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## Teacher Competencies

### *I. Effective K-3 teachers of literacy have a broad knowledge base about areas essential to effective literacy instruction.*

They:

#### **A. Understand the relationship between oral language and literacy (reading, spelling, writing)**

1. They have knowledge about a variety of oral-language competencies (e.g., vocabulary, phonological awareness, listening comprehension) and how these competencies play a role in learning to read
2. They understand the differences between informal/conversational language and formal/literate language
3. They recognize the importance of talking with children, and encouraging talk among children, in developing oral-language competencies
4. They recognize the importance of reading to children in developing both oral-language competencies and print-related knowledge (e.g., basic print concepts)
5. They understand the basis for speech-sound confusions that may affect reading and spelling (e.g., /b/ and /p/ are frequently confused because they are articulated in the same way, except that /b/ is voiced and /p/ is not)
6. They have knowledge about comprehension strategies
7. They understand the meaning and importance of "active construction of meaning"
8. They understand the meaning and importance of "emergent literacy"
9. They have knowledge about learning theory

#### **B. Know the stages and processes of children's development in areas central to literacy:**

1. oral language (listening and speaking)
2. reading
3. spelling
4. writing

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### C. Understand the nature of written English

1. They understand that English is an alphabetic writing system with complex letter-sound and spelling-sound mappings
2. They know common letter-sound and spelling-sound relationships in English, including sounds for larger units, such as *-tion*
3. They know the various syllable structures characteristic of written English (e.g., closed, open, silent *g* syllables)
4. They recognize common phonetically irregular (exception) words in English
5. They understand how to do structural analysis of long words and why structural analysis is useful
6. They understand the role of morphology in written English

### D. Have knowledge about diverse learners

1. They understand the impact of limited knowledge of spoken English on literacy acquisition (e.g., the importance of a base of oral competence in a language to learning to read in that language, the processes of first- and second-language acquisition, and how to facilitate children's acquisition of spoken and written English)
2. They understand the impact of dialect differences on literacy acquisition (e.g., understanding what a dialect is, specific features of dialects and how to facilitate children's acquisition of standard English)
3. They understand the impact of children's background knowledge on literacy acquisition
4. They understand the impact of various language difficulties and disorders (e.g., hearing impairment or language delay) on literacy acquisition
5. They know the common characteristics of children who experience reading difficulties and specific indicators for teacher intervention
6. They understand the importance of knowing children's strengths as well as their weaknesses and of capitalizing on these strengths in instruction

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7. They understand the importance of challenging and meeting the needs of high-achieving students as well as those experiencing difficulties

**E. Have knowledge about assessment**

1. They recognize the importance of ongoing assessment in guiding instruction
2. They understand the purposes of different kinds of assessment (e.g., assessment to screen and diagnose risk vs. assessment to measure progress over time)
3. They know about a variety of assessment tools (e.g., screening and diagnostic measures, informal reading inventories, running records, word lists, teacher-designed tests, analysis of reading and spelling errors, portfolios, standardized tests) that are useful in assessment of literacy and literacy-related abilities
4. They understand the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to assessment (e.g., authentic literacy assessments vs. standardized tests)
5. They understand basic concepts involved in test selection and interpretation, such as reliability, validity and standard error
6. They know how to interpret and use the results of various assessments

**F. Know about a wide variety of instructional resources and children's books**

1. They understand the importance of providing children with books matched to their reading levels and interests
2. They understand the ways that different types of books may be useful in reading instruction (e.g., "big books" may be useful for developing basic print concepts, rhyming and alliterative books for developing phonological awareness, decodable books for providing practice applying decoding skills in context, children's literature for developing broad language abilities, and nonfiction books for developing a knowledge base about a particular topic)

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3. They know about a range of books suitable for children of varying reading levels, interests and cultural backgrounds
  4. They know about a range of books of different genres (e.g., fiction vs. nonfiction texts)
  5. They know about various technological resources (i.e., software programs and the Internet)
  6. They understand the importance of connecting children and their parents with public libraries for access to books, motivational programs and professional assistance during times when school libraries, media centers and media specialists are not available (e.g., evenings, weekends, summer)
- G. Understand the importance of a variety of factors in fostering **motivation** to read, such as exhibiting their own enthusiasm for reading, giving children choices of reading material, ensuring that reading materials are not too difficult and using books as intrinsic rewards
- H. Recognize the importance of **collaborating with colleagues (in school and in other community agencies, such as the public library) and parents**
- I. Know about **research findings**
1. They know basic patterns of research findings in reading
  2. They understand and can apply to the interpretation of educational research basic scientific concepts (e.g., the importance of systematic observation and testing, stating claims in ways that are potentially falsifiable, considering alternative explanations of evidence)
  3. They understand the need for keeping reasonably current with basic research findings on an ongoing basis

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*II. Effective K-3 teachers of literacy can teach important aspects of literacy well to a wide range of children.*

They:

