

# Intervention Taxonomy Brief: Leveled Literacy Intervention

The goal of this brief is to provide educators with information they can use to evaluate the appropriateness of **Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI)** for a specific student or group of students who require supplemental and intensive intervention. The brief also may be used to guide decisions about the selection or purchase of a new intervention. We envision that the brief may allow users to examine the extent to which the program aligns to the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity, a framework used by educators to categorize interventions along key dimensions. The information included in this brief is organized along the seven dimensions of the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity and can assist educators in answering the following questions:

- Does evidence suggest that this intervention is expected to lead to improved outcomes in the identified area of need (**strength**)?
- Will the group size, duration, structure, and frequency provide sufficient opportunities for students to respond and receive corrective feedback (**dosage**)?
- Does the intervention match the student’s identified needs (**alignment**)?
- Does the intervention assist the student in generalizing target skills to general education or other tasks (**attention to transfer**)?
- Does the intervention include elements of explicit instruction (**comprehensiveness**)?
- Does the student have opportunities to develop the behavior skills necessary to be successful (**behavioral support**)?
- Can the intervention be individualized with a data-based process to meet student needs (**individualization**)?

To learn more about the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity and find resources to support implementation, visit <https://intensiveintervention.org/taxonomy-intervention-intensity>.

## Program Summary

The Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System (LLI) is a small-group, supplementary intervention designed for children who perform below grade-level expectations in reading and writing. LLI is designed to bring children to grade-level competency through 30-minute lessons delivered 5 days/week for 14 to 18 weeks on average. LLI serves those students who need intensive support to achieve grade-level competency. LLI can be used with children from various socio-economic backgrounds, English language learners and children with special needs. Through explicit instruction in reading, writing and word work combined with opportunities for increased language modeling and oral language development, students are moved quickly toward grade level goals. Specific strategies for English language learners are included in the instructional plan. Three systems each support instruction at different levels on

the Fountas & Pinnell A–Z Text Level Gradient™: Orange System: Levels A through C – Kindergarten; Green System: Levels A through J – Grade One; Blue System: Levels C through N – Grade Two Leveled books are a key component in helping children become competent readers. Each LLI system includes a collection of carefully developed and expertly leveled books based on ten text characteristics to provide enough support and challenge for the reader so that he/she can be successful and make steps toward grade-level goals. Assessment is an ongoing process in LLI and is tied to the Continuum of Literacy Learning, the instructional framework for the systems. Teachers are provided with goals and objectives for each lesson, observational suggestions, and resources to conduct a reading record weekly with each child. Progress is managed and monitored through the Classroom Management System, a computer-based resource that collects student data and reports results while aiding teachers in making instructional decisions. The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) is recommended, but not required, to be used with LLI to screen and place students at the appropriate level in LLI and to monitor their ongoing progress. BAS is a tool that can be used to corroborate the results of the intervention while providing valuable data on each child’s reading levels and reading progress. Professional Development is embedded throughout the system through clear, explicit instructional lessons, classroom videos that model best practices, the Prompting Guide that offers clear and precise language to support student interactions, and professional books that build teacher expertise. In addition, fee-based professional development is offered through Heinemann as well as Lesley and Ohio State Universities’ Literacy Collaborative.

### Exhibit 1. Program Information

Features of program implementation	Program recommendations
Grade level(s)	K–2
Group size	3 students
Intervention length	14–18 weeks
Frequency	5 days per week
Session duration	30 minutes
Cost	See <a href="https://www.heinemann.com/collection/lli">https://www.heinemann.com/collection/lli</a> for specific details.
Training	Professional learning with a Fountas & Pinnell consultant is recommended but not required for classroom teachers, reading specialists, and interventionists. Professional learning resources are available on demand within Online Resources.

### Evidence of Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity Dimensions

The following section presents definitions for the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity dimensions and a summary of intervention-specific evidence for each dimension. The evidence comes from the intervention’s vendor or developer. It is accurate as reported to the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII); it was not independently verified by NCII. Additional program evidence can be found on the [NCII Tools Chart](#) and might appear on the [What Works Clearinghouse](#). For specific questions about the content, contact the publisher at <https://www.fountasandpinnell.com/contactus/contact>

### **Taxonomy Dimension: Strength**

*Strength tells us how well the program works for students with intensive intervention needs, expressed in terms of effect sizes. Effect sizes greater than 0.25 indicate an intervention has value in improving outcomes. Effect sizes of 0.35 to 0.40 are moderate, and effect sizes of 0.50 or larger are strong (preferred).*

Exhibit 2 provides the effect sizes for students in need of intensive intervention organized by domain and subdomain. These effect size data are calculated on low-achieving participants, those falling at or below the 20th percentile on pretest measures of achievement. If available, additional effect sizes for disaggregated data can be found on the NCII Tools Chart.

