PAGE 1: PART 1A - FIVE COMPONENTS OF LITERACY CHECKLIST

Introduction:

This checklist provides research-based instructional strategies across the five essential components of reading to support effective literacy instruction for students in grades K-3. Each strategy is designed to be practical, grade-appropriate, and aligned with evidence-based practices that promote reading development and support diverse learners.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Definition: The ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. As stated by Tompkins et al. (2021), phonemic "awareness is a student's basic understanding that speech is composed of a series of individual sounds, and it provides the foundation for phonics and spelling" (p. 109).

Grade-Level Progression: Can be cited from Tompkins et al. (2021) on page 43, and this is why my strategies are appropriate.

Instructional Strategies:

1. **Sound Isolation Activities**
   - Students identify beginning, middle, or ending sounds in spoken words. For example, what sound do you hear at the beginning of 'cat'? This explicit practice helps students develop awareness of individual phonemes before connecting them to letters, as suggested by Tompkins et al. (2021) on page 110 in the highlighted area identifying sounds.
   - **Grade K:** Focus on initial sounds only
   - **Grade 1:** Add middle and final sound identification
   - **Grade 2-3:** Practice with multisyllabic words
2. **Blending and Segmenting Practice**
   - A teacher says individual sounds (/c/ /a/ /t/), and students blend them to form words, or students break words into individual sounds. Tompkins et al. (2021) explains this method on page 110.
   - **Grade K:** Blend 2-3 phoneme words with teacher support
   - **Grade 1:** Independently blend and segment CVC words

- ○ **Grade 2-3:** Work with consonant blends and digraphs
3. **Phoneme Substitution Games**
   - ○ Students change one sound in a word to create a new word (e.g., change /c/ in "cat" to /h/ to make "hat"). This advanced phonemic awareness skill supports decoding development and helps students understand how sounds work in words, as suggested by Tompkins et al. (2021) on page 110 in the highlighted area substituting sounds.
   - ○ **Grade K:** Simple initial sound substitution with teacher modeling
   - ○ **Grade 1-2:** Independent phoneme substitution in all positions
   - ○ **Grade 3:** Complex substitutions with blends and digraphs
4. **Multisensory Sound Boxes (Elkonin Boxes)**
   - ○ Students use manipulatives or markers to represent each sound in a word, moving one marker for each phoneme they hear. This multisensory approach supports diverse learners, including those with cognitive differences, as suggested by Tompkins et al. (2021) on page 110.
   - ○ **Grade K:** 2-3 sound boxes with concrete manipulatives
   - ○ **Grade 1:** 3-4 sound boxes, transition to drawing
   - ○ **Grade 2-3:** Use for spelling support and multisyllabic words
5. **Oral Rhyming and Alliteration Activities**
   - ○ Students identify or generate rhyming words and recognize words with the same beginning sounds through songs, poems, and games. These playful activities build phonological awareness in culturally responsive ways, as suggested by Tompkins et al. (2021) on page 110 in the highlighted area substituting sounds.
   - ○ .
   - ○ **Grade K:** Identify rhymes in familiar songs and poems
   - ○ **Grade 1:** Generate rhyming words independently
   - ○ **Grade 2-3:** Create rhyming poetry and tongue twisters

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PHONICS

Definition: The relationship between letters and sounds and how to use these relationships to read words. As stated by Tompkins et al. (2021), phonics is the ability "to convert letters into sounds and blend them to recognize words" (p. 109).

Grade-Level Progression: Can be cited from Tompkins et al. (2021) on page 43, and this is why my strategies are appropriate.

Instructional Strategies:

1. **Explicit Phonics Instruction cited from Tompkins et al. (2021) on page 25**
   - ○ Teachers directly teach the strategies that capable readers use by explicitly modeling letter-sound correspondences and providing guided practice. This systematic approach is particularly effective for English learners and struggling

readers. Students learn to apply phonics concepts to "use decoding strategies to figure out unfamiliar words" (Tompkins et al., 2021, p. 109). However, it is guided by one on one instruction.

