Third Edition

Teaching Reading to Students Who Are At Risk or Have Disabilities

A Multi-Tier, RTI Approach

William D. Bursuck | Mary Damer

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THIRD EDITION

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University of North Carolina-Greensboro

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To Beth, without whose continuing patience, love, and support this book would not have been possible. —*WB*

To Simone, my colleague, my friend, and my daughter. —*MD*

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About the Authors

William Bursuck is currently a Professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Dr. Bursuck has been interested in reading instruction ever since an unsuccessful stint teaching reading as an inner-city elementary school teacher in Buffalo, New York. In search of answers to the literacy puzzle, Dr. Bursuck first pursued a Master's degree in special education from the University of Vermont, and then further training as a Ph.D. student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Since that time he has been involved in preparing special and general education teachers to employ the systematic and explicit instruction needed to effectively teach students who are at risk or have disabilities to read. Dr. Bursuck has been the principal investigator for millions of dollars in federal grants, including Project PRIDE, the model-demonstration research grant that provided the basis for the multi-tier practices in this text. He has published numerous research articles and is the co-author of a best-selling textbook on inclusive practices with Dr. Marilyn Friend.

Mary Damer is currently coordinating a multi-tiered reading project in seven Ohio special education charter schools through *Multi-Tier LLC,* a consulting company she co-founded that works with school districts to increase reading achievement through an intensive multi-tiered model based on preventing reading failure. A former visiting professor at The Ohio State University, her current OSU project is consulting on an oral reading fluency technology grant for young at-risk urban students. Past experiences as a principal and behavior consultant led to Mary's keen interest in preventing reading problems. She observed that a large proportion of students referred for behavior problems could not read near grade level and eventually documented the role that inadequate reading skills played in the book she co-authored, *Managing Unmanageable Students: Practical Solutions for Administrators.* Her desire to reduce disruptive behavior in schools by increasing the numbers of students who could read at grade level eventually influenced her to take the role of field director for Project Pride, a federally funded early literacy model demonstration program.

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Preface

New to This Edition

- To enhance affordability and portability the third edition is available as a Pearson eText. In our work with teachers, the following concern was repeatedly raised: "Everyone talks and writes about how I should teach reading, but it would be such a help to actually see these skills being taught to children." The organization of this new electronic version is more cohesive because links to videos and applied activities are integrated throughout the text rather than ending each chapter. Both videos and pop-up information reflect the latest evidence-based practices related to explicit, systematic reading instruction. The video footage shows a teacher using the reading formats from the text to teach critical reading skills to students in a small-group classroom situation. Viewers can refer to the text as they watch phonemic awareness, letter–sound correspondence, word reading, vocabulary, and passage reading with comprehension being taught.
- Differentiating reading instruction for students who are at risk given the increased text complexity required by the Common Core Standards will be challenging for educators. This third edition includes issues and suggestions that will help teachers learn to juggle the demands of research-based reading and spelling instruction necessary to increase the rate of progress for children at risk within a multi-tier or RTI framework. Ideas on how to prepare students for more complex text while still providing the instruction they need in acquiring lower-level foundational skills are discussed throughout the chapters.
- The assessment section of each chapter has been updated to include information about the new *DIBELS Next* assessments and norms including a new First Sound Fluency measure for beginning phonemic awareness, the move to scoring whole word reading on the Nonsense Word Fluency Assessment, and a new measure to screen and monitor progress in reading comprehension. Descriptions of these new assessments and tips for analyzing student results reflect these latest changes.
- Students who are at risk for reading problems often struggle to develop the reading fluency necessary for comprehending text. An expanded chapter on teaching fluency skills to students provides teachers with new strategies and activities to develop students' fluency. The section on strategies to assess and teach prosody in order to develop students' expressive reading skills has been greatly expanded. The fluency chapter now also includes new interventions for building students' reading rate using repeated and wide reading.
- This latest edition offers increased coverage of strategies to teach reading comprehension, providing more in-depth information on specific factors of more complex text that are often problematic for students who are at risk and require intervention. Accommodations for students in Tier 3 who are unable to read grade-level text are expanded and reflect the latest technology developed since the last edition. While the second edition provided much information about how to systematically and explicitly teach comprehension, we wanted this third edition to reflect new research-based

developments in this area and provide more support for teaching specific skills. Teachers learn to conduct "Close Reading" of text, design four types of inferential questions for both expository and narrative text, and use a grid to plan for their teaching of comprehension.

- The addition of chapter summaries provides additional organizational supports for readers of the third edition.

Between 2000 and 2004 we implemented Project PRIDE, a four-year federal model demonstration project that employed evidence-based practices to prevent reading problems in children who were at risk in three diverse, high-poverty urban schools. The principals of these schools opted to reverse their course from a more naturalistic reading program and make the commitment to retraining their staff because of a history of chronic reading problems and a teaching environment permeated by failure. Failure rates on the Illinois State Achievement Test (ISAT) for PRIDE schools had ranged from 50% to 78%. Over the course of the project, through ongoing progress monitoring of student achievement and a close working relationship with the teachers, we had the opportunity to fine-tune instructional strategies to a degree that would not have been possible without that collaboration.

During the 4 years of Project PRIDE, we gained an even greater appreciation for Louisa Moats's expression, "Teaching reading is rocket science." On a daily basis we observed that as the human mind acquires the intellectual muscle to learn to read, the teacher must not only know how to carefully teach the sequence of small steps needed for reading at grade level but also to recognize the missteps that can thwart those efforts. Whether students came to school from high-poverty backgrounds, with no parental support, with learning disabilities or behavior disorders, with medical conditions, from backgrounds of abuse, or without English-speaking skills, most of them were able to learn to read. The research in reading, summarized by the report of the National Reading Panel (2000), the invaluable research in reading and multi-tier and response to intervention (RTI) approaches that have occurred since, and our own extensive work in public schools after Project PRIDE provide a clear guide for the use of systematic and explicit instruction to teach the largest number of students to read. In this book we have translated that guide into a detailed blueprint based on: (1) explicit, systematic instruction, (2) a multi-tier or RTI model, (3) data-based decision making, and (4) professional development.

Professional development and coaching for PRIDE teachers and staff who carried out instruction in Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 was provided by the authors of this text. All teachers attended after-school workshops and a series of summer institutes and received on-site coaching. The after-school workshops and summer institutes were used to introduce various teaching and assessment strategies, allow teachers to observe taped or live models of the strategies, and provide practice for the teachers in small groups using simulated experiences. During on-site coaching visits, data on tier implementation were gathered directly in the classroom; teachers were given feedback on their instruction until they demonstrated competence.

The impetus for writing and now revising this text came from the results attained during our 4 years of PRIDE implementation as well as work with other urban school districts that has followed. Our results have shown that all children can make progress toward learning to read when a system of assessments guides staff to identify children who are not responding to instruction, allowing them to meet their individual needs using evidence-based instructional options of varying intensities. The assessment and teaching strategies that have been successful are those that occupy the pages of this text.

The data shown in Table 1 from one project school and a control school reflect the percentage of children meeting or exceeding standards on the Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT). Note the significant increases from 1999–2000 to 2003–2004, the latter being scores for our first PRIDE cohort. It is interesting that the ISAT scores for our PRIDE school began improving for the 2002–2003 school year, despite the fact that these were

TABLE 1 Percentage of Children Meeting or Exceeding Standard on the Illinois State Achievement Test

Third-Grade Reading	1999–2000	2000–2001	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004
School 1	31	22	15.2	55.2	68.2
Control	39	40	36.4	28.6	39

students who were not officially part of the project. We believe that at least part of that increase resulted because the school, seeing that PRIDE was working so well in the early grades, began to implement some of the same practices in the later grades that were not part of the PRIDE project.

It is clear from these results that more children met state standards in reading as a result of Project PRIDE. It is also true that about 30% of the students did not meet state standards. These were largely students who were receiving support in either Tier 2 or Tier 3. Nonetheless, our results showed that, even though many Tier 2 and Tier 3 students did not meet standards, they did make significant gains on all of the DIBELS measures. Nonetheless, challenges remain. Key among them is finding ways to implement multi-tier or RTI models more successfully with those students who continue to struggle. We know that more instructional time is needed, and that scientifically based reading practices need to be implemented with greater fidelity. The improved delivery of multi-tiered instruction will take enlightened and courageous leadership on the part of principals, more effective professional development for teachers, and a can-do attitude in the face of chronic shortages of resources.

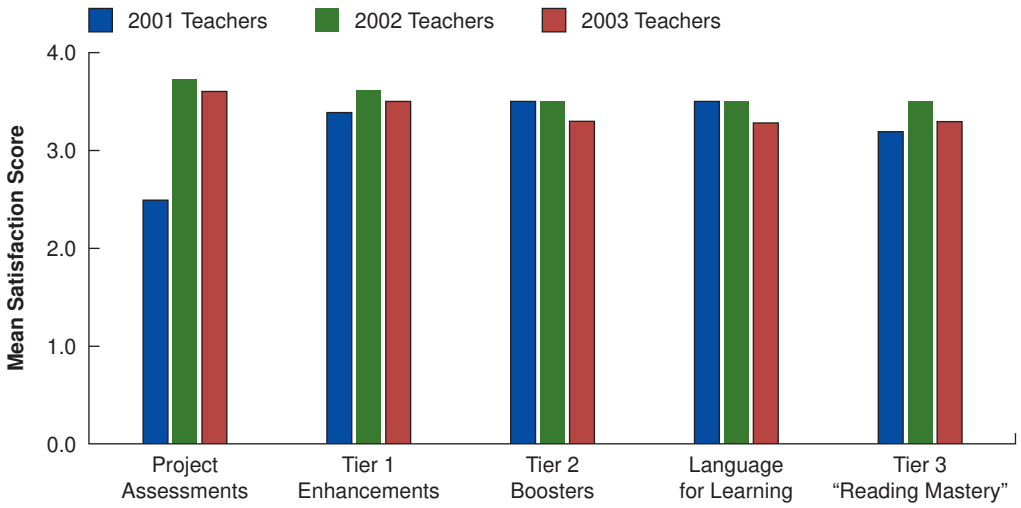
A common drawback of having different instructional options for children is that racial minorities tend to be overrepresented in the groups of children who are not responding to instruction. In PRIDE, children were assessed five to six times per year using highly efficient assessments directly tied to curricular goals and objectives. These assessments allowed us to make decisions in the best interest of individual children without being influenced by potentially biasing factors such as race. Our results showed that the proportion of African American children served in Tier 2 and Tier 3 was no greater than could be expected given their proportion in our school population at large.

Whatever disagreements exist in the field about how to teach reading, few would argue with the overarching goal of a nation of lifelong learners who enjoy reading for information as well as for pleasure. We are troubled when educational strategies such as skill-based grouping, pull-out, and drill-practice-and-review are viewed as antithetical to the enjoyment of reading. Our results showed that child success is what truly matters when it comes to students' attitudes toward reading. Clearly, drill is one ingredient of an effective reading program for students who are at risk and, if done effectively, can *thrill*—not *kill.*

We know that however positive the results, it is often teacher acceptance of an instructional approach that determines the likelihood that it will continue to be used over time. At the end of each year of the project, we surveyed our teachers to find out their feedback on all aspects of the PRIDE model. Satisfaction was of particular interest to us because of our emphasis on teacher accountability for the reading achievement of each and every student. Our teacher satisfaction results, shown in Figure 1, were very encouraging, with acceptance ratings after the first year for all parts of the model being consistently rated over 3 on a 4-point scale, with 4 representing the highest satisfaction. In the words of one of our principals, "It is interesting to watch the teachers' perceptions of Project PRIDE transition from fear and distrust to such high levels of satisfaction now that they are held directly accountable for student growth. I've watched them quickly develop their capacities to serve all of the learning needs within their classrooms after systematic professional development."

At the conclusion of the project, we asked teachers whether they thought their school should continue to implement Project PRIDE the following year. Twenty-nine, or 85%, of

FIGURE 1 Teacher Satisfaction



our project teachers responded to the question. Of the 29 teachers who responded, 28 (97%) wanted the project to continue.

Project PRIDE, with its emphasis on regular progress monitoring of all students and the provision of a range of instructional supports based on need, is consistent with recent trends in teacher accountability and implementation of RTI models as a way of identifying students with learning disabilities. The results for children in all three of our tiers showed that 95% of the children made reading progress, and that their attitudes toward reading were positive. Our Tier I, general education, and special education teachers found the model acceptable. Several years ago, one of our schools invited us to come back to do what they referred to as a "refresher" session. Teachers were concerned about the quality of model implementation when they saw their test scores in reading begin to decrease and they wanted us to "put them back on the right track." All of these results have encouraged us to revise this text in hopes that it will empower even more teachers to teach children to read who have been chronically unsuccessful. Since the conclusion of Project PRIDE, other school districts around the country have developed and implemented a multi-tier RTI framework to guide reading instruction. Information and stories from these districts can be found at the RTI Action Network at www.rtinetwork.org/voices-from-the-field/blog.

