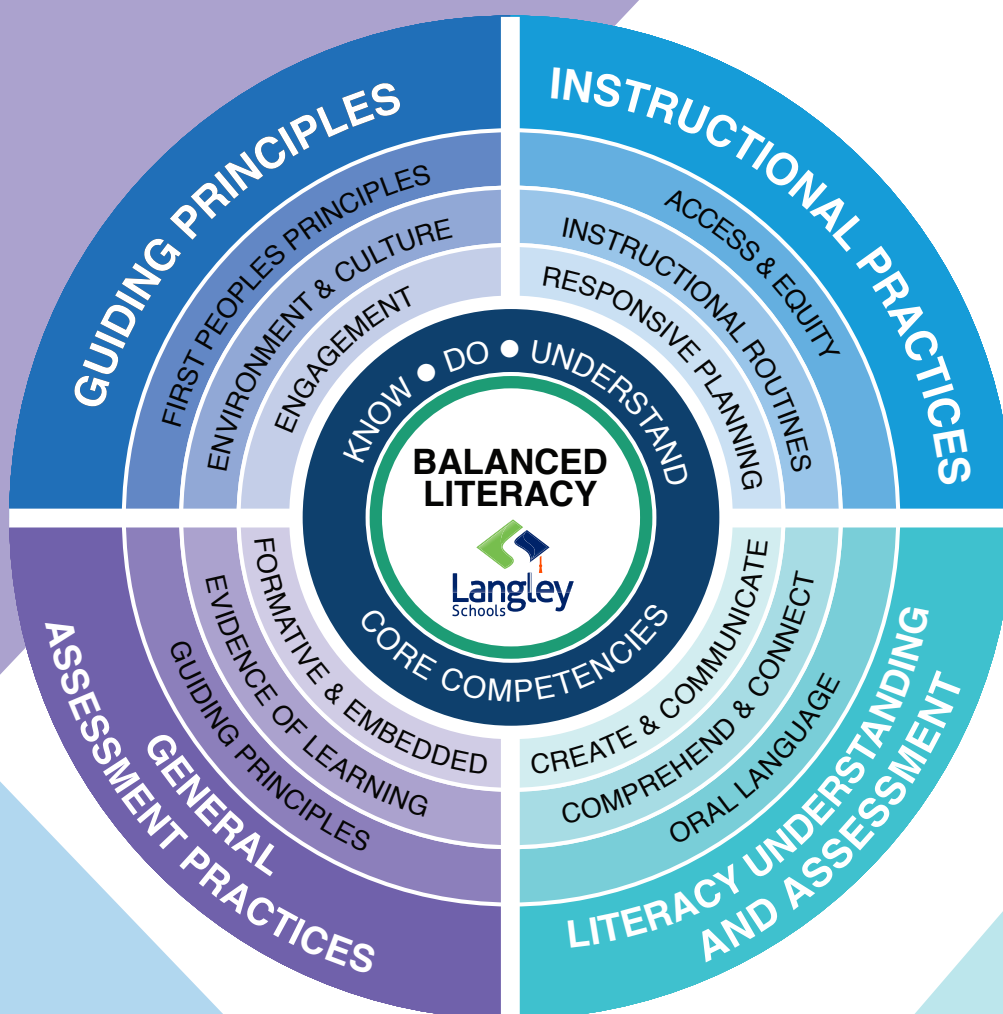




# Balanced Literacy Guide

A COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY FRAMEWORK FOR K-8 TEACHERS



**CREATED BY TEACHERS FOR TEACHERS**

Compiled by Shelley Hegedus, Amanda Slade,  
Deanna Lightbody & Kim Cline

Instructional Services - District Teachers

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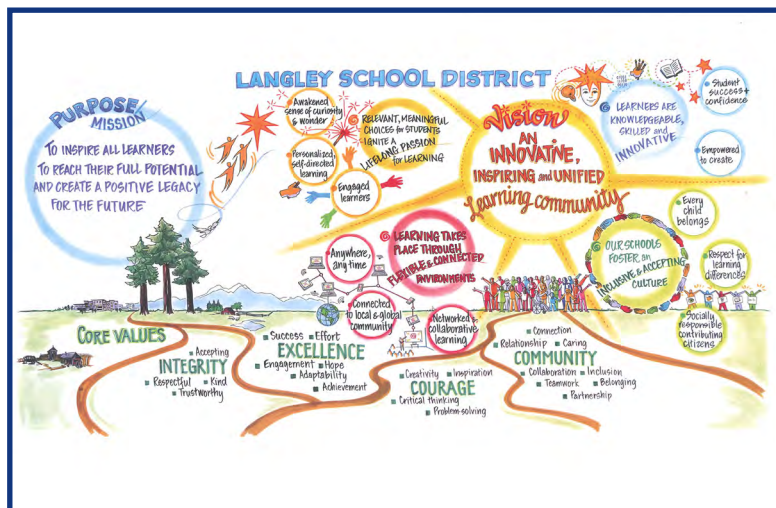
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# Preface

## Message from Instructional Services

Welcome to the August, 2022 revised Balanced Literacy Guide. This guide is a living document. You will always find the most current guide on the Instructional Services website.

This foundational document has combined the three previous balanced literacy guides (kindergarten, primary and intermediate/middle) into one comprehensive literacy guide. These guides were updated to include the emerging research on reading development as well as new instructional reading levels. This guide is our district's latest resource for best practices in teaching literacy. In the years to come, instructional services will be creating and compiling practical elaborations to this guide to help teachers implement these practices in their classrooms.



As district teachers, we wanted to develop a supporting document for literacy instruction similar to our district's Balanced Numeracy Guide. Many of our colleagues indicated that they would appreciate a common resource to help develop a balanced literacy program in their classrooms. It is our hope that this resource can guide and strengthen your professional learning journey towards ensuring all students receive the reading and writing instruction that meets their specific needs.

## Message from George Kozlovic, Director of Instruction

We are pleased to release a wholly revised Balanced Literacy Guide to support teachers in the Langley School District. Graduating literate citizens is our moral imperative. This revised guide reflects the latest research in reading instruction and addresses a proper balance of direct teaching and designing learning experiences. The Balanced Literacy Guide is rooted in evidence-based instructional practice and outlines the foundational pieces required for our learners to become literate citizens. Special thanks to Shelley Hegedus for completing the revisions.

## Acknowledgements

Several people contributed feedback and ideas throughout the developmental process. We would like to thank our colleagues for their time and support.

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We would like to thank Andrea Driedger & Crystal Loyer from Professional Services for their assistance with the design and formatting of this document. Their considerable time and effort is greatly appreciated.

All the resources or suggestions in this guide reflect our own experiences in classrooms and the latest research in literacy pedagogy. Please see the resources page for references and sources.

# Introduction

## LITERACY

### What is Literacy?

Literacy and numeracy are described as the two pillars of the BC curriculum as they are fundamental to all learning. The BC curriculum defines literacy as "the ability to understand, critically analyze, and create a variety of forms of communication, including oral, written, visual, digital, and multimedia, in order to accomplish one's goals."

Literacy is present in all aspects of the curriculum from K-12. It is a shared responsibility among all teachers.

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been promoting literacy since 1946. According to UNESCO, literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.

### What is Balanced Literacy?

Balanced Literacy is a framework that incorporates a diverse range of organizational structures, assessments, and instructional practices that are intentional and responsive to students and curriculum. Balanced Literacy provides opportunities for students to uncover, construct, and apply literary understandings. Drawing upon the research base for balanced literacy, we highlight the importance of **all** aspects of literacy within the classroom.

### What is the Balanced Literacy Guide?

The Balanced Literacy Guide was developed to support teachers with their knowledge and confidence in teaching literacy, with the goal of deepening learning for all Langley students. The Balanced Literacy Guide is a resource created for teachers by teachers in Instructional Services.

### Three Key Features of Literacy:

- Literacy is about the uses people make of it as a means of **communication and expression**, through a variety of media.
- Literacy is plural, being practiced in particular **contexts** for particular **purposes** and using specific **languages**.
- Literacy involves a **continuum of learning** measured at different **proficient** levels.

(UNESCO, 2004; 2017)

# BALANCED LITERACY

The components of a balanced literacy **approach** to teaching literacy are similar to those within a balanced numeracy framework.

Balanced Literacy
<b>Routines</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transitions (question of the day, morning message, classroom meetings, Daily 5, provocations, etc.)</li></ul>
<b>Flexible Groupings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Whole class (read aloud, mini-lessons, etc.)</li><li>• Small groups (mini-lessons, guided reading, literacy centres, literature circles, etc.)</li><li>• Individual (conferences, interviews, authentic practice, student choice)</li></ul>
<b>Explicit and Intentional Planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modelling of reading, writing (think aloud)</li><li>• Shared reading and writing (think-pair-share)</li><li>• Guided reading and writing</li><li>• Independent and authentic practice in reading, writing, reflecting</li></ul>
<b>Reading and Writing Workshop (Structure)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small group</li><li>• Mini-lessons</li><li>• Conferencing with teacher</li><li>• Teacher prompting and questioning to encourage further learning</li></ul>
<b>Rich Learning Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Classroom library, literacy centres, read aloud, sound wall, anchor charts for routines and criteria</li><li>• Place-based learning, outdoor learning, First Peoples Principles of Learning</li><li>• Opportunities for sharing stories, discussions, public speaking</li></ul>
<b>Foundations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading and writing strategies</li><li>• Oral language</li><li>• Phonological awareness, phonics, sight words, etc.</li></ul>

# BELIEFS ABOUT TEACHING LITERACY

It is our mission in the Langley School District to inspire student success, confidence, and lifelong learning in literacy through growth mindsets and innovative teaching. Our district believes that by applying the following principles, we can help ensure literacy success for all students.



Reading is a complex process involving a network of cognitive actions that work together to construct meaning.

*(Dorn and Soffos, 2005)*

## Foundational Beliefs

Unlike learning to speak, learning to read is not natural. Most children can learn to read however, they must be explicitly taught.

Literacy develops through learning to read, write and communicate. These skills develop and increase in complexity as students move through the grades. We believe that strong literacy instruction rests on these important beliefs based on research:

### 1. Oral Language is Foundational to Literacy Development

- ▶ While children learn to speak before they learn to read, advancing their oral language skills through instruction and practice supports the cognitive processes of learning to read and write.

### 2. The Goal of Literacy Development is Reading Comprehension and Communication

- ▶ Reading must be taught explicitly
  - Students must be able to decode and have language comprehension skills in order to achieve reading comprehension.
  - Students need to be engaged as listeners and viewers of text.
- ▶ Writing must be taught explicitly
  - The process for writing and understanding different stories (whether narrative or personal) and other forms of text (poems, research, letters, posters, photographs, blogs etc.) must be taught.
  - Students need to use speaking and/or representing to demonstrate their learning, understanding, opinions and perspectives. They need to show respect for the contributions of others.

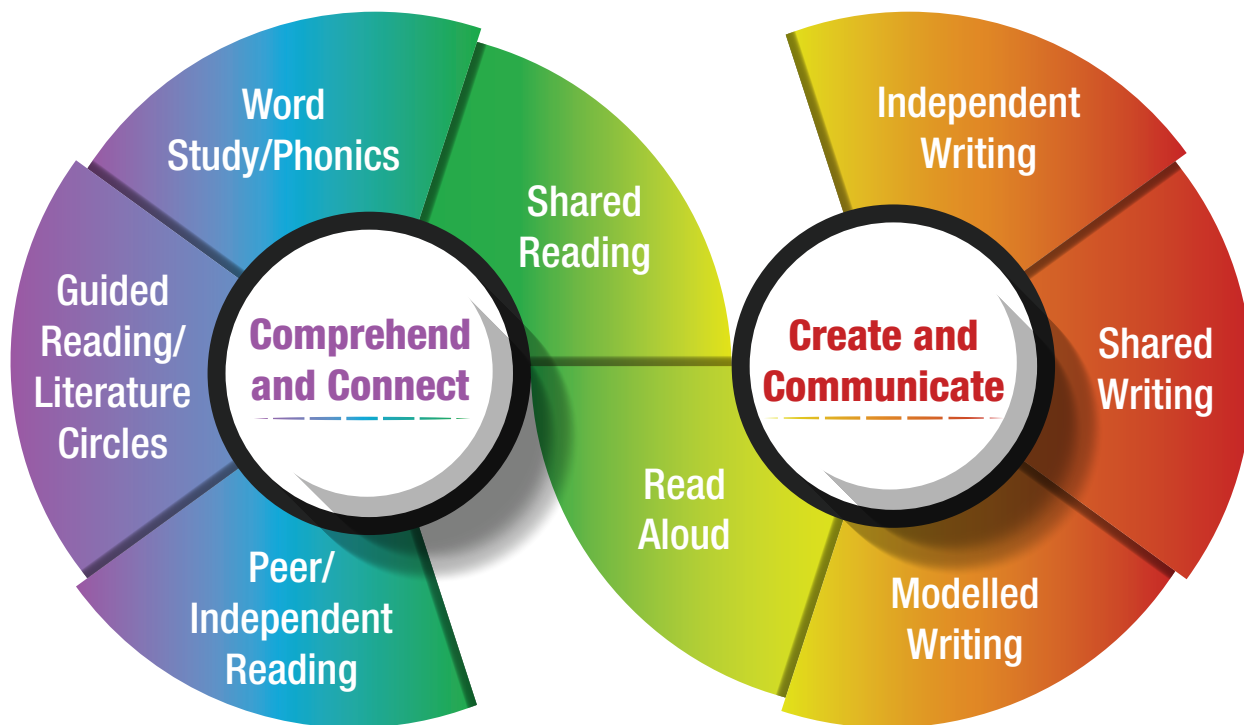
### 3. Using On-going Formative Assessment Identifies Individual Student Learning Needs and is Important to Inform Instruction.

- ▶ All of these skills are individual and based on a student's needs identified through ongoing formative assessments.
- ▶ Literacy should be integrated into all curricular areas.
- ▶ We are all reading and writing teachers.



# THE COMPONENTS OF BALANCED LITERACY

The image below shows all of the components of a balanced literacy framework. These components may look a bit different depending on the development or age of your students.



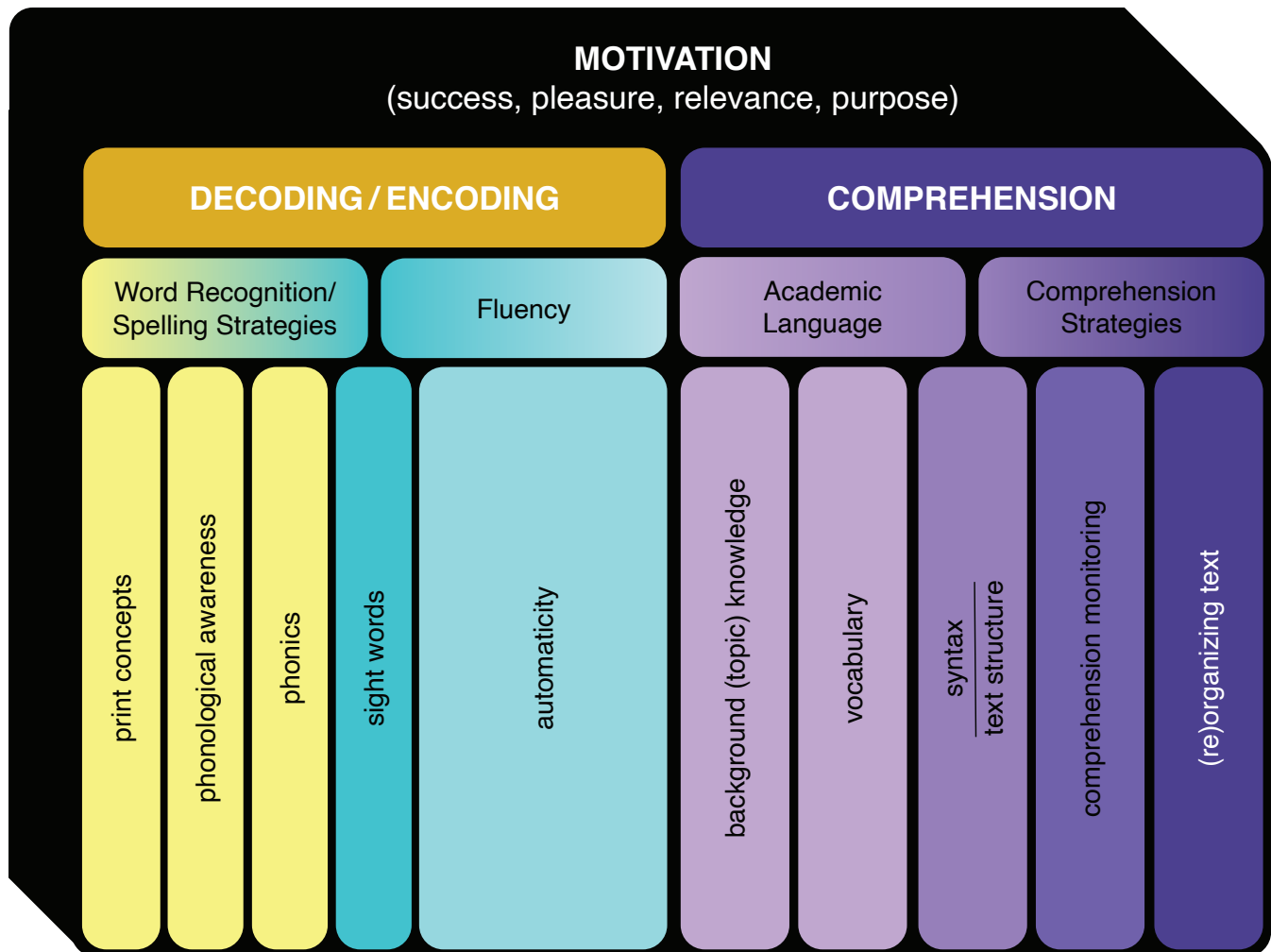
Balanced literacy is not a program. In Langley, balanced literacy is defined as a framework used in the classroom to ensure that students get what they need to be successful readers, writers, and communicators.

Strong oral language skills are the bedrock for building strong overall literacy skills. It is from this foundation that all other aspects of literacy skills develop and increase. The purpose of becoming a literate citizen is to be able to communicate, and oral language is the foundation.

Teaching with a balanced literacy approach ensures that all students (regardless of age) with emerging and approaching reading skills are explicitly taught the phonemic awareness and phonics skills they need. Students that are proficient and extending in skills are provided with instruction that will deepen their reading skills through more instruction in comprehension, spelling and vocabulary. When taught through a balanced approach of small group instruction, shared reading, word study, and writing, students receive literacy instruction in all areas of literacy. This ensures that students are learning the skills they need to read, write, and communicate. That is why a balanced literacy framework for all elementary classrooms is important.

# WHY IS USING A BALANCED LITERACY FRAMEWORK IMPORTANT FOR STUDENT LEARNING?

## LITERACY FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTION



*John Shefelbine, California State University, 2013*

Many facets of literacy work together simultaneously. This diagram demonstrates the skills and knowledge needed for students to learn to read, write and communicate. We know that decoding/encoding are the more technical skills, and that comprehension is the understanding developed by having these skills. Decoding is finite. Once a child learns to decode, they can continue to read new words. Language comprehension is ever-changing based on increased background knowledge and vocabulary. In order for a child to learn to read they need to have **both decoding and language comprehension skills**. While this image focuses more on reading, the skills within such as syntax, vocabulary and comprehension monitoring are important for writing development too. Reading and writing processes work together.

Integrating and scaffolding the skills as you teach, helps students to learn to read, write, and understand what they are reading and writing. These skills work **together** to build reading comprehension.



# WHAT COMPONENTS CREATE A BALANCED LITERACY FRAMEWORK IN THE CLASSROOM?

## Oral Language

Oral language surrounds the balanced literacy wheel because all aspects of literacy learning involve some level of oral language skills. Oral language skills form the original learning to speak and communicate and work simultaneously with other aspects of literacy to build strong overall literacy skills.

## Comprehend & Connect

### Reading

- ▶ Read Aloud/Interactive Reading
- ▶ Shared/Modelled Reading
- ▶ Word Study/Phonics
- ▶ Guided Reading
- ▶ Independent Reading

### Listening & Viewing

- ▶ Listening comprehension
- ▶ Show respect for contributions of others
- ▶ Use listen/viewing to make predictions, make connections, make inferences, etc.

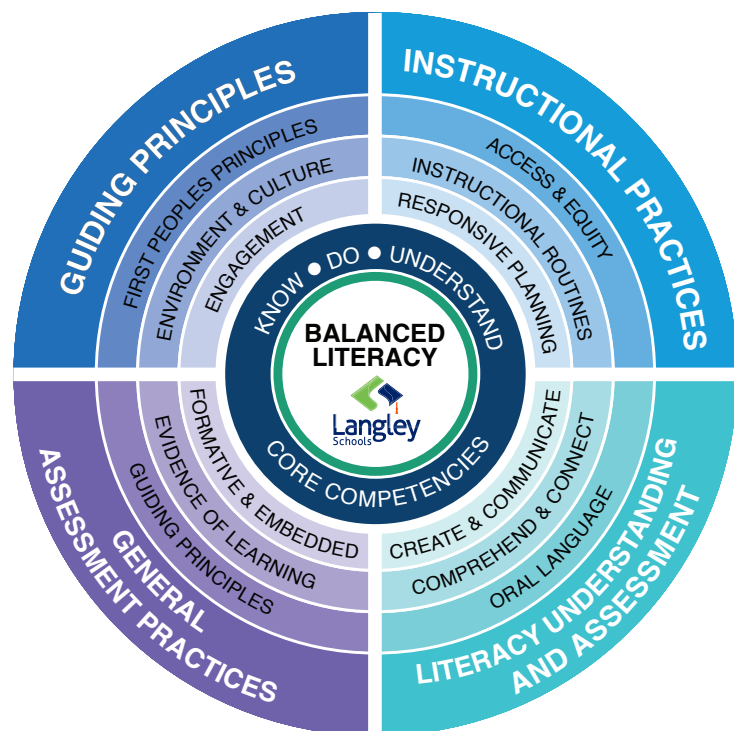
## Create & Communicate

### Writing

- ▶ Modelled Writing
- ▶ Shared Writing
- ▶ Independent Writing
- ▶ Peer Writing

### Speaking & Representing

- ▶ Exchange ideas and perspectives
- ▶ Classroom Discussions
- ▶ Oral Storytelling
- ▶ Communicate using different forms of language
- ▶ Conversations with peers and adults



"Reading is like breathing in.  
Writing is like breathing out."

**PAM ALLYN**

# HOW TO USE THE BALANCED LITERACY GUIDE

Each component of literacy in the balanced literacy framework provides options for methods teachers can choose to use when planning and teaching a lesson.

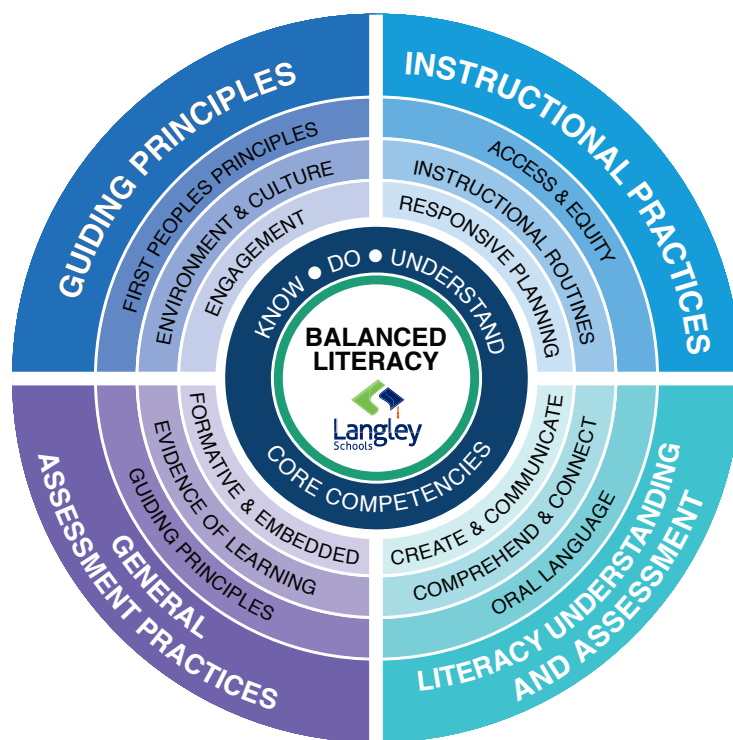
These instructional strategies can be used to teach a variety of things. Choosing the instructional strategy you will use can depend on such things as the age and abilities of the students, or the skill or concept you are teaching.

Some strategies provide extensive support to students, while others allow for more independence.

Using the gradual release model students receive the support they need as they learn. As students become more independent, the teacher gradually reduces support.

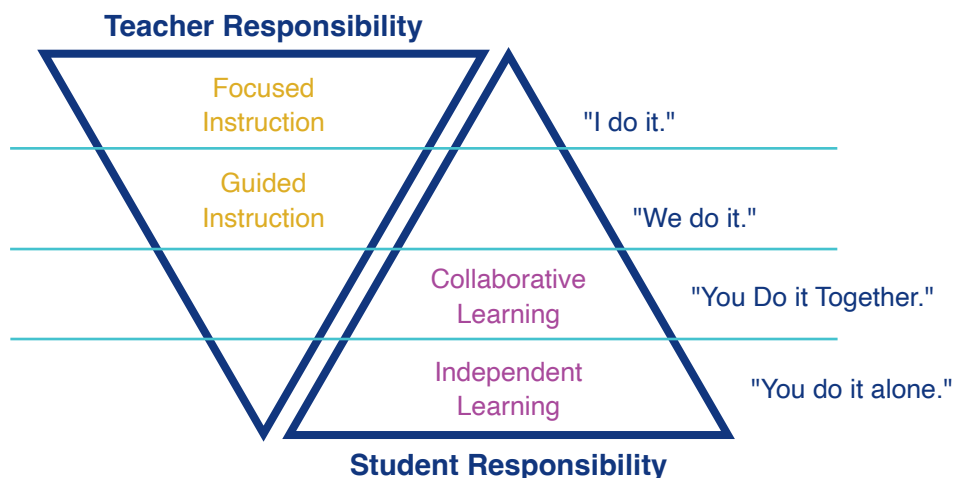
For example, the modelled writing approach relies more on the teacher doing the writing than shared writing where the students "share the pen" with the teacher. Teachers might use this strategy especially in kindergarten or grade 1 or in *any* grade when more support for a new concept is needed.

Throughout the guide you will notice suggestions that may apply more to primary than intermediate/ middle. Suggestions were generally done in order of difficulty but not grade level to allow multiple access points for all students.



The Gradual Release of Responsibility Model is a teaching strategy characterized by a sequence of learning activities that shift the responsibility from the teacher to the student.

'Show me, Help me, Let me.'



(Adapted from Pearson and Gallagher, 1983)

# EVERY CHILD, EVERY DAY...

*Reads* something they have  
*chosen* themselves.

*Reads accurately.*

*Reads* something he or  
she *understands*.

*Writes* about something  
personally *meaningful*.

*Talks* with *peers* about  
reading and writing.

*Listens* to a *fluent adult*  
reader read aloud.

## Make Time for the Things That Matter

"Eliminate almost all worksheets and workbooks. Use the money saved to purchase books for classroom libraries; use the time saved for self-selected reading, self-selected writing, literary conversations, and read alouds."

- Allington & Gabriel, 2012



# Guiding Principles

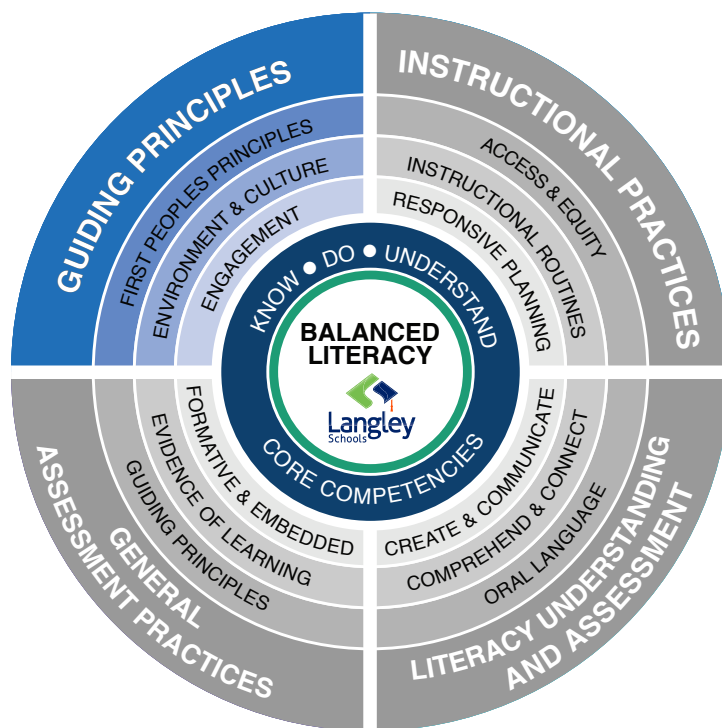
## Environment, Community, & Student-Centred Learning

Creating a safe and welcoming learning environment goes a long way to helping students feel a sense of belonging.

Building a community of literacy learners begins with developing a safe and comfortable classroom environment that is accepting and welcoming of all students.

### Other Important Guiding Principles:

- ▶ Relationships and connections are created and nurtured and are the context for well-being and learning.
- ▶ Environments are integral to well-being and learning.
- ▶ Literacy learning **opportunities** are created with all students in mind. Every student must have an access point into the learning.
- ▶ The **strengths, experiences, and identity** of individuals are honoured and respected through all interactions and literacy experiences.
- ▶ Classroom interactions foster an **inclusive space** in order to develop **empathy** and **appreciation** for the **perspectives** of others.
- ▶ Learning experiences promote **innovation, collaboration, and a lifelong passion for learning**.
- ▶ **Outdoor learning** environments are included for literacy learning.
- ▶ Literacy learning is an **active and collaborative** process.
- ▶ **Immediate, targeted feedback** specific to students' literacy learning needs.
- ▶ Explicit instruction provided for areas requiring instruction.
- ▶ Students are involved in setting **personal goals** for learning.
- ▶ Students are offered **multiple ways** to show what they know. Students may choose to use words, pictures, writing, creations, videos.



