



## ***Using REWARDS Program to Teach Decoding, Vocabulary, and Reading Comprehension across Content Areas***

**Objective:** To teach students to decode and identify vocabulary and build reading comprehension skills across content areas.

### **Setting and Materials:**

**Settings:** Small group settings in special education, resource, or general education classrooms (10-15 students; 45-50 minutes per day).

### **Materials:**

- *REWARDS Intermediate Program* <http://store.voyagersopris.com/rewards-intermediate-and-secondary/>
- Passages with comprehension questions to practice reading comprehension across content areas

### **Content Taught**

By participating in a specialized reading program designed for readers who struggle with multisyllabic words, students are provided with explicit instruction centered on daily lessons that aim to increase fluency, comprehension, and academic vocabulary with a gradual release of responsibility to the student as their proficiencies grow. Students learn highly generalizable and transferrable word attack strategies that extend from the ELA classroom into the content areas (e.g., ELA/social studies/science). Through repeated reading with partners, students increase reading fluency and comprehension skills.

Students:

- Learn flexible strategies for decoding grade-level multi-syllabic words
- Increase oral and silent reading fluency
- Expand their knowledge of general academic and domain-specific vocabulary
- Improve comprehension as decoding and fluency increase
- Read accurately, quickly, and with confidence

### **Teaching Procedures**

- In small class sizes of 10-15 students for 45-50 minutes per day; students will progress through three phases of an intervention based on the REWARDS Intermediate Program.

- Phase 1: (25 lessons over 7-8 weeks) emphasizes word recognition, fluency, additional instruction in vocabulary and comprehension.
- Explicit instruction (e.g., practice with letter sounds/ combinations/ affixes/ application of using word parts vocabulary and comprehension strategies using an instructional routine consisting of explicit modeling, demonstration, or description, followed by guided and independent practice) is provided in teaching phonological elements and advanced strategies for decoding multisyllabic words .
- Fluency is promoted by using oral reading fluency data and pairing higher and lower readers for partner reading. Students engaged in repeated reading daily with their partner with the goal of increasing accuracy and rate (approximately 10 min daily).
- Phase 2 (17 to 18 weeks) of the intervention emphasizes vocabulary and comprehension, with additional instruction and practice provided for applying the word recognition and fluency elements learned in Phase 1.
- Word recognition skills and strategies taught in Phase 1 should be reviewed daily in Phase 2 with explicit application of the phonic elements and decoding strategies to reading and spelling of new vocabulary words (e.g., activity involving matching various scenarios, examples, or description). Next, introduce word relatives and parts of speech.
- Three days a week, use REWARDS Plus Social Studies/Science/ELA lessons and materials.
- Two days a week, use novels with lessons. Students were taught strategies for understanding each type of text (i.e., expository and narrative) including identifying the structural features of the text and identifying questions to be answered in various sections of the text. Each day, students read the text with a partner at least twice for fluency. Connected text reading occurred between 20 and 40 min each day depending on the designated lesson.
- Comprehension elements were practiced both orally and through writing with explicit instruction on forming written responses and involved generating questions of varying levels of complexity and abstraction while reading (e.g., literal questions, questions requiring students to synthesize information from text, and questions requiring students to apply background knowledge to information in text); identifying main idea; summarizing text; and using strategies to answer multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions.
- Phase 3 (8-10 weeks) continued the instructional emphasis on vocabulary and comprehension, with more time spent on independent student application of the skills and strategies introduced in Phase 2.
- Fluency and comprehension are taught through application of strategies for reading and understanding text to both expository science and social studies content and narrative text (novels), with a focus on applying the strategies to independent reading. Students read passages twice for fluency, generated

questions while reading, and addressed comprehension questions related to all the skills and strategies learned.

### Evaluation

Student mastery depends on responding to each aspect of the REWARDS-based lesson automatically without prompts from the teacher. Aim for 80% accuracy or higher before progressing.

### Lesson Plan Based on:

- Vaughn, S., Wexler, J., Roberts, G., Barth, A. A., Cirino, P.T.,...Denton, C. A. (2011). Effects of individualized and standardized interventions on middle school students with reading disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 77*, 391-407.
- Vaughn, S., Roberts, G., Schnakenberg, J.B., Fall, A., Vaughn, M.G., & Wekler, J. (2015). Improving reading comprehension for high school students with disabilities: Effects for comprehension and school retention. *Exceptional Children, 82*, 117-131.
- Wanzek, J., Vaughn, S., Roberts, G., & Fletcher, J.M. (2011). Efficacy of a reading intervention for middle school students with learning disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 78*, 73-87.

This Lesson Plan Starter was developed by The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT), Charlotte, NC, funded by Cooperative Agreement Number H326E140004 with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). This document has been reviewed and approved by the OSERS. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education. OSEP Project Officer: Dr. Selete Avoke. RSA Project Officer: Kristen Rhinehart-Fernandez. This product is public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, the citation should be: National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (2019). *Using REWARDS Program to Teach Decoding, Vocabulary, and Reading Comprehension Across Content Areas*.

