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MOBILIZING VISIBLE LEARNING FOR LITERACY

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California is thirsty, and the fourth graders in Alice Nguyen's class know it. They have been reading, writing, and investigating the topic for two weeks. On this morning, she will be conducting a close reading of an informational article on a local water reclamation project in their community. After the close reading lesson, five students will join her for guided instruction, using the article to compose letters to their city council representative. Ms. Nguyen identified these students as being in need of additional instruction through a preassessment of their ability to craft written opinions with evidence.

Other children will use the research materials in the classroom, including web pages she bookmarked, and several digital information articles and videos on the water crisis in the western United States that she has loaded into the learning management system. One collaborative group is using an informational brochure from the local water agency to develop interview questions for a guest speaker who will visit next week. The guest speaker, a local farmer who uses environmentally sound irrigation practices, will answer questions about water use.

Later in the morning, all the students will independently read either *A Drop of Water* (Wick, 1997) or *The Water Cycle* (Harman, 2005) and compare it to the graphic organizer of the water cycle in their science journals. "I chose these two books because they provide a range of complexity for my students without compromising the content," says Ms. Nguyen. She sometimes uses part of her language arts instruction to support her science and social studies content. "We're accomplishing our reading and writing goals, but also acquiring knowledge about content," she remarks.

VISIBLE LEARNING FOR LITERACY

This fourth-grade teacher is mobilizing the principles of visible learning for literacy in each component of the morning's lessons. She holds high expectations for her students ($d = 0.43$) both in terms of the complexity of the content as well as their ability to deepen their knowledge through investigation. She engages in comprehension instruction ($d = 0.60$) using close reading of a complex text and deepening their knowledge through investigation by presenting a problem for them to address ($d = 0.61$). Ms. Nguyen regularly assesses her students for formative purposes such that she can create both teacher-directed and collaborative learning small groups in her classroom ($d = 0.49$). The measures she uses for assessment are generated by the students themselves, and are used to inform their goals ($d = 1.44$). She is mobilizing principles of visible learning such that she is consciously aware of her impact and her students are consciously aware of their learning. In other words, she sees the relationship between visible teaching and visible learning (see Figure 1.1).

EFFECT SIZE FOR EXPECTATIONS = **0.43**

EFFECT SIZE FOR COMPREHENSION PROGRAMS = **0.60**

EFFECT SIZE FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING TEACHING = **0.61**

EFFECT SIZE FOR SMALL GROUP LEARNING = **0.49**

EFFECT SIZE FOR STUDENT EXPECTATIONS = **1.44**

The literacy practices discussed in *Visible Learning for Literacy* (Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2016) highlight effective practices, and importantly, *when* those practices are best leveraged to maximize their impact on student learning. However, we would be remiss if we did not further contextualize their role in quality reading and language arts instruction for elementary-aged learners. Understanding how components of such programs interface with the developmental progressions of children is vital for accelerating students' literacy learning.

Figure 1.1 The Relationship Between Visible Teaching and Visible Learning

Highly effective teachers . . .	Such that students . . .
Communicate clear learning intentions	Understand the learning intentions
Have challenging success criteria	Are challenged by the success criteria
Teach a range of learning strategies	Develop a range of learning strategies
Know when students are not progressing	Know when they are not progressing
Provide feedback	Seek feedback
Visibly learn themselves	Visibly teach themselves

COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE LITERACY LEARNING

Teaching Takeaway

Effective teaching requires knowing which approaches work and when they work.

Many are familiar with the work of the U.S. National Reading Panel (NRP) and its influence on elementary reading programs. In 2000, this team of researchers, educators, and parents reported their findings on a review of thousands of research studies conducted since 1966. Their goal was to identify the necessary instructional components key to learning to read. This group named five strategies as evidence based, meaning that a significant number of studies supported their use in effective literacy teaching. The components included developing an awareness of the sounds of the language (*phonemic awareness*) and the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent (*phonics*). In addition, the NRP identified *fluency development* and *vocabulary development* as essential components of comprehension. Finally, intentional instruction in *comprehension* strategies must occur from the beginning of a child's entry into school.