To help students develop agency, teachers can not only recognize learners' individuality, but also acknowledge the wider set of relationships – with peers, families and communities – that influence their learning. In the traditional teaching model, teachers are expected to deliver knowledge through instruction and evaluation. In a system that encourages student agency, learning involves not only instruction and evaluation but also co-construction. In such a system, teachers and students become co-creators in the teaching-and-learning process. Students acquire a sense of purpose in their education and take ownership of their learning.

# FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

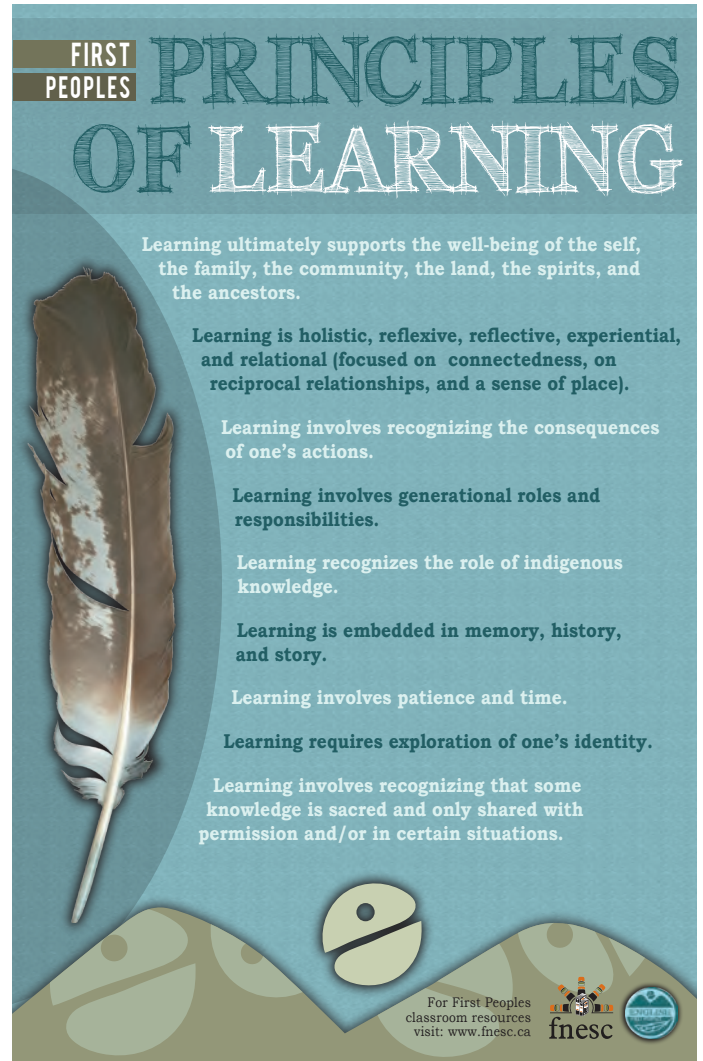
These First Peoples Principles of Learning are thoroughly compatible with approaches to teaching and learning that emphasize:

- ▶ Building on what students are already familiar with (both abstract knowledge and concrete knowledge).
- ▶ Exploring and building on students' interests (e.g., asking learners about what is important to them to identify what context will prove meaningful to them as a basis for learning literacy).
- ▶ Presenting literacy problems of various sorts in varied ways (e.g., visual, oral, role-play, and experiential problems as well as word and symbol problems).
- ▶ Stimulating students' innate curiosity and desire to explore.
- ▶ Communicating a positive and enthusiastic attitude toward literacy (e.g., being willing to take risks and make mistakes and encouraging students to do the same).
- ▶ Promoting and rewarding perseverance (e.g., giving necessary time for difficult problems and revisiting them on multiple occasions).
- ▶ Encouraging students to reflect on and be explicit about their own thinking processes and the transformations in their own understanding.

Adapted from: FNEsc, Math First Peoples Teacher Resource Guide, 2020.

The First Peoples Principles of Learning and other ways of knowing contribute to a more holistic and experiential learning of literacy that benefits all learners. The First Peoples Principles of Learning can be used to help create meaningful lessons for your students in literacy and in all other content areas. It is a way of knowing and a way of teaching that honours the student and family, what they know and how they learn.

Provide ways for students to connect their learning to each other, to the community and to the larger world around them. Help students start to understand First Peoples views and culture by exploring these principles with your class and embedding them into your literacy instruction and content areas across the curriculum.





# FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

## SUGGESTED STRATEGIES TO USE

- ☐ Share Indigenous stories with your class, highlight that stories are shared with permission.
- ☐ Create opportunities for student research, writing, and discussion about family history/heritage. Use a variety of media to present writing.
- ☐ Connect the core competencies for "I can/understand statements" to the First Peoples Principles in literacy activities.
- ☐ Encourage collaborative writing pieces.
- ☐ Where possible, take literacy outside.
- ☐ Set up opportunities to read with "Big or Little Buddies."
- ☐ Try to design inquiry-based, open ended writing tasks that reflect the principles.
- ☐ Invite members of the community to share their roles and responsibilities as a family member.
- ☐ Read/provide books recognized as authentically Indigenous. Discuss story meanings and teachings.
- ☐ Encourage patience and perseverance as students work through the reading and writing process.
- ☐ Provide time outside to learn from the land.
- ☐ Recognize and refer to Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in social studies and science.



**Fatty Legs**  
Christy Jordan-Fenton &  
Margaret Pokiak-Fenton



**Be a Good Ancestor**  
Leona Prince & Gabrielle  
Prince



**We Feel Good  
Out Here**  
Julie-Ann André &  
Mindy Willett

# ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

## A Note on Reading and Anxiety: The Psychology of Learning to Read

In recent years, concepts about reading anxiety have emerged. While not readily studied yet, the research available shows some interesting information. There are two schools of thought here: general anxiety affects reading (and learning) development and children's reading affect develops in response to reading experiences.

### In a nutshell, here are some of the findings:

- ▶ Differences in self-concept between poor and average students were evident as early as a few weeks after commencing first grade and were also related to phonological awareness and letter naming knowledge.
- ▶ Anxiety reduces working memory capacity, and consequently, people tend to retain less information from reading a text when they are anxious.
- ▶ It is hypothesized that reading self-concept develops based on reading rate (speed), not accuracy (fluency = accuracy + speed), and is particularly critical to forming students' reading affect.
- ▶ Reading anxiety is induced by past difficulties associated with reading and if asked to read aloud, the act of reading will be associated with a sense of worry toward the reading process. In some cases, students fear making pronunciation errors or other mistakes while reading aloud in front of their peers.

### What this Means for Teachers of Students Learning to Read

- Avoid calling on students (unless they volunteer) to read aloud in a whole class environment.
- Use various strategies to listen to students read, but avoid "round robin" reading. This is calling on students one after the other in order.
- Encourage a joy of reading, not a focus on levels.
- Use assessment to ensure that all students learning to read have acquired all the foundational skills before moving forward, (ex. KSP, phonemic awareness/phonics screeners, Fountas & Pinnell/comprehension checks).
- Focus on fluency as children learn to decode.

"Children's perceptions of reading competence significantly accounted for variations in word identification, spelling and reading comprehension skills."

*CONLON ET. AL., 2006*

"Studies on children and adults with reading difficulties suggest that these readers show elevated levels of anxiety."

*FRONTIERS IN PSYCHOLOGY, 2018*

For more information on reading skill challenges please see the Reading Instruction section and/or consult with your school resource teacher.



# ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

## The Learning Environment

It is important to create a classroom environment that facilitates the learning of literacy. The design of the learning space, the materials used, and the organization of the classroom can impact the learning environment. Making literacy "visible" in the classroom and integrating learned literacy skills into cross-curricular areas shows that literacy is prevalent in all aspects of learning and life and is valued.

There are three main pillars to creating a safe and friendly environment that supports the learning of literacy:

### Classroom Community

- ▶ Relationships and connections
- ▶ Student identity and valuing diversity
- ▶ Feature children's thinking/work on walls
- ▶ Build a rich and diverse classroom library: fiction and non-fiction books and books that represent all cultures and abilities

### Classroom Systems and Routines

- ▶ Learning processes that are routine
- ▶ Adjusting systems and routines to the student needs
- ▶ Well-being is nurtured and developed
- ▶ Use visual tools: co-created anchor charts, alphabet posters, sound wall
- ▶ Make technology available to support literacy. Apps that:
  - encourage creativity in narrative, informational and personal writing
  - encourage students to collaborate
  - support the editing process
  - help students practice and enjoy reading
  - provide access to all students
- ▶ Offer materials to help students record their thinking
  - small whiteboards
  - clipboards and pencils
  - notepads

### Classroom Community

- ▶ learning takes place in flexible and connected environments with the classroom, the school and the community.
- ▶ students have places to go within the classroom that is comfortable and where they have access to tools and resources that support learning and personal responsibility.



Image Credit: Tracey Thorne



Image Credit: Chelsey Gedak

For more information on this and more, please refer to the Langley School District *Framework for Teaching and Learning*: [instructionalservices.sd35.bc.ca/key-district-documents/foundational-district-documents](https://instructionalservices.sd35.bc.ca/key-district-documents/foundational-district-documents)

# ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

## Place-Based Learning

BC's redesigned curriculum provides teachers with flexibility in creating learning environments that are relevant, engaging, and novel. Flexible learning environments give consideration to local contexts and place-based learning. Connecting to our place helps build context to concepts. It embeds relevance and connects students to their worlds.

## Learning Outdoors

Experiencing literacy outdoors helps to engage students in conversation as they experience the different aspects and elements of the outdoors. Outdoor learning enables children to use their senses to describe, write, draw or document their understanding and appreciation of the natural world. Place-based learning:

- ▶ Offers opportunities for discussion and collaboration.
- ▶ Provides experiences that are connected to place, story, cultural practices, and perspectives relevant to local Indigenous communities, the local community, and other cultures that helps to build background knowledge.
- ▶ Supports the First Peoples Principle of Learning that learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and sense of place).
- ▶ Lends itself to an inquiry approach to learning and can be used to integrate the various subject areas.
- ▶ Helps students connect the outdoors to their own life and the curiosity, wonder and creativity they develop to support reading, writing and other oral language opportunities.

Place-based education is a vibrant approach to education that takes students out into the communities, to learn, to do and to grow as human beings. Students are given the opportunity to learn subject matter in deep and lasting ways, understand the places they live in and participate in community renewal that makes a difference to themselves and others.

*(Our Curriculum Matters)*

## Considerations

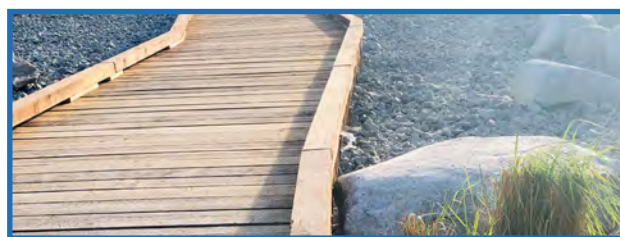
- ▶ Dress well for the weather and complete a site assessment for safety.
- ▶ Set boundaries and behaviour expectations.
- ▶ Collect tools to use outdoors: magnifying glasses, clipboards, camera device, notebook and writing implements, and tarps, etc.
- ▶ Group students.



Think of a place or a space around your school. What opportunities are available for students to think about or engage in literacy?

## Examples

- ▶ Create collections with rocks, sticks, pinecones, or leaves to observe, describe talk, draw, or write about.
- ▶ Use the natural environment for a story backdrop and describe it in a piece of writing.
- ▶ Create a story circle outdoors where oral story telling can take place.
- ▶ Use the outdoors as a "book wall" or "path of pages" where students follow pages from a book or text to put together a story or learn new information.
- ▶ Keep a nature or science journal where students can write reflections and/or observations.



# ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

## Classroom Materials (Literacy Tools)

Every classroom needs to have a core set of materials accessible to students to help support their development in literacy. The following is a suggested list of materials suitable for elementary/middle classrooms based on grades or levels of students.

Literacy Tools	
Whiteboards	Words for sentence building
Pocket chart(s)	Writing paper readily available
Whiteboard trolley	A variety of pencil/pens/markers
Sound wall	Sentence strips
Magnetic letters & boards/trays	Reference materials and/or ipads to use for reference or creation
Alphabet displayed	Classroom library books
Clipboards	Anchor charts (chart paper/chart stand)
Story workshop materials/loose parts	Sticky notes
Bananagrams	Decoding and/or comprehension bookmarks
Onset/rhyme tiles	Plastic sleeves & dry erase markers



Image Credit: Instructional Services

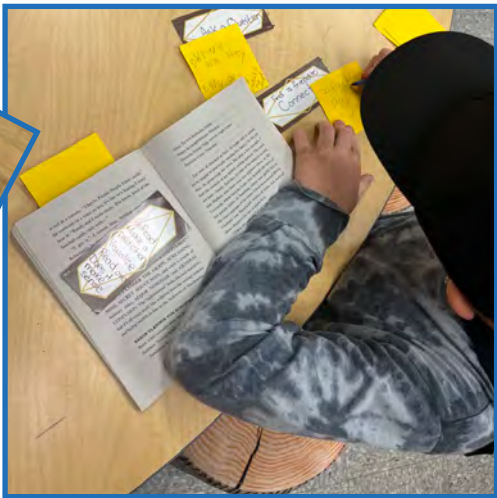


Image Credit: Brigitte Blake



# ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

## A Literacy Rich, Student-Centred Environment

### Includes:

- ▶ A **classroom library** that is an area of importance.
- ▶ Dedicated **classroom areas** to engage in whole group, small group and independent literacy activities.
- ▶ Things in the primary classrooms that are **labelled** (great for emergent readers, ELL learners & struggling readers). Consult with you ELL and resource teacher for ideas.
- ▶ **Co-created anchor charts** that serve as a reference to content vocabulary & processes.
- ▶ **Student work** displayed and regularly changed. Setting up a system where students can change their own work is not only student-centred but helpful to the busy teacher.
- ▶ Access to **electronic tools** that support learning and engagement.



Image Credit: Tristan Raphael

# THE CLASSROOM LIBRARY

## The Main Feature of Every K-7 Classroom

The classroom library is the main feature of your classroom. Whether you teach primary students or intermediate/middle students, the classroom library is a very important part of your classroom. It is a place to go to read, relax, and enjoy a book. Consult with the teacher-librarian in your school for more ideas and support. Oftentimes, it is a great place to go to take a break or self-regulate. The classroom library should be welcoming, have comfortable seating and/or a small carpet, and encourage kids to engage with books. When students are finished their work, they may have the opportunity to go to the library and read.

## Some important tips to help you build a thriving classroom library:

- ▶ Organize the books so that students are able to find what they are looking for. These might be bins with labels.
- ▶ Ensure that your library contains a variety of books with diverse characters so that all students can see themselves in the books.
- ▶ Offer fiction, and non-fiction books as well as magazines or other different kinds of texts.
- ▶ Organize by topic, genre, series or another method that will be clear to your students. If you organize it with your students, they will be more likely to be willing to keep it that way.
- ▶ Face the book covers forward for easy identification.
- ▶ Display some themed or new books by standing them upright to grab students' attention.
- ▶ Keep in contact with your teacher-librarian. They will be able to suggest places to find books and also recommend popular topics. You can even take lots of books out to help supplement your classroom library.



Image Credit: Chelsey Gedak



Image Credit: Brigitte Blake



# THE EARLY YEARS VISION

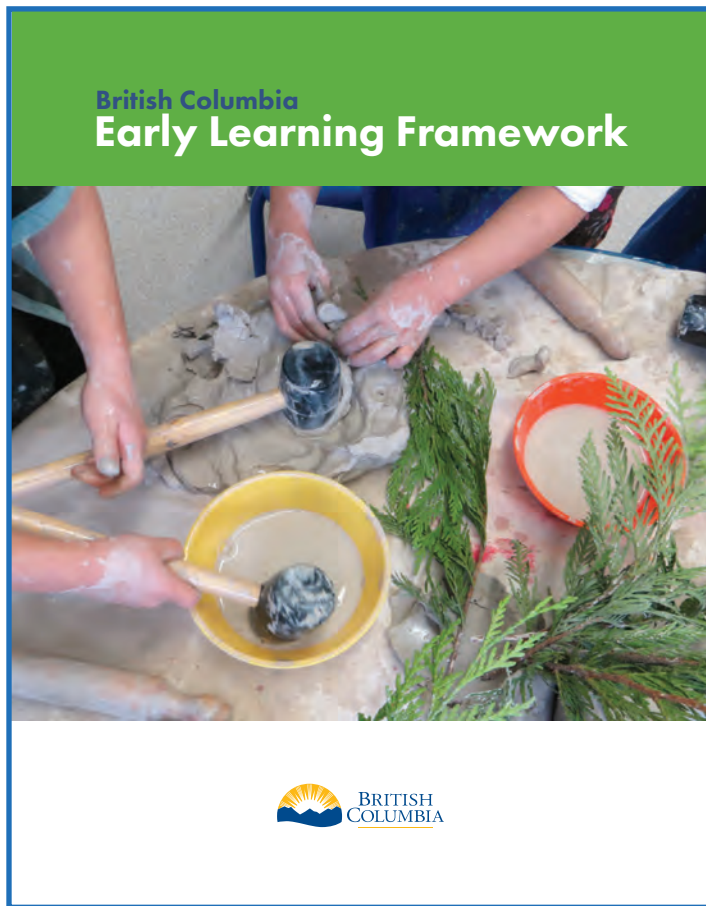
In BC, "early years" used to refer to infant to kindergarten. Now, early years refers to **infant to age 8**. Due to this shift by the Ministry, Langley recognized the need for an early-years vision that would also guide our work in primary classrooms.

You will notice in the vision below that we have taken a very holistic approach to creating this vision. Children do not go to school in a vacuum. Children bring with them their relationships with their families and communities, their stories, their interests, and curiosity. Every child is unique in personality, family background, and abilities. It is with this lens that literacy develops and is nurtured in the classroom. This is why there is a need for flexible learning spaces, a variety of access points for learning literacy, a need for co-creating, and an understanding that much of the learning children do at this age is through play, inquiry and hands-on learning.



This Langley School District Early Years Vision was developed by a team of Langley teachers, the education coordinator of Kwantlen First Nation, Strong Start Facilitators, Administrators, District Teachers, District Principal of Early Learning, Assistance Superintendent, and the Chair of Langley's Children's Committee.

# THE EARLY LEARNING FRAMEWORK AND LITERACY



Above: Two guiding documents that include K-3 learning.

## The Early Learning Framework...

"...[C]arries the hope of inspiring and supporting the creation of rich, joyful early childhood spaces where children, adults, ideas, and materials come together, and where knowledge is constructed about learning and living in ways that are local, inclusive, ethical, and democratic."

This framework aligns with the curriculum and core competencies and provides a holistic look at children and how they learn. The Early Learning Framework contributes to reconciliation with Indigenous people not only by acknowledging the colonialism that has existed in mainstream education but "implicitly and explicitly honouring Indigenous authorities in education." Throughout the framework, the vision of inclusive spaces and practices includes all children with diverse abilities and needs.

The revised version of the BC Early Learning Framework was released in 2019 to expand to primary grades. Thus, this framework should form a large part of the environment, community, and teaching and learning practices of all primary classrooms. You can find a copy of these documents online.

### Early Learning Framework:

[www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/early-learning-framework](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/early-learning-framework)

### Play today:

[www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/play-today](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/play-today)



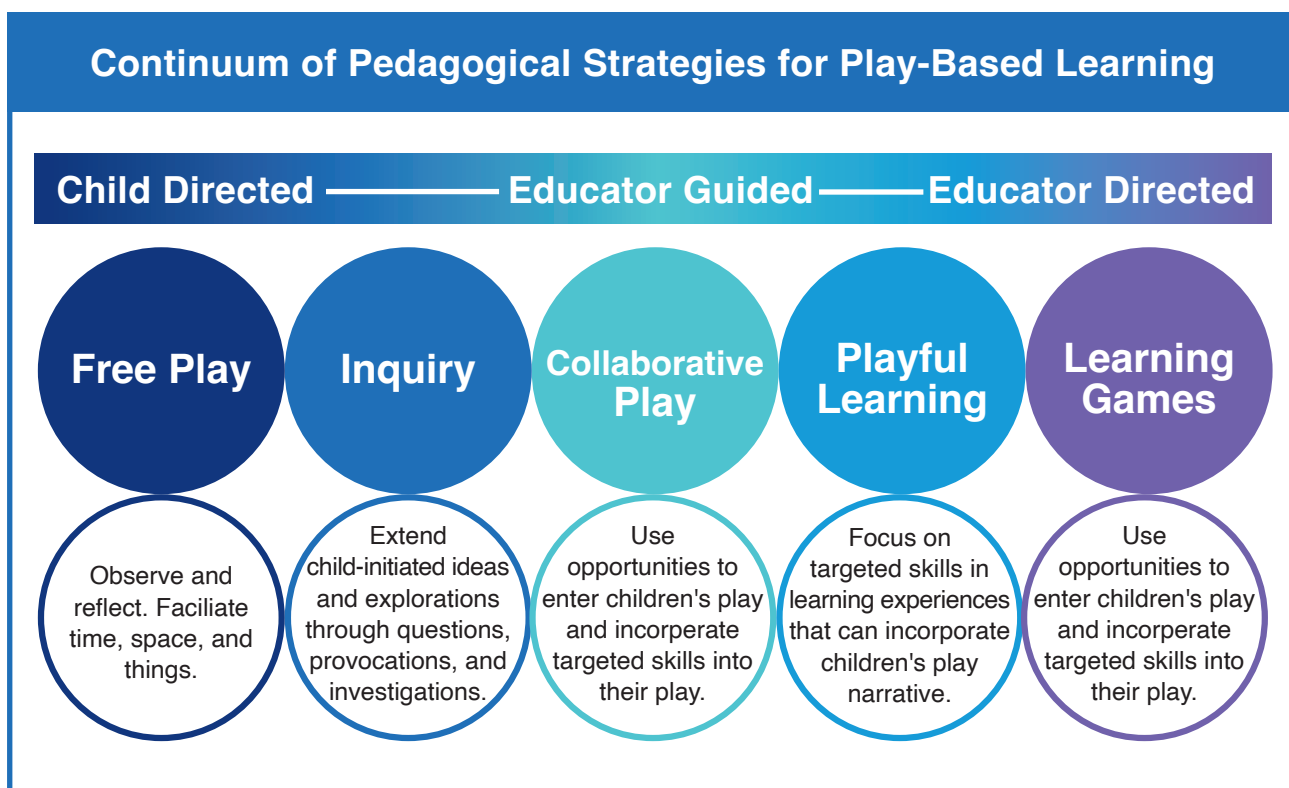
# ENGAGEMENT

## Play and Inquiry in Literacy

Play can take many forms and be used to increase student engagement, develop understanding and application of concepts, and increase automaticity. As children develop literacy skills in play in primary, these skills can be applied and developed further in the intermediate classroom through hands-on learning and inquiry learning.

**1** Inviting students to engage with literacy through play is essential to literacy development. Play involves an abundance of oral language and self-regulation skills which are necessary and foundational to further literacy learning.

**2** Children's engagement, creative thinking, problem-solving, and language comprehension deepens when they play.



*Adapted from Pyle and Danniels, 2017.*

# ENGAGEMENT

Motivation research shows that students are more motivated when the learning is relevant. "Learners tend to persist in learning when they face a manageable challenge (neither too easy nor too frustrating) and when they see the value and utility of what they are learning" (National Research Council, 2000).

This is important for 2 reasons:

1. Knowing how students learn and what motivates them helps teachers know how to adapt their lessons to include more student choice to build connections to learning.
2. Student choice can be based on many factors including personality, cultural background, life experiences, diverse abilities providing an equitable learning environment for all.

"The capacity to learn  
is a gift; the ability  
to learn is a skill; the  
willingness to learn  
is a choice."  
*Brian Herbert*

## Considerations for Developing Student Engagement

- ▶ Create emotionally safe classrooms.
- ▶ Assess authentically with ongoing feedback.
- ▶ Provide engaging opportunities that provoke and inspire literacy thinking through play, inquiry, and exploration.
- ▶ Design cross-curricular tasks and investigation (ex. integrate literacy into science or social studies).
- ▶ Provide access for all learners by using a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) model that starts with access points for students who learn differently or are diverse in needs.
- ▶ Create flexible, visibly random groupings for conversations, creations, and hands-on literacy tasks.
- ▶ Encourage individuality through flexible, open tasks that allow for different approaches and abilities.
- ▶ Play with words through vocabulary games.
- ▶ Provide different tools for students to represent their thinking: vertical spaces, individual white boards, technology, graphic organizers, reflective journals.
- ▶ Foster relationships through structured cooperative or collaborative learning approaches.
- ▶ Engage parents and the community and make connections between the classroom and home, classroom and community.

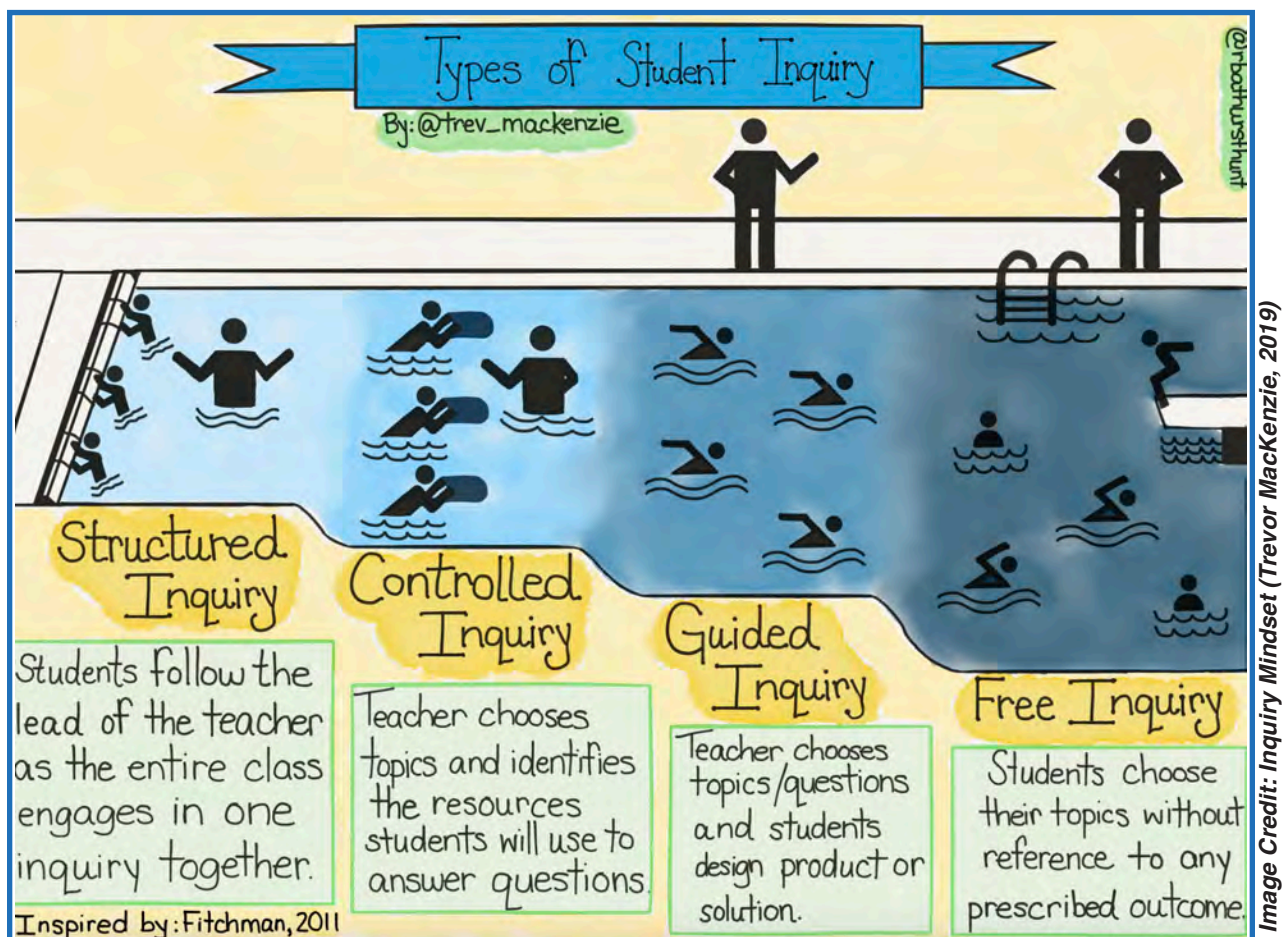
# INQUIRY LEARNING

Inquiry learning is suitable for all elementary students regardless of skill level. Inquiry learning is engaging because it emphasizes the students' role in the learning process rather than the traditional teacher-led role. Inquiry learning is a powerful way for students to use the literacy skills that they have acquired through lessons, conversations, and classroom discussions as well as personal experiences at home and in the community.

Inquiry learning promotes student voice and choice and helps to increase learning in all curricular areas using literacy to lead the process. It also includes students' own interests and lived experiences so it is makes learning relevant.

An inquiry approach to learning also:

1. Increases learning because the focus is not on memorizing but rather on applying knowledge, making connections among ideas, and/or creating something new.
2. Helps to develop "soft skills" such as teamwork and creative problem-solving, which always involves oral and written communication.
3. If the inquiry project is self-chosen or guided by the teacher but open-ended, students are more likely to take learning "risks" which builds self-confidence and engagement.
4. Inquiry-based learning follows a Universal Design for Learning model (UDL) in that students can choose topics or access points based on their skills, comfort level, interests etc.



# Instructional Practices

It is important to have a diverse repertoire of instructional practices that enable all students to access the learning. Considerations for planning, literacy routines, and inclusive practices are described in this section of the guide.

## Access & Equity

ALL students should be provided with access to high-quality literacy instruction and intervention when necessary. Teachers should consider students' knowledge, backgrounds, experiences, and cultural perspectives when designing their literacy program.

