Training for the New Georgia Performance Standards
Day 2: Unpacking Standards for Unit Development

Participant’s Guide
ELA K-3
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Acknowledgements

This training program was developed by the Georgia Department of Education as part of a series of professional development opportunities to help teachers increase student achievement through the use of the Georgia Performance Standards. The following people contributed to its development.

For more information on this or other GPS training modules, please contact Robin Gower at (404) 463-1933 or rogower@doe.k12.ga.us.

Use of This Guide

The module materials, including a Leader's Guide, Participant's Guide, PowerPoint Presentation, and supplementary materials, are available to designated trainers throughout the state of Georgia who have successfully completed a Train-the-Trainer course offered through the Georgia Department of Education.
Agenda

This is a one-day course, with approximately six hours of instructional time.

Introduction .......................................................................................................... 45 minutes

- Overview of the Module
- Review of Day One Content
- Discussion of Day One Follow Up Assignment

Large Group Demonstration ........................................................................1 hour, 30 minutes

- Identifying Big Ideas
- Transforming Big Ideas into Enduring Understandings
- Developing Essential Questions
- Identifying Skills and Knowledge

Unpacking a Single Standard ........................................................................1 hour, 30 minutes

- Small Group Activity
- Large Group Discussion

Unpacking Multiple Standards ........................................................................... 1 hour

- Small Group Activity
- Large Group Discussion

Sample Task ......................................................................................................... 45 minutes

- Sample Task Activity

Summary and Follow Up Work ........................................................................... 30 minutes

- Action Planning
- Follow-up Assignment
- Summary
Module Goal

Demonstrate a deep understanding of the new Georgia Performance Standards and the standards-based education approach, through thoughtful curriculum planning, development of formative and summative assessments, and the design of instruction matched to the standards and research-based best practices. This shall be measured by student performance on progress monitoring and standardized criterion-referenced tests.

Key words from the goal:

- Deep understanding
- Georgia Performance Standards (GPS)
- Standards-based education
- Research-based best practices

Note that the goal will not be reached by any single day of training. It will take preparation, follow up, and eight days of classroom instruction to master this goal. Various days of training will deal with different components of the goal, such as curriculum planning, assessment, and instruction.

Module Objectives

By the end of day two of training, participants will be able to:

1. Define and describe the rationale for identifying big ideas, enduring understandings, essential questions, and skills and knowledge for a standard.

2. Develop, for a given standard, the big ideas, enduring understandings, essential questions, and skills and knowledge (unpack the standard).

3. Unpack multiple standards to create cohesive units of study.
A Big Idea…

...Provides a “conceptual lens” for organizing content. A Big Idea refers to core concepts, principles, theories, and processes that should serve as the focal point of the curricula, instruction, and assessment. Big Ideas reflect expert understanding and anchor the discourse, inquiries, discoveries, and arguments in a field of study. They provide a basis for setting curriculum priorities to focus on the most meaningful content.

...Serves as an organizer for connecting important facts, skills, and actions. Big Ideas function as the “conceptual Velcro” for a topic of study. They connect discrete knowledge and skills to a larger intellectual frame and provide a bridge for linking specific facts and skills. A focus on these larger ideas helps students to see the purpose and relevance on content.

...Transfers to other contexts. Discrete facts do not transfer. Big Ideas are powerful because they embody transferable ideas, applicable to other topics, inquiries, context, issues, and problems. Because we can never cover all the knowledge on a given topic, a focus on the Big Ideas helps to manage information overload. Big Ideas provide the conceptual through lines that anchor a coherent curriculum.

...Manifests itself in various ways within disciplines. Big Ideas are typically revealed through one or more of the following forums: a core concept (e.g., adaptation), a focusing theme (e.g., man’s inhumanity to man), an ongoing issue or debate (e.g., liberal vs. conservative), a puzzling paradox (e.g., poverty amidst plenty), an important process (e.g., writing process), an authentic problem or persistent challenge (e.g., illiteracy, voter apathy), an illuminating theory (e.g., Manifest Destiny), an underlying assumption (e.g., the markets are rationale), or differing perspectives (e.g., terrorist vs. freedom fighter).