But literacy requires more than reading—it is further expressed through speaking, listening, writing, and viewing. Together these compose the language arts, which are furthered through the use of the reading, discussion, and composition of literary and informational texts. Effective literacy programs foster student growth through oral language development, composition, investigation, and performance. More specifically, they address three major areas (Connor et al., 2014):

- **Linguistic processes,** including language, word knowledge, and academic knowledge
- **Cognitive processes,** including comprehension monitoring, inferencing, and sense making for self and others
- **Text-specific processes,** that is, how narrative and informational texts are understood and composed

The indicators for effective literacy programs are not narrow and prescriptive, but rather can be accomplished using a number of different scheduling structures. However they are organized, the emphasis should be on sustained periods of instruction, including time each day when students read independently, talk about their learning with others, and write about their reading. There is a focus on assessment for the purpose of informing instructional decisions and providing feedback to learners. In addition, skills and strategies at the letter, word, and text level are taught, and all of this is accomplished through making connections between reading, writing, and spoken language. The following assumptions inform our collective understanding about teaching and learning:

- **Assessment occurs throughout the academic year and the results are used to inform the teacher and the learner.** Time each day is set aside to understand students' literacy progress and provide feedback to learners.
- **A meaningful amount of time is dedicated to developing literacy.** Every day children engage in sustained, organized, and comprehensive experiences with all of the components of the language arts.
- **Literacy instruction is balanced between part-to-whole and whole-to-part approaches.** Children experience instruction in sounds, letters, and words, reading connected text, authentic writing, oral language development, and comprehension instruction.
- **There is a reading-writing-speaking connection.** Development of reading and writing proficiency occurs when students have rich reading experiences, opportunities for purposeful writing, and occasions for meaningful interactions with peers and the teacher.
- **Reading and writing occur daily.** These events occur with the teacher, with peers, and independently.

Ultimately, an elementary literacy program is intended to work across the day. This curriculum includes science, mathematics, and social studies content as well as the visual and performing arts. Because literacy learning enhances these other curricular areas, it is essential that content area reading and writing are incorporated into these literacy experiences.

KNOWLEDGE OF HOW CHILDREN LEARN

As you can imagine, there is no shortage of ideas, theories, and anecdotes to answer the question about how children learn. The research fields of educational psychology and literacy are dedicated to understanding how learning occurs. Our thinking has been influenced by a number of significant principles, including a developmental view of literacy and the importance of meaningful experiences. These principles help us to answer the question of how students learn.

Developmental View of Learning

Perspectives on learning have moved far from the predominant theories of behaviorism and psychoanalysis of the early 20th century. The

influence of the developmental work of Vygotsky, Piaget, Montessori, and others has shaped our approach to learning and the educational systems that support it. Clay (2003) asks,

> How do developmental theories influence teachers' assumptions about children? These explanations, particularly in language and cognitive areas, have created for teachers vocabulary and knowledge structures that allow them to think beyond what the child does to what may be occurring in children's heads. (p. 49)

A developmental perspective in learning means that the teacher understands that a child's response is not merely "correct" or "incorrect" but rather a reflection of what the child understands at that moment. Therefore, the teacher's role is not simply to evaluate what is correct or incorrect, but instead to recognize that children's responses are an opportunity to hypothesize how they are using their knowledge to arrive at an answer. This requires the classroom teacher to understand how children learn as they grow, especially how they develop literacy knowledge. But adopting a developmental view of learning does not mean that we lock children into rigid stages of development. Their cognitive development is either enhanced or inhibited by the context we create for them. A learning environment should support their explorations, errors, and successes, and provide interactions with more capable peers. They need access to challenging, but not defeating, topics of study set within a culturally responsive milieu (American Psychological Association, 2015).

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Meaningful Experiences and Social Interaction

A basic premise of learning is that when experiences are meaningful to the learner, the ability to learn increases. For example, your ability to learn the concepts discussed in this book are directly related to the relevancy of learning about literacy teaching in your life. If you were studying to be an engineer, your ability to learn these principles would be somewhat diminished because the content would not be as useful in an engineering degree program. In the same regard, student learning is driven by the questions formulated with and by the learner (Harste, 1994). Furthermore, learning is social in nature and springs from the interactions we have with others (Halliday, 1975). Therefore, an important role of the teacher is to foster questions and dialogue among students and create meaningful experiences that allow them to interact with one another.

Surface, Deep, and Transfer of Learning

The progression of literacy learning through the elementary years follows a spiral as students move from understanding the surface contours of a skill or concept toward an ever-deepening exploration of what lies beneath. But understanding these progressions requires that teachers consider the levels of learning they can expect from students. How, then, should we define learning, since that is our goal? As John suggested in his 2014 Vernon Wall Lecture (see also Hattie & Donoghue, 2016), learning can be defined as

> [t]he process of developing sufficient surface knowledge to then move to deeper understanding such that one can appropriately transfer this learning to new tasks and situations.

An important role of the teacher is to foster questions and dialogue among students and create meaningful experiences that allow them to interact with one another.