## Instructional Routines

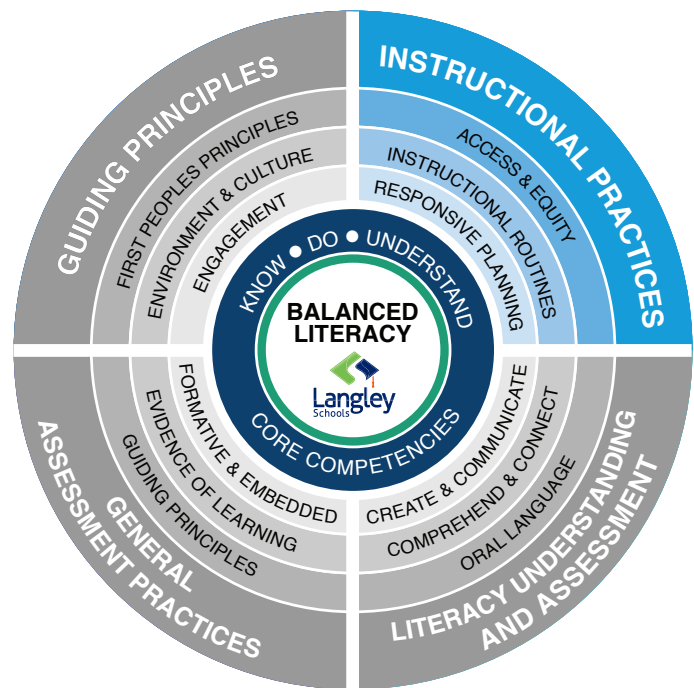
Instructional routines are structured activities that can help foster the core/curricular competencies in relation to literacy content. Implementing instructional routines provide access for all learners and can help to build a community of learners through discussion, questioning, and risk-taking.

## Responsive Planning

Teachers plan the instruction and learning so that the various needs of all students are addressed and so that students can see themselves reflected in classroom resources and activities. When planning, it is important to consider these four critical questions:

- ▶ What do students need to learn?
- ▶ How we will know whether students have learned it?
- ▶ How can we plan instruction to promote the learning?
- ▶ How will we respond to students who need more support or require an extension?

This section highlights key strategies to consider as teachers plan effective and inclusive programs for all students, whether daily, weekly, or yearly.



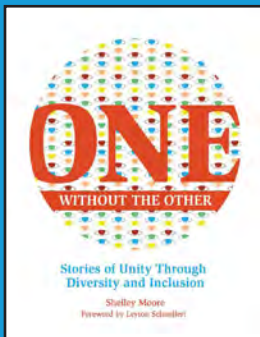
# ACCESS & EQUITY

“Books give a soul to the universe, wings to the mind,  
flight to the imagination and life to everything.”

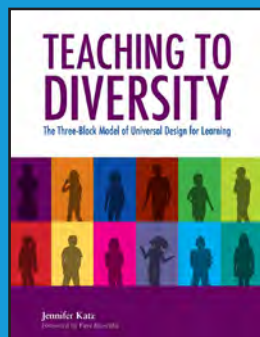
PLATO

## Considerations

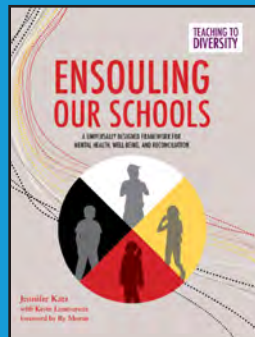
- ▶ Provide **all** students with access to high-quality skill-based literacy experiences as well as lessons than promote joy in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- ▶ Be responsive to students' backgrounds, experiences, cultural perspectives, traditions, and knowledge when designing and implementing a literacy program.
- ▶ *Universal Design for Learning* provides a planning structure for teachers to help support the needs of all students.
- ▶ Ensure that all students are learning the same or similar content, skills, and strategies with varying access points.
- ▶ Encourage multiple ways for students to demonstrate their understanding.
- ▶ Support a positive "reading and writing identity" development through strengths-based teaching and learning practices.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for student voice and choice.
- ▶ Plan for inclusive practices, such as accommodations for written output and sensory/physical needs.
- ▶ Implement flexible groupings whenever possible:
  - Whole group: instruction and community building
  - Small group: guided reading, differentiation
  - Individual: conferencing, interviews, explicit instruction, authentic practice
  - “Visibly random groupings”



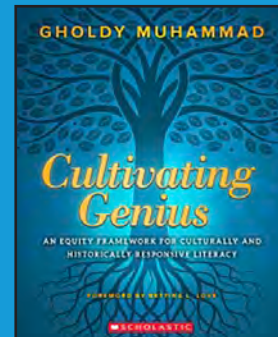
**One Without the Other**  
Shelley Moore



**Teaching to Diversity**  
Jennifer Katz



**Ensouling Our Schools**  
Jennifer Katz



**Cultivating Genius:  
An Equity Framework  
for Culturally and  
Historically Responsive  
Literacy**  
Gholdy Muhammad



# ACCESS & EQUITY

## Technology

When used effectively, technology can enhance the teaching and learning of literacy by:

- ▶ Creating opportunities to explore, create, listen, and read in multiple ways.
- ▶ Providing variety forms of communication and ways to capture and explain learning and thinking.
- ▶ Bringing ideas and stories to life through visual representations.
- ▶ Fostering collaboration and conversations about creations or books.
- ▶ Providing access points for equity and diversity.

For technology to be integrated in a way that is pedagogically appropriate for literacy instruction, teachers need to consider:

- ▶ The technology knowledge the students will need.
- ▶ The research or reading skills and understanding they will need.
- ▶ The best practices for teaching both the technology and the literacy.

“For people without disabilities, technology makes things easier. For people with disabilities, technology makes things possible.”

*(IBM Training Manual, 1991)*



Image Credit: Instructional Services



Image Credit: Instructional Services

# RESPONSIVE PLANNING

Responsive planning refers to planning that will meet the needs of all of your students, but that is also responsive to changing needs. If you have planned a great unit and it is clear that students' needs have changed, changing the direction or content of the unit or series of lessons to meet those needs is important. Responsive planning might refer to a whole class, or to a student or group of students. Formative assessment including observations can inform your decision to respond to a learning need. That is why it is important to use ongoing formative assessment as part of the planning, learning, and assessment cycle.

Tier 1 instruction refers to instruction that is suitable for the whole class. For example, this might be a mini-lesson during a writing workshop where the whole class engages. Sometimes, students struggle with regular content and need more intensive and targeted lessons. This is referred to as Tier 2. During Tier 2 classroom instruction a student or group of students might receive targeted small group reading instruction every day for two weeks for a longer block as the other students work independently on tasks or activities related to the reading block.

When a student continues to struggle despite Tier 2 interventions, it may be necessary to request support or submit a school-based team meeting to discuss possible Tier 3 interventions which are done by persons such as the resource teacher, SLP or reading specialist. The gradual release may look a bit different for students needing extra support.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ACROSS TIERS? A SCAFFOLDING EXAMPLE		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
I do	I do	I do
We do	I do	I do
We do	We do (with the teacher)	I do
We do	We do (with the teacher)	We do (with the teacher)
	We do (with the teacher)	We do (with the teacher)
You do	We do (student pairs)	We do (with the teacher)
	We do (student pairs)	We do (with the teacher)
		We do (with the teacher)
	You do (with peer feedback)	We do (student pairs)
	You do (with peer)	We do (student pairs)
	You do	We do (student pairs)
		We do
		We do
		We do
		You do (with teacher feedback)
		You do (with teacher feedback)

(Jess Surles: *Reading Instruction and Supplemental Interventions to Support Equitable Literacy*: [youtube.com/watch?v=vX8l-qJZcul](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vX8l-qJZcul))



# RESPONSIVE PLANNING

## Structures & Strategies

Planning is the key to effective literacy instruction. To plan for effective instruction, teachers need to consider what they want students to learn, how they will know whether students have learned it, how they will design instruction to promote the learning, and how they will respond to students who are not making progress or need their learning extended. Plans should include both long-term (yearly, monthly) and short-term (lessons) to ensure that the learning standards and topics are addressed.

There is great opportunity to build a strong literacy foundation by intentionally planning for reading, writing, and oral language skills as they develop on a continuum. Not everyone learns at the same rate or in the same way. It is like a student's own literacy journey and story that develops over time. Revisiting some skills and strategies by spiralling the learning (such as revisiting what letters make what sounds, the proper format of a written paragraph, or how to visualize) and going deeper with other skills and strategies (building vocabulary, making inferences, or comparing and contrasting different types of stories) helps students deepen their conceptual understanding of literacy.

### When Planning, Ask Yourself:

- ▶ In what ways does this connect with the students' experiences in and out of school?
- ▶ How can I provide opportunities to practice understandings using hands on tools?
- ▶ How will students show what they know?
- ▶ How will I understand what they still need to know?
- ▶ How can I develop further connections?
- ▶ How can I use this literacy learning in other literacy or cross-curricular areas?
- ▶ How can students apply their understanding to real world situations?
- ▶ How can I plan in ways that are culturally responsive? Create plans which recognize that all students learn in ways that are connected to background, language, family structure, and social or cultural identity.
- ▶ How can I create opportunities for students to have ongoing practice with reading, writing and oral language?
- ▶ Where can I plan for new learning, practice, and revision?

### Plan for Concepts to be Spiraled Through the Year

Daily

- direct teaching
- practice of concepts

Weekly

Development of literacy through:

- whole group lessons
- small group lessons
- practicing of skills

Monthly

- weave real life examples
- links to previous learning
- time for deep understanding through hands-on practice
- opportunities for choice and application

Yearly

- finding opportunities to spiral previous learning rather than teaching concepts in isolation without revisiting

The BC Curriculum provides great opportunities for literacy skills to be interwoven through different subjects and exploration of the Core Competencies.

# RESPONSIVE PLANNING

## Different Lesson Styles

There are various types of lesson structures that teachers can use for literacy instruction. It is important for teachers to vary the type of lesson style to meet the different learning needs of students. In addition, a specific type of lesson might better suit the particular literacy concept/skill that needs to be taught or be more suitable for the purpose of the lesson. It is recommended that teachers try to create a balance of the types of lessons that they will use, as explained below.

### Play/Exploration/Inquiry

Students may use different approaches and produce different conclusions. *Examples: What story do you see in these materials? Will conserving water help to protect the environment?*

### Direct Instruction

Students are taught a literacy skill or strategy under the direction of a teacher. *Examples: Students learn how to read text features in a non-fiction text.*

### Mini-Lesson and Guided Practice

*Brief, 10-15 minutes, includes only one focus or teaching point. Example: Students and teacher co-create an anchor chart for story elements.*

Many times the lesson includes time for guided practice. Here students show what they know and demonstrate the skills and concepts they are learning with teacher support. This can also take place during small group instruction. Both examples provide time for teacher feedback.

## Components of a Lesson

Most lessons, depending on the type, have a three-part structure: before, during and after. Each of these parts serve a specific purpose. The first part of a lesson usually helps the student connect to the topic. A "hook", inquiry question, or warm-up activity are examples of strategies teachers might use to engage students. During the second part of the lesson, students spend most of the time working on a problem or activity, individually, in pairs, or in small groups. The last part of a lesson is a consolidation to share and discuss strategies or debrief the essential understandings of the lesson. It is worthwhile for students to be actively involved and have opportunities for discussion in all three parts of a lesson.

BEFORE	DURING	AFTER
<b>Getting Ready:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Activate students' prior knowledge.</li><li>• Review previous learning if applicable</li><li>• Discuss and clarify the goal of the lesson.</li></ul>	<b>Working On It:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Present the material (I do it) (ex. skills, strategies, content).</li><li>• Guided practice with corrective feedback (WE do it).</li><li>• Provide appropriate support and extensions.</li><li>• Independent practice (YOU do it) with corrective feedback.</li><li>• Review learning/concepts from the lesson.</li><li>• Independent work</li></ul>	<b>Working On It:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide time to share learning/ ideas if appropriate to the lesson content.</li><li>• Transform conversation: how has your understanding/ learning changed?</li></ul>

*(Adapted from Anita Archer & Faye Brownlee)*

# RESPONSIVE PLANNING

## Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

All students can succeed in learning literacy. But in most classrooms, students may demonstrate a wide range of strengths and needs. UDL is an approach that enables teachers to provide personalized, precise teaching and learning experiences for all students. The goal of UDL is to create a learning environment that is open and accessible to all students. Instruction based on principles of universal design is flexible and supportive, can be adjusted to meet different student needs, and enables all students to access the curriculum as fully as possible.

- 1 Define flexible, clear SMART goals**  
Ask yourself, "What is the goal of this lesson?"
- 2 Consider learner variability**  
Anticipate challenges for students or other areas of need. Apply UDL guidelines to help plan for differentiation and determine what scaffolds are needed (see chart).
- 3 Determine appropriate assessments**  
Choose assessments that are flexible and assess individual student growth.
- 4 Select methods, materials and media**  
Determine which strategies and materials can address the different needs of students.
- 5 Teach and assess learning**  
Use flexible and formative assessment tools that connect to the learning goal.
- 6 Self-reflection**  
Review the observations and assessments. Did students meet the learning goal? What went well or needs to be changed for next time?





## Explicit Instruction - Sample Lesson Plan Form

Adapted from *Explicit Instruction: Effective and Efficient Teaching* by Anita L. Archer and Charles A. Hughes

<b>Objective(s):</b>	<b>Teacher/Date:</b>
	<b>Unit/Lesson:</b>

**Student Engagement:** *Check all that apply.*

**Oral Responses**

☐ Individual ☐ Partner ☐ Choral ☐ Team

**Written Responses**

☐ Response Slates ☐ Response Cards

**Active Responses**

☐ Touch or Point ☐ Act Out ☐ Gestures ☐ Hand Signals ☐ Facial Expressions ☐ **Independent Work**

Time	Procedure	Materials
	<b>Opening</b> (Gain attention.)	
	<b>Review</b> (Go over critical prerequisite skills.)	
	<b>Preview</b> (State the goal of the lesson.)	
	<b>Presentation of New Material ("I DO IT."):</b>	
	<b>Guided Practice with Corrective Feedback ("WE DO IT."):</b>	
	<b>Independent Practice with Corrective Feedback ("YOU DO IT."):</b>	
	<b>Closing</b> (Review critical content of lesson. Preview content of next lesson.)	
	<b>Assign Independent Work</b>	

<b>Teacher Notes:</b>	<b>Teacher Reflections:</b>



2015 ~ Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, Professional Learning and Sustainability

# RESPONSIVE PLANNING

## Structures & Strategies

Planning for instruction includes creating responsive and flexible groups where students are able to participate in literacy conversations that push their thinking.

### Whole Group

This grouping is used for instruction and to build community understanding. Whole group instruction provides teachers with a quick method (mini-lesson) of presenting information to all students.

### Small Group

Guided literacy allows teachers to differentiate and target instruction for small groups based on proficiency levels. These groups are fluid as proficiency changes based on ongoing, formative assessment. The small groups might be formed based on particular skills (such as decoding skills or fluency) or on levels.

### Independent

As students work independently on authentic practice, the teacher is having conversations with students about their literacy work and learning and/or conferencing with the students about their literacy understanding and providing explicit instruction to those that need it.

### Whole Group Lessons

- Presenting mini-lessons
- Read aloud children's literature/novels
- Practice and review
- Introducing the Reading or Writing Workshop aspects for the week

### Small Group Lessons

- Differentiating instruction
- Teaching with literacy tools
- Teaching concepts often found to be difficult for students year-after-year
- Assessing student learning informally
- Supporting and practicing skills and strategies like decoding, fluency, and comprehension
- Support learning by giving feedback

### Independent

- Apply skills from small group instruction and/or mini-lessons
- Literacy games to reinforce concepts
- Practice reading and writing fluency during the workshop model or literature circles

# INSTRUCTIONAL ROUTINES

Instructional routines are used to provide a sense of organization to the lesson so that students are aware of "what comes next." Instructional routines are important for all learners and are particularly useful for students with diverse needs.

## What is an Instructional Routine?

An instructional routine is a familiar structure with an open-ended task where less time is spent on teachers providing directions and more time is spent on the learning of literacy. A good routine provides all students opportunities to engage in literacy and gives teachers insight into student thinking and skills. Some routines are a bit more structured than others but all routines enable students to engage with the learning at their own developmental level and pace. Instructional routines should be intentionally planned in response to ongoing formative assessment.

"When students understand how lessons are proceeding, they can put all their thoughtfulness on content rather than on the task. Students and teachers both benefit."

*(Anita Archer)*

## Why use Instructional Routines?

The routines:

- ▶ Increase learning confidence.
- ▶ Allow students to focus on the content/skills they are learning and not on the way the lesson is being delivered.
- ▶ Build literacy understanding by exploring, reflecting, connecting, communicating, applying, and collaborating.
- ▶ Learn and strengthen literacy skills as part of a building on/scaffolding process using the same structure to every lesson of that time.
- ▶ Play with literacy ideas.
- ▶ Connect literacy to other areas of the curriculum.
- ▶ Connect curricular competencies with content to understand the big ideas.

# INSTRUCTIONAL ROUTINES

The following is a sample list of instructional routines for literacy learning.

Routine	Description
Think-Pair-Share	A cooperative learning routine where the teacher poses a question, students think about it first and then share their response with a partner.
Close Reading	The main intention of close reading is to engage students in the reading of complex texts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• repeated reading of a short text or extract</li> <li>• annotation of the short text or extract to reflect thinking</li> <li>• teacher's questioning to guide analysis and discussion</li> <li>• students' extended discussion and analysis</li> </ul>
The Writing Process	Draft, writing, revising, editing, etc.
Jigsaw	A cooperative learning strategy that puts students in groups to become the "expert" at a certain type of (usually nonfiction) text. After reading and discussing the information, students return to their original group where one "expert" from each part of the reading is there to share the information. This results in an entire piece of text being read and understood.
K-W-L or R.A.N. Strategy	A background jumping-off point that encourages students to express current learning, wonders, and new learning.
Think Aloud/Modelling Comprehension	A teacher shares a read aloud (of any type) and models the thinking process that goes through the teacher's mind during the reading process. This might include questions, or connections.
Read-Alouds	Read aloud routines model reading for students using a variety of tones, pace, volume, pauses, eye contact, to produce a fluent and enjoyable delivery.
Phonemic Awareness/Phonics Routine/ Grammar/Spelling	These routines might be something like Word Works Daily, word sorts, sound wall, literature circles, Greek and Latin roots.
Story Workshop	Story Workshop is a structure and approach that supports language and literacy development in the preschool and primary grades. Adults work alongside children as they explore prepared environments and experiences and share stories (see Story Workshop Section for more info).
Guided Reading	A small group reading lesson might include the following routine: word study, book introduction and vocabulary, student reading, and discussion about the reading.
Literature Circles	Literature circles are a small group of students that meet together to discuss a book and help each other. There are many possible formats; including all students read one book based on level or books are chosen based on theme or interests



# METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

Balanced **literacy** is the weaving of the different aspects of literacy to provide balanced exposure, instruction and practice of all elements of literacy. Balanced **instruction** involves utilizing a variety of groupings and methods to teach students.

Teachers should employ **whole group**, **small group** and **individual modes** of *instruction and application* of the literacy skills and strategies taught for maximum learning. This is important because different methods are more effective than others to teach a particular skill and/or strategy. Some lessons are for all, and some lessons need to be smaller to target specific learning needs. Not all students learn the same way, so being exposed to more than one type of instruction is necessary.

In addition, varying the methods of delivery *within* a particular lesson may be necessary in order to target specific student needs. This might include such things as using whiteboards to model, providing technology for assistance, or visuals.

## The Importance of Setting Up Literacy Structures at the Beginning of the Year

A literacy structure is the format of the routine you would like to teach and reinforce with your students to enable them to learn and become more independent in their learning.

Some common and recommended formats include:

- ▶ The Workshop Model
- ▶ Daily 5 (which has been modified by many teachers to be Daily 3)
- ▶ Literature Circles

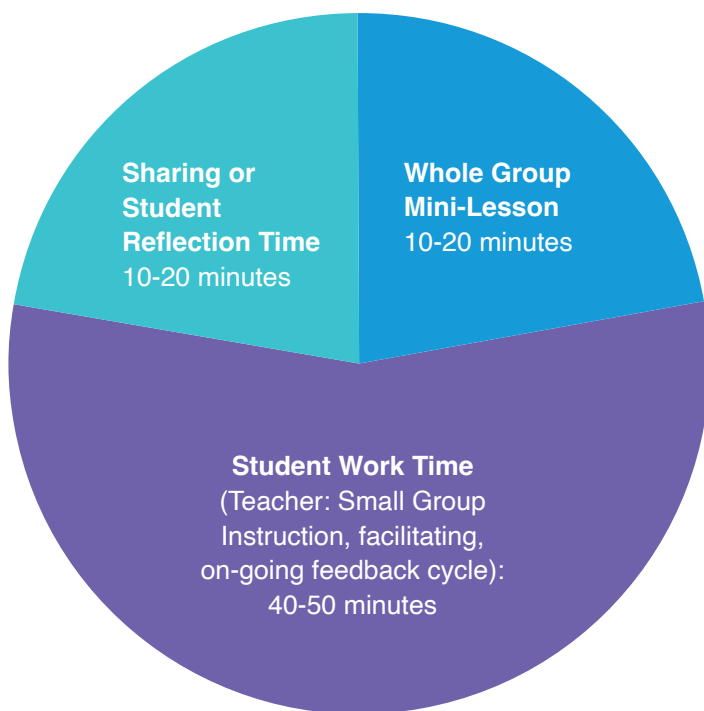
As the Workshop Model encompasses aspects from both the Daily 5 and the Literature Circles, this recommended strategy will enable teachers to use it at any grade level and incorporate both whole class and small group instruction. This option also gives students a lot of much needed work/practice time.

# THE WORKSHOP MODEL

The Workshop Model is a useful structure that enables whole class and small group work. This model is useful in literacy and numeracy. The key feature of this model is that the **students** are doing most of the work, not the teacher. Depending on the age of the students, mini-lessons are short (10-20 minutes) and target skills and strategies in the content area of the workshop (reading, writing, etc.).

There are different ways of designing the workshop. Students need lots of time to read and write. Designing a reading workshop and writing workshop provides time for explicit skill and strategy lessons and then loads of practice time where students are engaging in the reading or writing process. It is a naturally differentiated time in that they write what they can and can choose books based on their reading interest and skills.

Using literacy centres is another way of providing the work time, but it is more in the form of practicing the skills previously learned in small group instruction. Providing these targeted centre tasks can take more time and planning. The key is to make sure that students have the time to read and write and sharpen their skills as they work and collaborate.



## Literacy Workshop Model

- **Whole-Class Mini-Lesson.** The lesson is short and targeted. The concept is for all students to learn and is practiced as part of the lesson, often in pairs and/or with whiteboards.
- **Student Work Time.** This may be reading or writing time, depending on the focus of the workshop. This time is naturally differentiated and students often apply the mini-lesson concept to their work. This work time can also contain literacy centres where students work on writing, word study and reading. Here, students practice what they have already learned within previous targeted lessons. Tasks should be aligned to the curriculum and learner-focused.
- **Sharing or Student Reflection.** Students engage in sharing their writing, reading or reflections in conversations and/or to the class. This is a positive way to demonstrate and model listening skills. This step is very important and should not be skipped. If you run short on time, adjust the work time to allow for sharing/reflection.

# Literacy Understanding & Assessment

The goal of learning to read is reading comprehension. The goal of learning to write is communication and creativity. Resting on a strong foundation of oral language, literacy develops with the strong interplay between reading and writing.

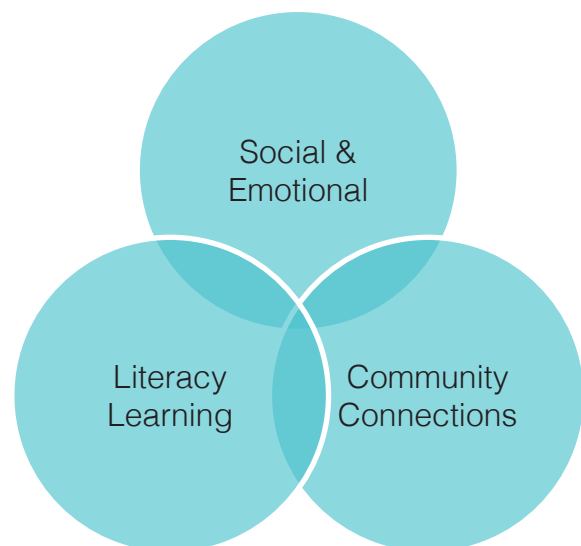
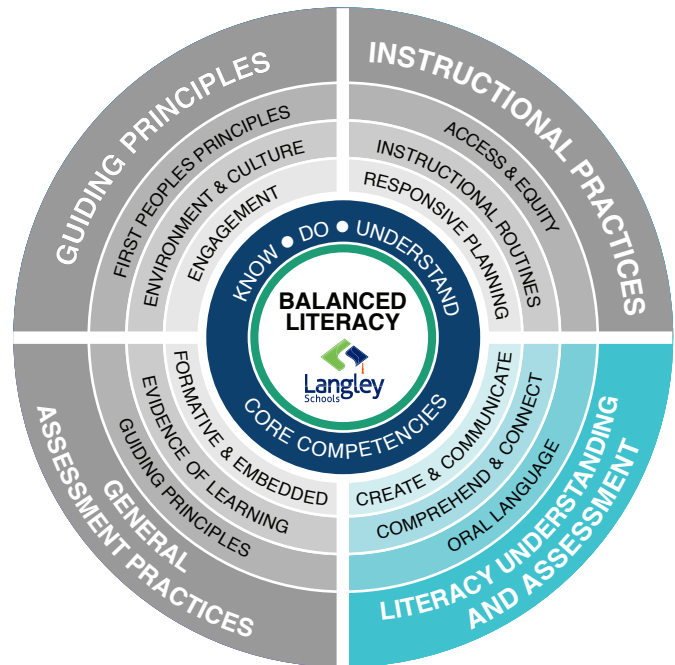
In order to achieve reading comprehension, students must develop strong decoding skills and strong language comprehension. Without both of these skills intact, reading comprehension cannot be achieved. Throughout this section on literacy understanding, teachers will find research and information on best practices for teaching literacy that involve multiple pathways. Using this information will help teachers to plan literacy lessons so that all learners can participate and learn.

Elementary literacy instruction begins the process of a child's formal literacy learning. While literacy skills in and of themselves are important and foundational for lifelong learning and work, so is setting up students to become good citizens. Literacy and social-emotional learning go hand-in-hand and interact together as the student learns and grows. Part of this process involves building strong connections between home and school and school and the community to give meaning and context to the learning.

The following section provides an overview of the important aspects of teaching literacy for all elementary and middle school students. As learning is on a continuum, you will find literacy instruction information that begins at the early stages and moves forward to more complex learning. Teachers should look at this guide to support their own literacy instruction knowledge so that they can apply and assess to make the best determinations for their students on where to begin.

This guide gives teachers the flexibility they need to reach and teach all learners based on need and not be bound by a grade level. Using this guide in conjunction with the BC Ministry of Education curriculum will enable teachers to create literacy goals with students.

*Every student has a unique literacy learning journey.*



# ORAL LANGUAGE

Oral language can be defined as the system through which we use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas, and feelings. Developing the skills and knowledge that go into listening and speaking is important for all students in the classroom. These skills contribute to effective communication and expression because these skills have a strong relationship to reading comprehension and writing.

There are many oral language components in the development of language. Some of these components are outlined and defined in the table below.

ORAL LANGUAGE COMPONENT	EXAMPLES
Phonology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speech sounds are combined based on rules and patterns.</li></ul>
Pragmatics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Audience awareness in writing and author awareness in reading.</li></ul>
Syntax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interpreting syntax is essential for reading comprehension.</li><li>• Producing grammatical syntax is essential for written expression.</li><li>• Punctuation marks are syntactic structure.</li></ul>
Morphology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compounds, prefixes, suffixes, roots, etc. are examples important for vocabulary, word recognition, and spelling.</li></ul>
Semantics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognizing, constructing, storing, and retrieving meaning represented by language.</li></ul>
Orthography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The spelling system represents phoneme-grapheme correspondences, syllable patterns, and meaningful parts of words (morphemes); it must be decoded for reading and encoded for writing.</li></ul>

While most speaking and listening skills are embedded into lessons, it is important that teachers take the time to highlight and teach these skills explicitly within these lessons as needed.

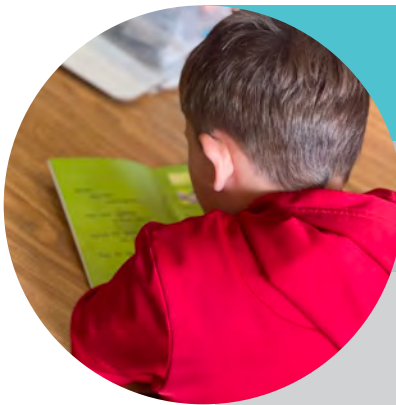
Encourage interaction as children come to understand written language. Children in the primary grades can keep developing oral abilities and skills by consulting with each other, raising questions, and providing information in varied situations. Every area of the curriculum is enhanced through language therefore classrooms full of active learners are hardly ever silent.

Understand that every child's language or dialect is worthy of respect as a valid system for communication. It reflects the identities, values, and experiences of the child's family and community. Please refer to the section on access and equity to see what this may look like in the classroom.

# ORAL LANGUAGE

## General Ideas for Oral Language in the Classroom:

- ▶ Provide a sharing time for students so that they can share something personally meaningful.
- ▶ Teach students how to recognize facial expressions and body communication by creating short skits that demonstrate emotions.
- ▶ Arrange for students to be the teacher for a lesson so that they can experience and practice effective communication and clear instructions.
- ▶ Allow students to share their writing and thinking regularly.
- ▶ Oral language is the traditional way of learning in most Indigenous cultures. Invite local Indigenous storytellers in and/or share stories from websites featuring Indigenous storytelling.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for debates.
- ▶ Use technology to support an assignment where students are presenting to an audience.



### ORAL LANGUAGE

- Speaking
- Listening

### READING COMPREHEND & CONNECT

- Decoding
- Language Comprehension

### WRITING CREATE & COMMUNICATE

- Stories
- Texts: oral, written, digital



Image Credit: Instructional Services

Two important aspects of oral language that require developing and support within the classroom setting are:

1. Learning how to have a conversation.
2. Learning how to be a part of a discussion on a topic (ex. In a classroom meeting).

Some students will come to school with good conversation skills, but many will need lessons that teach these skills and lots of practice. When students (and all people) engage in conversation, they may use comfortable language like sentence fragments or slang. This often transfers in the same way into writing and then the student may struggle with sentence construction and/or grammar.

In order to determine the lessons that students need, teachers will need to assess younger students' current abilities using an oral language screening tool and/or observations. Observation notes during class discussions with all students will give the teacher an idea of where the focus needs to be for oral language work in the classroom.



