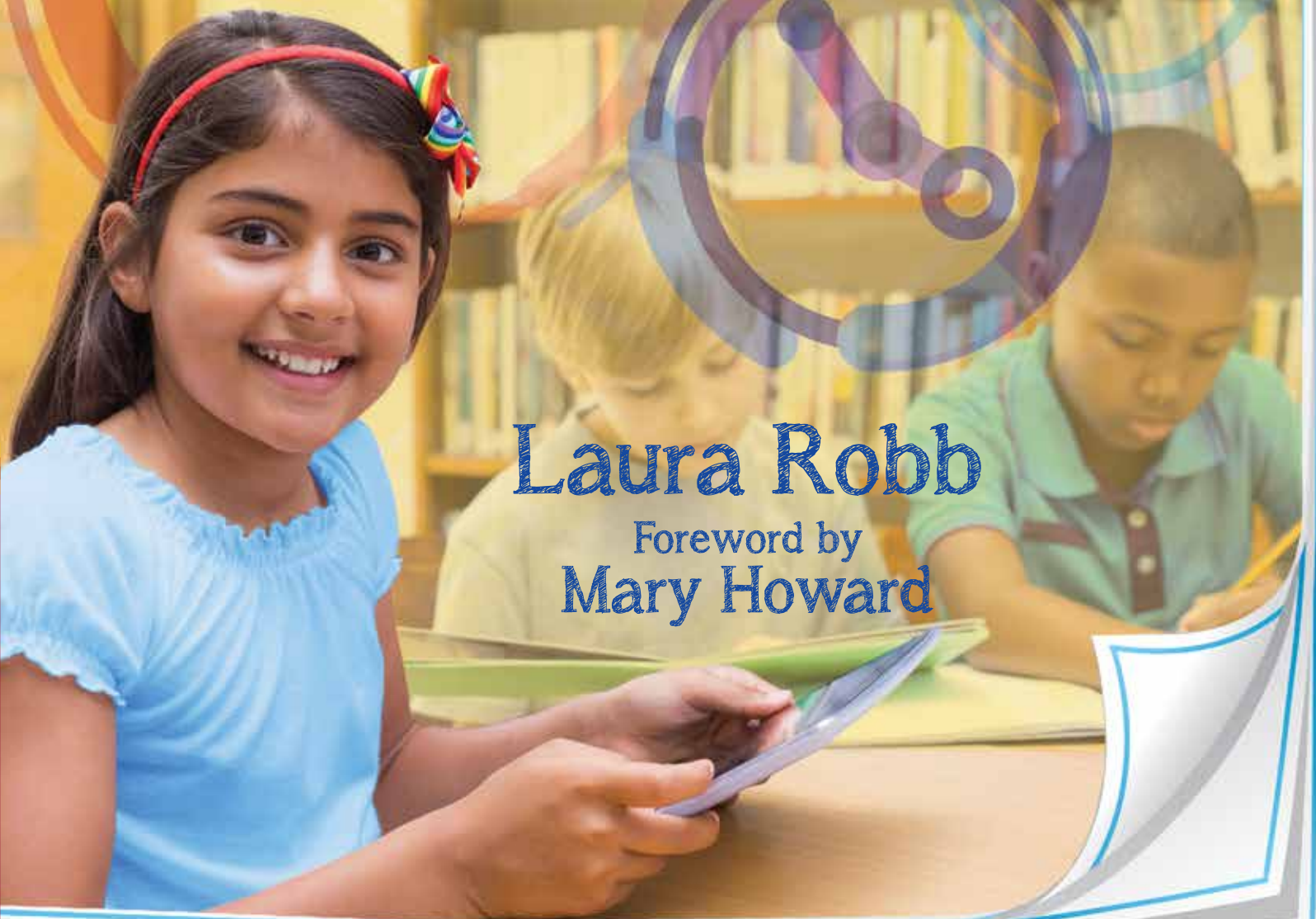


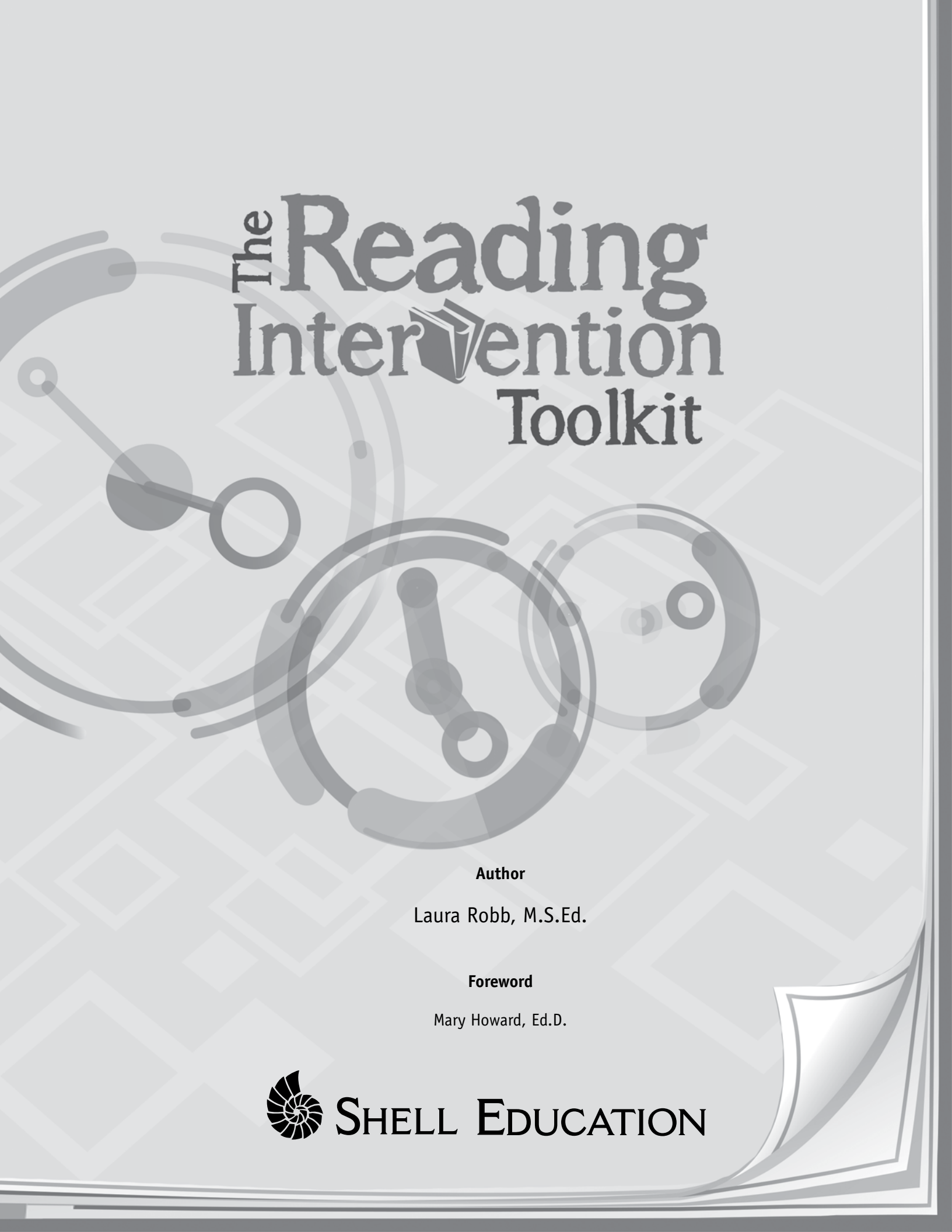


The Reading Intervention Toolkit



Laura Robb

Foreword by
Mary Howard

The background features a light gray geometric pattern of squares and rectangles. Overlaid on this are several abstract gray shapes, including circles, arcs, and a stylized book icon. The book icon is positioned between the words 'Inter' and 'vention' in the title.

The Reading Intervention Toolkit

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*All names used in this book are pseudonyms.



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Foreword

I still vividly recall my elation the first time I heard about Response to Intervention (RTI). I was filled with a sense of hope that an RTI design could embrace every learner. Sadly my hope soon dissipated as I saw RTI unfold in the trenches and I was reminded that *what* we do is inconsequential without a clear vision for *why* we do it and *how* to do it in the most effective ways. Questionable interpretations and implementations spurred by books, websites, seminars, and a virtual flood of programs made me fear that the promise I saw in RTI had become lost in the marketplace shuffle. As my hope had faded from view, I wrote a book titled *RTI from All Sides: What Every Teacher Needs to Know* in response to time-wasting non-solutions far removed from the students they purported to support.

Thankfully, Laura Robb's powerhouse book has reawakened my sense of hope. *The Reading Intervention Toolkit* brings the RTI promise back into focus as quick fixes and silver bullets are transformed into the authentic differentiated practices and targeted supports worthy of the lives RTI is intended to enrich. Each strategy is based on high-engagement instruction and interventions grounded in reading and writing that is repositioned in the hands of knowledgeable teachers. No fluff. No stuff. No silliness. No spreadsheets that reduce students to numbers. No one-size-fits-all recommendations that suck the very heart and soul from RTI. Laura redefines RTI as instructional excellence with students at the center of our efforts through flexible practices that put teachers face-to-face with children.

Why is *The Reading Intervention Toolkit* needed now more than ever? Based on a study exploring the negative impact of RTI, the research suggests that this is the result of three possible missteps: 1) incorrect selection of students, 2) mismatch between student needs and the interventions provided, and 3) misalignment between core instruction (Tier 1) and the interventions offered. The study illustrates that well meaning but misinformed applications of RTI may have led to its demise. In short, RTI did not fail us; we failed RTI (Sparks 2015).

Two things set Laura's book apart so that we can reclaim the RTI potential. First, she reminds us that nothing we do in the name of RTI will be adequate without active engagement in reading and writing with interventions to address specific needs of students based on daily assessment in the heat of learning moments. This lofty but achievable goal is reiterated by Richard Allington (2006). He states:

"Struggling readers need larger amounts of more expert, more personalized, and more intensive reading instruction. In the end, the quality of that instruction is critical, and high-quality instruction for struggling readers cannot simply be boxed up and shipped to a site" (20).

Laura broadens our canvas beyond isolated skill and drill that has plagued RTI. Strategy ideas focus on differentiated practices at increasing levels of intensity that can be embedded across the school day, regardless of time constraints. Flexible support options in a context of daily learning range from five to 40 minutes, affording varied layers of instructional intensity from "making the rounds" to teach, reteach, reinforce, and assess in on-the-spot learning to the increasingly intensive interventions designed to accelerate progress in small-group and side-by-side settings. Read-aloud, shared, guided, and independent practice form an overarching support umbrella of powerful, intentional, open-ended options.