Learning is a process, not an event. The movement from surface learning—the facts, concepts, and principles associated with a topic of study—to deep learning, which is the ability to make relationships and leverage knowledge across domains, in increasingly novel situations, requires careful planning. If students are to deepen their knowledge, they must also regularly encounter situations that foster the transfer and generalization of their learning. The American Psychological Association (2015) notes that "student transfer or generalization of their knowledge and skills is not spontaneous or automatic" (p. 10) and requires intentionally created events on the part of the teacher.

And there is a scale for learning. Some things students understand only at the surface level. Some teachers only assign work that students can complete using only surface knowing! While surface learning is often not valued (it is misconstrued as superficial learning), it should be. You have to know something to be able to do something with it. We've never met a student who could synthesize information from multiple sources who didn't have an understanding of each of the texts. With appropriate instruction about how to relate and extend ideas, surface learning becomes deep understanding. Deep understanding is important if students are going to set their own expectations and monitor their own achievement. But schooling should not stop there. Learning demands that students be able to apply—transfer—their knowledge, skills, and strategies to new tasks and new situations. Transfer is very difficult to attain, and it remains one of our closely kept professional secrets. When was the last time you and your colleagues talked about transfer? Therefore, we often pronounce that students can transfer, but the process of teaching them at this level with the expectation of transfer is too often not discussed.

John uses the SOLO (structure of observed learning outcomes) method developed by Biggs and Collis (1982) to explain the movement from surface to deep learning as a process of first branching out and then strengthening connections between *ideas*:

- One idea
- Many ideas
- Related ideas
- Extended ideas

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We'll offer an example from kindergarten to illustrate. Young children are introduced to naming the letters of the alphabet initially through song (*one idea*) that soon morphs into *many ideas*: that a letter has a certain shape, and one or more sounds are associated with that letter. But in order to apply it, the child needs lots of opportunities to begin to *relate* an increasing number of ideas to one another. Therefore, she learns to recognize the letter within words, across an ever-broadening range of print, and to use her knowledge of the letters and sounds to decode familiar and then new words. In time, these ideas are *extended*, as she composes using her knowledge of letters, sounds, decoding, and meaning in order to represent her message in a way others can understand. Transfer is occurring throughout, as she moves from one idea deeper to an extension of ideas. But the transfer of knowledge is not seamless and linear. You see it in children's developmental spelling as they use but sometimes confuse their growing knowledge.

The ultimate goal, and one that can be hard to realize, is transfer. When students reach this level, learning has been accomplished. Transfer occurs throughout surface and deep learning. In fact, *all* learning is really transfer, provided understanding is involved (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). By this, we mean that transfer is more than memorization; it also involves recognition on the part of the learner about what has occurred. The kindergartener who *knows* she is reading and writing is bearing witness to her own transfer of learning. At each phase of learning, specific instructional and curricular methods rise to the top. In other words, it isn't just knowing what works, but rather, what works *best*. Figure 1.2 captures some literacy learning approaches that are especially effective at the surface, deep, and transfer phases of learning.

PHASES OF READING DEVELOPMENT

As children learn to read, they move through a series of phases of development. Classroom instruction must be responsive to these phases of development in order for students to acquire the skills necessary to read and the tools necessary to understand what they are reading. Anyone who has spent time with children knows that the expectations for a six-year-old differ from those for a twelve-year-old. This is because these two

Figure 1.2 High-Impact Literacy Approaches at Each Phase of Learning

Surface Learning		Deep Learning		Transfer Learning	
Strategy	**ES**	**Strategy**	**ES**	**Strategy**	**ES**
Wide reading (exposure to reading)	0.42	Questioning	0.48	Extended writing/ writing programs	0.44
Phonics instruction	0.54	Concept mapping	0.60	Peer tutoring	0.55
Direct instruction	0.59	Close reading (study skills)	0.63	Problem-solving teaching	0.61
Note-taking	0.59	Self-questioning	0.64	Synthesizing information across texts	0.63
Comprehension programs	0.60	Metacognitive strategy instruction	0.69	Formal discussions (e.g., debates)/classroom discussion	0.82
Annotation (study skills)	0.63	Reciprocal teaching	0.74	Transforming conceptual knowledge	0.85
Summarizing	0.63	Class discussion	0.82	Organizing conceptual knowledge	0.85
Leveraging prior knowledge/ prior achievement	0.65	Organizing and transforming notes	0.85	Identifying similarities and differences	1.32
Vocabulary instruction	0.67	Cooperative learning 0.59			
Repeated reading	0.67				
Spaced practice	0.71				
Expectations of teacher 0.43					
Teacher clarity 0.75					
Feedback 0.75					
Student expectations of self 1.44					

children differ from one another physically, emotionally, and socially. As well, we view literacy learning through the lens of developmental phases. As we noted earlier, these phases are not rigid and stagebound, for little in human development (except perhaps puberty) is marked by an irreversible advancement from one condition to another. Instead, we look at phases of literacy development as markers of progression that

many learners pass through. Not every learner will exhibit all the behaviors, nor will any learner be solely in one phase at a given time. Typical phases of reading can be described as the following:

- **Emergent readers** are experimenting with reading. During this phase they are learning that print carries a message and how books work, and they are beginning to recognize letters and words.
- **Early readers** are reading simple texts and have a larger bank of words they can read and write. They utilize a variety of basic strategies to figure out known and unknown words.
- **Transitional readers** are reading a variety of texts and understand that each has its own unique text structure. When seeking information, they consult more than one source. They are also becoming more aware of the strategies they are using.
- **Self-extending readers** read a wide range of texts and apply critical literacy skills to analyze the authenticity and value of the information. They continue to acquire increasingly more sophisticated literacy skills through extensive reading and discussion.

Teaching Takeaway

The goal of schooling is for students to apply what they have been taught—to transfer their learning to new situations, tasks, and problems.

All readers in every phase of reading utilize a number of clues to figure out the print on the page. These clues are collectively called *cueing systems*. Emergent and early readers rely on a set of cueing systems in order to read a text. These can be thought of as clues readers extract from their knowledge of how print works to determine what the squiggly black lines on the page represent. Over time, these cues become more consolidated and their reading becomes more fluent. Fluency refers to a reader's ability to read smoothly, accurately, and with appropriate pace and expression.

- **Graphophonic cues** are those associated with the relationship between the symbols (letters) and their sounds. As learners develop these sound/symbol relationships, they recognize the patterns in clusters of letters (e.g., *pan, man,* and *fan*).
- **Syntactic cues** are governed by the grammatical rules of the language. This does not mean that the reader can name the rule, but rather that the reader recognizes that words occur in a particular order.
- **Semantic cues** are connected to the meaning of the words. A reader using semantic cues reads, "The house was small and blue" not "The horse was small and blue."

- **Pragmatic cues** are related to the social use of language in a culture. For instance, readers use these cues to recognize that *Mother, Mom, Mommy,* and *Ma* are names for the same person.

Young children learn to activate these cueing systems through reading connected text. Readers are not encouraged to use one cueing system at a time, but rather to utilize all the cueing systems as they read. When students read connected text, they apply comprehension strategies to support their understanding of the meaning of the words.

As children advance through phases of reading development, they acquire an increasingly larger bank of cues, now termed comprehension strategies. The reading comprehension strategies utilized by transitional and self-extending readers include previewing text, identifying main ideas, making inferences, rereading, and utilizing metacognition to monitor their understanding and reflect on the learning (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991). These comprehension and associated vocabulary strategies are collectively referred to as *unconstrained skills,* in that they continue to strengthen and deepen throughout one's lifetime (Paris, 2005). In contrast, *constrained skills* in reading include phonemic awareness, alphabetics, phonics, and fluency. Constrained skills have boundaries and limits (e.g., there are 26 letters in the English alphabet; fluent silent reading norms are finite). Therefore, elementary reading instruction covers a combination of the constrained foundational skills and unconstrained comprehension skills. The relative emphasis on each shifts between kindergarten and fifth grade as students master foundational skills and therefore need less instructional time devoted to them.

PHASES OF WRITING DEVELOPMENT

The development of a writer begins even before a child can compose in a manner that is understood by others. By the age of two or three, many toddlers are scribbling messages on paper and then "reading" their message to a delighted adult. Young children also visually represent ideas and concepts through drawing, an important literacy skill. Students entering kindergarten are exhibiting these very early writing skills. As with reading, they move through a series of phases, often displaying traits in more than one phase at a time.

- **Emergent writers** are learning how print works, especially in seeing the permanence of writing. They can recount events in sequence, such as giving directions or telling a story, and are using known letters and words in their writing.

- **Early writers** possess a larger bank of known letters and words and are able to use them more quickly in their writing, although the writing is sometimes constrained by the limits of their written vocabulary. An early writer's work is characterized by conventions of storytelling, especially formulaic writing such as *Once upon a time*.
- **Transitional writers** apply more sophisticated text structures to their work and can utilize structures used by other authors to create original text, such as using their growing knowledge of a writer's craft and text types to organize the message. Their sentences are more complex and they are beginning to use transitional phrases.
- **Self-extending writers** write for a variety of purposes and audiences. Their word choices are sophisticated and flexible and they engage in all aspects of editing to refine their work.