...Requires uncoverage because it is an abstraction. A Big Idea is inherently abstract. Its meaning is not always obvious to students, and simply covering it (i.e., the teacher or textbook defining it) will not ensure student understanding. “Coverage” is unlikely to cause genuine insight; understanding must be earned. Thus, the idea must be uncovered—its meaning discovered, constructed or inferred by the learners, with the aid of the teacher and well-designed learning experiences.

How to identify big ideas: Read the standard thoroughly. Underline the big ideas in the standard. Make additional notes as needed. Note that this is just a stepping stone in the process; once you have turned your Big Ideas into enduring understandings, you do not need to write them down.

An Enduring Understanding...

...Involves the big ideas that give meaning and importance to facts. Enduring understandings are made up of the concepts, principles, and theories that weave many facts into revealing and useful patterns. They involve the (few) organizing priority ideas that enable us to make sense of past lessons, conduct current inquiry, and create new knowledge.

...Can transfer to other topics, fields, and adult life. Such understandings endure in that they enable us to make vital and informative connections in our learning—as students and as adults. For example, the idea that “might does not make right” applies to both playground disputes and international diplomacy.

...Is usually not obvious, often counter-intuitive, and easily misunderstood. An understanding is an inference, not a fact. It is an insight derived from inquiry. Key understandings in intellectual fields (e.g., in physics: Objects remain in motion at a constant velocity if no force acts on them) often violate common sense and conventional wisdom. They are thus often prone to misunderstanding by students. These understanding therefore cannot be covered; they must be uncovered.

...May provide a conceptual foundation for basic skills. The skill-based teaching in mathematics, foreign language, and physical education does not seem to deal with “understanding” in most units, all skills derive their value from the strategic principles that help us know when and how to use the skill. The understandings also justify the use of a skills (e.g., the student who can explain why you should use a bent-arm pull in a swimming free style) and enable the student to extend the use of the skill to new situations (e.g., the use of bent-arm pull in back stroke).

...Is deliberately framed as a generalization—the “moral of the story.” An understanding is a generalization derived from inquiry. It is the specific insight that should be inferred from study of the topic (not just the stating of the topic)—what we want the student leaving the study to realize. Note: The enduring understanding of a unit might be that there is no single agreed-upon understanding, or that people disagree about how the issues, facts, or text should be understood.

How to identify enduring understandings: Frame them as full-sentence generalizations starting with “The student will understand that...” Avoid statements that are vague or trite. It may help to think about common misunderstandings about the topic. Enduring understandings may be overarching (beyond the specifics of the unit) or topical.

Essential Questions...

...Have no simple “right” answer; they are meant to be argued. Essential questions yield inquiry and argument—a variety of plausible responses, not straightforward facts that end the matter. They should uncover rather than cover the subject’s puzzles and perspectives. They should result in conclusions drawn by the learner, not recited facts. Like enduring understandings, they may be topical or overarching.

Examples: Does art reflect culture or help shape it? What makes a great story?

...Are designed to provoke and sustain student inquiry, while focusing learning and final performances. Essential questions work best when they are designed and edited to be thought provoking to students, engaging them in sustained, focused inquiries that culminate in important performance. They involve the counterintuitive, the visceral, the whimsical, the controversial.

Examples: Does food that is good for you have to taste bad? Are censorship and democracy compatible?

...Often address the conceptual or philosophical foundations of a discipline. They reflect the most historically important issues, problems, and debates in a field of study.

Examples: What is a proof? Nature or nurture? Can fiction reveal truth?

...Raise other important questions. Essential questions lead to other important questions within, and sometimes across, subject boundaries.

Example: In nature, only the strong survive? (Leads to questions such as, “What is strength? Are insects strong, since they are survivors?

...Naturally and appropriately recur. The same important questions are asked and asked again throughout one’s learning.

Example: What makes a book “great?”

...Stimulate vital, ongoing rethinking of big ideas, assumptions, and prior lessons. They force us to ask deep questions about the nature, origin, and extent of our understanding.

Example: (In light of fractions, place value, irrationals, and negative square roots) what is a number?