Instructor Supplements

Available with the Third Edition is an Instructor's Resource Manual with Test Questions and a set of PowerPoint Slides. Both of these supplements are available online at the Pearson Instructor Resource Center. www.pearsonhighered.com/educators

Acknowledgments

Over the years we have had the good fortune of working with and learning from a talented group of educators firmly committed to the proposition that every child can learn to read. Without the contributions of these dedicated professionals, writing *Teaching Reading to Students Who Are At Risk or Have Disabilities: A Multi-Tier, RTI Approach* would have

been impossible. First, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to all of the people who have provided us as well as our field with a blueprint for success that will continue to have a positive impact on children for many generations to come. Particular thanks are offered here to Doug Carnine and Jerry Silbert for writing our "bible," and to Diane Kinder for inspiring us to prepare teachers with integrity and passion. We would also like to thank Louisa Moats for impressing on us the importance of foundational information in language and spelling to any teacher-change effort in reading. Her generosity in serving as a sounding board as we clarified distinctions between different phonics-based reading approaches enhanced the quality of our text. Our thanks also to Roland Good for developing a sound, practical set of measures and who, in an act of educational philanthropy of historic proportions, made them available free on the Internet so that the data-based decision making so essential to a multi-tier model could be accomplished. Many thanks to Sonia Martin for her invaluable assistance with the preparation of the manuscript.

Portraying the teaching formats discussed throughout the text would not have been possible without the skill of our master teacher Kelly Bolas, former students of Bluford Communications Magnet School in Greensboro, North Carolina (Brianna Lorrick, Christina Brown, Kamari Purvis, Jaquin Miller, and Paul Gaurdin), and their former principal, LaToy Kennedy. Tom Lipscomb and Associates grasped the goals of the video immediately and captured on video everything we wanted and more.

We also wish to thank the many colleagues who were instrumental in helping with the development and refinement of the many aspects of the multi-tier model, but especially Shirley Dickson, from whom we have learned so much. Thanks also to Val Bresnahan, Connie Steigerwald, Connie Clark Williams, and Sue Grisco for their help with the Tier 3 tables and to Simone Kern whose experience teaching comprehension to middle school students led to further development of that section in this edition.

We are indebted to the federal government for funding Project PRIDE through a Model-Demonstration grant (CFDA 84.324.T; H324T990024). We also owe a great debt of gratitude to Kishwaukee School, whose conscientious effort to implement multi-tier instruction long past the funding period showed that we could have a positive impact on children who had previously fallen through the cracks. A particular note of thanks goes to Paula Larson and Nancy Dornbush, whose belief in the model and commitment to children sustained us.

Special thanks go to the reviewers of the book whose careful, constructive attention to the manuscript gave us the confidence to proceed while at the same time improving the final product: Emily Binks-Cantrell, Texas A&M University; Allison Kretlow, James Madison University; and Mei Shen, Michigan State University.

A final thanks to teachers everywhere who are willing to do whatever it takes to deliver effective, evidence-based reading instruction to their students. Your efforts will always teach and inspire us as we continue to pursue the vision of helping every child learn to read.

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List of Teaching Formats

CHAPTER

1 An Introduction to Systematic, Explicit Reading Instruction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. State the prevalence and characteristics of students who struggle while learning to read.
2. Identify ways that Response to Intervention (RTI) guides reading instruction.
3. Identify and describe five key skill areas that should comprise a reading curriculum for students who are at risk.
4. Describe the key features of a prevention-based multi-tier or RTI model of reading.
5. Describe the role of assessments in a multi-tier or RTI model of reading.
6. Identify and describe ways to enhance reading instruction for students who are at risk by making it more explicit and systematic.

Before a research-based multi-tier reading program started at Southwest, the discouraged, pessimistic staff working in this high-poverty school tagged by the state as "failing," complained in the lunch room about the new kindergartener, Bryan: "Why didn't they just start him out in the special education program." "I can't imagine Bryan ever reading." Over the years, the teachers had implemented the latest fads in reading with no results and believed that many of the students in their school were incapable of working at grade level. The teachers already weren't meeting the reading needs of 50% of their students, so they wondered aloud how they could work with a student who took medication for Attention Deficit Disorder resulting from Tourette Syndrome—a boy whose lead levels were extremely high when his parents adopted him as a baby and whose drug-addicted mother was so negligent that she lost custody.

In August, when Bryan's kindergarten teacher gave him the benchmark screening tests in reading, he was unable to say the sounds of any letters, blend spoken sounds into words, or name letters. These tests indicated that Bryan needed intensive support to read at grade level. By midyear kindergarten, he was already working with a small group of students in a Tier 3 alternative, research-based reading curriculum, taught by a Title 1 teacher. Out of all the kindergarten Tier 3 groups, Bryan's was the slowest paced. The weekly testing that his teacher did to monitor his progress showed only small gains. In response to this lack of progress, the staff decided to provide more support and increase the amount of time he received for reading instruction.

With this additional help, Bryan's end-of-the-year kindergarten benchmark testing showed that he had learned the sounds of eight letters and could now blend sounds into easy words. In contrast, most of the kindergartners knew all their letter sounds and could read words that contained them. The staff was concerned that Bryan had only minimally responded to the research-based reading curriculum.

At the start of his first-grade year, teachers still expressed skepticism that Bryan would ever read. During his first-grade year, a skilled paraprofessional supervised by the special education teacher taught the scripted Tier 3 curriculum used in Bryan's reading group. This paraprofessional was extremely motivating with her perky instruction providing extensive practice on any new skill learned in class. By midyear first grade, weekly progress monitoring showed that he was making more progress than the other students in his group, and so he was moved to a faster-paced Tier 3 group. By the end of first grade, Bryan's testing indicated that he still required Tier 3 instruction, but he now knew more sounds and could read short decodable stories.

During second grade, Bryan continued to respond well to instruction. To the staff's surprise, he tested near grade level by the middle of the year. The slower pace and extra practice in the intensive curriculum had finally made a significant difference. Following the multi-tier model guidelines, the staff moved Bryan up to Tier 2. Now the general education reading curriculum was no longer at a frustration level for Bryan. The teacher supported Bryan's learning by providing additional tutoring to him in a small group of three students every day, reviewing what he had learned in the larger second grade reading class.

At the end of second grade, when all of the students had been tested in reading, Bryan's end-of-the-year benchmark testing indicated that he had scored higher than any other second grader and no longer needed Tier 2 tutoring. Bryan would start third grade in Tier 1 with no extra support in reading. That day in the teachers' lounge, one of the staff said, "You know, I've learned that if Bryan could reach grade level, any student entering this school can." Another teacher said, "We have to stop making these assumptions about students and make sure that we teach reading to all of them as if they can come as far as Bryan." Teachers were empowered with the tools and structure needed to increase reading achievement. The staff now believed that Bryan's response to instruction was an example of why the number of students identified with learning disabilities was decreasing in their school.

Why do you think many of the teachers initially thought Bryan should be in special education? What factors do you think were responsible for his progress?

> *"Some people there are who, being grown, forget the horrible task of learning to read. It is perhaps the greatest single effort that the human undertakes, and he must do it as a child."*
>
> John Steinbeck (1962)

No other skill learned by children is more important than reading, described as the gateway to all other achievement by the American Federation of Teachers (2007). Yet, despite its critical importance for success in our society, millions of children in the United States are failing to learn to read; in fact, many of them attend schools like the one in the chapter-opening vignette. According to the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 33% of fourth graders and 24% of eighth graders could not read at the Basic level, and thus are unable to demonstrate even partial mastery of fundamental knowledge and skills. On the 2009 NAEP, 26% of twelfth graders could not read at the Basic level (NCES, 2012; http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard). Students reading below a Basic level cannot extract the general meaning or make obvious connections between the text and their own experiences or make simple inferences from the text. In other words, they cannot understand what they have read. Rates of failure in urban areas and among Black

and Hispanic children are even higher. An examination of 21 large urban districts was even more dismal, revealing that 45% of fourth graders and 35% of eighth graders were below Basic. Only 23% of students in both grades scored Proficient or Advanced (Buckley, 2011). Reading problems do not just reside among schoolchildren but pervade our entire society. Experts estimate that more than 90 million adults lack a foundation of basic literacy skills necessary to function in society, losing over 200 billion dollars a year in income as a result (Whitehurst, 2003). Given these statistics, it is not surprising to hear the current spate of literacy problems referred to as a national health problem. (Lyon, 1998b).

In response to public concerns about unacceptably high rates of illiteracy and demands for increased accountability, the U.S. Congress passed the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2002 (ESEA). One central provision of this act was the mandate that all of our nation's children be reading at grade level by the school year 2013–2014. Another provision was that data be disaggregated, so that the test scores of subgroups of students in school districts were reported separately, holding school districts responsible for increasing the scores of students in those subgroups. Included among the subgroups were data for students who were economically disadvantaged, had disabilities, or were English learners. A third provision required teachers in kindergarten through third grade to teach reading based on "scientifically based" research.

While the goals were laudable, this bold legislation continues to raise many questions among teachers trying to meet those goals. For example, which children have more trouble learning to read and why? How can we identify them? Are there effective methods available to teach these children to read? When is the most opportune time to teach children to read? Do all children learn to read the same way? Can we really teach all children to read? Teachers need practical research-based answers to these and other questions if they are to make a legitimate attempt to teach all children to read. Unfortunately, in far too many classrooms in the United States the teaching of reading has remained the same for the past 25 years with the most current high-quality research ignored (Moats, 2007). By September 2012, as the result of an outcry from districts claiming that having 100% of U.S. students proficient in reading was unrealistic, 44 states had received or requested waivers to opt out of the ESEA requirements (ED.gov, 2012).

Overlapping ESEA has been the development of the Common Core Standards (CCS), which started in 2009 when the National Governors Association (NGA) and Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) began to coordinate an effort to develop more rigorous standards in literacy and math instruction. Rather than a curriculum, the standards are a set of shared goals and expectations that were developed in anticipation of the minimum knowledge and skills that students will need to be successful and competitive in the 21st-century global economy (NGA & CCSSO, 2010). The CCS are expected to raise the level of rigor in U.S. schools, resulting in an emphasis on critical thinking skills and the ramping up of expectations for content knowledge. Although foundational skills in reading are stressed in the earliest grades, the application of grade-level reading skills is emphasized throughout the Common Core. For example, the first-grade English Language Arts-Literacy Reading Fluency standard is, "Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding" (RF.1.4a), reflecting the focus on grade-level reading from the earliest grade.

The complexity of text required by the Common Core Standards is also likely to increase as nonfiction informational text comprises an increasing percentage of what students read in school (Fiedler, 2012). This means text will increasingly include longer, more complex sentences, contain more difficult and technical vocabulary, and require an extensive knowledge base in order to be understood. This increase in text complexity is evident in the sixth grade standard: "By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range" (RI.6.10).

Explore the Common Core Standards under the "English Language Arts" category at **http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards**.

The widespread adoption of the Common Core Standards raises serious questions about whether students who are at risk or who have learning disabilities will receive needed instruction in lower-level foundational skills. Haager and Vaughn discuss this concern:

> Our greatest concern with regard to the Foundational Skills is that, in efforts to plan and implement instruction that covers other areas of the standards that are new to the early grades—such as close reading and deep analysis of text, increased use of informational text, and wide reading across genres—teachers may overlook the critical importance of providing high quality, explicit instruction in the foundational skills. (Haager & Vaughn, 2013; p. 8)

Why haven't major policy initiatives increased student achievement in reading? Explanations about why large percentages of students still do not attain minimum literacy levels echo the reasons that students are **at risk** in the first place:

- These students were raised in poverty.
- Their parents never read to them as children.
- These students have learning disabilities.
- English is not their first language.
- These students were premature babies.

Although educators agree that students who come to school with some or all of these factors present greater challenges, effective reading teachers believe that there are no excuses. These teachers can and will teach every student to read. Yes, John's mother took cocaine before he was born, but he will learn to read. Yes, Marissa has an exceptionally difficult time hearing the individual sounds in words, but she will learn to read. Yes, Shyron's mother has been married three times and amid a blended family of eight kids, he's lost in the shuffle. But he will learn to read. This tenacious attitude is necessary for teachers who get all or most of their students who are at risk to read at grade level.

A tenacious attitude alone isn't sufficient for success. Because of the greater challenges in teaching students who are at risk to read, teachers need effective teaching techniques and curriculum that have a proven track record of success with these students. Students who are at risk for reading failure require more carefully coordinated curriculum and skill instruction than do other students. Fortunately for today's teachers, the reports of the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) and the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP, 2008) help translate research into practice. Both panels included leading reading researchers, college professors, teachers, administrators, and parents. The panels spent considerable time identifying those studies that met the highest empirical standards of scientific investigation. Those high-quality studies were used to determine the most effective ways of teaching reading to the greatest number of students and included students who were at risk, had learning disabilities, or were underachieving. The work of the panels became a spring board for current research refining and expanding on their findings, research that is included is the third edition of this text (e.g., O'Connor & Vadasy, 2011; Rasinski, Blachowicz, & Lems, 2012; Samuels & Farstrup, 2011).

