catching readers

DAY-BY-DAY SMALL-GROUP READING INTERVENTIONS

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Now, let’s look at the daily routines of EIR lessons, the rationale behind them, and some basic information to get you started. I’m putting a lot of my advice in bulleted lists because I encourage you to dip in and out of this book as you launch EIR. First, let’s review four foundational ideas:

- With EIR, you accelerate students’ reading progress based on the same effective reading instruction you use with all students—this is not about remediation.
- Students who are struggling with reading get an extra shot of quality, small-group reading instruction. These children are getting this support in addition to—not instead of—other whole-group, small-group and one-on-one attention.
- Engaging children’s books are chosen for the lessons (see the list of sample books in Chapter 4 [Table 4-2] to guide you).
- Children who come to first grade with relatively weak letter–sound knowledge and phonemic awareness get the help they need. With solid intervention lessons, these children are likely to become independent readers in first grade.
Getting Started: FAQs

In Chapter 6, you will find more information on determining which children might benefit from EIR. But for now, here are some questions teachers commonly ask about setting up the groups.

How many students are in a group?
Each group should have about five to seven students, seven being the maximum. If there are more than seven children in your room who need EIR lessons, I would recommend finding a way to have two groups instead of just one. If you have Title 1 at your school, perhaps the Title 1 teacher can take one group and you can take the other. Then you can periodically switch groups so you have a sense of the strengths and weaknesses of all your readers who need additional support to become successful.

What if I have a bunch of first graders who need EIR?
With two EIR groups, teachers find it works well to put the faster-progressing students in one group and the slower-progressing students in the other. This grouping allows for all learners to learn at about the same pace; the faster-moving students won’t call out answers at the expense of the slower-moving students. Also, the slower-moving students are less inclined to feel discouraged if they do not experience others in their group catching on more quickly.

The students in the faster-progressing group may include a student who will be taken out of EIR before the end of the school year because they have benefited from EIR lessons and are reading on grade level. Guidelines to help you decide if a child no longer needs EIR lessons are provided in Chapter 6.

Who should teach the EIR students?
As hard as it is to teach two EIR groups, should you find you need to do this, I cannot recommend that one of the groups be taught by an instructional aide. Children at risk of reading failure desperately need quality, supplemental reading instruction, which is in addition to instruction from the regular reading program, and which is provided by certified teachers.

What advice do you have in regard to English language learners and EIR?
Often the question comes up as how to handle English language learners (ELLs) and fall placement in EIR. It is true that ELLs, especially children such as Hmong students whose first language sounds are very different from English, will score more poorly on the phonemic awareness assessment than would be the case if they were native English speakers. On the other hand, even if ELLs do relatively poorly on the fall assessment, I would put them in an EIR group in the fall unless they have the opportunity to learn to read in their first language. If possible, I might use something like the kindergarten EIR program (Taylor
forthcoming; also see Lessons for Students Who Need Additional Phonemic Awareness Instruction in Appendix 3-1) to develop oral vocabulary and emergent literacy skills at the same time, but not instead of, their participation in first-grade EIR lessons. You do not want to take the chance of preventing any student from learning to read by postponing their participation in EIR to a later time, such as after the first of the year. Also, I have found that ELL students generally do well in EIR (Taylor 2001).

**How do special education students fare with EIR?**

I have also found that EIR works well with students with learning disabilities. No modifications to the program are recommended.

However, students who are developmentally and cognitively delayed learn well in EIR, but more predictable texts are typically needed than those used in regular EIR lessons to keep the children feeling successful. I would start out with the regular books at EIR Level A and switch to more predictable books, if needed, because the regular EIR stories at Levels B and C get longer and harder. EIR book levels are discussed in Chapter 4 and described in Table 4-1.

**Do the children in EIR groups feel stigmatized?**

Over the many years I’ve been implementing and researching EIR, teachers report that this is not the case. In fact, children love the fast pace, interesting stories, and feelings of success that they experience in EIR lessons. Children who no longer need EIR lessons because they are reading on grade level often do not want to give the group up. All children are in small groups with their teacher, so no one seems to think much about who is with the teacher when. But the children in EIR lessons like the extra time with their teacher if she is the one teaching the EIR group.