### **Exhibit 2. Leveled Literacy Intervention Effect Sizes for Students ≤20th Percentile by Domain and Subdomain**

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Subdomain</b>	<b>Outcome Measures</b>	<b>Effect size<sup>a</sup></b>
Reading	Early Literacy	DIBELS Initial Sound Fluency	Unavailable
Reading	Early Literacy	DIBELS Letter Naming Fluency	Unavailable
Reading	Early Literacy	DIBELS Nonsense Word Fluency	Unavailable
Reading	Early Literacy	DIBELS Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	Unavailable
Reading	Reading Fluency	DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency	Unavailable
Reading	Reading Comprehension	Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems, K–2	Unavailable

*Note.* DIBELS = Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills.

<sup>a</sup> To ensure comparability of effect size across studies, NCII uses a standard formula to calculate effect sizes across all studies and outcome measures—Hedges *g*, corrected for small-sample bias.

### **Taxonomy Dimension: Dosage**

*Dosage is the number of opportunities a student has to respond or practice and receive corrective feedback. Dosage may be impacted by the size of the instructional group, the number of minutes each session lasts, the number of student-teacher interactions built into lessons, and the number of sessions provided per week.*

Assuming a group size of three students, each student in the group has an estimated 53 opportunities to respond and receive corrective feedback.

### **Taxonomy Dimension: Alignment**

*Alignment (Exhibit 3) focuses on how well the program (a) addresses the target student’s full set of academic skill deficits, (b) does not address skills the target student has already mastered (extraneous skills for that student), and (c) incorporates a meaningful focus on grade appropriate curricular standards.*

### Exhibit 3. Alignment With Content Areas Addressed

Instructional grade level(s)	Content area addressed	Skill strands
Kindergarten	Reading/English language arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reading Comprehension</li> <li>▪ Alphabet Knowledge</li> <li>▪ Phonological Awareness</li> <li>▪ Phonics</li> <li>▪ Writing</li> </ul>
Grade 1	Reading/English language arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reading Comprehension</li> <li>▪ Alphabet Knowledge</li> <li>▪ Phonological Awareness</li> <li>▪ Phonics</li> <li>▪ Writing</li> </ul>
Grade 2	Reading/English language arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reading Comprehension</li> <li>▪ Alphabet Knowledge</li> <li>▪ Phonological Awareness</li> <li>▪ Phonics</li> <li>▪ Writing</li> </ul>

### Taxonomy Dimension: Teaching to Promote Transfer

*Attention to transfer is the extent to which an intervention is designed to help students (a) transfer the skills they learn to other formats and contexts and (b) realize connections between mastered and related skills.*

For reading consonant clusters that blend two or three consonant sounds at the beginning of words (e.g., *fr*, *st*, *tr*), three activities designed to explicitly teach for transfer are as follows: (a) opportunities to notice and gain control of consonant clusters when decoding and encoding, (b) resources to promote self-regulation and independence when encountering consonant clusters, and (c) application of previously introduced consonant clusters in the context of new books.

**Activity 1.** After engaging in an inquiry-driven exploration of consonant clusters, students have multiple opportunities to notice and gain control of consonant clusters when decoding (reading) and encoding (writing). They develop an understanding of a clearly stated principle (e.g., “A group of two or three consonant letters is a consonant cluster. You can hear each sound in a consonant cluster.”) across several lessons through explicit instruction and multimodal activities, including playing a game in which they must read words with consonant clusters. This game gives them many opportunities to employ the demonstrated strategy of breaking words with consonant clusters into onset and rime, a tactic that supports them when they read or write words with consonant clusters in continuous texts. See Exhibit 4 for a lesson example.

## Exhibit 4. Multimodal Activity Example

**Optional Letter/Word Work**

**Principle** A group of two or three consonant letters is a consonant cluster. You can hear each sound in a consonant cluster.

- Play Follow the Path with the children.
- The children take turns rolling a die or drawing a card with the number 1, 2, or 3 on it. They move their game piece that number of spaces on the board, read the word they land on, and use it in a sentence. If they cannot read the word, they go back to where they were. Play until one child reaches the end of the path. That child is the winner!
- If time permits, play the game again.

