Students need many opportunities to read, read, read.

Access, time, modeling, choice, multiple readings, difficulty: All of these are factors in providing students with many opportunities to read (Allington, 1977, 1980;

Allington & Cunningham, 1996; Cunningham & Allington, 2003; Stanovich, 1986). What is critical is that students do read—lots, for sustained periods, for meaning, and for real and authentic purposes. Pearson (1993) observes, "One is tempted to conclude that some of the best 'practice' for enhancing reading skill occurs when children are given greater opportunity to read everyday materials" (pp. 507–508).

Opportunity to read has an effect on various measures of reading skill or achievement, as described in the following findings:

- "Just plain reading" improves students' comprehension (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988), vocabulary knowledge (Herman, Anderson, Pearson, & Nagy, 1987), ability to monitor their own reading for sense (Pinnell, 1989), disposition to read independently (Ingham, 1982), English grammar skills (Elley & Mangubhai, 1983), and writing style into more sophisticated forms (Block, 2001; Gallik, 1999).
- A consistently positive relationship occurs between the amount of voluntary reading completed at home or at school and gains on standardized reading achievement tests (Pearson & Fielding, 1991; Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 1999).
- Fifteen minutes a day of independent, recreational reading significantly increases students' reading abilities. Average and below-average readers experience the greatest gains (Collins, 1980; Smith & Joyner, 1990; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990; Wiesendanger & Bader, 1989).
- When adolescents increase their pleasure reading, performance also increases in academic work (Baumann & Duffy, 1997).
- Middle school students want to read on their own in order to make an otherwise difficult text interesting and comprehensible (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001).

One focus of reading instruction is to develop the lifelong habit of reading. Holdaway (1979), however, points out that schools spend a great deal of time teaching literacy skills, then leave little room for students to practice those skills by really reading. Why is the success of most reading programs gauged by the "successful" scores on standardized reading tests rather than by the personal reading habits of their students (Irving, 1980; Speigel, 1981)? If instructional programs do not provide ample opportunities for students to read for enjoyment in school, desire and motivation to do so may not develop (Lamme, 1976; Speigel, 1981). Successful school experiences help to motivate students to read voluntarily. Allington and McGill-Franzen (2003) suggest that effective instruction must ensure that all students engage in extensive, high-success reading activities throughout the school day and must reliably enhance the volume of voluntary reading students do outside of the school day. When students are held accountable for a wide variety of reading experiences (e.g., compiling reading logs, participating in

sustained silent reading [SSR], documenting reading-at-home experiences), positive attitudes toward reading will develop.

Making the Choice to Read

The notion of *recreational reading* has long been a goal of reading instruction, that is, when readers choose to read on their own, motivated by their own interests, inquiries, and purposes. Programs to encourage recreational reading beyond the classroom are varied; they are often, although not always, incentive based.

Many adolescents read less than did their peers of 30 years ago (Brozo & Hargis, 2003; Glenn, 1994; Libsch & Breslow, 1996) or choose not to read at all (Beers, 1996; Schumm, Vaughn, & Saumell, 1994). Poor readers often lack the self-confidence and self-efficacy to choose to read on their own (Beers, 2003). They also lack the understanding of purposes for reading that might otherwise motivate them to read.

Neuman and Celano (2002, 2004) found that students who feel confident in reading will read more challenging materials and for higher level purposes. Less efficacious readers will do just the opposite. In particular, they found in the case of increased computer access in libraries, students from middle-income families were more likely to spend computer time on applications with more print; students from lower income families tended to spend more time playing computer games that contained little print (2004).

Access to Quality Reading Materials

Neuman and Celano (2001) note the prevailing assumption seems to be that books and other literacy-related resources are easily and equally accessible for all students and their families (cf. Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003). However, recent studies have found this is not the case. Neuman and Celano state,

> If access to print is highly differentiated in our culture, it may result in differential opportunities for certain types of learning and thinking that are related to literacy development. Differences in access could influence the degree of familiarity with book language and the cognitive behaviors associated with reading, helping to explain the substantial educational differences among low- and middle-income students in beginning formal instruction. (p. 11)

Neuman and Celano (2001) found that low-income students had consistently less access to quality reading materials than did middle-income students. This includes access to places selling children's and young adult reading resources, signage, and public spaces for reading (coffee shops and restaurants, local preschools, school libraries, and public libraries). Duke (2000) studied very low and very high socioeconomic status first graders and found similar results, suggesting that social reproduction through schooling may begin quite early in the schooling process as students from different socioeconomic backgrounds were offered qualitatively different print environments and experiences.