At every phase of writing development, the act of writing must be promoted. Students need opportunities to write and to receive intentional instruction on the aspects of writing. Like cueing systems in reading, these aspects of writing instruction foster acquisition of skills and strategies necessary for writing. These include conventions of language, purposes and related structures for writing, and instruction in the craft of writing and the processes writers use to revise. It is most important to help students realize that writing is nearly always for a purpose—and the form of writing may differ depending on the purpose—whether it is to persuade, instruct, narrate, describe, explain, or relate.

It probably won't surprise you to hear that writing is an incredibly complex skill. Anyone who has faced a blank page without a clue as to how to begin knows this. Any complex skill is going to require an equally sophisticated set of instructional techniques.

It probably won't surprise you to hear that writing is an incredibly complex skill. Anyone who has faced a blank page without a clue as to how to begin knows this. Any complex skill is going to require an equally sophisticated set of instructional techniques to teach students to write well. The challenge, of course, is that the act of writing leads writers in directions they may not have expected. Writer Anne Lamott said that "very few writers know what they are doing until they've done it" (1995, p. 22). And she was talking about professional writers!

The goal is to get students writing frequently and fluently using a growing repertoire of skills regarding the conventions of the language such as spelling, punctuation, and word choice. These skills are developed through

- Intentional instruction
- Exposure to other good writers through reading experiences with rich narrative and expository text

- Time to experiment with the craft of writing by creating original texts that serve many purposes, including conveying experiences, informing or explaining, and persuading others using opinions with evidence

We know this:

- Good writing does not occur only because of instruction on conventions.
- Good writing does not occur only after students read good literary and informational texts.
- Good writing does not occur only through writing a lot using lots of different formats.
- Good writing occurs when all of these things are interwoven, in intentional ways that allow students to witness their increasing writing prowess.

Although learners move through developmental phases of reading and writing acquisition, no student will move neatly and conveniently from one phase to the next. This is especially true of students with diverse learning needs in our classrooms, including English language learners and students with disabilities. These learners require more specialized approaches to instruction that support growth in reading and writing.

Teaching Takeaway

Learning does not occur in neat, linear stages. Learning is more staccato than flow. Try to adjust your approaches to meet the needs of students where they are.

FORMATS AND SCHEDULING

The purpose of this book is to explore what teaching literacy looks like in a visible learning classroom at the K–5 level. Logistics are a big part of that. Organization of an elementary literacy program should allow for students to participate in a model of instruction that allows them to acquire, consolidate, and deepen their literacy skills and strategies on a daily basis. In addition, students read and write every day, collaborate with peers, and work independently. The teacher meets with students as a whole group, in small groups, and individually. While not every student meets with the teacher every day, these meetings occur several times a week. In most districts, a two-hour block of time is devoted to literacy instruction. Therefore, the following section describes how time is used across a 120-minute time period. The language arts workshop diagram in Figure 1.3 provides an example of instructional phases within this block.

The learning intentions and success criteria are reinforced during the literacy block, so that students remain focused on what they are learning, why they are learning, and where they are in their learning.

Figure 1.3 Sample Time Distribution in a Two-Hour Block

Time Period	Purpose	Features	Who?	Purpose	Features	Who?
20 minutes	*Focused Instruction*	Establish learning intentions and success criteria Provide direct instruction for surface level acquisition and consolidation Set goals with students	Whole class			
20 minutes	*Needs-Based Instruction I*	Needs-based skills and strategies development with teacher	Small group	*Collaborative Learning*	Deep acquisition and consolidation of knowledge with peers	Balance of the class
20 minutes	*Needs-Based Instruction II*	Needs-based skills and strategies development with teacher	Small group	*Collaborative Learning*	Deep acquisition and consolidation of knowledge with peers	Balance of the class

Time Period	Purpose	Features	Who?	Purpose	Features	Who?
10 minutes	*Focused Instruction*	Check-in with class and reteach as needed	Whole class			
40 minutes	*Conferring and Assessing*	Provide and receive feedback, assess progress, and reteach as needed	Individual students	*Independent Reading and Writing*	Transfer of skills and concepts	Balance of the class
10 minutes	*Focused Instruction*	Revisit learning intentions and success criteria Closure Students self-assess and reflect on goals	Whole class			

Time Organization

EFFECT SIZE FOR TEACHER CLARITY = **0.75**

Up to about the first 20 minutes is devoted to focused instruction, which consists of time devoted to sharing the learning intentions and success criteria with students. This isn't simply posting them on the board and giving them cursory attention. Instead, students and the teacher engage in dialogue to parse and clarify. The learning intentions and success criteria are reinforced during the literacy block, so that students remain focused on what they are learning, why they are learning, and where they are in their learning. This is a crucial step in making learning visible to students. We discuss learning intentions and success criteria in depth in Chapter 2.