- ○ **Grade K:** Teach individual letter-sound correspondences systematically
- ○ **Grade 1:** Teach CVC patterns, digraphs, and simple blends
- ○ **Grade 2-3:** Teach complex vowel patterns, r-controlled vowels, and syllable types

2. **Decodable Text Practice that can be derived from by Tompkins et al. (2021) from decoding strategies shown on page 109**
   - ○ Students read texts that contain phonics patterns they have been taught, allowing them to apply letter-sound knowledge successfully.
   - ○ **Grade K:** Simple CVC decodable books with picture support
   - ○ **Grade 1:** Decodables with taught patterns and high-frequency words
   - ○ **Grade 2-3:** Longer decodable passages with complex patterns

3. **Word-Building Activities**
   - ○ Students use letter tiles, magnetic letters, or digital tools to build words following specific phonics patterns. This hands-on approach supports kinesthetic learners and allows for immediate feedback. Tompkins et al. (2021) explain that understanding the alphabetic principle helps students realize that the sounds "(phonemes) they hear in oral language can be represented by letters (graphemes) in print" (p. 107).
   - ○ **Grade K:** Build simple CVC words with manipulatives
   - ○ **Grade 1:** Build word families and change one letter to make new words
   - ○ **Grade 2-3:** Build multisyllabic words and explore morphology

4. **Word Walls with Visual Support that can be derived from by Tompkins et al. (2021) from decoding strategies shown on page 133**
   - ○ Create organized displays of high-frequency and pattern words with pictures and color-coding to support visual learners and English learners. Students actively connect words to the classroom word wall to reinforce learning. Tompkins et al. (2021) on page 133 describe how teachers use a word wall, a brightly colored alphabet quilt with 26 letter blocks that's displayed permanently on one wall of the classroom to support word recognition.
   - ○ **Grade K:** Alphabetically organized with pictures for each word
   - ○ **Grade 1:** Organized by phonics patterns and high-frequency words
   - ○ **Grade 2-3:** Include content vocabulary and morphological connections

5. **Phonics Manipulatives and Tools**
   - ○ Provide sound boxes, letter cards, and digital phonics games that allow students to practice decoding in multisensory ways. These tools support students who benefit from tactile learning experiences and help develop orthographic awareness, as suggested by Tompkins et al. (2021) on page 109.
   - ○ **Grade K:** Large magnetic letters, alphabet puzzles, sound sorting games
   - ○ **Grade 1:** Letter tiles for word building, digital phonics apps
   - ○ **Grade 2-3:** Syllable cards, morpheme manipulatives, word study notebooks

FLUENCY

Definition: The ability to read or write text accurately, at an appropriate rate, and with expression. Tompkins et al. (2021) suggest this in chapter 5.

Grade-Level Progression: Can be cited from Tompkins et al. (2021) on page 43, and this is why my strategies are appropriate.

Instructional Strategies:

1. **Repeated Reading with guided assist**
   - Students read the same passage multiple times while tracking words per minute (WPM) to build automaticity. Weaver (2024) explains that when students can decode words automatically, their cognitive resources are freed up for comprehension and enjoyment of text, which allows for flunecey. Tompkins et al. (2021) note that through repeated reading practice with guided reading, students learn "high-frequency words" (p. 133). This is accomplished through the success of monitoring student needs through guided reading.
   - **Grade K:** Not yet appropriate; focus on foundational skills
   - **Grade 1:** Read short, predictable texts 3-4 times with teacher support, focusing on accuracy first
   - **Grade 2-3:** Read longer passages independently, track WPM progress toward benchmarks (100-140 WPM)
2. **Teacher Modeling and Echo Reading**
   - Teachers demonstrate fluent reading with appropriate pacing and expression, then students immediately echo the same text, matching the teacher's prosody. This explicit modeling shows students what fluent reading sounds and looks like (Tompkins et al., 2021, p. 133).
   - **Grade K:** Teacher models very short sentences, students echo with picture support
   - **Grade 1:** Teacher models short sentences or phrases, students echo immediately
   - **Grade 2-3:** Teacher models longer passages with varied expression, students echo with attention to prosody
3. **Phrase-Cued Text Reading cited from fivefromfive (2026)**
   - Provide texts with phrase boundaries marked by slash marks to teach students where to pause and chunk words together, helping them move away from reading one word at a time toward more natural phrasing and improved reading speed.
   - **Grade K:** Not yet appropriate for developmental level
   - **Grade 1:** Use simple phrase-cued sentences to teach chunking