# CONVERSATIONAL LANGUAGE AND DISCUSSION STEMS

As oral language develops, conversational language becomes a part of everyday functional and purposeful use of language. It is important to not assume that all children come to school with conversational language fully developed. Many of these skills develop over time at home as children listen to their parents or significant adult model conversation. If children are not exposed to this, their conversational language skills will need more development and support at school.

## Why is Conversational Language Important?

Carrying on a conversation is a life skill. In the early years, children develop these skills to identify and express needs, feelings, and to develop important friendship skills. Not only is this important for the social and emotional development of the students, but these skills transfer to literacy. As students mature, conversational language continues to be an important communication skill; especially in this age of texting and emails. ELL students of all ages benefit from this learning.

Conversation skills are about being able to talk and listen well. This involves:

- ▶ Initiating conversation with a greeting like 'Hello' or a question
- ▶ Introducing yourself
- ▶ Knowing how to get attention in the right way – for example, by saying 'Excuse me'
- ▶ Using eye contact but only where appropriate (eye contact is uncomfortable or inappropriate for many people including those with different cultural norms, neurodiverse students, and even just introverted individuals).
- ▶ Taking turns talking and listening
- ▶ Staying on topic
- ▶ Speaking politely
- ▶ Knowing when to stop talking and listen
- ▶ Asking questions

**Discussion Stems** are parts of a sentence that prompt students to agree, disagree, clarify meaning etc. While many of these stems would be more applicable to grades 3+, being aware and modifying these stems for classroom meetings might work well depending on the class in front of you that year.

Examples of discussion stems may include:

- ▶ What do you mean?
- ▶ Will you explain that again?
- ▶ I think/I believe that.
- ▶ I don't agree with that because

*For more suggestions on oral language development, ideas, and assessments, consult with your school ELL teacher or speech-language professional.*

# LISTENING COMPREHENSION

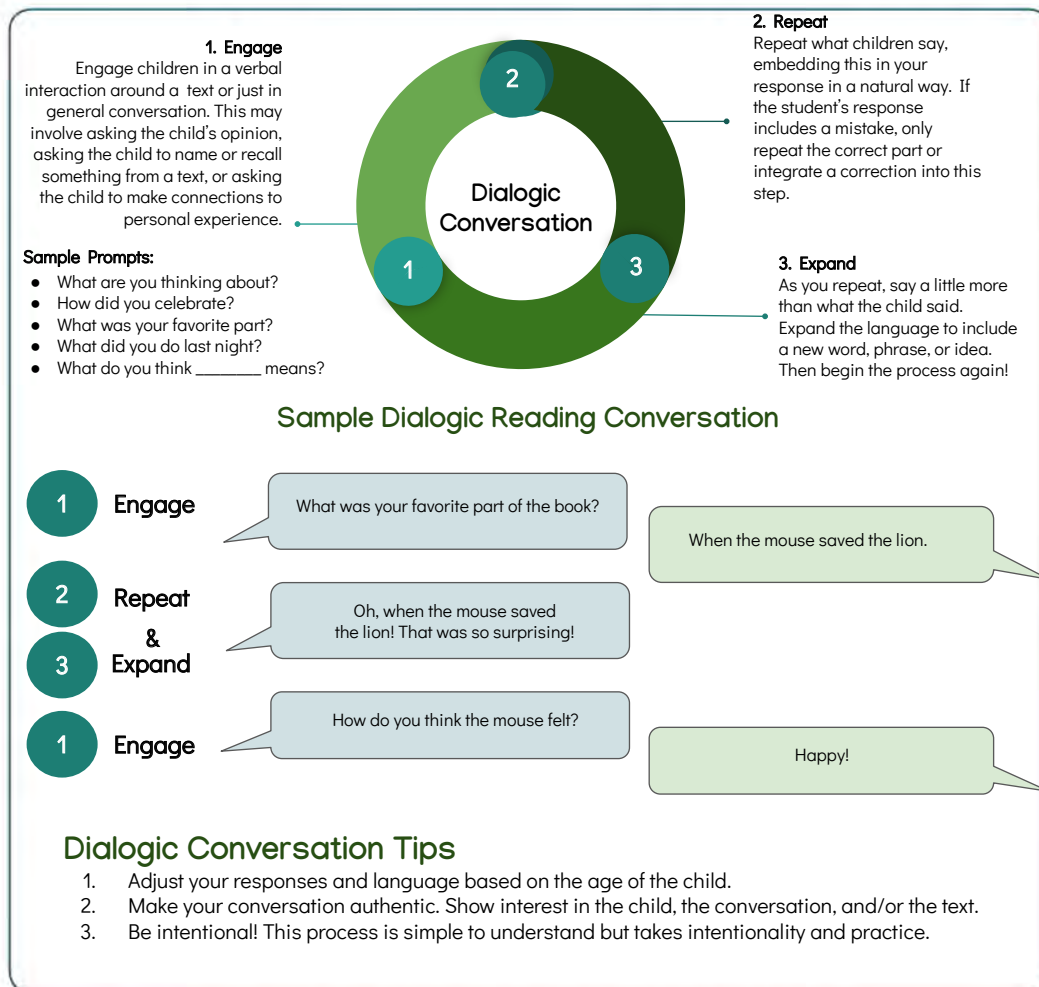
As Burkins and Yates tell us in their book *Shifting the Balance* (2021) it is a myth that the first step to reading comprehension starts with print.

"Reading comprehension actually involves translating the words on the page into spoken language and 'listening to them,' aloud or saying them in our heads. It means that in the early years, while children are learning to read—with texts that are necessarily well below their listening comprehension capacity—we must have an eye toward the future, focusing on stretching the limits of listening comprehension through oral language development and knowledge building."

Listening comprehension is a life skill and is equally as important in the older grades.

## Using Dialogic Conversations to Develop Oral Language

TheSixShifts.com



Adapted from Whitehurst, Grover, Francine L. Falco, Christopher J. Lonigan, Janet E. Fischel, Barbara D. DeBaryshe, Marta C. Valdez--Menchaca, and Marie B. Caulfield. 1988. "Accelerating language development through picture book reading." *Developmental Psychology* 24(4): 552–559. doi: 10.1037/0012-1649.24.4.552



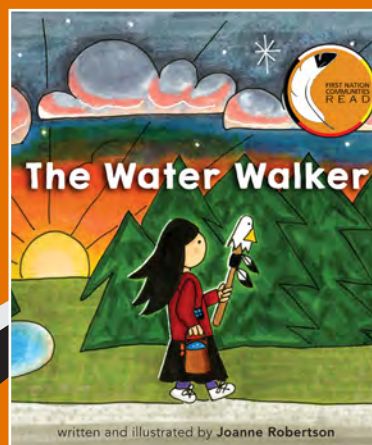
# INDIGENOUS STORY WORK

Indigenous oral narratives are an important component of the knowledge systems. Many stories can span across different curricular areas. It is through this story work, that the listener is involved in holistic meaning-making. It is important that teachers feel comfortable using Indigenous stories in their teaching practice. In order to understand how to do this, keep in mind the following things:

- ▶ Begin by using story books that Indigenous people have written.
- ▶ Tell the story without the book acknowledging who the storyteller is.
- ▶ Tell the story in context; work with the story in some way that bridges the story with the arts, math, science etc.
- ▶ Traditional stories are trickster stories. There isn't a neat and tidy beginning, middle and end to Indigenous stories. When the storytellers stops, that is where the story stops for now. Another portion of the story may pick up later as the beginning of another story. It may seem like a story has no end however, the listener/learner, must think about and figure out what happened or think about why something happened.
- ▶ Indigenous story work is a process of learning. The stories can be very open-ended and the use of metaphors is common.
- ▶ The student can go away, reflect, and use the story to guide them in their life and help them to make decisions.
- ▶ Knowing the framework of Indigenous stories is important for teachers so that they can understand the power and elegance within the simplicity of the story and pass that on to students as they engage with the learning (Dr. Jo-Ann Archibald).

## Basic Protocol for Using Indigenous Stories

1. Identify storyteller.
2. Identify Nation and culture from which the story originates.
3. Provide cultural context when necessary to support an understanding of the story.



**The Water Walker**  
Joanne Robertson



**The Barren Grounds**  
David A. Robertson

*For more information and ideas, connect with your school Aboriginal worker or the Aboriginal Department of the Langley School District.*

# STORY WORKSHOP



Images credit: Colleen Sturrock

Story workshop was first made popular at the Opal School in Portland, Oregon. Story workshop is a structure idea within the balanced literacy framework that enables all students to have access to literacy learning through play, oral storytelling, and the infusion of writing workshops and the arts. Student voice and choice are front and centre as the exploration and inquiry of the story workshop take shape in the classroom. The teacher's role is that of a researcher and involves observation and facilitation.

"Our greatest problem is that we underestimate what children can do"

*Susan Harris MacKay*

Story workshop aligns with the curriculum and emphasizes preparation and planning. The elements of the story workshop lesson are:

## Preparation

- ▶ intention
- ▶ set up and materials
- ▶ text
- ▶ documentation

## Provocation (Stories live everywhere!)

- ▶ a question that promotes thinking and discovery

## Invitation and Negotiation

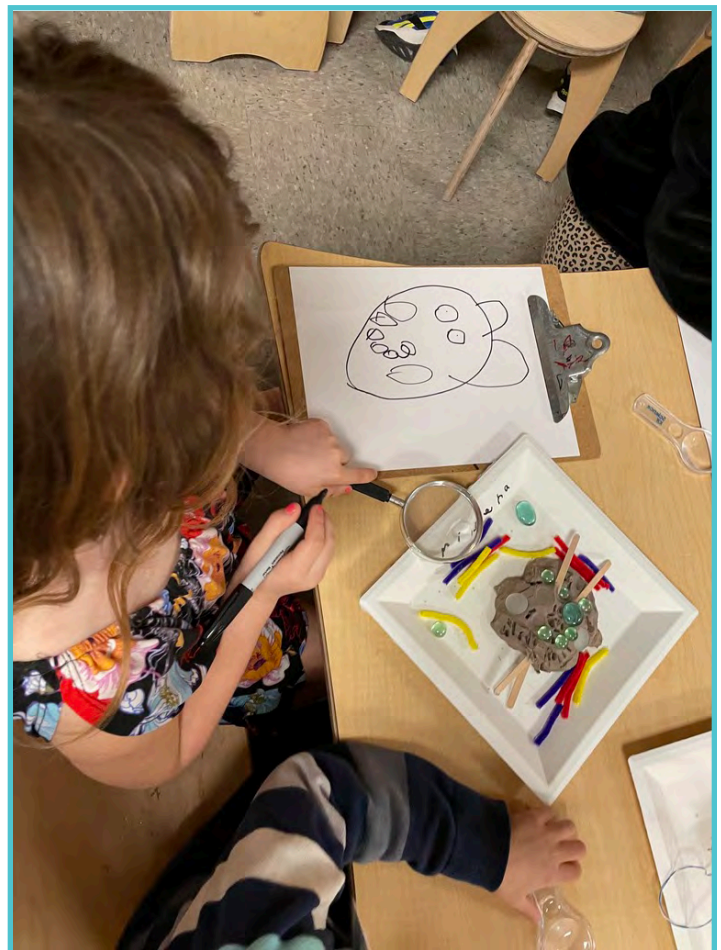
- ▶ An invitation for students to notice the materials available to them to tell their stories.

## Story Creation

- ▶ As students create, the teacher listens and documents. The teacher learns more and more about the students.

## Story Sharing

- ▶ A way for students to express their stories for an audience and for the teacher and other students to get to know each other more and more as the year progresses.



Images credit: Colleen Sturrock



# PLAY-BASED LEARNING AND USING LOOSE PARTS

Play and inquiry is an important part of learning. Primary students develop social and oral language skills, literacy and numeracy skills, and learn to solve problems during play. This sets the stage for complex interactions, and increases the need for more sophisticated critical thinking and communication skills in the intermediate grades. It is important to note that play and inquiry learning are not "substitutes" for learning. Students **learn** through play and inquiry. Explicit instruction in both literacy and numeracy is foundational and provides the skills students need as they move forward and participate in more sophisticated inquiry and project-based learning.



Image credit: Vanessa Steunenberg

## Loose Parts and Materials

The term loose parts was originally coined by Simon Nicholson, an architect, in 1971. Nicholson designed schools and playgrounds. Loose parts are natural or synthetic found, bought, or upcycled materials—acorns, hardware, stones, aluminum foil, fabric scraps, for example—that children can move, manipulate, control, and change within their play. Loose parts are alluring and beautiful. They capture children's curiosity, give free reign to their imagination, and encourage creativity (Redleaf Press). Loose parts can be utilized in intermediate grades as well, as students create, design and build. Literacy is used as students discuss, problem-solve, share, and reflect on the process.

## Careers

Many careers incorporate creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and design elements in their field. Teachers can include opportunities to encourage students to explore and express personal attributes, skills, interests, and strengths as part of the K-8 Careers curriculum. Please connect with your teacher-librarian for access to career-related book kits available at the District Learning Commons (DLC).



Image credit: Vanessa Steunenberg

Future Marine Biologists?

In any environment, both the degree of inventiveness and creativity and the possibility of discovery, are directly proportional to the number and kind of variables in it.  
- Simon Nicholson, Architect



Image credit: Vancouver Fire Department

Future Firefighters?



Image credit: Vanessa Steunenberg

Future Environmental Scientists?



# STORY WORKSHOP

Within story workshop you will find a balance of many different types of literacy learning: listening and speaking are prominent as they provide context and meaning to the reading and writing that will evolve out of children's story telling. Environments and experiences are prepared by the teacher for students to explore. According to Susan Harris MacKay (2021), together, adults and students wonder:

- ▶ Where do stories go?
- ▶ What stories do I want the world to hear?
- ▶ What stories do I need to tell?
- ▶ How do stories influence me and our community?
- ▶ How do my stories become part of my community, and how do the stories of others in my community become a part of me?

"Literacy is a process of merging who we are with what we show we can do."

*Karen Gallas (2003)*

These elements are similar to elements of any lesson and include all elements of balanced literacy in one way or another. The difference is the focus on deep connections, story telling, the arts and more interaction and inclusion of student ideas. The teacher is the researcher as they learn about each child and the stories they have to tell.

## Cherishing and Documenting Our Stories



Image credit: Instructional Services

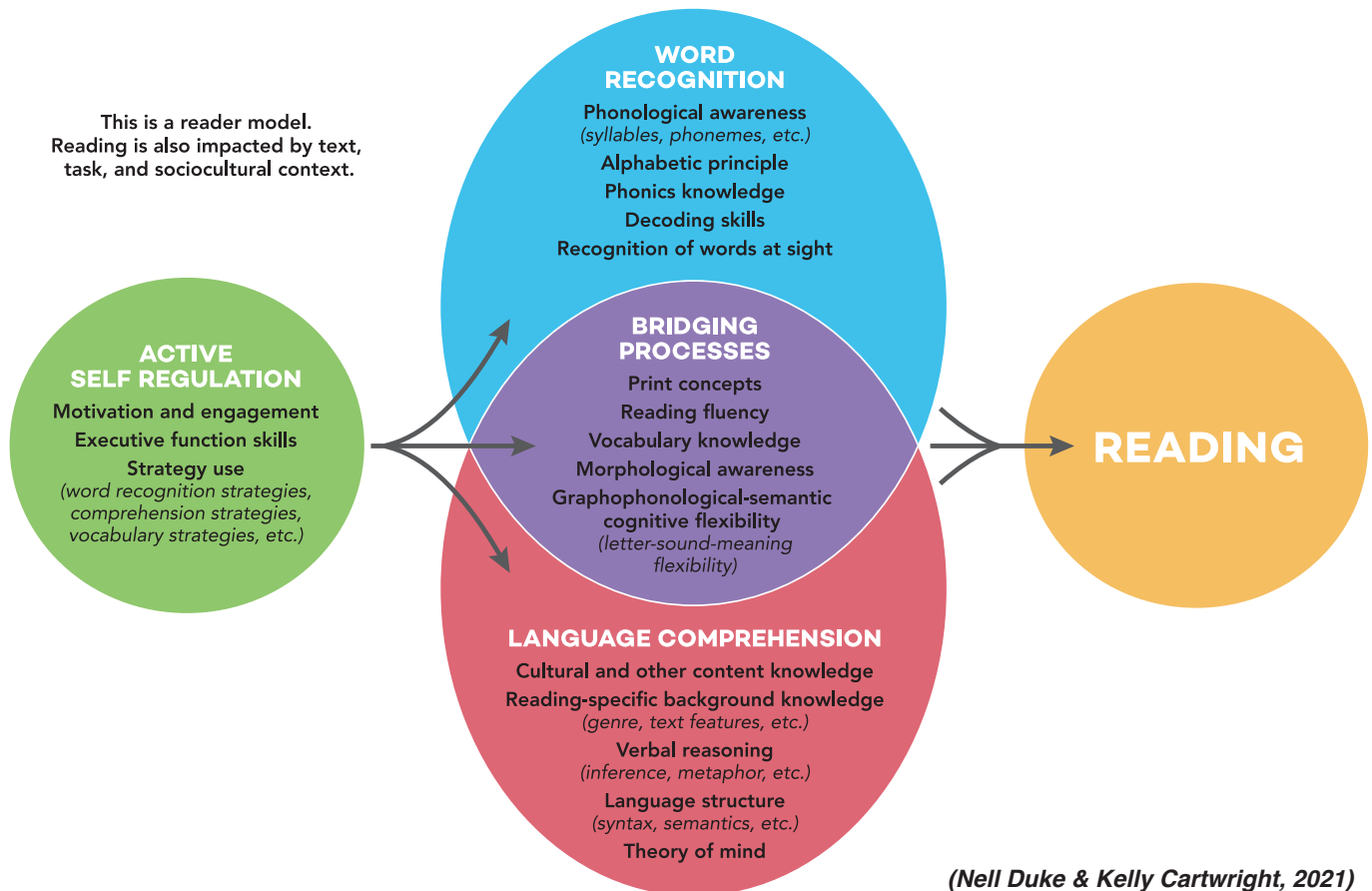


Image credit: Instructional Services

# READING INSTRUCTION

Learning to read is a very complex process that requires assessment knowledge to inform instruction, explicit instruction, and a lot of application and practice.

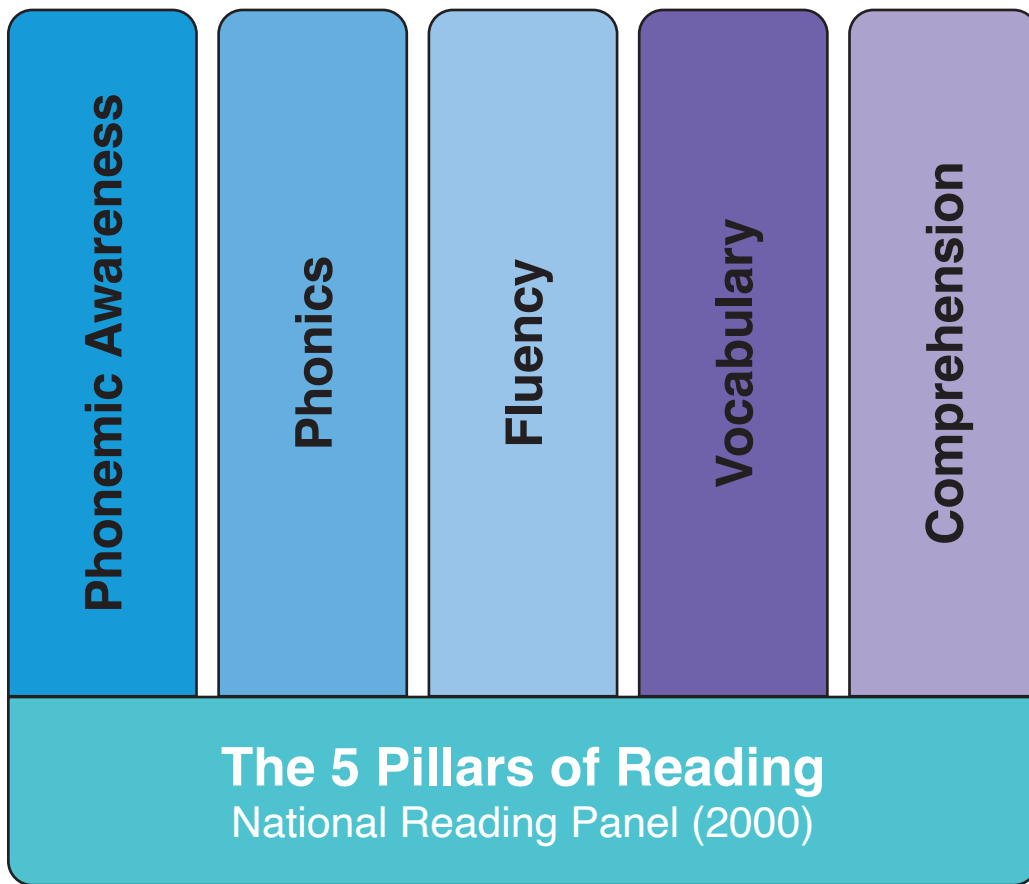
This diagram is a look at the processes at play when a student is learning to read. This is called **The Active View of Reading** and was developed from the original "Scarborough's Rope" to include the active pieces of learning to read as well as the bridging process that occurs once the student has learned to decode.



This shows the importance of the overlap and bridge of language comprehension as the child learns to decode. Teachers can use this diagram as a guide depending on where students are at in their elementary reading development regardless of age or grade. This image also shows how running records assess the Active View of Reading.

As you can see, motivation and engagement are a large piece of the learning-to-read process which has been discussed in an earlier section. In the reading instruction information to follow, you will find more information on the various aspects of learning to read (beginning stages and beyond) and how teachers can best utilize skill and strategy-based instruction in teaching reading.

## READING INSTRUCTION



In 2000, a team of reading researchers published "The 5 Pillars of Reading". It was designed to "assess the status of research-based knowledge, including the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read." (p.7) This very comprehensive report was based on years of research. The conclusions revealed five aspects of reading instruction that were necessary in order for students to successfully learn to read. Developing early reading skills through a focus on explicit instruction in all five areas is a key aspect of why using a balanced literacy framework in the classroom is effective and necessary.

# LEARNING TO READ

There are two aspects of learning to read: decoding and language comprehension. While both of these rest on the development of speaking and listening skills, they are also dependent on each other in order to achieve reading comprehension.

Decoding is the act of sounding out words as you read. Students must have phonological awareness and understand the alphabetic principle before they are able to learn to read. In other words, students need to understand the basics of syllables, phonemes etc. and know that letters represent corresponding spoken sounds. Once this is established, students can begin in the process of learning phonics.

Phonics/word study is the relationship between sounds and letters or groups of letters (syllables) in a language. Many high-frequency words that students may encounter in early reading can be sounded out, the other words must be recognized on sight. Sight words are words that a student recognizes right away. These can be high-frequency words or other words. The words may be different for each child. As a student's sight word knowledge increases, their reading fluency (the rate at which they read) improves steadily. Lots of practice reading and immediate application of the skills also helps decoding and fluency increase. It is important to note that decoding is a **finite** skill. Early readers will also need language comprehension skills in order to learn to read. These two components work harmoniously together.

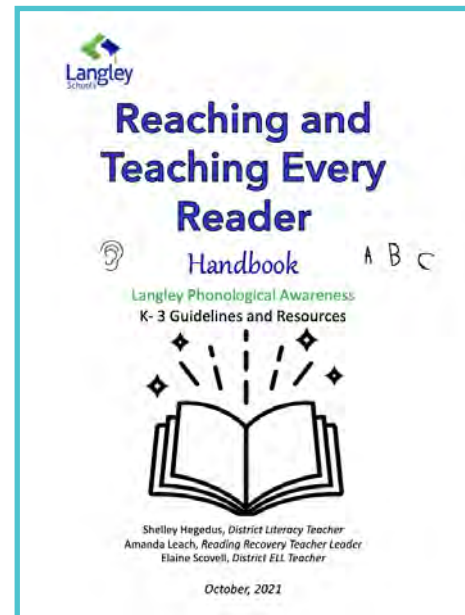
Language comprehension is **not finite** and is ever-changing based on context, life experiences etc. Language comprehension includes such things as background knowledge, vocabulary/cultural and content knowledge, verbal reasoning, language structure, and the understanding that others can have different opinions and views than you (Theory of Mind).

Once students have a good grasp on decoding (utilizing the language comprehension skills to achieve this), they have "launched" or "cracked the code."

## What if a student is struggling to read?

**Essential question:** Is it a decoding issue or a language comprehension issue? The answer will guide further instruction and interventions.

**Elaboration:** To take a closer look at phonemic awareness and phonics instruction and see a Langley scope and sequence for K-3, please consult the *Reaching and Teaching Every Reader Handbook* on the District website.



# FLUENCY

Fluency is the bridge from decoding to comprehension. When students are reading fluently, they are increasing their understanding of the text. Reading fluently for emerging and early reading begins with sustaining momentum, pointing at words and matching with their voice. It involves noticing a period and stopping at it. Once the reading has moved into a transitional stage the student begins to also notice more forms of punctuation and reflect them through intonation and pausing. Readers can stress words such as those in bold, adjust for sentence variety, and reread to notice the language or meaning. Fluent readers maintain their fluency by reading with pausing, phrasing, intonation, word stress, and rate. They read silently at a faster rate than orally and are able to maintain comprehension. Fluent readers begin to reflect more conventions (ex. quotation marks, dashes and ellipses) through voice and read the dialogue with expression. These readers can also use voice to reflect meaning and rhythm, can stress key content words, and adjust their reading to fit the genre of the text.



## PACE

conversational, not "fast."



## PHRASING

scoops appropriate words together; uses punctuation, stress and intonation.



## SMOOTHNESS

rhyme, not choppy.



## EXPRESSION & VOLUME

sounds like talking to a friend.



Read Poems



Choral reading (not round-robin reading)



Reader's Theatre (reading with expression, pace)



Model fluency with read-alouds



Practice reading aloud with no punctuation to demonstrate the importance of attending to punctuation in reading.



Use two fingers to frame the sentence being read, line tracking (ex. bookmarks) if needed.



"Scoop" a series of words to begin phrasing



Read a wide variety of texts: books, verse, text that contains bullets, dashes, etc.



Add increasingly complex words or phrases of emphasis to own writing and read aloud.

For more information on aspects of fluency, vocabulary and thinking within the text, please refer to the Literacy Continuum by Fountas and Pinnell.



# LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

Language comprehension refers to using oral language to perceive words and derive meaning (Hoover & Gough, 1990, via Reading Rockets). Thus, language comprehension becomes reading comprehension when word meaning is derived from print. This is why the foundation of oral language coupled with decoding and language comprehension skills leads to reading comprehension. Without one of these elements intact, reading comprehension cannot be achieved or will be very weak.

For our purposes here, we will focus mostly on background knowledge and vocabulary. However, some definitions of each aspect will be useful as you put together your reading instruction plans:

## Vocabulary-semantic knowledge

The words we need to know to understand what we read. Semantic knowledge refers to knowledge of facts, concepts, and knowledge that are stored in long-term memory and retrieved to help readers comprehend.

## Syntactic-grammatical knowledge

Syntax deals with the order of words, grammar refers to things such as plurals, verb tense, and parts of speech.

## Background Knowledge

There are a few different kinds of background knowledge such as general word knowledge, topic knowledge, and knowledge of the genre a student may be listening to or reading.

## Working Memory

A core process that enables learners to temporarily capture and maintain the specific words and grammatical constructions in any given sentence or group of sentences in order to comprehend that information (Gathercole & Galloway, 2008, cited in Kilpatrick, 2015).

## Attention

When a student is focused on what they are listening to or reading.

## Inferencing

Finding meaning from what is not explicitly stated in the text.

## Comprehension monitoring

One example is: noticing when meaning is lost when reading and going back to reread.

## Non-verbal visual-spatial skills

The ability to imagine or visualize shapes, position of object and their spatial relations to one another. Being able to identify words on a page visually is one example related to reading.



ORAL  
LANGUAGE

- Speaking
- Listening

READING  
COMPREHEND &  
CONNECT

- Decoding
- Language Comprehension

WRITING  
CREATE &  
COMMUNICATE

- Stories
- Texts: oral, written, digital

# LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

The big picture with language comprehension is that students need to be thinking, constructing meaning, understanding, and using metacognition - thinking about thinking (Harvey and Goudvis in Gear, 2015). These active processes are not just for reading, but rather for all content areas.

"If we want students to learn how to think when they read (and write), they must have something to think about."

*Susan Neuman*

While using comprehension strategies as part of instruction (making connections, asking questions, visualizing, drawing inferences, determining importance, analyzing and synthesizing, and monitoring comprehension) is important, it is part of the bigger goal of thinking, making meaning, understanding, and metacognition. This is why teaching isolated strategies may not be as effective for achieving comprehension.

Two aspects of language comprehension that support reading and comprehension are background knowledge and vocabulary.

## Background Knowledge

According to Miriam Trehearne (2016, 97), "Research indicates that the children most likely to have difficulty with literacy learning are those who begin school with less prior knowledge and skill in areas such as oral language and background knowledge, phonological awareness, alphabet letter knowledge, print awareness, and writing. Background knowledge is the key to comprehension." Much of the background knowledge can be developed by inquiry learning and inquiry learning through play.



Image credit: Instructional Services

# WHY IS BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE IMPORTANT?

It might be rather obvious to some that if students have background or prior knowledge on a topic it would make reading comprehension much easier. However, if we look even more closely:

1. Background knowledge enables readers to choose between multiple meanings of words.
2. Reading and listening requires readers to make inferences from text that rely on background knowledge.
3. Literacy language requires background knowledge.
4. Informational text requires background knowledge.

"Knowledge is not just the accumulating of facts; rather, children need to develop knowledge networks, comprised of clusters of concepts that are coherent, generative, and supportive of future learning in a domain."

