



# Transforming Literacy Instruction

## Developing High-Quality Literacy Instruction

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[mimtsstac.org](http://mimtsstac.org)

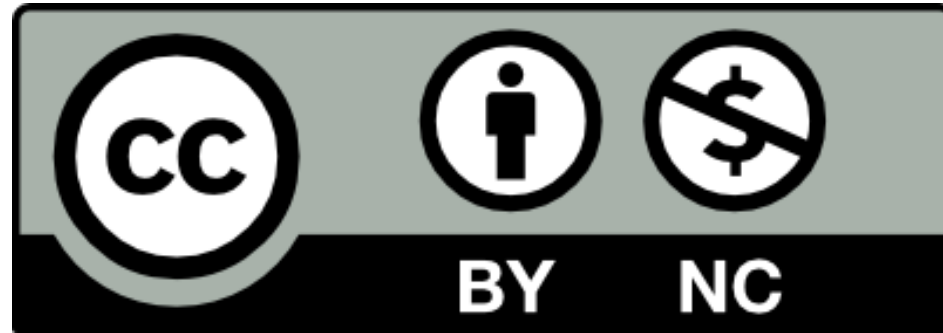


# Acknowledgments

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- Anita Archer & Charles Hughes
- Kimberly Gibbons, Sarah Brown & Bradley C. Niebling
- Zach Groshell
- Institute of Education Sciences (IES)
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- Nathaniel Swain

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# Group Agreements

## We are Responsible

- Return on time from breaks
- Take care of our needs

## We are Engaged

- Share “air time”
- Plan to participate in multiple ways

# Active Participation Strategies

- Short Choral Response
- Choral Reading
- Cloze Reading
- Partner Sharing (1 and 2)
- Hold-up
  - Fingers
  - Zoom reactions
- Written Responses
  - Best Practices in Session
  - Preparation for Sharing
  - Brain Drains
  - Waterfall

# Purpose

- To support successful implementation of Tier 1 literacy instruction by:
  - Equip educators with the knowledge, strategies, and tools to develop instructional plans
  - Empower educators to make informed decisions
  - Ensure a classroom environment to support learning

# Intended Outcomes

At the end of this session, I will...

1. Identify essential components of a literacy block
2. Review instructional content to prioritize what is critical
3. Evaluate literacy resources to select those aligned with the science of reading
4. Craft a classroom environment to support learning

# Agenda

1.0 Welcome

2.0 Essential Components

3.0 Critical Content

4.0 Evaluate Resources

5.0 Classroom Environment

6.0 Closing

# 1.0 Welcome

# About Me

Julie Bourke, NBCT

- Classroom teacher
- Administrator
- Early literacy coach
- Explicit Instruction
- K-12 Dyslexia