- - **Grade 2-3:** Gradually fade phrase cues as students internalize phrasing patterns
4. **Choral Reading cited from Reading Rockets (2026) in the reading Choral Reading**
   - Students read aloud together as a group, supporting less fluent readers while building confidence and prosody. This strategy is particularly effective for English learners who benefit from hearing fluent models and helps students develop expressive reading.
   - **Grade K:** Read predictable, patterned texts together with teacher leading
   - **Grade 1:** Choral read poetry, songs, and leveled texts
   - **Grade 2-3:** Use for content-area texts and to build confidence with complex material
5. **Reader's Theater cited from Reading Rockets (2026) in the reading Reader's Theater**
   - Students practice and perform scripts with expression and character voices, providing authentic purposes for repeated reading and prosody development. This performance-based approach engages reluctant readers and supports "more expressive readers" (Tompkins et al., 2021, p. 133).
   - **Grade K:** Simple scripts with repetitive lines and teacher support
   - **Grade 1:** Short scripts with 2-4 characters, focus on expression
   - **Grade 2-3:** Longer, more complex scripts requiring interpretation and expression

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VOCABULARY

Definition: Understanding the meaning of words and having strategies for learning new words. As suggested by Tompkins et al. (2021), it is "about graphophonemic (letter–sound) relationships" (p. 107).

Instructional Strategies:

1. **Explicit Vocabulary Instruction**
   - Pre-teach 3-5 key vocabulary words before reading using student-friendly definitions, visual representations, and examples. Tompkins et al. (2021) on page 107 emphasize that students benefit from direct teaching of word meanings through one on one instruction.
   - **Grade K:** Teach 1-2 words using pictures and real objects (realia)
   - **Grade 1:** Pre-teach 2-3 tier-two words with actions and visuals
   - **Grade 2-3:** Pre-teach 3-5 words with student-friendly definitions and multiple exposures
2. **Visual Vocabulary Supports**
   - Use pictures, gestures, real objects, and graphic organizers to represent word meanings. Visual supports help students understand graphophonemic

relationships and word meanings, and as suggested by Tompkins et al. (2021), students acquire vocabulary from "pictures" (p. 107).
- **Grade K:** Use real objects and photographs for concrete nouns
- **Grade 1:** Combine pictures with simple written definitions
- **Grade 2-3:** Use concept maps and semantic webs for abstract vocabulary

3. **Word Walls and Personal Word Banks**
- Maintain organized displays of important vocabulary with pictures and student-generated word collections. Students make connections to the classroom word wall display to reinforce vocabulary learning. Tompkins et al. (2021) describe how effective word walls support students in learning "high-frequency words" (p. 133). This teaches vocabulary.
- **Grade K:** Picture word wall organized alphabetically
- **Grade 1:** Add high-frequency words and phonics patterns to word wall
- **Grade 2-3:** Content-specific word walls and student vocabulary journals

4. **Context Clue Instruction cited from Zorfass and Gray (2026) in the reading Context Clue Instruction**
- Explicitly teach students to use surrounding text to figure out unknown word meanings. Model thinking aloud to demonstrate how skilled readers use context strategically to understand unfamiliar vocabulary.
- **Grade K:** Not yet developmentally appropriate
- **Grade 1:** Introduce concept with heavily illustrated texts
- **Grade 2-3:** Teach types of context clues (definition, example, contrast) explicitly

5. **Semantic Mapping and Word Relationships cited from Zorfass and Gray (2026) in the reading Connecting Word Meanings Through Semantic Mapping**
- Create visual webs showing how words relate to each other through categories, synonyms, antonyms, and associations. This strategy deepens word knowledge beyond simple definitions and helps students understand the complexity of language (Tompkins et al., 2021, p. 109).
- **Grade K:** Simple category sorting (animals, foods, colors)
- **Grade 1:** Create simple webs with related words and pictures
- **Grade 2-3:** Complex semantic maps showing multiple word relationships

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COMPREHENSION

Definition: Understanding and making meaning from text. As stated by Tompkins et al. (2021), comprehension "is a creative, multifaceted process in which students engage with, and think about, the text" (p. 221).

