

# Reach All Readers by Anna Geiger

Working as a special education teacher for 25 years provided me with many opportunities, skills and resources to support a diverse range of students. I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the VRP team for the past few years as a way to continue fostering and guiding reading instruction in a meaningful way. Reflecting back on my teaching practices and the model in which most reading instruction was structured, it seemed disjointed and often too open-ended. The mandated program emphasized “balanced literacy” : a mix of guided reading, phonics, levelled readers and reading using a three cueing system, etc.. This way of teaching lacked clear guidelines and was too broad to ensure students had the best opportunities to become fluent readers. All these approaches had me feeling a bit “off balance” and wondering how effective they were, especially for struggling readers. Over the past few years, focus and practices have shifted to the evidence-based science of how students learn to read. We have an invaluable opportunity as VRP volunteers to provide our struggling readers effective and direct support. Using the resource Reach All Readers by Anna Geiger allowed me to gain clearer insight into the science of how students learn to read and gave me some productive instructional practices that I can apply to maximize my VRP sessions.

The book highlights that using systematic instruction is the foundation to learning to read. The book is written in an easy-to-read and relatable style that is organized with descriptions of essential skills combined with proven research findings and practical tools that we can use.

Here are some highlights and practical takeaways from Reach All Readers that may be useful to you for your VRP sessions:

**BORROW** Reach All Readers by Anna Geiger from Kristina - use QR codes embedded into book that are linked to printable resources (charts, games, reading passages etc. )

**GO TO** [www.themeasuredmom.com](http://www.themeasuredmom.com)

**CHECK OUT** @themeasuredmom on Instagram

\*Students need explicit instruction in **phonemic awareness** (ability to identify, manipulate, and think about individual sounds eg. c/a/t) AND **phonics** (learning to connect sounds to letters/ sounding out new words )

\*Students need both phonemic awareness and phonics to move through phases of word learning.

Incorporate phonemic awareness into phonics activities:

Ehri’s Phrases of Word Learning <https://ufl.edu/education/ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/EhriPhases.pdf>

\*Teach phonics skills in an order from simple to more complex. **Scope and sequence** provides a plan that scaffolds phonics instruction:

Free phonics scope and sequence - The Measured Mom

<https://ufl.edu/education/ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/UFLI-Scope2.pdf>

\***Decodable texts** (Bob Books sets) are important because they allow students to apply their phonics skills and feel success.

\***Oral Language skills** are important for both word reading and language comprehension. Adults can actively involve the child in discussions about read-alouds.

**Some example phrases to facilitate discussions:**

“ Can you give me an example ... ”

“Tell me more about that....”

*“ One thing I learned today is...”*

*“What do you already know about this topic...”*

\*Students must become automatic at word recognition (**FLUENT**) so they are able to focus on reading comprehension. Remember, **reading comprehension is the main goal of reading.**

Alphabet Arc activities focussed on letter recognition and sound can help build fluency :

[https://www.readingrockets.org/sites/default/files/migrated/content/pdfs/F\\_Final.pdf](https://www.readingrockets.org/sites/default/files/migrated/content/pdfs/F_Final.pdf)

*Judy Moncik VRP Volunteer October 2024*