Video 1
Lesson Elements, Grades K–5

https://resources.corwin.com/VL-LiteracyK-5

To read a QR code, you must have a smartphone or tablet with a camera. We recommend that you download a QR code reader app that is made specifically for your phone or tablet brand.

The teacher also uses these first 20 minutes to model and think aloud, and to provide any necessary direct instruction that is needed. Before transitioning to the next phase, the teacher returns to the learning intentions and success criteria, and students name or write the goals they have for themselves for the day.

EFFECT SIZE FOR SMALL GROUP LEARNING = **0.49**

Next, the teacher meets with small groups of students for 20 minutes for needs-based instruction in reading or writing. Students in these groups have been selected based on formative use of assessment information, and are often (but not always) clustered due to similar needs. While the teacher meets for guided instruction, the rest of the class is engaged in collaborative learning.

EFFECT SIZE FOR COOPERATIVE VERSUS INDIVIDUALISTIC LEARNING = **0.59**

Collaborative learning may occur in pairs or in slightly larger groups, but all students are working with at least one other person. Depending on the purposes, students may be consolidating previously learned, but still new, knowledge. Conversely, they may be deepening their knowledge of a skill or concept with peers. For example, students may be involved in word study with a partner as they sort words conceptually and then morphologically.

After two rotations, students independently read. This is an opportunity for them to apply what they have been learning to new text, thus further fostering transfer. While students read independently, the teacher meets with individual students to confer, assess, and provide feedback about reading, working with students toward self-reported goals.

Later in the literacy block, students work on their independent writing for another 25 minutes while the teacher again confers and assesses, this time for writing.

Of course, not all instruction necessary for effective practice can be offered in one lesson. This requires a perspective across the week to see

how instruction unfolds. There is flexibility, of course, in how this is implemented on a daily basis. Some days use less time for conferring, as additional time may be devoted to phonics, vocabulary instruction, handwriting, or oral language development.

Across a Week

Figure 1.4, on the next page, features a sample weekly schedule for language arts instruction. This suggested schedule is not meant to be a rigid structure that follows the same pattern day after day. Notice that on some days the teacher is collecting assessment information, while at other times he or she meets with individual students to confer about reading and writing. In addition, while small group, needs-based instruction occurs each day, it is not always with the same students. It is critical not only to assess student learning but to plan time for reteaching concepts students may not have mastered the first time. (In Chapter 7 we will discuss in more detail ways to assess your impact on student learning.) In our experience, well-intentioned teachers do not ever get to reteaching because they do not set aside time to do so. We suggest that time for reteaching is planned each week. If you don't need to reteach anyone during a particular week, you can move on with your curriculum.

In our experience, well-intentioned teachers do not ever get to reteaching because they do not set aside time to do so.

A note about sample schedules—they are only intended to give a broad guide to the structure of a literacy block of instruction. We believe that the best teaching is responsive teaching that has an impact on student learning. Good teachers watch their students closely to see how the lesson is going and what students are learning. When teachable moments occur, when a student asks a profound question, when a puzzled look on a child's face suggests the child is confused, it's appropriate to follow the child's lead. This undoubtedly messes up the carefully crafted schedule. So be it. After all, who's the schedule for? If something has to give on a particular day in order to accommodate these important events, be flexible about it. Don't let the occasional deviations from the schedule discourage you. But it is equally important to remember that expected lapses in schedules do not mean there should be no schedule at all. Children thrive on knowing what to expect, and teachers find they accomplish far more when a thoughtful schedule is planned and implemented.

Video 2
Elements of Instruction, Grades 1, 3, and 5

https://resources.corwin.com/VL-LiteracyK-5

Across Content Areas

When you read the description of Ms. Nguyen's morning in the chapter opening, you may have been surprised to see science content being taught. Because literacy development is essential to learning content, it