Instructional Strategies:

1. **Explicit Strategy Instruction**
   - Directly teach and model comprehension strategies such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. Tompkins et al. (2021) note that students "monitor their reading to recognize when it doesn't make sense; cross-check using phonological, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic information in the text to figure out the problem; and repair or self-correct it" (p. 46). Explicite strategy helps with this given that students need guidance for interpreting comprehension if it is not understood, and this metacognitive awareness is essential for deep comprehension.
   - **Grade K:** Model and practice making predictions using pictures
   - **Grade 1:** Teach questioning and visualization with guided support
   - **Grade 2-3:** Teach all comprehension strategies explicitly with gradual release
2. **Graphic Organizers cited by Osen-Foss (2026)**
   - Use visual tools like story maps, Venn diagrams, and sequence charts to help students organize their thinking about texts. These scaffolds support diverse learners, including those with cognitive differences, by providing structure for the creative, multifaceted process of comprehension.
   - **Grade K:** Simple beginning-middle-end story maps with pictures
   - **Grade 1:** Story maps, character webs, and simple sequence charts
   - **Grade 2-3:** Complex organizers including cause-effect, compare-contrast, and problem-solution
3. **Think-Aloud Demonstrations cited by Reading Rockets (2026) in the reading Think-alouds**
   - Teachers verbalize their thinking process while reading, making invisible comprehension strategies visible to students. This modeling is essential for showing students how capable readers think and engage with text.
   - **Grade K:** Simple think-alouds during read-alouds focusing on pictures and predictions
   - **Grade 1:** Model making connections and asking questions during shared reading
   - **Grade 2-3:** Demonstrate complex strategies like inferencing and synthesizing
4. **Oral Retelling and Summarization cited by Humphrey (2025)**
   - Students retell and summarize stories orally to demonstrate understanding without the barrier of written expression. This oral response option supports English learners and students with writing challenges while allowing them to show comprehension.
   - **Grade K:** Retell familiar stories using pictures as prompts
   - **Grade 1:** Retell beginning, middle, and end with key details
   - **Grade 2-3:** Summarize main ideas and supporting details from complex texts
5. **Text-to-Self, Text-to-Text, and Text-to-World Connections cited by Facing History & Ourselves (2020)**
   - Teach students to make personal connections to texts, linking new learning to prior knowledge and experiences. This strategy is particularly effective for engaging culturally diverse learners whose experiences should be valued and incorporated into the comprehension process.

○ **Grade K:** Make text-to-self connections with teacher modeling
○ **Grade 1:** Practice all three types of connections with picture books
○ **Grade 2-3:** Make sophisticated connections across multiple texts and content areas

PAGES 2-3: PART 1B - LITERACY CHECKLIST ANALYSIS & REFLECTIVE ESSAY

Student Selected: Aaliyah (Grade 2)

STUDENT PROFILE SUMMARY

Aaliyah is a second-grade student from a multilingual home where Arabic and English are spoken. Her family practices nightly storytelling and scriptural reading in Arabic, and she recently transferred from a school overseas. Aaliyah demonstrates high motivation with strong listening comprehension and oral retelling abilities. However, she exhibits gaps in phonics, word recognition, and spelling patterns in English. As a bilingual learner familiar with right-to-left Arabic script, Aaliyah is navigating the transition to English literacy while her family adjusts to U.S. school systems. She thrives with peer collaboration, visual supports, and gentle routines.

ANALYSIS: APPLYING THE CHECKLIST TO AALIYAH'S PROFILE

Phonemic Awareness:

Aaliyah demonstrates strong listening comprehension, suggesting adequate phonemic awareness in oral language. However, her familiarity with Arabic phonology may create challenges with English-specific sounds that don't exist in Arabic.