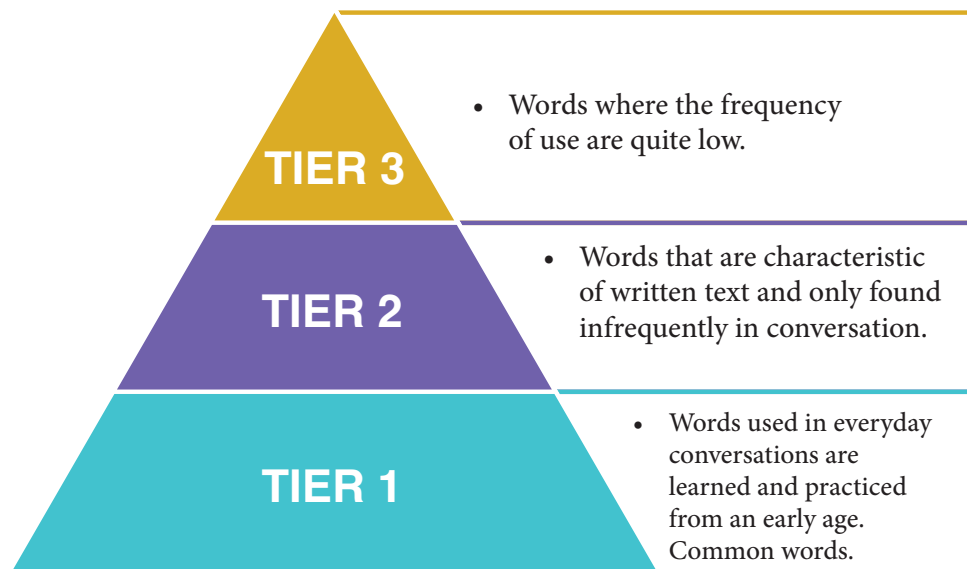
*Reading Rockets*

## Suggestions for Developing Background Knowledge

- ▶ Know, wonder, learn
- ▶ Teach words in categories
- ▶ Conversations
- ▶ Use analogies (compare something new to something we already know)
- ▶ Questions
- ▶ Venn Diagram (contrast and compare)
- ▶ Web
- ▶ Encourage topic-focused wide reading
- ▶ Fieldtrips and multimedia.

## 3 Tiers of Vocabulary

Building students' vocabulary is an important aspect of reading. As part of language comprehension, vocabulary development supports and develops students' background knowledge which helps to increase reading comprehension. Vocabulary must be taught because "most of the words children customarily encounter in oral language beyond their earliest years, both at home and in school, are words that they already know" (Beck et al., 2013). This is why Tier 2 words are particularly important in the context of classroom reading instruction. The diagram below shows the 3 tiers and defines the types of words found in each tier. Teachers should be spending most of their time teaching Tier 2 words.



# TEACHING VOCABULARY

Follow the "Big Six" routine: (Marzano, 2006)

1. **Explain** - Provide a student-friendly description, explanation, or example of the new term.
2. **Restate** - Ask students to restate the description, explanation, or example in their own words.
3. **Show** - Ask students to construct a picture, symbol, or graphic representation of the term.
4. **Discuss** - Engage students periodically in structured vocabulary discussion that help them add to their knowledge of the terms in their vocabulary notebooks.
5. **Refine and Reflect** - Periodically ask students to return to their notebooks to discuss and refine entries.
6. **Apply in Learning Games** - Involve students periodically in games that allow them to play with terms.

"Direct instruction in vocabulary is a critical aspect of literacy development. Synthesizing research and theory in direct vocabulary instruction into an innovative six step instructional process enables classroom teachers to reach and reinforce selected vocabulary terms with success."

*Robert J. Marzano*

## Practical Vocabulary Teaching Ideas

- ▶ Very young students learn best by using movement activities to reinforce their understanding of a word.
- ▶ Sing songs.
- ▶ Use a word-oriented board or online games such as Scrabble, Pictionary, Wordle, Scattagories, Bananagrams.
- ▶ Introduce lessons on Greek and Latin roots (see the section on spelling for more information).
- ▶ Use graphic organizers such as the Frayer Model to have students dig deep into one word.
- ▶ Use word association.
- ▶ Pull words from a shared reading or interactive reading mentor text to ensure students can either make connections and/or understand what they mean (or both) before you read.

*Be sure to check out the [Balanced Literacy Guide Elaborations and On-Demand Learning](https://www.balancedliteracy.org/) ([thinklangle.com/on-demand](https://www.thinklangle.com/on-demand)) for more ideas on teaching vocabulary.*

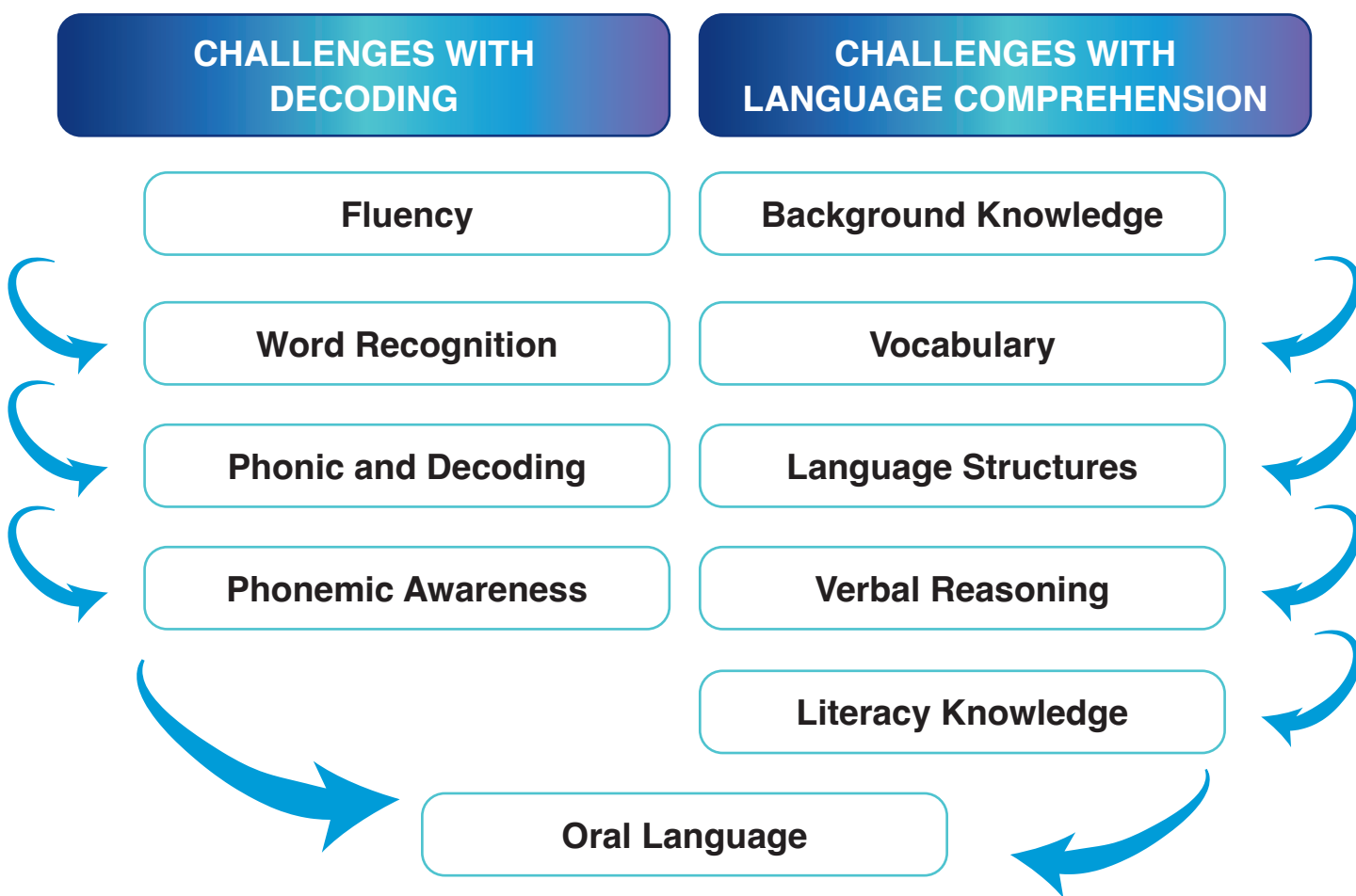


## READING SKILL CHALLENGES

Not every child learns to read in the exact same way. Most students will be successful by systematically learning the decoding and language comprehension skills they need to launch into reading. However, teachers will encounter students that still struggle despite regular classroom and small group instruction. Teachers will need to look a little deeper into what difficulties the child is experiencing. This can be done through observations, running records or phonemic awareness and phonics screeners (see *Reaching and Teaching Every Reader*).

The chart below outlines the progression of skills in learning to read in broad topics. Once a teacher has identified the learning gap/s, intensive small group or 1-1 (Tier 2 in multi-tiered interventions) lessons can begin. This may mean two weeks of daily targeted instruction in which the other students work on other literacy tasks. If a child is struggling with a skill, go back to the one below (foundational skill).

If the child is still struggling after the intervention, please consult with the school resource team.



(Source Unknown)

# PHASES OF READING AQUISITION

(from *Breakthrough* [2006]. Fullan, M., Hill, P., & Crevola, C.. Corwin Press. p. 60)

## 1. Pre-Emergent

During this stage, students are not yet reading published texts, they can often read their own name and maybe one or two other sight words. Students in this stage have limited oral language knowledge and limited knowledge of how print works. This is often referred to as the role-play stage of development.

## 2. Early Emergent

These students are beginning to apply their knowledge about how print works. They are beginning to apply some early conventions and concepts about print as they read simple texts. They have a small bank of letter knowledge and high-frequency sight words. They can read some known texts relying heavily on memory and picture cues. Their ability to read fluently is limited as they rely heavily on one-to-one matching and finger-pointing.

## 3. Emergent

During this stage, students can reconstruct familiar texts and can respond to and discuss texts. They are more consistent in matching the written word to the spoken word. Their letter/sound knowledge is developed to the point at which they are beginning to problem-solve unknown words and experiment when reading simple texts. Emergent students have a growing bank of high-frequency sight words.

## 4. Beginning

Beginning readers understand that a text represents a consistent way of telling a story or relating information. They have begun to use a variety of strategies to decode and comprehend texts and are able to adapt their reading to suit different text types. Their letter/sound knowledge is now consolidated. Reading fluency is a major focus in this stage.

## 5. Transitional

During this stage, students are beginning to integrate all information sources to make meaning from text. They have the ability to make connections between what they already know and what is new. They can relate to the text and make meaningful predictions and self-correct independently. They read in a phrased and fluent manner using intonation and language structures to support the construction of the message.

## 6. Established

Established readers have an understanding of the characters, events, situations, and relationships in narrative texts. They make personal connections with the characters, evaluate situations, and make judgments based on their experiences. Students in this stage read a variety of nonfiction material for research purposes and for pleasure. Established readers can and need to read for longer stretches of time; they can read silently and adjust their style of reading to reflect the text and the purpose. They can decode unknown words rapidly and fluently.

# READING COMPREHENSION

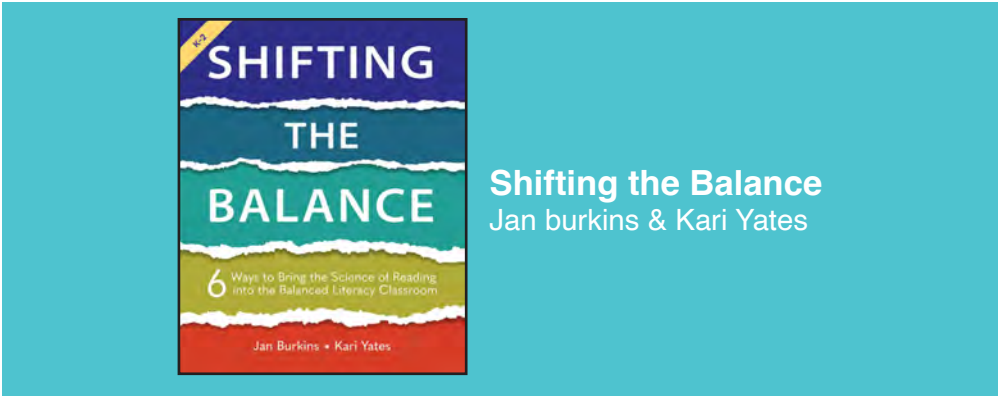
The ultimate goal in reading is to make meaning. Reading comprehension is not taught as an isolated "unit" but in combination with other aspects of teaching reading and literacy, including phonemic awareness and phonics.

Understanding spoken language (listening comprehension) involves three processing systems. You can see how these same language processes influence reading development by looking at the following chart which illustrates the language processing systems in action:

"Reading comprehension actually begins long before children being able to decode. It begins as they learn to understand, and use spoken language."  
*(Hogan, Adolf, and Alonzo, 2014 in Burkins & Yates, Shifting the Balance)*

THE SYSTEM AND WHAT IT DOES	HOW IT PROCESSES EACH WORD
Phonological Processing Systems	Hears and recognizes a word in a sentence and activates the meaning processing system.
Meaning Processing System	Reviews stored vocabulary for possible meanings for the word heard in the sentence.
Context Processing System	Considers the surrounding context, background knowledge, and language structure to choose the appropriate meaning.

(Adapted from: Burkins & Yates Shifting the Balance, 2021)



Shifting the Balance  
Jan burkins & Kari Yates

# BEGINNING READERS

A student that is a beginning reader is learning how to read. This may be students in the early primary grades or older students that have not mastered reading yet. All students need to be taught to read with explicit phonics lessons. The number of phonetic skills needed decreases on the continuum as the student progresses and the complexity of vocabulary and comprehension skills increase. As always, some students will require more in-depth or extended lessons than other students. Through ongoing assessment, the teacher is able to determine the next steps in instruction and the particular skills a student or a group of students needs to move forward in learning how to read.

While most beginning readers begin learning to read in grade 1, there are many students that have either learned to read a bit earlier or have struggled to grasp the process and will be requiring intervention in later grades. This is why it is important to ensure that assessments are given that will identify what specific skills and strategies are needed to "fill the gaps."

Learning to read does not just take place during small group instruction. Learning to read requires interest and engagement, self-regulation, phonemic awareness, phonics skills, fluency, background knowledge, and vocabulary. If a child is not interested or has trouble regulating long enough to acquire some of these skills, no amount of explicit instruction will help the student make strong, steady strides in learning to read. This is where the balance comes in balanced literacy.

The following section will highlight how read-aloud/interactive read-aloud, shared reading, and independent reading set the stage for learning to read and provide much-needed background knowledge and vocabulary.

It is important to connect with the resource teacher at the school so that co-planning can take place for literacy blocks within the school day where possible. The resource teacher can help teachers to plan Tier 2 interventions and/or facilitate the learning of the rest of the class while the teacher is engaged in small group instruction/interventions.

## Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension can be supported by helping students develop strategies that will help them increase their background knowledge and make connections to their life. This will help them to understand what they are reading.

Strategies that build deeper understanding and critical thinking:

- ▶ use metacognition (talking and thinking about reading) to reflect, question, goal-set, evaluate.
- ▶ monitor for understanding
- ▶ back up and reread
- ▶ retell the story
- ▶ use prior knowledge to connect with the text
- ▶ visualize (make a picture or mental image)
- ▶ ask questions throughout reading process
- ▶ predict what will happen; use text to confirm
- ▶ infer and support with evidence from the text
- ▶ summarize text (sequence main events), draw conclusions
- ▶ determine importance (main idea & supporting details)
- ▶ recognize & explain cause and effect relationships
- ▶ compare and contrast within and between text
- ▶ use text features
- ▶ determine author's purpose (support with text)
- ▶ identify characteristics of text (narrative, expository, persuasive)
- ▶ understand that there are different genres with specific characteristics
- ▶ recognize story elements: beginning, middle, end, characters, details, theme, etc.



# 50 INSTRUCTIONAL ROUTINES TO DEVELOP CONTENT LITERACY (THIRD EDITION)

Adjunct Displays	Read-Alouds
Annotation	Reader's Theatre
Anticipation Guides	Read-Write-Pair-Share
Close Reading	Reciprocal Teaching
Collaborative Conversations	ReQuest
Conversation Roundtable	Response Writing
Debate	Shades of Meaning
Directed Reading-Thinking Activity	Shared Reading
Exit Slips	Socratic Seminar
Fishbowl Discussions	Split-Page Notetaking
Found Poems	Student Booktalks
Generative Reading	Student questions for Purpose of Learning
Guest Speaker	Take 6
Independent Reading	Text-Dependent Questions
Interest Surveys, Questionnaires, and Interviews	Text Impressions
Jigsaw	Text Structure
KWL	Think-Alouds
Language Experience Approach	Tossed Terms
Mnemonics	Vocabulary Cards
Modeling Comprehension	Vocabulary Self-Awareness
Opinionaire	Word Grids/Semantic Feature Analysis
Popcorn Review	Word Scavenger Hunts
Question-Answer Relationship	Word Sorts
Question the Author	Words Walls
RAFT Writing	Writing Frames and Templates

*(Douglas Fisher, William G. Bronzo, Nancy Frey, Gay Ivey)*

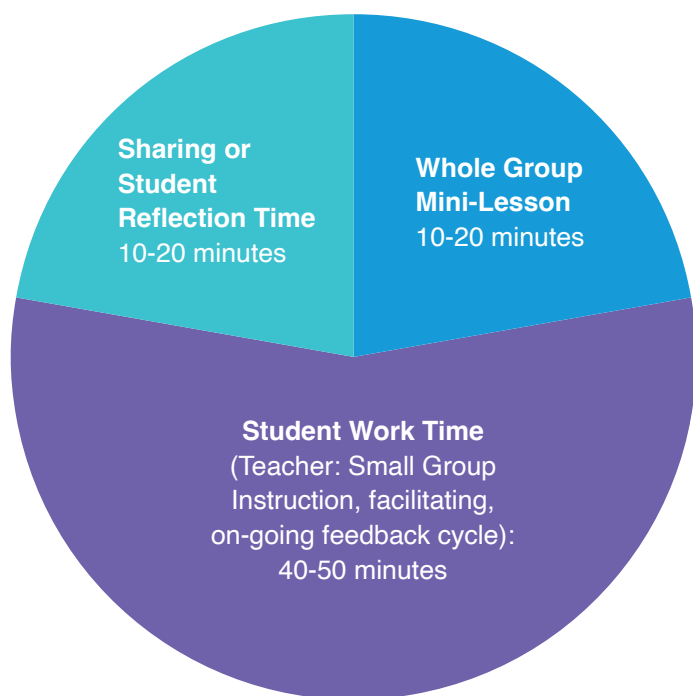
# READING WORKSHOP

In the next section, we will take a closer look at classroom reading instruction. This includes pre-readers and ways that teachers can help support the emerging reader in their classroom.

The teacher can decide which **format** they would like to use:

1. Reading mini-lesson, small group guided reading instruction and literacy centres that support reading (one of which needs to be a way to practice reading what the students have just learned).
2. Reading mini-lesson, small group guided reading instruction and rest of the class is reading (practicing) in pairs, independently and/or literature circles/book clubs

In a reading workshop, students receive a short, focused literacy lesson that is targeted at the whole class. All students will be exposed to this lesson, and some may need reinforcement another time in small group instruction.



## Mini-lesson Structure

**Connection:** connect to a related topic/skills that students have already mastered and/or to applying it in real life.

**Teaching:** break down a concept into small pieces and only teach one small part. Show an example.

**Active Engagement:** short engagement into the lesson concept. This might be a turn and talk, class discussion, or practice on a whiteboard/vertical surface.

**Link:** tie the content of the lesson to the student's work. Ex. "Make sure you always stop and pause at the period." Or, "See if you can identify the author of this text by identifying the *voice*." Set students off to their work spaces.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Reading Workshop Planning Page

## Whole Class Reading Focus

Unit Focus

Reading Behaviours or Other Reading Goals:  
From curriculum and/or Literacy Continuum

### Whole-Class Mini-Lesson:

Connection:

Teaching:

Active Engagement:

Link:

### Guided Reading/Small Group Instruction

Group	Focus	Book

### Whole-Class Reading Time

This time is for those students not involved in small group instruction. Students can be reading independently, taking part in a literature circle or book club, or reading on a digital device (ie. an iPad).

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Reading Workshop Planning Page

## Literacy Center Reading Focus

Unit Focus

Reading Behaviours or Other Reading Goals:  
From curriculum and/or Literacy Continuum

### Whole-Class Mini-Lesson:

Connection:

Teaching:

Active Engagement:

Link:

### Guided Reading/Small Group Instruction

Group	Focus	Book
Literacy Centre 1	Literacy Centre 2	Literacy Centre 3

# READING INSTRUCTION

In the following section, we will look at classroom reading instruction. This includes pre-readers and ways that teachers can help support the emerging reader, and beyond.

Teaching reading is multifaceted. Students need to be able to decode. They need to become fluent readers who understand what they are reading. This involves targeted small group instruction and various learning experiences involving reading and literacy so that students see literacy not just as learning to read. Students need to be motivated to learn and to build their confidence as a reader. Ultimately, we want students to choose to read for pleasure.

Reading instruction involves the following core components:

- ▶ Read Aloud (reading TO)
- ▶ Shared Reading (reading WITH)
- ▶ Guided Reading/Small Group instruction (reading WITH)
- ▶ Independent Reading (reading BY)

READ ALOUD Whole Class	SHARED READING/ MODELLED READING Whole Class Often used as a mini-lesson in the reading or writing workshop	GUIDED READING Small-Group Instruction
<p><b>Purpose:</b> to foster interest and motivation, model fluent reading, engage students in discussing a text and demonstrate comprehension strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the book.</li> <li>• Read the book aloud while thinking aloud as a reader.</li> <li>• Model comprehension strategies.</li> <li>• Ask questions without interrupting the "flow" of the story too much.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> to teach skills and strategies to all, increase reading fluency as well as support developing readers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the text: engage students with a few words.</li> <li>• Read the text aloud <b>to</b> the students to model reading behaviours.</li> <li>• Have a conversation about the meaning of the text and ask questions.</li> <li>• Read the text again together (under a document camera or using a big book) and focus on a teaching point or curriculum standard.</li> <li>• Reread the book on subsequent days to review teaching points or introduce new ones.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> to target specific learning needs based on on-going assessments and evidence of learning, provide appropriate scaffolding, and gradually reduce support to promote independence.</p> <p><i>Small group instruction is designed to align with needs. Pre-readers and early readers of all ages may be focused on phonological and phonemic awareness, concepts of print, the alphabetic principle and not necessarily with a book. The instruction may or may not be in the form of a group but less formal such as part of playful literacy in the case of kindergarten/early grade 1.</i></p> <p>Set purpose for the group based on the skills and strategies needed. (ex. Which phonics skills you will focus on as students launch? Sometimes the purpose is fluency or comprehension depending on needs); especially with transitional readers of all ages.</p> <p>*Refer to the section on guided reading for more details.</p>

(Adapted from: Jan Richardson and Fountas and Pinnell)



# WHAT MAKES A GOOD READ-ALOUD?

The read-aloud is a powerful way to bring the joy of reading to every student in the classroom. As the teacher reads a text or book aloud to the class, students are viewing and listening, which are two very important aspects of literacy. Reading aloud may also support visual-spatial development. This teaching time helps to develop listening comprehension and serves to bring the joy of stories to students. Here you can highlight various authors, inspire and entertain listeners and read books that introduce genres that students may not have chosen themselves. This can also be a time to share oral stories where students can learn, connect, and visualize as they listen.

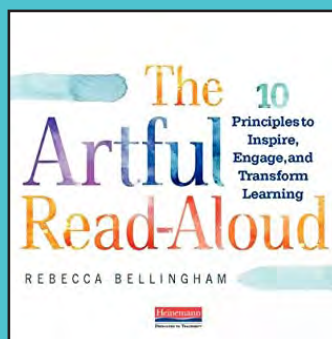
- ▶ Provides an adult model of fluent reading (voice, tone, volume, inflection, pace, gesture)
- ▶ Promotes joy in reading
- ▶ Develops a sense of story/text
- ▶ Develops vocabulary
- ▶ Builds a community of readers
- ▶ Develops active listening
- ▶ Teaches the reading process in a meaningful context
- ▶ Motivates students to read
- ▶ Highlights traditional Indigenous stories



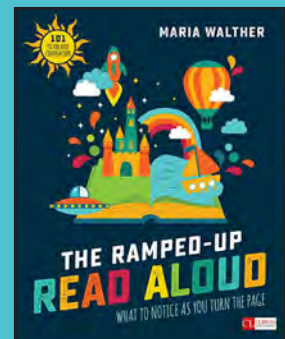
(Image Credit: Tristan Raphael)



**Rebellious Read Alouds**  
Vera Ahluya



**The Artful Read-Aloud**  
Rebecca Bellingham

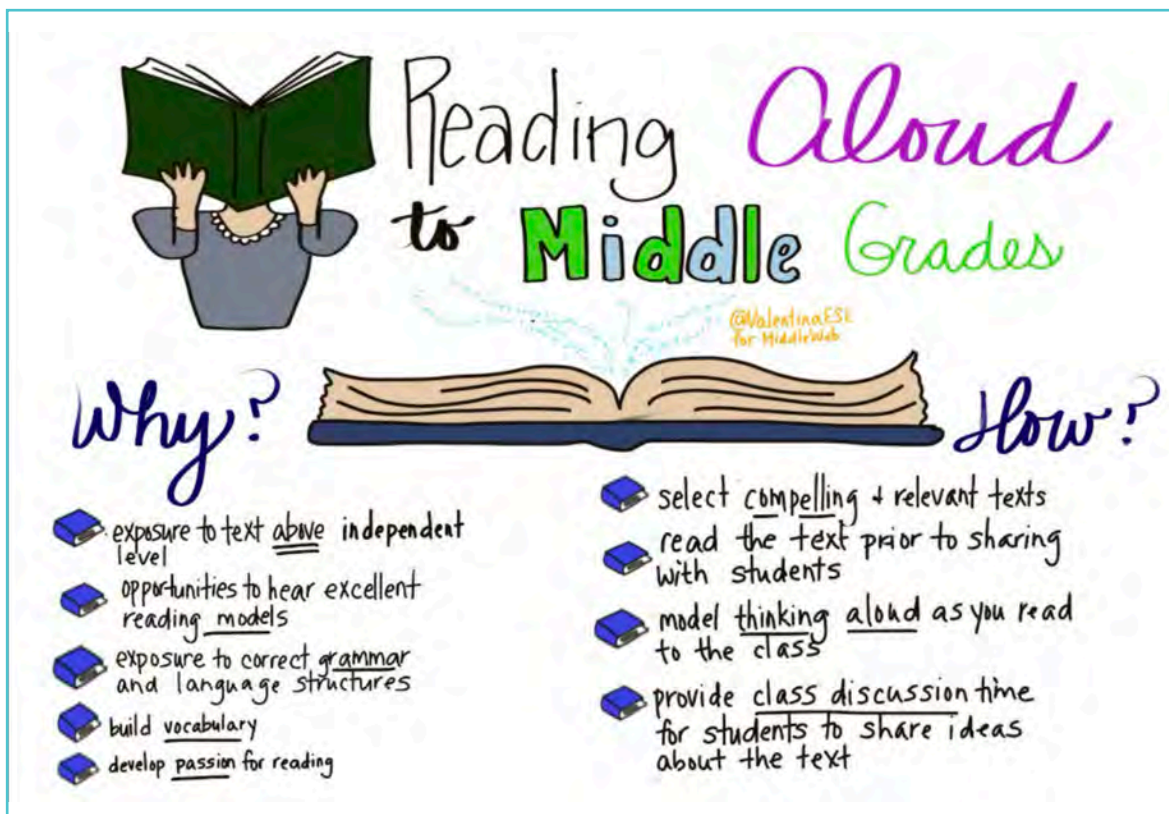


**The Ramped-Up Read Aloud**  
Maria Walther

# WHAT MAKES A GOOD READ-ALOUD?

## SUGGESTED TIPS AND STRATEGIES

- ☐ Choose a favourite picture book and launch a discussion on author's purpose.
- ☐ Focus on the illustrations, do they help give a deeper understanding of the story?
- ☐ Read various different types of genres in different voices.
- ☐ Make read alouds part of the daily routine.
- ☐ Include authors of other nationalities and backgrounds.
- ☐ Pick a book with a big idea or theme in mind. How could this tie into Indigenous learning and understanding?
- ☐ Read various types of print (newspapers, articles, recipes...)
- ☐ Invite students to pick the read aloud books
- ☐ Model voice, expression and fluency vs monotone (robot reading).
- ☐ Read aloud to change the tone of the room, settle students down, or build enthusiasm and anticipation.
- ☐ Use read alouds to explore distinctions between fiction and non-fiction.
- ☐ Introduce preliminary vocabulary.
- ☐ Read several titles from the same author and examine writing style.



# SHARED READING

Shared reading is a time when the text of the lesson (big books, poems, books, infographics etc.) is shared with students so that the text is visible and accessible to all students. A variety of different texts are used to expose and teach students about different genres, different modes such as digital texts, as well as visual texts. The purpose of the shared reading experience is for the teacher to:

- ▶ help students apply strategies to authentic reading experiences
- ▶ invite students to join the teacher in reading (if appropriate to the age and text)
- ▶ introduce students to a variety of texts and the different ways a reader approaches them
- ▶ model thought processes while demonstrating a skill or strategy

*(Saskatchewan Reads)*

All shared reading texts should be challenging to the students (instructional) as they have a teacher there to support them. Students in all grades participate and interact with the text in book talks.

BEGINNING/EARLY READERS	TRANSITIONAL/ FLUENT READERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big books</li> <li>• Poems in pocket charts (interactive or written on chart paper)</li> <li>• Specific academic focus such as identifying words that start with a /g/ sound, high-frequency words, compound words, etc.</li> <li>• Repeated reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deepening comprehension focus</li> <li>• Conceptual vocabulary (knowing the meaning and not just the words)</li> <li>• A wide variety of different kinds of texts (infographics, blogposts)</li> <li>• Teacher models higher-level cognitive thinking (critical thinking, problem solving, etc.)</li> </ul>



*(Image Credit: Read to be Ready on Youtube)*

## SUGGESTED TIPS AND STRATEGIES

- ❑ Explore rhymes, changes and songs together.
- ❑ Choral reading.
- ❑ Read morning messages together or classroom news.
- ❑ Read with all eyes on text (ie. big book, document camera, pocket chart).
- ❑ Invite students to "turn and talk" to a partner about what they have read.
- ❑ Focus on the print, and any text features used (non-fiction).
- ❑ Include a Socials or Science book and find important words to help determine meaning or build vocabulary.
- ❑ Include Indigenous content.
- ❑ Practice using different voices for characters.
- ❑ Cover up part of a text to focus on vocabulary or specific aspects of print.
- ❑ Have students extend the story elements through drama or other creative means such as Reader's Theatre. Connect to Indigenous dance, story and mask.
- ❑ Introduce socials/science materials by drawing attention to text features.
- ❑ Use shared reading to model making predictions and connections.
- ❑ Use shared reading to explore different authors.
- ❑ Implement BEFORE (ie. predict, prior knowledge) DURING (ie. connect), and AFTER (retell, summarize) reading strategies.
- ❑ Revisit texts for different purposes.
- ❑ Analyze, compare, and contrast different texts.