- A. Can teach **word-identification skills** effectively, including:
1. Phonological and phonemic awareness
  2. Basic print concepts
  3. Common letter-sound and spelling-sound correspondences, including correspondences for groups of letters (e.g., igh, oo, tion)
  4. Developing children's understanding of the alphabetic principle
  5. Word decoding, using synthetic as well as analytic strategies, and teaching multisyllable as well as single-syllable words
  6. Structural analysis
  7. Sight-word knowledge (e.g., teaching irregular or exception words by sight)
- B. Can teach effectively skills for **fluent and accurate word identification in context**, including:
1. Encouraging children to apply known decoding skills when reading in context
  2. Encouraging children to monitor comprehension while reading in context
  3. Providing appropriate feedback and scaffolding during oral reading in context
  4. Developing children's fluency
  5. Selecting books that are appropriate for a particular child or group of children (e.g., books of appropriate difficulty)
  6. Encouraging independent reading
- C. Can teach **comprehension** effectively, in both listening and reading, including:
1. Vocabulary, including multiple meanings of words, idiomatic expressions and literary language
  2. The use of comprehension strategies, such as summarization and prediction
  3. Important aspects of text structure (e.g., narrative and expository text structure)

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4. Asking scaffolded questions that foster discussion, elaboration and active construction of meaning
  5. Helping children relate reading to their own experiences and to prior knowledge
  6. Building children's background knowledge
  7. Dividing texts into appropriate segments for comprehension instruction
  8. Encouraging attention to formal language patterns (e.g., correct verb forms) in texts

D. Can teach **spelling** effectively, including:

1. Developing children's abilities to use letter-sound and spelling-sound correspondences, phonemic awareness and understanding of the alphabetic principle in spelling
2. Developing conventional spelling competencies appropriate to each grade level
3. Drawing children's attention to common letter patterns within words
4. Teaching common spelling generalizations (such as dropping silent e before adding -ing)
5. Drawing children's attention to morphological and structural relationships among words (e.g., heal/health)
6. Encouraging application of spelling knowledge to everyday writing

E. Can teach **writing** effectively, including:

1. Guiding children through the stages of a writing process, with planning, composing, revision and editing of written products
2. Providing appropriate feedback and scaffolding while "coaching" children in writing
3. Teaching various purposes for writing
4. Demonstrating the connections between reading and writing (e.g., a writer organizes his or her story around a beginning, middle and end; a reader uses story structure—beginning, middle and end—to facilitate comprehension)
5. Encouraging use of formal language patterns (e.g., correct verb and pronoun forms) and literacy words (e.g., new vocabulary encountered in reading) in children's writing
6. Developing clarity, descriptiveness and elaboration of writing

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7. Teaching organization and paragraphing
  8. Teaching sentence structure (e.g., avoiding sentence fragments and using varied sentence lengths)
  9. Teaching basic mechanics of writing (e.g., capitalization, punctuation, handwriting)

F. Can effectively **manage classroom instruction**, given appropriate resources, including:

1. Adapting instruction to meet individual differences in each area of reading (word identification, fluent and accurate word identification in context, comprehension, spelling, writing)
2. Effectively grouping children for instruction using a variety of flexible small-group and large-group formats, depending on what is appropriate in a given situation
3. Providing opportunities for oral-language use and verbal interaction (child-child verbal interaction as well as teacher-child interaction)
4. Effectively coordinating and integrating instruction in the various areas of literacy, both with each other and with all content areas

G. Can effectively **use technology** in instruction

*III. Effective K-3 teachers of literacy can assess children's competencies in key areas of literacy.*

They:

- A. Can **administer and interpret measures of literacy routinely used with all children**, such as informal reading inventories, graded word lists, running records, portfolios of children's work and standardized tests
- B. Can **administer and interpret screening and diagnostic measures** designed to identify children at risk for reading difficulties

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C. Can **informally assess, on an ongoing basis, children's competencies** in:

1. word identification;
2. fluency and accuracy of word identification in context;
3. comprehension;
4. spelling; and
5. writing.

D. Can **use knowledge about developmental stages and processes** (in oral language, reading, spelling and writing) to assess children's performance and to improve instruction

E. Can **use the results of assessment to improve instruction** for a given child or group of children

*IV. Effective K-3 teachers of literacy can motivate a broad range of children to read and write.*

They:

- A. Model enjoyment and appreciation of books, reading and writing
- B. Develop children's awareness of and curiosity about books, words and ideas
- C. Provide children with interesting and appropriate choices of reading material
- D. Encourage social interaction around books and literacy (e.g., book sharing, sharing of writing, peer recommendations of authors)
- E. Use books and other literacy-related materials as incentives



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*V. Effective K-3 teachers of literacy collaborate with other professionals and with parents to promote children's literacy achievement and motivation.*

They:

- A. Collaborate with specialists, including reading specialists, special educators, bilingual specialists, speech and language pathologists, library media specialists and public children's librarians
- B. Communicate with children's families about ways to encourage children's language and literacy development
- C. Communicate with children's families about children's strengths and weaknesses on various assessments and classroom work