Strategies from Checklist to Support Her Needs:

- **Blending and Segmenting Practice: Explicitly teach English phoneme blending to help Aaliyah connect her strong oral language skills to English sound patterns. Tompkins et al. (2021) explain that phonemic "awareness is a student's basic understanding that speech is composed of a series of individual sounds" (p. 109). Thus, Aaliyah can leverage comprehension of English from Arabic through this strategie.**

- **Multisensory Sound Boxes:** Provide tactile support as she learns to isolate sounds in English words, differentiating from Arabic phonemic patterns through hands-on manipulation.

Why These Work: These strategies build on Aaliyah's strength in listening while providing explicit practice with English phonemes that may differ from her home language. Her strong oral storytelling tradition supports this foundational awareness.

Phonics:

This is Aaliyah's primary area of need. She has gaps in phonics, word recognition, and spelling patterns in English, likely stemming from her recent transfer and bilingual background.

Strategies from Checklist:

- **Explicit Phonics Instruction:** Direct teaching of English letter-sound correspondences is essential since Aaliyah is familiar with right-to-left Arabic script. She needs clear, systematic instruction in English orthography. Tompkins et al. (2021) emphasize that students must understand the alphabetic principle to realize "that the sounds (phonemes) they hear in oral language can be represented by letters (graphemes) in print" (p. 107).
- **Word-Building Activities:** Hands-on manipulation of English letters will help Aaliyah understand left-to-right directionality and English spelling patterns, supporting her development of orthographic awareness.
- **Word Walls with Visual Support:** Visual displays with pictures support Aaliyah's learning style and provide reference points for English word patterns.
- **Decodable Text Practice:** Controlled texts allow Aaliyah to successfully apply the phonics patterns she's learning, building confidence in her ability to convert letters into sounds and blend them to recognize words.

Why These Work: Aaliyah is transferring literacy skills from one writing system to another. Explicit, systematic phonics instruction with visual support helps her understand how English orthography differs from Arabic script. Tompkins et al. (2021) states this addresses the "mismatch between the number of phonemes and the number of letters in English" (p. 109). This can be particularly challenging if not confronted correctly.

Fluency:

While not identified as a primary concern, Aaliyah's phonics gaps likely impact her fluency. As she develops word recognition, fluency will need attention.

Strategies from Checklist:

- **Choral Reading:** Reading with peers provides a supportive context that aligns with Aaliyah's collaborative learning preference and reduces anxiety about oral reading. This helps her develop more expressive reading.
- **Echo Reading:** Teacher modeling provides clear fluency targets, which is particularly important for English learners developing prosody in their second language and improving reading speed.

Why These Work: These low-risk strategies allow Aaliyah to practice fluency while receiving support. Her strong listening comprehension means she can understand models of fluent reading and work to match them.

Vocabulary:

Aaliyah's strong listening comprehension suggests solid oral vocabulary development, but she may need explicit support with English vocabulary.

Strategies from Checklist:

- **Visual Vocabulary Supports:** Pictures and gestures help Aaliyah connect English words to concepts, bypassing the need for translation. These supports help with understanding graphophonemic, letter–sound, relationships.
- **Word Walls and Personal Word Banks:** Organized displays with visual support provide ongoing reference for vocabulary learning and help Aaliyah learn high-frequency words.
- **Explicit Vocabulary Instruction:** Pre-teaching key vocabulary with student-friendly definitions and visuals prepares Aaliyah for text comprehension and supports her understanding of English vocabulary.

Why These Work: All the strategies can explicitly show vocabulary concepts, and English learners benefit from explicit instruction. Thus, this is why they work.

Comprehension:

This is an area of strength for Aaliyah. She has strong listening comprehension and oral retellings, demonstrating solid understanding when phonics and word recognition don't present barriers.

Strategies from Checklist:

- **Oral Retelling and Summarization:** This allows Aaliyah to demonstrate her strong comprehension abilities without the barrier of written expression or decoding challenges, engaging in the creative, multifaceted process of comprehension.
- **Graphic Organizers:** Visual story maps support Aaliyah's preference for visual learning while organizing her understanding of text.
- **Text-to-Self Connections:** Aaliyah's rich cultural background and storytelling tradition at home provide excellent foundations for making personal connections to texts as she engages with, and thinks about, the text.