# Introductions

- In the chat please add:
  - Your name
  - Location/School District
  - Role

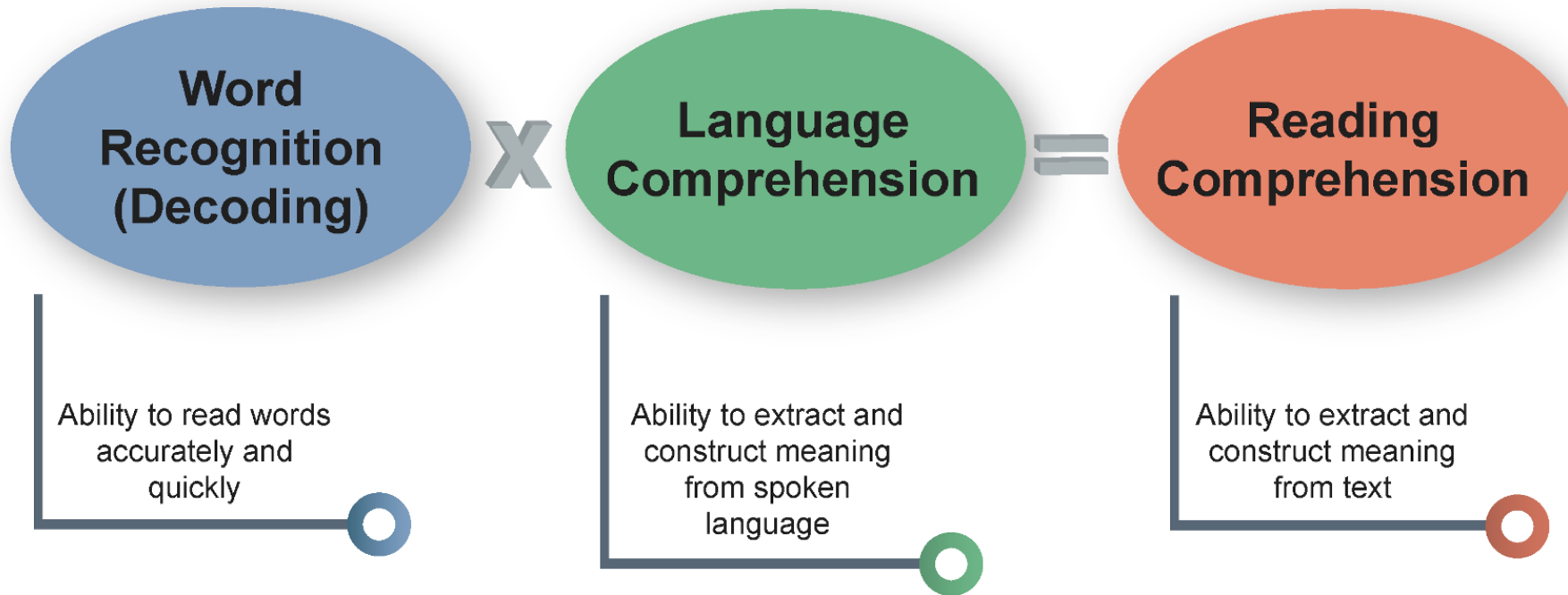
# Check-In

- Finish the sentence by selecting one of the images below:
  - Literacy instruction is like \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.



