

# Establish an Engaging and Motivating Context in Which to Teach Reading Comprehension

## Purpose

This document provides educators with information about a high-leverage, evidence-based practice recommended in the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) practice guide, [Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade](#).<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

**Establishing an engaging and motivating context in which to teach reading comprehension** is an evidence-based practice to help educators increase student achievement in critical foundational skills for early readers. Page 34 of the practice guide states:

Students must actively engage with text to extract and construct its meaning, and they will become better readers if they are taught reading comprehension in an engaging, motivating context. A teacher can create this context by clearly conveying the purpose of each lesson, explaining to students how the comprehension strategies will help them learn, and impressing on them that the power to be successful readers rests as much with them as it does with their teacher... Teachers should choose reading materials that offer students a choice in what to read and an opportunity to collaborate with one another.

For more information about this practice guide, see the [AOE's Annotated Guide](#), as well as [Resources for Educators](#) on the WWC (including videos and instructional rubrics).

## ESSA Level of Evidence

ESSA levels of evidence are the result of a synthesis of current evidence-based research. Below is the level of evidence for this recommendation:

- **Tier 3 – Promising (Moderate Evidence)**

See the [full practice guide](#) for more information about specific studies. For more information about levels of evidence, see the REL document [ESSA Tiers of Evidence: What You Need to Know](#).

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<sup>1</sup> [What Works Clearinghouse/IES Practice Guides](#) provide recommendations for educators of evidence-based practices to improve student outcomes. WWC/IES Practice Guides were developed by a panel of literacy experts based on reviews of research, practitioner experiences, and expert opinions.

## Contact Information:

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## How to Carry Out the Recommendation

Listed below are ways to [establish an engaging and motivating context in which to teach reading comprehension](#). See the pages of the guide referenced next to each instructional practice to find more specific implementation strategies.

- Help students discover the purpose and benefits of reading (35).
- Create opportunities for students to see themselves as successful readers (36).
- Give students reading choices (36-37).
- Give students the opportunity to learn by collaborating with their peers (37).

## Connections to Literacy Essential Practices

[Literacy Essentials](#) provide evidence- and research-based approaches educators can use to support early literacy. This resource was introduced to Vermont through work done with [Dr. Nell Duke](#) and includes classroom practices teachers can use daily to implement the recommendations in the WWC practice guides. See the page number referenced next to each Essential Practice to find more specific implementation strategies.

### [Literacy Essential Practices for Prekindergarten](#)

- **Essential Practice #1:** Intentional use of literacy artifacts in dramatic play and throughout the learning environment (3)
- **Essential Practice #7:** Extended conversation (6)
- **Essential Practice #8:** Provision of abundant reading, listening, and viewing material in the classroom (6)

### [Literacy Essential Practices for Grades K-3](#)

- **Essential Practice #1:** Deliberate, research-informed efforts to foster literacy motivation and engagement within and across lessons (3)
- **Essential Practice #3:** Small group and individual instruction, using a variety of grouping strategies, most often with flexible groups formed and instruction targeted to (i.e., differentiated by) children’s observed and assessed needs in specific aspects of literacy, including both writing and reading development (and therefore not by perceived general “ability” or “level”) (4)
- **Essential Practice #7:** Intentional and ambitious efforts to build vocabulary and knowledge, including content and other cultural knowledge, throughout the day (6)
- **Essential Practice #8:** Abundant reading material in classroom and school libraries and reading opportunities in the classroom (7)