



Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement
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A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis March 2003

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The selection and adoption of an effective, research-based core reading program in the primary grades is a critical step in the development of an effective schoolwide reading initiative. The investment in identifying a core program that aligns with research and fits the needs of learners in your school will reap long-term benefits for children's reading acquisition and development.

A critical review of reading programs requires objective and in-depth analysis. For these reasons, we offer the following recommendations and procedures for analyzing critical elements of programs. First, we address questions regarding the importance and process of a core program. Following, we specify the criteria for program evaluation organized by grade level and reading dimensions. Further, we offer guidelines regarding instructional time, differentiated instruction, and assessment. We trust you will find these guidelines useful and usable in this significant professional process.

1. What is a core reading program?

A core reading program is the primary instructional tool that teachers use to teach children to learn to read and ensure they reach

reading levels that meet or exceed grade-level standards. A core program should address the instructional needs of the majority of students in a respective school or district.

Historically, core-reading programs have been referred to as basal reading programs in that they serve as the "base" for reading instruction. Adoption of a core does not imply that other materials and strategies are not used to provide a rich, comprehensive program of instruction. The core program, however, should serve as the primary reading program for the school and the expectation is that all teachers within and between the primary grades will use the core program as the base of reading instruction. Such programs may or may not be commercial textbook series.

2. Why adopt a core reading program?

In a recent document entitled "Teaching Reading is Rocket Science," Louisa Moats (1999) revealed and articulated the complexities of carefully designed and implemented reading instruction. Teaching reading is far more complex than most professionals and laypersons realize. The demands of the phonologic, alphabetic, semantic, and syntactic systems of written

language require a careful schedule and sequence of prioritized objectives, explicit strategies, and scaffolds that support students' initial learning and transfer of knowledge and skills to other contexts. The requirements of curriculum construction and instructional design that effectively move children through the "learning to read" stage to the "reading to learn" stage are simply too important to leave to the judgment of individuals. The better the core addresses instructional priorities, the less teachers will need to supplement and modify instruction for the majority of learners.

3. What process should be used to select a core reading program?

Ideally, every teacher involved in reading instruction would be involved in the review and selection of the core reading program. Realistically, a grade-level representative may be responsible for the initial review and reduce the "possible" options to a reasonable number. At minimum, we recommend that grade-level representatives use the criteria that follow and then share those findings with grade-level teams.

Schools often ask whether the adoption should be K-6 or whether a K-3/4-6 adoption is advisable. Ideally, there would be consensus across grades K-6; however, it is imperative to give priority to how children are taught to learn to read. Therefore, kindergarten and first grades are critical grades and should be weighted heavily in adoption decisions. This may entail a different adoption for grades 4-6.

4. What criteria should be used to select a core reading program?

A converging body of scientific evidence is available and accessible to guide the development of primary-grade reading programs. We know from research the critical skills and strategies that children must acquire in order to become successful readers by grade 3 (National Reading Panel, 2000, National Research Council, 1998; NICHD, 1996, Simmons & Kameenui, 1998). Following, we specify criteria for reviewing critical elements of reading organized by grade.

Stage I: Is There Trustworthy Evidence of Program Efficacy?
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Prior scientific studies of program efficacy should be a first-level criterion to identify the pool of possible core programs. Your review of programs should answer the following questions:

- _____ 1. Does the program have evidence of efficacy established through carefully designed experimental studies?
- _____ 2. Does the program reflect current and confirmed research in reading?
- _____ 3. Does the program provide explicit, systematic instruction in the primary grades (K-3) in the following dimensions:
- phonemic awareness (grades K-1)
 - phonics/decoding
 - vocabulary
 - comprehension (listening and reading)
- _____ 4. Was the program tested in schools and classrooms with similar demographic and learner profiles as your school?

If the answers to questions 1-4 are yes, you have evidence to indicate that if adopted and implemented faithfully, there is high probability the program will be effective.

If you can narrow your selection to programs with trustworthy evidence, proceed to Stage II for more comprehensive analysis.

Your review of programs may yield those that lack prior evidence of efficacy but that have components based on research. A lack of program efficacy should not exclude a program from consideration. Your analysis of critical elements, however, assumes greater importance.

A new generation of reading programs is currently finding its way into the market place; a generation of programs that holds great promise yet lack evidence of efficacy. New programs often do not have adequate levels of evidence because large-scale, longitudinal evidence is costly and difficult to obtain. If programs lack established program efficacy, evaluate the program carefully and thoroughly according to following elements described in this guide.

**Stage II: A Consumer's Guide to Selecting a Core Program:
A Critical Elements Analysis**

A key assumption of a core program is that it will (a) address all grade-level standards and (b) ensure that high priority standards are taught in sufficient depth, breadth, and quality that all learners will achieve or exceed expected levels of proficiency. All standards are not equally important. Our critical elements analysis focuses on those skills and strategies essential for early reading.

General Review Process

1. Scope of Review and Prioritization of Items

Review each critical element for each grade. Items within each critical element have been prioritized as either High Priority or Discretionary. High Priority items are considered essential to the review. Discretionary items should be reviewed but do not carry as much weight in the overall analysis.