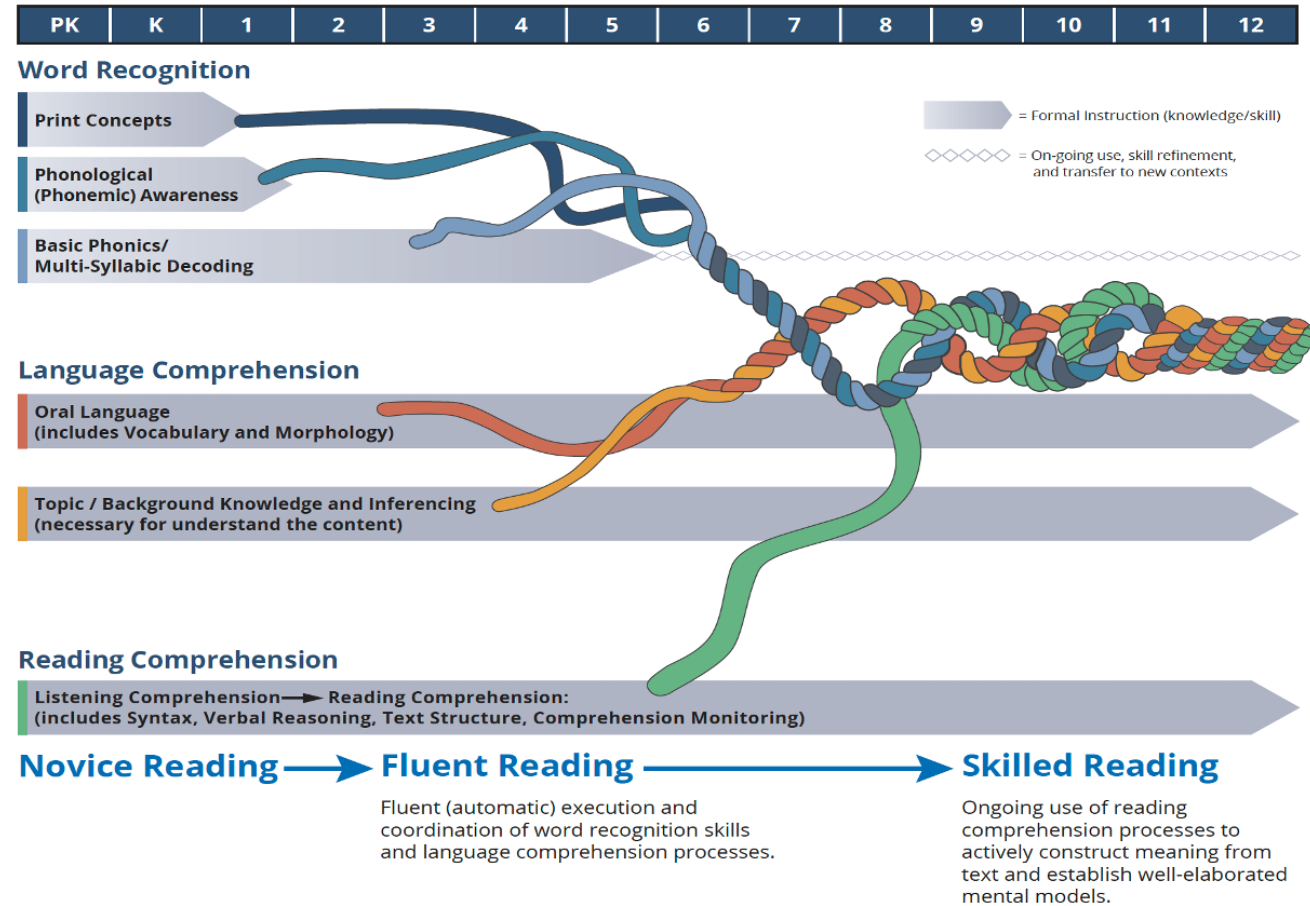
## 2.0 Essential Components

# Simple View of Reading



Gough & Tunmer, 1986

# Reading Rope Model



## Foundational Skills to Support Reading

1. Teach students **academic language skills**, including the use of **inferential and narrative** language, and **vocabulary knowledge**.
2. Develop awareness of the **segments of sounds** in speech and how they **link to letters**.
3. Teach students to **decode words**, analyze word parts, and **write and recognize words**.
4. Ensure that each student reads **connected text** every day to support reading **accuracy, fluency, and comprehension**.

Foorman et al., 2016

# 1. Academic Language Skills

- Engage students in conversations that support the use and comprehension of inferential language
- Explicitly engage students in developing narrative language skills
- Teach academic vocabulary in the context of other reading activities

Foorman et al., 2016

## 2. Awareness of the Segments of Sound

- Teach students to recognize and **manipulate segments of sound** in speech
- Teach students **letter-sound relations**
- Use **word-building** and other activities to **link** students' knowledge of **letter-sound** relationships with **phonemic awareness**

Foorman et al., 2016

### 3. Decode Words, Analyze Word Parts, and Write and Recognize Words

- Teach students to blend letter sounds and sound-spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce a recognizable pronunciation
- Instruct students in common sound-spelling patterns
- Teach students to recognize common word parts
- Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text
- Teach regular and irregular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently
- Introduce non-decodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words

Foorman et al., 2016

## 4. Connected Text

- As students read orally, model strategies, scaffold, and provide feedback to support accurate and efficient word identification
- Teach students to self-monitor their understanding of the text and to self-correct word-reading errors
- Provide opportunities for oral reading practice with feedback to develop fluent and accurate reading with expression

Foorman et al., 2016

# Improving Reading Comprehension

1. Teach students how to use **reading comprehension strategies**.
2. Teach students to **identify** and **use the text's organizational structure** to comprehend, learn, and remember content.
3. Guide students through **focused, high-quality discussion** on the meaning of text.
4. Select texts **purposefully to support** comprehension development.
5. Establish an **engaging and motivating context** in which to teach comprehension.

