

Best Practices in K–5 Skills Instruction

Look for	Best Practice	Highly Effective Description
Program and Lesson Components	Plans and teaches lessons to support full implementation of DPS skills curriculum	<p>Whole Group Teacher uses <i>Houghton-Mifflin Teacher’s Guides</i> to design 30-minute lessons that provide explicit instruction on phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, vocabulary, and/or grammar. Teacher encourages students to apply these strategies and skills during Reading and Writing Workshops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten–Grade 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Daily phonemic awareness activities ○ Explicit instruction of weekly phonics principle supported by manipulatives (e.g., letter cards, picture cards, word cards, magnetic letters) and decodable books ○ High-frequency word studies and word walls • Grades 3–5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Weekly spelling lists organized by phonetic principles, patterns, and word parts ○ Word sorts to reveal essential similarities and differences among words ○ In-depth word studies, including analogies and word structure ○ Vocabulary expansion and enrichment, including content area vocabulary integration, vocabulary games, and use of resources, such as thesauri and dictionaries ○ Grammar instruction, including parts of speech, capitalization, and punctuation, supported by <i>Houghton-Mifflin English Workbook Plus Blackline Masters</i> • Grades 3–5 ELA-S <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explicit grammar usage lessons, including parts of speech, capitalization, and punctuation, supported by <i>Houghton-Mifflin Lenguaje</i> (Spanish) and <i>Houghton-Mifflin English</i> (English) ○ Activities to support writing process and provide additional instruction in using editing checklists and proofreading ○ Strategies for building vocabulary, checking spelling, test-taking, and researching ○ Lessons to support transition from <i>Houghton-Mifflin Lenguaje</i> to <i>Houghton-Mifflin English</i> through graphic organizers, student models, and benchmark papers <p>Differentiation Options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each program offers activities built on key concepts to supplement, modify, and/or adjust lessons to meet student needs. • Instruction and practice opportunities may be offered in whole group, small group, or individually, depending on need.
Classroom Environment	Establishes physical classroom environment and positive classroom culture to support learning	<p>Arrangement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed for both large and small group instruction <p>Displays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program artifacts, including strategy charts • Word walls (e.g., high-frequency words, word meanings, content area word walls) • Student work and examples <p>Materials and Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipulatives (e.g., letter and word cards, magnetic letters, dry erase boards, templates, graphic organizers)
Assessment	Uses assessment to support student learning	<p>Both formal and ongoing informal assessments are used to inform instruction and monitor student progress. Possibilities for assessment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of skills application taught when students are reading and writing. • Weekly monitoring of student progress around key concepts (K–2—Re-Teaching Lessons: Day 5). • Unit tests and review tests (grades 3–5). • Teacher-and-student-developed rubrics and evaluation guides.