list of words once with their partner, noting any words students have difficulty reading. Then ask them to try to read more words correctly when they read the list to their partner a second time.
6. Read a list of words (up to 20 words) aloud as a group (in unison or by taking turns).
7. Time students as they read a list of words. Ask them to read the list again to meet or beat their previous time.
8. Dictate words for students to spell that contain the targeted prefixes and suffixes or sounds in the lesson.
9. Read sentences containing multisyllabic words aloud as a group (in unison or by taking turns) or with the teacher reading first and then the students reading next.
10. Ask students to read the passage containing the words they are learning at least twice.

Source: Toste et al. (2019).



Obstacle: A few of my students can read multisyllabic words pretty effortlessly but perform poorly on reading tests because of weak vocabulary and difficulties in comprehension.

- These students need additional work on language and vocabulary development. Therefore, teachers should minimize decoding and fluency instruction and maximize comprehension instruction.
- When possible, group these students in an intervention that focuses on oral language and reading comprehension.
- Activities should include experiences that increase world knowledge and word knowledge and provide ample opportunities to engage students in meaningful discussion about the text they are reading.

Recommendation 2: Fluency building

Provide purposeful fluency-building activities to help students read effortlessly.

Level of Evidence: Strong

Recommendation 2: *Provide purposeful fluency-building activities to help students read effortlessly.*

How-to Step 1: *Provide a purpose for each repeated reading.*

How-to Step 2: *Focus some instructional time on reading with prosody.*

How-to Step 3: *Regularly provide opportunities for students to read a wide range of texts.*



Obstacle: *Sometimes students avoid finding words they do not know because they feel embarrassed or have concerns that the teacher will ask them to do more work.*

- In these cases, teachers can address these concerns through remarks such as: “There are at least two words that I think are very difficult. See if you have the same two words as me.”
- Another option is to motivate students by having them work in pairs to choose difficult words. This may make them feel more comfortable and ease their concerns about appearing less able to respond to the task.



Obstacle: It is hard to find materials that include the words or patterns the students are learning, relate to subject-area topics, are age-appropriate, and increase in difficulty.

- Often published programs contain word lists and passages for fluency instruction. If a published program is not available, choose words and passages from a variety of sources, including subject-area textbooks, novels, newspapers, or electronic resources, that emphasize the sound patterns, words, or content of the lesson.
- Schedule time during grade-level or department meetings to collect and develop materials to address the skills you are teaching. Over time you will have materials that span a wide range of topics and vary in difficulty.

Questions and Reflections



- What questions do you have about the practice guide recommendations or how SEAs can support implementation?
- Do you have relevant experiences to share?

Recommendation 3: Comprehension building

Routinely use a set of comprehension-building practices to help students make sense of the text.

Level of Evidence: Strong

Parts of Recommendation 3: *Routinely use a set of comprehension-building practices to help students make sense of the text.*

Part A: *Build students' world and word knowledge so they can make sense of the text.*

Part B: *Consistently provide students with opportunities to ask and answer questions to better understand the text they read.*

Part C: *Teach students a routine for determining the gist of a short section of text.*

Part D: *Teach students to monitor their comprehension as they read.*

Recommendation 3, Part A: *Build students' world and word knowledge so they can make sense of the text.*

How-to Step 1: *Develop world knowledge that is relevant for making sense of the passage.*

How-to Step 2: *Teach the meaning of a few words that are essential for understanding the passage.*

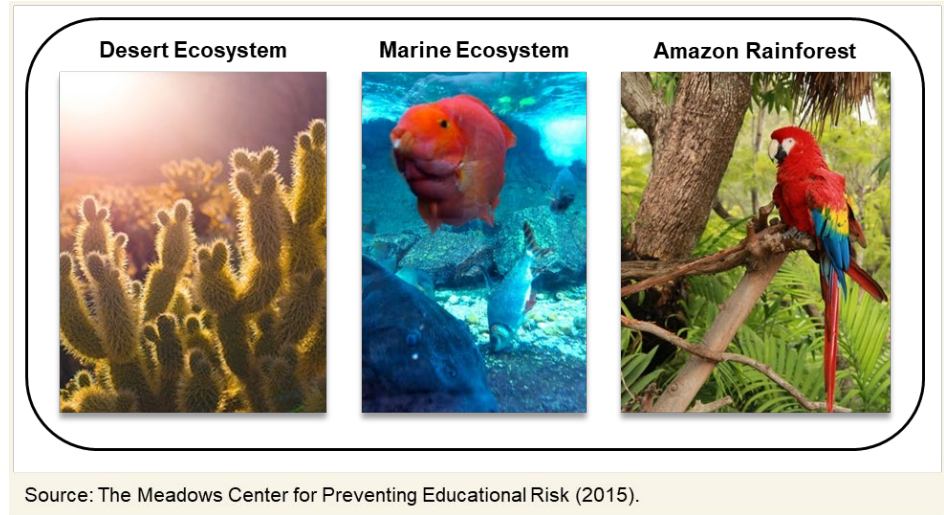
How-to Step 3: *Teach students how to derive meanings of unknown words using context.*

How-to Step 4: *Teach prefixes and suffixes to help students derive meanings of words.*

How-to Step 5: *Teach the meaning of Latin and Greek roots.*

How-to Step 1: *Develop world knowledge that is relevant for making sense of the passage.*

- Provide a brief 3- to 5-minute introduction on the topic before reading to help students develop knowledge that might help them understand what they are reading.
- Another way to prepare students for reading about a topic is to present a short 2- to 4-minute video clip, podcast, or brief informational lecture with illustrations.