How to develop essential questions: Two to five per unit is reasonable. Put them in language appropriate to students. Use them as organizers for the unit, making the “content” answer the questions. Sequence questions so they lead naturally from one to another. Share essential questions with other teachers to ensure curricular coherence.

GPS and the Backward Design Process

**Stage 1**
Identify Desired Results

- (Big Ideas) →
- Enduring Understandings →
- Essential Questions →

Skills and Knowledge

**Stage 2**
Determine Acceptable Evidence
(Design Balanced Assessments)

(To assess student progress toward desired results)

**Stage 3**
Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction

(to support student success on assessments, leading to desired results)
Levels of Generality of Declarative and Procedural Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declarative Knowledge</th>
<th>Procedural Knowledge</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Organizing Ideas</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(general statements for which examples can be provided)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- generalizations</td>
<td>Processes</td>
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<tr>
<td>- principles</td>
<td>- procedures that involve many component parts that have subcomponents</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Details</strong></td>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- episode</td>
<td>- tactic (general rules governing an overall flow of execution of steps)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- cause/effect sequence</td>
<td>- algorithm (a single set of steps that must be performed in a specific order)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- time sequence, or</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- fact</td>
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<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
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<td>- terms</td>
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<td>- phrases</td>
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**General**

**Specific**

**Level of Generality**

Georgia will lead the nation in improving student achievement.

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Skills and Knowledge

Knowledge. Getting students to construct meaning, organize information, and (selectively) store information. This includes:

- Vocabulary
- Terminology
- Definitions
- Key factual information
- Formulas
- Critical details
- Important events, people
- Sequence and timelines
- Rules
- Laws
- Principles
- Concepts

Skills. Getting students to demonstrate the ability to do something. These may be very simple, discrete operations, or more complex creative ones. This includes:

- Actions, procedures, and processes
- Basic skills—decoding, arithmetic computation
- Psychomotor skills—running, swimming a back stroke, playing an instrument
- Study skills
- Communication skills—listening, speaking, writing
- Thinking skills—comparing, inferring, analyzing, interpreting
- Research, inquiry, investigation skills
- Interpersonal/group skills

Verbs to use when stating skills and knowledge. These are samples only:

- Demonstrate
- Derive
- State
- Describe
- List
- Design
- Express
- Induce
- Instruct
- Create
- Critique
- Compare/contrast
- Evaluate
- Illustrate
- Judge
- Make meaning of
- Make sense of
- Use
- Model
- Predict
- Prove
- Show
- Synthesize
- Justify
- Choose
- Imagine
- Assess
- Write
- Draw
- Translate
- Adapt
- Build
- Determine
- Perform
- Solve
- Test

How to develop skills and knowledge statements: Look at the enduring understandings, essential questions, and elements. Ask yourself, “What skills and knowledge do students need in order to reach this goal?” Start each skill/knowledge statement with a verb.

### Unpacking a Standard

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard (underline big ideas, add as needed)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Elements</td>
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<td>Enduring understandings</td>
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<td>Essential questions</td>
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<td>Skills and knowledge</td>
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### Unpacking Multiple Standards

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<th>Standards (underline big ideas, add as needed)</th>
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<td>Elements</td>
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<td>Essential questions</td>
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### Action Plan

**Directions:** Complete the following chart to help shape your team's work between this training session and the next one. Your goal is to complete stage one (unpacking the standards) for all the standards, so that you have a very rough outline of the entire year’s units of study. Here are some questions to consider:

- How will we find the time to continue this work?
- How can we build and sustain a high level of enthusiasm and commitment?
- What is our timeline?
- How will we ensure accountability?
- How will we celebrate successes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step/Activity</th>
<th>Who</th>
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Follow Up Assignment

Brainstorm ideas for assessments you could employ to measure the extent to which students know and are able to do what the standards you unpacked earlier today specify. Your assessments should directly connect to the standard and the elements.

Materials:

Understanding by Design Workbook by McTighe and Wiggins
Workbook pages 140-147 (These pages may serve as reference tools)
**Recommended Readings**

**Books**


The authors use Adlai Stevenson High School as the case study of how principals can create learning communities where student learning and achievement are center stage. The book lays out the school improvement process. No failing schools would exist if every school became a learning community modeled after DuFour’s school. The book contains an extensive bibliography.