Between 2000 and 2004, we implemented Project PRIDE, a 4-year federal model demonstration project that employed evidence-based practices to prevent reading problems in children who are at risk in three diverse, high-poverty urban schools. Bryan, the subject of the vignette at the beginning of this chapter, was a student in one of our Project PRIDE schools. As the story of Bryan shows, given the right tools and a guiding and sustaining belief in evidence-based reading practices, all children can make progress toward learning to read. In the years following Project PRIDE, we have developed multi-tier programs in Georgia and Ohio. The assessment and teaching strategies that were successful in these three projects and/or found in the most current research are those that occupy the pages of this text.

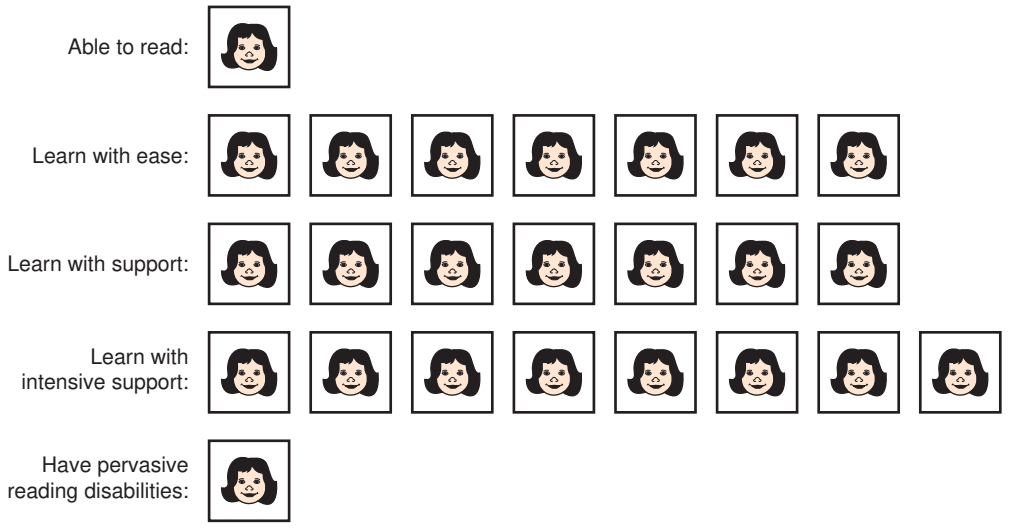
Who Are the Students at Risk for Reading Problems?

The strategies for teaching early literacy described in this text are based on the idea that when it comes to reading instruction, "one size does not fit all." Figure 1.1 shows how many children in a typical kindergarten classroom are likely to struggle while learning to read. These figures are based on research sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD; Lyon, 1998a). Looking at the chart, you can see the following trends:

- About 5% of students come to school already able to read. These children learn to read naturally without any formal instruction.
- Another 20% to 30% of students learn to read with ease, regardless of the approach to reading instruction used.
- For 20% to 30% of students, learning to read will take hard work, with some extra support needed. A research-based core reading program started in preschool or kindergarten and taught well will provide enough support for many of these students. If parents work with these students every night, reviewing books read in class and serving as tutors, the students may learn to break the code. Extra practice with a volunteer tutor may be enough to help them break the code.
- An additional 30% of students will learn to read only if they are given intensive support. These students require explicit systematic phonics instruction and extensive practice reading the new words they are learning until they are at least able to read second-grade text accurately and fluently. They may also need intensive language remediation. If they do not receive appropriate support before second grade, many of these students will have a reading level significantly behind that of their peers and never catch up. Some may be incorrectly diagnosed as having learning disabilities.
- The remaining 5% of students have serious, pervasive reading disabilities and are served in special education. These students make very slow progress even in the presence of otherwise effective instruction (Torgesen, 2000).

In high-poverty schools, the number of children who need extra or intensive support may be even higher due to language problems and deficits in background knowledge (Bursuck &

FIGURE 1.1 Typical First-Grade Classroom



Damer, 2005). This text refers to any students who require extra support to learn as *at risk*. Regardless of the cause, these students will learn to read if a systematic, supportive approach is in place.

Marilyn Adams (1990) explained reading difficulties in terms of the various interconnected systems that help the reader decode and comprehend. The processing model that she developed originated from a comprehensive review of the reading research literature in education, cognitive science, and psychology. Her model describes the process that occurs as fluent readers simultaneously and successfully engage the following four processors as they read text: orthographic processor, phonological processor, meaning processor, and context processor. The more fluent the reader, the more unaware he is of how his brain is coordinating information on the sounds, letter shapes, meaning of words, and context as his eyes rapidly move across the text from left to right (Adams, 1990). The work of each processor and its connections with the others was described by Adams: "As the parts of the system are refined and developed in proper relation to one another, each guides and reinforces the growth of the other" (p. 6).

When the reader sees text on a page, the **orthographic processor** recognizes the visual image of words as interconnected sets of letters. For example, when the reader sees the word *cat,* the orthographic processor sees the letters clustered into a spelling pattern *cat.* The **phonological processor** is the system that processes the speech sounds of language. When the reader sees the word *cat*, the "inner voice," or phonological processor, identifies and orders the sounds of the word /c/ /a/ /t/ rather than the letters *c-a-t.* In order to develop automatic word reading, the phonological and orthographic processors must work together efficiently and fluently to make the connections that activate associations of past experiences with "cats." The **meaning processor** focuses on definitions rather than the letters or sounds and the reader thinks "furry four-legged pet that meows" when reading *cat.* This meaning processor works quickly for words the reader knows, but slower for unknown words as it connects parts of the word to meaning. Coordinating with the meaning processor, the **context processor** brings prior knowledge to bear on understanding the meaning of the word. When the reader sees *cat*, the context processor might think about his friend's cat.

Struggling readers have problems in one or more of these four processing domains, and effective interventions need to address their specific area of difficulty. Students with deficits primarily in phonological and orthographic processing have the vocabulary and conceptual knowledge to bring meaning to text read to them but cannot decode printed words accurately and fluently enough to extract meaning on their own (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). These students require careful instruction in word reading and fluency. A second group of struggling readers includes children living in poverty who enter school with delayed development in all areas of language that prevent the efficient functioning of all four processors. These children require intensive instruction in vocabulary and language concepts as well as word reading and fluency. A third group of children have deficits in vocabulary and concept knowledge but adequate phonological and orthographic skills. This group of struggling readers, often referred to as *word callers*, comprises at most 10% of struggling readers (Meisinger, Bradley, Schwanenflugel, Kuhn, & Morris, 2009), and includes English Learners. Students in this group need carefully targeted comprehension instruction, including both vocabulary and language concepts. These three groups of struggling readers share two common characteristics: the inability to comprehend written text and the need for early identification and reading support.

Recent studies using computerized imaging show that serious reading problems may be brain-based, with the brain activity of the most deficit readers differing from that of students who are skilled readers (Hudson, High, & Otaiba, 2007). Many deficit readers show a pattern of underactivation in a region in the back of the brain that enables first accurate and then automatic reading. These brain scans, which differ from those of skilled readers, provide insight about why these students have problems learning to decode accurately and

fluently (Shaywitz, 2005). Fortunately, research also shows that effective language instruction, including systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics, generates repair in underactivated sections of the brain (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2007; Simos et al., 2007), reinforcing the importance of early identification and remediation.

APPLY YOUR UNDERSTANDING 1.1

How Does Response to Intervention (RTI) Guide Reading Instruction?

The aim of the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework is to ensure that all the students in kindergarten classes like the class just described are reading at grade level by third grade at the latest. The key elements at the heart of an RTI framework are introduced here and will be discussed more thoroughly throughout this chapter and the text. These include a multi-tier model of instruction and evidence-based reading instruction.

A **multi-tier model** enables schools to provide students with the support that the assessments indicate they need. Students vary in the amount of support they need for learning to read. Reflect back on the typical kindergarten class (Figure 1.1) with its wide range of learners. In a typical class, some students learn new material as fast as the teacher can teach it; other students need extra practice before they learn it; and a third group needs very deliberate teaching that slowly moves from easier skills to more difficult concepts. Because of these differences, schools need a range of instructional options to meet the diverse needs of their students. Teaching that provides this broader range of options is known as **differentiated instruction** (Friend & Bursuck, 2014). Each of the three or four tiers in a multi-tier model provides a different level of support, whether it be to "catch-up" students to grade level or to challenge students with advanced reading skills.

Data-based decision making based on information from research-based assessments and objective teacher observation provide the basis for making desicions about whether instruction is effective, and, if it is not, what changes are recommended. The school team routinely analyzes assessment data to determine whether students are responding to instruction. Grade level reading is dependent upon the student making continuous progress in acquiring reading skills and learning new vocabulary. Assessments that are sensitive to small gains in reading are used to help the team determine who is not making necessary progress with a "no excuses" approach. The guiding question is, "What additional support can we provide this student so that he reads at grade level?" Staff are gutsy enough to believe that when a student isn't making expected progress, providing additional support, making changes to the curriculum, or adopting a new curriculum will ensure students make the desired gains. Using data-based decision making is not as easy as it sounds. Sometimes a school is using a favorite curriculum or a teacher has his own distinctive teaching strategies, and if results do not show these are effective, changes are needed. When educators find out that something is not supported by gains in the data, they are tempted to dismiss the data instead of making changes (Damer, 2010). Obviously, this is a course of action to be avoided.

One of the authors spent an entire summer rewritng the spelling program of a basal curriculum that hadn't been effective. After all that work and the teachers' enthusiasm about the change, everyone went through the year convinced that students' spelling had improved. The end-of-the-year tests showed that students had improved their phonetic spelling; however, they were still misspelling the same percentage of words, causing your author to face the fact that all her work had not yielded positive results. These data led to an anlysis of why the program had failed and what spelling research indicated might be the reasons. Eventually this data-based decision process resulted in the adoption of a more comprehensive, intensive spelling curriculum for all students, and only then did spelling gains increase.

Evidence-based reading instruction includes instructional practices that have been shown by research to be most likely to improve student reading outcomes in a meaningful way (Cook, Tankersley, Cook, & Landrum, 2008). Evidence-based practices guide reading instruction in all tiers. In a typical kindergarten, some students who are at risk may not need intensive support if all general education instruction reflects scientific, research-based instructional strategies and curricula. If Leila needs more practice saying the sounds of letters, and she receives that practice by reading decodable books in a small group of other students who also need the extra practice, she may not need to receive instruction in a more intensive tier.

Do you have questions about whether a particular program or teaching strategy is evidence based? Visit the Center on Response to Intervention at **http://www.rti4success.org/instructionTools**.

These are exciting times in reading research. Recent studies in ophthalmology, neurology, cognitive psychology, and education help guide us to determine the most effective instruction for students who are at risk. Because decision making based on research rather than fads is still relatively new in education, educators have to approach claims that a method or curriculum is "scientific" or "evidence-based" with healthy skepticism.

Of course, effectiveness established by quality research isn't the only consideration. Implementation remains the critical link between research and practice (Cook & Odom, 2013). In considering whether to adopt a practice, it is important to consider these additional questions as well:

- With how many similar learners has the practice been used?
- What is the success rate of the practice when implemented appropriately?
- How many schools/teachers in similar settings have adopted the practice?
- How often has the practice been implemented with fidelity in real-world settings?
- How many schools and teachers have maintained implementation of the practice over time?

(Fixsen, Blasé, Metz, & Van Dyke, 2013)

Read and watch videotape excerpts of leading reading researchers and educators at **http://www.childrenofthecode.org**.

Years ago, educators believed that reading skills developed naturally and that as long as children were immersed in a literature-rich environment, they would eventually learn to read when they were "ready." In a system based on this belief, struggling readers often were not given extra support until second or even third grade. Since then, educators have been confronted by a large body of research that has emphasized the importance of early identification. Educators now recognize that many children who are at risk will never develop reading skills naturally. Even more disturbing is evidence that once they are behind in reading, most students do not catch up. For example, Juel (1988) found that only one in eight readers who were behind at the end of first grade would catch up by fourth grade. Francis and colleagues (1996) followed 407 children who were classified as poor readers in third grade and found that 74% of these students still remained poor readers when they reached ninth grade. Edward Kame'enui (2007) explained:

> There's a myth, and probably a popular myth, that if kids start off slow they'll eventually catch up, and what we know from the research is that that's simply not the case. Kids who start off slow, their trajectory of learning and reading continues to flatten out. In fact, their performance decreases over time. So, what we know is that we need to intervene early and we need to intervene because we don't have any time to waste. Time is precious. Kids face the tyranny of time. And in order to catch up, we have to be very strategic in what we do in the early years.