Foreword *(cont.)*

The second thing that sets Laura's book apart from others is illustrated in Pernille Ripp's cautionary advice: "If we focus more on the intervention than the child that needs it, we have lost our way" (1). Laura repositions our efforts on students in a myriad of ways. *The Reading Intervention Toolkit* is a love note to teachers from her first words in the introduction, "Classroom Teachers Can Reach and Support All Readers." These eight words represent the spirit of this book and Laura's deep belief that the foundation of RTI resides in maintaining Tier 1 teachers as decision makers. Each suggestion revolves around high-interest texts within meaningful literacy events through teacher-supported oral reading, one-to-one conferring, small-group instruction, peer supported partner work, and independent application. She acknowledges the role of motivation with choice, interest, and engaging talk, demonstrating her commitment to increasing the volume of reading and writing, rather than dancing around it.

Throughout this book, Laura shows us how to accomplish a renewed RTI purpose. She demonstrates that immersion in active and joyful literacy is the work of RTI, citing three key oft-missing intervention ingredients: instruction using engaging books, discussion of self-selected books for independent reading, and listening to teachers read aloud. She offers classroom snapshots to give strategy ideas a face with teacher tips and suggestions to continue the conversation at the end of each chapter. Page after page, Laura whispers words of wisdom in our ears to help us elevate conferences and initiate interventions based on the needs of students. Laura's words are a testament to expert, personalized, and intensive reading instruction focused squarely on the child that needs it. In Laura's own words:

"The goal of all intervention in grades 4 to 8 is to help students comprehend, interpret, and analyze reading materials, as well as improve their motivation to read, write, think, and discuss. Targeted interventions are focused lessons designed for students who need extra support in reading and writing" (15).

The time has come to demonstrate a sense of urgency that will change the direction of RTI. For too long, tiers have been relegated to real estate over shared responsibility. For too long, targeted support has been removed from the first line of defense where moment-to-moment daily support can be offered. For too long, interventions have been trivialized with the "stuff" far removed from our vision of best practices. For too long, we have ignored the serious, thoughtful, informed, responsible state of the "art of teaching" (Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde) that comes from meaningful, authentic, purposeful, and intentional teaching in the hands of teachers with a deep knowledge of literacy instruction. For too long, we have viewed RTI as the end goal when the success of students is our first priority.

As I have savored each word in Laura's masterful book, I imagine a bridge from where we have been to where we need to be. *The Reading Intervention Toolkit* reignites the promise that has always resided within RTI—a promise that can only become a reality when we keep students at the center with practices that allow them to read, write, and talk their way across the day. This is the RTI that I envisioned—Responsive Thoughtful Instruction our students deserve. There is no doubt in my mind that this book can change the RTI success trajectory.

And my hope is at last renewed.

—Mary Howard, Ed.D.
author and literacy consultant
RTI from All Sides: What Every Teacher Needs to Know

Dedication

With love for my son, Evan, an outstanding principal.