2. Type of Review and Sampling Procedure

To gain a representative sample of the program, we recommend the following strategies:

- (a) Within lesson procedure (W) involves identifying the first day (lesson) in which a critical skill (e.g., letter sound correspondence, word reading) is introduced and following that skill over a sequence of 2-3 days. Then, repeating the process to document evidence at two other points in time (e.g., middle/end of program).

- (b) Scope and sequence procedure (SS) involves using the scope and sequence to identify the initial instruction on a skill and analyze how instruction progresses over time. Document progression in the evidence columns.

- (c) Skills trace procedure (ST) will be used for selected skills. (See attached description of the procedure.)

3. Documenting Evidence

On the review forms there is space to document specific information. Example information may include lesson number, particular skill/strategy introduced, etc.

4. Calculating Scores and Summarizing Findings

Criteria are calculated at the Critical Element level by grade and across Critical Elements by grade level. At the end of each critical element, tally the number of consistently, partially, and does not satisfy criterion scores. At the end of the analysis, summarize your tallies by High Priority and Discretionary items.

5. Grade Level Design Features Analysis

At the end of each grade, there are 4-6 overarching items to assess the design, coherence, and systematic nature of instruction across lessons in the program. These items are intended to provide a big picture analysis.

Use the following criteria for each critical element:

● = Element consistently meets/exceeds criterion.

◐ = Element partially meets/exceeds criterion.

○ = Element does not satisfy criterion.

When evaluating individual elements, slash (/) the respective circle that represents your rating (e.g., ●).

Type of Review

1. (*w*) = Within a sequence of lessons. A specified element is best analyzed by reviewing a particular lesson or a series of 2-3 successive lessons.
2. (*ss*) = Scope and sequence. A specified element is best analyzed by reviewing the program's scope and sequence.
3. (*st*) = Skills trace. A specified element is best analyzed by completing a skills trace over a series of 10 consecutive lessons.

CLASSIFICATION OF PROGRAM

Program Name: _____

Date of Publication: _____

Publisher: _____

Reviewer Code: _____

1. _____ The program meets the following criteria for a comprehensive/core program and will be evaluated using the Consumer's Guide.

_____ Includes comprehensive materials for grades K-3.

_____ Provides instruction in each of the critical elements.

_____ phonemic awareness

_____ phonics

_____ fluency

_____ vocabulary

_____ comprehension

2. _____ The program does not meet the following criteria for a comprehensive/core program and will be evaluated using the Consumer's Guide (select all that apply).

_____ Includes comprehensive materials for grades K-3.

_____ Provides instruction in each of the critical elements.

_____ phonemic awareness

_____ phonics

_____ fluency

_____ vocabulary

_____ comprehension

3. _____ The program meets criteria for a supplemental or intervention program and will be reviewed for that purpose.

_____ Provides targeted instruction on specific skill (select all that apply).

_____ phonemic awareness

_____ phonics

_____ fluency

_____ vocabulary

_____ comprehension

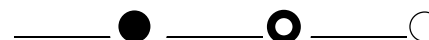
_____ Specify for which Grade/Age the program is appropriate.

Phonemic Awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate the sound structure of language. It is a strong predictor of reading success. Phonemic awareness is an auditory skill and consists of multiple components.

High Priority Items — Phonemic Awareness Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ● ○	1. Progresses from the easier phonemic awareness activities to the more difficult (e.g., isolation, blending, segmentation, and manipulation). (<i>ss</i>)			
● ● ○	2. Teaches skills explicitly and systematically (<i>w</i>).			
● ● ○	3. Models phonemic awareness tasks and responses orally and follows with students' production of the task. (<i>w</i>)			
● ● ○	4. Integrates letter-sound correspondence instruction to phonological awareness. (<i>w</i>) [NRP, pg. 2-41]			
● ● ○	5. Focuses on segmentation or the combination of blending and segmenting for greatest transfer. (<i>ss</i>) [NRP, pg. 2-41]			

Kindergarten Phonemic Awareness Instruction — High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.



Discretionary Items — Phonemic Awareness Instruction	
Rating	Criterion
● ○ ○	1. Focuses beginning instruction on the phonemic level of phonological units with short words (two to three phonemes; e.g., <i>at, mud, run</i>).
● ● ○	2. Makes students' cognitive manipulations of sounds overt by using auditory cues or manipulatives that signal the movement of one sound to the next.
● ● ○	3. Focuses first on the initial sound (<i>s<u>a</u>t</i>), then on the final sound (<i>sa<u>t</u></i>), and lastly on the medial sound (<i>sa<u>t</u></i>) in words.
● ● ○	4. Provides brief instructional sessions. (Significant gains in phonemic awareness are often made in 15 to 20 minutes of daily instruction and practice over a period of 9 to 12 weeks.) [NRP 5-15 hrs total, pg. 2-41]

Kindergarten Phonemic Awareness Instruction — Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● ○