Advocates of secondary school reform (Alvermann et al., 2002; Langer, 2001; Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999) concur that students need multiple opportunities for engaged, sustained print encounters in the classroom every day. The easier the access is to interesting print materials, the more frequently adolescents read (McQuillan & Au, 2001).

The Summer Lag. Allington and McGill-Franzen (2003) argue that summer reading setback is a key element in closing the achievement gap between low-income and more advantaged students. Hayes and Grether (1983) showed that students in both high-poverty and low-poverty schools made substantially similar gains when school was in session. However, the effects of summer vacation (spring to fall comparisons) on reading achievement looked very different; they calculate that the differential progress made during the four summers between second and sixth grade accounts for upward of 80% of the achievement difference between the two groups.

Borman and D'Agostino (1996) found the effects of remedial reading instruction during the school year were diminished when the summer vacation period was included in the estimates of achievement growth. Allington and McGill-Franzen (2003) suggest that a critical support for low-income learners is easy—literally fingertip access to books that provide engaging, successful reading experiences throughout the calendar year if we want them to read in volume.

Libraries. Krashen (1993, 1996) has found a critical relationship between access to books via public and school libraries and reading achievement. Indicators of school library quality and public library use were found to be significant predictors of reading comprehension scores. Allington and Cunningham (1996; cf. Cunningham & Allington, 2003) also emphasize this relationship. The U.S. trend of shrinking library funding is particularly hard on low-income areas; schools enrolling many poor students have 50% fewer books than do schools enrolling primarily more advantaged students (Guice & Allington, 1994). Some suggest that very broad national differences in literacy are related to the per-capita amount of print available to the average adult (Guthrie & Greaney, 1991; cf. Pearson, 1993; Pearson & Fielding, 1991).

To best support students, books need to be available through both classroom collections and schoolwide libraries. Classroom libraries give students immediate access, a factor likely to increase the amount of voluntary reading students do in and out of school (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003; Fractor, Woodruff, Martinez, & Teale, 1993; Neuman & Celano, 2001). Students in classrooms without literature collections read 50% less than do students in classrooms with such collections (Morrow, 1998).

Neuman and Celano (2001) found wide discrepancies between low-income and middle-income communities in both school and public library collections (cf. Smith, Constantino, & Krashen, 1997). They note that students most likely to benefit most from school libraries were offered the poorest services and resources

and the least access. Schools serving many at-risk students need particularly good collections in both classrooms and libraries because these students typically have much less access out of school; public libraries need increased resources and programming to support students and families throughout the calendar year (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003; Neuman & Celano, 2001; Smith et al., 1997).

Neuman and Celano (2002, 2004) remind us that even as libraries struggle to survive in difficult economic times, libraries and librarians are vital to the development of literacy skills of children and young adults. Their study of the transformation of library services in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, focused on creating a model urban library that offered a wide range of access, programs, and services for all community members. Libraries serving low-income families are just as busy as those serving middle-income families; Neuman and Celano observed that low-income libraries were often more crowded. It is interesting to note, however, several critical differences: Low-income families do not check out as many books (for fear of loss, overdue fines, damage), and low-income students tend to read at or below their grade level, in contrast to middle-income students who read at or above their grade level when choosing library materials. Their study also found that excellent librarians are critical to the transformation of access in low-income neighborhoods. These librarians pushed students to reach beyond their current abilities, often helping to close the gap caused by poor literacy environments.

International studies confirm the importance of high-quality libraries and librarians as critical factors in effective reading instruction and overall literacy acquisition ("Libraries called key," 2004; "New study supports," 2004). Recognizing the urgent need to provide students with materials to read, Allington and Cunningham (1996; cf. Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003; Neuman & Celano, 2004) recommend the expansion of library collections and services.

Time and Opportunity

Clearly, providing time and opportunity for learners to read is a critical aspect in successful reading instruction. As Krashen (1996) notes, access means having not only the availability of books but also time for reading them (cf. International Reading Association, 1999).