Shanahan et al., 2010

# 1. Use Reading Comprehension Strategies

- Teach students how to use several research-based reading comprehension strategies
- Teach reading comprehension strategies individually or in combination
- Teach reading comprehension strategies by using a gradual release of responsibility

Shanahan et al., 2010

## 2. Identify and Use the Text's Organizational Structure

- Explain how to identify and connect the parts of narrative texts
- Provide instruction on common structures of informational texts

Shanahan et al., 2010

### 3. High-Quality Discussion

- Structure the **discussion** to complement the **text**, the instructional **purpose**, and the readers' **ability and grade level**
- Develop discussion **questions** that require students to **think deeply** about text
- Ask follow-up question to encourage and **facilitate discussion**
- Have **students lead** structured small-group **discussion**

Shanahan et al., 2010

## 4. Select Texts Purposefully

- Teach reading comprehension with multiple genres of text
- Choose texts of high quality with richness and depth of ideas and information
- Choose texts with word recognition and comprehension difficulty appropriate for the students' reading ability and the instructional activity
- Use texts that support the purpose of instruction

Shanahan et al., 2010

## 5. Engaging and Motivating Context

- Help students discover the purpose and benefits of reading
- Create opportunities for students to see themselves as successful readers
- Give students reading choices
- Give students the opportunity to learn by collaborating with their peers

Shanahan et al., 2010

## Time Allocated

- National Reading Panel Report: 90 minutes of uninterrupted explicit, systematic, and differentiated instruction
- 2 hours or more K-1
  - Foundational skills cover at least half the time
- At least 90 minutes in 2-3
  - Foundational skills will take somewhat less for “on track” students

National Reading Panel, 2000; Moats & Tolman, 2019

## Don't Let the Rope Unravel

- An overemphasis on foundational skills can leave students bereft of the background knowledge, vocabulary, and language comprehension associated with content-rich text
- An overemphasis on literature and language comprehension leaves only the top students to access the text in K-2 and the rest will flounder

## Not One But Both

- Clarify the goals of each component for yourself and your students
- Differentiate varied purposes for various activities
- Plan blocks of time for each components
- Choose high-quality read aloud text

# Optimize Instructional Time

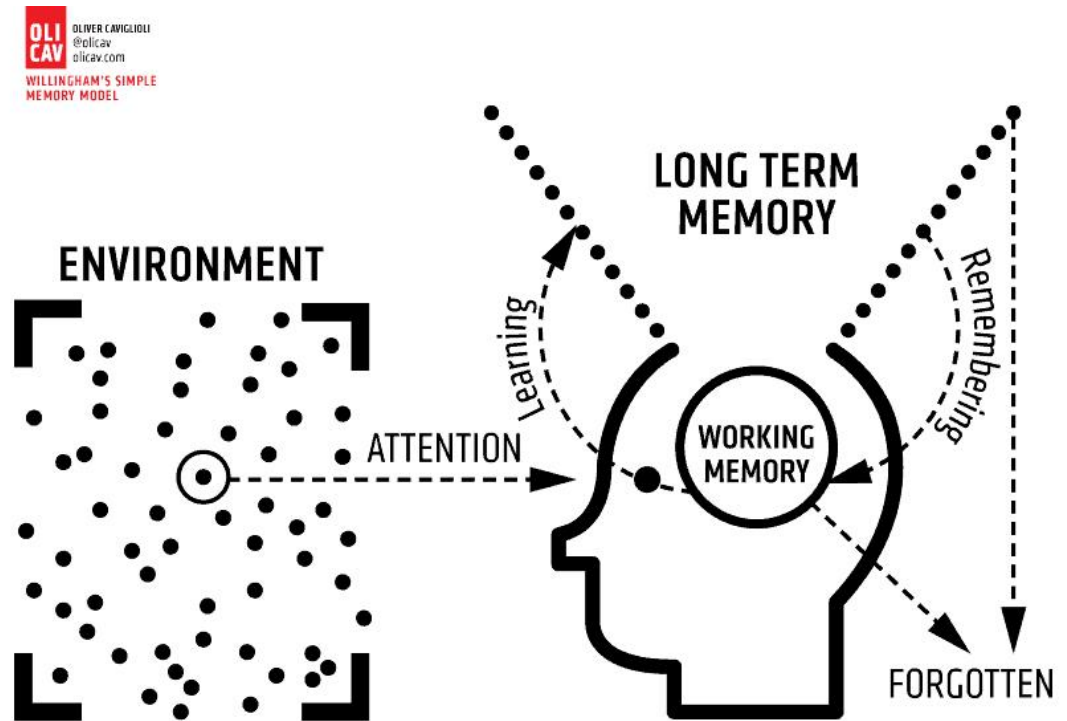
- Increase allocated time and **time spent teaching** in critical content areas
- Ensure an **appropriate match** between what is **being taught** and the instructional **needs of students**
- Start lessons **on time** and stick to the **schedule**
- Teach in **groups** as much as possible
- Be **prepared**
- Avoid **digressions**
- Decrease **transition time**
- Use **routines**