Why These Work: These strategies build on Aaliyah's strengths while providing accessible ways to demonstrate understanding. Her family's nightly storytelling and scriptural reading in Arabic means she comes to school with strong narrative comprehension. These strategies allow that strength to shine.

REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS

Which strategies from my checklist apply to Aaliyah's profile and why?

The strategies that most directly address Aaliyah's needs are those focused on explicit phonics instruction with visual support. Because Aaliyah recently transferred from overseas and is transitioning from Arabic script to English orthography, she requires systematic, clear instruction in English letter-sound correspondences and spelling patterns. Tompkins et al. (2021) explain that understanding "the alphabetic principle" helps students realize "that the sounds (phonemes) they hear in oral language can be represented by letters (graphemes) in print" (p. 107), which is precisely what Aaliyah needs as she learns English orthographic patterns. According to ReadNaturally (2026), students receiving "systematic, explicit phonics instruction" demonstrate stronger outcomes than those receiving non-systematic approaches, which is particularly relevant for students like Aaliyah who are learning to read in their second language.

The visual vocabulary supports and word wall strategies are also highly applicable because Aaliyah thrives with peer collaboration, visuals, and gentle routines. These strategies leverage her learning preferences while providing the scaffolding necessary for English language development. Tompkins et al. (2021) describe how teachers use "a word wall, a brightly colored alphabet quilt with 26 letter blocks that's displayed permanently on one wall of the classroom" (p. 133) to support word recognition, which would benefit Aaliyah significantly. Additionally, oral retelling and comprehension strategies allow Aaliyah to demonstrate her considerable strengths in understanding, which can build confidence while she develops her phonics skills. The fact that comprehension "is a creative, multifaceted process in which students engage with, and think about, the text" (Tompkins et al., 2021, p. 221) means Aaliyah can show sophisticated thinking even while developing decoding skills.

Strategies emphasizing peer collaboration—such as choral reading and partner work—align with Aaliyah's identified strength in collaborative learning environments. This is particularly important for maintaining engagement and reducing anxiety around areas of challenge.

What gaps or limitations did I find in my original checklist?

After analyzing Aaliyah's profile, I identified several gaps in my original checklist:

1. **Limited attention to bilingual learners' specific needs:** While I included some strategies for English learners, I didn't adequately address the unique challenges faced by students transferring literacy skills from one writing system to another. Aaliyah's familiarity with right-to-left Arabic script requires explicit attention to English directionality and orthographic patterns that my checklist didn't specifically address. Tompkins et al. (2021) note that English presents particular challenges because of the "mismatch between the number of phonemes and the number of letters in English" (p. 109), which is even more complex for students transferring from different writing systems.
2. **Insufficient cultural responsiveness strategies:** Although I mentioned culturally relevant texts in comprehension, I didn't systematically incorporate cultural considerations across all five components. Aaliyah's family practices nightly storytelling and scriptural reading in Arabic, which represents a rich literacy tradition that could be leveraged more intentionally in instruction.
3. **Lack of family engagement strategies:** My checklist focused primarily on classroom instruction without addressing how to involve families, particularly those new to U.S. school systems like Aaliyah's. Strategies for bridging home and school literacy practices were absent.
4. **Missing cross-linguistic transfer strategies:** I didn't include strategies that explicitly help students recognize similarities and differences between their home language and English, which could accelerate Aaliyah's literacy development by building on her existing Arabic literacy knowledge.
5. **Limited assessment considerations:** My checklist didn't address how to assess students who have strong comprehension but struggle with phonics, which could lead to misidentifying Aaliyah's abilities if we only assess through traditional reading measures.

How would I revise or expand my checklist for Aaliyah and similar students?