In this step-by-step description of the process for creating and working with curriculum maps from data collection to ongoing curriculum review, Jacobs discusses the importance of “essential questions,” as well as assessment design that reflects what teachers know about the students they teach. The benefits of this kind of mapping are obvious for integrating curriculum. Through the development of curriculum maps, educators can see not only where subjects already come together but also any gaps that may be present.

*Literacy Across the Curriculum: Setting and Implementing Goals for Grades Six through 12.* Southern Regional Education Board, 2004. Publication Orders Department, 592 10th St. N.W., Atlanta, GA 30318-5790, Fax: (404) 872-1477 (03V63, $10 each/$6.50 each for 10 or more.) [http://www.sreb.org/main/Publications/catalog/howtoorder.asp](http://www.sreb.org/main/Publications/catalog/howtoorder.asp).

This volume is essential for state, district, and school leaders who plan to implement schoolwide literacy programs. It provides concrete, research-based steps not only to raise reading and writing achievement but also to help students learn more in every class by using literacy skills. The guide focuses on five literacy goals: reading 25 books across the curriculum; writing weekly in all classes; using reading and writing strategies; writing research papers; and taking rigorous language-arts classes.

Using a meta-analysis of thousands of research studies, Marzano clearly answer the question, “Which instructional techniques are proven to work?” They provide 13 proven strategies that all teachers can use and explain the research in a clear, practical manner.


A perfect resource for self-help or school study groups, this handbook makes it much easier to apply the teaching practices outlined in Classroom Instruction That Works. The authors guide the reader through the nine categories of instructional strategies that are most likely to maximize student achievement and provide everything needed to use the strategies quickly in classrooms. The book includes the following: exercises to check understanding; brief questionnaires to reflect on current beliefs and practices; tips and recommendations to implement the strategies; samples, worksheets, and other tools to help plan classroom activities; and rubrics to assess the effectiveness of the strategy with students.


The authors analyze research from more than 100 studies on classroom management to answer the questions, “How does classroom management affect student achievement?” and “What techniques do teachers find most effective?” The authors provide action steps, along with real stories of teachers and students, to guide teachers in implementing the research findings.


Grading has the potential for being a valuable learning tool that helps both students and teachers clearly see how they can improve; however, this potential is seldom realized. In this book, Marzano presents viable alternatives to traditional assessment that are grounded in research and practical at the same time.

This practical book about the responsibility educators have to teach what matters most includes many examples of educators throughout the nation who have been successful in increasing student performance on state and national assessments. The authors also explore three changes that must take place to achieve this goal: responsible standards, responsible strategies, and responsible assessment practices.


Tomlinson explains the elements of differentiated instruction and the importance of differentiated instruction within the classroom. The book also serves as an instructional guide for educational leaders and instructors as differentiated strategies are implemented.


This excellent resource includes concrete examples of instructional strategies matched to the readiness, interests, and talents of all students. Strategies include learning-centered, hands-on activities; contracts; and investigative projects. The author also offers lesson-planning strategies to provide scaffolding of the content, procedures used in learning, and products of learning.


This book explains the “backward design” process that is the backbone of standards-based education. The book explains both the underlying principles and the process teachers can use to put them into practice.


This companion book to *Understanding by Design* provides discussion questions, graphic organizers, and summaries to support faculty study groups that are exploring *Understanding by Design.*

This companion book to *Understanding by Design* is chock-full of templates and examples to help teachers put the process into place.

**Professional Organizations**

NCTE - http://www.ncte.org/
GCTE - http://www.gcte.org/
IRA - http://www.reading.org/
GRA - http://www.georgiareading.org/

**Web Sites**

Read-Write-Think. NCTE/IRA. http://www.readwritethink.org/.

This site contains lessons, web resources, standards, and student materials. It provides quality practices and resources in reading and language arts instruction.

Illinois School Improvement Division.
http://206.166.105.86/knowledge/standards_resources.asp.