### Teachers as Creative Artists

"The read aloud is a classroom art, a creative process that centres children's literature as powerful works of art in their own right, with the potential to instruct, inspire, disrupt, heal, and empower."

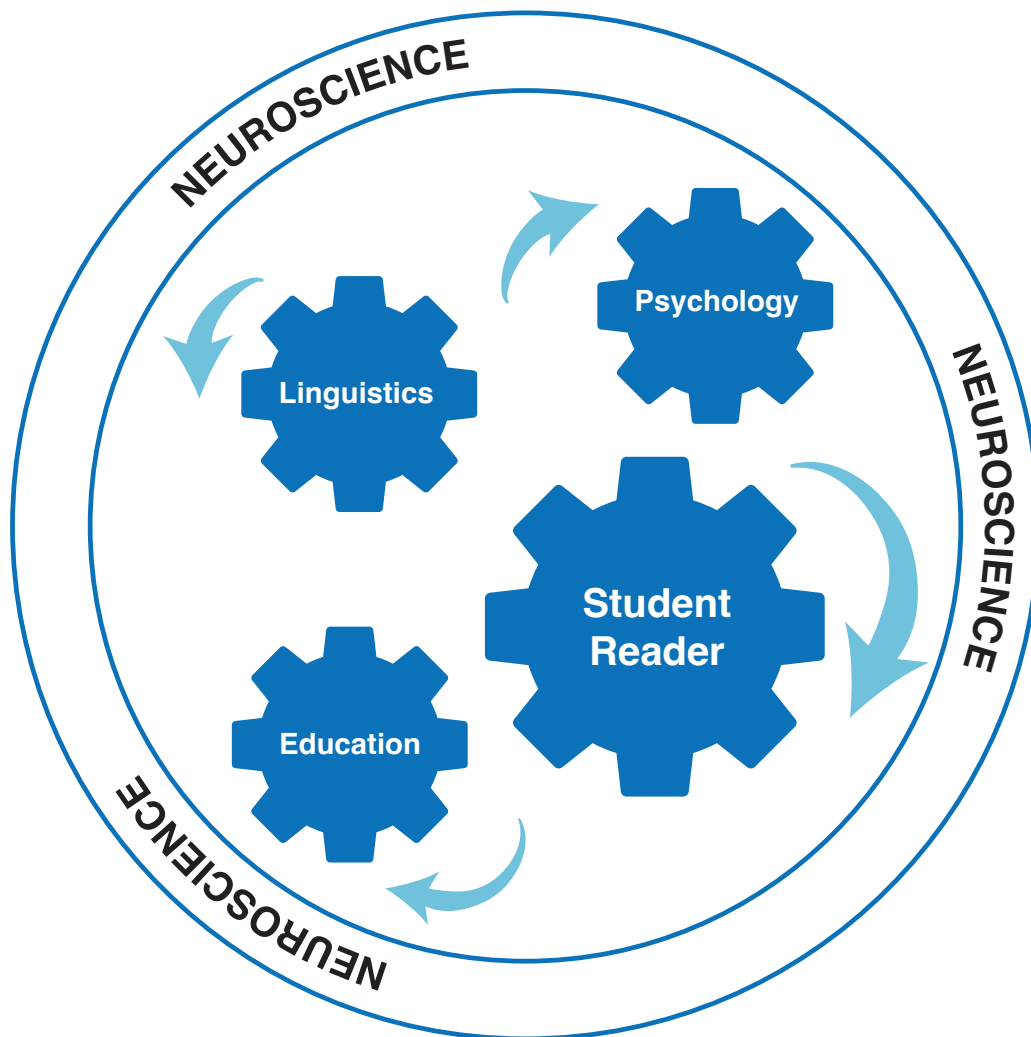
*Rebecca Bellingham*



# USING THE SCIENCE OF READING WITHIN THE BALANCED LITERACY FRAMEWORK

The science of reading is not a program or a philosophy of teaching reading. It is a science-based and research-supported understanding of how a brain learns to read. It is a deep dive into what skills and processes are necessary to be able to read. It takes a strong understanding of this science to best know how to approach the teaching of reading in your classroom with the students that are in front of you each year.

Learning to read is a complex process that involves information from at least three fields of study: **Education**, **Psychology**, and **Linguistics**. Developing research on neuroscience highlights what the brain does while a typical or neuro-diverse student is learning to read (patterns of activation). In the past, it was thought that humans were born with a certain level of "smarts." We now know that the brain is malleable and can change and grow new pathways over time. This functional neuroplasticity enables the brain to experience permanent changes in synapses due to learning and development. (Ackerman, 2018) This is why the field of neuroscience has an impact on reading instruction.



Adapted from Holly Lane  
Director of Florida Institute of Literacy

# THE SCIENCES OF READING

It takes a team approach to fully understand this work and that is why we need to work together to best support students. This image below represents all the aspects of reading instruction and how teacher knowledge and connection to other professionals to support reading instruction can have a big impact on reading skills acquisition in your classroom.

## Psychology (development and cognition, thinking and learning)

- ▶ Thinking processes: memory, attention, perception, problem-solving
- ▶ How things are stored in memory
- ▶ The kinds of practice that promote memory
- ▶ How we organize and retrieve information



## Linguistics (language and its structures)

- ▶ Semantic, syntax, morphology, phonology, phonetics
- ▶ What we need to teach, how to sequence it, prerequisite skills (ex. How articulatory gestures can promote phonemic awareness)

## Education (pedagogy)

- ▶ Instructional methods
- ▶ Teacher knowledge (ex. National Reading Panel findings) and how they impact instruction
- ▶ Instructional material
- ▶ Student outcomes (monitoring student progress etc.)



*The classroom teacher (as well as resource, ELL, and Reading Recovery teachers), school psychologists, and speech-language pathologists all have knowledge and skills in their area of expertise that will help a student learn to read. When collaboration between these professionals takes place, instruction and intervention are aligned to improve practice.*

# PUTTING THE ALPHABETIC PRINCIPLE TO WORK

For many years, teachers have been using a word wall to help their students learn the **sight words**. The idea was that when students regularly saw the words posted or looked at the words when needed, they would be able to use the word wall to help them spell these words. In some classrooms, the word wall was more interactive where students could come up and take the word to their desks to make it easier.

Research in the science of learning to read is showing that students should be focusing on the sounds of language and how it is those sounds (phonemes) and the coordinating letters (graphemes) that make up the words that we read and write. This is known as the alphabetic principle. Students are then able to use this knowledge to orthographically map the sound-letter combinations that they would use to encode words when they learn to spell.

## Sight Word and High-Frequency Words

High-frequency words are words of high utility that a student will encounter in books they read. Recognizing these words instantly helps the students to increase fluency. It also helps to reduce the cognitive load to tackle and decode new words. High-frequency words are words like all, be, and came.

As research is emerging, it is evident that many of those **high-frequency words** in English (up to 70%) can actually be sounded out. This leaves only 30% that need to be recognized upon sight, thus, lessening the cognitive load. This enables students to learn new words and not have to remember so many "sight words." These true sight words are sometimes called **heart words** as students need to know them by heart. Sight words can also include words that may not be high-frequency words but are words that an individual student still might know by heart. As a result of this, all students will have a collection of different sight words, held in their memory.

## 44 Phonograms (symbols representing vocal sounds) of the English Language

### The Alphabet

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r
s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z	

### Consonant Teams

ch	ck	dge	fn	kn	ng	nk	ph	sh
tch	th	wh	wr					

### Vowel Teams

ai	au	aw	ay	ea	ee	ei	eigh	ew
ey	ie	igh	oa	oe	oi	oo	ou	ough
ow	oy	ui						

### The Sound of /er/

er	ir	ur	or	ear	our
----	----	----	----	-----	-----

### The Sound of /sh/

ci	si	ti	sh
----	----	----	----

### Other Phonograms

ed	ar	or
----	----	----

# THE SOUND WALL

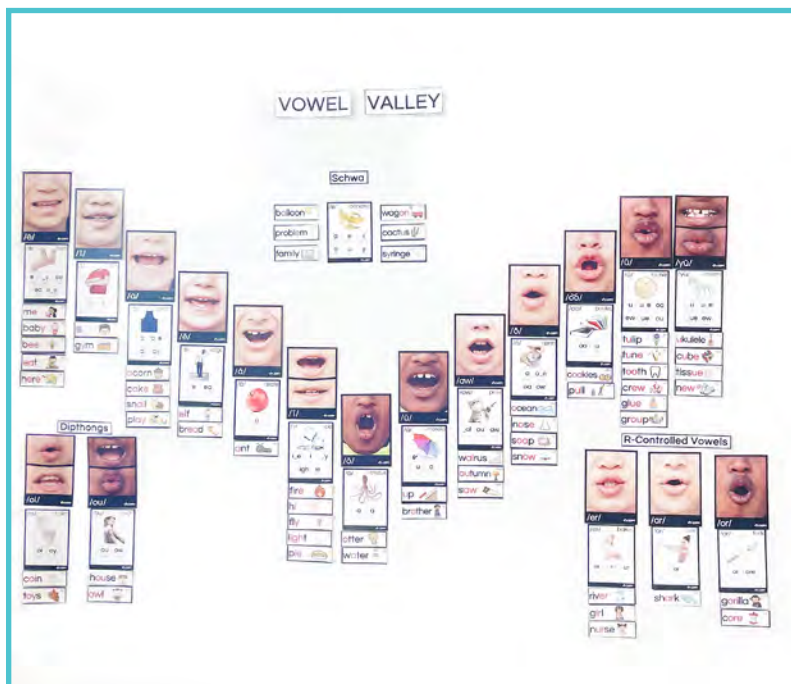
For many years, teachers were trained to use a word wall. This high-frequency word wall was organized alphabetically based on the beginning letter. Students accessed this wall when they wanted to be able to spell the word. The purpose of the word wall was also for students to memorize the spelling of the words.

A sound wall organizes the 44 phonemes (speech sounds) by manner and place of articulation in the mouth. It is organized by consonant sounds and vowel sounds, and vowel sounds have images of a person's mouth and what it looks like (the openness of the mouth) as it is pronouncing the sound. As students learn sounds and different phonics patterns, these patterns and/or example words for the patterns are added to the sound wall. Many teachers include mirrors with their sound wall display so students can see their own mouths as they make the sound. Students will be able to use the sound wall to help them with words they want to spell based on phonemes and the correlating graphemes patterns.

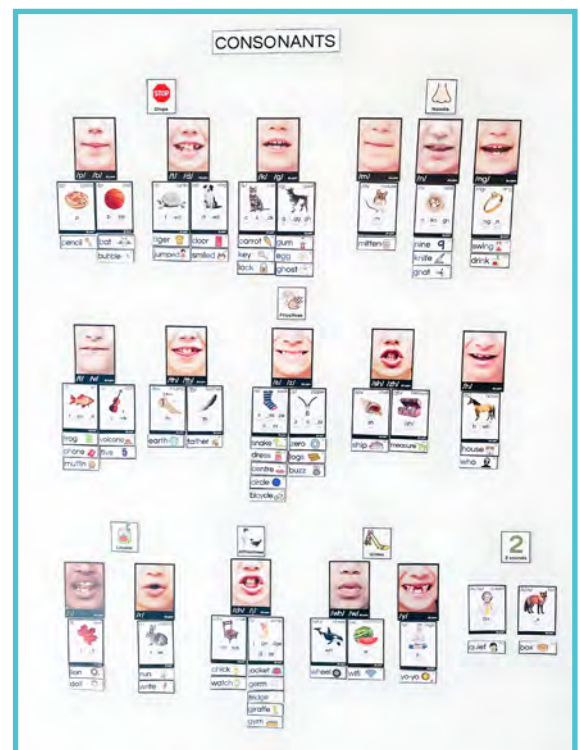
## Teaching the Phonemes and Graphemes

In order to know which order to follow when teaching the phonemes and graphemes, teachers will need to consult the Langley Scope and Sequence for K-3. This can be found in the foundational document called *Reaching and Teaching Every Reader*. This may also be useful for intermediate/middle students who are requiring Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions.

The sound wall should not be set up in its entirety as you begin the school year. As students learn the phoneme and corresponding graphemes, place the corresponding cards onto the wall. A teacher of grade 2 or 3, can put up the aspects of the sound wall that students learned the year before and review them before beginning to introduce the new phonemes and graphemes (refer to the scope and sequence). More information on the implementation of the sound wall can be found in the reference section of the above document and will be a topic for further elaboration of this guide in the future.



(Image Credit: Instructional Services)



(Image Credit: Instructional Services)



# DIFFERENT KINDS OF TEXTS

## Decodable Books and Levelled Books

When students are first learning to read, they must understand how to decode and make sense of the text (language comprehension). Using decodable books as students learn how to read is important because the vocabulary is controlled. Good quality decodable books are comprehensible so that students can learn to decode and make sense of what they are reading. Decodables are like training wheels. As students launch into reading, transitioning students to levelled texts in conjunction with decodables enables students to move forward in reading with authentic and varied vocabulary. Wiley Blevens, (2017) identifies what makes levelled readers good for students **that have launched**:

- ▶ they are highly motivating to beginning readers
- ▶ they give students a sense of how to read by developing key concepts of print (left to right) and some sight word knowledge that can be used when reading more complex texts later
- ▶ students learn the difference between text and illustration and the importance of each (as well as other reading behaviours)
- ▶ development of vocabulary and background knowledge

When students are first learning to decode, they must have decodable books to practice the skills they are learning. It is not effective to have students learn to decode with decodable books and then practice reading with levelled books. However, as the student is moving towards using levelled books to increase their reading competency, using levelled books to practice is appropriate.

Levelled books for intermediate students who do not have any reading challenges work well in guided reading groups for explicit instruction. At this stage of reading, students are moving more into deepening comprehension, higher-level thinking, content acquisition, and conceptual vocabulary.

Older students with reading difficulties also benefit from decodable books. Decodable chapter books are available through various publishers as are high-interest low vocabulary books for students that do not necessarily struggle with decoding but find new, more difficult vocabulary challenging.

## Trade Books

Trade books, also known as mentor texts, generally are books by well-known authors and illustrators. These books come in various genres and have a great sense of story. Children's literature is highly engaging to students but is not suitable for phonics instruction. These books help students learn vocabulary, develop background knowledge, and work on their general comprehension through listening and retelling. Trade books are perfect for shared reading, read aloud/interactive reading and independent reading.

"Picture books" are not just for primary students. Intermediate and middle teachers can use these books to launch lessons on all kinds of things. In the words of Pernille Ripp, the purpose of using picture books in intermediate/middle is varied: *"I often look for picture books that can be used as community builders, self-connections, or conversation starters. We also use them as mentor texts as we develop as readers and writers throughout the year. But I also look for picture books that will make my students laugh, make them reconnect with being a little kid again, or help them get out of a bad mood. I try to get a balance of all of these types of books in the hands of students"* (from *Passionate Readers*).

## A NOTE ON MSV FOR ASSESSMENT AND TEACHING

When using the Fountas and Pinnell assessment kit, teachers record and monitor a student's use of 3 cueing systems as they read – meaning, structural and visual.

*According to Fountas and Pinnell, MSV stands for meaning, language structure or syntax and visual information, which includes graphics, letters and phonological information, the sounds. It is a way for teachers to analyze what information a young reader uses and does not yet use as he builds a system for processing written texts from his earliest encounters with print.*

Identifying the sources of information students are using as they read (MSV) during the Fountas and Pinnell assessment will help teachers to identify the **broad category** of skills the students may be using (comprehension, language structure or syntax and visual information). With analysis of the running record, graphophonological explicit skills needed can be extracted. It may be more efficient and accurate to use a phonemic awareness/phonics screener to identify these emergent/early reading skills.

For emergent/early readers (approx. level A-F or K/early 1) it is appropriate to use a screener to identify and target skills and plan for instruction (please see the *Reaching and Teaching Every Reader* handbook). These skills assessment records can be given to school administration in place of an F & P level. Current research is showing that students who are first learning to read or are struggling with learning to read need to keep their eyes primarily on the text rather than relying on pictures or meaning to solve words. Effective practice in reading instruction puts the focus on decoding (graphophonological skills) to **identify words** and then prompting children for meaning and syntax after reading a word or sentence.

If in partnership, teachers/admin decide that using a screener throughout the year to inform instruction is more appropriate, then that decision resides within the school. Focusing on phonemic awareness and phonics skills is intended ultimately to support students to read continuous text. When students learn phonemic awareness and phonics skills and practice with a skill-controlled decodable book, the goal is that these skills transfer to levelled/trade books as students continue to practice and develop new skills. Therefore, the assessment of reading provides important information about the student's ability to transfer component skills to the authentic task. Using both decodable books and levelled books at certain stages (transitional and fluent) may be appropriate for some students. Teachers using decodable books for small group instruction may also decide to use levelled books occasionally to verify the transfer of skills as the year goes on.

**At the end of the year, all primary students (grades 1-3) will need to have a Fountas and Pinnell assessment done.** While teachers will use many different types of evidence of learning for reporting reading development on report cards, only the F&P reading level will be submitted to the district. In the future, the district will be collecting grades 4+ as well. The purpose of this collection of data at the district level is to monitor reading growth over time so that resources may be put where they are needed.

For fluent readers, the focus is more on advanced morphology, deepening comprehension and vocabulary, the information gained from the F & P would be suitable to determine the next steps in instruction.

# SMALL-GROUP INSTRUCTION/GUIDED READING

Guided reading is targeted reading instruction in a small group. The targets or goals are always established based on the outcomes of assessments and reading behaviour goals. Teachers can use the Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Continuum to help them identify some of these behaviours.

All students need instruction on skills/strategies and comprehension. Teachers may notice that some fluent readers have transitional spelling, and will need to adjust phonics/spelling instruction as needed.

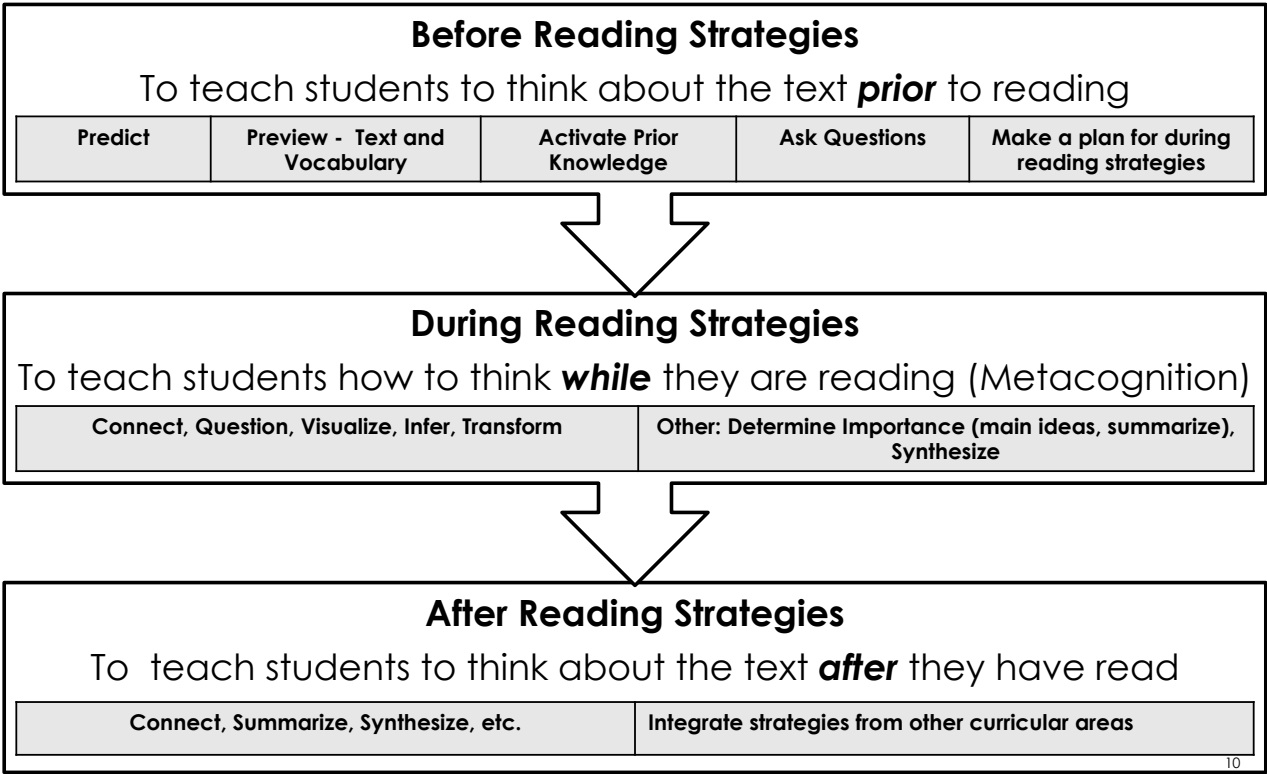
During shared reading and interactive read-aloud, teachers may engage students in three stages of reading instruction. These stages are also more commonly used in the the intermediate/ middle grades of reading because the whole class focus is more heavily on expanding vocabulary, comprehension and critical thinking.



(Image Credit: Instructional Services)

## Three Stages of Reading Instruction

Students should have a balance of reading, writing and discussion opportunities:  
KWL, Notice/Wonder, Story Mapping, Somebody Wanted- But- So etc.



The following page is a sample look at particular skills, strategies, and possible components for guided reading lessons through the reading development phases.

# WHAT IS THE FORMAT OF AN EFFECTIVE GUIDED READING LESSON FOR EARLY/TRANSITIONAL READERS?

## Day 1

- ▶ Introduce the book.
- ▶ Introduce new vocabulary.
- ▶ Students read the book (with prompting) independently while teacher confers with one student at a time.
- ▶ Discuss and Teach: after students have read, ask the group open-ended questions to help them draw inferences.
- ▶ Retell the text together

## Day 2

- ▶ Students read the book (without prompting early/beginning readers and with prompting transitional readers as the text is more difficult)
- ▶ Discuss and teach (same as day 1)
- ▶ Word Study: target a skill such as short vowels, digraphs, blends, long vowels, and vowel teams etc. depending on needs and skills from the scope and sequence.
- ▶ Model: show students how to segment a word at the onset and rime to hear the vowel sound.

## Day 3

- ▶ Guided writing response. This does not replace writing workshop, it supports it.)
- ▶ Each student uses their personal sound wall or the classroom one to help them with spelling.
- ▶ Teacher helps students create a plan or simple concept map.
- ▶ Teacher selects a format for writing: for example, compare-contrast, problem and solution, favourite part or another reflection that extends the comprehension. Early readers may have dictated sentences while transitional readers may be writing their own ideas.
- ▶ Early readers can write a dictated sentence. This is a great way to know what phonics skills they need. Transitional readers can be coached as they write their own ideas.



Image credit: Instructional Services

For skill-based sound level and word level work, please refer to the suggestions in Langley's *Reaching and Teaching Every Reader Handbook*.

*For more detailed lessons, prompts, discussion starters and videos of guided reading in action, please refer to The Next Step Forward in Guided Reading K-8 by Jan Richardson. This book should be available in your school. Note that for early readers learning to decode, more focus should be put on decoding skills than strategies.*



# WHAT IS THE FOCUS FOR AN EFFECTIVE GUIDED READING LESSON FOR FLUENT READERS?

Fluent readers require a strong focus on vocabulary and comprehension development. Students know how to read and are focusing more on deepening the understanding of before, during and after reading aspects. It is important that the vocabulary and comprehension work hand-in-hand with the more complex texts to which fluent readers will become exposed.

Teachers will need to understand a fluent reader's current level of comprehension. Teachers can listen to a few pages from a book that the student has chosen or a short, levelled text. The purpose is not to do a running record but to listen. Listening to a student read and asking higher-order comprehension questions that reflect strategies a student is using is useful in order to determine groupings for small group instruction and/or literature circles. To see a thorough comprehension interview set of questions, see page 223 of *The Next Steps Forward in Guided Reading* (Jan Richardson). Alternatively, teachers can use aspects of the Literacy Continuum (Fountas and Pinnell) and/or Bloom's Taxonomy found in the Independent Reading section to develop their own set of interview questions. Bourgain's « soutenir les lecteurs en langue seconde » provides ideas for French Immersion students.

## Day 1

- ▶ Introduce the book/text. Use a wide variety of texts beyond the bookroom: poems, magazine articles, Scholastic short reads, a chapter from a novel. Provide a synopsis. Preview and predict. Introduce new vocabulary (define it, connect it, relate it to the book/text, turn and talk). State the students' comprehension focus.
- ▶ Read and respond with prompting: prompt for vocabulary and comprehension.
- ▶ Discuss and Teach: questioning to lift the processing level of students.
- ▶ Word Study (1-2 minutes): spelling connections, Greek and Latin words, phonics skills (for fluent readers with transitional spelling).

## Day 2 & 3

- ▶ Follow the procedure for day 1

## Day 4

- ▶ Guided writing (optional but recommended for students that need writing support).
- ▶ Analyze writing samples to pinpoint a target skill.

Where we are going...

*The exploration of text and story deepens our understanding of diverse, complex ideas about identity, others and the world. Questioning what we hear, read, and view contributes to our ability to be educated and engaged citizens.*

**BC Ministry of Education**  
**Grade 12 Big Ideas in ELA Literacy Studies**

# READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

While learning how to decode is the first step in learning how to read, students also need to understand what they are reading. Students in K-3 need to learn and develop strategies that will help them make connections to their lives and develop and use background knowledge. This will help them to make meaning from what they are reading.

The established reader needs to move beyond learning a set of comprehension strategies, to learning how to analyze a text deeply enough to respond critically and creatively. (Requiring students to answer a list of comprehension questions does not support higher-level thinking).

## Strategies that Build Deeper Understanding and Critical Thinking

- ▶ pre-readers begin to develop comprehension from being read to, listening to a story being reread, listening to and sharing oral stories, and doing a picture walk.
- ▶ emerging readers begin to develop comprehension by connecting the text they are learning to decode with background knowledge. This is also true for readers of all ages.
- ▶ predict what will happen (ex. through whole-class read-aloud) or independently and use the text to confirm
- ▶ retell the story
- ▶ back up and reread
- ▶ recognize story elements: beginning, middle, end, characters, details, theme
- ▶ use metacognition (talking and thinking about reading) to reflect, question, goal-set, evaluate
- ▶ monitor for understanding
- ▶ visualize (make a picture or mental image)
- ▶ ask questions throughout the reading process
- ▶ infer and support with evidence from the text
- ▶ summarize text (sequence main events) draw conclusions
- ▶ determine importance (main idea & supporting details)
- ▶ recognize & explain cause and effect relationships
- ▶ compare and contrast within and between text
- ▶ use text features
- ▶ determine author's purpose (support with text)
- ▶ identify characteristics of text (narrative, expository, persuasive)
- ▶ understand that there are different genres with specific characteristics

# SMALL-GROUP INSTRUCTION (GUIDED READING/ LITERATURE CIRCLES)

Small group instruction enables teachers to have an environment “to provide students extensive opportunities to express what they know and receive feedback from other students and the teacher. Instructional conversations are easier to conduct and support with a small group of students” (Goldenberg, 1993).

During small group instruction, students work in small groups with the teacher to learn and practice needed skills. Many times, the chosen text is a common reading selection based on a set skill needed (especially when first learning to read or when providing Tier 2 intervention). Other times the skill needed is something like fluency so students of varying abilities in other reading areas might be grouped together. Sometimes the goal is to engage students in reading and so they choose their own book to bring to the session. The small group instruction focus depends on the teacher and/or students’ goals.

## The Benefits of Teaching Small Groups:

- builds skills in phonemic awareness, concepts of print, sound/letter recognition
- increases language strategies (talking and thinking about reading, oral storytelling processes)
- enables the students to receive explicit instruction based on needed reading skills as determined by assessments.
- helps students learn skills and strategies that will allow them to read difficult texts independently
- enables students to experience success in reading for meaning
- encourages the exchange of ideas and perspectives
- enables the student to receive immediate feedback
- engages students in cooperative learning tasks (during literature circles) that build communication and thinking skills
- allows for student choice (literature circles) and heightened engagement



Image credit: Instructional Services



## SUGGESTED TIPS AND STRATEGIES

- ❑ Teach decoding/phonics and word attack skills to beginning readers.
- ❑ Teach and guide practice in fluency development.
- ❑ Listen to student(s) read aloud and offer timely prompting and feedback.
- ❑ Choose books and authors where students see themselves (ie different cultures).
- ❑ Use small groups to explore and practice behavioural expectations that support reading.
- ❑ Teach students orthographic mapping.
- ❑ Use methods to find out what a student's background knowledge is for the book they will read.
- ❑ Pull a small group to:
  - front-load vocabulary
  - do a picture walk
  - practice fluency
  - explore literary elements (character, setting, problem, solution)
  - model reading for meaning
  - explore poetry and word choice
- ❑ Teach comprehension strategies to students who have launched into reading:
  - retelling
  - connections
  - asking questions
  - determining importance
  - visualizing
  - comprehension monitoring
  - evaluating
  - inferring
  - main idea/details
  - summarizing
  - text features
  - text structure
  - vocabulary
  - author's purpose
- ❑ Practice a reading strategy in different contexts.
- ❑ Review a reading strategy before students begin a new text.
- ❑ Pull a small group of students to review text features of non-fiction books.
- ❑ Explore the powerful language used in fiction by acting out strong verbs.
- ❑ Teach students about finding a just-right book.
- ❑ Explore reading topic interests with students.
- ❑ Explore written expression through emergent and conventional spelling.
- ❑ Copy a short passage from a classic novel and practice a reading strategy.
- ❑ Model the student roles for literature circles.
- ❑ Use short texts/non-fiction text to introduce students to lit circle roles.
- ❑ Have students record their thinking on post-it notes or paper bookmarks.
- ❑ Use literature circle groups to practice asking deeper questions.
- ❑ Provide opportunities for literature circle groups to hear a chapter from an audiobook.
- ❑ Provide students with literacy journals to record their thoughts.
- ❑ Use literature circle groups to explore and practice group social skills.
- ❑ Use academic vocabulary to explore spelling characteristics.
- ❑ Use literature circles to differentiate for reading levels and interests.