My thanks to the students I have worked with because they made this book possible. Sincere thanks to the third and fourth grade teachers at Quarles Elementary in Winchester, Virginia, and to Katy Schain and Katherine McHale, who let me work with English language learners at Daniel Morgan Middle School in Winchester, Virginia.

My deep appreciation and thanks go to my editors, Sara Johnson and Kristy Stark, whose great organizational vision shaped this into a book that teachers can easily navigate and use.



Introduction

Classroom Teachers Can Reach and Support All Readers

Recently, I taught reading to a group of seventh-grade English language learners who were reading at a third-grade instructional level. During 10 weeks, the students and I met daily for 50 minutes. I divided the time into 25 minutes for a teacher read-aloud and guided reading, and 25 minutes of independent reading. The students had never read an entire book. Instead, they had only read short texts and answered multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blank questions for each one. They were not purposefully talking or writing about what they read, nor was their ESOL teacher (English for Speakers of Other Languages) reading outstanding fiction and nonfiction to them. So, I changed the focus of their instruction.

For guided reading, I gave students three nonfiction books to choose from, and they agreed on a biography about Roberto Clemente. For independent reading, I started with graphic novels, brought about 20 to class, and had students choose. Gradually, independent reading choices included biography and informational texts. Over the 10 weeks, the students and I read and discussed two nonfiction books; students also wrote short responses in their readers' notebooks. Moreover, all but two of the students read from 10 to 15 books during independent reading, and that's when I had short five-minute scaffolding conferences with individuals or pairs.

Many of the schools I work in around the country have adopted reading intervention programs similar to the one those seventh-grade students used—programs that focus on skills. Why? Skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, and fluency are easy to assess and enable teachers to collect measurable data. However, there are three key ingredients that are often missing in these intervention curricula: instruction using engaging books, discussion of self-selected books for independent reading, and listening to teachers read aloud every day. Educators such as Stephanie Harvey, Ann Goudvis, Harvey Daniels, Linda Dorn, Ellin Keene, and Regie Routman agree that students who listen to teachers read aloud and have meaningful conversations about these texts also build their listening capacity, background knowledge, and understanding of literary language. Actually, according to Richard Allington, Mary Howard, Linda Hoyt, Donalyn Miller, and Steve Krashen, students who practice skills daily without reading self-selected whole books don't improve their reading skill. Moreover, because students don't read books, they slide backwards, and this backward slide can result in low scores on state tests, frustrating teachers and administrators.

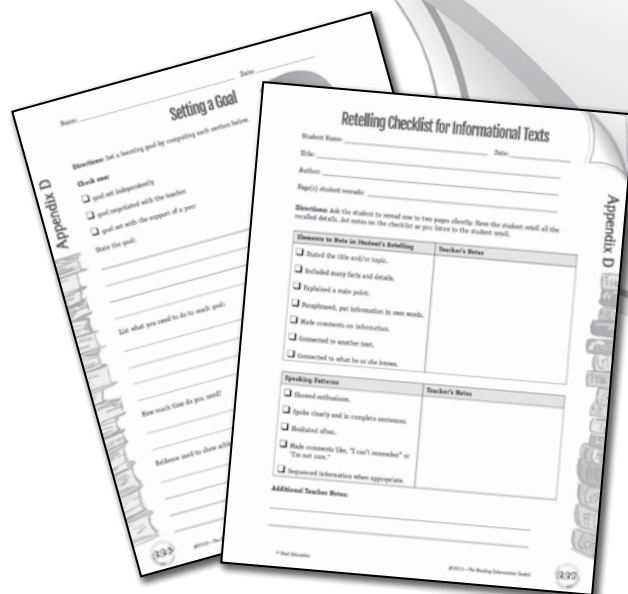
I wrote this book for fourth to eighth grade teachers to address the instructional challenges that they face. Educators agree that high quality core reading curricula can support about 80 percent of the student population, enabling them to show solid, annual growth. But, to move all students from a frustration zone into their learning zone and ultimately to independent reading learning, lessons need to respond to the needs of every student.

To assist teachers with strategies in this area, **Chapters 1 and 2** discuss responsive teaching and differentiation. The heart and soul of this book is introduced in Chapter 2 where I discuss, in great depth, four kinds of interventions that can support students' reading. The first three can be readily integrated in the core reading curriculum. The last type of intervention is meant for students reading significantly below grade level and often needs to be conducted in addition to regular classroom instruction.

- **2- to 3-Minute Interventions:** These occur while you “make the rounds” and continually circulate among students while they read and write about reading during guided practice and independent work. By providing short, on-the-spot scaffolds, you can support students and prevent small confusions from becoming large obstacles to learning. During this time, you'll also identify students who need more time to practice a strategy in their learning zone. To help them, you can schedule one or a series of 5-minute interventions while other students work on their own.
- **5-Minute Interventions:** Sometimes, as a result of what you learned during a 2- to 3-minute intervention, you need to schedule an investigatory 5-minute intervention to get a better handle on a student's needs. Then, with the student, you can estimate how many times you'll meet during a week. Other times, a 5-minute intervention might be all a student needs to correct a misconception or provide the necessary scaffold to get back to speed with grade-level expectations.
- **10- to 15-Minute Interventions:** There will be times when one student or a small group of students with a common problem will need more than five minutes of instruction that you scaffold. In the book, I suggest that you schedule longer interventions to help students make the necessary gains.
- **30- to 40-Minute Interventions:** This type of intervention is for students who are reading far below grade level and would benefit from 30 to 40 minutes of additional instruction at least three to five times a week. Usually, instruction for these students is scheduled outside of core reading classes. Frequently, a reading specialist or special education teacher teaches these classes. However, this book points out that extra classes should be a combination of teacher-led instruction, student practice, and independent reading of self-selected books. In the book, I offer schedules with suggestions that enable you to work with students who struggle because not all schools have the resources for scheduling separate classes. The intervention examples in this book feature different grade levels and include lessons that address the four kinds of interventions.

Chapter 3 shares intervention tools and strategies for teachers and students. It is important to have a variety of methods to use to support your students during intervention. Models for think-alouds, reteaching lessons, one-on-one conferences, and word study are included as well as supporting forms and checklists to help keep you organized. Additionally resources for students are included to help them track their own reading progress, self-monitor their comprehension, and set goals.

Chapters 4 and 5 use focus standards to discuss key reading strategies, such as inferring, finding main ideas and themes, and using context to determine a word's meaning. The texts for interventions in both chapters are available for you to use with your students. In both chapters, lessons for each type of intervention offer reasons for why I selected a specific intervention, my planning process, a list of several scaffolding possibilities, and often a classroom snapshot that shows the intervention in action. To help you respond to students who need more than the interventions you've offered, both chapters end with five reteaching lessons and the texts that go with each one.



