SECTION III

Quality Instruction

In South Carolina, ***quality instruction*** means engaging students in learning and problem solving while meeting the diverse needs of all students. Good instruction is creative and motivating yet is carefully thought out with the interests and abilities of the students in mind. It is flexible and individually challenging for gifted students and for those who learn at a slower pace. For these reasons, Response to Intervention (RTI) SC recommends a three-tier, service-delivery model in which all students receive high-quality, research- supported, differentiated academic instruction with fidelity as well as research-supported behavior strategies.

Quality instruction does not happen by chance. There is no single best practice in delivering quality instruction. Delivery methods depend on the content, the specific learning objectives, and the needs of the learners in the classroom. Therefore, quality instruction is a matter of planning, of delivery, and of evaluating the effectiveness of instruction and its impact on student learning. The overall goal is for students to master concepts and skills. Mastery learning involves sequencing, monitoring, and control of the learning process. RTI is a comprehensive delivery model that encompasses all of the needs mentioned in this section on Quality Instruction. For a more detailed description of the model please see ***Section 1*** in this document. Also refer to ***Literacy Matters, the SC Comprehensive Literacy State Plan***, and the Effective Practice section.

Planning Quality Instruction

Quality instruction facilitates learning when it is aligned to the internal learning processes of students. Therefore, instruction is a planned set of external events that support learning processes. Educational learning theorist Robert Gagné (1985) developed instructional design principles of planning for instruction that lead to efficient learning. Some of those principles are as follows:

1. The goals of the instruction, the resources available, and the learning time allotted are made explicit.

2. A framework for the academic content to be taught, including the learning goals and objectives, is developed.

3. Learning goals are broken down into major units of instruction with skills and concepts to be learned.

4. The skills and concepts to be learned are sequenced into cumulative lessons.

5. Lessons are broken down into specific instructional activities, and the characteristics of the learner are taken into account.

6. The procedures for the assessment of learning are determined.

7. The various instructional methodologies are reviewed and chosen.

8. Instruction is evaluated for its effectiveness, and revisions are made as needed.

In *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction*, Robert J. Marzano includes these questions to guide the development of a teacher's instructional practice:

- What will I do to establish and communicate learning goals, track student progress, and celebrate success?
- What will I do to help students effectively interact with new knowledge?
- What will I do to help students practice and deepen their understanding of new knowledge?
- What will I do to help students generate and test hypotheses about new knowledge?
- What will I do to engage students?
- What will I do to establish or maintain classroom rules and procedures?
- What will I do to recognize and acknowledge adherence and lack of adherence to classroom rules and procedures?
- What will I do to establish and maintain effective relationships with students?
- What will I do to communicate high expectations for all students?
- What will I do to develop effective lessons organized into a cohesive unit?

(Marzano, 2007)

High Progress Classrooms

A key feature of high progress classrooms is high quality instruction. Rigorous academic standards and content are not enough. Teachers create and maintain a high progress classroom during the course of the school year. High progress classrooms feature high- quality instruction that encourages ***students to interact purposefully with the content.***

Various instructional strategies may be used to involve students in their own learning. Often these strategies use real-world examples of the concepts presented. In addition, ***instruction is on the appropriate level for students***.

Teachers take into account what students already know and challenge them to learn more. Teachers use a variety of experiences to access multiple ways of learning concepts. The teacher's role is to ensure that no students slip between the cracks.

Finally, high quality instruction is a critical element in creating an ***environment that is conducive to learning.*** Teachers encourage students to ask questions and challenge them to engage deeply with the content. Teachers ask questions that inspire thinking and help students make connections among concepts. A teacher provides clear explanations during the lesson. Effective lessons engage students in meaningful, intellectual work, as the teacher guides to ensure that students make sense of key academic concepts.

