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Innovations in Language and Literacy Instruction

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Action Principles

Reading and Language Instruction in Early Childhood Education

- a. SEAs: Require that credential or certificate programs include current research-based practices to prepare early childhood educators to deliver high-quality instruction that will prepare students for later success in school.
- b. LEAs and their schools: Ensure that a comprehensive program of instruction connects early childhood instruction to instruction in elementary grades and ultimately through high school.
- c. LEAs: Provide continual professional development for inservice teachers.

Reading in the Elementary Grades

- a. Although not specified in the brief review of research described [in this chapter], it is important for SEAs to have both a diagnostic (progress monitoring) program and the resources to address student difficulties as they arise. After identification of reading difficulties (or potential difficulties), it is important to follow up on the diagnosis of difficulties with sufficient instruction to correct them. The resources for such remedial or supplemental instruction are often insufficient.
- b. LEAs: Shift the focus of instruction as students progress through the grades; that is, ensure that students receive a strong but not exclusive foundation in decoding skills in early grades, shifting to higher level comprehension skills.
- c. LEAs: Provide a coherent program of professional development (and coaching). If done correctly, such a program will enable teachers to continually update their skill sets and so deliver the most effective instruction possible.

Reading Instruction in Middle and High School

- a. SEAs and LEAs: Provide extra instructional time, targeted to need, for struggling readers. This additional time will involve assessments and appropriate instructional regimens based on those assessments.
- b. LEAs: Provide professional development for teachers in middle and high school to assist them in delivering high-quality instruction. Extend professional support to all content area teachers and not limited to English language arts teachers.
- c. LEAs and schools: Provide content area teachers with the tools to detect and to address difficulties in learning that are related to their specific disciplines.

Writing Across the Grades

- a. SEAs: Stipulate in teacher credentialing requirements that preparation for writing instruction is a fundamental part of teacher preparation.
- b. LEAs: Ensure that writing is integrated into the literacy curriculum and taught in combination with reading and other literacy skills.
- c. LEAs: Direct teachers to conduct writing instruction in contexts that are as authentic as possible so that students will not view writing as divorced from real life.

Listening and Speaking

- a. LEAs: Add both listening and speaking to the curriculum across all grades, not just the elementary grades.
- b. LEAs: Promote the teaching of listening and speaking in the context of reading and writing and also as independent skills.

Second-Language Learning:

Oral Proficiency

- a. SEAs and LEAs: Ensure that policies encourage the use of native language in the acquisition of second languages.
- b. SEAs and LEAs: Include all communicative forms in second-language instruction—reading, writing, and listening, in addition to speaking.
- c. LEAs: Provide professional development in current research-based practices for teaching second languages.

Second-Language Literacy

- a. SEA policies: Allow the use of native language in the instruction of English language learners to make such instruction more effective.
- b. SEAs and LEAs: Ensure that teachers receive appropriate preparation in teaching English language learners both in preservice and inservice settings.
- c. SEAs and LEAs: Use assessments that take into account the native language abilities of students for both formative and summative purposes.