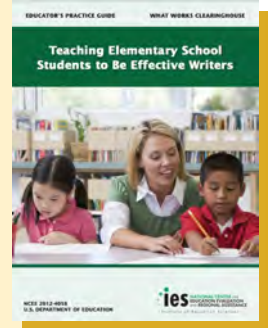**What is Raising Literacy?**

Raising Literacy, a quarterly newsletter produced by the Florida Department of Education's State Regional Literacy Directors (SRLDs), provides resources and information on a variety of topics, such as the science of reading, evidence-based pedagogy, literacy leadership, the B.E.S.T. English Language Arts (ELA) Standards and more.

STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT

When students can intentionally develop appropriate voice and tone in their writing, they are more likely to engage their readers and convey a strong command of language. We can support this learning by using mentor texts. According to the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) practice guide, Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers, students learn to develop their own voice and tone by noting the features of good writing in the texts that they read. Teachers select exemplary models of writing, explicitly drawing students' attention to aspects of the author's craft based on the goals of the lesson. In order for students to internalize and apply the "features of good writing" from exemplar texts, students "may specifically focus on emulating sentence patterns or identifying and substituting words in appropriate places" (p. 22). The practice guide recommends text-based exercises to make students comfortable with both "analyzing and emulating writing styles," (p. 22) so they may be better able to express their own meaning in benchmark-aligned writing. This strategy for voice and tone development aligns with the ELA Expectation 6.1. See the table in "Content Connection" below for more!

CONTENT CONNECTION

ELA Expectations

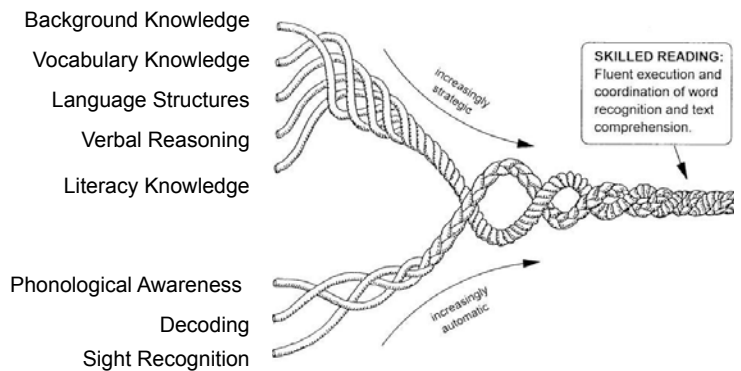|	
ELA.K12.EE.1.1	Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.
ELA.K12.EE.2.1	Read and comprehend grade-level complex texts proficiently.
ELA.K12.EE.3.1	Make inferences to support comprehension.
ELA.K12.EE.4.1	Use appropriate collaborative techniques and active listening skills when engaging in discussions in a variety of situations.
ELA.K12.EE.5.1	Use the accepted rules governing a specific format to create quality work.
ELA.K12.EE.6.1	Use appropriate voice and tone when speaking or writing.

The six ELA Expectations can be found in Appendix A of Florida's B.E.S.T. ELA Standards (p. 147). They are the compass that guides teachers in cultivating well-rounded, skilled readers and communicators. By weaving these expectations into daily literacy-based and content-area instruction, educators empower students to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. These skills go beyond the boundaries of ELA instruction. They offer students different ways to engage in content area benchmarks, rooted in language. These expectations are the pillars of our teaching – nurturing the next generation of collaborative, articulate, critical thinkers.

DID YOU KNOW ?

Scarborough's Reading Rope is a model used to demonstrate how the components of language comprehension and word recognition become interwoven to increase skilled reading. When developing reading instruction, teachers should account for student needs across the strands of the rope, so all students can access grade-level complex text.

Background Knowledge
Vocabulary Knowledge
Language Structures
Verbal Reasoning
Literacy Knowledge

increasingly strategic

SKILLED READING: Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

Phonological Awareness
Decoding
Sight Recognition

increasingly automatic

Scarborough, H. S. (2001). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. In S. Neuman & D. Dickinson (Eds.), Handbook for research in early literacy (pp. 97–110). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

LITERACY LEADERSHIP TIPS

Literacy Leadership Teams (LLTs) play a pivotal role in advancing schoolwide literacy goals through data analysis and strategic implementation of effective practices. To ensure student achievement, an LLT should commit to consistent cycles of triangulating data and seeking root-cause analysis to inform next steps, aligning those next steps with evidence-based practices. To get consistent student growth, the choice of assessments and progress monitoring tools are vital for instructional decision-making.

Instructional decision-making is only as effective as our understanding of what questions are answered by the reading assessments we might use. For example, screeners answer, "Who is at risk?" To streamline the assessment process, an LLT must guide the usage of reading assessments. To make every instructional minute count, an LLT should support teachers' use of appropriate assessments, so teachers can make appropriate instructional decisions to meet schoolwide literacy goals.

Reading Assessments

Screening Who is at risk?	Brief assessments, typically administered to all students, designed to **identify at-risk students**.
Diagnostic At risk for what?	An assessment that is typically given to those identified as at risk on a screening assessment to provide specific information about a student's **strengths** and **weaknesses**.
Progress Monitoring How are students doing?	Interim: An assessment, given within a **limited timeframe**, used to evaluate knowledge and skills aligned to a specific set of goals.
	Formative: An **ongoing** assessment process that is used by teachers and students to gauge student learning, so teachers can deliver corrective feedback and modify instruction.
Summative How did students do?	An assessment generally administered **one time**, usually at the end of a school year, to evaluate students on a set of standards.

Adapted from Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southeast's "Assessment Terms Used in Reading" Infographic.

FEATURED RESEARCH

The WWC practice guide, Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade, provides recommendations for how to improve foundational literacy skills based on available research and the expertise of the panel members. The guide includes practical ideas for implementation. The recommendations are:
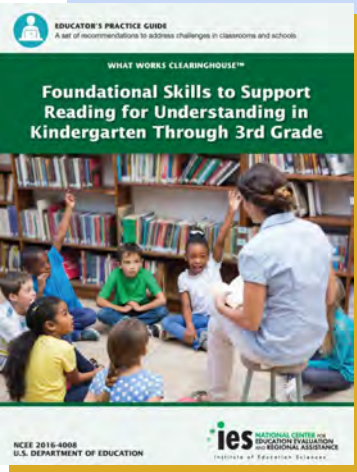
- Teach students academic language skills, including the use of inferential and narrative language and vocabulary knowledge.
- Develop awareness of the segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters.
- Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts and write and recognize words.
- Ensure that each student reads connected text every day to support reading accuracy, fluency and comprehension.

RESOURCES

Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR)

FCRR offers a wealth of literacy materials for educators and administrators. Here are just a few of the many resources you can access: Essentials for Reading Success, Student Center Activities and the School Leader's Literacy Walkthrough Tool. Visit https://fcrr.org/educators for these resources and more!

Coming Soon From SRLDs

RAISE Universal Webinar: The Science of Reading in Action in the B.E.S.T. ELA Classroom
- **September 16-27, 2024**

Look for more information sent out by district reading contacts.