**What’s the optimum time of the year to start EIR?**

It is best to begin EIR in October. However, if you have just bought or been given this book and it is February, then for you, February would be the best time to begin. For a February start, you would begin with books at EIR Level C. If these books are too challenging because you have not had students in EIR in the fall, you may have to drop back to Level B books. However, one of the major problems I have seen in the hundreds of first-grade classrooms I have visited over the past 20 years is that teachers often have their students, and especially their struggling readers, reading books that are too easy for them. Remember, in the EIR model we want to challenge students and get them to “glue to the print” so they can figure out how to sound out words as quickly as possible so they can understand new vocabulary and gain meaning from text.
What’s the best way for me to begin to build my confidence with EIR?

After you read through the three-day set of procedures for the basic first-grade teaching routines in Figure 3-1, read the detailed Day 1 procedures that follow and watch the corresponding Day 1 video clips on the accompanying DVD. Soon, the EIR routines will seem very natural, and, as many teachers have reported, you will feel that the extra work on your part is worth the effort! For the past twenty years, I have consistently found that teachers, by February, are very excited about the progress they see their struggling readers making.

How do I know when I am ready to actually teach the lessons?

Once you have read this book, you may not feel completely ready to conduct the lessons, but I have found the best way to learn about EIR procedures is to just jump in and try them. If you have questions, and I’m sure you will, you can reread parts of the book or rewatch particular video clips. Ideally, you will be working with a group of colleagues learning and implementing EIR together so that you can share successes and discuss questions and uncertainties together.
Grade 1 Basic EIR Procedures

DAY 1 LESSON

1. Group rereads a familiar, old story for fluency. Teacher conducts oral reading check or coaches in word recognition.

2. Teacher reads from “new” book and models a variety of word-recognition strategies for three to five words from the story. Teacher discusses meanings of some unfamiliar words with students at point of contact in the story. Children reread story chorally.

3. Teacher coaches for comprehension and discusses meaning of other unfamiliar words not discussed in Step 2.

4. Group completes Sound Box or Making Words activity.

DAY 2 LESSON

1. Group rereads familiar, old story again for fluency. Teacher conducts oral reading check or coaches in word recognition.

2. Group rereads “new” story twice while the teacher coaches as needed.

3. Teacher coaches for comprehension.

4. Group writes a sentence about the story and the teacher gives support as needed. Each child should be engaged in hearing the sounds in the words and in trying to write the letters for these sounds. The students should not be simply copying a sentence as the teacher writes it.

DAY 3 LESSON

1. Group rereads old story for fluency. Teacher conducts oral reading check or coaches in word recognition.

2. Group rereads “new” story twice while the teacher coaches as needed.

3. Teacher coaches for comprehension.

4. Group writes a second sentence about the story and the teacher gives support as needed. Each child should be engaged in hearing the sounds in the words and in trying to write the letters for these sounds. The students should not be simply copying a sentence as the teacher writes it.


Figure 3-1 Grade 1 Basic EIR Procedures*

* It’s helpful to keep this form at your side during EIR lessons. Photocopy for easy reference.
Day 1
Lesson Routine

Every day you and your group of five to seven children will reread “old” EIR stories (that is, those stories read in previous EIR lessons), read the current story, work on comprehension, and do word work or sentence writing. You need to pay careful attention to your timing to get through these four activities in 20 minutes (or 30 minutes at first). I always tell teachers that if they take longer than 20 to 25 minutes, they may be tempted to quit doing EIR because it seems to take up too much time. So try to stay within the 20-minute time frame.

Overview of the Lesson Steps

1. Group members read stories they have read before in EIR lessons for fluency. Typically, the teacher gives them a number of the most recent books to read and they select the ones they like the best. The teacher conducts an oral reading check or coaches in word recognition.

2. Teacher reads from a new book and models a variety of word-recognition strategies for three to five words from the story. The teacher discusses meanings of some unfamiliar words with students at point of contact in the story. Children reread the story chorally.