Why is later reading intervention so ineffective for students who are at risk? One key reason is that once students get behind, it takes a significant expenditure of time and resources

to catch them up, resources that budget-strapped schools may not have available. For example, getting older students who have not attained reading fluency by the end of third grade to grade level costs seven to eight times as much in time and money (Wendorf, 2003). Not only do older students have to relearn ineffective habits they have acquired, they also must overcome pervasive feelings of failure and stress related to reading. Clearly, the best method is to identify children as early as possible and provide them with the supports they need to prevent reading problems in the first place. Although the teaching strategies described in this text are effective for students of all ages, they are most effective when used early.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING 1.1

What Essential Skills Do Students Need to Become Mature Readers?

The NRP (2000) and NELP (2008) identified five key skill areas that should comprise the reading curriculum for students who are at risk. These areas include phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. The key skills comprising each of these areas are shown in Figure 1.2 and described in this section. The time frame information in Figure 1.2 is intended to represent when each skill area is emphasized as part of a core developmental reading program. These skills are also essential for remedial readers. The only difference is that remedial readers will learn them later than their peers. Chapters in this text will provide a clear description of what is and what is not systematic and explicit reading instruction in each of the five skill areas.

Increasingly, reading researchers are questioning why the National Reading Panel did not include spelling as the sixth key skill area to investigate. The old-fashioned notion of spelling as a visual task or task of memorization does not incorporate current research indicating that effective spelling instruction enhances word reading, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Because of the reciprocal relationship

Publications from the NRP and reports from NELP are free and available for downloading at **http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Publications/publications.htm** and **http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/NELP/NELP09.html**.

FIGURE 1.2 Scientifically Based Reading Curriculum

	Kinder Fall	Kinder Spring	First Fall	First Spring	Second All Year	Third All Year
Phonemic Awareness						
Segmenting	X	X	X			
Blending	X	X	X			
Alphabetic Principle						
LS Correspondence	X	X	X	X	X	X
Regular Word Reading		X	X	X	X	X
Irregular Words		X	X	X	X	X
Spelling	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reading Fluency				X	X	X
Vocabulary	*	X	X	X	X	X
Reading Comprehension	*	X	X	X	X	X

*Orally taught

between spelling and reading, each chapter will also include information on how effective spelling instruction can enhance instruction in the highlighted skill area.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate the smallest units of sound in spoken language (Ball & Blachman, 1991). Students who are at risk are less likely to develop this important foundational skill naturally. Word play activities and language games often do not provide enough support. A considerable body of research shows that teaching phonemic awareness skills to students who are at risk within a language-rich environment makes it easier for them to learn to read (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001). Although there are many different phonemic awareness skills, this text stresses the two that researchers have concluded have the most value in a beginning reading program: segmenting and blending (Ball & Blachman, 1991). Segmenting is the ability to break apart words into their individual phonemes or sounds. A student who can segment says /f/-/i/-/sh/ when asked to say the sounds in *fish.* The ability to segment helps students strategically attack words they will be reading in text and break words into phonemes when spelling. Blending, the opposite of segmenting, is the ability to say a spoken word when its individual phonemes are said slowly. A student who can blend can say the word *fish* after the teacher slowly says the individual sounds /f/-/i/-/sh/. Blending enables students to read unfamiliar text by combining single sounds into new words.

The Common Core includes phonemic awareness skills under CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.2 with *RF* standing for *R*eading *F*oundations: "Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes)" (NGA & CCSSO, 2012). You will learn more about phonemic awareness and how to teach it to students who are at risk in Chapter 2.

Phonics

Although a small percentage of students naturally become fluent readers, many will develop these skills only through activities stressing the connection between written letters and their most common sounds. **Phonics** is the teaching strategy described in this text to teach the relationships between written letters, or graphemes, and the speech sounds, or phonemes. Programs that emphasize phonics often will refer to teaching sound–spelling relationships or graphophonemic knowledge. Both terms refer to the connection between speech sounds (phonemes) and written letters of the alphabet (graphemes). Although some would argue otherwise, the English language has more than enough regularity to merit the teaching of phonics. The Research Note covers this issue in more depth.

The utility of teaching phonics has been clearly established, but not all phonics approaches are equally effective. After identifying thousands of research studies and submitting them to rigorous review, the NRP (2000) and NELP (2008) concluded that **systematic and explicit phonics** programs are most effective for teaching students to read, particularly students who are at risk. Armbruster, Lehr, and Osborn (2001) summarized the key differences between systematic and nonsystematic phonics programs. These differences are shown in Figure 1.3. The phonics strategies described in this text are designed to be both systematic and explicit to ensure the success of students who are at risk.

The Common Core includes beginning phonics skills under the Reading Foundations strand in kindergarten and first grade: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.1.3, "Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words." In second through fifth grade, students are expected to know and apply the phonics skills needed for increasingly more difficult advanced word reading (NGA & CCSSO, 2012). Phonics skills used in beginning reading as well as more advanced reading are covered in Chapters 3 and 4.

Research Note

Does Teaching Phonics Make Sense?

1. We must *polish* the *Polish* furniture.
2. "Tom, go around the corner and come to me now."

Judging from these examples, teaching students to read would be much easier if there were only one symbol for each phoneme or sound in our speech. In that case, the letter *o* would have the same sound regardless of context or what letter it happened to be positioned next to in a word. Unfortunately, as these examples show, that sound (as in *polish*), depends on the meaning of the words surrounding it. In the second sentence, seven of the words contain the letter *o,* and *o* makes a different sound in each word, depending in large part on the adjacent letters. The question is, given all of this irregularity, does teaching phonics still make sense? The truth is only about 13% of English words are exceptions with highly unpredictable letter–sound relations, whereas 87% of English language words are either very predictable or consist of more complex spelling patterns that can be explicitly taught (Venezky, 1970; Wijk, 1966). In addition, many of the exceptions, such as *said* and *where,* are easier to remember when some of their sounds are taken into account. Research also shows that context clues may be helpful only 10% to 20% of the time (Gough, 1983). Add to this over 40 years of research evidence in support of teaching phonics, and the inescapable conclusion is that the teaching of phonics is definitely justified.

FIGURE 1.3 Evaluating Programs of Phonics Instruction

Examples

Systematic programs that teach phonics effectively . . .

- help teachers explicitly and systematically instruct students in how to relate letters and sounds, how to break spoken words into sounds, and how to blend sounds to form words.
- help students understand why they are learning the relationships between letters and sounds.
- help students apply their knowledge of phonics as they read words, sentences, and text.
- can be adapted to the needs of individual students, based on assessment.
- include alphabetic knowledge, phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, and the reading of text, as well as systematic phonics instruction.

Nonexamples

Nonsystematic programs that do not teach phonics effectively include . . .

- Literature-based programs that emphasize reading and writing activities. Phonics instruction is embedded in these activities, but letter–sound relationships are taught incidentally, usually based on key letters that appear in student reading materials.
- Basal reading programs that focus on whole-word or meaning-based activities. These programs pay only limited attention to letter–sound relationships and provide little or no instruction in how to blend letters to pronounce words.
- Sight-word programs that begin by teaching children a sight-word reading vocabulary of from 50 to 100 words. After children learn to read these words, they receive instruction in the alphabetic principle.

Source: Armbruster, B., Lehr, F., & Osborn, J. (2001). Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read (pp. 16–17). Washington, DC: Partnership for Reading.

Phonics instruction helps students acquire skills in the following areas: identifying letter–sound correspondences, sounding out words containing letter sounds previously taught, reading text containing those words and new words with letter–sound correspondences that have previously been taught, and identifying words by sight. As noted earlier, spelling instruction should be integrated into all aspects of phonics instruction because of the benefits of having students spell words they are also learning to read. Chapters 3 through 5 will explain how learning these skills will help your students become fluent readers. Teaching students decoding skills involves some of the most difficult and precise teaching you will do. The aim of Chapter 3 is to provide information and guides for teachers to provide all students with the foundational decoding skills necessary to become fluent readers so that their attention and memory resources are available to focus on comprehending the meaning of the text they are reading.

Reading Fluency

Reading fluency is the ability to read text accurately, quickly, and with expression. All three of these elements—accuracy, speed, and expression—are essential so that students can apply their fluency skills during silent reading and comprehend the text (Chard, Pikulski, & McDonough, 2006). That is because students who are able to read fluently can focus their energy on finding out what the text means. Conversely, students who read in a choppy, word-by-word fashion are so focused on getting the words right that they have little energy left for deciphering their meaning. Reading fluency is an important part of the reading curriculum for students who are at risk because they may not develop it naturally, even if they have attained the alphabetic principle (Speece & Ritchey, 2005). Unfortunately, teachers often omit teaching fluency, which prevents many students who are at risk from transitioning into fluid, expressive readers. Fortunately, there is a large body of research showing that fluency can be assessed and effectively taught (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins, 2001; Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001), particularly for students reading at grade levels 1 to 6 (Edmonds et al., 2009).

The Common Core Standards include reading fluency as a separate strand under foundational skills between first and fifth grades. A typical standard in fluency indicates: "Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension." (NGA & CCSSO, 2012). In Chapter 5, you will learn to teach students to do both.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the fourth key component of effective early literacy programs for students who are at risk. As shown in Table 1.1, vocabulary can be either receptive or expressive and oral or written. Oral **receptive vocabulary** involves understanding the meaning of words when people speak; written receptive vocabulary concerns understanding the meaning of words that are read. Oral **expressive vocabulary** means using words in speaking so that other people understand you; written expressive vocabulary is communicating meaningfully through writing.

Knowledge of the meaning of a wide variety of words enables students to identify words more easily. A student who knows the meaning of the word *skeptic* from hearing it in conversations, but who has never read the word before, will more fluently apply his decoding knowledge when reading a sentence containing that word. He will also be more apt to understand the meaning of the sentence. In turn, knowledge of letter–sound associations provides a valuable memory cue and helps students remember vocabulary words more easily (Ehri, 2005). Students who are at risk, including those in poverty, those having disabilities, or those who speak a second language, are likely to lag behind their peers in vocabulary development (Hart & Risley, 1995). Equally disturbing is that vocabulary differences grow

TABLE 1.1 Vocabulary in Oral and Written Communication

	Oral Communication	Written Communication
Receptive Vocabulary	*listening comprehension* Example: The student knows the meaning of a vocabulary word in a story that the teacher reads aloud.	*reading comprehension* Example: The student knows the meaning of a vocabulary word in a story that she reads.
Expressive Vocabulary	*meaningful speech* Example: Correctly using the vocabulary from a story, the student describes the sequence of events in the story that he read or that was read aloud.	*meaningful writing* Example: Correctly using the vocabulary from a story, the student writes a description of the events that took place in a story that she read or that was read aloud.

larger over time, due to a lack of exposure at home and failure to teach vocabulary extensively at school (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Biemiller, 2001). Hart and Risley (1995) estimate the gap in words learned per year between students who are at risk and their peers who are not at risk amounts to more than 2,000 words per year.

The extent of students' vocabulary knowledge can have a significant impact on their early reading achievement. For one thing, reading is infinitely more meaningful and rewarding when students understand the meaning of the words they are decoding. Imagine what reading would be like if you were reading only nonsense words! A knowledge of vocabulary is also essential for reading connected text for meaning, the ultimate goal of reading instruction.

It is widely believed that most vocabulary is learned indirectly—either through speaking with others, being read to, or reading independently. However, many students who are at risk come to school with significantly less exposure to these naturalistic experiences. Clearly, for students who are at risk, vocabulary instruction is an essential part of teaching them to speak, read, and write adequately. Vocabulary instruction should have two key emphases: direct teaching of the meanings of important, useful, and difficult words; and strategies for figuring out the meaning of words independently using context, meanings of word parts, and the dictionary (Stahl & Nagy, 2006).

Vocabulary is a separate strand under "Language" in the Common Core Standards from kindergarten through twelfth grade. For example, the fifth-grade Common Core Standard (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.4) is as follows: "Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 5 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies." Three specific strategies for accomplishing this are then listed (NGA & CCSSO, 2012). In Chapter 6, you will learn how to teach vocabulary so that students have the opportunity to extensively use new words in their oral language, reading, and writing.

Reading Comprehension

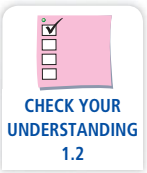
One area on which reading experts agree is that reading **comprehension** is the ultimate goal of reading instruction. Students who understand what they read are able to decode connected text accurately and fluently and know the meanings of a variety of vocabulary words. Good comprehenders also read purposefully and actively engage with and think about what they are reading (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002). Reading comprehension is a complex process because it is influenced by factors such as the person who is reading, the text being read, the task the reader is trying to accomplish, and the context in which the reading is being done (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002). Despite its complexity, the NRP (2000)

and NELP (2008) identified a number of **comprehension strategies** often used in tandem that help students derive meaning from text. These strategies are as follows:

- Activate background knowledge and use it to make meaning out of text.
- Generate and ask questions while reading.
- Evaluate or draw conclusions from information in a text.
- Get meaning by making informed predictions.
- Summarize information by explaining in their own words what the text is about.
- Monitor comprehension, including knowing when they understand and do not understand, and using additional strategies to improve when understanding is blocked.
- Derive meaning of narrative and expository text by being able to identify relevant text structures.