Phonics is the ability to recognize words accurately, fluently, and independently is fundamental to reading in an alphabetic writing system. For kindergarten students, critical skills include learning to associate sounds with letters, using those associations to decode and read simple words, and learning to recognize important nondecodable words. [NRP, pg. 2-41; pg. 2-93]

High Priority Items — Letter-Sound Association Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ● ○	1. Introduces high-utility letter sound instruction early in the sequence (e.g., /m/, /s/, /a/, /r/, /t/) instead of low-utility letter sounds (e.g., /x/, /y/, /z/). (ss)			
● ● ○	2. Explicitly models the sound of letter prior to student practice and assessment. (w)			
● ● ○	3. Incorporates frequent and cumulative review of taught letter sounds to automaticity. (st)			

Kindergarten Letter-Sound Association Instruction — High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○

Discretionary Items — Letter-Sound Association Instruction	
Rating	Criterion
● ○ ○	1. Sequences the introduction of letter sounds in ways that minimize confusion (e.g., sequence /p/, /b/, /v/; /e/, /i/).
● ● ○	2. Includes a few short vowels early in the sequence so that students can use letter-sound knowledge to segment and blend words.

Kindergarten Letter-Sound Association Instruction — Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● ○

High Priority Items — Decoding Instruction

Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ● ○	1. Provides explicit strategy for blending words. (<i>w</i>) [NRP, pg. 2-96]			
● ● ○	2. Provides multiple opportunities within lessons for students to blend and read words. (<i>w</i>)			
● ● ○	3. Provides sufficient guided practice in decodable word lists and short, controlled connected text. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>ss</i>)			
● ● ○	4. Introduces regular word types (CV or CVC) first in the sequence. (<i>ss</i>)			
● ● ○	5. Introduces regular words for which students know all letter sounds. (<i>ss</i>)			

Kindergarten Decoding Instruction — High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○

High Priority Items — Irregular Words Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	1. Introduces words of high utility (e.g., I, have, etc.) with ample practice for automaticity. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>st</i>)			

Kindergarten Irregular Words Instruction — High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ _____ _____

Discretionary Items — Irregular Words Instruction	
Rating	Criterion
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	1. Limits # of words introduced within a lesson.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	2. Separates highly similar words (e.g., was/saw).

Kindergarten Irregular Words Instruction — Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ _____ _____

Vocabulary refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively. In general, vocabulary can be described as oral vocabulary or reading vocabulary. Oral vocabulary refers to words that we use in speaking or recognize in listening. Reading vocabulary refers to words we recognize or use in print.

High Priority Items — Vocabulary Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ● ○	1. Provides direct instruction of specific concepts and vocabulary. (<i>w</i>)			
● ● ○	2. Provides repeated and multiple exposures to critical vocabulary. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>st</i>)			
● ● ○	3. Integrates words into sentences and asks students to tell the meaning of the word in the sentence and to use it in a variety of contexts. (<i>w</i>)			

Kindergarten Vocabulary Instruction— High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● ○

Discretionary Items — Vocabulary Instruction	
Rating	Criterion
● ● ○	1. Reviews previously introduced words cumulatively.
● ● ○	2. Provides opportunity for daily listening, speaking, and language experience.
● ● ○	3. Incorporates exposure to a broad and diverse vocabulary through listening to a wide range of stories and informational texts.

Kindergarten Vocabulary Instruction— Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● ○

Listening Comprehension: *The ability to listen to stories, answer questions, sequence events, learn new vocabulary, and retell information heard are the foundation of reading comprehension. Because many kindergarten children cannot yet read stories, it is imperative that they have frequent and rich opportunities to listen to and discuss stories and informational text that will extend their current understandings and vocabulary knowledge. [NRP, pg. 2-97]*

High Priority Items — Listening Comprehension				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ● ○	1. Models and systematically reviews critical comprehension strategies. (<i>st</i>) [NRP, pg. 4-126; pp 4-100] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literal comprehension • Retelling 			
● ● ○	2. Models and guides the students through story structure (e.g., setting _____), thinking out loud as the elements are being identified. (<i>w</i>) [NRP, pg. 4-100]			
● ● ○	3. Strategically selects and reinforces critical vocabulary during story reading (connects with background knowledge and examples). (<i>w</i>) and (<i>ss</i>)			
● ● ○	4. Provides plentiful opportunities to listen to and explore narrative and expository text forms and to engage in interactive discussion of the messages and meanings of the text. (<i>ss</i>) [NRP, pp 4-109]			

Kindergarten Listening Comprehension — High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● ○

Discretionary Items — Listening Comprehension	
Rating	Criterion
● ○ ○	1. Focuses on only a few important elements and introduces additional elements when the students can reliably identify those previously taught. [NRP, pg. 4-100]
● ● ○	2. Models multiple examples and provides extensive guided practice in listening-comprehension strategies. [NRP, pg. 4-107]
● ● ●	3. Inserts questions at strategic intervals to reduce the memory load for learners when introducing strategies in stories. (For example, have students retell the important events after each page rather than wait for the end of the story.) [NRP, pg. 4-110; pg. 4-111]