This site provides Illinois Learning Standards Resources, including benchmark indicators, sample learning activities, and sample student work.

Units (incorporating Learning Focused components). Connected Learning.
http://www.title3.org/.

BOCES is a cooperative service organization that helps school districts save money by pooling resources and sharing costs.

**Special Education Resources**

Approximately 70 general and special educators and parents attended the National Capacity Building Institute on Access, Participation, and Progress in the General Curriculum, held on July 10, in Arlington, VA. The article includes the proceedings from the Institute.

**Aligning Special Education with NCLB.** www.ldonline.org.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is a standards-based reform movement. This movement emphasizes standards and the alignment of curriculum and assessment to those standards. States established what is to be taught. The goal of standards is to increase academic achievement levels. A related goal is to close the achievement gap for students who have traditionally been at-risk for academic failure or lack of success. This group includes students with disabilities.


This article summarizes data on each State’s use of standards in developing Individualized Education Programs (IEP) for students with disabilities. All fifty states were asked to send their IEP forms and to indicate whether the forms were required, recommended, or simply sample forms. Out of the 41 states with IEP forms, only 5 states specifically addressed the general curriculum on their forms. Recommendations for IEP forms that provide decision-making guidance involving access to the general curriculum are summarized.

**Writing Standards-based IEPs.** Colorado Department of Education. www.cde.org.

The Colorado Department of Education provides information for teachers on developing standards-driven IEPs. The summary includes a definition of standards-driven IEPs, characteristics of standards-driven IEPs, and a rationale for standards-driven IEPs.

**Resources for Differentiation**


**Resources for K-3 Language Arts**


This handbook offers a practical and comprehensive means of teaching and monitoring children’s development of phonological awareness in the classroom. The authors provide answers to frequently asked questions about phonological awareness, offer a possible teaching sequence, and suggest a variety of activities to enhance children’s phonological awareness.

**Recommended Grade-Level(s) – Kdg.**


*Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction* provides a practical way to study words with students. Based on the research on invented and developmental spelling, the framework of this text is keyed to the five stages of spelling or orthographic development. Ordered in this developmental format, Words Their Way complements the use of any existing phonics, spelling, and vocabulary curricula.

**Recommended Grade Levels(s) – kdg. – 1st**


Exciting and engaging vocabulary instruction can set students on the path to a lifelong fascination with words. This book provides a research-based framework and practical strategies for vocabulary development with children from the earliest grades through high school. The authors emphasize instruction that offers rich information about words and their uses and enhances students' language comprehension and production. Teachers are guided in selecting words for instruction; developing student-friendly explanations of new words; creating meaningful learning activities; and getting students
involved in thinking about, using, and noticing new words both within and outside the
classroom. Many concrete examples, sample classroom dialogues, and exercises for
teachers bring the material to life. Helpful appendices include suggestions for trade
books that help children enlarge their vocabulary and/or have fun with different aspects
of words.

**Recommended Grade Levels(s) – kdg. - 1st**


Updated with new strategies, ideas, and websites, this research-based book features a wealth
of ideas for developing vocabulary in all content areas. Many of the techniques explored in this
book have the broader goal of enhancing the acquisition of content knowledge. The authors do
an exceptional job of combining a strong research base with field-tested strategies for
developing vocabulary in any K-12 classroom. Chapter topics include learning vocabulary from
context, integrating vocabulary and reading strategy instruction, learning vocabulary in
literature-based reading instruction, learning vocabulary in the content areas, using dictionaries
and other references, assessing vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary instruction for learners with
special needs, vocabulary and spelling instruction using structural analysis, and wordplay in the
classroom.

**Recommended Grade Levels(s) – 2nd - 3rd**


Exemplary teacher research has established that explicit teaching plays a vital role in the
K-8 classroom, with particular benefits for struggling readers. This book is a practical
resource for explaining reading to students who do not learn to read easily. Identified
are 22 major skills and strategies associated with vocabulary development,
comprehension, word recognition, and fluency. Ways to explain each skill or strategy are
illustrated with abundant concrete examples, which teachers can use as starting points
for developing lessons tailored to the needs, strengths, and interests of their own
students. The book also shows how to move from the teacher's explanation to the
student's independent use of new concepts, and how to embed explicit teaching within a
context of rich, engaging literacy experiences.