**Activity 2.** Each lesson includes an opportunity for independent practice during independent work time once the student has returned to the whole group in their classroom. In the lesson example below, students use what they have learned about consonant clusters to complete a picture and word sort. The picture sort asks them to hear the consonant cluster as they would during writing. The word sort asks them to search for visual information to notice the consonant cluster as they would during reading. See Exhibit 5 for a lesson example.

## Exhibit 5. Classroom Connection Example

**Classroom Connection**

Blue Fold Sheet #37 Name: Amelia

st	sp	fr	gr
store	spill	from	green
still	spit	free	grin
stop	spare	fry	grab

- Give children Fold Sheet 37 with the consonant clusters *st*, *sp*, *fr*, and *gr* along the top. Give them the sheet with the pictures and words. The pictures are: *step*, *stone*, *spider*, *spoon*, *frog*, *frame*, *grapes*, and *grass*. Be sure that the children can identify each picture.
- Have children take Fold Sheet 37 back to the classroom to cut out the pictures and words and paste them under the correct consonant cluster.

**Activity 3.** After exploring consonant clusters together, students are introduced to a consonant cluster/digraph reference chart. Individual copies and a wall chart are made available to them. This resource promotes self-regulation and independence when encountering consonant clusters and becomes a critical scaffold for transferring this knowledge to reading and writing continuous texts. See Exhibit 6 for a lesson example.

## Exhibit 6. Extension Example

### Extending Letter Knowledge

- Introduce the large version of the Consonant Clusters and Digraphs Chart and read it with the children. Talk about the consonant clusters that they have already worked with and those that are new to them. Save the consonant digraphs to be discussed in Lessons 39 and 40. Give each child an individual Consonant Clusters and Digraphs Chart to keep in his or her folder.

## Taxonomy Dimension: Comprehensiveness

*Comprehensiveness is the number of explicit instruction principles the intervention incorporates (e.g., providing explanations in simple, direct language; modeling efficient solution strategies instead of expecting students to discover strategies on their own; providing practice so that students use the strategies to generate many correct responses; and incorporating systematic cumulative review). Additional information can be found within the NCII [Explicit Instruction course content materials](#).*

### ***Dimension: Provide Directions in Clear, Direct Language***

**Activity 1.** In each lesson, directions and instruction are provided in clear, direct language that is accessible to students. See Exhibit 7 for a lesson example.

## Exhibit 7. Example of Activity Directions


- *Turn to page 15. In some informational books, you will find maps. Do you see the red line on this map of Alaska that shows the way the dog team is going when they run in the race? Take your pointer finger, and move it from Anchorage to Nome. The dog teams race mile after mile on the ice and snow to try to win the race.*

### ***Dimension: Ensure That Students Have Adequate Background Knowledge and Skills***

**Activity 1.** To support students' efficient processing of each new text at the instructional level, teachers engage students in an introductory conversation. The teacher prompts students to use their background knowledge and understandings to process a specific text. See Exhibit 8 for a lesson example.






## Exhibit 8. Background Knowledge Example

<p><b>Reading a New Book</b></p> <p>Suggested Language</p>  <p><b>NEW BOOK</b> How Frogs Grow, Level 6</p>	<p><b>Introducing the Text</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Today you are going to read a book that has facts about frogs. What do you know about frogs? In this book, you are going to learn how a mother frog lays eggs, how the eggs become tadpoles, and then how tadpoles become frogs.</li> <li>▪ Turn to pages 2 and 3. What do you notice? [Children respond.]</li> <li>▪ Turn to pages 4 and 5. What comes out of the eggs? [Children respond.]</li> <li>▪ What do the tadpoles look like? [Children respond.] You are right. They do not look like frogs yet.</li> <li>▪ Now, look at pages 10 and 11 to see how the tadpoles grow. What do you notice about the legs? [Children respond.] What do you notice about the tails? [Children respond.]</li> <li>▪ Find the words longer and shorter on page 10. Clap each word and notice -er at the end. [Children respond.]</li> <li>▪ Now, look at the frog on pages 14 and 15. What do you notice? [Children respond.] What can the frog do now? [Children respond.]</li> <li>▪ Turn back to the beginning and read to learn how frogs grow.</li> </ul>
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### *Dimension: Gradually Fade Support for Correct Execution of Strategies*

**Activity 1.** Support for early reading behaviors gradually fades across the Getting Started lessons in the LLI Orange and Green Systems. Early reading behaviors are modeled (Read To), practiced together (Read With), and performed independently (Read By). See Exhibit 9 for a lesson example.