Kindergarten Listening Comprehension — Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○

Summary of Kindergarten Ratings

High Priority Items	
Phonemic Awareness Instruction (5)	_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○
Letter-Sound Association Instruction (3)	_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○
Decoding Instruction (5)	_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○
Irregular Words Instruction (1)	_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○
Vocabulary Instruction (3)	_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○
Listening Comprehension Instruction (4)	_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○

<i>Kindergarten High Priority Totals</i>	_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○
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Discretionary Items	
Phonemic Awareness Instruction (4)	_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○
Letter-Sound Association Instruction (2)	_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○
Decoding Instruction (0)	_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○
Irregular Words Instruction (2)	_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○
Vocabulary Instruction (3)	_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○
Listening Comprehension Instruction (3)	_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○

<i>Kindergarten Discretionary Totals</i>	_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○
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Reviewer Code/Name: _____

KINDERGARTEN

Additional Comments

Phonemic Awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate the sound structure of language. It is a strong predictor of reading success. Phonemic awareness is an auditory skill and consists of multiple components.

High Priority Items — Phonemic Awareness Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ○ ○	1. Allocates appropriate amount of daily time to blending, segmenting, and manipulating tasks until proficient. (w) [NRP, pg. 2-41]			
● ○ ○	2. Incorporates letters into phonemic awareness activities. (w) [NRP, pg. 2-41]			

First Grade Phonemic Awareness Instruction — High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○

Discretionary Items — Phonemic Awareness Instruction

Rating	Criterion
● ○ ○	1. Analyzes words at the phoneme level (i.e., working with individual sounds within words).
● ● ○	2. Works with phonemes in all position in words (initial, final, medial).
● ● ○	3. Progresses from identifying or distinguishing the positions of sounds in words to producing the sound and adding, deleting, and changing selected sounds.
● ● ○	4. Works with increasingly longer words (three to four phonemes).
● ● ○	5. Expands beyond consonant-vowel-consonant words (e.g., <i>sun</i>) to more complex phonemic structures (consonant blends).

First Grade Phonemic Awareness Instruction — Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○

High Priority Items – Phonics Instruction

Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ● ○	1. Progresses <u>systematically</u> from simple word types (e.g., consonant-vowel-consonant) and word lengths (e.g., number of phonemes) and word complexity (e.g., phonemes in the word, position of blends, stop sounds) to more complex words. (<i>ss</i>) [NRP, pg. 2-132]			
● ● ○	2. Models instruction at each of the fundamental stages (e.g., letter-sound correspondences, blending, reading whole words). (<i>w</i>) and (<i>ss</i>)			
● ● ○	3. Provides teacher-guided practice in controlled word lists and connected text in which students can apply their newly learned skills successfully. (<i>w</i>)			
● ● ○	4. Includes repeated opportunities to read words in contexts in which students can apply their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>ss</i>) [NRP, pg. 3-28]			

High Priority Items – Phonics Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ○ ○	5. Uses decodable text based on specific phonics lessons in the early part of the first grade as an intervening step between explicit skill acquisition and the students' ability to read quality trade books. Decodable texts should contain the phonics elements and sight words that students have been taught. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>ss</i>)			

First Grade Phonics Instruction – High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ ○

Discretionary Items – Phonics Instruction	
Rating	Criterion
● ○ ○	1. Provides integrated proactive instruction and practice in words that students first read, spell, and write.
● ○ ○	2. Sequences words strategically to incorporate known letters or letter-sound combinations. [NRP, pg. 2-132]
● ○ ○	3. Begins instruction in word families and word patterns (i.e., reading orthographic units of text, such as <i>at, sat, fat, rat</i>) <u>after</u> students have learned the letter-sound correspondences in the unit. [NRP, pg. 2-132]
● ○ ○	4. Teaches students to process larger, highly represented patterns to increase fluency in word recognition.

First Grade Phonics Instruction – Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ ○

High Priority Items — Irregular Words Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ○ ○	1. Selects words of high utility with ample practice for automaticity. (<i>st</i>)			
● ○ ○	2. Controls the number of irregular words introduced at one time. (<i>w</i>)			

First Grade Irregular Words Instruction — High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ ○

Discretionary Items — Irregular Words Instruction	
Rating	Criterion
● ○ ○	1. Strategically separates high-frequency words (e.g., <i>was, saw; them, they, there</i>), that are often confused by students.
● ○ ○	2. Points out irregularities while focusing student attention on all letters in the word.