Elley and Mangubhai (1983) found that increasing access to books for students with limited access to books increased their literacy achievement, particularly for second-language learners. Elley (1992) found key factors that consistently differentiated between countries with high reading achievement scores and low reading achievement scores focused on access and availability of books: large school libraries, large classroom libraries, regular book borrowing, frequent silent reading in class, and frequent story reading aloud by teachers. The highest scoring countries typically provide students with greater access to books in the home, in nearby community libraries and bookstores, and in the school.

Neuman (1999) found that increasing 3- and 4-year-old children's access to books in child-care centers serving economically disadvantaged students, as well as training child-care providers to use the books effectively to promote early

literacy development, significantly increased the students' emergent literacy development.

Block and Mangieri (2002), in a survey of teachers about recreational reading practices, found that response to legislative mandates at both the federal and state levels has decreased the time teachers allow for independent, recreational reading. Both parents and teachers reported that today's students spend less time in leisure reading activities at home and school than these adults did when they were students (cf. Mahiri & Godley, 1998).

The following list describes several ways that teachers can provide children with wide opportunities for extensive reading:

- Schedule at least one block of structured sustained silent reading for students each day (e.g., SSR, Drop Everything And Read [DEAR]). Model your own reading pleasure in various ways in your classroom. Regularly read aloud from the texts you are reading for pleasure, particularly those relevant to content areas. Display the books; give brief book talks about them; connect them to everyday classroom activities.
- Provide a varied collection of print material in your classroom: library books, personal books, student-written books; newspapers (community, city, regional); magazines (for students, community-based); brochures and pamphlets of interest to the students in your class; menus, and other such environmental print. Content area classrooms need to have available a wide range of texts—fiction and nonfiction, as well as journals, magazines, and newspapers—on particular topics and events relevant to topic study.
- Provide an opportunity for all students to acquire a library card. Many public libraries have programs that work closely with public schools to make their services accessible to all students.
- Provide a wide variety of content area texts linked to the curriculum. Topical literature is especially important as students move into middle and high school.
- Create ways to consistently interact with and support families accessing appropriate, high-quality reading materials for learners.
- Create book bag programs for young students to take home classroom or school materials to read with families. These programs usually include opportunities for families and students to respond to the reading in some fashion and to document the reading time spent.

The research literature highlights the importance of both access and opportunity to appropriate materials and reading experiences to support successful reading development and growth.

TEACHER RESOURCES

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CORE UNDERSTANDING 13

Monitoring the development of reading processes is vital to student success.

Monitoring learners' progress calls for a variety of assessment and evaluation strategies. Assessment and instruction are integral processes, each informing the other to meet the individual needs of students. *Authentic assessment* describes a fusion of instruction and assessment; that is, activities that involve real reading and real writing provide assessment information on literacy (Cooper & Kiger, 2005). Teachers must constantly use keen observation of student growth and development to inform instruction. Also, students must learn to become critically aware of their own reading processes, that is, to become metacognitive, to support their development as competent, engaged, and effective readers. We might see assessment as an ongoing process of gathering information about what students can and cannot do. Evaluation, the next step, takes into account all assessments and observations in order to make a judgment about an individual student. In general, the purpose for assessment is to inform instruction, ultimately to support learning. Purposes for evaluation may include grading and placement.

Conclusion

> There are, in the end, only two main ways human beings learn, by observing others (directly or vicariously) and by trying things out for themselves. Novices learn from experts or experience. That's all there is to it. Everything else is in the details.
> —Deborah Meier (1995, p. 181)

What Helps Readers Develop?

Location, location, location: the "three" factors to consider in buying a house. Can we reduce the complex body of research knowledge presented here, even our 13 core understandings about learning to read, to a single, powerful mantra? We think we can:

> Learning to read and growing as a reader are about access.

Access Is Key

In both oral language acquisition and learning to read, access is the critical component. Children with access to rich and responsive language interactions about their experiences in the first three years of life develop power over language even as they learn to talk. Their orientation to the world around them is one of agency and curiosity. They acquire ever-larger vocabularies as they notice, talk about, and receive adult feedback on experiences. These children come to school ready to continue that quest for knowledge and to make their own the words that name it.

