Early Literacy Instruction
10 Research-Informed Practices That Can Change Every Classroom
Early Literacy Instruction: 10 Research-Informed Practices That Can Change Every Classroom

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Setting the Stage: Early Literacy in Michigan
Michigan is one of only five states that show negative improvement for early reading since 2003.

Average Scale Score Change, NAEP Grade 4 – Reading – All Students (2003-15)

Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCEA (Basic Scale Score = 200, Proficient Scale Score = 238), 2003-15
Michigan Last for African American Students in Early Literacy Compared to Nation
Average Scale Score, NAEP Grade 4 – Reading – African American Students (2015)

Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Basic Scale Score = 208; Proficient Scale Score = 238), 2015

Available online at: https://midwest.edtrust.org/michiganachieves/
Michigan lawmakers debate third-grade retention policy

An article in the Detroit Free Press from April outlined the work of Michigan legislators to agree on a policy regarding third-grade retention for readers performing below grade level. Legislators in the Michigan House passed a bill in October that would require the retention of all third-graders who are more than one grade level behind in reading. The Senate passed its own bill, which received bipartisan and educator support, including a provision that would allow parents, principals, and reading teachers to seek exemptions on a case-by-case basis for students reading below grade level.

3rd-grade reading bill stuck over holding back students

Michigan Senate OKs 3rd grade reading bill that could hold some students back
Governor’s Workgroup and Initial State Funding

The Governor’s Third-Grade Reading Workgroup made strategy recommendations focused in four areas:

- research-supported assessment instruments, instruction, and interventions,
- educator training,
- engaging parents in developing their children’s early literacy skills,
- data that compares our status and growth over time.

State funding and grants for extended time for literacy, regional coaches, coaches training, and student literacy assessment were awarded.

Report available online at:
Educators Stepping Up
Michigan’s ISDs
Early Literacy Task Force

Michigan is organized with 56 regional service agencies at the county or multi-county level. The state group is MAISA.

Four years ago the instructional leaders from these service agencies started convening.

The General Education Leadership Network was formed.

Recognized the opportunity to make a difference in early literacy.

The Early Literacy Task Force was formed.
Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead
Intentional use of **current research** to guide practice

**Common framework** so we have a common frame of reference

**Network** to support one another and track progress

**Track our impact**
Guiding Documents
- Buy-in from key groups and leaders

Embed and sustain quality coaching
- Coaching frameworks
- Professional learning
- Coaches network
- Use of instructional essentials
- Change in teacher practice

Develop teachers' instructional skills
- Consistent, high quality use of practices
- Adjust and deepen through action research

Ensure quality practices in every classroom every day

Every child develops strong literacy skills
- Student literacy improvement
# Initial Coalition Building

## Challenges

- Politic of meeting everyone’s needs/agenda versus doing the “right” work
- Capacity to work quickly AND with high quality product
- Whose voice is not at the table?
- How do you make quick decisions if you are working by consensus and in small and large coalitions?

## Opportunities

- Coalition approach allowed rapid access to all key experts and stakeholders
- Consistency in voice with a shared understanding and vision
- ISDs working together – across the system as well as up and down the system— a “middle-out approach”
- Working with researchers and using a research lens
Purpose

The purpose of the document is to increase Michigan's capacity to improve children's literacy by identifying a small set of research-supported instructional practices that could be the focus of professional development throughout the state. The focus of the document is on classroom practices, rather than on school- or systems-level practices (which will be addressed in a future document). Research suggests that each of these ten practices can have a positive impact on literacy development. We believe that the use of these practices in every classroom every day could make a measurable positive difference in the State's literacy achievement. They should be viewed, as in practice guides in medicine, as presenting a minimum 'standard of care' for Michigan's children.
PREKINDERGARTEN

Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy

By the Early Literacy Task Force, a subcommittee of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN), which represents Michigan’s 56 Intermediate School Districts. For a full list of representatives, please see the back page.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

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Available online: http://www.gomaisa.org/sites/default/files/Pre-K%20Literacy%20Essentials%203.2016.pdf

http://tinyurl.com/literacyessentialspreK
Some Key Points About “the Essentials”
Prekindergarten and grades K to 3 working together

Grades 4 – 5 and Grades 6 – 12 (by domain) are in development.
A “minimum standard of care”
A focus on classroom instruction

The Essentials

"Tier 1"

"Tier 2"