Obstacle: *There are so many words my students do not know. Working on word knowledge could take up the entire lesson.*

- Focus on words that are essential to understanding the passage and those that students will encounter frequently in their readings.
- If not knowing the meaning of a particular word becomes a barrier to understanding the text, quickly provide the meaning of the word and continue reading.
- Show students how to use dictionaries and thesauruses.

Recommendation 3, Part B: *Consistently provide students with opportunities to ask and answer questions to better understand the text they read.*

How-to Step 1: *Explicitly teach students how to find and justify answers to different types of questions.*

How-to Step 2: *Provide ample opportunities for students to collaboratively answer questions.*

How-to Step 3: *Teach students to ask questions about the text while reading.*



Obstacle: *My students are really struggling with generating questions as they read.*

- One way to get students started with generating questions is to begin with literal questions that begin with “Who, What, or When?” (“Right There” questions).
- Then, move on to questions requiring students to draw inferences.

Recommendation 3, Part C: *Teach students a routine for determining the gist of a short section of text.*

How-to Step 1: *Model how to use a routine to generate gist statements.*

How-to Step 2: *Teach students how to use text structures to generate gist statements.*

How-to Step 3: *Work collaboratively with students to generate gist statements.*



Obstacle: *Students get tired of generating gist statements day after day.*

- Including a variety of activities can be helpful. After spending some time devoted primarily to learning how to generate a gist statement, spend time on other areas of comprehension, such as word knowledge or asking and answering questions.



Obstacle: Sometimes, I think my students have finally learned how to generate gist statements. But then, a few days later, we get to a new piece of reading material, and it all falls apart. Will they ever learn how to do it?

- As texts get more difficult or students encounter unfamiliar topics, generating gist statements becomes more challenging, and students will need more support and discussion.
- Students may have trouble with a harder text when they do not have enough world and/or word knowledge.
- Continue to ask students to generate gist statements so they can continue to work the skill with harder and harder text.

Recommendation 3, Part D: *Teach students to monitor their comprehension as they read.*

How-to Step 1: *Help students determine when they do not understand the text.*

How-to Step 2: *Teach students to ask themselves questions as they read to check their understanding and figure out what the text is about.*

How-to Step 3: *Provide opportunities for students to reflect on what they have learned.*



Obstacle: *My students are reticent to share what they did not understand.*

- Helping students feel comfortable sharing when they are not understanding what they are reading may take time.
- Some students may not feel comfortable at first. They may want to hide their confusion, or they may not be accustomed to identifying when they are stuck.
- Repeatedly and gently, encourage students to share when they need help and remind them that you are there to help.



Obstacle: *I keep stopping every two minutes to make sure they are understanding what they read. This does not seem to be working well.*

- It can be hard to follow along with the text if you are stopping too often. If this technique is not working well, interrupt their reading after longer sections of text.
- Ask students to continue to mark (e.g., underline or highlight) any problem areas in the text as they read and share what they marked at stop points further along in the text.

Recommendation 4: Stretch text

Provide students with opportunities to practice making sense of stretch text (i.e., challenging text) that will expose them to complex ideas and information.

Level of Evidence: Moderate

Recommendation 4: *Provide students with opportunities to practice making sense of stretch text (i.e., challenging text) that will expose them to complex ideas and information.*

How-to Step 1: *Prepare for the lesson by carefully selecting appropriate stretch texts, choosing points to stop for discussion and clarification, and identifying words to teach.*

How-to Step 2: *Provide significant support as the group works through a stretch text together.*

How-to Step 3: *After students demonstrate comfort with reading stretch texts with the group, provide students with electronic supports to use when independently reading stretch text to assist with pronunciation of difficult words and word meanings.*

How-to Step 1: *Prepare for the lesson by carefully selecting appropriate stretch texts, choosing points to stop for discussion and clarification, and identifying words to teach.*

- Consider texts that are at the upper range or somewhat above the upper range of students' independent reading levels.
- Sequence the stretch text passages so that the difficulty and passage length gradually increase.
- Choose texts related to topics students are studying in their subject-area classes, when possible, rather than isolated passages or excerpts from the subject-area textbooks.
- Look for texts that are engaging and that discuss interesting ideas or perspectives.