In the same way, young people learning to read and becoming more skillful readers need access to meaningful and personally interesting texts. This opens another way of learning about the world to them. And because background knowledge and experience are so important to reading comprehension, the more students are reading, the more they increase the grounding they bring to the next text...and the next. They increase their *world knowledge* even as they are acquiring *word knowledge* (Allington & Cunningham, 1996). The motivation to read builds as the learner finds meaning in texts and then follows a trajectory similar to that experienced in learning to talk: Increased engagement in the process fuels learning, positive disposition, and control of skills and strategies. Juel (1992) found the differences in achievement between poor and good first-grade readers are remarkably consistent, even though all the children were making gains. She believes that the critical factor was the amount of reading children actually did—their access to real encounters with books. First graders who were good readers read approximately twice as many words during the year as did poor readers. This pattern held fast through fourth grade. Reading frequently and widely is essential for reading achievement. For struggling readers more time for real reading is imperative if we are ever to narrow this gap. The critical role of extensive

reading also has been confirmed in more recent studies for students across the educational spectrum and particularly for underperforming students and students from low-income households (Krashen, 2004; McQuillan, 2001; Neuman & Celano, 2001). To say that children learn to read by reading is not to deny the need to provide explicit instruction and many demonstrations in the classroom. The point to be made is that the amount of extended text reading that children do is directly related to their reading achievement. Without real engagement with meaningful texts, students will not become readers. Thus, a focus on early instruction in isolated skills is potentially damaging for young readers, especially those who struggle to learn to read.

Specifically, readers at all stages of development need access to the following:

- Time for reading and learning.
- Texts of all kinds and rich resources for reading.
- Knowledgeable and supportive teachers.
- Appropriate instruction in skills and strategies.
- Demonstrations of how readers, writers, and texts work.
- Other readers, both novice and expert.
- Their own reading processes.

Allington (2002) provides a shorthand for these in his six common features, or "the six T's of effective elementary literacy instruction" (p. 742): time, texts, teaching, talk, tasks, and testing.

Providing Access to Critical Components in the Classroom

Time. Learners need to have sustained periods of engagement with texts (blocks of time in the school day with plenty of time for guided reading, independent reading in texts of their own choice, working with words, talking about books, and reading curriculum-linked texts). Students need time to grow to love reading and to choose it for both learning and pleasure.

Texts and Resources. Classrooms and schools need richly stocked libraries that offer readers information and enjoyment, representing the many cultures and perspectives of our diverse society. Included in the school's resources must be books of all sorts as well as electronic texts and literacy applications, including computers with high-quality reading software, integrated media technology, and the Internet (Sharp, Bransford, Goldman, Kinzer, & Soraci, 1992). As children are learning to read, they "need to read lots of easy stuff" (Allington & Cunningham, 1996, p. 53). And students at all levels need "enormous quantities of successful reading to become independent, proficient readers" (Allington, 2002, p. 743). Trained librarians work closely with teachers to keep the media center collection current and are available to put just the right resource in a child's hands. Children's access to

quality school library media centers, staffed by professionals, has a direct correlation with reading achievement and with positive attitudes about reading (Routman, 1996).

Knowledgeable and Supportive Teachers. Teachers must thoroughly understand current theories of language, literacy, and learning. This understanding must be demonstrated in and enhanced by their classroom practice. It is vitally important that teachers see themselves as lifelong learners, always updating their practitioner knowledge, and for this reason institutional structures to nurture teachers' professional development are essential. Schools need to be seen as places where teachers learn, too. But knowledge is not enough for teachers of reading.

In addition, teachers must communicate both high expectations for children's learning and the assurance of their support for each learner to succeed. The desire to learn to read and write is powerfully affected by teacher expectations, the patience and caring of the teacher, and the quality of communication that motivates and engages students in the learning process (Rosenholtz, 1989). Yatvin (1992), former superintendent of a rural district in Oregon, writes:

> In order to learn, a child must believe: I am a learner; I can do this work; craftsmanship and effort will pay off for me; this is a community of friends, and I belong to it. Because such beliefs often are not the inherent property of children who come from splintered families and dangerous neighborhoods, teachers today must work as hard on them as they have always worked on the intellectual side of learning. (p. 7)

Appropriate Instruction. This component of providing access is also the responsibility of the teacher. Excellent teachers of reading establish regular literacy routines that provide opportunities for learners to work independently, in small groups, and as a whole class (see Core Understanding 11). It should be noted, though, that a reliance on whole-class instruction for reading is not good because it distances teachers from children's development as readers (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1997). Teachers need to know how individual children are progressing and what understandings of literacy they are developing. Teachers need to work closely with children to know what a child needs at the present moment to support the child's next steps as a reader. Classrooms should be organized to provide children access to the teacher, time, one another, books, and other components that they need to be successful in learning to read.