3. Teacher coaches for comprehension and discusses meaning of other unfamiliar words not discussed in Step 2.

4. Teacher develops phonemic awareness and phonics with Sound Box or Making Words activity.

Day 1, Step 1: Reread Old Stories
(5 min.)

Take the first few minutes of the lesson to build children’s confidence as they reread “old” stories by themselves or with a partner. (I call them old stories because it’s easier for young children to understand than calling them familiar stories.) You will work with one student on word recognition during this phase. Rereading familiar stories gives the children time to experience fluent reading and success. Also, they are building a sight vocabulary as they reread familiar words. (See Chapter 4, Table 4-2, for a list of the kinds of authentic literature children will be reading.)

In the beginning, you’ll need to remind your first graders to keep from telling their partner a word and to give them a hint instead. Since a major emphasis in EIR is on coaching children to be independent, you don’t want a partner calling out a word when a child gets stuck. Guide students to use the following prompts with their reading partner.
Prompts Students Can Give During Partner Reading

- **It starts with**... (child gives his reading partner the beginning sound).
- **This part says**... (child provides his partner with a rhyming part like *at* or *op*).
- **Look at the picture**...
- **Look at this word again**... (for child who misreads a word).

**What the Teacher Does**

Use this rereading time to conduct an oral reading check (described in Chapter 6) with one child, coach a child who is having difficulty catching on to reading, or rotate among students in the group, listening to them read and coaching them in word recognition as needed. You can use the following prompts when coaching students to use word-recognition strategies.

Prompts Teachers Can Use to Coach Students to Use Word-Recognition Strategies

**Self-Monitoring Prompts**

- Good checking! How did you know it wasn’t...?
- You said . . . . Does that make sense? Does that look and sound right?
- Why did you stop? What did you notice?

**Decoding Prompts**

- What can you do to figure out that word?
- What word starts with the letter __ and would make sense?
- Is there a rhyming part you recognize?
- Can you sound it out and come up with a word that makes sense?
- Let’s start again from the beginning of the sentence to see if this word makes sense.
See it in Action

DAY 1
Reading an Old Story

On Day 1, first-grade teacher Celia Huxley begins by having students reread the story they just spent three days on, a summary of *Herman the Helper*. (In this example, because of budget constraints, the teacher had previously read the entire book to the students and then wrote a summary of the story on chart paper and on sheets she folded into little books. Ideally, children would have the actual published books.) Students read with a partner as she coaches one student. Celia says, “I want Nick and Shaun to be partners. Nick reads the first page and Shaun reads the second. Then, when you are done, you read it again, although this time Shaun goes first and then Nick. I also want Jake and Akouma to be partners. As you read, I’m going to listen to Andy read.” Celia listens to Andy read the summary of *Herman the Helper*, but she also pays attention to the other students at the same time. She reminds Akouma to track the words with her finger as she reads and to listen to Jake as he is reading. When Andy gets stuck on the word *himself* but knows *him*, she coaches, “Cover up the first part.” She puts her finger over *him*, and Andy quickly comes up with *himself*.

Day 1, Step 2: Read a New Story

(5 min.)

Read It Aloud

On Day 1, it is important for you, the teacher, to read aloud the new story to the children first so that you can track for them. That is, insist they follow the words you are reading with their eyes. Plan to pause on four to five words and to think aloud about a few strategies for figuring out unfamiliar words. Briefly discuss the meaning of unfamiliar words. Since you have a small group of students, you can read from your book as opposed to a big book, but you need to make sure students are positioned so they can follow along.

In this segment of the lesson, some of the word-recognition strategies you might model are:

- Use the first letter sound plus thinking of what would make sense. (Note, you only use this at the beginning of the year. Later you want students to decode from the beginning to the end of a word.)
› Look for a chunk.
› Sound out each letter and blend the sounds together.
› Cross-check for meaning—make sure the word makes sense in the text.
› Reread after working on a word because this helps readers understand and remember what is read.

**Choral Read**

After you read aloud the story to the children, read it again with them chiming in.