## Exhibit 9. Fading Support Example

<p><b>Reading a New Book</b></p> <p>Suggested Language</p>  <p><b>NEW BOOK</b> Waking Up, Level A</p>  <p><b>PROMPTING GUIDE, PART 2</b> Refer to pages as needed</p>  <p><b>PROMPTING GUIDE, PART 1</b> Refer to page 5 as needed</p>	<p><b>Read To</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As you introduce the children to the lap book, encourage them to notice and use information in the pictures, and invite conversation around the text. Build on their comments to expand the amount of language used.</li> <li>▪ This book is called Waking Up. It is early in the morning on the farm, and the animals are waking up. What animals might wake up? [Children respond.] What sounds do they make? [Children respond.]</li> <li>▪ Turn to pages 2 and 3. What is one animal that wakes up? [Children respond.] The rooster. Point and read the text. What sound does the rooster make? [Children respond.] Read the words in the speech bubble with me. [Children respond.]</li> <li>▪ Turn to pages 4 and 5. Who wakes up now? [Children respond.] Point and read the text. Read the words in the speech bubble with me. [Children respond.]</li> <li>▪ Repeat the process on each spread, inviting the children to use information from the pictures.</li> <li>▪ Turn to page 16. Now, what animal wakes up? [Children respond.] Point and read. Find the word and and point to it. [Children respond.]</li> <li>▪ Invite the children to talk about the animals that wake up on the farm.</li> </ul> <p><b>Read With</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reread the text with the children as you point crisply under each word.</li> <li>▪ Turn to a few different pages, and have the children say a particular high-frequency word (<i>the, up, and</i>). What letter do you expect to see first? [Children respond.] For the word <i>the</i>, have the children tell the first two letters.</li> <li>▪ Then, have children find the word using a masking card, a flag, or highlighter tape. Notice how quickly and easily they can find the word.</li> <li>▪ As you read with the children, you may find opportunities to help them notice the sound at the beginning of the name of the animal and its first letter. Show them that they can see the animal in the picture and check it with the word.</li> </ul> <p><b>Read By</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Give the children the small version of <i>Waking Up</i>.</li> <li>▪ Point under each word and read the book with me.</li> </ul>	<p><b>GETTING STARTED</b></p> <p><b>LESSON 1</b></p>
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**Activity 2.** Writing in response to texts is scaffolded across lessons with dictated, interactive, and independent writing lessons. In dictated writing, the teacher provides a high level of support and teaching as students write sentences provided by the teacher; in interactive writing, students “share the pen” and contribute letters, words, and punctuation that they know; and in independent writing, students express their own ideas and begin to develop control over all aspects of composition. See Exhibit 10 for a lesson example of interactive writing.

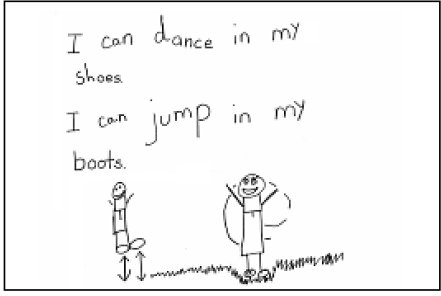
**Exhibit 10. Writing Response Example**

**Writing About Reading**  
Suggested Language



- MY WRITING BOOK
- PROMPTING GUIDE, PART 1

Refer to page 27 as needed



**Interactive Writing**

- Talk with children about the different kinds of shoes and boots pictured in the story *Shoes and Boots*. *What do the boys and girls in the story say they can do in the different kinds of shoes and boots?* [Children respond.]
- Use interactive writing to construct two or three sentences about the shoes and boots and the ways in which they can be used. For example:  
*I can dance in my shoes.*  
*I can jump in my boots.*
- Engage the children in writing words that are almost known. Use sound boxes to prompt for saying new words slowly and listening for easy-to-hear sounds. Use The Verbal Path to support correct letter formation.
- If time allows, have children write and illustrate the sentences in *My Writing Book*.

**Dimension: Provides Adequate Practice Opportunities**

**Activity 1.** Each lesson includes Classroom Connection activities (Exhibit 11) that provide practice and application of the phonics/word study principle and opportunities for independent reading.

**Exhibit 11. Classroom Connection Example**

**Classroom Connection**

Green Fold Sheet #83 Name: Micah

can	city	go	gym
cat	cent	get	giant
come	circus	gone	giraffe
cow	circle	got	gel

- Give the children Fold Sheet 83.
- Have the children take the fold sheet back to the classroom, cut out the words, and paste each word in the column that represents the same initial consonant sound. Provide an envelope for words not yet pasted down.
- Give the children Take-Home Book *The Tree House* to reread in the classroom.