To better serve students like Aaliyah, I would make the following revisions and additions:

1. Add Bilingual Literacy Transfer Strategies:

- **Explicit Comparison of Writing Systems: Directly teach students about differences between their home language script and English (e.g., directionality, letter formation, phoneme-grapheme relationships). For Aaliyah, this would involve acknowledging her Arabic literacy background as an asset while explicitly teaching English-specific features. Tompkins et al. (2021) explain that students need to understand "the alphabetic principle" to grasp how "letters represent sounds differently" (p. 107) in English compared to other writing systems.**
- **Cognate Instruction: Help students identify words that are similar across languages to leverage existing vocabulary knowledge. While Arabic and English have fewer cognates than Spanish and English, strategic instruction in word roots could support vocabulary development and help with "graphophonemic (letter–sound) relationships" (Tompkins et al., 2021, p. 107).**

2. Expand Culturally Responsive Literacy Practices:

- **Home Language Literacy Integration: Encourage students to read, write, and tell stories in their home language alongside English development. Aaliyah's nightly storytelling and scriptural reading in Arabic should be honored and connected to school literacy, recognizing that comprehension "is a creative, multifaceted process in which students engage with, and think about, the text" (Tompkins et al., 2021, p. 221) in any language.**
- **Multilingual Word Walls: Include words in students' home languages alongside English, validating linguistic diversity and helping students make connections. This would particularly support Aaliyah's vocabulary development while building on the concept of word walls as "brightly colored alphabet quilt[s]" (Tompkins et al., 2021, p. 133) that support all learners.**
- **Cultural Storytelling Connections: Explicitly connect school literacy activities to students' home literacy practices. For Aaliyah, this might involve incorporating oral storytelling traditions before written responses.**

3. Include Family Partnership Strategies:

- **Bilingual Family Communication: Provide literacy information and at-home activities in families' home languages. Aaliyah's family would benefit from materials in Arabic explaining English literacy instruction.**
- **Family Literacy Workshops: Offer sessions helping families understand U.S. literacy instruction while honoring their home literacy practices. This would help Aaliyah's family, who are new to U.S. school systems, understand how to support her English literacy development while continuing their valuable Arabic literacy traditions.**

4. Add Assessment Differentiation:

- **Multiple Measures of Progress: Include oral assessments, listening comprehension checks, and observational notes alongside traditional reading**

assessments to capture the full picture of students' abilities. For Aaliyah, this would reveal her strong comprehension despite phonics challenges, showing her engagement in the "creative, multifaceted process" of making meaning (Tompkins et al., 2021, p. 221).

- **Progress Monitoring in Specific Skill Areas:** Create targeted phonics assessments that track growth in specific English letter-sound correspondences, allowing teachers to document Aaliyah's learning even while her overall reading level is still developing. This would track her understanding of "the alphabetic principle" (Tompkins et al., 2021, p. 107) specifically.

5. Incorporate Peer Learning Structures:

- **Structured Partner Reading:** Pair students strategically for reading practice with specific roles and language supports. Since Aaliyah thrives with peer collaboration, this would leverage her strength while providing fluency practice and opportunities to develop as a "more expressive reader" (Tompkins et al., 2021, p. 133).
- **Collaborative Word Study:** Have students work in small groups to discover patterns in words, with English learners grouped strategically to provide linguistic support while learning to "convert letters into sounds and blend them to recognize words" (Tompkins et al., 2021, p. 109).

6. Add Explicit Directionality and Print Concept Instruction:

- **Left-to-Right Tracking Practice:** For students transferring from right-to-left scripts like Arabic, explicitly teach and practice English directionality with finger tracking, highlighting, and visual cues. This supports understanding of how English differs from Arabic in fundamental ways.
- **English Print Convention Instruction:** Directly teach concepts about English print that may differ from students' home language (spacing, capitalization, punctuation), which would support Aaliyah's transition to English literacy and help her understand English orthographic conventions (Tompkins et al., 2021, p. 109).

These revisions would create a more comprehensive, culturally responsive checklist that addresses the complex needs of bilingual learners like Aaliyah. Weaver (2024) emphasizes that systematic, explicit instruction "empowers students to read independently," and for bilingual learners, this empowerment requires acknowledging their linguistic assets while providing clear, direct teaching of English-specific features. Tompkins et al. (2021) note that when students understand fundamental concepts like the alphabetic principle, they can "begin to develop their knowledge of letter–sound relationships" (p. 107) and progress as readers and writers.

By expanding my checklist in these ways, I would better support students who, like Aaliyah, bring rich literacy experiences from other languages and cultures while navigating the specific demands of English literacy instruction.

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