Chapter 6 examines the importance of getting students to write about their reading. When students write about what they read, it provides a window into their understanding. Can they supply text evidence to support their ideas? Do they understand literary elements or the text structure? A variety of student resources are provided to support students' writing, such as graphic organizers and rubrics. Additionally, this chapter includes key interventions to use with students who struggle in writing about their reading.

Finally, **Chapter 7** concludes the book with key reminders and big ideas about reading intervention and the instructional practices that make the most impact with struggling readers.

In the **Appendices**, you'll also find conference forms for documenting interventions and student resource sheets that provide students with tips for reading literary and informational text deeply as well as guidelines for using context clues to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words. I've shared the research on writing to improve reading and provided suggestions for you to try. Writing about reading is crucial as it's your ticket for getting into a student's head to observe his or her reading and thinking processes.

The **Digital Resource CD** is full of student and teacher resources, including templates, student reference pages, and engaging texts to use with the intervention lessons.

Each chapter closes with prompts and/or questions for discussing the information with a colleague or with a small group of teachers on your grade-level team or in your department. It's my hope that conversation will deepen your knowledge of the chapter's information and raise your comfort level with the information so that you will be able to try some lessons with your students or use the tools provided to create your own intervention lessons. In addition, I invite you to bring to a second meeting these intervention artifacts: students' assessments, goal-setting write-ups, and/or an intervention lesson that worked and one that didn't work so you can share ideas and offer feedback to support one another and your students.

As you read, reflect on, and discuss this book with colleagues, you will deepen your knowledge of the intervention tools and suggestions that can help you improve the reading of every student in your classroom.

—Laura Robb

Chapter

1

Setting the Stage for Reading Interventions

Responsive Teaching

Responsive teachers know what each student in a class does well and when a student requires extra support because they watch, listen, and have short but meaningful conversations with their students. Teachers who respond to students' needs intervene with scaffolds and guided practice to help struggling students with tasks, and then they gradually move those students to independence.

Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, who identified the zone of proximal development, also called students' learning zone, recognized the need for responsive teaching and scaffolding to help students become independent (1978). There are students who can master a strategy that they can't complete independently when they have the support of an adult or peer expert. For example, Mara, a fifth-grader, struggles with using dialogue to infer personality traits. Her teacher, Ms. Keller, watches and recognizes that Mara can master this type of inferring with teacher modeling and time to practice. Ms. Keller schedules a series of five-minute conferences, one each day, while other students read or write independently. During two of the scaffolding conferences, Ms. Keller thinks aloud and discusses the inferring process with Mara and watches Mara practice. At the third meeting, Ms. Keller decides to turn over part of the responsibility for inferring personality traits to Mara. By the fifth conference, Ms. Keller has moved Mara to independence with this reading skill. To ensure that Mara maintains independence, Ms. Keller partners Mara with Tanisha, and the pair work together until the teacher, by observing the pair's discussions and by reading Mara's notebook entries, feels Mara will be successful on her own.

Responsive teaching practices also consider students' culture. This intervention illustrates that a responsive teacher is a careful observer of students, watching them work when students practice independently, with a partner, or in a small group. The goal always is to meet individual needs and help each child improve his or her reading (Allington 2011; Owocki and Goodman 2002; Robb 2010; Routman 2014).

Research indicates that when teachers understand students' cultures, students become more engaged and motivated in their learning, and they progress and build trusting relationships with their teachers (Gay 2000; Hawkins 2012; Zubrzycki 2012).

Chapter 1

According to Douglas Magrath (2016), culture is an integral part of language and language patterns; the meanings of words that name the same item and concepts in different languages have connotations that differ. For example, Magrath explains that American culture often considers time a concept that is future-oriented, while Hispanic culture often considers time as the present moment.

Culturally responsive teachers communicate frequently with students to understand their needs and frustrations and also to encourage students to communicate with each other (Delpit 2006; Gay 2000). Continual communication builds trust and shows students that their culture and individual learning needs are valued.

When teachers respond to the cultural and literacy diversity of their students, they meet students where they are and adjust tasks so students can succeed. For example, a district requires seventh-grade students to read a grade-level anthology, but there are several students reading three to four years below grade level. Here are some things teachers can do:

- Use the anthology selection to think aloud and model applying a skill or strategy (Hoyt 2013a and 2013b; Fountas and Pinnell 2013; Robb 2010 and 2013).
- Ask students to apply grade-level skills to texts at their own instructional reading level (Allington 2011; Bomer 2011; Routman 2014).
- Encourage independent reading of self-selected books. The more students read, the faster the rate of progress (Allington 2009; Allington and McGill-Franzen 2003; Krashen 2004; Miller 2009 and 2013; Robb 2013).

In order to know the types of reading interventions required for each student, responsive teachers reflect on the importance of four teaching practices and weave them into daily literacy lessons.

1. **The teacher models and thinks aloud.** Modeling and thinking aloud are two strategies that enable the teacher to help students learn how to apply a strategy or solve a problem (Burke 2010; Howard 2009; Keene 2008; Robb 2010 and 2014; Routman 2014; Wilhelm 2013). In a 10- to 15-minute mini-lesson, a type of explicit instruction developed by Donald Graves (1983) and popularized by Lucy Calkins (1994), the teacher can show the entire class, small groups, or individuals how strategies work. During the mini-lesson, the teacher can also scaffold a process such as identifying themes by explaining how this task can be organized into small steps.

While modeling, teachers make their thinking visible to students and build students' mental model of a process. For example, when teaching students to make a logical prediction about what a character will decide, students first need to mentally review everything they learned about the character, including any decisions the character made. Then, students can use that information to make a logical prediction because it is based on evidence from the text.

2. **The teacher provides time to practice.** Students improve when they have time to practice (Howard 2009; Robb 2010; Routman 2014; Wilhelm 2013). Practice can be with a short text at a student's instructional reading level or with a passage or a few pages from a student's instructional reading book. The teacher can monitor and assess a student's application of a strategy from the student's writing about the reading or while watching the student's process during a conference (Allison 2009; Graham and Hebert 2010; Robb 2010). If the student's writing reveals an inability to cite text evidence to support an inference or to compare/contrast, then the teacher responds by planning an intervention.
3. **The teacher makes learning social and interactive.** Research suggests that engagement with tasks and motivation to learn increase when teachers shift the focus to student-centered learning. A student-centered approach uses methods such as collaboration through paired and small-group

discussions and inquiry to solve problems, interpret texts, and actively engage in meaningful reading, writing, and speaking (Adler and Rougle 2005; Keene 2008; Robb 2010; Routman 2014; Wilhelm 2002).

Teachers who use student-centered learning methods have multiple opportunities to be responsive to students who arrive at school with a variety of cultural backgrounds as well as a wide range of literacy experience and prior knowledge (Delpit 2006; Gay 2000; Tomlinson 2014; Smith and Wilhelm 2007; Wormeli 2007).