Delivering Quality Instruction

There are several methods of delivering quality instruction. These methods depend on the content being taught and the needs of the learners in the classroom. All instructional methodologies have certain characteristics that have been found to facilitate learning. The chart below details these characteristics, or 'instructional events,' and their purposes:

Instructional Event	Purpose
1. Gain the learner's attention and provide motivation for learning	Direct the learner to the purpose and relevance of the lesson
2. Present the learning objective(s)	Make the expectation of performance explicit
3. Review prerequisites and establish prior knowledge	Provide the foundation for new learning related to what a student already knows
4. Present new content clearly and precisely	Present procedures, processes and tasks to be learned while maintaining connection to prior knowledge
5. Guide the learning process	Elaborate the content by examples, descriptions, stories to provide a rich knowledge structure
6. Perform skills and apply concepts	Detect learner misunderstandings (formative assessment)
7. Provide feedback about performance	Inform learner of the accuracy of his knowledge
8. Assess performance	Test the knowledge and skills of the learner
9. Guide retention and transfer	Strengthen knowledge by practice and application in different contexts or situations

(From Gagné *Principles of Instructional Design*, reprint 2005)

Methods of Delivering Instruction

The following is a list, in alphabetical order, of methods and skills for delivering quality instruction. This list is not exhaustive and does not recommend one method over another.

Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction (DI) is a model for teaching that emphasizes well-developed and carefully planned lessons designed around small learning increments and clearly defined and prescribed teaching tasks. It is based on the theory that clear instruction eliminating misinterpretations can greatly improve and accelerate learning.

"Reading instruction is most effective when teachers provide students with direct and explicit teaching in the specific skills and strategies that are necessary for reading proficiency. The finding holds for students across grades and ages (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; National Reading Panel, 2000; Torgesen et al., 2007). Although such instruction is effective for teaching a range of reading skills and strategies, it is especially effective in helping students comprehend fully what they read (Nokes & Dole, 2004)."

Effective teachers, those who beat the odds in preventing student failure, combine direct, explicit instruction of strategies and concepts with other teaching approaches, nesting it within complete programs of literacy development (Graves, 2004; Langer, 2002). They provide students with content-rich materials, interact with them in meaningful discussions, and engage them in purposeful writing, all of which afford students opportunities to explore how to use the strategies and clarify concepts across diverse contexts, and so make the strategies and concepts their own.

The exemplary model of direct, explicit instruction consists of five phases that allow teachers to scaffold instruction, gradually shifting and releasing responsibility for completing a task from themselves to students (Joyce & Weil, 2000; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983;Rosenshine & Meister, 1992;Vygotsky, 1978).

The five phases include the following:

- Orientation
- Presentation
- Structured Practice
- Guided Practice
- Independent Practice

Initially, in direct, explicit instruction, teachers activate students' relevant prior knowledge and experiences and help them to connect it to the new knowledge they will gain from the lesson.

The basic philosophy of DI is found in the following statements:

- All children can be taught.
- All children can improve academically and in terms of self-image.
- All teachers can succeed if provided with adequate professional learning opportunities.
- Low performers and disadvantaged learners must be taught at a faster rate than typically occurs if they are to catch up to their higher-performing peers.
- All details of instruction must be controlled to minimize the chance of students' misinterpreting the information being taught and to maximize the reinforcing effect of instruction.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is inductive, learner-centered, and activity-oriented. Personalized reflection about an experience and the formulation of plans to apply learning to other contexts are critical factors in effective experiential learning. Experiential learning emphasizes the process of learning and not the product.

Experiential learning can be viewed as a cycle consisting of five phases, all of which are necessary:

- experiencing (an activity occurs),
- sharing or publishing (reactions and observations are shared),
- analyzing or processing (patterns and dynamics are determined),
- inferring or generalizing (principles are derived), and
- applying (plans are made to use learning in new situations).

Some examples of experiential learning are as follows:

- **Narrative essays** are told from a defined point of view, often the author's, so the writer shares feelings as well as specific and often sensory details to get the reader involved in the elements and sequence of the story. Since a narrative relies on personal experiences, it is often in the form of a story. When the writer uses this technique, he or she must be sure to include all the conventions of storytelling: plot, character, setting, climax, and ending. It is usually filled with details that are carefully selected to explain, support, or enhance the story. All details relate to the main point the writer is attempting to make.

- **Simulations** are instructional scenarios where the learner is placed in a "world" defined by the teacher. They represent a reality within which students interact. The teacher controls the parameters of this "world" and uses it to achieve the desired instructional results. Simulations are, in a way, a lab experiment where the students themselves are the test subjects. Students experience the reality of the scenario and gather meaning from it. This strategy fits well with the

principles of constructivism. Simulations promote the use of critical and evaluative thinking. The ambiguous or open-ended nature of a simulation encourages students to contemplate the implications of a scenario. The situation feels real and thus leads to more engaging interaction by learners. The activities are motivating and enjoyable to students of all ages. The industry and commitment of the participants usually determine success. The goal is not to win but to acquire knowledge and understanding.