First Grade Irregular Words Instruction — Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ ○

High Priority Items – Connected Text and Fluency Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ● ○	1. Introduces passage reading soon after students can read a sufficient number of words accurately. (<i>w</i>)			
● ● ○	2. Contains regular words comprised of letter-sounds and words types that have been taught. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>ss</i>)			
● ● ○	3. Contains only high-frequency irregular words that have been previously taught. (<i>ss</i>)			
● ● ○	4. Uses initial stories/passages composed of a high percentage of regular words (minimum of 75-80% decodable words). (<i>w</i>)			
● ● ○	5. Builds toward a 60 word per minute fluency goal by end of grade. (<i>ss</i>) [NRP, pg. 3-4]			

High Priority Items — Connected Text and Fluency Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ○ ○	6. Includes sufficient independent practice materials of appropriate difficulty for students to develop fluency. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>ss</i>) [NRP, pg. 3-28]			

First Grade Connected Text & Fluency Instruction — High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ ○

Discretionary Items — Connected Text and Fluency Instruction	
Rating	Criterion
● ○ ○	1. Teaches explicit strategy to move from reading words in lists to reading words in sentences and passages.
● ○ ○	2. Introduces fluency practice (e.g., repeated reading) after students read words in passages accurately. [NRP, pg. 3-28; pg. 3-15]

First Grade Connected Text & Fluency Instruction — Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ ○

High Priority Items – Vocabulary Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ○ ○	1. Provides direct instruction of specific concepts and vocabulary. (<i>w</i>)			
● ● ○	2. Provides repeated and multiple exposures to critical vocabulary. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>st</i>)			
● ● ○	3. Integrates words into sentences and asks students to tell the meaning of the word in the sentence and to use it in a variety of contexts. (<i>w</i>)			

First Grade Vocabulary Instruction— High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● ○

Discretionary Items – Vocabulary Instruction	
Rating	Criterion
● ○ ○	1. Reviews previously introduced words cumulatively.
● ● ○	2. Provides opportunity for daily listening, speaking, and language experience.
● ● ○	3. Incorporates exposure to a broad and diverse vocabulary through listening to a wide range of stories and informational texts.

First Grade Vocabulary Instruction— Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● ○

High Priority Items – Reading Comprehension Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ○ ○	1. Guides students through sample text in which teachers think out loud as they identify the components of story structure. (<i>w</i>) [NRP, pg. 4-122]			
● ● ○	2. Provides plentiful opportunities to listen to and explore narrative and expository text forms and to engage in interactive discussion of the messages and meanings of the text. (<i>ss</i>) [NRP, pg. 4-109]			
● ● ○	3. Explicitly teaches critical comprehension strategy (e.g., main idea, literal, inferential, retell, prediction). (<i>w</i>) and (<i>ss</i>)			

First Grade Reading Comprehension Instruction – Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● ○

Discretionary Items — Reading Comprehension Instruction	
Rating	Criterion
● ○ ○	1. The text for initial instruction in comprehension: -begins with text units appropriate for the learner -uses familiar vocabulary -activates prior knowledge [NRP, pg. 4-108] -uses simple sentences -begins with short passages to reduce the memory load for learners
● ● ○	2. Introduces text where the structure of text is explicit (beginning, middle, and end being obvious). [NRP, pg. 4-112]
● ● ○	3. Has students discuss the story structure orally and make comparisons with other stories. [NRP, pg. 4-100]

First Grade Reading Comprehension Instruction — Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○

Summary of First Grade Ratings

High Priority Items	
Phonemic Awareness Instruction (2)	_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○
Phonics Instruction (5)	_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○
Irregular Words Instruction (2)	_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○
Connected Text and Fluency Instruction (6)	_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○
Vocabulary Development (3)	_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○
Reading Comprehension Instruction (3)	_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○
<i>First Grade High Priority Totals</i>	_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○

Discretionary Items	
Phonemic Awareness Instruction (5)	_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○
Phonics Instruction (4)	_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○
Irregular Words Instruction (2)	_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○
Connected Text and Fluency Instruction (2)	_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○
Vocabulary Development (3)	_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○
Reading Comprehension Instruction (3)	_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○
<i>First Grade Discretionary Totals</i>	_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○

Reviewer Code/Name: _____

FIRST GRADE

Additional Comments

Phonics is the ability to recognize words accurately, fluently, and independently is fundamental to reading in an alphabetic writing system. For kindergarten students, critical skills include learning to associate sounds with letters, using those associations to decode and read simple words, and learning to recognize important nondecodable words. [NRP, pg. 2-41; pg. 2-93]

High Priority Items — Phonics Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ○ ○	1. Teaches advanced phonic-analysis skills explicitly, first in isolation, then in words and connected text and applies to other program materials (e.g., trade books, anthologies) when students are proficient. (w) and (ss) [NRP pg. 2-13]			
● ● ○	2. Provides teacher guided practice in word lists and controlled contexts in which students can apply newly learned skills successfully. (w)			
● ● ○	3. Teaches explicit strategy to read multisyllabic words by using prefixes, suffixes, and known word parts. (w)			

Second Grade Phonics Instruction — High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● ○

Discretionary Items — Phonics Instruction

Rating	Criterion
● ○ ○	1. Avoids assuming that learners will automatically transfer skills from one word type to another. When introducing a new letter combination, prefix, or word ending, models each of the fundamental stages of blending the word and then reading the whole word.
● ● ○	2. Separates auditorily and visually similar letter combinations in the instructional sequence (e.g., does not introduce both sounds for <i>oo</i> simultaneously; separates <i>ai</i> , <i>au</i>).
● ● ○	3. Ensures that students know the sounds of the individual letters prior to introducing larger orthographic units (e.g., <i>ill</i> , <i>ap</i> , <i>ing</i>).
● ● ○	4. Offers repeated opportunities for students to read words in contexts where they can apply their advanced phonics skills with a high level of success. [NRP, pg. 3-28; 3-15]
● ● ○	5. Incorporates spelling to reinforce word analysis. After students can read words, provides explicit instruction in spelling, showing students how to map the sounds of letters onto print.
● ● ○	6. Makes clear the connections between decoding (symbol to sound) and spelling (sound to symbol).

