



THE

# FOUR BLOCKS

LITERACY MODEL

## Using the Four Block Literacy Framework for Students with Disabilities





- Developed in 1989-91 by Patricia Cunningham, Dorothy Hall & Margaret Defee
- First Implemented in 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes in North Carolina
- Recently expanded to include models for:
  - Kindergarten classes – “Building Blocks”
  - 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes – “Big Blocks”



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## PHILOSOPHY

Children are different in the way they learn, **so** *several different approaches are incorporated daily into reading/ writing instruction.*

Children enter our classes at varying language & literacy levels, **so** *each instructional block is as multi-level as possible.*

Children have different personalities/needs, **so** *substantial instructional support is provided to students who struggle and who need challenge.*



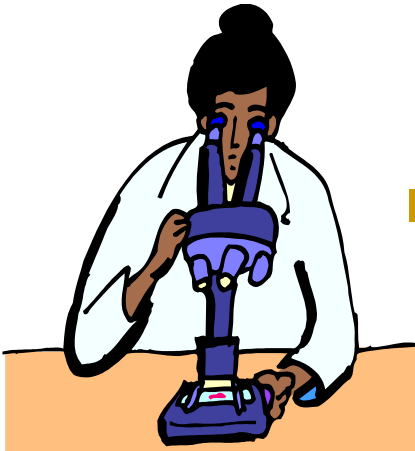
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## RESEARCH

- Four Blocks Literacy Model Website: <http://www.four-blocks.com/research.htm>



- Pat & Dottie's Website: [www.wfu.edu/fourblocks](http://www.wfu.edu/fourblocks)
- Children with Disabilities: Reading & Writing the Four-Blocks Way by Karen Erickson & David Koppenhaver

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## FRAMEWORK



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<http://www.four-blocks.com/1-3.htm>



# Guided Reading Block

## 30-40 minutes

- **Goals are to increase students'**
    - ❑ Background knowledge, oral vocabulary meanings, and comprehension skills
    - ❑ Application of reading strategies in various text types
    - ❑ Reading fluency through repeated readings
  
  - **Components of this block are**
    - ❑ Before Reading Activities
    - ❑ During Reading Activities
    - ❑ After Reading Activities
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# Self Selected Reading

## 30 minutes

- **Goals to develop students'**
  - ❑ Receptive language by listening to read alouds
  - ❑ Skills for selecting interesting reading materials  
(at student's instructional level)
  - ❑ Reading comprehension (1-1 teacher conferences)
  - ❑ Expressive language by sharing what they've read
- **Components of this block are**
  - ❑ Teacher Read-Aloud
  - ❑ Independent, self selected reading & conferences
  - ❑ Sharing Time



# The Writing Block

40 minutes

- **Goals are to improve students'**
    - Independent writing skills for real purposes
    - Written language skills at an individual pace
    - Expressive language skills by sharing what they've written.
  
  - **Components of this block are**
    - Mini Lesson – Modeling Writing & Editing Process
    - Children write on self selected topics and have teacher conferences (1-1)
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- Sharing writing in small or large groups





# Working With Words Block

## 30 minutes

- **Goals are to increase students'**
    - recognition and fluency of high frequency words
    - decoding and spelling of phonetically regular words
  - **Components of this block are**
    - Word Wall Activities
    - Decoding and Spelling Activities
      - Rhyming, Reading & Writing Onset/Rimes
      - Making & Sorting Word Families
    - Using Patterns and Context
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# Children With Disabilities: Reading & Writing the Four Blocks Way

Developed by Karen Erickson & David  
Koppenhaver



- Implemented at the Center for Literacy & Disability Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
    - ❑ Students with Communication Disorders
    - ❑ Students with Moderate – Severe Cognitive Impairments
    - ❑ Students with Learning Disabilities
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# Adapting the Four Block Model for Students with Disabilities

- Disability type or label does not provide instructional information
- Consider the areas of significant difference:
  - Communication
  - Cognition
  - Physical abilities
  - Senses
  - Affect
- Attention



# Adapting the Four Block Model for Students with Disabilities

- Adapt only in the areas of need.
- Try to develop adaptations that do not significantly change the objective of the activity.
- Multi-level materials are available in each block.
- Use assistive technology as a tool to support students in Four Block activities.



# Guided Reading

30-40 minutes

- Adapt versions of text for the computer
- Scan and import illustrations to multimedia software program
- Include MPEG videos of topic to augment student's understanding of topic
- Add text which computer will read aloud
- Click of a mouse will turn the pages of the electronic book



# Guided Reading

30-40 minutes

- Student can hum/tap syllables while doing silent reading
- Choose a reading fact from a list the teacher has prepared and record it on the BIGmack for sharing at circle time
- When partner reading can say a specific word when the partner points to it in the book



# Self Selected Reading

## 30 minutes

- Provides an opportunity to get out of wheelchair and relax during teacher read-aloud.
  - Multi-leveled books are available for all abilities on same subject
  - Electronic books are available on computer
  - Power point books recreated by the teacher or other students
  - Use eye-gaze to elicit answers during conferencing about the book
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# The Writing Block

40 minutes

- Student can participate by using communication device that asks editing questions to the class.
- Work on scanning and spelling
- Use word prediction program to assist in writing
- Use low-tech items such as a pencil grip, raised line paper, angle tray to assist “writers”.
- Participate in sharing stories using speech devices
- Program devices to say specific messages that pertain to a writing conference





# Working With Words

30 minutes

- Use the computer to type the words when others are writing the words
- Color coded on the wall to aid student using eye-gaze frame
- Student goal is different yet using same class activity gives a meaningful opportunity to work on individual skills daily
- Portable word wall corresponds to the classroom word wall