**Recommended Grade Levels(s) – 2nd**


This book presents a highly practical approach to assessing children's spelling and word
knowledge abilities and offering effective, appropriate instruction. Included is the
Developmental Spelling Analysis (DSA), a dictated word inventory that enables teachers
to quickly and easily evaluate students' stages of spelling development and their
knowledge of important orthographic features. Detailed guidelines are set forth for engaging students in hands-on word study that is tailored to their specific strengths and weaknesses. Validated and field-tested, the instructional techniques described here reflect the author's many years of classroom experience. Particularly useful features of the book include narrative "snapshots" of children at different stages of spelling development; numerous examples of student work; suggested word sort activities for each orthographic feature; lists of recommended books and poems; and a focus on fostering a love of words through word play and language appreciation. Provided in the appendices are reproducible forms for administering the DSA, plus a list of over 12,000 words arranged by sound, pattern, and meaning-related features. **Recommended Grade Levels(s) - 3rd**


Combining essential background knowledge with hands-on tools, this practical resource and text provides a detailed roadmap for conducting multidimensional reading assessment. The authors' research expertise and extensive classroom experience are reflected on every page. Presented are effective ways to evaluate K-6 students' spelling, word recognition, fluency, comprehension, strategic knowledge, and more. Aided by lively case examples, preservice and inservice teachers and reading specialists learn to tailor assessment to the needs of each child and use results strategically to inform instruction. The concluding chapter offers useful information on preparing a reading clinic report. Special features of this accessible 8 1/2" x 11" volume include numerous figures, tables, and sample assessment instruments, many with permission to photocopy. Topics covered include assessment, curriculum, methods, and comprehension difficulties, from the preschool level through high school.

**Recommended for Literacy Coaches and Curriculum Directors**


This book offers essential guidance to preservice and inservice teachers seeking to create, revise, or add new strategies to the teaching of the language arts block. The focus is on how to implement effective strategies in the context of a well-planned classroom and a smoothly choreographed daily schedule. In a series of vivid case studies, Lesley Mandel Morrow brings to life the methods used by exemplary teachers to create rich, student-friendly learning environments for children in grades K-4. No component of organizing the language arts block is omitted, including setting up and running classroom learning centers, assessing different instructional needs, conducting whole-class and small group meetings, and linking language arts to content area instruction. Enhancing the practical utility of the book are sample daily schedules and
classroom management tips for each grade level, along with dozens of reproducible learning activities, lesson plans, and assessment and record-keeping tools.

**Recommended for Literacy Coaches and Curriculum Directors**


This resource presents an innovative teaching model that will help students construct meaning from text by integrating four established reading comprehension strategies - predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing - into three classroom settings: whole-class sessions, guided reading groups, and literature circles. You'll find an array of tools for using reciprocal teaching in these settings, including detailed explanations of the strategies, issues related to teaching them, and practical lessons that let you easily integrate the model into your curriculum. Interspersed throughout the book are reproducible forms, suggested resources, student assessment options, and intervention ideas for struggling readers.

**Recommended Grade Levels(s) – 3rd**


This book offers teachers fresh, interactive ways to teach reading. It opens with a clear, research-based rationale for teaching oral reading, stressing the connections among word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. Rasinski provides the strategies themselves-read aloud, repeated reading, performance reading, and many more.

**Recommended Grade Levels(s) – 2nd -3rd**


This book presents the Small-Group Differentiated Reading Model, an explicit classroom-tested and research-based model that provides effective reading instruction by combining guided reading and word study in small groups, allowing teachers to address the needs of beginning and struggling readers in a regular classroom setting. The chapters present easy-to-implement lesson plans and activities to support the five stages of reading - emergent, beginning, fledgling, transitional, and independent.

**Recommended Grade Levels(s) – 1st**
Learning Journal

What squares with my thinking?

What's still rolling around in my mind?

What do I need to change?
Learning Journal

What squares with my thinking?

What's still rolling around in my mind?

What do I need to change?