



**ESSENTIAL
ELEMENTS OF
AN EFFECTIVE
SCHOOL
READING
PROGRAM**

**Burt /
Books**

INTRODUCTION

Developing a curriculum that can be used in a whole school situation is the task and responsibility of those in leadership in a school. It is a responsibility that necessitates a deep understanding of the acquisition of reading in children.

This paper outlines a model for initiating an effective reading curriculum in a school. Further reading should take place to develop ideas that suit your school. This model can be used to evaluate your present reading curriculum and it also establishes a framework for changes that may need to be made.

CURRICULUM

1. GOALS

**What goals have been identified for your reading curriculum?
Which theories are these goals based upon?**

2. ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

Which of these components are included in your curriculum:

- * decoding**
- * word meaning**
- * text comprehension**
- * sentence comprehension**

3. PROGRAM MATERIALS

Selected to suit the school cohort – this may mean having more than one program running concurrently to suit all needs. The program should ensure SUCCESS!

INSTRUCTION

1. ORGANISATIONAL

Have you provided adequate organisational structures that facilitates learning and allows all children to engage in the learning process?

2. INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Have you selected instructional strategies and activities that are appropriate for your pupils and that will allow them to engage in the learning process?

3. FACILITATION OF COMMUNICATION

Selected to suit the school cohort – this may mean having more than one program running concurrently to suit all needs. The program should ensure **SUCCESS!**

ASSESSMENT

1. FORMAL MEASUREMENT

- * Which formal assessment tests will you use?
- * When will these tests be performed?
- * How will the results be used?
- * Who will have access to the results?
- * How will the results be used to plan individual programs

2. INTERNAL SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

- * How often will assessment take place?
- * What planning has taken place to ensure progress?
- * What opportunities have been given to pupils to demonstrate their progress?
- * Who will evaluate progress - peer -assessment
self-assessment

What criteria make a remedial reading program effective for helping struggling readers?

To be effective for a struggling reader, a remedial reading program needs to include the following:

- **Explicit introduction of all concepts**
There should be no guesswork. The pupil should know exactly what the program is offering and what is expected of him/her
- **Systematic instruction**
The program should teach the student step by step
- **Comprehensive coverage.**
There should be no jumping about from one concept or phonic sound to another. The program should be strictly sequential.
- **Multi-sensory instruction.**
Teach using all the senses: hearing, seeing, saying, touching, visualizing, whole body movement.
- **Introduce small chunks of information**
The program should not overload the pupil with too much new information at one time. The pupil needs to be able to consolidate one phonic sound before moving on to the next.
- **Speed of the program**
The program must be able to move at a pace that is **slow enough** that the pupil can succeed without frustration **and fast enough** to keep

him/her interested, attentive and challenged. Since the ideal pace is different for different pupils, the program must allow for this flexibility in progressing.

- **Regular systematic review**

This is important so that nothing important is forgotten.

- **Opportunity for revision and consolidation.**

The program must include multiple and varied opportunities to practice applying everything that's taught.

- **The program must encompass all aspects of reading acquisition**

:ie: phonemic awareness

phonics

decoding

fluency

vocabulary

comprehension

spelling

(research shows that teaching spelling and reading of the same words simultaneously reinforces the learning of both).

- **Research based.** Be based on the decades of research collected showing us what it takes to effectively teach everyone to read

- **Fun.** Will students of any age enjoy the program? The program needs to be interesting, fun and contain enough variety so the student will not get bored.

- **Assessment.** There must be means in the program to assess student progress and to easily determine whether the student needs to continue working at the current level or is ready to move forward.

This assessment (formal or informal) should include accuracy and speed in word reading; phrasing, expression and comprehension of sentences and passages; spelling and basic writing mechanics.

The author of the Burt Reading Scheme used the above as a checklist whilst compiling the program to make sure that every aspect was covered. The program is based on the work of Orton Gillingham and also research done in the UK into reading acquisition by academics such as W. Joliffe, Professor Goswami (Cambridge) and others