Second Grade Phonics Instruction — Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● ○

High Priority Items — Irregular Words Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ● ○	1. Selects words that have high utility; that is, words that are used frequently in grade-appropriate literature and informational text. (<i>ss</i>)			

Second Grade Irregular Words Instruction — High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○

Discretionary Items — Irregular Words Instruction	
Rating	Criterion
● ● ○	1. Sequences high-frequency irregular words to avoid potential confusion. For example, high-frequency words that are often confused by students should be strategically separated for initial instruction.
● ● ○	2. Limits the number of sight words introduced at one time.
● ● ○	3. Preteaches the sight words prior to reading connected text.
● ● ○	4. Provides a cumulative review of important high-frequency sight words as part of daily reading instruction.

Second Grade Irregular Words Instruction — Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○

High Priority Items — Vocabulary Instruction			
Rating	Criterion	Evidence	
		Initial Instruction	Week _____
● ● ○	1. Provides direct instruction of specific concepts and vocabulary essential to understanding text. (<i>w</i>) [NRP, pg. 4-4]		Week _____
● ● ○	2. Provides repeated and multiple exposures to critical vocabulary. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>st</i>) [NRP, pg. 4-4]		Week _____

Second Grade Vocabulary Instruction — High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○

Discretionary Items — Vocabulary Instruction

Rating	Criterion
● ● ○	1. Variety of methods [NRP, pg. 4-4]
● ● ○	2. Incorporates exposure to a broad and diverse vocabulary through listening to an reading stories and informational texts. [NRP, pg. 4-4]
● ● ○	3. Integrates words into sentences and asks students to tell the meaning of the word in the sentence and to use it in a variety of contexts. [NRP, pg. 4-4]
● ● ○	4. Reviews previously introduced words cumulatively. [NRP, pg. 4-4]
● ● ○	5. Teaches strategy for word meanings based on meaning of prefixes and suffixes.
● ● ○	6. Introduces the prefix or suffix in isolation, indicating its meaning and then connecting it in words.
● ● ○	7. Illustrates the prefix or suffix with multiple examples.

Discretionary Items — Vocabulary Instruction

Rating	Criterion
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	8. Restructuring of vocabulary tasks for at-risk, low achieving students.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	9. Uses examples when the roots are familiar to students (e.g., <i>remake</i> and <i>replay</i> as opposed to <i>record</i> and <i>recode</i> .)
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	10. Separates prefixes that appear similar in initial instructional sequences (e.g., <i>pre</i> , <i>pro</i>).

Second Grade Vocabulary Instruction — Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○

High Priority Items — Passage Reading - Fluency Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ● ○	1. Contains regular words comprised of phonic elements and word types that have been introduced. (<i>ss</i>)			
● ● ○	2. Selects majority of high frequency irregular words from list of commonly used words in English. (<i>ss</i>)			
● ● ○	3. Builds toward a 90 word-per-minute fluency goal by end of grade 2. Assesses fluency regularly. (<i>ss</i>) [NRP, pg. 3-4]			

Second Grade Passage Reading - Fluency Instruction — High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● ○

Discretionary Items — Passage Reading - Fluency Instruction	
Rating	Criterion
● ○ ○	1. Contains only irregular words that have been previously taught.
● ● ○	2. Introduces repeated readings after students read words in passages accurately. [NRP, pg. 3-28; 3-15]
● ● ○	3. Includes sufficient independent practice materials of appropriate difficulty for students to develop fluency. [NRP, pg. 3-28]

Second Grade Passage Reading - Fluency Instruction — Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● ○

High Priority Items – Reading Comprehension Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ● ○	1. Teaches conventions of informational text (e.g., titles, chapter headings) to locate important information. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>ss</i>)			
● ● ○	2. Teaches explicit strategy to interpret information from graphs, diagrams, and charts. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>ss</i>)			
● ● ○	3. Teaches or activates prior knowledge to increase a student's understanding of what is read. [NRP, pg. 4-108] (<i>w</i>)			
● ● ○	4. Teaches skill or strategy (e.g., comprehension monitoring, summarizing) explicitly with the aid of carefully designed examples and practice. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>ss</i>) [NRP, pg. 4-108]			
● ● ○	5. Continues skill or strategy instruction across several instructional sessions to illustrate the applicability and utility of the skill or strategy. (<i>st</i>)			