- ✚ **The teacher plans and targets interventions to meet students' needs.** The goal of all intervention in grades 4 to 8 is to help students comprehend, interpret, and analyze reading materials, as well as improve their motivation to read, write, think, and discuss. Targeted interventions are focused lessons designed for students who need extra support in reading and writing.

The individualized focus of targeted interventions can make a difference in the progress of readers far below grade level because scaffolding and reteaching can move students to independence with a task (Adler and Rougle 2005; Allington 2011; Buffum, Mattos, and Weber 2009 and 2010; Duke and Pearson 2002; Howard 2009). It's important to view interventions through a positive lens and to see students who struggle or "don't get it" as capable of learning and making progress when you find ways to meet their needs.

The following are some ways that teachers can provide interventions for students:

- Pre-teach explicit vocabulary, such as three to four challenging words, prior to reading a text. In addition, you can teach word roots, prefixes, and suffixes so students have the tools for determining word meanings.
- Teach explicit comprehension strategy lessons that show students how to identify themes, big ideas, point of view, literary elements, and informational text structures, and how to infer and link these to themes, big ideas, and inferences about characters, topics, and people.
- Conduct extended discussions of text meaning that start with retellings to check basic comprehension and move to higher-order thinking, such as comparing and contrasting characters, analyzing the role of the setting, determining cause and effect, and identifying and analyzing multiple themes.
- Emphasize the importance of text evidence to support interpretations. This can be difficult for students who often resist returning to the text to nail evidence. Help students understand that their ideas are valid only when they support them with text details.
- Provide individual and small-group lessons, which offer opportunities to intervene by scaffolding a process. One-on-one and small-group interventions can occur while the rest of the class is reading and writing independently. Sitting side-by-side with a student or close to a small group can lower students' anxiety levels and make the lesson more accessible (Atwell 1991; Fountas and Pinnell 2000; Howard 2009; Scanlon, Anderson, and Sweeney 2010).

Teacher

TIP

There is no one, correct fix for building students' reading and writing capacity. I suggest that when you plan interventions, you target them on a specific need and find two to three strategies that might work. That way if one isn't supporting the students, you have another strategy at your fingertips.

If frequent assessments reveal that scaffolds aren't improving students' reading skill(s), you can consider reteaching using materials that differ from the original lesson and scaffold practice.

Roadblocks to Responsive Teaching

Many teachers are required to deliver content from a grade-level anthology or novel to every student. To meet this requirement for students reading two or more years below grade level, teachers often read the text aloud to the below-grade-level group and have students follow along in the text, while the rest of the class reads the anthology independently. However, teachers soon realize that students don't pass the grade-level unit tests because they can't read the material.

This kind of accommodation doesn't improve reading because the teacher is reading, not the students, and for students to improve, they need to read (Allington 2009 and 2011; Allison 2009; Ford and Opitz 2015; Robb 2013; Routman 2014).

Two myths surround this type of teaching:

- **Myth 1:** Exposing students to grade-level texts even though they can't read them will support their ability to pass state reading exams. Learning information can provide the background knowledge needed to comprehend grade-level materials.

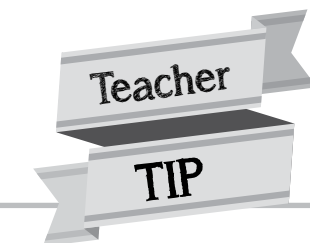
Reality: Reading grade-level texts to students to hear the information does not improve students' reading skills or their ability to comprehend texts far above their instructional reading levels. Background knowledge is one prerequisite for comprehending grade-level texts, but it is not enough when students lack vocabulary and independent reading experiences. This strategy is not a ticket to passing state tests.

- **Myth 2:** Having students follow along in the text while the teacher reads aloud will build their vocabulary and reading skill.

Reality: There is no guarantee that students are following along when the teacher reads aloud. If the vocabulary and syntax are too difficult, students quickly figure out what to do to look as if they are following along. Moreover, following a text is not a form of instruction, and it won't move students forward.

Backward Slide

Although often done with good intentions, teachers who exclusively read aloud to students who can't read and comprehend grade-level texts or have students primarily listen to audio of the texts often contribute to students' backward slide. Similar to Richard Allington's "summer slide" (2009), backward slide (and summer slide) occurs when students aren't reading. Therefore, one of the primary goals of intervention is to have students read, read, and read to build vocabulary, fluency, background knowledge, and the stamina to move forward.



Reading stamina is the ability to concentrate and read a text for 20 minutes or more. When students lack stamina, teachers can build it by having students settle down and read for 10 minutes until you observe they have met this goal. Then, gradually increase the amount of silent reading time until students can concentrate on reading for at least 20 minutes.

Class Size and Time to Teach

Teachers who have a wide range of instructional reading levels in their classrooms need to know and respond to what their students can and can't do on a daily basis and intervene quickly to clear up small confusions before they become large obstacles. This can happen when teachers have longer class periods and smaller classes (Chingo and Grover 2011).

Being a responsive teacher can become a challenging task when you have classes of 30 to 40 students reading at six to eight different instructional levels. Such a wide range of reading abilities is indicative of the heterogeneous groupings in many schools. Class size and the range of instructional student levels directly affect a teacher's ability to respond to students' needs with planned interventions. Chingo and Grover cite studies that show that reducing classes with 35 to 40 students to class sizes of 20 to 24 increased students' achievement over time (2011). Smaller numbers allow teachers to keep abreast of students' progress and intervene to help every student move forward and improve their reading.

Defining Reading Skill Versus Strategy

Teachers and students frequently use the terms *skill* and *strategy* interchangeably. However, these terms differ, and explaining them will clarify why I use the term *strategy* throughout this book. Here's how Peter Afflerbach, P. David Pearson, and Scott G. Paris explain these terms (2008):

- A skill is a well-practiced strategy, such as inferring or identifying big ideas. The term *skill* means that learners have proficiency with a strategy and can use it automatically in all situations.
- A strategy builds reading comprehension and requires practice in different situations until the learner can apply the strategy effortlessly or with automaticity in diverse situations.

Most students in grades four to eight, especially those who require intervention, are at the strategy level. Students can progress when they practice and learn from reading strategies that use entire books at their instructional levels and self-selected books for independent reading.

Using Extra Time for Reading Instruction

To accelerate achievement for developing or struggling readers and improve their vocabulary and reading strategy use, schools often provide an additional 30–40 minutes a day of reading instruction in small groups. However, the 30–40 minutes need to be divided between strategy practice and reading entire short and long texts. Why? When students practice strategies out of the context of meaningful texts, it is rare that they will transfer those strategies to other genres and learning situations (Allington 2011; Scanlon, Anderson, and Sweeney 2010).