- **Role playing** asks students to act out characters in a predefined "situation." Role playing allows students to take risk-free positions by acting out characters in hypothetical situations. It can help them understand the range of concerns, values, and positions held by other people. Role playing is an enlightening and interesting way to help students see a problem from another perspective.

Independent Study

Independent study refers to the range of instructional methods purposefully provided to foster the development of individual student initiative, self-reliance, and self-improvement. While independent study may be initiated by student or teacher, the focus here is on planned independent study by students under the guidance or supervision of a classroom teacher. In addition, independent study can include learning in partnership with another individual or as part of a small group.

The following are examples of independent study:

- **Computer-assisted instruction (CAI)** is a learning tool presented on a computer that allows students to progress at their own pace and work individually or problem solve in a group. Computers provide immediate feedback, letting students know whether their answer is correct. If the answer is not correct, the program shows students how to answer correctly. Computers offer a different type of activity and a change of pace from teacher-led or group instruction. Also, computer-assisted instruction moves at the student's pace and usually does not move ahead until he has mastered the skill.

- **Journal writing** is a learning tool based on the idea that students write to learn. Students use journals to write about topics of personal interest, to note their observations, to imagine, to wonder and to connect new information with things they already know. Using journals fosters learning in many ways. Students who use journals are actively engaged in their own learning and have the opportunity to clarify and reflect upon their thinking. When students write in journals, they can record ideas and feelings, special words and expressions they have heard, interesting things that have happened to them or information about interesting people. Journal writing offers opportunities for students to write without the fear often associated with marking. Every journal entry is individualized.
- **Research projects** are effective for developing and extending language arts skills as students learn in all subject areas. While doing research, students practice reading for specific purposes, recording information, sequencing and organizing ideas, and using language to inform others. A research model provides students with a framework for organizing information about a topic. Research projects frequently include these four steps:
    - determining the purpose and topic,
    - gathering the information,
    - organizing the information, and
    - sharing knowledge.

Indirect Instruction

In contrast to the direct instruction strategy, indirect instruction is mainly student-centered although the two strategies can complement each other. Indirect instruction seeks a high level of student involvement in observing, investigating, drawing inferences from data, or forming hypotheses. It takes advantage of students' interest and curiosity, often encouraging them to generate alternatives or solve problems.

In indirect instruction, the role of the teacher shifts from lecturer/director to that of facilitator, supporter, and resource person. The teacher arranges the learning environment, provides opportunity for student involvement, and, when appropriate, provides feedback to students while they conduct the inquiry (Martin, 1983).

Some examples of indirect instruction are the following:

- **Problem solving** is reflective and creative. Regardless of the type of problem solving a class uses, problem solving focuses on knowing the issues, considering all possible factors and finding a solution. Because all ideas are accepted initially, problem solving allows for finding the best possible solution as opposed to the easiest solution or the first solution proposed. The process is used to help students think about a problem without applying their own pre-conceived ideas. Defining what the problem looks like is separated from looking at the cause of the problem to prevent premature judgment. Similarly, clarifying what makes an acceptable solution is defined before solutions are generated, preventing preconceptions from driving solutions. Some people argue that problem solving is the art of reasoning in its purest form. In the classroom, problem solving is best used to help students understand complex ethical dilemmas, think about the future, or do some strategic planning.
- **Inquiry** provides opportunities for students to experience and acquire processes through which they can gather information about the world. This requires a high level of interaction among the learner, the teacher, the area of study, available resources, and the learning environment. Students become actively involved in the learning process as they do the following:
    - act upon their curiosity and interests,
    - develop questions,
    - think their way through controversies or dilemmas,
    - look at problems analytically,
    - inquire into their preconceptions and what they already know,
    - develop, clarify, and test hypotheses, and
    - draw inferences and generate possible solutions.