Reading comprehension is a part of the English Language Arts Common Core Standards and includes reading and understanding literature and informational texts of ever-increasing difficulty. An example of a third-grade standard for informational text is as follows: "Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea" (CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI.3.2). A third-grade standard for comprehending literature is "Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text" (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.2).

Chapter 7 explains teaching techniques that help students who are at risk to consistently use these strategies while engaged with the content of the text.



How Is Systematic and Explicit Instruction Used to Teach Essential Reading Skills to Children Who Are at Risk Using a Multi-Tier, RTI Model?

The evidence is clear that students who are at risk benefit from reading instruction that is explicit and systematic. **Explicit instruction** is the clear, direct teaching of reading skills and strategies and includes the following:

- Clear instructional outcomes (what you want the student to do with the information you've taught)
- Clear purpose for learning
- Clear and understandable directions and explanations
- Adequate modeling/demonstration, guided practice, and independent practice as part of the teaching process
- Clear, consistent corrective feedback on student success and student errors

The second-grade teachers at Fourth Avenue School use an explicit reading curriculum to teach reading. They expect their students to read at least 90 words per minute by the end of the year and to apply that skill when reading books of different genres for school assignments and for enjoyment. If the students are taking turns reading a play, the teachers explain the directions beforehand and tell students the procedure for rotating turns and for correcting errors. Because the teachers are so clear, the students, after misreading a word, have formed the habit of immediately starting again at the beginning of the sentence and rereading. The teachers always introduce new concepts by first showing the students how

to do them and then supporting their learning until independence. Because the two- and three-syllable words introduced last week were difficult for many of the students, the teachers spent an extra day reviewing them so students had more practice. Whenever students make mistakes, the teachers follow the systematic error correction procedures that you will read about later in this chapter. By correcting errors using these procedures, teachers make sure that students know how to perform the skill correctly the next time they are called on.

Systematic instruction is teaching that clearly identifies a carefully selected and useful set of skills and then organizes those skills into a logical sequence of instruction. For example, Mr. Prince decides to teach his students to sound out regular words because there is not enough time for them to memorize all the words with which they come in contact. Before he works on sounding out words, Mr. Prince teaches his students to say the sounds in words they hear and to blend sounds into whole words. Gradually, he begins teaching his students letter sounds. By the time his students begin sounding out words, they will have all the skills they need to be successful.

Mrs. Wheeler wanted her students to identify the main idea in a paragraph but knew she first had to teach her students to identify who or what is being talked about most in a paragraph. For example, in a paragraph that provided information on clouds, her students didn't understand that the pronoun "their" referred to the clouds, as did the phrase "fluffy balls of cotton." After several weeks of instruction, her students had learned to identify what nouns were described by pronouns in a paragraph and to recognize different ways to name one thing. Now the students could determine who or what was talked about most often. But in order to identify the main idea, she still needed to teach them to classify what was being said about the person or thing talked about most often. Once they learned that skill, they had the subskills to identify the main idea.

Students vary in the amount of explicit, systematic instruction they need for learning to read. Reflect back on the typical kindergarten class (Figure 1.1) with its wide range of learners. Meeting all these students' needs requires differentiated instruction at the classroom as well as the schoolwide level. How is the teacher in this **video** using explicit instruction to teach a reading comprehension skill to her students? Why do you think explicit teaching is effective for students who are at-risk or have disabilities?

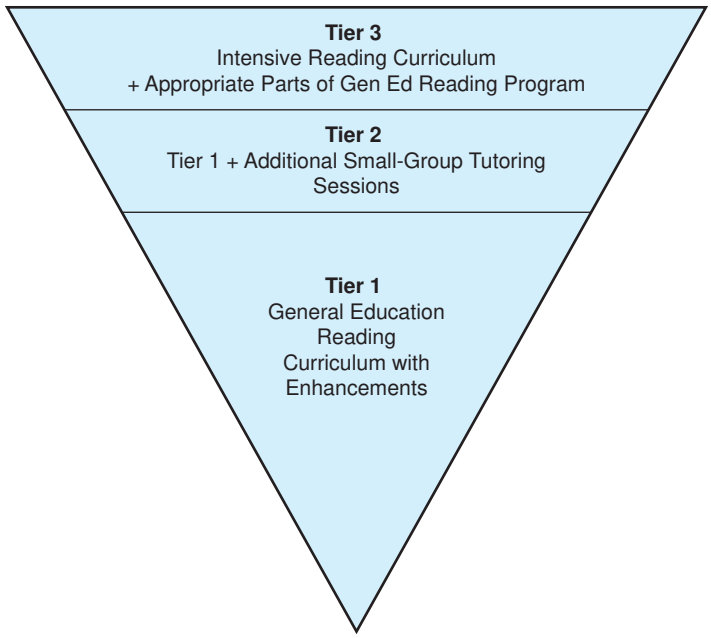
Learn more about the brain's challenge reading text at **http://www.childrenofthecode.org/Tour/c6/index.htm**.

Throughout this text, we will show you how to provide differentiated instruction through the RTI framework, designed to provide support for struggling readers at the first sign of difficulty through a multi-tier model (Gersten et al., 2009). In a multi-tier model, which was the prevention-based system of delivering reading instruction in Project PRIDE, students who needed additional support in reading were identified through regularly scheduled research-based assessments of essential reading skills. Students who needed more support received additional research-based interventions of varying intensity. Varying levels of intensities are called *tiers*, and in a typical multi-tier model, Tier 1 is the general classroom curriculum, Tier 2 provides additional small-group tutoring support, and Tier 3 is a more intensive alternative reading program (Hoover & Patton, 2008). The tiers depicted in Figure 1.4 are described in more detail later in this chapter. Assessments given on a weekly or monthly basis provide information about whether students are responding to the amount of support they receive, and adjustments are made as needed.

In RTI, a multi-tier system of instruction provides the foundation, but in addition, a process is included to determine whether a student is eligible for learning disability services. A student's lack of response (i.e., lack of improvement) to several high-quality research-based Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions can be viewed as evidence of an underlying learning disability if other testing or data support that diagnosis (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005).

Learn more about RTI at the National Center on Response to Intervention at **http://www.rti4success.org**.

FIGURE 1.4 Multi-Tiered Model of Differentiated Instruction



Tier 1 Instruction

Tier 1 in a multi-tier or RTI model is the least intensive, first level of instruction and consists of the core reading program used in the classroom, whether it is a basal, strictly literature-based, or a combination of the two. Students who receive all of their reading instruction in Tier 1 test at grade level or above on universal screening assessments. The fact that Tier 1 instruction is evidence-based is critical for students who are at risk. If at-risk students do not receive effective reading instruction from the very beginning of their schooling, they are likely to fall behind their peers. Worse yet, their achievement gap continues to widen as they advance through the grades and reading demands increase in complexity. Whether or not students who are at risk stay at grade level or in Tier 1 is dependent upon continuous growth in all aspects of reading.

In Project PRIDE we added a number of research-based teaching enhancements to the core reading program that helped our students who were at risk learn more efficiently and effectively (Bursuck & Blanks, 2010; Kame'enui, Good, Simmons, & Chard, 2002). Throughout the text we will teach you ways to use these same enhancements to maximize the effectiveness of your Tier 1 core reading program so that you can meet the needs of as many of your students as possible. Of course, more students who are at risk will learn to read successfully with the additional Tier 1 enhancements if the core reading program already reflects effective reading practices described in the NRP (2000) and NELP (2008) reports and is implemented as designed for at least 90 minutes per day (Arndt & Crawford, 2006). An effective Tier 1 program should be able to serve 80% of the students, though in schools with large numbers of students who are at risk, that number may be smaller, even with the use of enhancements (Bursuck & Damer, 2005).

Frequently, the RTI literature recommends that all students spend a period of time in Tier 1 before receiving the additional support of Tier 2 or 3. That approach makes sense for students who enter school at the beginning of kindergarten without exposure to beginning reading skills. Many of these students will quickly acquire the required skills by midyear. However, employing this "wait to fail" approach in first and second grade makes less sense. If Tomas enters second grade reading at a kindergarten level, the second-grade reading

material will create excessive frustration for him. Providing all his reading instruction in Tier 1 will waste precious time, when instead he could begin the intensive reading instruction support he needs months earlier.

While instruction using small homogeneous groups of three to four students has been shown to be the most effective grouping procedure in general (Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, & Moody, 2000), extensive use of small groups in Tier 1 can reduce instructional time with the teacher, a key predictor of student success (Rosenshine, 1986). Also, behavior problems proliferate in classes where students work independently for more than 15 or 20 minutes, waiting for the teacher to work with their small group. In Project PRIDE, the instructional enhancements were designed to make large-group instruction more effective. Small-group instruction was then provided for those students needing additional support in Tier 2 and Tier 3, a practice recommended by Gersten and colleagues (2009). Regardless of the approach, the quality of the core reading program and the amount of time students receive systematic, explicit instruction with feedback from the teacher are critical features of effective Tier 1 instruction.

Tier 2 Instruction

Students in Tier 2 receive their reading instruction in the general education curriculum along with the students in Tier 1. But in addition to the regular grade level instruction, they receive additional small-group tutoring sessions in skill-based groups that provide extra practice on targeted key skills covered in Tier 1. Tier 2 skill groups are carried out by a variety of staff, including general education teachers, Title 1 teachers, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals

Students enter Tier 2 when their scores on universal screening or progress monitoring assessments dip below a set cut-off point or rate of progress on universal screening or progress-monitoring measures described later in this chapter and throughout the text. Tier 2 skill groups should be coordinated with the classroom curriculum and focus on the skills students need to acquire. For example, if Kaylie struggles to blend sounds into words when she is reading words in Tier 1 without sounding them out, then she will receive more practice sounding out those same or similar words in Tier 2 until her blending becomes automatic. She will also receive more practice reading stories containing those same words. In this way, she is practicing the same skill with the same or similar words. On the other hand, if her Tier 2 group worked on reading stories containing many unknown words or words that could not be sounded out, she would likely begin guessing at words rather than sounding them out. As you can see, when it comes to providing extra pracctice in Tier 2, more is not always better.

In Project PRIDE, Tier 2 sessions usually lasted 10 minutes in kindergarten and 30 to 40 minutes in the later grades—practices consistent with research-based guidelines recommended by the Institute for Education Sciences (Gersten et al., 2009). While the institute recommends group sizes of three to four, in Project PRIDE we were often able to accommodate slightly larger group sizes by using the same enhancements employed in Tier 1, such as unison responding. Tier 2 instruction ensures that students become fluent, accurate readers by providing extra practice on essential foundational word reading skills in the primary grades with more of an emphasis on vocabulary and comprehension skills after third grade. Word reading skills are emphasized in the primary grades because a high percentage of students who are at risk fail to comprehend what they are reading because they cannot read connected text accurately and fluently (Adams & Bruck, 1993). Their comprehension will not mature until their word reading improves, enabling them to focus more attention on the meaning of the text. Having effective Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs in place should enable you to meet the needs of all but 5% of your students, although high-poverty schools usually have more students who require Tier 3 support (Bursuck & Damer, 2005).

Tier 3 Instruction

Tier 3 in a multi-tier or RTI model includes all of the enhancements that are in Tiers 1 and 2 plus a more systematically designed and explicitly taught reading curriculum. Students placed in Tier 3 have failed to make substantial progress despite a Tier 1 enhanced general education reading program and highly coordinated extra help in Tier 2 intervention groups. Research indicates that Tier 3 interventions that focus on key foundational skills, are conducted in small groups of one to four students, are highly systematic and explicit, and are longer in duration result in increased reading achievement results (Gersten et al., 2009).

In Project PRIDE, Tier 3 sessions were conducted in small groups daily for 60 to 90 minutes. Students placed in Tier 3 tested below the cut-off on their benchmark tests. Some students enter school needing Tier 3 instruction; others fail to make substantial progress in Tier 1 or 2. Our experience shows that, depending on where you are teaching, at least a third of your children may need Tier 3 instruction (Damer, Bursuck, & Harris, 2008). The intensity of Tier 3 programs differs from district to district in terms of time, size of group, and curriculum. With effective instruction, most other students in Tier 3 should eventually move up into Tier 2 or Tier 1.

Students who do not respond to interventions in Tier 3 require special education. Students in this group are in the lowest 5% of students in the typical kindergarten and have serious, pervasive reading disabilities characterized by significant difficulties with vocabulary, visual memory, linguistic processing, and behavior (Al Otaiba & Fuchs, 2006). In an RTI model these students are more appropriately served in special education (Wanzek & Vaughn, 2008), which, depending on the specific multi-tier model, can be included as a part of Tier 3 or a separate Tier 4. They may benefit from doubling their reading time using a practice called "double dosing." However, double dosing works only when the intervention being doubled is well-designed, systematic, and explicit (Wanzek & Vaughn, 2008). Other increased supports for students who do not respond to Tier 3 instruction include the implementation of a formal motivational behavior program, reduced group size, or a change in curriculum. Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton (2012) recommend what they call "experimental teaching" for this group. Experimental teaching involves individualized goals, instructional material that matches students' needs, regardless of grade level, and continuous progress monitoring to evaluate progress and make changes as needed.