A New Approach to Ensure Measurable Gains

In a school where I coach teachers, a small group of fourth-grade special education students used to receive an additional 40-minute class every day. Students completed phonemic awareness exercises, phonics worksheets, and comprehension cards. They did not read books, and the teacher did not read aloud to them. At the end of the first semester, no measurable progress had occurred.

The teacher agreed to pilot a different approach and to start the class with a 10-minute interactive read-aloud to build students' mental model of how to apply reading strategies and think about text.

During the remaining time, students chose books to read and reread. Three days each week small groups of students read at their instructional level and discussed the books with their teacher. Twice a week, students read books at their independent reading level—95% to 100% accuracy and excellent or satisfactory comprehension (Fountas and Pinnell 2009). Then, students discussed these books with partners. The discussions centered on retelling, literary elements, or information learned in nonfiction. Students also used prompts that encouraged discussion. For homework, students reread instructional books and self-selected independent reading books. By the end of the second semester, based on informal reading inventories, students made one-half to one-year gains in instructional reading levels.

Prompts That Fostered Discussion

To further their reading work, the fourth-grade teacher typed and printed the discussion prompts that follow and had students tape them into their notebooks. The prompts can also be projected onto an interactive whiteboard or written on chart paper. When pairs or small groups discussed a book, they agreed on one or more prompts. Sometimes, the teacher asked students to choose a prompt they discussed, write it in their notebooks, and list key points they discussed. The teacher also emphasized the importance of including text evidence with their answers.

The following discussion questions and prompts apply to any book, and students from each of the three tiers will find some they can reflect on and discuss.

Questions and Prompts for Fiction

- Who is the protagonist (main character), and what is his or her problem?
- Discuss two important settings, and explain why you believe each is important.
- Use a decision a character made and a problem he or she solved to identify two to three personality traits.
- Show how a character changed by pointing out the change in his or her personality. Then, discuss the event, person, setting, or conflict that caused the change.
- Choose one minor character and explain how he or she affected the main character.
- Were there problems that characters couldn't solve? Identify one or two and explain why you think each one wasn't solved.
- How does the title relate to the story?
- Discuss, using text details, two points that the author made about family, friends, feelings, nature, or life experiences.
- Are there examples of literary techniques such as flashback, foreshadowing, or figurative language? Identify one example and explain how it connected to a theme, a conflict, or a problem.
- Identify two antagonistic forces and explain how each one worked against the protagonist (main character). Why were these important to the story?
- Did the author create different moods? Find a passage that reveals mood and point out the words, phrases, and actions that helped create that mood.

Questions and Prompts for Biography

- Why is this person famous or important? How is that significant for society?
- Discuss two personality traits that helped this person achieve his or her goal.
- Identify two obstacles the person overcame and explain how he or she accomplished this.
- What traits and beliefs did this person have that enabled him or her to realize his or her dream? Select two to three to discuss.
- Select one person and one event and show how each one influenced the person's choices and decisions.
- How did this person affect the lives of other people during his or her time?
- Does this person's ideas or inventions affect people today? Explain why or why not.

Questions and Prompts for Informational Texts

- Why did you choose this book?
- What new information did you learn?
- What questions did the book raise in your mind but not answer? What can you do to find the answers to your questions?
- What did you learn from photographs and captions? How did these text features support the information in the text?
- What information did you learn from charts and diagrams? How did those text features support the information in the text?
- How did this book change your thinking about this topic?
- Did the author weave opinions with facts? Give an example of this and explain why it was significant.

Responsive Teaching with Tiers 1, 2, and 3 Readers

In a regular classroom, there is a core instructional curriculum that all students experience—this is Tier 1 instruction. Responsive teachers adjust the core curriculum so that it is accessible to every student in their classrooms. An effective way to adjust curriculum and differentiate instruction is to develop reading units around a genre and/or theme. To do this, find books and materials in your classroom and school library that relate to the genre and/or theme and that each student can read, learn from, and discuss with peers. This way, you can improve students' application of reading strategies to different texts and build their reading stamina, the ability to concentrate on reading. You can read more about this type of differentiation in Chapter 2.

It's important to note that even proficient and advanced readers become dependent, developing readers when faced with a text that contains new information and challenging vocabulary. It's helpful to revisit the definition of (and learning needs common to) each tier of readers so you can more efficiently provide interventions and organize partners who can support one another. In addition, responsive teachers understand that the most effective interventions are timely, based on students' struggles with

a task, and target a student's specific learning needs (Howard 2009; Owocki 2010). To pinpoint students' needs, teachers try to identify students' reading difficulties early in the year; they monitor students' progress throughout the year by observing them, listening to discussions, conferring, and using writing about reading to assess students' use of text evidence to support thinking.

Tier 1 Instruction

All students in your class receive Tier 1 instruction. Instruction includes whole-class and small-group lessons and instruction from the teacher that meets the needs of the diversity of reading and writing levels. By teaching small groups of students with common needs, you can provide reading instruction that meets students where they are, offers appropriate challenges, and helps them improve. Instead of practicing isolated skills, students who read below grade level should practice reading with motivating texts, as well as reading and discussing self-selected books during independent reading (Allington 2009; Howard 2009; Owocki 2010). Though a core curriculum defines Tier 1 instruction, responsive teachers are flexible and make adjustments that meet each student's learning needs. Educators agree that high-quality Tier 1 instruction can support about 80 percent of the student population, enabling them to show solid growth during the year (Howard 2009; Owocki 2010; NASDSE 2006).

Tier 2 Instruction

Students who require Tier 2 instruction are those who aren't making enough progress in the Tier 1 curriculum and who require additional intervention. Students reading one to two years below grade level can fall into this group. You can identify these students by systematically monitoring formative assessments and observational notes as students listen, follow directions, discuss texts, read, and write. It is helpful to administer an individual reading inventory to determine a student's instructional and independent reading levels. To move these students forward, classroom teachers can supplement the Tier 1 core curriculum with longer interventions and reteaching lessons, intensify instruction by working with pairs and individuals, and inch these students closer to becoming grade-level readers.

Tier 3 Instruction

Students reading three or more years below grade level benefit from instruction beyond the core curriculum because they are at a high risk for failure. In addition to the differentiated core curriculum, these students can improve their reading by having an additional 30 to 45 minutes of reading instruction three to five times a week. Finding time to meet with students at risk for failing a grade, as well as having the funds for reading specialists, is often a challenge for schools. Following, you can find two sample schedules for addressing the needs of the three tiers of students. Select or adapt the schedule that works best for you.



Planning for a 45-Minute Class Schedule

To meet the needs of Tier 3 students, this schedule requires a reading specialist or special education teacher who helps while you work with Tier 1 and Tier 2 readers. If your school doesn't have a teacher who can help, adjust the schedule using the suggestions that follow:

- On Tuesday and Thursday, spend 10 minutes on word study and 25 minutes supporting Tier 3 students.
- On Monday and Wednesday, work with Tiers 1 and 2, and have Tier 3 students complete independent reading.
- On Friday, work with Tier 3 students and have Tiers 1 and 2 students complete independent reading.