High Priority Items – Reading Comprehension Instruction			
<input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	6. Uses story grammar structure as a tool for prompting information to compare and contrast, organize information, and group related ideas to maintain a consistent focus. (<i>w</i>) [NRP, pg. 4-112]		

Second Grade Reading Comprehension Instruction – Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ _____ _____

Discretionary Items – Reading Comprehension Instruction	
Rating	Criterion
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	1. Teaches narrative and informational text.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	2. Organizes instruction in a coherent structure.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	3. Connects previously taught skills and strategies with new content and text. [NRP, 4-107]
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	4. Cumulatively builds a repertoire of skills and strategies that are introduced, applied, and integrated with appropriate texts and for authentic purposes over the course of the year. [NRP, 4-107]
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	5. Teaches analyzing elements of narrative text and comparing and contrasting elements within and among texts.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	6. Uses graphic organizers on the content of passages.

Second Grade Reading Comprehension Instruction – Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ _____ _____

Summary of Second Grade Ratings

High Priority Items	
Phonics Instruction (3)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Irregular Words Instruction (1)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Vocabulary Instruction (2)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Passage Reading - Fluency Instruction (3)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Reading Comprehension Instruction (6)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○

<i>Second Grade High Priority Totals</i>	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
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Discretionary Items	
Phonics Instruction (6)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Irregular Words Instruction (4)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Vocabulary Instruction (10)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Passage Reading - Fluency Instruction (3)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Reading Comprehension Instruction (6)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○

<i>Second Grade Discretionary Totals</i>	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
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Second Grade Design Features	
● ○ ○	1. Aligns and coordinates the words used in phonics/word recognition activities with those used in fluency building.
● ○ ○	2. Provides ample practice on high-priority skills.
● ○ ○	3. Provides explicit and systematic instruction.
● ○ ○	4. Includes systematic and cumulative review of high priority skills.
● ○ ○	5. Demonstrates and builds relationships between fundamental skills leading to higher order skills.

Reviewer Code/Name: _____

SECOND GRADE

Additional Comments

High Priority Items — Decoding and Word Recognition Instruction [Systematic NRP, pg. 2-132]				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ○ ○	1. Teaches strategies to decode multisyllabic words using the structural features of such word parts as affixes (e.g., <i>pre-</i> , <i>mis-</i> , <i>-tion</i>) to aid in word recognition. (<i>w</i>)			
● ○ ○	2. Emphasizes reading harder and bigger words (i.e., multisyllabic words) and reading all words more fluently. (<i>ss</i>)			

Third Grade Decoding and Word Recognition Instruction — High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ ○

Discretionary Items — Decoding and Word Recognition Instruction

Rating	Criterion
● ○ ○	1. Separates word parts that are highly similar (e.g., <i>ight</i> and <i>aight</i>).
● ○ ○	2. Introduces word parts that occur with high frequency over those that occur in only a few words.
● ○ ○	3. Teaches the word parts first and then incorporates the words into sentences and connected text.
● ○ ○	4. Extends instruction to orthographically larger and more complex units (e.g., <i>ight</i> , <i>aught</i> , <i>own</i>).
● ○ ○	5. Provides explicit explanations, including modeling, "Think-alouds," guided practice, and the gradual transfer of responsibility to students.
● ○ ○	6. Relies on examples more than abstract rules. (Begin with familiar words. Show "nonexamples." Use word parts rather than have students search for little words within a word. <i>Examples</i> : depart, report.)
● ○ ○	7. Makes clear the limitations of structural analysis.
● ○ ○	8. Uses extended text in opportunities for application.

Third Grade Decoding and Word Recognition Instruction — Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ ○

High Priority Items – Vocabulary Instruction

Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ● ○	1. Teaches strategies to use context to gain the meaning of an unfamiliar word. Context includes the words surrounding the unfamiliar word that provide information to its meaning. (<i>w</i>)			
● ● ○	2. Repeated and multiple exposures to vocabulary. (<i>st</i>) [NRP, pg. 4-4]			
● ● ○	3. Emphasizes direct instruction in specific concepts and vocabulary essential to understanding text. (<i>w</i>)			
● ● ○	4. Provides exposure to a broad and diverse vocabulary through listening to and reading stories. (<i>ss</i>) [NRP, pg. 4-4]			
● ● ○	5. Variety of methods; variety of contexts. (<i>ss</i>) [NRP, pg. 4-4]			

Third Grade Vocabulary Instruction – High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● ○

Discretionary Items — Vocabulary Instruction

Rating	Criterion
● ○ ○	1. Teaches dictionary usage explicitly with grade-appropriate dictionaries that allow students to access and understand the meaning of an unknown word. Uses words in context and that are encountered frequently.
● ● ○	2. Restructuring of vocabulary tasks for at-risk, low achievers.
● ● ○	3. Extends the understanding of concepts and vocabulary of the English language through (1) learning and using antonyms and synonyms; (2) using individual words in compound words to predict the meaning; (3) using prefixes and suffixes to assist in word meaning; and (4) learning simple multiple-meaning words.