"Tier 3"
Research-supported instructional practices

How to make a BALL-and-scoop

Materials:
scoop
scissors
ball
markers

Steps:
1. Cut the scoop
2. Decorate it
3. Play with the ball

Interactive Writing
Essential #6 PreK and K to 3
Research-supported instructional practices

For example:


Research-supported instructional practices

For example:


Practices and professional development

Tivnan and Hemphill (2005)

- 16 high-poverty schools
- choice of 4 literacy models
- made at least “good” efforts in implementing their chosen model
- 590 first graders assessed fall and spring
  - word reading, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing
Practices and professional development

- Largest sources of variability:
  1. child individual difference
  2. pedagogical skills and orientations of individual teachers

- For example, in reading comprehension:
  - Some teachers got 80% of class to grade level
  - Some got 20% to grade level
The importance of the details...

2. Read aloud with reference to print

Daily read alouds include verbal and non-verbal strategies for drawing children's attention to:

- running finger underneath word
- noting specific features (e.g., “that is the letter ‘o’
- asking children where they find words
- counting words
- pointing out print with finger

3. Interactive read aloud with a comprehension and vocabulary focus

The teacher reads aloud age-appropriate books and other materials, print or digital, including sets of texts that are thematically and conceptually related and texts that are read multiple times, with:

- higher-order discussion among children and teacher before, during, and after reading
- child-friendly explanations of words within the text
- revisiting of words after reading using tools such as movement, props, videos, photo, examples, and non-examples, and engaging children in saying the words aloud
- using the words at other points in the day and over time
- teaching of clusters of words related to those in the text, such as vocabulary related to the garden or gardening

Information in Action (Duke, 2015)

Pre-K
Reading for areas affirmed. . .

Excerpt from Essential #8, PreK and K to 3:

“The classroom includes:

• a wide range of books and other texts, print and digital, including information books, poetry, and storybooks accessible to children/that children are supported in accessing”
and areas for improvement

Excerpt from Essential #8, PreK and K to 3:

“The classroom includes:

... 

• books and other materials connected to children’s interests and that reflect children’s backgrounds and cultural experiences, including class- and child-made books”
Big changes may be needed

Excerpt from Essential #1, K to 3:

• “The teacher avoids attempting to incentivize reading through non-reading-related prizes such as stickers, coupons, or toys. . .”

To begin to learn more:

• http://www.heinemann.com/products/E06157.aspx
Big changes may be needed

Excerpt from Essential #5, K to 3:

• “High-frequency words are taught with full analysis of letter-sound relationships within the words, even in those that are not spelled as would be expected.”

To begin to learn more:

» https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYLefa3kFYs
» https://www.literacyworldwide.org/blog/literacy-daily/2016/06/23/teach-ldquo-sight-words-rdquo-as-you-would-other-words
“Every classroom every day”

Excerpt from K to 3 Essential #2:

Read alouds involve:

...  

- higher-order discussion among children and teacher before, during, and after reading
“Every classroom every day”

Excerpt from K to 3 Essential #3

The teacher:

... 

• is deliberate in providing quality instruction to children in all groups, with meaning-making the ultimate goal of each group’s work
“Every classroom every day”

Excerpt from K to 3 Essential #6

The teacher provides:

... 

• daily time for children to write, aligned with instructional practice #1 above
But Not Literacy as a “Curricular Bully”  (P. David Pearson)

Literacy

Science, Social Studies. . .

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Additional Guiding Documents

School-wide and Center-wide Essentials

Essential Coaching Practices
Supports for Coaches

- Defined coaching practices
- Professional learning opportunities
- Supported network of literacy coaches
- Online modules to use for facilitation and work with teachers
Systems-level Work

**Opportunities**

Collective impact

Alignment with educational organizations in state – all agreeing and working toward same practices and outcomes

**Challenges**

Funding – statewide systemic work takes substantial funding

Defining roles

Varying levels of capacity across regions in Michigan

Addressing change – EVERYONE has to rethink how they do early literacy and professional learning

Did we go far enough to change outcomes for kids in poverty or for our kids of color?
Measuring Progress

**This year:**
- Profiles of different coaching approaches across the state (to develop outcomes measures)
- Impact of professional learning and network support on the first cohort of coaches
- Impact on teachers’ literacy instructional practices

**Future years:**
- Specific instructional and student literacy outcomes
Thank you for your interest!