Interventions that occur soon after you've identified a need have a better chance of moving students toward independence with a task because you are supporting students when they need the strategy to learn.

Figure 1.1 Sample 45-Minute Class Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Vocabulary: 10 min. Instructional Reading: 30 min.; can be guided reading or differentiated via genre; classroom teacher works with tiers 1 and 2. Word Sorting and Study: 15 min. Wrap-Up	Interactive Read-Aloud: 10 min. Independent Reading and Conferences: 20 min.; all 3 tiers Word Sorting and Study: 15 min. Wrap-Up	Vocabulary: 10 min. Instructional Reading: 30 min.; can be guided reading or differentiated via genre; classroom teacher works with Tiers 1 and 2. Word Sorting and Study: 15 min. Wrap-Up	Interactive Read-Aloud: 10 min. Independent Reading and Conferences: 20 min.; all 3 tiers Word Sorting and Study: 15 min. Wrap-Up	Vocabulary: 10 min. Instructional Reading: 30 min.; can be guided reading or differentiated via genre; classroom teacher works with tiers 1 and 2. Word Sorting and Study: 15 min. Wrap-Up
30-min. Class: Specialist works with Tier 3 students while classroom teacher works with Tiers 1 and 2; focus is reading and writing about reading in a notebook.		30-min. Class: Specialist works with Tier 3 students while classroom teacher works with Tiers 1 and 2; focus is reading and writing about reading in a notebook.		30-min. Class: Specialist works with Tier 3 students while classroom teacher works with Tiers 1 and 2; focus is reading and writing about reading in a notebook.
Homework: Independent reading 20–30 min.; practice word sort	Homework: Independent reading 20–30 min.; practice word sort	Homework: Independent reading 20–30 min.; practice word sort	Homework: Independent reading 20–30 min.; study word sort words for quiz	Homework: Independent reading 30 min.





Planning for a 60-Minute Class Schedule

Having more time allows the classroom teacher to work with all tiers as well as have two days a week for independent reading and scaffolding conferences.

Figure 1.2 Sample 60-Minute Class Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Vocabulary: 10 min.	Interactive Read-Aloud: 10 min.	Vocabulary: 10 min.	Interactive Read-Aloud: 10 min.	Vocabulary: 10 min.
Instructional Reading: 45 min.; can be guided reading or differentiated via genre; classroom teacher works with all tiers.	Independent Reading and Conferences: 30 min.; all tiers	Instructional Reading: 45 min.; can be guided reading or differentiated via genre; classroom teacher works with all tiers.	Independent Reading and Conferences: 30 min.; All Tiers	Instructional Reading: 45 min.; can be guided reading or differentiated via genre; classroom teacher works with all tiers.
Word Sorting and Study: woven into reading lesson (Tiers not working with teacher read independently or write about reading.)	Word Sorting and Study: 15 min.	Word Sorting and Study: woven into reading lesson (Tiers not working with teacher read independently or write about reading.)	Word Sorting and Study: 15 min.	Word Sorting and Study: woven into reading lesson (Tiers not working with teacher read independently or write about reading.)
Wrap-Up	Wrap-Up	Wrap-Up	Wrap-Up	Wrap-Up
Homework: Independent reading 20–30 min.; practice word sort	Homework: Independent reading 20–30 min.; practice word sort	Homework: Independent reading 20–30 min.; practice word sort	Homework: Independent reading 20–30 min.; study word sort words for quiz	Homework: Independent reading 20–30 min.

In order for the classroom teacher to work with the three tiers, students need access to high-interest and motivating books they can read independently. The high-quality books can also be used for instruction.

Motivating Texts for Students Reading Below Grade Level

Finding materials for developing readers two or more years below grade level can be challenging. Using literature that students in grades one to three read can destroy older students' self-confidence, increase feelings of hopelessness, and confirm the belief that they are unable to catch up to peers reading on grade level (Allington 2010, 2009, and 2011; Guthrie and Wigfield 2000; Miller 2010; Robb 2000b and 2010; Tankersley 2005; Wilhelm and Smith 2013). The following section contains a selection of 30 high-interest books for reluctant and developing readers.

Figure 1.3 High-Interest Books for Reluctant and Developing Readers

Literary Texts	Lexile® Level
<i>Island Book I: Shipwreck</i> by Gordon Korman	610L
<i>Island Book II: Survival</i> by Gordon Korman	600L
<i>Island Book III: Escape</i> by Gordon Korman	620L
<i>Stone Fox</i> by John Gardiner	550L
<i>Shiloh</i> by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor	780L
<i>Holes</i> by Louis Sachar	660L
<i>Becoming Naomi Leon</i> by Pam Munoz Ryan	830L
<i>The Outsiders</i> by S.E. Hinton	750L
<i>Miracle's Boys</i> by Jacqueline Woodson	660L
<i>The Great Gilly Hopkins</i> by Katherine Paterson	800L
Biographies	Lexile® Level
<i>The Secret Soldier: The Story of Deborah Sampson</i> by Ann McGovern	590L
<i>Go Fly a Kite, Ben Franklin</i> by Peter Roop and Connie Roop	680L
<i>Adventures of Shark Lady: Eugenie Clark Around the World</i> by Ann McGovern	890L
<i>Roberto Clemente</i> by Dona and William Rice	930L
<i>Jane Goodall: The Early Years</i> by William B. Rice	780L
<i>Helen's Big World: The Life of Helen Keller</i> by Doreen Rappaport	770L
<i>Nelson Mandela: Leading the Way</i> by Tamara Leigh Hollingsworth	640L
<i>Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman?</i> by Patricia C. McKissack and Frederick McKissack	960L
<i>I Am Harriet Tubman</i> by Grace Norwich	1060L
<i>Leonardo DaVinci</i> by Kathleen Krull	1010L

Informational Texts	Lexile® Level
<i>Rome: World Cultures Through Time</i> by Christine Dugan	600L
<i>Amazon Rainforest</i> by William B. Rice	610L
<i>The Crossing: How George Washington Saved the American Revolution</i> by Jim Murphy	1080L
<i>Egypt: World Cultures Through Time</i> by Shirley Jordan	710L
<i>United No More: Stories of the Civil War</i> by Doreen Rappaport	780L
<i>Bug Builders</i> by Timothy J. Bradley	710L
<i>The Time Machine and Other Cases (Einstein Anderson: Science Detective)</i> by Seymour Simon	620L
<i>Bones: Our Skeletal System</i> by Seymour Simon	1000L
<i>Summer of Fire: Yellowstone 1988</i> by Patricia Lauber	850L
<i>Unforgettable Natural Disasters</i> by Tamara Leigh Hollingsworth	760L

The Connection Between Motivation and Engagement

Motivation and engagement are two important ingredients for igniting students' learning engines and sparking their desire to work and achieve at school and in life. Success is a great motivator (Guthrie 2004; Guthrie and Wigfield 2000). However, the students who require intervention conferences and reteaching gingerly walk a tight rope because they repeatedly struggle to experience success at school (Allington 2010 and 2011; Robb 2000a; Beers 2002; Tankersley 2005).