Archer & Hughes, 2011

# 3.0 Critical Content

# Cognitive Load

- Highly effective teachers manage students' cognitive load
  - Breaking learning tasks into **bite-sized chunks**
  - Build students' knowledge solidly and in a **sequential manner**
  - Maximize the time spent **explicitly teaching** students
  - Frequent **checks for understanding**



Swain, 2025; Willingham, 2021

# Science of Learning and Explicit Instruction

<b>Cognitive Science Principle</b>	<b>Explicit Instruction</b>
Working memory is limited	Explicit instruction reduces overload
Prior knowledge enables new learning	Lessons are sequenced based on what students already know
Retrieval isn't a test of learning; it is learning	Retrieval practice is built into lessons through active participation
Learning and performance aren't the same	Distributed practice is an essential component of explicit instruction
Novices benefit from explicit guidance	Explicit instruction benefits all learners and is critical for novices
Motivation and achievement are reciprocal	High levels of success enhance motivation

Hendrick, 2025

## What is critical?

- Teach skills, strategies, vocabulary terms, concepts, and rules that will empower students in the future and match the students' instructional needs

Archer & Hughes, 2011

## Teach the Stuff and Cut the Fluff

- Can increase content coverage by deciding what is important for your students to learn
  - Examine your curriculum, select critical skills and objectives, and discard or deemphasize those that are less critical
  - Focus on skills, strategies, concepts, or rules that will generalize to many other items or situations
- Can increase content coverage by increasing efficiency of instruction

## Data Informed

- Master teachers rely on their knowledge of their students to alter how they do things
  - What do students already know?
  - What prerequisite skills are they lacking?

## Scope and Sequence

- Clear and logical scope and sequences are critical for this work
  - Ensures components are taught systematically and sequentially
  - Role of daily and monthly review

# 4.0 Evaluate Resources

# The Reading League's Curriculum Evaluation Tool

- Alignment to findings from the **science of reading**
  - Including “red-flags” practices within a curriculum that are not aligned with the scientific evidence base
- Practices used to **review curricula** are those featured in Scarborough's **reading rope model**
  - Word recognition
  - Language comprehension
- Additional practices related to **fluency, writing, reading comprehension, and assessment**

The Reading League, 2022

# Sample Red Flags vs. Green Flags

<b>Instructional Area</b>	<b>Red Flags</b>	<b>Green Flags</b>
Phonemic Awareness	Instruction only attends to larger units of phonological awareness	Instruction includes conversations about the way sounds are made in the mouth
Phonics & Decoding	Blending is not explicitly taught or practiced.	Letter-sound correspondences are taught to automaticity in an explicit manner
Fluency	Rate is emphasized over accuracy	Word level fluency practice is provided

The Reading League, 2022

# 5.0 Craft a Classroom Environment to Support Learning

# Organize Space to Support Instruction

- Design areas for specific activities
  - Whole class instruction
  - Small group instruction
  - Gathering on the rug

Archer & Hughes, 2011; Groshell, 2024

## Set the Conditions for Focused Learning

1. Students **face the teacher** without **turning around**
2. Teacher has **close proximity** to students
3. Students can **interact** with partner/group with **ease**
4. Teacher can **see all areas** of the room
5. Teacher can **easily monitor** all areas
6. Teacher and students can **move easily around the room**
7. Teacher can **access instructional materials**
8. Students can **access materials**