### see it in Action

**Decoding Strategies**

After reading the old story, Celia reads the “new” story with her group. First, she reviews strategies for figuring out words by asking students what they should do when they come to a word they don’t know. Students offer, “Sound it out; point with my finger.” Since it is early in the year and students have not yet mastered looking at every letter in a word to decode it, Celia coaches by talking about partial decoding, “Do you ever look at the beginning letter and think about the story?” She reminds students to keep their eyes on her copy of the story and begins to read and model word-recognition strategies for the students. She models blanket by giving the beginning sounds for /bl/ and thinking aloud about the story: “Pink bl. . . Blanket. I remember there was a pink blanket in the story. I like the way your eyes are up here.” She models how to sound out “patches” by looking for a chunk. “I see a chunk pat, ch says /ch/, /es/, /patches/ does that make sense?” The students say, “Yes.” She reads and makes a mistake, “Mama tried to hid the blanket. That doesn’t sound right. I can try another sound for i.” She gives the long i sound and comes up with hide. “Let’s go back and reread, Mama tried to hide the blanket.” That makes sense.” She also models how to sound out dress by using sequential decoding, /dr/ + /e/ + /s/, /dress/. 
Reading the New Story

Celia then reads the story a second time and has the students chime in. “I’ll point and you look with your eyes.” Students’ eyes are intently focused on the story as they chorally read. However, the teacher is still the leading voice because the students are not yet that confident about their reading. She offers support, “I like how Jake and Akouma have their eyes up here.”

Day 1, Step 3: Coaching for Comprehension
(5 min.)

After reading aloud the story twice, with a focus on decoding strategies, now have students attune to the meaning of the story by asking a high-level question. What is a high-level question? It’s one that gets the children to think about the story. It’s not answered with a yes or a no. The question may prompt students to connect the meaning of the story to their own lives. We have to expect our first graders to think—and to be capable of this level of response to texts. The payoff is worth it: Teachers who ask students to respond to higher-level questions about what they have read see greater growth in students’ reading scores than teachers who do less of this type of questioning (Taylor et al. 2003, 2005). To ensure that each child understands the story sufficiently to participate in the higher-level thinking, take the time to briefly discuss the meanings of potentially unfamiliar but high-utility words not discussed in Step 2.

Coaching for Comprehension: Tips for Success

The purpose of coaching for comprehension is to expand students’ comprehension of what they have read—rather than assess it. Higher-level questions are engaging, challenging, and require students to pause and think before answering. When coaching, you might:

- Ask children to summarize all or part of the story.
- Stretch children’s understanding of the story by asking them interpretive questions.
- Invite children to determine a big idea of the story, or theme.
- Ask children to relate the story to their own lives.
Coaching for Comprehension:
Questions and Prompts for Teachers

During EIR lessons, the teacher questions and prompts children to expand their comprehension of and appreciation for what they just read. You want to pose questions that challenge students to pause and think before answering, that go beyond yes or no responses or factual information. Higher-level questions ask students to interpret a story and focus on a big idea, and get students to make connections between a text and their own experiences or with events in the world about them (Taylor et al. 2003).

Through Your Questioning, Students:
- Summarize all or part of the story.
- Stretch their understanding of the story.
- Relate the story to their life.
- Discuss a big idea or theme of the story.

Examples of Questions to Coach for Comprehension
- Summarize the story. What happened at the beginning of the story? the middle? the end? (Answer in just a few sentences.)
- How are you like Character X? How are you different?
- Why did Character X do Y?
- How did Character X change?
- What did you learn from this story?
- What did you like or not like about this story? Why?

Interpretive Questions Based on the Text
- What kind of person do you think (name of character) is? What in the story makes you think this?
- What are some good/bad things that happen in the story? Why do you think these are good/bad things?
- What do you think is an important thing that happened in the story? Why do you think it is important?
- How does (character in the story) compare to you or a family member? How is the character different?
- Why do you think the author gave the title he/she did to the story?
- What did you like best about (name a character)? Why? What in the story helped you think this way?
- What did you not like about (name a character)? Why? What in the story made you think this way?
- If you were the main character, would you have done the same things the main character did? Why or why not? What might you have done differently?
- Why do you think (character in the story) did . . . ?
- How did (character in the story) change? Why do you think this happened?
- What do you think were three main ideas (or most important ideas) in this article (for nonfiction)?