Third Grade Vocabulary Instruction — Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● ○

High Priority Items — Passage Reading - Fluency Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ● ○	1. Contains only words comprised of phonic elements and word types that have been introduced. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>ss</i>)			
● ● ○	2. Builds toward a 120 word-per-minute fluency goal by end of grade 3. Assess fluency regularly. (<i>ss</i>) [NRP, pg. 3-28]			
● ● ○	3. Includes sufficient independent practice materials of appropriate difficulty for students to develop fluency. (<i>w</i>) [NRP, pg. 3-28]			

Third Grade Passage Reading - Fluency Instruction — High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○

Discretionary Items — Passage Reading - Fluency Instruction	
Rating	Criterion
● ● ○	1. Contains only irregular words that have been previously taught.
● ● ○	2. Selects majority of high frequency irregular words from list of commonly used words in English.
● ● ○	3. Introduces repeated readings after students read words in passages accurately. [NRP, pg. 3-28; 3-15]

Third Grade Passage Reading - Fluency Instruction — Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ● _____ ○

High Priority Items – Reading Comprehension Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ● ○	1. Teaches background information and/or activates prior knowledge. (<i>w</i>) [NRP, pg. 4-108]			
● ● ○	2. Uses text in which the main idea or comprehension unit is explicitly stated, clear, and in which the ideas follow a logical order. (<i>w</i>)			
● ● ○	3. Uses known or taught vocabulary and passages at appropriate readability levels for learners. (<i>w</i>)			
● ● ○	4. Continues skill or strategy instruction across several instructional sessions to illustrate the applicability and utility of the skill or strategy. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>st</i>)			
● ● ○	5. Connects previously taught skills and strategies with new content and text. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>ss</i>) [NRP, pg. 4-107]			
● ● ○	6. Cumulatively builds a repertoire of multiple strategies that are introduced, applied, and integrated with appropriate texts and for authentic purposes over the course of the year. (<i>w</i>) and (<i>ss</i>) [NRP. pg. 4-107]			

High Priority Items – Reading Comprehension Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week _____	Week _____
● ○ ○	7. Explicitly teaches comprehension strategies with the aid of carefully designed examples and practice (e.g., comprehension monitoring, mental imagery, question generation, question answering, story structure, summarization). (w) [NRP. pg. 4-100 to 4-113]			

Third Grade Reading Comprehension Instruction – High Priority

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○

Discretionary Items – Reading Comprehension Instruction	
Rating	Criterion
● ○ ○	1. Provides cooperative learning activities that parallel requirements of instruction.
● ○ ○	2. Begins with linguistic units appropriate to the learner; for example, uses pictures and a set of individual sentences before presenting paragraph or passage-level text to help students learn the concept of main idea.
● ○ ○	3. Uses familiar, simple syntactical structures and sentence types.
● ○ ○	4. Progresses to more complex structures in which main ideas are not explicit and passages are longer.

Third Grade Reading Comprehension Instruction – Discretionary

Tally the number of elements with each rating.

_____ ● _____ ○ _____ ○

Summary of Third Grade Ratings

High Priority Items	
Decoding and Word Recognition Instruction (1)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Vocabulary Instruction (4)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Passage Reading - Fluency Instruction (3)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Reading Comprehension Instruction (7)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○

Discretionary Items	
Decoding and Word Recognition Instruction (8)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Vocabulary Instruction (3)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Passage Reading - Fluency Instruction (3)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Reading Comprehension Instruction (4)	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○

<i>Third Grade High Priority Totals</i>	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
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<i>Third Grade Discretionary Totals</i>	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
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Third Grade Design Features	
● ○ ○	1. Aligns and coordinates the words used in phonics/word recognition activities with those used in fluency building.
● ○ ○	2. Provides ample practice on high-priority skills.
● ○ ○	3. Provides explicit and systematic instruction.
● ○ ○	4. Includes systematic and cumulative review of high priority skills.
● ○ ○	5. Demonstrates and builds relationships between fundamental skills leading to higher order skills.

SUMMARY	
Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality (specify elements)	Evidence of Insufficient Instructional Quality (specify elements)

SUMMARY

Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality (specify elements)	Evidence of Insufficient Instructional Quality (specify elements)

Additional Comments

Reviewer Code/Name: _____

THIRD GRADE

Additional Comments

Overall Assessment of Instructional Sufficiency by Critical Element and Grade

PROGRAM NAME: _____

Critical Element	Kindergarten		First Grade	
	High Priority Items	Discretionary Items	High Priority Items	Discretionary Items
Phonemic Awareness	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Phonics	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Fluency	N/A	N/A	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Vocabulary	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Comprehension	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Critical Element	Second Grade		Third Grade	
	High Priority Items	Discretionary Items	High Priority Items	Discretionary Items
Phonemic Awareness	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Phonics	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Fluency	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Vocabulary	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○
Comprehension	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○	___ ● ___ ○ ___ ○

Use the following criteria for each critical element:

● = Element meets/exceeds criterion; ○ = Element partially meets/exceeds criterion; ○ = Element does not satisfy criterion.