When districts in high-poverty areas first implement multi-tier or RTI models, they may identify up to 60% of second-grade or older students as being so far behind that only a Tier 3 intervention will provide "catch-up." These districts face an ethical dilemma when, because of cost, they can only provide those services to the lowest performing 10% of students. Meeting the needs of a large group of older students requiring Tier 3 instruction forces schools to be creative, using new strategies such as training general education teachers to teach Tier 3 groups or enlisting everyone in the building from the principal to the music teacher to teach reading to at least a small Tier 2 reading group. When enhanced Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction begins in preschool or kindergarten, the percentage of older students who need Tier 3 should decrease significantly.

The ultimate purpose of Tier 3 is to catch students up to their peers, which means that students need instruction that is well designed and efficiently and competently taught. Otherwise, Tier 3 groups can become a dumping ground with an irrelevant, watered-down curriculum in which students fall further behind and become at high risk for dropping out of school. Too often in the past, remedial programs have become such dead-end options. Because of potential risks associated with remedial pull-out programs, we suggest using a prepackaged, commercially produced reading program that is evidence based, has teacher-friendly formats that are relatively easy to implement, and provides scaffolding to teachers without a lot of prior experience teaching explicit reading. However, even when using an evidence-based commercial program, catching up students to grade level is difficult due to limits in district time and resources. The data we have collected show that for younger students, 90 minutes is most

effective for these intensive curricula (60 minutes in the morning and 30 in the afternoon). Older students reading below a fourth-grade reading level should be taught for at least two hours per day using a well-designed Tier 3 program (Archer, Gleason, & Vachon, 2003).

How can you determine which alternative reading program will have the most success with the largest number of your students? How do you know whether the alternative program has an adequate phonemic awareness emphasis? How can you tell if the alternative program is a systematic phonics program? These questions are confusing for many educators who are faced with testimonials defending reading curricula as having research support. To assist you or your school in toward the end of each chapter we have listed key characteristics to look for in alternative reading programs. These characteristics include the skill focus, design, and instructional approach as they relate to students who are at risk or who have disabilities. In addition, we have analyzed some commonly used alternative reading programs to determine which ones include these characteristics.

We suggest that whenever feasible, Tier 3 groups take place in the classroom. In-class groups are preferred because they provide a valuable instructional model for general education teachers and can lead to shared responsibility for the reading outcomes of all students (Friend & Cook, 2007). Because the intensive reading curricula that students in Tier 3 receive focus on the necessary foundational skills needed for fluent reading and comprehension, they often do not have the rigorous vocabulary and the text complexity students need to meet Common Core Standards once they are able to decode grade-level text.

We recommend that general education teachers include their Tier 3 students in the Tier 1 and 2 comprehension and vocabulary parts of their classroom instruction so the students can expand their vocabularies and learn to comprehend more complex text through listening and oral engagement. Caution is advised, however. Students in Tier 3 should not be required to read the text in the Tier 1 and 2 curriculum because it would be at their frustration level. The case of Janice is an example of how to involve Tier 3 students in Tier 1 and 2 activities, Janice is a student in the *Reading Mastery* program during her 90 minutes of Tier 3 instruction. She is also in her general education classroom when informational text is read out loud by the teacher or students who can fluently read. Janice participates in class by answering questions and completing related projects; by doing this, she is able to keep up with the class in grade-level general knowledge. A sample schedule for a classroom using a three-tier approach is shown in Figure 1.5.

Caution is also advised when a student in Tier 3 requires more intensive comprehension, vocabulary, writing, or spelling instruction than is provided by the general education core curriculum. For example, sometimes older students in Tier 3 receive the Direct Instruction *Corrective Reading* program, which teaches phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency, but if they also need and are not receiving the Direct Instruction comprehension, spelling, or writing programs, their progress monitoring scores may plateau. Scheduling to meet the needs of students who require more intensive intervention in four or five of the critical areas of reading is daunting but necessary when "catching up" students to grade level is the goal.

How Do I Identify Struggling Readers, Monitor Student Progress, and Diagnose Instructional Needs in a Multi-Tier or RTI Model?

Assessments in multi-tier or RTI models serve three purposes: universal screening, progress monitoring, and diagnosis. Regardless of the purpose, the assessments used must accurately measure essential early reading skills, be easy to give, take up little classroom time, predict later classroom problems, and enable teachers to readily monitor student progress (Jenkins, 2009). In multi-tier or RTI models, criterion-referenced tests are most

FIGURE 1.5 120-Minute Core Reading Block Conducted in Mrs. James's First-Grade Classroom

Large-Group Instruction: Tiers 1, 2, 3 students **(20 minutes)**

Who Teaches: Mrs. James
Prereading, vocabulary, carryover comprehension activities from last story/article.

Large-Group Instruction: (30 minutes)
Tier 1 and Tier 2 students work with Mrs. James on parts of core curriculum that would be at frustration level for students in Tier 3.

- Letter–sound identification
- Word reading, spelling, first read-through of the story/article in the core reading curriculum.

Small-Group Instruction: (60 minutes)
One or two small Tier 3* groups, conducted by Title 1 teacher, special education teacher, classroom aide trained to conduct scripted reading lessons, or another assigned general education teacher, work on intensive reading lessons at small tables in the room.

Small-Group Instruction and Centers: (30 minutes)

- Tier 2 support group meets to review new sounds and words taught in class and/or read decodable text. These students work with Mrs. James.
- Tier 1 students independently work on challenging center activities.

Large-Group Instruction: Tiers 1, 2, 3 students **(25 minutes)**

Who Teaches: Mrs. James
All students work on comprehension and vocabulary activities related to the story that students read earlier. Although students in Tier 3 do not orally read frustration-level text, they fully participate in all of the comprehension and vocabulary activities related to the story. Tier 1 and Tier 2 students have another opportunity to read the text with comprehension integrated at the sentence level.

Extra Small-Group Instruction: Tiers 1, 2, 3 students **(15 minutes)**

Who Teaches: Mrs. James
Other times during the day when reading instruction takes place:

- After lunch, Mrs. James reads to the students (50% of the time reads nonfiction) using graphic organizers and frequent questions to develop listening comprehension.
- During math, Mrs. James challenges advanced readers by teaching them to read the names of difficult shapes.
- During the social studies and science block, Mrs. James uses a combination of large group and centers, integrating vocabulary, reading, writing, and comprehension into her volcanoes activity.
- During "sponge times" (waiting outside the lunch room, lining up in the room), Mrs. James provides extra practice and asks students to segment words, spell words, identify vocabulary words on the word wall, etc.

* For these Tier 3 students to catch up to their peers, it is recommended that in the afternoon they have another 30 minutes of intensive instruction in the same curriculum, incorporating spelling instruction.

often used. Criterion-referenced tests compare student performance to a specific level of performance or benchmark. One particularly useful type of criterion-referenced assessment is **curriculum-based measurement** (**CBM**; Deno, 2003). CBM is an assessment method that directly measures basic academic skills. CBM is characterized by an extensive research base establishing its technical adequacy as well as tasks and scoring procedures that are brief, grounded in the classroom curriculum, standardized, and **fluency based**. Fluency, or how quickly a student can perform a skill or recall academic content, adds an important dimension to assessment that level of accuracy alone can't provide. Students

who are fluent in a skill are more likely to retain it and master more advanced skills based on its foundation (Logan, 1988).

Universal screening measures, sometimes called *benchmark assessments*, ensure that each student is placed in the Tier that provides the amount of support needed to acquire grade level reading skills. In an RTI model, CBM assessments are typically used for universal screening. These assessments are usually administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to ensure that students who require increased or decreased support get it. Quality universal screening measures accurately identify students who are at risk for future reading failure because they are efficient and result in students' reading needs being met (Jenkins & Johnson, 2007). This process involves identifying students who, despite a strong reading program in Tier 1, are not making adequate progress and require extra support in Tier 2 or Tier 3. The assessments should address skills related to both word reading and comprehension (Catts, Fey, Zhang, & Tomblin, 1999) and reflect grade-level differences. In the early grades, letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, and phonics should be stressed, while vocabulary and comprehension take on increased importance in the later grades (Jenkins & Johnson, 2007).

Some schools identify students who are at risk by defining deficit reading as a score corresponding to a percentile such as performing below the 50th percentile or in the bottom 10% of their school or district. Other **screening assessments** define deficit reading as falling below a predetermined standard, which is often a cutoff point either on a state high-stakes test or on a curriculum-based measure that is predictive of future reading problems. Those using a two-stage approach consider rates of progress towards meeting benchmark goals (Fuchs et al., 2012). Universal screening identifies accurately students who are truly in need and avoids either identifying children for extra tier help who don't need it (**false positives**) or not identifying children for extra tier help who need it (**false negatives**). While too many false positives can drain resources in times of reduced funding, having too many false negatives can have more dire consequences for students whose reading needs are neglected. That is why we recommend caution when using cutoffs such as identifying only the bottom 10% or 20% of a given school or district as being eligible to receive extra Tier 3 support, particularly when engaged in screening activities in urban districts where a much higher percentage of children are likely to be at risk when a multi-tier program is first implemented.

Throughout this text, **universal screening** subtests that assess the skills highlighted in each chapter will be discussed. These subtests have been selected from four larger assessment batteries because they are most frequently discussed in the RTI literature as being credible assessments, have established reliability and validity, and take a relatively short amount of time to administer. Appendix A shows how the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS Next), AIMSweb, Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), and Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) can be used as universal screeners within multi-tier or RTI models.

Progress-monitoring assessments enable teachers to make important decisions such as whether a student should remain in a tier, enter a more intensive tier, or exit into a less intensive tier. As much as we know about evidence-based practices in reading, we still cannot predict how each student will respond to a given instructional intervention. That is why measuring student growth throughout the year is such an important part of multi-tier and RTI models. Progress-monitoring assessments are given repeatedly over time and must be of approximately equal difficulty, a feature of CBM that makes them ideal for measuring student progress. Generally, students in Tier 1 are assessed at a minimum of three times per year, while Tier 2 and Tier 3 students can be assessed every three to four weeks (Jenkins, 2009), or more often if desired. Jenkins describes a four-step process of progress monitoring: setting growth goals, selecting progress monitoring assessments of approximately equal difficulty, measuring performance every three to four weeks to determine growth rates, and adjusting instruction when growth is inadequate. Jenkins

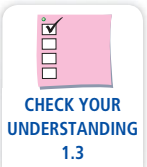
also recommends obtaining multiple measures (at least two, ideally three) of each skill on each progress monitoring occasion to ensure the accuracy of the growth rates.

Diagnostic assessments are used to determine some of these needs:

- The reading level at which a student should be instructed
- Which foundational reading skills, such as letter–sound correspondences or phonemic awareness, need instruction
- Whether there is a need for fluency building in passage reading or for modeling and guided practice when students are sounding out multisyllable words
- Which students can be grouped together to work on comprehension skills, such as finding the main idea
- What skills students need to practice in Tier 2

At the heart of the "one size doesn't fit all" reading model is the need to provide differentiated instruction, including materials and tasks at varied levels of difficulty and with varying levels of support through the use of multiple grouping arrangements. Differentiation is achieved by diagnosing the needs of students shown to be at risk on universal screening measures, and determining what additional instruction students who are not progressing in their tier need.

For Tier 1 and Tier 2 students, classroom teachers can give simple diagnostic tests and identify error patterns based on student performance on universal screeners and progress monitoring measures. Two of the larger assessment batteries described in Appendix A include diagnostic tests to help plan smaller instructional groups. In an RTI model, Tier 3 students who are not responding to interventions at an acceptable rate and whose eligibility for special education services is being considered receive further diagnostic assessment by a reading teacher, special education teacher, speech and language pathologist, or school psychologist. Information on how to use progress-monitoring measures to make decisions in an RTI model are described in each chapter.



What Are the Instructional Enhancements for Students Who Are at Risk?

The instructional enhancements for students who are at risk described in this section are evidence based and can provide the consistency, predictability, and structure students who are at risk need to be successful (Stichter, Stormont, & Lewis, 2009) because they are based on the principle of universal design of instruction (Pisha & Stahl, 2005). The idea behind **universal design** is that instructional materials and methods designed with built-in supports minimize the need for differentiated instruction later on (Friend & Bursuck, 2014; Pisha & Stahl, 2005). The enhancements include advance organizers, unison responses through the use of effective signals, perky pace, efficient use of teacher talk, increased practice, support for new learning using a My Turn–Together–Your Turn format, systematic error correction, cumulative review, teaching to success, and motivational strategies. Each of these enhancements is described in this section, and throughout this text, we provide ways for you to maximize the learning of all students by integrating them into your teaching.