Higher-Level Questions Relating a Story Concept to Children’s Lives
- Which character is most like you? Why?
- Which character would you like to be like? Why?
- Which character would you like to have as a friend? What in the story helped you make this decision?
- How are you like (character in the story)? How are you different?
- Can you compare anything in this story to (name another story or something else you have done in your classroom that could be compared)? Why do you think these are similar (alike) or different?
- Nonfiction type questions could relate to your state. (e.g., Could you find these animals, events in Minnesota? Why or why not? Where might they happen if they could be in Minnesota?).
- What did you like about this story? Why?

Examples of questions to coach for comprehension include:

- What happened at the beginning of the story? The middle? The end? (Answer in just a few sentences.)
- Why did Character X do Y?
- How did Character X change?
- How are you like Character X? How are you different?
- What is this story really about?
- What did you learn from this story?
- What did you like about this story?

A variety of coaching for comprehension questions are found in Figure 3-2. You may want to print out the comprehension questions in Figure 3-2 and place them in your planning notebook or binder for easy access and reference. Also, on the DVD, there are vocabulary words and comprehension questions for exemplar books at different EIR reading levels. (See Appendices 4-2 and 4-3.)

**See It in Action**

**Coaching for Comprehension**

After reading the new story, Celia asks students a high-level question, or one that a student has to pause and think about, as well as come up with his own idea before answering, such as “What did you like about the story and why?” She coaches for comprehension by asking students to elaborate on their ideas. Jake answers, “I liked when she got Rosa.” Celia asks, “Why?” Jake says he forgot. Celia is patient and offers support. “Did Rosa help Geraldine?” Jake thinks for a moment and says, “Yes, the blanket got turned into a dress for her.” Celia helps Jake make a connection to the story by asking him if he would like a new toy like Rosa. Jake answers, “Yes, but not that, a hockey toy.”
Day 1, Step 4: Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Work  
(Sound Box Activity and Making Words)  

(5 min.)

The Sound Box Activity

This activity is the fourth step on Day 1 and is used from October through December in first grade. (Starting in December or January, the children will switch to doing the Making Words activity instead of the Sound Box activity.)

During this final five minutes of the EIR lesson, children complete sound boxes on three to five words from the story. For examples of words to use in sound boxes with exemplar books, see the DVD Appendix 4-4. Have the children write the letter or letters for one sound per box. This helps them focus on hearing the sounds in words and develops their phonemic awareness. As students gain skill with this activity, you should do less of the exaggerating of sounds for them and let them do this on their own, as needed. They are often more successful if they say the actual words themselves.

You may also want to ask them how many sounds they hear in a word, which will tell them how many boxes they will be using. To help students become more independent, regularly use a short vowel chart in which the vowels and pictures starting with each short vowel sound are displayed, such as a—apple, e—elephant, i—insect, o—octopus, u—umbrella (see an example in Figure 3-3).

After writing the words in boxes, children should touch the words with their finger as they reread them. This helps them make the transition from hearing the sounds in words and writing the letters for these sounds to reading the words.

Figure 3-4 shows how the words that would be good choices to use when reading Things I Like by Anthony Browne (1989) would be inserted in the sound boxes. In with, the th goes together because these letters make just one sound. If a child can’t tell what vowel is at the beginning of in, point to the short vowel chart and ask, “Is it the sound you hear at the beginning of apple? Is it the sound you hear at the beginning of elephant? insect? octopus? umbrella?”

tips

The words that are best for sound boxes depend on the children’s level of development and what you are stressing in your regular reading program. For the most part, you should select words made up of two to four phonemes that have phonetically regular long and or short vowel sounds represented by the CV, CVC, CVCC, or CVCE pattern (e.g., go, hen, went, time from Rosie’s Walk by Pat Hutchins, 1968). Once children are gaining skill in hearing the phonemes in words, you may want to add initial consonant blends (e.g., pl, br) or digraphs (e.g., sh, ch, th).
Short Vowel Chart

Aa    Ee    Ii

Oo    Uu

See the DVD for full-size versions of these forms.