How-to Step 1 (continued): *Prepare for the lesson by carefully selecting appropriate stretch texts, choosing points to stop for discussion and clarification, and identifying words to teach.*

- Before the lesson begins, read through the text to choose logical points to stop for group discussion.
- Also create a list of difficult multisyllabic words, proper nouns, and essential words to discuss before and during reading.



Example: Teacher preparing to read a short section from a grade-level text about noted novelist Louise Erdrich.

First excerpt: The teacher marks the following sections and words before beginning to read with the group. This is grade level material for the English language arts class.

Stop points and discussion starters:

- Stop after paragraph 1 – *What is this paragraph about?*
- Stop after paragraph 2 – *What was the purpose of the boarding schools for Native Americans?*
- Stop after paragraph 3 – *What happened in her novel LaRose that was disturbing?*
- Stop after paragraph 4 – *What are some positive aspects of her novels? What do you think the author means when describing people who fall in between being wise and thoughtless at the same time?*



Example (continued): Teacher preparing to read a short section from a grade-level text about noted novelist Louise Erdrich.

Proper nouns:

- Pulitzer Prize
- Louise Erdrich
- Ojibwe
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Native American

Multisyllabic words using previously taught word-reading skills:

- frequently
- reservation
- attended
- assimilate
- traditions

Essential words:

- novel
- reservation
- assimilate
- boarding school

How-to Step 2: *Provide significant support as the group works through a stretch text together.*

- Work through stretch texts as a group with teacher support, rather than assigning stretch texts to students to work on independently or with a partner.
- Before reading, help students understand that stretch text activities will be very difficult at times.
- Explain to them that all readers (including their teachers) read material that includes words that are difficult to read or understand, or about topics for which they lack relevant world knowledge.

How-to Step 2 (continued): *Provide significant support as the group works through a stretch text together.*

- Explain (and then remind them often) that, as in athletics or learning to play a musical instrument, readers need to challenge themselves to build their skills.
- Explain that the goal is to keep trying to make sense of challenging texts together, so students develop the habit of sticking with difficult passages.

How-to Step 3: *After students demonstrate comfort with reading stretch texts with the group, provide students with electronic supports to use when independently reading stretch text to assist with pronunciation of difficult words and word meanings.*

- Over time, students will demonstrate increased comfort in working with stretch texts.
- In addition to providing students with challenging text to grapple with in a supportive small-group setting, students can work with stretch texts during independent reading using electronic supports available on tablets, laptops, and other devices.
- Most of these devices include electronic dictionaries that can help students understand difficult words. Some devices may contain software that reminds students about their knowledge of word parts to help discern a word's meaning.



Obstacle: *Stretch text is just too frustrating for my students. They tend to give up far too easily.*

- Remind students that this challenging task is just one part of their lesson and that they will be guided and fully supported throughout the lesson.
- Begin with very brief 1- to 2-sentence stretch texts and then build up to longer selections.
- Also, consider engaging students prior to reading by reminding them that the text is very difficult and that they likely will not be able to read it with ease. Yet, they will see improvement with practice.

Questions and Reflections



- What questions do you have about Recommendations 3 and 4 and how SEAs can support implementation?
- Do you have relevant experiences to share?

This presentation contains a few examples from the practice guide.

The full practice guide and supporting materials provide more details and are available on the What Works Clearinghouse website (<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/29>).

Submit questions and requests via email to the WWC Help Desk at Contact.WWC@ed.gov.

Other Resources to Support Reading Instruction and Intervention



Supporting Resources

This is a companion resource to the November 2023 webinar, *Supporting Practice Guide Implementation: Providing Reading Interventions to Students in Grades 4–9*, the first in the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) Research to Practice Spotlight Series. The following open-access materials support the selection and implementation of evidence-based reading intervention. Please note this is not an exhaustive list but a sample of resources that may be helpful in expanding and applying what you learned from the webinar.

What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guides

The webinar overviewed the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) practice guide, [Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9](#). Practice guides include recommendations for educators and schools based on research, practitioner experience, and expert opinions. For recommendations to support applications for English learners, see [Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School](#). For more on supporting reading for older students, see [Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices](#). For other literacy-related practice guides, including for younger students and for implementing supports within a tiered framework, see the [WWC Practice Guides page](#).

More to Come!

- Future webinars will address additional topics and practice guides.
- Stay updated with the NCSI newsletter:
<https://ncsi.wested.org/subscribe-ncsi-news/>

Evaluation Link



https://meadowscenter.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9Zad5VvcRwRfRmm

Other Questions?



- Kim St. Martin
kstmartin@mimtss.org
- Lauren Artzi
lartzi@air.org
- Laura Kuchle
lkuchle@air.org

Thank you

The content of this document was developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H326R190001. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer: Perry Williams (October 2019)

WestEd is the lead organization for NCSI. For more information about the work of WestEd, NCSI, and their partners, please visit www.ncsi.wested.org and www.wested.org.



NCSI includes staff from the OSEP-funded Parent Training and Information Center and Regional Parent TA Centers and the OESE-funded Statewide Family Engagement Centers.