  Questioning is the heart of inquiry learning. Students must ask relevant questions and develop ways to search for answers and generate explanations. Teachers place emphasis on the process of thinking as this applies to student interaction with issues, data, topics, concepts, materials, and problems. Activities encourage and nurture divergent thinking as students recognize that questions often have more than one "good" or "correct" answer. Such thinking leads in many instances to elaboration of further questions. In this way, students come to the realization that knowledge may not be fixed and permanent but may be tentative, emergent, and open to questioning and alternative hypotheses.
- **Concept map** is a special form of web diagram for exploring knowledge and gathering and sharing information. Concept mapping is the strategy employed to develop a concept map. A concept map consists of nodes or cells that contain a concept, item, or question and links. The links are labeled and denote direction with an arrow symbol. The labeled links explain the

relationship between the nodes. The arrow describes the direction of the relationship and reads like a sentence. Concept maps can be used for the following reasons:

- to develop an understanding of a body of knowledge, to explore new information and relationships,
- to access prior knowledge,
- to gather new knowledge and information,
- to share knowledge and information generated,
- to design structures or processes such as written documents, constructions, web sites, web searches, multimedia presentations, and
- to create problem-solving options.

Interactive instruction

Interactive instruction relies heavily on discussion and sharing among participants. Students can learn from peers and teachers to develop social skills, to organize their thoughts, and to develop rational arguments.

The interactive instruction strategy allows for a range of groupings and interactive methods. The teacher outlines the topic, the amount of discussion time, the composition and size of the groups, and reporting or sharing techniques. Interactive instruction requires the refinement of observation, listening, interpersonal, and intervention skills by both teacher and students.

The success of the interactive instruction strategy and its many methods is heavily dependent upon the expertise of the teacher in structuring and developing the dynamics of the group.

Some examples of interactive instruction are the following:

- **Peer partner learning** is a collaborative experience in which students learn from and with each other for individual purposes. Students reflect upon previously taught material by helping peers to learn and, at the same time, develop and hone their social skills. Students work together as partners, one functioning as a "doer," and the other as a "helper." The doer performs a task or answers questions; the helper observes and provides feedback and helping information. The doer is the student and the helper takes on the role of teacher. Later, the partners reverse roles.
- **Discussion** involves an oral exploration of a topic, object, concept, or experience. All learners need frequent opportunities to generate and share their questions and ideas in small and whole class settings. Teachers who encourage and accept students' questions and comments without judgment and clarify understandings by paraphrasing difficult terms stimulate the exchange of ideas. Discussions have the following purposes:
    - to help students make sense of the world;
    - to stimulate thought, wonder, explanation, reflection and recall;
    - to provide opportunities for students to clarify and expand their ideas and those of others;
    - to promote positive group interaction and conversation; and
    - to demonstrate questioning techniques.
- **Cooperative learning** is an instructional strategy that simultaneously addresses academic and social skill learning by students. It is a well-researched instructional strategy reported to be highly

successful in the classroom. Citizens have an ever-increasing need for interdependence in all levels of our society. Providing students with the tools to work effectively in a collaborative environment should be a priority. Cooperative learning provides students the opportunity to learn from each other within a well-defined framework. Students work toward fulfilling clearly stated academic and social skill goals. In this team approach, the success of the group depends upon everyone's pulling his or her weight.

Instructional Skills

Instructional skills are the most specific category of teaching behaviors. Teachers need these skills for procedural purposes and for structuring appropriate learning experiences for students. A variety of instructional skills and processes exist.

- **Explaining**

Student resource materials typically do not provide extensive explanations of concepts. The teacher may need to spend classroom time further explaining concepts or generalizations to the whole class, a small group, or an individual.

Some explanations help students acquire or deepen their understanding of a concept, while others help students understand generalizations. Concerning the former, the teacher must select an appropriate concept definition and appropriate examples and non-examples. Regarding the latter, Shostak (1986) suggests that an explanation can show the following:

- a cause and effect relationship (for example, to show the effect of adding an acid to a base);
- that an action is governed by a rule or law (for example, to show when to capitalize a noun);
- a procedure or process (for example, to show the operation of solving a mathematical equation); or,
- the intent of an activity or process (for example, to show the use of foreshadowing in drama).

- **Demonstrating**

The teacher spends much classroom time explaining or demonstrating something to the whole class, a small group, or an individual. Student resource materials typically do not provide extensive explanations of concepts, and students often need a demonstration in order to understand procedures.

Much student learning occurs through observing others. A demonstration provides the link between "knowing about" and "being able to do." Research reveals that demonstrations are most effective when they are accurate, when learners are able to see clearly and understand what is going on, and when brief explanations and discussion occur during the demonstration (Arenas, 1988).