---

Sound Boxes for Things I Like by Anthony Browne

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
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Figure 3-4 Sound Boxes for Things I Like by Anthony Browne
See it in Action

Sound Boxes

Celia Huxley hands out sound box sheets to the five students in her EIR group. As they start with the first word, she says, “Listen carefully. Your job is to hear the sounds the words make and write the letters for them in the boxes. Had. What letter has the /h/ sound?” The students say h. Celia continues, “Write that down in the first box. What do you hear in the middle, /haaad/?” Students reply /a/. “Write a in the second box. What do you hear at the end? /had/?” Students say /d/. “Put your pencils down. Touch the letters like I do as we say the word. /h/, /a/, /d/, /had/.” On the next word, but, Celia reminds the students to say the word before they start writing. When the students give the letter name /b/ for /b/, she reminds them about the short vowel chart. “/u/ sounds like the u in umbrella. At the end of the word, they again reread it like they did with the first word, touching each letter as they say the sound for the letter, and then blending the sound together: /b/, /u/, /t/, /but/. Celia asks someone to use but in a sentence. Akouma says, “I have a blanket, but my mom washed it.” When they come to the word made and Celia mentions the silent e, Jake shouts out that he has a silent e in his name. Celia praises him and tells them all to put the e with the d in the third box because they are putting one sound in a box and e is silent so it does not have its own box. When they come to the word dress, Celia helps the students with the double s at the end of the word. “You don’t hear it, but sometimes words have two s’s at the end of the word.” With Celia, the students read all five words on their chart, sound by sound, and then they blend the sounds together. “You did an outstanding job. Give yourselves a hug.” She tells the students to take their sound box sheets home, read the words to Mom or Dad, and make up a sentence for each word just like they did for the word but.

tips

As with the Sound Box activity, a good strategy with Making Words to help the children be successful is to have them say the words they are making. This is especially important for those who are still struggling with phonemic awareness. In first grade, especially at first, you should have the children spell a word that is close to the “mystery word” on their word before the “mystery word” boxes itself to avoid making the task too difficult.

Making Words

After two or three months of working with the sound boxes, Step 4 in Day 1 shifts to the Making Words activity to meet students’ growing phonics knowledge. In Making Words, based on the work of Pat Cunningham (2009), children are given letter squares that spell a “mystery word” from the story. The teacher tells them to take two or three letters to start with and to make a particular word.
Then the teacher tells them to add a letter, perhaps take away a letter, or perhaps rearrange letters to spell a different word. At the end, the children are to use all of their letters to come up with a “mystery word” from the story. See the following example for how this activity might work. For examples of words to use in making words with exemplar books, see the DVD Appendix 4-5.

**see it in action**

**Making Words**

Celia Huxley has students put the letters a, e, b, t, l, n, and k in a row. (She has the set of letters ready to go in an envelope for each child.) “We are going to make some words using letters,” she tells them. She explains how they will be playing a game that will help them be better readers. “The first word has three letters. Take three letters and make the word, let /l/, /e/, /t/. What sound do you hear for the first letter?” Students say /l/. “What do you hear next? /l/, /e/, /t/?” Students say /e/.”What letter is this?” “What do you hear at the end?” Students say /t/.”What letter is this? Change one letter and make the word net. Now still use the same three letters and move them around to make the word ten. You say it. Everyone did it! Good job. Now take two letters and make the word an. Add two letters and make the word tank. What sound do you hear first? Listen carefully. Change one letter and make it say bank. How many letters do you have left? The next word is going to have seven letters. Can anyone figure out the secret word form the story about Geraldine?” A few students say, “Blanket.” Most students have trouble spelling this word with their squares, so Celia coaches them individually. All are very interested in and intent on the task.

**MAKING WORDS SEQUENCES FOR BOATS BY ANNE ROCKWELL**

Hand out the following letter cards: a, o, b, s, t to each child.