Figure 1.4 Sample Weekly Distribution of Time

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Focused Instruction **20 minutes**	Reading (comprehension strategies instruction)	Writing (craft, purpose, organization)	Reading (comprehension strategies instruction)	Writing (conventions and revision)	Reading (comprehension strategies extension)
Guided Instruction 1 **20 minutes** OR *Collaborative Learning 1* **20 minutes**	Guided or Scaffolded Reading (Group 1)	Guided Writing (Group 3)	Guided or Scaffolded Reading (Group 3)	Guided Writing (Group 1)	Close reading, extended discussion, and writing about a complex text
	Collaborative Reading: Book discussion or reciprocal teaching for deep consolidation (Group 2) Stations for rehearsal (Groups 3 and 4)	Collaborative Writing: Oral planning and composition of text (Groups 1, 2, and 4)	Collaborative Reading: Book discussion or reciprocal teaching for deep consolidation (Group 4) Stations for rehearsal (Groups 1 and 2)	Collaborative Writing: Peer critiques (Groups 2, 3, and 4)	
Guided Lesson 2 **20 minutes** OR *Collaborative Work 2* **20 minutes**	Guided or Scaffolded Reading (Group 2)	Guided Writing (Group 4)	Guided or Scaffolded Reading (Group 4)	Guided Writing (Group 2)	
	Collaborative Reading: Book discussion or reciprocal teaching for deep consolidation (Groups 3 and 4) Stations for rehearsal (Group 1)	Collaborative Writing: Oral planning and composition of text (Groups 1, 2, and 3)	Collaborative Reading: Book discussion or reciprocal teaching for deep consolidation (Groups 1 and 2) Stations for rehearsal (Group 3)	Collaborative Writing: Peer critiques (Groups 1, 3, and 4)	
Focused Instruction	Check in with class and reteach as needed	Check in with class and reteach as needed	Check in with class and reteach as needed	Check in with class and reteach as needed	Check in with class and set goals for genius hour exploration
Independent Reading With Conferring **20 minutes**	Assess formatively individual students in reading and provide and receive feedback	Confer with five students on reading and provide and receive feedback	Assess formatively individual students in reading and provide and receive feedback	Confer with five students on reading and provide and receive feedback	Genius hour: What do these texts inspire you to do?
	Balance of class is reading teacher-selected texts linked to unit of study	Balance of class is reading teacher-selected texts linked to unit of study	Balance of class is reading teacher-selected texts linked to unit of study	Balance of class is reading teacher-selected texts linked to unit of study	
Independent Writing With Conferring **20 minutes**	Assess individual students in writing	Confer with five students on writing	Assess individual students in writing	Confer with five students on writing	
	Balance of class is composing	Balance of class is composing	Balance of class is composing	Balance of class is composing	Oral language development and metacognition
Focused Instruction Closure Goal Setting **10 minutes**	Oral language development and metacognition	Oral language development and metacognition	Oral language development and metacognition	Oral language development and metacognition	Oral language development and metacognition

Available for download at **https://resources.corwin.com/VL-LiteracyK-5**

only makes sense that content areas are incorporated as well as taught at other points in the day. There is simply too much content knowledge to ever be effectively taught in the brief amount of time typically devoted to these subjects.

As well, we are cautious about the uneven use of informational texts in literacy instruction at the elementary levels. Students typically have far more extensive experience with reading stories than with reading nonfiction, and this impacts both their background knowledge and their understanding of how to read these texts. Duke (2000) reported that in some schools, first graders averaged 3.6 minutes per day with informational text. Even with the increased attention in the last decade to the use of informational texts in reading and language arts, some elementary teachers report that relatively little time is devoted to informational text comprehension and composition. Jeong and colleagues' study of second-, third-, and fourth-grade classrooms reported that a decade after Duke's groundbreaking study, instruction in these classrooms had increased by only 1 minute in Grade 2, with a more robust increase of 16 minutes in Grades 3 and 4 (Jeong, Gaffney, & Choi, 2010). However, keep in mind that these findings are for the *entire day*, not just the traditional literacy block. Students simply must have frequent opportunities to read and write informational text within the literacy curriculum if they are to master the many content standards before them. Figure 1.5 on the next page contains a sample schedule of how the this might fit into a balanced curriculum.

SPOTLIGHT ON THREE TEACHERS

To help you further visualize how elementary teachers use the practices highlighted as most effective in *Visible Learning for Literacy*, we will follow the practices of three teachers throughout the remaining chapters:

- Iman Hakim is a first-grade teacher in California. The 29 students in her classroom represent the rich diversity found in her community and include many English learners who speak either Spanish, Arabic, or Tagalog as a first language. Ms. Hakim is a teacher-leader in her school, and she serves as grade-level chair, heads the school's collegial coaching efforts, and has hosted student teachers over the years. An important issue for her is building family and community connections. "These are young children who are profoundly influenced by their families," she noted, "and as a school we are entrusted by families to care for their most valuable assets. I don't think making homes more 'school-like' is the answer. We need to make our schools more 'home-like' so that families feel welcome in meaningful ways."