Advance Organizers

When students are easily distracted or come from chaotic home environments, they want and need structure and predictability in their environment. Disorganized students often do not automatically draw connections from one part of a learning task to another. Unless the teacher has told students that the words they are reading on the board will be in that day's story, some of the students who are more disorganized will not make the connection to

those words when they open their books to the new story and begin to read. Teachers establish a comfortable level of predictability when they use advance organizers at the start of each lesson by telling students what they are learning, why they are learning it, and what the behavioral expectations are during the lesson (Marzano, 2003). When these advance organizers provide the beginning organization for each day's lesson, students learn to anticipate connections between what they are learning and how they will apply the new learning to other situations. By briefly describing the sequence of activities covered during the reading lesson and checking each one off after it is completed, teachers also motivate students who are likely to tune out or act out in a part of the lesson that they find difficult. For example, reading the new long-vowel words might be difficult for Debra, but if she knows that word practice is followed by an interesting story about a lizard that bakes cakes, she will pay closer attention and work harder. Advance organizers should include a graphic depiction along with a brief verbal description, especially for younger students. A sample visually presented advance organizer for a kindergarten lesson is shown in Figure 1.6. It includes the comments the teacher makes to prepare the students to learn.

Unison Responding

Students who are at risk need more practice in the key skills they are learning than their peers who are not at risk. They need to be actively engaged with many opportunities to orally practice the new sounds, read the new words, read the longer stories, and use new vocabulary words in increasingly longer sentences (Lemoine, Levy, & Hutchinson, 1993). For example, to learn to automatically recognize a written word as a sight word, the average student requires between 4 and 14 exposures, while struggling readers need 20 or more exposures (Lyon, 1998a). Students with disabilities may require 50 to 100 exposures to automatize the recognition of a new word in context (Honig, 2001). In a class of 20 or 30 students, teachers can provide that amount of practice only by having all of the students answer in unison. Rather than ask one student to say the sound of the new letter *l*, the teacher increases academic learning time for everyone by asking all of the students to answer at the same time.

As an added benefit, students who are actively participating are more likely to pay attention to instruction and follow classroom rules. Students who are constantly answering and reading have little time to be off task, stare out the window, or disrupt the class. Because students who are at risk also need to have their answers carefully monitored to make sure that they are acquiring the skills that are taught, teachers are more effective if they follow each section of the lesson with a few quick, individual questions. These quick checkouts enable the teacher to provide more practice if some students still are making errors.

Effective Signals

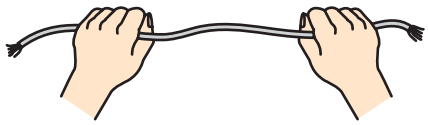
Effective signals help a teacher get all the students to answer together, speaking in one voice as if in a choir. If students answer too early or too late, reading instruction will not be as effective. One or two students who immediately grasp the concept may answer ahead of everyone else, creating the illusion that the class does not need any more practice. Students who are at risk may answer after everyone else, relying on other students' answers and not sounding out the words by themselves (Archer & Hughes, 2012). The parts of an effectively delivered signal that will get all students to answer together are described in Table 1.2.

Note that the teacher first focuses the students' attention on the question. Questions that teachers ask in beginning reading instruction include the following:

- Asking students to name letter sounds
- Asking students to sound out words
- Asking students to say all of the sounds in the words they hear
- Asking students to read simple sentences

FIGURE 1.6 Advance Organizer—Letter and Sounds Lesson

1. Segmenting Lesson—"Let's pull some words apart!"



2. Blending—"Next we'll put some sounds together to make words."

3. Letter Sounds—"Then we'll work with the letter **d** and its buddies."

Working with the letter. . . **d** and its buddies.

4. Reading Words—"Then we'll read some words."

5. Spelling—"Then we'll spell some words."

During the lesson today I would like you to. . .
- Sit up nice and tall in your seats.
- Listen very closely.
- And answer on my signal.

Source: Hicks, A. (2006). *Model advance organizer*. Unpublished manuscript, University of North Carolina at Greensboro reprinted by permission.

TABLE 1.2 Effective Signals

Component	Description
1. FOCUS students' attention, and then ask your question.	The teacher gains students' attention by having them focus on the word they will read or on an oral question. ■ When asking an oral question, hold up a hand to gain students' attention and tell students what they will do. Example: Hold up a hand and say, "You are going to take some words apart. First word is *mat.*" ■ If asking students to read, tell students what they will do and point a finger to the left of the first word. Example: Tell students, "Get ready to read the word when I touch it," and point to the left of the word.
2. THINK Time	A brief pause of no more than three seconds provides students with time to formulate an answer. If the questions are easy or review, the teacher gives a very short thinking pause. If the questions are difficult or new, the teacher gives a longer thinking pause.
3. SIGNAL	The teacher gives the signal that indicates everyone should answer at that very instant. The signal always comes after the directions, never at the same time. Thus a teacher never talks and signals at the same time. Chapters 2 and 3 describe specific signals including: ■ Hand drop ■ Hand clap ■ Finger raise ■ Loop signal

Next, the teacher provides think time, waiting for a few seconds after asking the question and calling on the students. The amount of think time will vary depending on the question. For new or more difficult questions, the think time is longer than for easier or review ones. Following the thinking pause, the teacher asks the question, pauses one second, and then gives the signal. The type of signal used depends on the nature of the question that students are asked. For example, when students are asked to sound out words listed on the board, the teacher points to the letters in the word, signaling for students to sound them out. When asking students to orally take apart words ("What are the sounds in *fish:* /f/ /i/ /s/ /h/?"), the teacher either snaps two fingers, claps hands together, or drops a hand as the signal. Specific strategies for using signals are covered in the chapters that follow. Some teachers develop their own signals, such as moving their arms as if directing an orchestra, using a clicker in the shape of a bug, moving fingers in the air, or tapping fingers on a surface.

Efficient Use of Teacher Talk

The clarity with which teachers present information to students at risk has a strong influence on their learning. Students in classrooms where teachers present material in concise statements, using language the students understand, are more likely to be on task than students whose teachers provide lengthy explanations and present information unrelated to the task at hand. Teaching in a clear and concise manner is easier said than done. We have included scripted teaching formats for all of the key skills covered in the text as a scaffold for teachers as they develop their abilities to teach more clearly.

Perky Pace

Teachers can also increase student attention and learning by employing a perky pace throughout every lesson (Englert, Tarrant, & Mariage, 1992). Teachers who use a perky pace start with a brief advance organizer and minimize the transition time between activities, as well as between each student answer and the teacher's next question. Students give more of their attention to a teacher who uses an animated teaching style, conveying her enthusiasm for what they are learning. They are less likely to waste time, be uncooperative, or tune out when a theatrical teacher uses exaggerated affect, enthusiastic voice tones, and dramatic gestures.

My Turn–Together–Your Turn Format

All students require support or scaffolding when they are learning new skills or content. Think about the frustration you felt when a math or physics teacher introduced a new concept and then, without adequately giving you practice using the new concept, expected you to apply it to that night's homework problems. As you tried to solve problems that depended on your knowledge of the new concept, your frustration and tension level increased as you stared at the work. Unless you could find a better teacher in the form of a friend, a tutor, or a detailed book, your learning was at a standstill. Students who are at risk require even more support when they are learning to read and write. An effective way to scaffold their new learning is to use the My Turn–Together–Your Turn strategy used in explicit instruction (Archer, 1995). The components of this approach are as follows:

- **My Turn:** The teacher first demonstrates how to do the new skill so that students have no difficulty understanding exactly what the new skill looks like.
- **Together:** The teacher practices the skill with his students until they are able to do it without him. Students experience a higher level of success and less frustration if they first have the opportunity to practice with the teacher. In this way, students are prevented from practicing the errors and acquiring habits that, once learned, are difficult to break.
- **Your Turn:** The teacher monitors students as they do the skill independently. By closely monitoring his students, the teacher can correct any errors and prevent students from acquiring habits that, once learned, are difficult to break.

Teachers who use a My Turn–Together–Your Turn format for teaching new critical skills are explicitly teaching so that students are successful from the start. These teachers know that when students inadvertently learn errors such as saying /sh/ for the /th/ sound, valuable time will be wasted reteaching. Jerry Ameis (2003) cautions, "Reteaching is a significant waste of time for students and teachers. It is far better to spend the needed time on trying *'to get it right'* the first time than to bore and/or frustrate students (and yourself) by reteaching and reteaching . . ." (Ameis, 2003). Eventually teachers move to using "Your Turns" as students' accuracy shows they have learned the new skill. Moving to "Your Turns" represents an important transition because providing more support than is needed can thwart student independence and prevent accurate progress monitoring. Indeed, when the building is complete, the scaffolds come down.

Cumulative Review

Teachers who work with students who are at risk often observe that these students have difficulty retaining new information or skills. Just when it seems that they have learned

something new, the very next day they have already forgotten it. In addition to problems with retention, students who are at risk also have trouble discriminating between new information and information previously learned. For example, Delarnes learned the sound /b/ several weeks ago, but since learning other sounds has practiced it only once or twice. This week, he learned the new /d/ sound on Thursday. On Friday, he read all of the *b* words in his decodable book as if they contained the letter *d.* If Delarnes's teacher had continued to practice the /b/ sound every day after he learned it, he would have been less likely to confuse it with /d/. **Cumulative review** is a method of selecting teaching examples where the teacher adds previously learned material to examples of newly learned material. Cumulative review increases student retention and helps students discriminate between new and old learning. To use cumulative review, simply add examples of previously learned material to examples of newly learned material.

Systematic Error Correction

No matter how systematic and explicit the reading instruction, students will always make some errors. Research shows that in an effective lesson, students answer at least eight out of every ten answers correctly (McEwan & Damer, 2000). This minimum level of success instills confidence and reduces frustration for at-risk students. The way that teachers correct student errors is critical. If errors are not corrected appropriately, students continue to make the same errors and develop habits that can seriously undermine the goal of fluent, accurate reading with comprehension.

In making a **systematic error correction**, the teacher corrects the students immediately after they make the error by modeling the correct answer/skill ("My Turn"), guiding the students to correct the error as needed ("Together"), and then re-asking the same question so students have the opportunity to independently answer the question correctly ("Your Turn"). Later in the lesson, the teacher provides even more practice by asking students to answer the same question again. If students answer correctly, the teacher knows that she can move ahead in the lesson.

Teachers who use systematic error corrections provide high levels of feedback to their students, an important component of explicit instruction. According to Fisher and colleagues (1980), academic feedback should be provided as often as possible to students. When more frequent feedback is given, students pay closer attention and learn more. In their research, academic feedback was more strongly and consistently related to learning than any of the other teaching behaviors.

Teaching to Success

Children who are at risk or have disabilities often require more time to learn to read. When teaching reading to students who are at risk, teachers often need to spend more time on a given skill, continuing instruction and not moving on to the next skill until students have clearly learned the one currently being taught. Research shows that if instruction is evidence based, most children can learn, given the right amount of time (Ornstein & Lasley, 2004). For example, Mr. Lazaro's class was struggling to correctly identify the short sound for the letter *a.* While he had originally planned to introduce the sound for the letter *p* on the following day, Mr. Lazaro decided he would continue working on the sound of *a*, not introducing a new sound until his students could correctly identify the first one. Mr. Lazaro knew that if his students could not automatically identify the sound for the letter *a,* they would struggle with the many words they would subsequently be reading that contained it. Another teacher using this strategy was Ms. Gentry. Her class was orally reading the latest story in their reader. Ms. Gentry, who was keeping track of the number of words

her students missed, found that they were missing more than two words per page and that their accuracy was below 90%. Before Ms. Gentry moved to the next story, she had her students practice reading the words they misread and had them reread the current story until they could read it with 97% accuracy. In the past, when Ms. Gentry had moved her students to the next story regardless of their accuracy, she found that they made more errors. Sometimes our Project PRIDE teachers repeated lessons for several extra days, even an entire week. For example, when students first learned blends such as *st, sk,* and *br*, their teacher spent an extra week having them read words with those sound patterns before moving on. During social studies, one of our teachers took two or three additional days teaching comprehension, moving through the text paragraph by paragraph using graphic organizers. Time is of the essence when students are behind in reading, and teachers cannot afford to spend the long hours that are needed to reteach a skill that a child has learned incorrectly. Zig Engelmann (2007) explains that if by fourth grade a child has learned to misread words, it will take about 400 teaching trials to reteach those words. The older the student becomes, the more difficult the task of reteaching errors, and by high school, reteaching those errors can take almost three times the effort, or more than 1,000 trials.

