There are five different pillars of literacy: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics Instruction, Fluency Instruction, Vocabulary Instruction, and Comprehension Instruction. Phonemic Awareness is, “the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in spoken words”. Phonics Instruction is, “the ability to draw relationships between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language”. This is to help students to use these two relationships to be able to read and write words. Fluency Instruction is, “the ability to read text accurately and quickly, either silently or orally”. Vocabulary Instruction is being able to communicate with one another effectively. Comprehension Instruction is the ability to remember what was read and to communicate the meaning with peers.

I viewed each of these five pillars in my clinical at some point during the 60 hours that I was there. Phonemic Awareness I notice this a lot in my RTI classroom. The children were always breaking apart words that they did not recognize and sounding out each individual sounds. If they are still having problems I will break the words apart for them by putting slashes through each part of the word and have them sound out each part. They normally do well at figuring out unknown words. I have noticed this some in my general education 2nd grade classroom with a few students who have troubles reading. I was very happy to see all the students do well with using phonemic awareness in my classrooms.

I noticed phonics instruction in both of my classrooms. I noticed it the most in my RTI classroom because each lesson had a spelling test. The students did not know what these spelling words were until I gave the test. They did not have time to practice these words or study them; it was to see how well they could do with phonics instruction. The students really had to sound out the words in their heads and put those letters on paper. They did a good job at sounding out the words and sometimes I would help them by sounding out the words with them and asking them what letter says this sound. In my second grade classroom I would see this in their spelling test, except the difference was they had the week to study these words so most of them were memorized, but I still noticed some children sounding out the words while they wrote them. I noticed it the most when the students had to write stories for me, but then they would just ask me how to spell a word. I would have them sound it out for and try on their own first.

My students in my RTI classroom were having problems with fluency. Some of them were reading a little bit faster than others in the classroom. I did work with fluency when I would work with my two students in RTI. Both students had different stories and they would have one minute to read their story and I would work with them by trying to get them to read at least 100 words in a minute. After their minute was up I would go over the words that they missed by using phonemic awareness to sound out the words that they missed. When they would pass their story with 100 words per minute we would give them a new story to read. I would mark their progress each day after they read.

Vocabulary I saw mainly used in my general education 2nd grade classroom. We would go over vocabulary every Monday. The students would tell me what they words meant and then they would use them in a sentence. I would sometimes give them a scavenger hunt where they would have to find their vocabulary words in the story they were reading for the week. We would also play vocabulary games on the smartboard where they were given the word ad they had to match the definition to the word. Then every Thursday of that week they would take a vocabulary test on their words. The first part of the test was matching the word to the definition and then the second part of the test the students would have to pick the correct word to go in the sentence.

I would use comprehension a lot during reading time in my 2nd grade classroom. While we are reading our story for the week I would ask them questions to work on their comprehension to see if they comprehend what they are reading. We would also feel out KWL charts for our story for the week. And after they had finished the story I would ask them to tell me what they had learned from this story and to fill in the “L” part of their chart. We would also make story webs as we would read to help with comprehension. Then at the end of the week they would take a reading test for their story which would test them on comprehension. I also saw a little bit of this in my RTI classroom. There was a part in their lessons where they would have to read a little story and then pick the picture that goes with the story. They had to remember what they had read to know what picture when with that particular story.

I saw each of these five pillars of literacy in my classroom one way or another. And I realized that I did not even notice that I was doing these in my classroom until I actually thought about it. It is nice to see that even though we might by playing games or doing scavenger hunts, we were still working on these five pillars of literacy without even noticing.