## Primary Guided Reading Lesson Plan

Group:	Skill Level:	Book Title (if applicable):
Learning Intentions: (simple & specific)		
<b>Part 1 - Introduction to Book (5 mins)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Synopsis of the book:</li>   <li>2. Elicit Prior Knowledge:</li>   <li>3. Introduce New Vocabulary:</li> </ol>		
<b>Part 2 - Reading (5-8 mins)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students read independently and softly at the same time.</li> <li>2. Teacher listens to students read individually 1 at a time and records observations on separate assessment sheet or grid.</li> <li>3. Students plan their writing. Write their reading response in a notebook.</li> </ol>		
<b>Part 3 - Discussion and Open-Ended Questions (5 mins)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher provides discussion prompts/open-ended questions:</li> </ol>		
Day 1: Retell	Day 2: Word Study Words	Day 3 - Guided Writing Response Focus for Plan
<b>Possible Follow Up:</b>		

C. Burns & J. Malcolm



## Intermediate Guided Reading Lesson Plan

Group:	Skill Level:	Book Title (if applicable):
Learning Intentions: (simple & specific)		
<b>Part 1 - Introduction to Book (5 mins)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Provide Review (Brief synopsis):</li><li>2. Elicit Prior Knowledge:</li><li>3. Introduce New Vocabulary:</li><li>4. Set Learning Intention and Response Topic:</li></ol>		
<b>Part 2 - Reading and Responding (10 mins)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students read independently at the same time.</li><li>2. Teacher listens to students read individually and records observations on separate assessment sheet.</li><li>3. Students write their reading response in a notebook.</li></ol>		
<b>Part 3 - Discussion and Teachable Moment (5 mins)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Teacher provides discussion prompts/open-ended questions:</li><li>2. Refocus on Learning Intention and explain Follow Up Activity (if applicable).</li></ol>		
<b>Possible Follow Up:</b>		

C. Burns & J. Malcolm

## WORD STUDY

Word study is ideally taught within reading instruction although the learning overlaps learning to write. Word study that is taught in small group instruction can be practiced and applied in various opportunities where students explore language features in a hands-on and interactive environment.

Teachers might provide early readers with instruction and practice on such things as CVC words using sound boxes (Elkonin boxes). Transitional readers may be looking at vowel teams. Fluent readers may be learning about Greek and Latin roots or multisyllabic words.

Word study:

- ▶ builds awareness of language features, spelling and structure, grammar, and conventions
- ▶ helps students move from phonetic to visual strategies
- ▶ builds vocabulary and word recognition
- ▶ allows for the investigation of patterns in words
- ▶ helps children develop spelling knowledge as they work through the stages of spelling with developmental activities that promote growth

For more information and word study lessons, consult the reading instruction professional books at the end of this document, and the Balanced Literacy elaborations on the Instructional Services website.

### SUGGESTED TIPS AND STRATEGIES

❑ Assess spelling development through dictated sentences, written work, or a spelling screener such as Words Their Way.

❑ Use a Sound Wall to teach students the 44 phonemes and various letter combinations that make those sounds.

❑ Analyze invented spelling for common patterns in errors and inform next steps.

❑ Compare and contrast features in words.

❑ Use games or activities to apply word knowledge.

❑ Allow opportunities for students to manipulate letters in words, words in sentences.

❑ Use sound boxes for early learners.

❑ Explore word families.

❑ Use the Langley scope and sequence (K-3) to know what to teach at what state of development/grade.

❑ Use mentor sentences to model grammar, punctuation and writer's craft (choose one from their favourite book and take a closer look together).

❑ Use cards to sort and categorize new vocabulary.

❑ Create anchor charts together of word families, Greek and Latin roots.

❑ Provide lots of opportunities for students to write and practice spelling.

❑ Have students go back through their own writing and add correctly spelled words to a personal dictionary or word list.

❑ Teach students to edit for spelling.

# INDEPENDENT READING

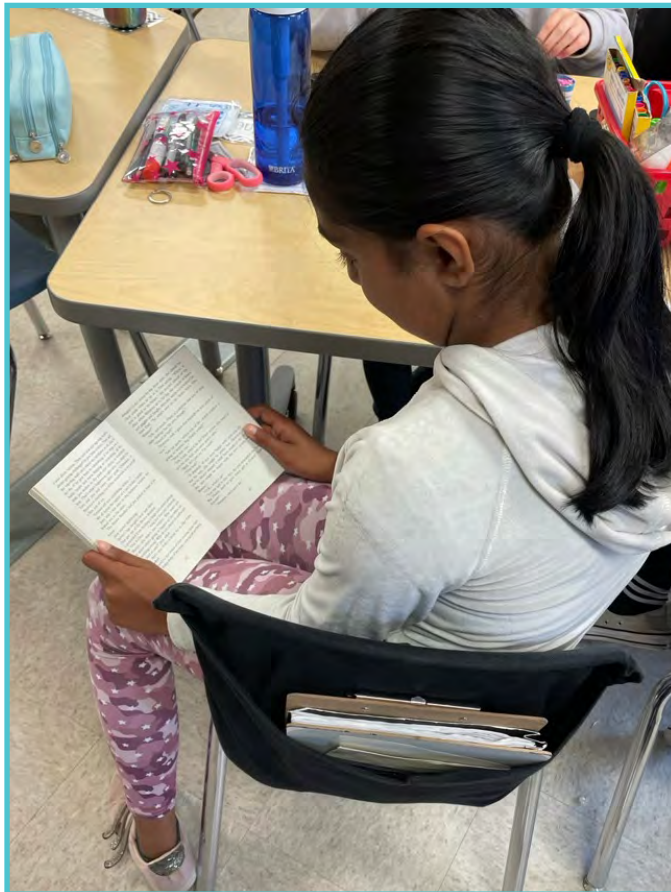
Time must be provided every day for students to read independently. Not only does this enable students to choose the books they would enjoy and like to read, but it also demonstrates to students that reading is a thinking activity too. Not all students are able to read (of all ages) independently so it is up to the teacher's professional judgement to set up reading environments for students based on needs and abilities. Sometimes this means starting the year off by reading in pairs and moving to independent reading as the year goes on.

*"Reading gives us someplace to go when we have to stay where we are."*

*Mason Cooley*



(Image Credit: Instructional Services)



(Image Credit: Tracey Thorne)

It is also important that all students have time to read books that will enable them to practice the skills learned in small group instruction. This is particularly important when students are first learning to decode so that the skills are transferred to reading right away. These may be younger students or older students that are struggling. Using appropriate books for instruction is important. Decodable books are available at all levels of reading development. There are decodable chapter books for the older students which is helpful for reading and in a social sense as students read in groups with their peers.

Teachers can have "book bins" or "magazine holders" for each student to have practice books and books to read for pleasure.

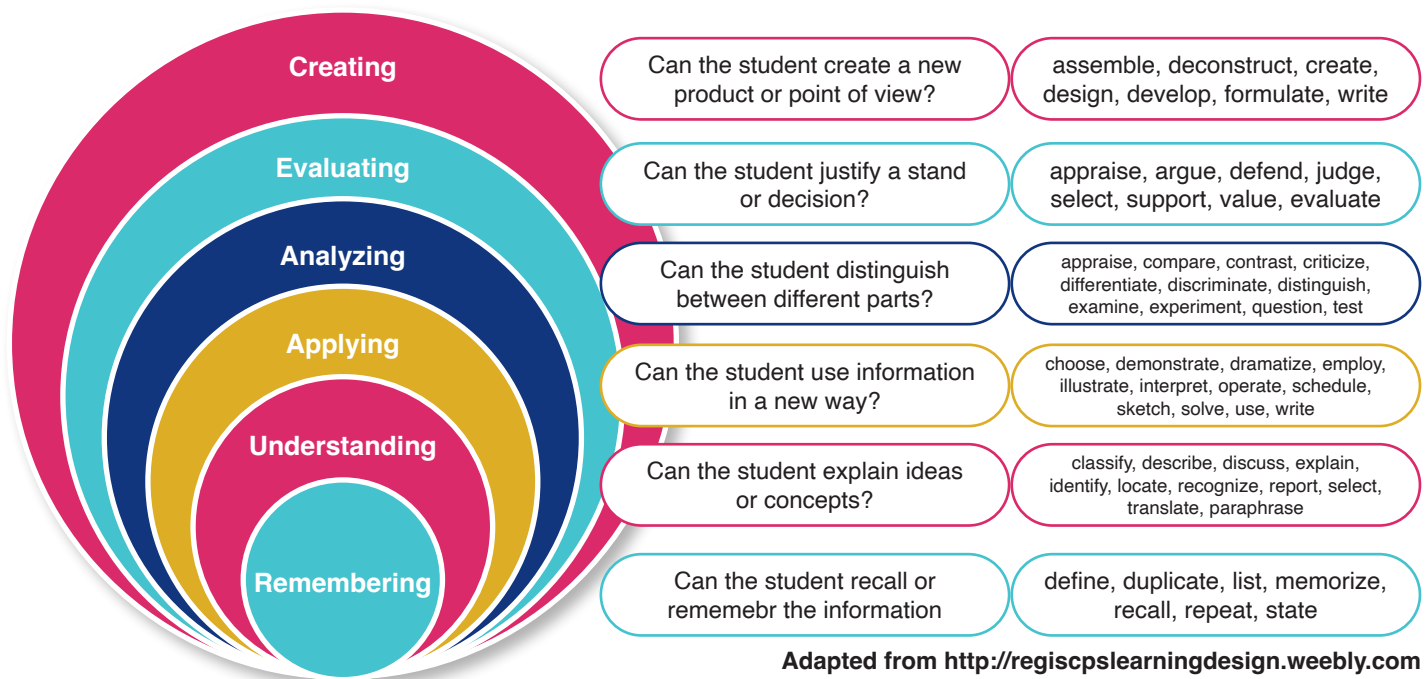
# INDEPENDENT READING

The ultimate goal of independent reading is for students to be able to sustain reading for longer periods of time on their own and read with full comprehension.

Independent reading:

- ▶ For younger learners and pre-readers, this might be a "book look time" with a partner
- ▶ exposes young students to focus on booking handling, text directionality, alphabet knowledge, mechanics/punctuation
- ▶ promotes reading for enjoyment and information
- ▶ develops/increases fluency
- ▶ increases comprehension
- ▶ supports writing development
- ▶ extends experiences with a variety of written texts including those written by Indigenous authors
- ▶ fosters self-confidence by reading a familiar and new text
- ▶ increases their reading stamina over time
- ▶ encourages strategic reading

As students progress further into reading (or are extending in the primary grades) teachers can actively engage students in critical thinking by learning to ask deeper questions. Students can challenge themselves to dig deeper into the meaning of what they are reading. Below you will see Bloom's Taxonomy (Revised) and how the complexity of the student abilities grows as they develop in their cognitive skills. This can be developed and supported by asking appropriate questions with targeted words to expand students' thinking starting at a young age.





# INDEPENDENT READING

## SUGGESTED TIPS AND STRATEGIES

- ❑ Ensure students learning to decode are practicing using decodable books that match the skill that has been taught. The next book can be a book they have chosen.
- ❑ Students who are already reading should be encouraged to choose their own books.
- ❑ Have an extensive and organized classroom library that includes a wide variety of different books that represent all children. Include Indigenous authors.
- ❑ Allow younger students to read to a "stuffie".
- ❑ Some students will need to do a "reader's mumble" during quiet reading time as they have not yet internalized the silent reading process.
- ❑ Build stamina and practice independent reading behaviour routines.
- ❑ Have a variety of quiet spaces where students can read (pillows, comfortable chairs).
- ❑ Introduce students to various genres; read excerpts and build excitement.
- ❑ Use quiet reading time to conference with students about what they are reading.
- ❑ Help all students see themselves as readers.
- ❑ Have a "book box" or area where students can access self-selected materials to read. This will put the focus on sustained reading.
- ❑ Ensure that quiet reading is a regularly scheduled part of the daily routine.



(Image Credit: Tracey Thorne)



(Image Credit: Tracey Thorne)



# ORTHOGRAPHIC MAPPING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPELLING

Orthology is the spelling system of a language. Orthographic mapping is a process our brain goes through as we connect grapheme-phoneme pronunciations to our already developed spoken language system. It enables us to store and remember words that then become sight words so that we never have to decode them again. Ehri (a reading researcher and chair of the National Panel on Reading) developed a connectionist theory for this process:

"When readers apply their grapheme-phoneme knowledge to decode new words, connections are formed between graphemes in written words and phonemes in spoken words. This bonds the spellings of those words to their pronunciations and meanings and stores all of these identities together as lexical units in memory. Subsequently, when these words are seen, readers can read the words as single units from memory automatically by sight. Decoding letter by letter is no longer needed to read the words." (Parker Phonics blog)

In order for our brains to be able to do orthographic mapping, we need to:

- ▶ Have letter recognition (shapes, names, upper and lower case)
- ▶ Knowledge of letter-sound relationships of 24 consonants and 20 vowel sounds (this is where the sound wall comes in)
- ▶ The ability to blend phonemes to form spoken words and segment words into phonemes
- ▶ Repeated practice decoding and encoding (writing)

## Did you know?

Some students with diverse needs may need to listen to a book or information rather than actively decode. In this case, those students will need explicit instruction in segmenting in order to develop orthographic mapping.



When students are first learning to read, the alphabetic principle comes into play. Students learn the relationship between sound and letter. They learn to recognize that a letter or letter combination produces sounds but not meaning. As students develop in spelling, they must be able to recognize not only that a root word carries meaning but that new words that they want to spell can be encoded by understanding the meaning of the root. This opens the doors to the ability to spell more and more words. This process aligns with the student's increasing ability to read more complex texts because understanding the meaning of root words supports the development of vocabulary.

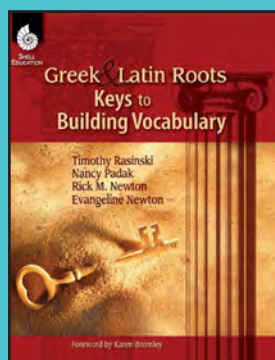
# GREEK AND LATIN ROOTS: THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF SPELLING

As students move through the early phases of learning to read and spell, they will learn syllables and word families. These two skills set the stage for learning Greek and Latin roots which will further spelling and reading development. Greek and Latin roots are closely linked to vocabulary development as these roots have meaning and when combined with other letter combinations, create new words.

Understanding how words work shows us how to think in new ways about words both in the spelling of words and in the definition. As Tim Raskinki et. al (2008) point out, just like many stories contain a beginning, middle and end, so does a word. Just as a beginning, middle and end have a purpose, so do the 3 parts of a word.

1. **Base:** The base of the word is a small part of a word that contains the meaning.  
ex. "mot" means move – therefore a motor makes things move and motion is movement.
2. **Prefix:** The prefix of a word can give direction, negate a word by meaning "not" or intensify the meaning of a word by adding the notion of "very."  
ex. dis means "apart" or "in different directions" – therefore distracting takes attention away in a different direction.
3. **Suffix:** The suffix comes at the end of a word and does not have a **fixed** meaning like the base and prefix. **The meaning of a suffix is fluid.** As long as students have a good understanding of the base and root, they can usually come up with the meaning without having to use the suffix.  
ex. geology is the "study of" the earth; hematology is the study of blood.

When students have a good grasp of basic spelling, they are ready to dig deeper into word meaning to help them spell known and new words. Many of these words come from the content areas of social studies and science and may not be words of high utility but they help students to develop a large vocabulary which in turn, assists the students with reading complex texts.



**Greek & Latin Roots: Keys to Building Vocabulary**  
Timothy Rasinski, Nancy Padak, Rick M. Newton & Evangeline Newton

# STAGES OF SPELLING DEVELOPMENT

**Pre-communicative stage (typically 3+ years to 5+ years)** There is little or no evidence of alphabetic knowledge. Strings of letter-like forms. May or may not understand left-to-right directionality.

**Semi-phonetic (typically 4+ years to 6+ years)** The child understands that sounds can be represented by a letter. The concept of a word is beginning to be understood. Words may be written with one or two letters. The main sounds in a word are being used. Consonants are used more often than vowels. A few sight words are spelled correctly. (me, I) Knowledge of the alphabet is evident.

**Phonetic stage (typically 5+ years to 7+ years)** The child uses a letter or group of letters to represent every speech sound that they hear in a word. Invented spellings make sense (ie: becuz). Known sight words are used correctly.

**Transitional stage (typically 6+ years to 11+ years)** Conventions of spelling are understood and vowels are placed in every syllable. The child is able to recognize when a common word is misspelled. Less dependence on sound for spelling and more reliance on visual patterns and an understanding of the structure of words. Applying word structure knowledge to larger words such as prefixes and suffixes, doubling a letter, etc. can be seen.

**Correct stage (typically from 10-11+ years)** The speller knows the English orthographic system and its basic rules. The correct speller fundamentally understands how to deal with such things as prefixes and suffixes, silent consonants, alternative spellings, and irregular spellings. This knowledge is applied to unknown words. The child's generalizations about spelling and knowledge of exceptions are usually correct and they can distinguish between homonyms using context clues. The student is increasing in proficiency with proof-reading strategies and has a large bank of complex words they can spell automatically.

*(Read, 1971, 1975, Beers and Henderson, 1977, Chomsky, 1971, Gentry, 1982, 2004)*



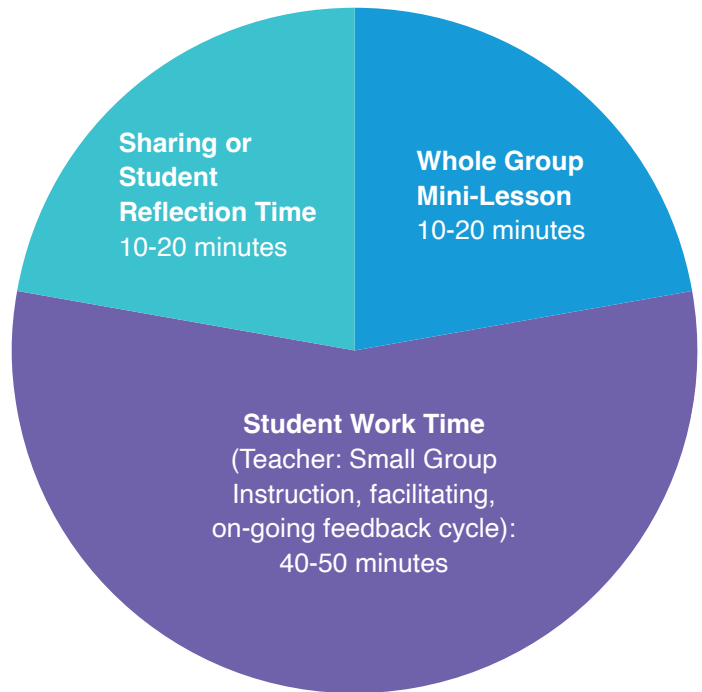
# WRITING WORKSHOP

The writing workshop uses the same structure as the reading workshop. Ideally, the student work portion would be used for writing time. Students need lots of writing practice to become better writers (and readers).

It is a myth that students learn to write on their own or that the bulk of the writing is a response to reading. Often students learn that the point of reading is to write about it. This leads to many kids not enjoying reading a book because they know it always leads to "having" to write. With a comprehensive writing workshop, students will want to write.

Just like reading, writing needs to be explicitly and systematically taught. When writing development keeps up with reading development, students are more confident learners and communicators.

The teacher can decide which format they would like to use. It will be dependent on the class, the grade or other factors.



1. Whole class writing mini-lesson followed by the **whole class engaged in writing**. The teacher is interacting with the students, having conversations, and posing questions. This is also the time for small group writing instruction as needed, and writing conferences.
2. Whole class writing mini-lesson followed by **literacy centres** that provide opportunities for students to write and practice the writing skills that have been taught.

## Writing Tools

Teachers can use the tools that are suitable for their grade level and to support diverse learners in their classrooms.

- ▶ a designated area for writing (writing centre) if appropriate and/or available
- ▶ pencils
- ▶ loose parts
- ▶ pens
- ▶ writer's notebook with ideas for writing from 6 trait instruction
- ▶ file folder, binder or other to keep writing drafts
- ▶ anchor charts with writing skills and strategies from mini-lessons
- ▶ dictionaries or tech tools to aid in spelling
- ▶ iPads for research (topics/themes or different kinds of writing samples)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Writing Workshop Planning Page

Writing Unit Focus

Reading Behaviours or Other Reading Goals:  
From curriculum and/or Literacy Continuum

### Whole-Class Mini Lesson:

Connection:

Teaching:

Active Engagement:

Link:

### Whole-Class Writing Time

Teacher Notes:

### Small-Group Writing

Students or Group

Focus

Book

Sharing

Next Steps:



# QUALITIES OF THE WRITE TRAITS

Research suggests that all good writing includes **six** key aspects. Teaching students these traits gives them common language and helps them know what to focus on in their own writing. These traits can be introduced using mentor texts that exemplify one or all traits.

## KEY QUALITIES OF EACH TRAIT

### Ideas

- Find a topic
- Focus on the topic
- Develop the topic
- Use details

### Word Choice

- Apply strong verbs
- Select striking words and phrases
- Use specific and accurate words
- Choose words that deepen meaning

### Organization

- Create the lead
- Use sequence words and transition words
- Structure the body
- End with a sense of resolution

### Sentence Fluency

- Create well-built sentences
- Vary sentence types
- Capture smooth and rhythmic flow
- Break the "rules" to create fluency

### Voice

- Establish a tone
- Convey the purpose
- Create a connection to the audience
- Take risks to create voice

### Conventions

- Check spelling
- Punctuate effectively and paragraphing accurately
- Capitalize correctly
- Apply grammar and usage

(Taken from Using Mentor Texts to Teach Writing With the Traits)

# MODELLED/SHARED WRITING

Modelled writing is a method of writing instruction where the teacher models the process of writing as well as the elements of effective writing instruction to build shared understanding. From "sharing the pen" with younger students and/or diverse learners to modelling paragraph writing, all students K-8 benefit from some level of modelled writing. The types of lessons and extent of the modelling will depend on the age and development of the students being taught. Modelled writing can be used as a mini-lesson during writing workshop.

Some of the benefits of modelled writing include:

- ▶ supports reading and writing development
- ▶ develops writing strategies and processes (pre, during, after)
- ▶ provides a model for a variety of writing styles, forms, and functions (ie. grammar) in context
- ▶ teaches students about the writing traits and skills that authors have that can be developed with younger authors.
- ▶ provides opportunities for students to see how written expression of ideas take shape
- ▶ provides opportunities to practice writing about something personally meaningful

## Mentor Sentences

What better way to teach students about quality writing than to pull a sentence out of a mentor text/anchor book and have students identify the aspects of it that make it good writing. This technique can be used to identify certain traits of writing that students have been working on. For example, a teacher may focus on the words that the author has chosen to describe something. The sentences chosen will get more complex as the learners' reading and writing development increases. Students can evolve into choosing their own sentences and explaining to the class or a peer why they chose that sentence and what trait it may exemplify.

*"Underneath her rather bold and cruel exterior, she had a kind heart, and she was to prove loyal and true to the very end."*

*E.B. White, Charlotte's Web*

# MODELLED/SHARED WRITING

## SUGGESTED TIPS AND STRATEGIES

- |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Build personal identity through the modelling of writing.                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Write the entire text yourself in front of students while requesting input.                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Take a few pieces of writing and have students work together to add a "hook."                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Find great examples of writing and "imitate" the craft of the writing (such as through author studies).                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid modelling perfection but rather show what can be a messy process.                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Use graphic organizers to build a piece of writing together.                                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share the pen with writers as appropriate.                                                                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and acknowledge any mistakes you make as you conduct a modelled or shared reading lesson. | <input type="checkbox"/> Take time to write a complete piece together over a series of days to model process.                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Select a piece of writing that shows a great example of one or more of the traits, and extend or copy the writing style. | <input type="checkbox"/> Use a writer's notebook and model styles of writing and examples of each writing trait.            | <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate in-the-moment revision.                                                                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Model writing that is representative of all students on your classroom.                                                  |                                                                                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Post the completed text in an accessible spot in the classroom or turn writing sample into an anchor chart. |

“But of all of the strategies I have learned over the years, there is one that stands far above the rest when it comes to improving my student’s writing: The teacher should model writing – and think out loud while writing – in front of the class.”

**KELLY GALLAGHER**

# INDEPENDENT WRITING/PEER WRITING

The teacher creates a writing environment conducive to collaboration. Much of the writing process rests on a foundation of oral language, discussion, and sharing of connections and ideas. The term independent simply means the student will be doing their own writing but it does not imply that they must do it silently. Students should be collaborating with others as they write or plan their writing. The teacher draws on experiences, perspectives, and understandings of students and/or professional literature to select topics that are personally meaningful to students and contains choices within the topics for students to decide on before writing. No matter what stage a writer is at, whether it is early construction, drawing, or writing fully through the writing process from start to finish, writing independently promotes writing for enjoyment and information.

Students will engage in independent writing through the process of explicit writing instruction in such things as:

- ▶ various genres
- ▶ traits of quality writing
- ▶ writer's (author's) purpose/audience
- ▶ literary elements
- ▶ literary devices
- ▶ different writing styles, forms, and functions
- ▶ sentence and paragraph structure
- ▶ conventions
- ▶ writing processes (such as revising and editing)



*(Image Credit: Instructional Services)*

Teaching writing using the writing workshop model allows teachers the time for whole-class mini-lessons, lots of student writing time, and time for the teacher to actively engage with students as they write, run a small writing group and/or conference with students. Most of the mini-lessons will be comprised of the above topics. Reinforcement of sentence and paragraph writing or conventions with students who need more support will take place during small group writing. It is okay to scribe for young learners or diverse learners as needed if it helps them to express what they want to express but are not able to in writing. Keep in mind, however, that encouraging students to write (encode) helps the teacher to assess current writing development and to plan next steps in writing instruction. Students are provided with time at the end of the writing workshop to share their writing aloud with the class or with a peer. Peer feedback is important in this process and can also be embedded into the mini-lesson or writing time.

Engagement during writing workshops is usually achieved through the launching of lessons with a mentor text and/or writing for a purpose that is meaningful to students. Engagement and efficacy are a large component of any writing workshop.

# INDEPENDENT WRITING/PEER WRITING

## SUGGESTED STRATEGIES TO USE

- ❑ Teach students how to create lists of possible ideas to write about/purposes.
- ❑ Record student writing for reluctant writers.
- ❑ Provide samples of different kinds of writing for students to mimic (ex. letter writing, menu).
- ❑ Encourage younger students or diverse learners to draw about their writing to aid in visualizations.
- ❑ Practice writing together before requiring students to write independently.
- ❑ Explicitly teach how to make use of graphic organizers, don't just provide them.
- ❑ Encourage students to set their goals for their personal writing (use the literacy continuum for ideas).
- ❑ Use independent writing time to conference with students about their writing goals.
- ❑ Teach students how to brainstorm, or "rapid write" to generate ideas.
- ❑ Provide frameworks for independent writing tasks.
- ❑ Design inquiry based, open ended writing tasks that allow for true personalization
- ❑ Teach and encourage the use of Indigenous story works methods.
- ❑ Ensure that independent writing is a regularly scheduled part of the daily routine.
- ❑ Craft writing lessons with student interests in mind.
- ❑ Make the writing meaningful (write a letter to a friend or as part of a social justice project).
- ❑ Provide prompts for students who struggle with the writing process.



(Image Credit: Tristan Raphael)



# Conferring with Writers Cheat Sheet

## RESEARCH

---

- What are you working on as a writer?
- How's it going?
- What are you planning to do next and how do you plan for that to go?
- How do you feel about this piece?
- If you were going to fix up this piece of writing to make it much better, what would you do?
- Say more...
- Tell me more...

## COMPLIMENT

---

- I want to compliment you. Some people are doing \_\_\_\_\_, but you're doing \_\_\_\_\_...
- You're doing really smart work as a writer. I see you...
- I noticed the way you're...

## TEACH

---

- You're already doing this work so well so I want to give you another tip...
- I think you're ready for the next step...
- Today I want to teach you...
- Watch me as I show you...
- One think I suggest is...
- One strategy I use when I write...
- Many writers find it helps to...
- Let's try this...
- Did you notice how...?

## LINK

---

- What are you going to do next?
- I'd like you to try what we talked about on your own...
- I'll be back (after my next conference/in \_\_\_\_\_ minutes) to see how it's going
- I'm leaving you this (tangible artifact) to remind you of the strategy we worked on today.
- Keep going!

(From Welcome to Writing Workshop by Shubitz and Dorfman)

# Writing Conference Form

Student:

Writing Title:

Research Notes:

Compliment:

Teach:

Link:

# READING AND WRITING THROUGH THE YEAR SNAPSHOT

Alongside systematic phonemic awareness and phonics, students will be learning about reading and writing strategies to build comprehension and strengthen written communication and creativity. When these strategies are used to develop thinking, meaning, understanding, and metacognition, reading comprehension will align with decoding skills to support overall reading development. The suggested pairing of these approaches in this chart may help to clarify the purpose and ways you can do this.

Reading Comprehension Strategies	BC Curriculum
Make Connections	<b>Communicates:</b> sharing and describing ideas, information, presenting ideas, information and justifying a reason for a decision or idea
Ask Questions	
Draw Inferences	<b>Makes Meaning From Text:</b> looking at texts for understanding, extracting ideas and information for the task, applying strategies
Determine Importance	
Analyze and Synthesize	
Monitor Comprehension	

"Learning to sound out, or 'decode' words involves a finite set of skills that, when practiced in a systemic way, usually lead to success. But reading comprehension is different. It's not just a reading process. It's inextricably connected to the process of learning in general. And cognitive scientists have found that the key factor in learning new information is how much relevant information you already have."

*Natalie Wexler, Forbes*

## ASSESSING FOR SMALL GROUP/GUIDED READING

A book at an *instructional* reading level is more challenging for the reader but is not too hard. With instructional support and scaffolding of skills, these books help move students forward in their learning. Instructional levels are used to plan and teach guided reading groups. Teachers use sets of decodable books and/or guided reading books (depending on need) to support small groups of students in reading at their instructional level. See the upcoming page on reading comprehension for more detailed information.