Student Motivational System

Students who are at risk often enter school with a more limited repertoire of appropriate social and academic behaviors. As a result, learning can initially be quite difficult for them, even when the instruction provided by the teacher is systematic and explicit. Once students experience the success that results from well-designed instruction, success alone may be enough to keep them motivated and working hard, as research indicates that "skill and will" go together (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). Until then, teachers often need to use a student motivational system to maintain a positive classroom atmosphere and to strengthen key academic and social behaviors that students who are at risk often lack. When Pressley and colleagues (2001) investigated what types of teachers were most effective in teaching primary-level literacy, they found that the most effective teachers had classrooms that were positive learning environments. The authors found that these teachers frequently praised students' work and their behavior, in contrast to criticizing them.

In classrooms that are positive learning environments, teachers make three or four positive comments about students' work or behavior to every one criticism or correction (McEwan & Damer, 2000). When this ratio is reversed, the teacher is caught in a criticism trap, and students learn less and actually increase their misbehavior. If students come to school uncooperative and without school readiness skills, a teacher needs to consistently praise social behaviors such as staying in a seat, answering on the teacher's signal, and keeping hands to oneself in addition to correct answers or effort put into schoolwork. If that praise alone is not enough to maintain the necessary 3:1 ratio of positive-to-negative teacher comments, the teacher needs to develop a student motivational system. If only one or two students need the additional motivation to be successful, the teacher can plan a motivational system just for them. Otherwise, the teacher can plan a class or group strategy for injecting positive motivation. Some teachers will find that extra motivation is necessary to diminish frustration only when students are first learning new skills or when they are practicing difficult ones. Strategies for motivating students who are at risk are described throughout this text. What strategy is the teacher in this **video** using to motivate her students? Why do you think it is effective?

Table 1.3 shows what to do and what not to do when using all of the teaching enhancements just described. The *In Your Classroom* feature tells how to motivate your students using the Teacher–Class Game.

TABLE 1.3 Instructional Enhancements—What to Do and Not Do

	Examples What to do	**Nonexamples** What not to do
Advance Organizers	The teacher starts the lesson by saying, "Today we are going to learn a new letter sound and read words the fast way. This will help you learn how to read so you can decide what kind of ice cream you want when you read the Dairy Queen menu." The teacher places symbols for activities on the board as she describes them. "First we will practice a new tiger-roaring letter sound; then you will read some words that will be in our story. Today's story is about a red rabbit that gets mixed up about everything! Remember to sit up tall, keep your hands and feet to yourself, and answer when I signal."	The teacher begins the lesson by saying, "I'll sound out a word very slowly; then you read the whole word fast, like we've done before." When the teacher says "/m/-/a/-/n/," one student shouts, "man." The teacher tells the students to start over and wait for her to clap her hands before they answer.
Unison Responding	The teacher asks all of the students in the group to sound out a word by saying the sound of each letter in the word when she touches under it.	Individual students take turns coming to the board to sound out regular words.
	The teacher asks all of the students in the group to say the first sound in the spelling word *ran* when she drops her hand.	The teacher doesn't use a visual signal when students in unison read words that are on the word wall. Some hesitant students in the group consistently answer late, reading the words a second after the more fluent readers.
Efficient Use of Teacher Talk	Wanting students to read a row of words written on the board, the teacher points to the first word and says, "Sound it out. Get ready." The teacher then signals by touching under each letter as students sound out the word.	Wanting students to read a row of words, the teacher points to the first word and says, "Let's sound out this word. It's one we've worked on before. See if you can remember it. Careful now. Don't forget. This word is a weird one."
	The teacher points to the letter combination *sh* and asks, "What sound?"	The teacher points to the letter combination *sh* and says, "Let's read the sound of these two letters. Remember the rhyme we always say every morning about them. Tanya, that is always your favorite rhyme! What is the sound these two letters make when they come together in a word?"
Perky Pace	The teacher points to the first exception word on the list and asks, "What word?" and then when students read it correctly moves immediately to the next word.	The teacher points to the first exception word on the list and asks, "What word?" The students answer correctly. The teacher pauses at least five seconds between the student answer and the next exception word. The delay could be due to the teacher's excessive talking, a slow reaction time, or the time required to put the next word on the board.
	The teacher writes the letters for the letter–sounds activity on the board before the daily reading lesson begins.	The teacher writes the *ch* combination on the board and asks students what sound it makes. The teacher then says, "Let's try another one," and writes the next letter–sound combination on the board. The teacher continues this pattern of asking a question and writing the next letter–sound combination for the rest of the lesson.

(*Continued*)

TABLE 1.3 (*Continued*)

	Examples What to do	**Nonexamples** What not to do
My Turn–Together–Your Turn Format	The teacher says, "Today we are going to sound out some words for the first time," and models sounding out /m/-/a/-/n/ = *man.* Then the teacher has students sound out the word twice with him before having them sound it out on their own. The teacher provides this support for the first four new words on the list and then asks students to read the rest of the new words on their own.	The teacher says, "Today we are going to sound out some words for the first time." Then the teacher asks students to sound out /m/-/a/-/n/ = *man* one time. About 60% of the students loudly answer, and the teacher moves on to the next word.
	Before students read a paragraph, the teacher explains that they will find the main idea, but first they need to pay attention and determine who or what is talked about the most. After students read the paragraph, the teacher uses a "think aloud" and tells them how she would find the answer. "As I read this paragraph, I notice that the capital city of the United States, Washington, D.C., is mentioned twice. Once it is called the 'capital city' and twice it is called 'Washington, D.C.' Look at the third paragraph that begins with 'it.' I can tell that 'it' refers to Washington, D.C., so now I know that city is talked about most often. Let's reread the paragraph to see what is being said about this city."	The teacher tells the students that they are going to find the main idea in several paragraphs. The teacher asks the students to read the first paragraph and circle the best main idea. The teacher encourages the students to read carefully and use the words in the paragraph to find the correct answer. At least 30% of the students circle incorrect answers.
Cumulative Review	The teacher introduces regular words that begin with *s* blends such as *stop* and *slow.* When the students are able to correctly read the *s* blend words, the teacher has the students read a list of words containing *s* blends plus other previously learned words beginning with *sh* and *th.*	The teacher introduces regular words that begin with *s* blends, such as *stop* and *slow.* When the students are able to read a list of words beginning with *s* blends, the teacher introduces words with *p* blends.
	The class is learning to decode and understand the meaning of common prefixes. On Monday, students learn the prefix *re* before reading and defining five words, all starting with *re*. Defining the words is difficult for the students, so on Tuesday the teacher presents five different words with the *re* prefix for practice. This second day, students are successful defining the words. She starts a word wall, which eventually will have all the prefixes students learn, so she can point to them and review during spare moments in the day. On Wednesday, students review the *re* prefix and define two words before learning the meaning of the new prefix *de.* After learning the meaning, students read and define five words, all containing the new *de* prefix.	The class is learning to decode and understand the meaning of common prefixes. On Monday, the students learn the prefix *re* and read and define five words, all containing the *re* prefix. On Tuesday, the class learns *de* and reads and defines five words containing the *de* prefix. The teacher continues like this all week, introducing a new prefix each day and having the students read and define five words containing the new prefix.

TABLE 1.3 (*Continued*)

	Examples What to do	**Nonexamples** What not to do
Systematic Error Correction	During a letter–sound teaching activity, the teacher touches the letter combination *ch* and asks, "What sound?" The student says /sh/. The teacher responds, "These letters say /ch/. What sound?" The teacher then provides extra practice by alternately asking the student to say the sound for *sh* and six other sounds previously learned. Later in the lesson, she asks the student one more time to tell the sound for *sh.*	During a letter–sound teaching activity, the student says /sh/ when the teacher points to *ch.* The teacher says, "No, think about something good to eat." After the student names foods, the teacher says, "Chocolate is good to eat. What letters does chocolate begin with? Do you see those letters on the board? What sound do they make?" When the student says /ch/, the teacher moves on to the next word.
	During a sight word reading, the teacher points to the word *ghost* and says, "What word?" Several students pronounce the word incorrectly. The teacher says, "The word is *ghost.* What is this word?" When students answer correctly, the teacher returns to the top of the list of five words and has the students read all five words again, including the word *ghost.*	During a sight word reading activity, the students say *gets* when they see the word *ghost.* The teacher says, "The word is *ghost.* Let's try the next word."
Teaching to Success	The teacher introduces the *ou* sound to her students for the first time. The next day she tests her students to see if they can identify the *ou* sound when it is mixed in with the previously learned combinations of *sh, ea, ow,* and *th.* Her students make repeated errors on the *ou* sound and miss *th* and *sh* as well. The following day, the teacher decides to provide more practice on all of the sounds from the day before. She only introduces *ar* when the students are able to identify these other sounds correctly.	The teacher introduces the *ou* sound to her students for the first time. The next day she tests her students to see if they can identify the *ou* sound when it is mixed in with the previously learned letter combinations of *sh, ea, ow,* and *th.* Her students make repeated errors on the *ou* sound and miss *th* and *sh* as well. The following day the teacher introduces a new letter combination: *ar.*
	The teacher has her students read today's story orally. The group makes 20 errors, reading the story with about 88% accuracy. The following day the teacher provides a drill for the students on the words missed the previous day. She also has the students reread the story until they read it with 97% accuracy.	The teacher has her students read today's story orally. The group makes 20 errors, reading the story with about 88% accuracy. The following day the teacher moves to the next story in the book.
Student Motivational System	During small-group instruction, Billy often leaves his seat. The teacher frequently praises Billy for staying in his seat and working so hard. She also praises other students for staying in their seats. The teacher seldom has to tell Billy to come back to his seat.	During small-group instruction, Billy often leaves his seat. Often when Billy leaves his seat, the teacher says, "Billy, if you can't pay attention, I'll have to call your mom." The teacher does not praise Billy when he is in his seat.
	While sight-reading a list of words, students continue to miss a number of them. Before reading through the list again, the teacher tells the students that their goal is reading every word correctly. This time, she praises the students immediately after each of the sight words is read correctly. When the list is finished, she smiles and exclaims, "I knew you could do it. Every one right! Give yourself a pat on the back!"	While sight-reading a list of words, students continue to miss a number of them. Each time they miss a word, the teacher makes a comment like, "This sure is a bad day," or "I don't know what you are all thinking about." When students continue to make mistakes, the teacher ends the lesson saying, "Maybe tomorrow you will all be awake."

In Your Classroom

RTI Management Strategies: Using the Teacher–Class Game

Getting a classroom of students to pay attention to the reading lesson, follow the classroom rules and procedures, and answer in unison can be challenging, especially when some students come to school without the following basic behavior skills needed for learning:

- Wait for a turn to speak or act.
- Understand and follow directions.
- Actively listen.
- Work independently.
- Accept consequences of behavior.

When students are not answering in unison or when misbehavior is interfering with learning time, the Teacher–Class game teaches students these skills while enabling the teacher to maintain a positive classroom environment. To organize the game before class starts, the teacher writes a T-grid on the board so he can easily award points to the class or to himself. A sample completed grid at the end of class looks like Figure 1.7.

During the lesson introduction, the teacher informs students that they will be playing the Teacher–Class game and reminds them how they can earn points. Periodically throughout the lesson when students are following the rules, the teacher awards the class points. Whenever a student does not follow the rules, the teacher gives himself a point. The more frequently the teacher gives the class a point and compliments students on their behavior, the more motivating the lesson becomes. As students work hard to get more points than the teacher, they learn successful school behaviors in the process. On Friday during the advance organizers for reading class, Mr. Setinz introduced the game to his class sitting on the rug by saying:

FIGURE 1.7 The Teacher–Class Game

Teacher	Class
𝍸 |||	𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸
7	20

"Remember to pay attention to my signals, to keep your hands and feet to yourself, and to do your best work. We are going to play the Teacher–Class game again today. Every day this week you have earned more points than I have (exaggerated sigh of exasperation). If you beat me today, that is five days in a row, and so everyone earns an extra recess at the end of the day. You'll need to pay close attention because I am going to try my hardest to win today. I would like to win at least one day, but this class is hard to beat."

Without interrupting the flow of his teaching during the lesson, Mr. Setinz juggled paying attention to students' answers along with closely monitoring their behavior. He provided some of the following feedback as he gave or took away respective points:

"Everyone followed my signal and read those first six words, so the class gets a point."

"That's my point. Tanya and Robert, I need you to answer with everyone."

"You took out your books so quickly that I just have to give you a point."

Whether a behavior strategy succeeds or fails depends on how effectively the teacher uses it. To teach positive behaviors with this game, the following guidelines are recommended:

- **Do not give warnings about potential points lost.** If your rules are that no one gets out of his seat or talks out of turn, you need to immediately give yourself a point when a student does either of those behaviors. If you warn students by saying, *"Next time, I'm going to give myself a point,"* you are actually encouraging higher rates of misbehavior because students recognize that sometimes they get away with breaking the rules.
- **Remember to notice positive student behaviors and give points for them.** *"Row 3 has been working so hard and listening to my instructions that they've earned a point for the class."* The game helps teachers maintain a positive classroom by frequently giving feedback on the positive actions of their students.
- **Put thought into selecting rewards.** Students should want the reward they will earn so they will be motivated to do their best work. Avoid using the same award every week because it will lose its impact as students become bored with it.