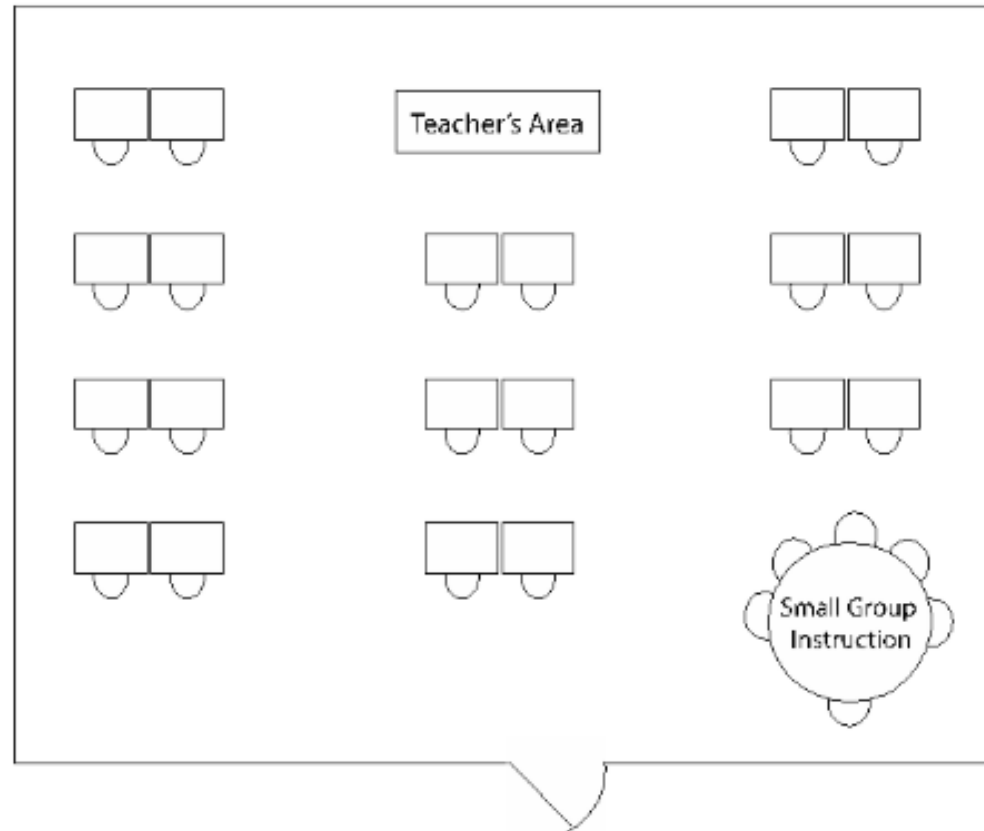
Archer & Hughes, 2011

# Assign Seats

“It is showing empathy not cruelty to assign students to the seat that maximizes their attention, not least because it relieves them from the immense social pressure of having to choose between friends and learning.”