Richard Allington (2002) reports in his article "The Six Ts of Effective Elementary Literacy Instruction", that exemplary teachers routinely offered direct, explicit demonstrations of the cognitive strategies used by good readers when they read. In other words, they modeled the thinking that skilled readers engage while they attempt to decode a word, self-monitor for understanding, summarize while reading, or edit when composing. The "watch me" or "let me demonstrate" stance they took seems quite different from the "assign and assess" stance that dominates in less-effective classrooms (e.g., Adams, 1990; Durkin, 1978-79).

- **Questioning and Wait Time**

Among the instructional skills, questioning holds a place of prominence in many classrooms. When questioning is used well, the following are observed:

- a high degree of student participation occurs as questions are widely distributed,
- an appropriate mix of low and high level cognitive questions is used,
- student understanding is increased,
- student thinking is stimulated, directed, and extended,
- feedback and appropriate reinforcement occur,
- students' critical thinking abilities are honed, and,
- students' creativity is fostered.

Good questions should be carefully planned, clearly stated, and to the point in order to achieve specific objectives. Teachers must understand questioning techniques, wait time, and levels of questions. Teachers should also understand that asking and responding to questions are viewed differently by different cultures. The teacher must be sensitive to the cultural needs of the students and aware of the effects of his or her own cultural perspective in questioning. In addition, teachers should realize that direct questioning might not be an appropriate technique for all students.

The teacher should obtain the attention of the students before the question is asked. The question should be addressed to the entire class before a specific student is asked to respond. Calls for responses should be distributed among volunteers and non-volunteers, and the teacher should encourage students to speak to the whole class or small group when responding.

While the need for factual recall or comprehension must be recognized, teachers also need to challenge students with higher level questions requiring analysis, synthesis, or evaluation. The consideration of level is applicable at all grade levels and in all subject areas. All students need the opportunity to think about and respond to all levels of questions. Teacher probes or requests for clarification may be required to move students to higher levels of thinking and deeper levels of understanding.

Wait time is defined as the pause between asking the question and soliciting a response. Providing additional wait time after a student response allows all students to reflect on the response prior to further discussion. Increased wait time results in longer student responses, more appropriate unsolicited responses, more student questions, and increased higher order responses. It should be noted that increased wait time is beneficial for students who speak English as a second language.

The Reading and Writing Workshop

The purpose of reading and writing workshop is to promote literacy in the classroom. The purpose is set for students by focusing on text and promoting the enjoyment and love of reading through meaningful interactions with the printed word. This is true for writing as well. By making their own responses to reading or responding in some written context to what they have read, students begin to understand what they read.

The foundational element present in every high-progress classroom is an intense focus on extensive and diverse reading and writing. The research on high progress literacy classrooms makes clear that supporting and challenging students to reach proficient and advanced levels of literacy requires that educators dramatically increase the time students are expected to read and write in South Carolina

classrooms. Numerous studies (Allington & Johnston, 2000; Duffy-Hester, 1999; Langer, 2001; Pressley et al., 2001; Pressely, Rankin, Yokoi, 1996; Pressley, Wharton-McDonald, Allington, Block, & Morrow, 1998; Taylor & Pearson, 2004; Taylor, Peterson, Pearson, & Rodrigues, 2002; Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, & Hampston, 1998) indicate that high-progress literacy classrooms consistently feature the following:

- significant time devoted to actual reading and writing,
- high-quality instruction in reading skills and strategies,
- a prevalence of small group and individualized instruction,
- numerous books matched to the students' reading levels, and
- increased instructional focus and intensity based on the changing needs of students.

In terms of reading, Guthrie's research states that high engagement must be viewed as both a means and an end in reading instruction. "Because engaged reading and reading achievement are mutually causal, they both must be cultivated in school. A neglect of one is a neglect of both" (Guthrie, 2004).

Concepts for Successful Reading and Writing Workshops

- Student talk is an important concept that allows the reader to anticipate what line of story or information the text might convey. What matters is that students talk about the reading and talk about the writing, both their own and that of good storytellers, and authors.
- The focus of writing workshop is to support the reading and to help students make connections with text, the world, and their own experiences. Students must use their own language to come to an understanding of literature, and then they may begin to craft their own writing.
- Conferencing is a large part of the workshop philosophy, both teacher-to- student and peer coaching. Classrooms will be active, not noisy or disorganized. During conferencing sessions a teacher observes, re-teaches, clarifies, and coaches students. During conferencing teachers want students to take ownership of their reading or writing.