During whole-class activities, students who struggle should be mixed with those who are proficient and advanced learners because one group informs the others by sharing their thinking and problem-solving process during discussions (Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock 2004).

The following seven suggestions can help build motivation for learning and engagement with reading for those students who require intervention strategies to move forward (Francois 2015; Guthrie 2004):

1. **Create a community of learners who work in a safe environment with a teacher they trust and know will support them** (Lent 2007). During the first week of school, get to know your students by asking them to complete interest surveys, and answer questions about their reading and writing lives. Also conduct informal conferences with students.
2. **Praise students' successes with a personal note that reminds them how much you recognize their efforts and progress.** Leave a note on a specific piece of work in a students' journal/notebook. A note is concrete evidence of progress, and a student can reread it whenever he or she needs a boost in self-confidence or a nudge to continue to work hard. The note I clipped to the last entry in Isef's journal says: "You have read eleven books in three months and have improved your reading! I am proud of your efforts and see how much you have begun to enjoy reading. Keep up the great work!"

3. **Negotiate goals that are reasonable and that students can reach and experience success getting there.** During a conference with Sylvie, I pointed out the solid progress she's made with inferring and offering text evidence as support. We discussed what her next goal for reading might be, and I encouraged Sylvie to suggest one. "Finding themes," she said. I told her that finding themes is similar to inferring because themes are unstated and that she's chosen an excellent goal. "Can I work with Talia?" Sylvie asks. "Talia's good at that." I praised Sylvie for making this suggestion and was pleased she felt confident enough to work with a peer instead of her teacher.
4. **Find reading materials students can learn from so they can participate in partner and group work and research.** About a week before students chose a book for a unit on natural and man-made disasters, I worked with our school librarian and collected books and magazines that were at students' instructional reading levels. Next, I organized the books into stacks and asked students to select a book from the stack of books that they can learn from and read.
5. **Be positive as you "make the rounds" and always point out to students what they do well in addition to discussing ways they can improve.** I paused at Jamal's desk, read his notebook entry and said, "You've identified the tone of this chapter and explained how it made you feel, and I appreciate your ideas. Can you support your thinking by telling me some words and phrases from the chapter that helped you identify the tone? Excellent! Now add these to your entry."
6. **Be a good listener and show by your actions that you honor and understand students' frustrations and anxieties.** Lelia explained why she wanted to abandon her instructional book. "I've read and reread chapters 1 and 2, and I don't remember a lot. I don't know about that time (middle ages) and the book's boring." I told Lelia that this is the ideal time to switch books and offered her three alternates to browse through. I reminded her to finish the first two chapters over the next two days during independent reading time so she could be ready to discuss these with her partner.
7. **Build relationships by interacting with students, by building self-esteem through positive feedback, and by always showing them what they can achieve and where they can go.** Supporting every student you teach can be a daunting task. As you build a positive learning community, trusting relationships with students, and intervene to improve students' reading, their tense feelings and worries about completing a task can melt away. "Your writing plan for that argument paragraph has an excellent claim and text evidence for one point that's clear and detailed, Lucas! Now let's discuss a second detail to support your argument. You've got it. Add it to your plan."

Instructional Needs of English Language Learners

English language learners in our classrooms cope with many challenges as they develop language skills appropriate for school and everyday English. However, it's important to understand and honor the strengths students have with their native languages (Brown-Chidsey, Bronaugh, and McGraw 2009). Many English language learners will benefit from scaffolding and reteaching lessons in order for them to make steady reading progress. Keep in mind the practices that enable you to remain sensitive to individual's needs and challenges.

- Determine students' instructional reading levels.
- Adjust the curriculum so students can experience success while learning.
- Monitor them carefully to ensure that they are moving forward with specific strategies.

- Give students the gift of time. Slow down the pace of lessons so they can understand and absorb information.
- Whenever possible, work with pairs and small groups to heighten opportunities for language interactions through discussions.
- Help students see progress by pointing out what they *can* do after scaffolding and reteaching.
- Work on helping students set achievable goals so they develop self-efficacy and continue to work hard.

Continue the Conversation

Discuss these prompts and questions with your grade-level team or a peer partner. Reflecting on what you learn, what you know, and your students' performance can support your decision-making process regarding the kind of intervention plan you will develop.

1. Discuss why responsive teaching leads to positive interventions for students.
2. Share ways that you target interventions for struggling readers.
3. Work with colleagues to adjust teaching schedules so you can support all three tiers of students. Use the schedules and suggestions from Figures 1.1 and 1.2.
4. Bring an intervention artifact (e.g., student work or an observation form) to a second meeting, discuss with colleagues, provide feedback, and learn more about helping developing readers.

Chapter 2

Differentiation and Intervention: An Integral Part of Responsive Teaching

Researchers know that in a class of diverse reading abilities, one book or a grade-level anthology will not meet the needs of all learners (Allington 2011; Allington and Gabriel 2012; Tomlinson 2014; Robb 2008; Wormeli 2007). So the question to ponder is, *How do I meet every student's instructional needs to help each student improve?*

Richard Allington points out that by the middle grades and middle school, decoding is usually not an impediment to reading (2010, 2011, and 2012). However, researchers agree that poor general academic vocabulary, lack of targeted interventions, and no independent practice reading are obstacles to comprehending grade-level materials (Beck, McKeown, and Kucan 2013; Baker, Simmons, and Kame'enui 1998; Brozo, Shiel, and Topping 2008; Howard 2009). Two powerful ways that teachers can gradually help their students overcome these obstacles to progress in reading are by: (1) differentiating reading instruction and (2) scaffolding students' learning with targeted interventions.

Differentiating Reading Instruction

In order to prevent backward slide among students, it's important to develop a reading curriculum that has every student reading and progressing. There are three elements to a differentiated reading curriculum:

- Interactive read-aloud
- Instructional reading
- Independent free-choice reading

Interactive Read-Aloud

An interactive read-aloud is a 10- to 15-minute lesson. The teacher reads a text passage to students and thinks out loud in order to model how to apply a reading strategy to improve comprehension. The interactive element is inviting students to ask questions and involving them in the thinking and sharing of ideas. Interactive read-alouds can be presented to the whole class, small groups, and woven into scaffolding or reteaching lessons. These read-alouds provide students with mental models of how to solve reading problems presented by an expert, the teacher (Fountas and Pinnell 2012; Robb 2008,