In becoming readers, all children must develop the same understandings, that is, the ability to use all four of the cueing systems to construct meaning with text (see Core Understanding 5 for discussion of the four cueing systems). But children will not all need the same amount or kind of instruction in all the systems. Providing instruction that is responsive to the learner's needs is key. Beginning or developing readers who require more explicit instruction in any aspect of reading will understandably need more time. One way teachers meet this need is the use of flexible groups as part of their literacy routines. The best resources for skill and

strategy instruction in such groups are real texts, for example, trade books (fiction and nonfiction) and students' own writing.

Baumann (1997) recommends that although literacy instruction activities should be enjoyable, it is also important to acknowledge to children that learning to read is hard work. Children need to be taught how to read words and puzzle out texts. Furthermore, children need to experience the power of strenuous effort as they grapple with sometimes-difficult material (Carnegie Task Force, 1996). For older students, especially those who have disengaged from reading and may be struggling with academic texts, teachers need to help them build their stamina as readers and successfully read increasingly challenging texts (Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, & Hurwitz, 1999).

Demonstrations of How Readers, Writers, and Texts Work. Learners need to see lots of examples of how readers and writers work and of how reading and writing are used for various purposes. Reading aloud to students is a powerful way to demonstrate not only how books work but also to model a love for reading. One important use of reading is as a learning tool; young readers need to see how it works this way. As students are involved in whole-class, small-group, paired, and individual literacy activities, these demonstrations are provided and used by readers of varying degrees of expertise.

Furthermore, classroom experiences and instruction that integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening support literacy development because they keep the language picture whole. Talking and writing in response to reading, listening to stories, writing original stories all feed "the linguistic data pool" described in chapter 2 (Brown & Cambourne, 1990; Harste, Burke, & Woodward, 1982). Basically, reading, writing, listening, and speaking are streams that flow into the same pool; they are constantly refreshing one another, if our classrooms take advantage of their complementarity. Across the wealth of beating-the-odds studies, the findings are consistent: Students at all grade levels benefit from integrated literacy experiences in a coherent, meaning-based curriculum with many opportunities for small-group interaction (Allington, 2002; Langer, 2001; Morrow, Tracey, Woo, & Pressley, 1999; Taylor et al., 1999).

Other Readers. Some students are surrounded by readers in their home and community, adults who share books with them from their earliest years. As Cullinan notes, "Children who sit beside a reader and follow the print from an early age learn to read quite 'naturally.' We know that the modeling has a lasting effect; children do what they see others do" (as cited in Putnam, 1994, p. 363). But children who come to school without rich reading experiences at home need access not only to books but also to skilled readers who will envelop them in the language and experience of books. Sometimes the reader will be the teacher, sometimes another adult from the school or the community, or sometimes an older student. The important thing is that children experience the support of a skilled reader to help them bond with books.

As students move through the grades and encounter more demanding content area texts, they need access to other readers to help them master the ways of reading and thinking in the disciplines. Teachers can create supportive classroom communities in which the invisible processes of reading in the disciplines are made visible and accessible to students (Schoenbach, Braunger, Greenleaf, & Litman, 2003).

Readers also need to talk with one another about what they are reading. They learn about books they would like to read, sharpen their own understandings of a text by listening to others' responses, and become a community of readers. The powerful role of authentic classroom discussion in increasing student learning has been well documented (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran, 2003) and talk should be an essential component of classroom life.

Students' Own Reading Processes. Students' awareness of what they know and can do as readers is essential to their literacy growth. The goal of the Reading Recovery program, for beginning readers, is to foster a "self-extending system of literacy expertise" (Clay, 1991, p. 317), developed as the child reads more and consciously acquires and applies an ever-widening repertoire of reading strategies. As with all of Reading Recovery's interventions for struggling readers, this goal is derived from careful observation of what good readers do. The title of one of Clay's books (1991) says it all—*Becoming Literate: The Construction of Inner Control.* (See chapter 3 for more discussion of the Reading Recovery program.)

Across the developmental continuum, readers need to be aware of their reading process, know how to repair comprehension when it breaks down, and understand how to vary their reading process to suit reading in different genres and for various purposes. Research on learning to high levels of literacy points out important cognitive strategies that readers must develop and consciously implement, including (a) problem-solving, or fix-up, strategies; (b) self-regulatory procedures; (c) executive structures, or goals and purposes for reading; and (d) intentional learning procedures (Dreher & Slater, 1992). Ongoing instruction and assessment should involve students in setting such goals and monitoring progress toward them.