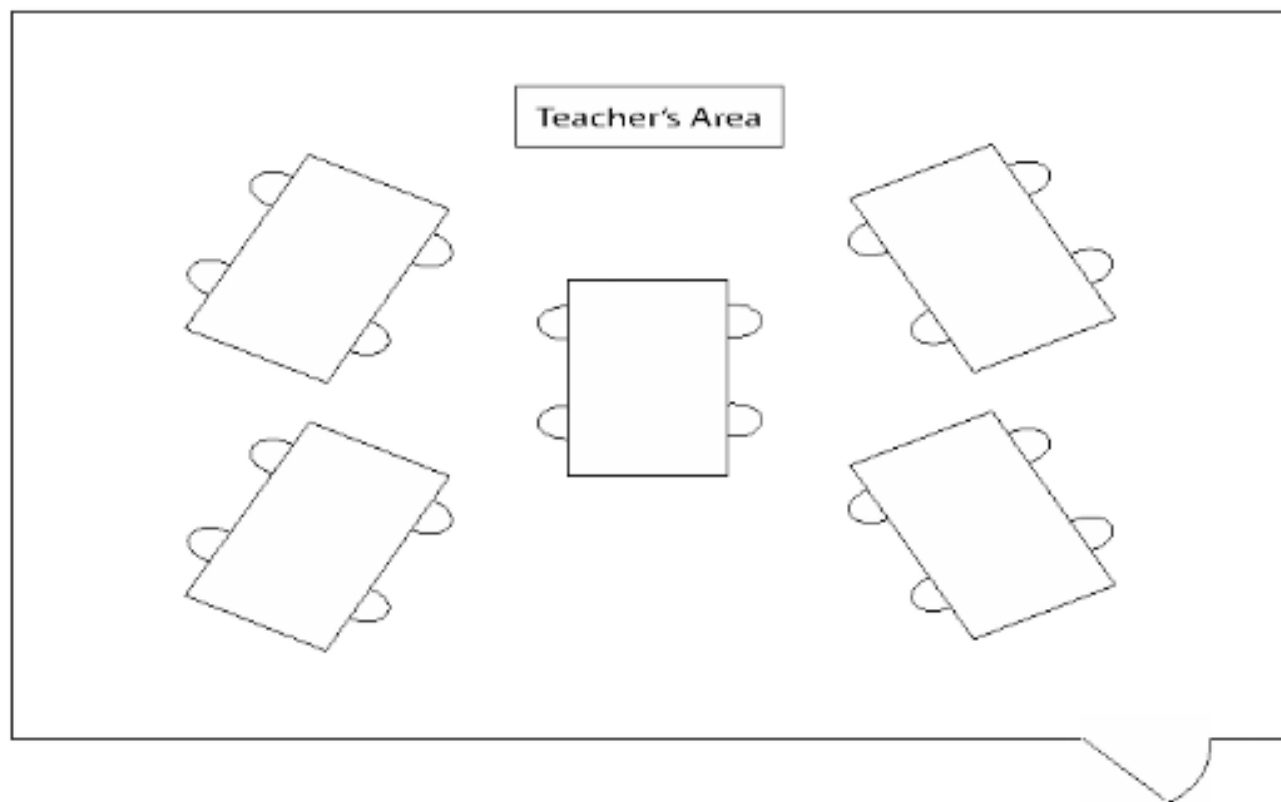
Groshell, 2024

# Classroom Arrangement – Paired Rows



Archer & Hughes, 2011

# Classroom Arrangement – Slanted Tables



Archer & Hughes, 2011

## Reduce Visual Distractions

- Reduce **visual clutter** in the classroom environment
- Place classroom displays **away** from where you're **explaining**
- Post **materials** that remind students of the **critical content and strategies** to apply
  - Word wall/ Sound wall
  - Strategy posters
  - Content/reference information

Archer & Hughes, 2011

# Clear Expectations

- Consider your rules, they should be:
  - Few in number
  - State the desired behavior
  - Short and simple
  - List observable behavior
  - Begin with a verb
  - Clearly define behaviors (clarify with examples and non-examples)

Archer & Hughes, 2011

## Predictability Predicts Ability

- Consider classroom routines carefully
  - Students have no difficulty following consistently
  - Require little, if any, teacher involvement
- Introduce routines as they are needed

Archer & Hughes, 2011

# Possible Routines

- Movement into / out of classroom
- Transition to a new activity
- Use of bathroom
- Use of pencil sharpener
- Turning in completed work
- Cues for attention
- Gaining assistance during independent work time when the teacher is working with a small group

Archer & Hughes, 2011

# 6.0 Closing

# Closing Review

- Scarborough's reading rope model provides us with essential components for reading instruction (don't forget writing)
- Select critical content
- Evaluate resources for potential red flags and adjust accordingly
- Organize your space to support instruction
- Provide students with clear expectations

# Preview of Designing High-Quality Literacy Instruction

- Review the components of high-quality literacy instruction
- Describe the structure and attributes of explicit lesson design
- Design lessons that integrate evidence-based literacy strategies
- Reflect on current practices and set goals for implementation

# Don't Forget!

- Homework: Assignment 3.1
  - Review your curriculum scope and sequence and reflect:
    - Are foundational skills and language comprehension both represented? Which are emphasized?
    - Are too many concepts introduced at once?
    - Are there opportunities embedded to revisit critical concepts across the year?
    - Where will students need support with prerequisite skills?
    - What might students already know?

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