**Activity 2.** A take-home version of every book (Exhibit 12) offers opportunities for large amounts of reading at home.

### Exhibit 12. Home/School Connection Example

<b>Home/School Connection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have children take home Fold Sheet 82 to share with family members.</li> <li>▪ Have the children read and discuss Take-Home Book <i>The Skunk with No Stripes</i> with family members.</li> </ul>
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### *Dimension: Incorporates Systematic Cumulative Review*

**Activity 1.** Phonics and word study principles are systematically reviewed across the lessons (Exhibit 13). For example, phonograms with a VC (vowel consonant) pattern are taught in LLI Green System Lessons 21 (-an), 22 (-it), 23 (-am), 24 (-in), and 25 (-at) and again in Lessons 38 (-ad), 39 (-ip), 40 (-ap), 41 (-et), and 42 (-ag) with charts that provide cumulative reviews of previously taught phonograms.

### Exhibit 13. Cumulative Review Example

<p><b>Phonics/ Word Work</b></p> <p>Phonograms With a VC Pattern (-ag)</p>	<p><b>Principle</b> You can look at a part (pattern) to read a word. You can make new words by putting a letter or a letter cluster before the part (pattern).</p> <table border="1" style="margin: 10px auto; text-align: center;"> <tr><td>dad</td><td>sip</td><td>cap</td><td>net</td><td>bag</td></tr> <tr><td>had</td><td>hip</td><td>sap</td><td>met</td><td>tag</td></tr> <tr><td>bad</td><td>lip</td><td>tap</td><td>pet</td><td>rag</td></tr> <tr><td>mad</td><td>tip</td><td>rap</td><td>let</td><td>sag</td></tr> <tr><td>glad</td><td>trip</td><td>clap</td><td>get</td><td>flag</td></tr> </table> <p>See and Say</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Display the five-column chart you created in Lesson 38 and have the children read the words in the first four columns. Then, write the word <i>bag</i> at the top of the last column and have the children read it with you.</li> <li>▪ Now, write <i>tag</i>, <i>rag</i>, <i>sag</i>, and <i>flag</i> beneath <i>bag</i>, saying each word as you write it. Use any word the children may not understand in a sentence.</li> <li>▪ <i>What do you notice about these words?</i> [Children respond.] Help the children to see and hear the -ag pattern in each word. <i>Can you think of any other words with the -ag pattern?</i> [Children respond.] Add the children's words to the chart.</li> <li>▪ Underline the -ag pattern in each word and have the children read the words in the last column.</li> <li>▪ Now, give the children the magnetic letters <i>a</i>, <i>b</i>, <i>g</i>, <i>r</i>, <i>s</i>, <i>t</i>, and <i>w</i>. Have them make and read two or three words with the -ag pattern.</li> <li>▪ Have the children read the entire chart with you if time allows.</li> <li>▪ Summarize the lesson by restating the principle.</li> </ul>	dad	sip	cap	net	bag	had	hip	sap	met	tag	bad	lip	tap	pet	rag	mad	tip	rap	let	sag	glad	trip	clap	get	flag
dad	sip	cap	net	bag																						
had	hip	sap	met	tag																						
bad	lip	tap	pet	rag																						
mad	tip	rap	let	sag																						
glad	trip	clap	get	flag																						

### **Taxonomy Dimension: Behavioral Support**

*Behavioral support addresses the extent to which the program incorporates (a) self-regulation and executive function components and (b) behavioral principles to minimize undesired behavior. Additional information can be found within the [NCII behavioral support course content](#).*

**Activity 1.** The small size of each group ensures intensive, precise teaching interactions that offer both challenge and regular success, which help build confidence and allow children to make faster progress. Each lesson includes guidance for teachers to facilitate active and engaging

conversations with robust opportunities for students to share thinking with each other and to build a close-knit, safe learning community to which they feel accountable.

**Activity 2.** The alternating lesson structure in LLI, built around high-quality, beautiful, interesting books, is designed to increase students' motivation to engage in literacy learning. Students experience success regularly by reading an independent-level text every other day (even-number lessons) as the teacher uses language to reinforce productive behaviors and understandings and to help students experience the satisfaction of stretching themselves by reading a new instructional-level text every other day (odd-number lessons).

### **Additional Information About Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention**

Learn more about *Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention*, including the LLI Red, Gold, and Purple Systems for Grades 3 and above, at [www.fountasandpinnell.com/lli/](http://www.fountasandpinnell.com/lli/).