What Can Hinder Readers in Their Development?

Classroom practices that isolate skills from meaningful reading make learning to read difficult. They do not help children develop inner control and strategic functioning as readers. Smith (1983) made the point in a widely circulated essay titled "Twelve Easy Ways to Make Learning to Read Difficult." Smith's 12 ways were all variations on the theme of distancing children from their attempts to read for meaning. However well intentioned, these instructional approaches denied children access to reading as a meaning-making process. In contrast, the simple but elegant prescription for how to make learning to read easy was to "respond to what the child is trying to do" (p. 24). Recently, Smith (2003) reprised that advice, say-

ing that reading—like learning to talk or walk—is a marvel but not a mystery. He goes on to say that when teachers make it into a mystery by isolating component skills in the process, then making sense of print becomes elusive, even confusing, for learners.

Consensus is considerable among literacy researchers to support Smith's overall point and especially the core understandings contained in this book (Flippo, 1998, 2001). The practices that researchers agree are helpful are all incorporated in the foregoing discussion. The practices that they agree would hinder effective reading development are

- emphasizing only phonics,
- drilling on isolated letters or sounds,
- teaching letters and words one at a time,
- insisting on correctness,
- expecting students to spell correctly all the words they can read,
- making perfect oral reading the goal of reading instruction,
- focusing on skills rather than interpretation and comprehension,
- constant use of workbooks and worksheets,
- fixed ability grouping, and
- blind adherence to a basal program.

The phrasing of some of the practices suggests why agreement across the spectrum was possible, for example, "emphasizing only," "drilling," "focusing on," and "blind adherence." Nevertheless, the pressure from some quarters today to make explicit, systematic phonics the core of reading instruction in the primary grades and to focus on similar basic skill instruction for older readers who struggle could lead to valuable classroom time being used for the very practices soundly rejected by these reading experts. Students could lose access to the rich resources and interactions that prompt engagements with reading, as outlined in the 13 core understandings.

Roles and Responsibilities: Supporting All Students to Reach High Levels of Literacy

Our challenge, to bring all students to Myers's (1996) "critical/translation" level of literacy, as defined in chapter 1, is daunting. At the same time that our standards for literacy are rising, some learners in U.S. schools struggle to acquire basic skills in reading, and U.S. school populations are more diverse than ever before. How can we meet the varied needs of individuals and help them all develop a firm command of basic skills and strategies, the ability to construct and negotiate meanings with

text, and the knowledge and the disposition to be critical, lifelong readers? As policymakers, educators, parents, or other adults involved in children's education, we all have significant roles to play.

Allington (2002) observes, "Good teachers, effective teachers, matter much more than particular curriculum materials, pedagogical approaches, or 'proven programs'" (p. 740). The usefulness of all professionals in the school—administrators, specialists (Title I, special education, talented and gifted), librarians, social workers, English as a second language/bilingual teachers, school psychologists—should be judged by the impact they have on enhancing the quality of classroom instruction. For children who experience difficulty learning to read, the focus on delivering high-quality, consistent classroom instruction is especially important. They cannot afford a fragmented or confused message about reading.

Ensuring excellent classroom instruction will take collaboration among professional staff, initially to agree on goals for the literacy program and then to develop shared understandings of effective literacy practices. This effort may mean that staff members undertake a program of learning for themselves, possibly in a reading and study group or through action research on some aspect of their literacy program.

Because we know that students' reading achievement is directly related to the amount of reading they do, building support with parents for reading at home is very important. And although independent reading is a goal, reading with children and talking about books is also necessary. Not only does talking about books motivate children to read, it enhances their development of important cognitive strategies. Classroom studies have shown that social interaction and strategy instruction are strongly related to the amount and breadth of students' reading (Applebee et al., 2003; Guthrie, Schafer, Wang, & Afflerbach, 1995).

Finally, the importance of a supportive, united community of adults across the literacy-learning continuum cannot be underestimated. The school can take the leadership in welcoming parents and community members into the schools, building bridges between home and school literacy, providing access to rich literacy materials, and offering appropriate training or strategy information for parents and volunteers. Children learning to read and older students developing as readers need adults who support them to be on the same page: understanding that reading is a construction of meaning.