Structures to Support Readers and Writers

Research suggests that high-progress literacy classrooms (Pressley et al., 1996, 1998, 2001) should include the following:

- Many, many ***books*** to read at students' instructional and independent reading levels, fiction and nonfiction, of interest to readers.
- Students fully engaged with "extensive and diverse" reading and writing opportunities. Most of the time allocated for literacy in the school day is devoted to reading and writing.
- Much ***small group and individualized*** instruction
- More instruction and ***support for struggling readers***
- Extremely ***positive environments***
- Teaching of ***self-regulation*** and decision-making
- ***Engaging*** instruction: positive, low-risk, encouraging, accepting, and conveying goals, self-selection, and ownership of reading and writing topics.

Based on research by Allington and Johnston, (2002), significant time must be devoted to actual reading. Their study of exemplary fourth grade teachers noted that high progress classrooms maximized the amount of time students read by fully engaging students in reading and writing text most of the time.

In exemplary High Progress classrooms for each hour of reading instruction the following is evident:

- Teachers spend 5-10 minutes preparing students to read.
- Students read 40-45 minutes.
- Teachers spend 5-10 minutes engaging students following the reading.
- While the students read, the teacher works with students in small groups or individually side by side at their seats.

Less effective classrooms minimize reading time in the following ways:

Spend 15-20 minutes preparing students to read
Spend 20-25 minutes after reading with students engaged in a variety of follow-up activities including

- Responding to questions
- Completing workbook pages
- Reviewing the story
- Checking on vocabulary, etc.

In less effective classrooms, students typically read for only 15-20 minutes for each hour allocated to reading lessons. And in some classrooms, students read even less.

Research by Pressley et al., (1996, 1998, and 2001), **indicates High Progress Classrooms have at least:**

- 20 books per student
- 400 books per classroom of 20 students
- books at or above grade level along with books below grade level
- varied genres

High-progress classrooms are well-stocked with a variety of interesting books and materials at students' reading levels.

The following structures provide opportunities for students to be actively engaged in reading and writing.

Read Aloud provides daily opportunities for children to delight in text. It enables children to hear the right language of texts they cannot yet read on their own or might not have chosen to read. Teachers choose books thoughtfully to share for a variety of purposes across the curriculum. Read alouds are even more effective when surrounded by rituals – gathering together on a rug, lighting a story candle, reciting a poem together.

Shared Reading provides opportunities for children to learn what good strategic readers do and how the reading process works in the context of a large group with the teacher demonstrating and orchestrating the process. Children are invited to participate by reading along and responding to reading strategy prompts within the security of a large group.

Independent Reading provides opportunities for children to practice independent reading strategies with just-right books. During this time to read large quantities of text of their choosing, students get to know themselves better as readers. Paired with conferences, independent reading encourages students to take responsibility in their growth as readers.

Reading Conferences offer teachers and children opportunities to learn and apply reading strategies in an intimate setting. During reading conferences, teachers use running records, miscue analysis, interviews, self-assessments, and/or kid watching notes to gain insight into children's strengths, needs and interests as readers. Reading conferences also provide opportunities for teachers to match readers with texts and to hold conversations about the reading process and content of the book, reader-to-reader.

Guided Reading provides opportunities for children to apply the skills and strategies that are inherent in strategic reading with increasing independence. Teachers continue to guide the process but expect children to take more responsibility and to engage in independent problem solving within a small group setting. Teachers support individuals and the group by matching books to readers and scaffolding the reading process.

Literature Study Groups provide opportunities for children to hold grand conversations about books they choose. Consequently, children learn the value of responding to literature both aesthetically and efferently (Rosenblatt, 1995). They learn about language through author studies, genre studies, and craft studies. Through rich conversations about high quality literature, children learn that literature can be both informative and transformative.

Shared Writing provides opportunities for teachers and children to work together to compose texts with the teacher serving as the scribe. It allows the teacher to demonstrate how the writing process works by focusing on features of composing, written expression, and print conversations while modeling a variety of text types. The co-created text can then serve as written language references for the classroom.

Interactive Writing provides opportunities for teachers and children to collaboratively develop text and "share the pen" to write it. Children learn about and participate in the process of writing, learn concepts of print, and understanding that reading and writing are reciprocal processes. This structure allows children to apply letter-sound knowledge and spelling patterns in context. It also provides texts that children can revisit and read independently.