### THE JUST RIGHT BOOK

#### I-PICK

**Purpose** - I have a reason to read this book.

**Interest** - I am really interested in this topic, story or author!

**Comprehension** - I understand the text and can retell it (story elements, big ideas, and supporting details).

**Know** - I know almost every word and I can read it smoothly and with expression.

*(Gail Boushey and Joan Moser - used with permission)*

A "just right" book is one you are interested in and that you can read accurately, fluently, and with good comprehension.

An *independent* reading level is when the reader knows most of the words and can comprehend the text without much difficulty or any support from the teacher. A book at the independent level is often referred to as a "just right" book. An independent level book should sound smooth when read aloud and feel comfortable to read. These books can be regular children's literature that students have chosen that are just right. These are the types of books suitable for home reading as are more difficult books of interest to the child if they are being read to or enjoying a book together with someone at home.

# READING ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES FOR K-8

## September – October

1. **Kindergarten:** due to gradual entry and the time needed to understand the variety of needs as students transition into school, there is a delayed timeline for collecting baseline data. Begin with observations (formal and informal) on what students already know about concepts of print. Explicitly teach concepts such as rhyme, on-set rime, segmenting, blending and emphasize the building of vocabulary. Submit to the administration the letter and sound identification knowledge of each student by the end of October.
2. **Grade 1-7:** Review June reading levels (gr. 2-7). Administer a Fountas and Pinnell assessment. Begin by assessing students who were **emerging in reading level/proficiency level** based on June results. Grade 1 and some emerging students/diverse learners in other grades may require a phonemic awareness/phonics screener at the beginning of the year instead of or in addition to the F & P or GB+ so that specific skills can be targeted.
3. Submit **emerging** levels/skills-based assessment results to Administration and School-Based Team staff by the end of September.
4. Assess the rest of the students (F&P, Dart, or GB+) by mid-October.
5. Guided reading groups can begin and be adjusted as more information is gained about your students.

## Ongoing

1. Kindergarten: Continue teaching explicit phonemic awareness skills as well as embedding them into everyday routines and playful literacy activities.
2. Administer F&P or GB+ for struggling readers regularly (1-2 times per term). Beginning readers may require a phonemic awareness screener instead if they are in the early stages of reading.
3. Continue ongoing formative assessment strategies to pinpoint where instruction is needed.
  - reader's notebooks
  - reading conferences
  - anecdotal records
  - literature circle observations
  - performance standards
4. Teachers should be aware of students' reading abilities at all times during the year (formally or informally).
5. Small group instruction for all students. Try to meet with struggling students on a more frequent basis (daily if possible).
6. Kindergarten: administer the full KSP at the end of January/beginning of February. (Some of these skills you will already know where your students are at through instruction and ongoing assessment). Submit results to Admin.

## End of Each Term

1. Submit instructional reading levels/proficiency levels of students to Administration. (Proficiency levels take into consideration all evidence of learning: running records, F&P/ Dart/GB+ or student evidence of fluency, accuracy, and comprehension).

## May

1. F&P (or Dart) at the end of May: whole class.
2. Submit instructional reading levels to Administration.



# Instructional Reading Level Targets for Primary Students

	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
<b>Grade 1</b>	Guidelines For All Grades			Guidelines For All Grades
September	<p>To be considered <b>emerging</b> for <b>instruction</b>, students must be considerably behind in <b>reading behaviours and levels</b>; (ex. In Sept. grade 1, students might be in the beginning-middle stages of learning alphabet sounds and letters.)</p> <p>In later grades or another time of year, this might look like one reading level or more below the developing level with several “reading behaviours” not evident.</p> <p>These students will need targeted tier 2 classroom instruction.</p>	<p>Many letter sounds (phonemes) Many letter names (graphemes)</p>	<p>All letter sounds (phonemes) All letter names (graphemes) - A-B</p>	<p>When assessing students that are <b>extending for instructional purposes</b>, only assess to one full grade reading level beyond. (ex. Nov. Gr. 1 = E, assess to Nov. Gr. 2 = K) These students will <b>require reading lessons, strategies and tasks</b> that enable them to go <b>deeper into comprehension</b>.</p> <p>Assessing beyond a full grade level for instruction does not take into account <b>content load, vocabulary, literary language</b> etc. that might not have been taught yet. It also makes it difficult for next year’s teacher because the books have already been read.</p>
November		B-C	D-E	
March		D-E	F-G	
June		F-G	H-I	
<b>Grade 2</b>				
September		F-G	H-J	
November		H-I	J-K	
March		J	K-L	
June		K	L-M	
<b>Grade 3</b>				
September		J-K	L-N	
November		L-M	N-O	
March		M-N	O	
June		N-O	P	

Use the reading level, reading behaviours in the **Literacy Continuum** and any observations or conversations to determine when to move a student forward to the next instructional reading level. Please see the next page for the specific BAS scoring.

## Instructional Reading Level Targets for Intermediate Students

	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
<b>Grade 4</b>	Guidelines For All Grades			Guidelines For All Grades
September		N-O	P	
November		O-P	Q	
March		P-Q	R	
June		Q-R	S-T	
<b>Grade 5</b>				
September	To be considered <b>emerging</b> for <b>instruction</b> , students must be considerably behind in reading <u>behaviours</u> and levels.			When assessing students that are extending for <b>instructional purposes</b> , only assess to one full grade reading level beyond. (ex. Nov. Gr. 5 = U, assess to Nov. Gr. 6 = W) These students will require reading lessons, strategies and tasks that enable them to go <b>deeper into comprehension</b> .
November		Q-R	S-T	
March		R-S	T-U	
June		S-T	U-V	
<b>Grade 6</b>	In intermediate, this might look like one reading level or more below the developing level with several "reading behaviours" not evident.	U-V	V-W	Going beyond a full grade level in assessment does not take into account <b>content load</b> , <b>vocabulary</b> , <b>literary language</b> etc. that might not have been taught yet. It also makes it difficult for next year's teacher because the books have already been read.
September				
November		T-U	V-W	
March		U-V	W	
June	These students will need targeted tier 2 classroom instruction.	V-W	X	
<b>Grade 7</b>		W-X	Y	
September				
November		W-X	Y-Z	
March		W-X	Y-Z	
June		X-Y	Z	

Use the reading level, reading behaviours in the **Literacy Continuum** and any observations or conversations to determine when to move a student forward to the next instructional reading level. Please see the next page for the specific BAS scoring.

# FOUNTAS & PINNELL BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT

## SCORING FOR EDITION 1 AND 2 FOR COMPREHENSION

For the reading level to be instructional, one of the following should be true for levels A–K:

- The child reads 90–94% of the words accurately with proficiency of approaching proficiency in comprehension.
- The child reads 95–100% of the words accurately with limited proficiency comprehension.

Accuracy Levels A – K	Comprehension			
	Excellent 6–7	Satisfactory 5	Limited 4	Unsatisfactory 0–3
95–100%	Independent	Independent	Instructional	Hard
90–94%	Instructional	Instructional	Hard	Hard
Below 90%	Hard	Hard	Hard	Hard

For the reading level to be instructional, one of the following should be true for levels L–Z:

- The child reads 95–97% of the words accurately with proficiency of approaching proficiency in comprehension.
- The child reads 98–100% of the words accurately with limited proficiency comprehension.

Accuracy Levels L – Z	Comprehension			
	Excellent 9–10	Satisfactory 7–8	Limited 5–6	Unsatisfactory 0–4
98–100%	Independent	Independent	Instructional	Hard
95–97%	Instructional	Instructional	Hard	Hard
Below 95%	Hard	Hard	Hard	Hard

**Niveaux de lecture INSTRUCTIFS - GB+ (Immersion française)**

Émergent ➡ En voie d'acquisition ➡ Compétent ➡ Approfondi

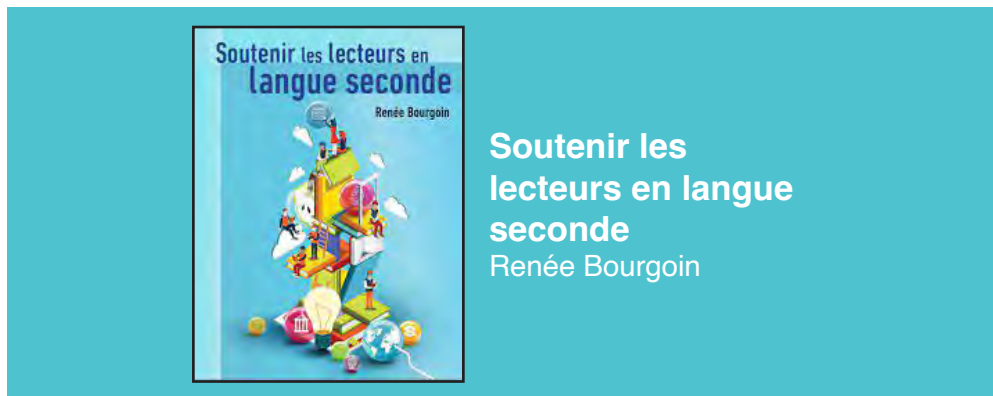
	Informations pour tous les niveaux			Informations pour tous les niveaux
<b>1<sup>ère</sup> année</b>	Pour être considérés comme émergent quand on rapporte sur les progrès des élèves, ces élèves doivent être considérablement en retard avec les stratégies de lectures et en niveaux de lecture (par exemple, en février, les élèves de 1 <sup>ère</sup> année peuvent se trouver au début ou au milieu de l'apprentissage des sons et des lettres de l'alphabet).			Pour considérer que l'élève est 'approfondi', l'élève doit lire à au moins un niveau complet au-dessus du dernier niveau compétent avec une compréhension, un décodage, une fluidité complète et avec une exactitude à travers des genres. L'élève fait preuve de ses stratégies de lecture (prédire, résumer, inférer, utiliser ses connaissances antérieures, synthétiser, analyser).
1 <sup>e</sup> terme			Alphabet, sons et 30 mots fréquents	
2 <sup>e</sup> terme		3 – 4	5 – 6	
3 <sup>e</sup> terme		5 – 6	7 – 8	
<b>2<sup>e</sup> année</b>				Lors de l'évaluation des élèves qui sont 'approfondi', ne les évaluez que jusqu'à un niveau scolaire complet au-delà (ei: nov. 2 <sup>e</sup> année – pas plus haut que niveau 17). Ces élèves auront besoin de leçons de lecture, de stratégies et de tâches qui leur permettront d'approfondir leur compréhension.
1 <sup>e</sup> terme		7 – 8	9 – 10	
2 <sup>e</sup> terme		9 – 10	11 – 12	
3 <sup>e</sup> terme		11 – 12	13 – 15	
<b>3<sup>e</sup> année</b>	Dans les classes supérieures ou à un autre moment de l'année, cela peut ressembler à un niveau minimum du niveau de développement. L'élève peut aussi démontrer plusieurs "comportements de lecture" non évidents.			Aller au-delà d'un niveau scolaire complet dans l'évaluation complique la tâche de l'enseignant de l'année suivante, car les livres ont déjà été utilisés.
1 <sup>e</sup> terme		13 – 14	15 – 17	
2 <sup>e</sup> terme		16 – 17	18 – 20	
3 <sup>e</sup> terme		19 – 20	21 – 22	
<b>4<sup>e</sup> année</b>				
1 <sup>e</sup> terme		20 – 21	22 – 23	
2 <sup>e</sup> terme		22 – 23	24	
3 <sup>e</sup> terme		24	25	
<b>5<sup>e</sup> année</b>				
1 <sup>e</sup> terme		24	26	
2 <sup>e</sup> terme		26	27	
3 <sup>e</sup> terme		27	28 – 29	
<b>6<sup>e</sup> année</b>				
1 <sup>e</sup> terme		28	29 – 30	
2 <sup>e</sup> terme		29	30	
3 <sup>e</sup> terme		30	*	

Les niveaux indiqués sont des niveaux de lecture instructif (non indépendant). C'est avec une précision de 90% à 95% avec une exactitude, fluidité et compréhension.

### **L'évaluation du niveau instructif :**

Un niveau de lecture instructif est le niveau le plus élevé qu'un enfant peut lire, mais avec le soutien de l'enseignant pour améliorer la compréhension. Dans la plupart des cas, les compétences en résolution de mots sont suffisantes, bien qu'il puisse s'agir d'un problème mineur comme lire correctement **é** et **er** à la fin d'un mot (cela n'affecte pas le sens, mais c'est considéré comme une erreur). L'enfant peut avoir une bonne compréhension malgré les erreurs OU l'enfant peut avoir une compréhension limitée, ce qui indique que le texte est trop difficile.

Pour déterminer le niveau de difficulté du texte pour l'élève, compter les erreurs et trouver le taux de précision. Si l'élève est entre 90% et 95%, ce niveau est instructif pour cet élève. Si le texte est bien facile ou trop difficile, choisir un autre livre. Le but est de donner à l'enseignant de l'information pour aider l'élève à progresser.





# EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

## LITERACY

### Reading

Use the Fountas & Pinnell/GB + assessment kit and include observations of reading behaviours from the Literacy Continuum or *Soutenir les lecteurs en langue seconde* (by Renée Bourgoin) and any other products, observations and conversations to determine the overall level of reading proficiency.

### Writing

Use the Ministry rubrics for writing and/or rubrics created to assess multiple examples of student writing tasks over time. These can include stories and text such as:

- **oral texts** (ex. speeches, poems, plays),
- **visual texts** (ex. posters, photographs),
- **digital texts** (ex. electronic forms of the above)

to determine proficiency. Writing across the curriculum should be considered (ex. writing in mathematics to explain how they solved a problem or writing in science to describe an animal habitat or a country's geography).

### Oral Language & Communication

Use the literacy continuum behaviours and/or other oral language and communication rubrics applicable to the task to determine proficiency. You can extract information about oral language and communication skills from tasks or observations in writing, reading and other areas across the curriculum.

### Essential Question:

If a student is "developing" in one of the three areas of literacy, ask: at what stage of "developing" is the student? Are they making steady progress? Will they be able to acquire new skills from lessons to become proficient soon?

If the answer is yes, and the other two areas are strong, you may consider proficient in literacy. If not, then the proficiency level would be approaching.

# GENERAL LITERACY GUIDELINES THROUGH THE YEAR

As no year or student is ever the same, this is a general idea of what a year of literacy may look like. Scaffolding and revisiting these strategies are important. Suggested reading and writing strategies and skills have been provided to give teachers an idea of how they could fit into a year-long plan. However, teachers are encouraged to understand their own students' literacy needs and plan accordingly. More detailed information and practical ideas will follow in the literacy elaborations as a separate document.



## Beginning of the Year September– December

- Get to know your students and families. Developing trust and relationships is the key foundation to all other learning.
- Create a classroom library that is organized and labelled (by theme, by series, and including other cultures) and is a welcoming place to go. Use literacy as a way to get to know students and for students to see themselves in books.
- Set up spaces in the classroom that are organized and welcoming.
- Set up and teach literacy routines and structures (such as Word Works Daily, the Workshop Model, and Literature Circles). This is critical to overall classroom management. Start with a book look/read to self/quiet reading to build stamina.
- Take time and plan lessons that incorporate student names and promote student identity
- Teach the students who have launched into reading how to pick a "just right" book. Provide quiet reading time for all students.
- Organize learning as an inquiry that supports the Early Learning Framework model and the intermediate curriculum. Literacy is found all through the curriculum. Incorporate social studies or science into the students' learning.
- Provide time for students to explore meaningful, choice-based writing and partner speaking and listening activities.
- Share a morning message or have a morning meeting discussion where students will engage in reading, listening, speaking and building comprehension.
- Build-in simple student self-assessment structures. (Thumbs up, thumbs down)
- Begin to model open-ended questions during literacy/book discussions and/or classroom meetings.
- Use assessments to group students for small group instruction. Begin small group instruction with your most vulnerable readers (and writers). Try to read with them daily even if it is at another time of the day.
- Recognize and teach that different cultures have different kinds of stories. (ie. Indigenous stories do not have a beginning, middle and end.)
- Teach students about author's purpose: persuade, inform, entertain. Relate it to books you are reading aloud and during shared reading and to writing when choosing their topic.

# GENERAL LITERACY GUIDELINES THROUGH THE YEAR

## January – March

- Continue with on-going assessments to inform instruction
- Reinforce the use of orthographic mapping for spelling rather than using an isolated spelling list.
- Continue with small group instruction for all students, and those needing additional support/skill development. Co-plan and consider a co-teaching model with resource, ELL, or other non-enrolling teachers/professionals to help you reach more students and facilitate the learning of the class while small group instruction is going on.
- Use mentor texts (quality children's literature) to teach students about what makes a good story and poems to teach word choice and build fluency during shared/interactive reading and writing.
- Reassess your vulnerable readers every 3 to 4 weeks and restructure groups as necessary. Use dictated sentences to plan next steps in reading and writing with younger learners and ones with diverse needs.
- Teach/reteach the writing process and take students through the cycle in lessons that are suitable for the grade level. Not all writing needs to be polished. Some writing stays in draft all year.
- Bring in Indigenous authors and compare and contrast with other authors.
- Increase the regularity and complexity of the student self-assessment. See the assessment section of this guide for more ideas.

## April – June

- Continue teaching mini-lessons based on literacy needs and goals.
- Use a folder and/or notebook for students to practice their writing. Use these writing samples as formative assessments then scaffold their learning with new mini-lessons to help students progress.
- Continue to use the anchor charts created together to refer back to and showcase student work on bulletin boards.
- Be sure to allow many opportunities for students to volunteer to read and write and to share their writing aloud to help improve oral language.

Tip: Co-plan some lessons with your resource or ELL teacher to reach more students in your literacy block.

# General Assessment Practices

Effective classroom assessment practices support student achievement by informing students, parents, and teachers on where students are at with their learning and establishing new learning goals (BC Curriculum, 2017). Research indicates that there are common principles that can be used to determine quality assessment. This section describes these principles of assessment, ways teachers can gather authentic information, and how to embed formative assessment in the classroom. For more information about assessment, see the Langley document, *CSL and Rethinking Assessment Guide*.

## Guiding Principles

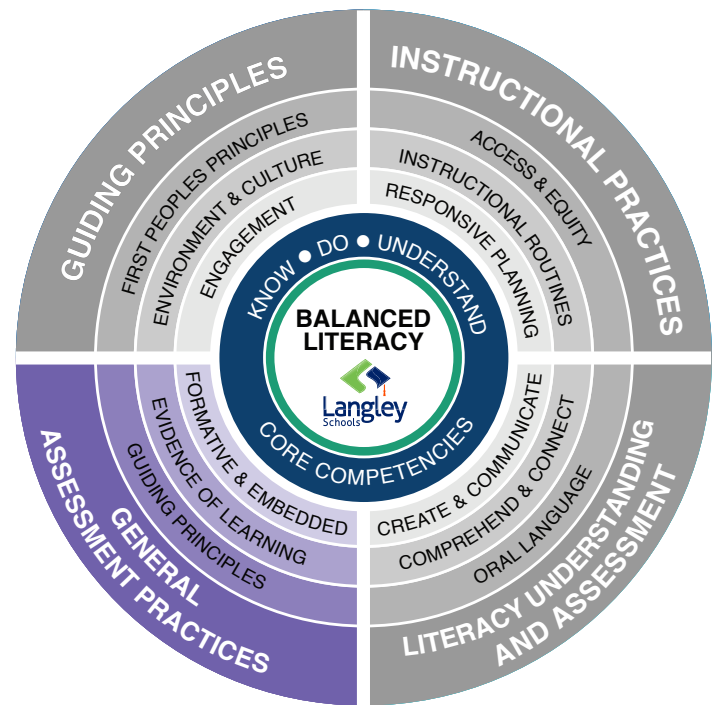
There are fundamental practices to consider when designing and implementing effective assessments in the literacy classroom. These guiding principles are based on evidence-based research and support a balanced approach to quality assessment.

## Evidence of Learning

All assessment is designed with the student in mind and is strength-based. Teachers are encouraged to obtain information from a variety of sources, such as products, observations, and conversations with the students. At times, teachers can provide students with a choice to show their literacy understanding in multiple ways to accommodate different learning styles and strengths.

## Formative and Embedded

Formative assessment informs both the teacher and the student of the learning that is happening in that moment of time. Embedding assessment into daily classroom experiences provides opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know, understand, and can do in relation to the Language Arts learning standards.



“The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning.”  
*Anne Davies, PhD, Making Classroom Assessment Work, 2011.*

“Minute by minute, day by day, strategic formative assessment can substantially improve student achievement.”  
*Dylan Wiliam*

# EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT

<b>Competency-Based</b>	Effective assessment reflects where the student's skill level is in relation to the curricular competencies. It balances the measurement of both literacy content and processes (conversations, observations, and products).  Evidence of learning and professional judgement determines proficiency.
<b>Explicit, Accessible, and Transparent</b>	Effective assessment requires clear learning intentions and communicates success criteria so that learning is accessible for all students.
<b>Relational</b>	Effective assessment fosters hope, efficacy, and a culture of learning.
<b>Reflective and Responsive</b>	Effective assessment includes ongoing descriptive feedback to promote student reflections and inform next steps. It focuses on student improvement and measures growth over time.
<b>Student-Centred</b>	Effective assessment empowers students through voice and choice. It includes a variety of assessment formats such as products, observations, and conversations with the students.
<b>Student Agency</b>	Effective assessment guides students in understanding and articulating their learning.

*The primary purpose of assessment is to improve teaching and learning. This is embedded into lessons every day.*

- ▶ **Learning Intentions:** students understand what they are expected to learn.
- ▶ **Clear Criteria for Success:** co-construct criteria for quality and success.
- ▶ **Effective Questioning:** use questioning that promotes deep thinking and learning.
- ▶ **Descriptive Feedback:** provide specific detailed feedback.
- ▶ **Self and Peer Assessment:** students are reflective and involved in the assessment process.
- ▶ **Student Ownership:** have students share with others and communicate their learning.

*(Black & Williams, 1998)*

“Any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting pupils' learning.”

*(Assessment for Learning)*



# EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

Assessments may be formal or informal. They may be formative (on-going throughout a term or block of time) or summative at the end of the learning. Assessments of all types provide evidence for teachers to make decisions about the next steps forward in the students' learning.

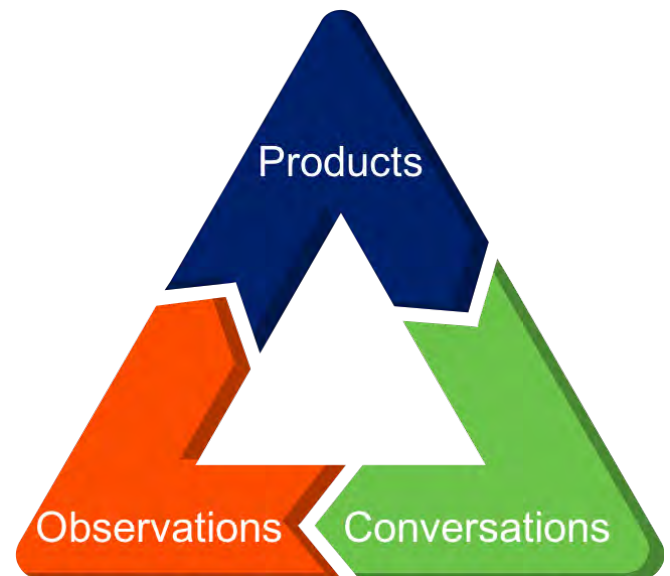
The purpose of formative assessment is to gather evidence of what the students know, can do, and understand during the learning process. Teachers are encouraged to obtain information from a variety of sources, such as products, observations and conversations with the students. Many students can demonstrate their understanding more accurately using some formats over others. For example, some students may do better with a written format and others may prefer to draw pictures or explain their thinking and learning through talking. When students can show their literacy understanding in multiple ways, teachers can accommodate different learning styles and strengths.

Tasks need to be accessible for all students and invite students to reflect on and about their learning:

- ▶ projects/assignments
- ▶ notebooks
- ▶ short tests and quizzes demonstrations of thinking (making thinking visible)
- ▶ exit tasks

Some learning can only be observed:

- ▶ anecdotal notes



The CSL triangulation model can be used to inform assessment of all aspects of literacy proficiency levels (*CSL Guide*).

- ▶ checklists
- ▶ formal and informal presentations
- ▶ performance tasks (individual and group)
- ▶ questioning

As students think and explain, teachers gather evidence about what they know, can do, and understand:

- ▶ class meetings
- ▶ conferences (individual, peer, and small group)
- ▶ cooperative tasks

## Effective Assessment Tools - Criteria

When choosing or creating assessments, it is important that the assessments elicit the right kind of evidence. Assessment tools, whether formative or summative, that have been created by publishers or others, don't always address the targeted learning goals or even the correct literacy curriculum. When this is the case, it is recommended that teachers create assessments for their own students such as discussions, questioning and performance tasks.

Effective assessment tasks:

- ▶ Directly relate to the learning intentions.
- ▶ Are explicit about what learners are required to do.
- ▶ Include clear assessment criteria.
- ▶ Are fair to all students including those with additional needs.
- ▶ Are scored based on rubrics.
- ▶ Are appropriate for where learners are in their learning.

# FORMATIVE & EMBEDDED

## Examples

<b>Diagnostics</b>	<b>Screeners</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kindergarten Screening Protocol (KSP)</li> <li>Qpas Phonemic Awareness Screener</li> <li>D.A.R.T.</li> <li>Word Their Way screener</li> <li>Diagnostic tools from « Soutenir les lecteurs en lange seonde by Renée Bourgoin »</li> </ul>
<b>Interviews/Conferences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Probe for understanding during or after reading</li> <li>Converse about current work on writing skills or traits</li> <li>Identify misconceptions (ex. in spelling development)</li> </ul>
<b>Products</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drawings that represent ideas</li> <li>Story workshop story display</li> <li>Journals, learning logs, exit slips</li> <li>Writing samples</li> <li>Digital read-aloud sample</li> <li>Infographic posters, blog posts, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Observations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observing and listening to students, providing feedback.</li> <li>Anecdotal notes</li> <li>Checklists</li> <li>Questioning</li> </ul>
<b>Open Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow students to demonstrate their critical thinking.</li> <li>Allow students to approach from a variety of background knowledge and strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>Peer &amp; Self Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Journal Entries</li> <li>Verbal Check-ins</li> </ul>
<b>Rubrics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry and/or teacher-created based on topics and standards related to the particular lesson. These can be generic or task-specific.</li> </ul>
<b>Portfolios</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Piece of writing or drawing</li> <li>Record growth over time and enables students to go back and reflect</li> <li>Videos, portfolios</li> <li>Student narratives</li> </ul>



“The Latin root for assessment is assidere, to sit beside.

It's the best seat in the house for a teacher.”

*Carol Jago, Teacher and Reader*

# FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (INDIVIDUAL)

<b>One Sentence Summary</b>	Students are asked to write a summary sentence that answers the "who, what, where, when, why, how" questions about the topic.
<b>One Word Summary</b>	Select (or invent) one word which best summarizes a topic.
<b>Ticket to Leave</b>	Closing activity where students respond in writing or verbally to short assignments.
<b>Red Green Yellow Traffic Lights</b>	Give each student a small slip of paper. As they are working, they can draw a green circle if they are clear on the concept, yellow if they could use a bit of help, or red if they are not understanding.
<b>Self-Reflection</b>	Journals, sentence starters, 3-2-1 Summaries, Rubrics
<b>Misconception Check</b>	Present students with common or predictable misconceptions about a designated concept, principle, or process. Ask them whether they agree or disagree and explain why. The misconception check can also be presented in the form of a multiple choice or true-false quiz.
<b>Student Conference</b>	One-on-one conversation with students to check their level of understanding.
<b>Index Card Summaries/ Questions</b>	On an index card ask students to write on both sides, with these instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side 1: List a big idea that you understand and word it as a summary statement.</li> <li>• Side 2: Identify something that you do not yet fully understand and word it as a statement or question.</li> </ul>
<b>Exit Slips</b>	A written student response to questions posed at the end of a class or learning activity or at the end of a day on a small slip of paper.
<b>Journal Entry</b>	Students record in a journal their understanding of the topic, concept, or lesson taught.
<b>Self-Assessment Goal Setting</b>	A process in which students collect information about their own learning, analyze what it reveals about their progress, and plan the next steps in their learning by setting a goal.
<b>Portfolio Check</b>	Check the progress of a student's portfolio. A portfolio is a purposeful collection of significant work, carefully selected, dated and presented to tell the story of a student's achievement or grow in well-defined areas.

# FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES (WHOLE GROUP)

<b>Hand Signals</b>	Ask students to display a designated hand signal to indicate their understanding of a specific concept, principle, or process: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I understand can explain, it (e.g., thumbs up).</li><li>• I do not yet understand (e.g., thumbs down).</li><li>• I'm not completely sure about it (e.g., wave hand).</li></ul>
<b>One Minute Questions</b>	A one-minute question is a focused question with a specific goal that can be answered within a minute or two. Consider using white boards or worksheet covers, and dry erase markers.
<b>Graphic Organizers</b>	Any of several forms of graphical organizers which allow learners to perceive relationships between concepts through diagramming key words, listing, or organizing key concepts. (Concept Map, Web, Venn Diagram, Frayer Model, 3 Column Notes).
<b>Observation</b>	Walk around the classroom and observe students as they work to check for learning. Strategies include: Anecdotal Records, Conferences, Checklists.
<b>Choral Response</b>	In response to a cue, all students respond verbally at the same time.
<b>A-B-C Summaries</b>	Each student in the class is assigned a different letter of the alphabet and they must select a word starting with that letter that is related to the topic being studied.
<b>Idea Spinner</b>	The teacher creates a spinner marked into four quadrants and labeled "Predict, Explain, Summarize, Evaluate." After new material is presented, the teacher spins the spinner and asks students to answer a question based on the location of the spinner.
<b>Inside/Outside Circle</b>	Inside and outside circles of students face each other. Within each pair of facing students, students quiz each other with questions they have written. Outside circle moves to create new pairs. Repeat.
<b>Numbered Heads Together</b>	Each student is assigned a number. Members of a group work together to agree on an answer. The teacher randomly selects one number. Student with that number answers for the group.
<b>Commit and Toss</b>	Students record their thinking or response to a question or concept. They crumple up the paper and toss it in the middle of the room. Students then retrieve a different piece of paper, read, and then discuss.
<b>Think-Pair-Share</b>	Students think individually, then pair (discuss with partner), then share with the class.
<b>Turn to a Partner</b>	Teacher gives direction to students. Students formulate individual response, and then turn to a partner to share their answers. Teacher calls on several random pairs to share their answers with the class.

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