Figure 1.5 How a Literacy Block Fits Into a Balanced Curriculum

Sample Weekly Schedule for the Entire Day

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00–8:15 AM	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting
8:15–8:30 AM	Independent Reading	Independent Reading	Independent Reading	Independent Reading	Independent Reading
8:30–9:00 AM	Word Study	Word Study	Word Study	Word Study	Word Study
9:00–11:00 AM	Literacy Block *Links to science or social studies*	Literacy Block *Links to science or social studies*	Literacy Block *Links to science or social studies*	Literacy Block *Links to science or social studies*	Literacy Block *Links to science or social studies*
11:00–11:30 AM	Visual and Performing Arts	Music	Physical Education	Library	Physical Education
11:30 AM–12:15 PM	Lunch and Recess	Lunch and Recess	Lunch and Recess	Lunch and Recess	Lunch and Recess
12:15–1:15 PM	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics
1:15–2:15 PM	Science	Social Studies	Science	Social Studies	Science
2:15–2:30 PM	Afternoon Meeting	Afternoon Meeting	Afternoon Meeting	Afternoon Meeting	Afternoon Meeting

- Kiara Mitchell is a third-grade teacher in Virginia. She has 33 students in her classroom, and most qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, a common measure of socioeconomic status. Most of her students speak English as a first language as well as African-American English. Ms. Mitchell is a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) in elementary education. When asked about what she sees as being a driving factor in her teaching, she responded, "issues about equitable education and opportunities to learn," and then continued, "I want the students in this school to see possibilities in themselves and in the world."
- Edward Hurley is a Year-5 teacher at a remote primary school in the Northern Territory of Australia. Many of his 26 students identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and they speak one or more

non-English heritage languages. "Attendance and literacy levels are a major concern for me," says Mr. Hurley, who is a certified Highly Accomplished Teacher (and thus a member of the Australian Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher HALT association). "I see my role as being one who removes barriers for these children, both through my own practice and in mentoring my colleagues."

These three teachers, although in different regions and contexts, operate under three important assumptions:

- Meaningful change occurs when teachers, families, and communities collaborate to strengthen learning.
- Language and cultural diversity is a strength to be leveraged, not a deficit to be corrected.
- Expert teaching requires monitoring student progress, providing feedback, and adjusting lessons based on the learning of students.

In the chapters that follow, you will encounter these three teachers and view the lesson plans they have developed for themselves (see Figure 1.6 on the next page). The lesson template is not meant to be delivered in a strictly linear fashion, but rather is intended to serve as a way to guide your thinking about the elements of the lesson. In addition, you will more briefly meet a number of teachers from other grade levels whose practices illustrate the approaches under discussion. While no book on literacy instruction could ever entirely capture every context or circumstance you encounter, we hope that the net effect of this book is that we provide you with a process for incorporating visible learning consistently and throughout the day.

CONCLUSION

Literacy instruction that capitalizes on visible learning is established upon principles of learning. A developmental approach to reading and writing is utilized to foster literacy acquisition. This focus on the individual learner makes this approach ideal for students with language or learning needs. In addition, a visible learning for literacy approach leverages high-impact instruction to accelerate student learning through surface, deep, and transfer phases of learning by engaging them in direct, dialogic, and independent learning tasks. Finally, students learn best when there is a solid organizational structure that allows them to learn in a variety of ways and with a variety of materials. In other words,

Figure 1.6 Lesson Plan Template

Assessed Need: I have noticed that my students need:
Standard(s) Addressed:
Text(s) I Will Use:
Learning Intention for This Lesson:
Success Criteria for This Lesson:
Direct Instruction: Model: Strategies/skills/concepts to emphasize Guide and Scaffold: Questions to ask Assess: These are the students who will need further support
Dialogic Instruction: Teacher-Directed Tools (e.g., anticipation guides, 4 Corners activity, K-W-L, to spark discussion) Student-Enacted Tools (e.g., literature circles, reciprocal teaching, debate, Socratic seminar, that are primarily driven by students) Assess: These are the students who will need further support
Feedback Opportunities:
Independent Learning and Closure:

learning becomes visible for students. As we will highlight in each chapter that follows, visible learning students are students who:

- Can be their own teacher
- Can articulate what they are learning and why
- Can talk about how they are learning—the strategies they are using to learn
- Can articulate their next learning steps
- Can use self-regulation strategies
- Are assessment capable—they understand the assessment tools being used and what their results mean, and they can self-assess to answer the key questions: Where am I in my learning? Where am I going? What do I need to do to get there?
- Seek, are resilient to, and aspire to challenge
- Can set mastery goals
- See errors as opportunities and are comfortable saying that they don't know and/or need help
- Positively support the learning of their peers
- Know what to do when they don't know what to do
- Actively seek feedback
- Have metacognitive skills and can talk about these (systematic planning, memory, abstract thinking, critical thinking, problem solving, etc.) (p. 6)

In other words, a visible learner notices when he or she is learning and is proactive in making sure that learning is obvious. As we engage in discussions about literacy learning in this book, we will return to these indicators that students are visible learners to explore how they might look in the classroom.