Independent Writing provides opportunities for children to develop their own writing processes while composing their own texts. Children are given opportunities to write in different genres for a variety of purposes and audiences. This structure allows children to apply their knowledge of print conventions and writer's craft. Children are given opportunities to generate ideas, draft, revise, edit and publish. They also learn to articulate their decisions and processes as writers through conferring with other writers.

Writing Conferences offer teachers and children opportunities to learn and share their experiences with the writing process. Conferences are conversations, writer-to-writer, that allow teachers to assess and teach children individually in a continual effort to move them forward. Conferences also provide opportunities for teachers to match children with mentor writers and texts.

Mini-Lessons offer teachers the opportunity to provide short, focused lessons (5-10 minutes) based on students' needs. During mini-lessons, teachers offer advice that works into what students are doing as readers and writers. Teachers may choose to demonstrate a strategy, to build background knowledge, to

highlight well-crafted writing, or to model a procedure. The effectiveness of these focused lessons may be increased by connecting a string of mini-lessons.

Sharing provides students an opportunity, after reading and writing, to reflect on and articulate what they have noticed about the work they have done and the strategies they have used. Students may also choose to talk about the books they are reading or the pieces they have written. Sharing also offers teachers the opportunity to follow up on mini-lessons and to give students recognition for trying or doing something.

Based on Guthrie et al., (2001) the benefits of having opportunities to read and receiving balanced instruction found the following true:

- For 9-year-olds who took the NAEP in 1998, the correlation between engaged reading and reading comprehension achievement was higher than any demographic characteristic such as gender, income, or ethnicity.
- Students whose family background was characterized as low income and low education ***but who were engaged readers*** substantially outscored students from family backgrounds with higher education and income.
- "Based on a massive sample, this finding suggests the stunning conclusion that engaged reading can overcome traditional barriers to reading achievement, including gender, parental education, and income" (Guthrie, 2004).

Achievement gaps exist among students from various demographic groups including race, gender, and income, as evidenced by persistent discrepancies in standardized test scores, dropout and graduation rates, and the percentages of students entering and completing college. Because South Carolina has a much higher proportion of African American and children of poverty than the national average, meeting or exceeding the national average for literacy proficiency will require massive and focused efforts to cause accelerated growth in literacy achievement.

Kirsch et al.,(2002) looked at performance and engagement across countries:

- The PISA study (Programme for International Student Assessment) found the amount students read predicts achievement more than any other factor including gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status.

In a study of fourth graders who took the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001) and 15-year-olds in 32 countries who took the Programme for International Student Achievement (PISA) (Kirsch, de Jong, LaFontaine, McQueen, Mendalovits, & Monseur, 2002), researchers found the same thing*: the amount students read predicts achievement more than any other factor including gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status.* In other words, poor kids who are engaged readers consistently outscore wealthier kids who read less. Focusing on the research on high-progress classrooms will transform literacy achievement for South Carolina's students.

Response to Intervention provides a systems approach for building and maintaining high progress classrooms. The RTI model ensures every student has opportunities to increase academic achievement through quality instruction and intervention when needed.

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Websites for Quality Instruction

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http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Standards-and-Learning/Academic-Standards/old/Instructional-Promising-Practices/documents/ResponsetoIntervention.html	South Carolina Department of Education
http://www.rti4success.org/	National Response to Intervention Site
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/	What Works Clearinghouse
http://nrcld.org/research/rti.shtml	National Research Center on Learning Disabilities
http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/index.html	

Further Resources for Learning More about Classroom Structures

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Miller, Debbie. 2002. *Reading With Meaning.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse.

Morgan, Denise, et al. 2009. *Independent Reading.* NY, NY: Guilford Press.

Routman, Regie. 2003. *Reading Essentials.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Taberski, Sharon. 2000. *On Solid Ground.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Additional Resources for Learning More about Matching Books with Readers

Fountas, Irene and G. Pinnell. 2006. *Leveled Books K-8 Matching Texts to Readers for Effective Teaching.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. www.fountasandpinnelleveledbooks.com (requires $15 payment)

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Fry formula: http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/fry/fry2.html

Lexile Tool: www.lexile.com

Reading Recovery levels: www.rrcna.org/rrcna/membership/books.asp

Spache and Dale–Chall formulas: www.interventioncentral.org/htmdocs/tools/okapi.php

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