Have students make the following words: at, sat, bat, tab, stab, boats. Say, “Take two letters and make the word at. Change one letter and make the word sat. Change one letter and make the word bat. Rearrange the letters you have to make the word tab. A tab is what you see on the edge of a folder [show a folder with a tab to the students]. Add one letter and make the word stab. Your dad might stab the steak to get it off the grill.” At the end of the activity, say, “Now take all of the letters to make the mystery word from the story [boats].”
Sorting Words as Part of Making Words

After children have made words, it is important to show them cards that contain all of these words. You want students, one at a time, to tell you what words go together, whether this is by first letter or phonogram or by some other pattern. Often children like to see if the others can guess how they sorted their words. It is important to teach children how to sort by common phonograms and to talk about transfer to reading on their own. Regularly remind them that they may be able to figure out a hard word in the future by recognizing the phonogram, or word chunk, such as -ab in stab. For the exemplar book Boats by Anne Rockwell (example used on the previous page), students would hopefully come up with at, sat, and bat for one word sort and tab and stab for another.

The word sorts are an essential part of Making Words that often gets overlooked. You especially want the children to sort words by common phonograms. It is important to explain to the children, like Celia did in the See It in Action for Video 7, that learning to recognize common patterns, chunks, or phonograms will help them decode many words when they are reading on their own. I consistently recommend that teachers be explicit about students’ transfer of strategies to independent reading in this way. In this case, Celia is reminding the children that they can look for these patterns in all the books they read.

Remember, you do not need to use the same exemplar books, but I hope the vocabulary, comprehension, and word work suggestions for these books give you ideas about the vocabulary to focus on, questions to ask, and words to use in word work in the books you do use.

See It in Action

Sorting Words

Celia puts word cards on a pocket chart. The words are the ones the children just made during the Making Words activity: let, ten, net, an, tan, bank, tank, blanket. “I’m going to show you one of the words. What does this word say?” Students say ten and Celia coaches them to come up with net. “What else could go with net? It rhymes with net and had the same ending e, t.” Students come up with let. Celia explains, “Good readers read lots of rhyming words. If you recognize the rhymes and know the patterns, you can read lots of words.” Students come up with tan and an as words that go together, and bank and tank that go together. Celia asks, “Does anyone see another word with this pattern, /ank/?” She has to show them the /ank/ in blanket. She ends by talking again about transfer to reading. “If you see the pattern we have worked on, you’ll be able to read lots of words when you are reading new books.”
Summary of Day 1

As you can see, the four teaching steps for Day 1 are fairly straightforward. Nevertheless, you may want to reread the chapter and replay the video clips before you actually begin to teach Day 1. Also, after you have started to teach EIR lessons, by rereading the chapter, reviewing the videos, and discussing procedures with colleagues who are using EIR, you may come across points that you did not notice on your first reading that will help you be even more effective in your teaching. In the next sections of this chapter, I cover the procedures for Days 2 and 3 of the three-day cycle.

Preparation of Making Words Sequences

- Start with words that follow the CVC or CVCe pattern at Level B. (See description of EIR reading levels in Table 4.1.)
- End with the second-to-the-last word that is close in spelling to the mystery word, especially at Level B (e.g., pig, piglet).
- You can move into some sequences with vowel combinations if you feel your students are ready for this at Level C.
- For reinforcement, try to pick phonics elements that are being taught in your regular reading program at a similar point in time.
- As you are doing a Making Words sequence, notice from the examples, that you typically should only change one letter each time.
- It is also a good idea, on occasion, to simply change the order of the letters, especially at Level B, so you can talk about how the order of the letters makes a difference (e.g., was vs. saw).
- Also, as you are preparing the Making Words sequences across stories, keep in mind that you want a variety of phonograms represented as opposed to using the same word family too often. For example, it would be better to select a mystery word for one story that features the –at word family, and for a second story to select a mystery word that features the –ot word family or two different CVE patterns than to select two stories that both feature the –at word family.
- While repetition is fine, it is also important to expose children to many different word families. I mention this because I realize how much I think about this as I select mystery words for different stories. Selecting a good mystery word, one that gives you a number of words and novel phonograms to make at students’ reading level, isn’t that easy.
Thank you for sampling this resource.

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