**Elements described in detail**

**Balanced Literacy Elements**

The following pages are adapted from the *Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools Balanced Literacy Reference Guide (2012).* They describe each of the separate elements within the menus in detail. Each page includes:

1. **Definition**
2. **Purpose**
3. **The role of the teacher**
4. **The role of the student**
5. **What the administrator will see**
6. **Home/school connection**
7. **Resources**

**READ ALOUD**

**Definition:** Reading aloud motivates students to learn to want to read, extends their oral language, and gives them opportunities to connect new information to what they already know. By being immersed in well chosen texts (including a variety of genres and representing our diverse society) children learn to love reading and stories. The teacher reads aloud materials that are at students’ listening level but above their reading level. The teacher reads aloud to the whole class. The students are actively engaged in thinking about the text. (Fountas & Pinnell, *Guided Reading*, 1996)

**Purpose**: To involve students in reading for enjoyment, to improve students’ listening skills, reading comprehension, and attitudes toward reading, and to build vocabulary and background knowledge. Reading aloud also allows the teacher to model fluent oral reading. (Fountas & Pinnell, *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency*, 2006)

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To share with students a love of reading
* To model oral reading fluency
* To build vocabulary and extend background knowledge
* To share texts of appropriate text complexity with students and to model appropriate reading behavior
* To read a variety of genre and other materials (including web-based text, magazines and newspapers)
* To include books and other materials that students may not read on their own

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To enjoy listening to a variety of genres read aloud
* To build listening and comprehension skills through reading.
* To increase their vocabulary foundation by hearing words in context
* To improve their memory and language skills as they hear a variety of writing styles and paraphrase their understanding
* To gain information about the world around them
* To develop individual interests in a broad variety of subjects

**The Administrator will see:**

* The teacher enthusiastically reading literature to students everyday
* The teacher is a happy and effective reading model
* The teacher is respectful of all students’ cultures and backgrounds
* Students who are engaged in listening to a variety of genres read aloud

**Home/school connections:**

* Families/caretakers visit libraries and bookstores frequently
* Families/caretakers read and/or reread stories to and with their children

**Resources:**

Fountas & Pinnell, *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency*, 2006

Fountas & Pinnell, *The Continuum of Literacy Learning*, 2011

Harvey & Goudvis, *Strategies That Work*, 2007

Miller, *Reading with Meaning, 2002*

Routman, *Reading Essentials*, 2003

**THINK ALOUD**

**Definition:** Think-alouds help students understand the kind of thinking required by a specific task. The teacher models thinking processes by verbalizing thoughts as she/he reads, processes information, or performs some learning task. Students see how the teacher attempts to construct meaning for unfamiliar vocabulary, engages in dialogue with the author, or recognizes when she or he doesn’t comprehend and selects a fix-up strategy that addresses a problem she/ he is having. Ineffective readers especially benefit from observing what skilled readers think about while reading.

**Purpose:** To improve students reading comprehension by learning how to self- monitor their thinking as they read. This meta-cognitive awareness is a crucial component of learning, because it slows down the reading process and enables the learner to assess their level of comprehension and adjust their strategies for greater success.

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To explain what strategies consists of and why these strategies are important
* To explain when to use a strategy in actual reading (e.g., what to notice in a text that tips off the reader that this particular strategy should be used)
* To model how to perform the strategy in actual context (e.g., by doing a think-aloud using a real text) while students observe
* To guide learners practice; walk through challenging examples of the strategies together using authentic text
* To model thinking within, beyond, and about a text (during and after reading)
* To model how to look for evidence that incorporates new information into their previous understanding of a topic (“ I used to think \_\_\_ but this line/phrase/sentence leads me to now think \_\_\_\_\_\_”)
* To scaffold the learning when students learn a new strategy

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To stop and think along with the teacher
* To engage in routines like “turn and talk” to share what they noticed or observed the teacher doing to support her/his comprehension
* To practice the strategies in their own reading
* To model their own think-alouds with whole class, small groups, or with a partner
* To track their own thinking and use strategies to “fix-up” their comprehension when it falters

**The Administrator will see:**

* The teacher modeling her thinking as she reads aloud to the whole class or group of students
* The teacher explicitly teaching comprehension strategies
* The teacher gradually release the responsibility to the students
* Students practicing/sharing their own think-alouds and implementing the strategies as they read independently or in guided groups

**Home/School Connection**

* To share/discuss the thinking strategies they use when they read or when comprehension gets lost

**Resources:** Harvey & Goudvis, *Strategies That Work*, 2007**;** Wilhelm, *Improving Comprehension with Think-Aloud Strategies*, 2001 **;** Taberski, *Comprehension From the Ground Up*, 2011

**SHARED READING**

**Definition:** When the teacher and students read together in unison from a shared text (big book, enlarged text on chart or screen, individual books). “The teacher leads the group, pointing to words or phrases. Reading is usually in unison, although there are adaptations, such as groups may read alternating lines or individuals reading some lines.” (*The Continuum of Literacy Learning*, Fountas & Pinnell, 2011) All participants can see and read the text.

**Purpose:** To build upon children’s interests and to increase their enjoyment and appreciation of stories, poems, rhymes, and chants as well as informational texts. Students are exposed to a text they can see multiple times and are invited to join in on the reading experience. A sense of community is established and students feel encouraged and confident to read along in this enthusiastic environment.

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To provide students with shared text (big book, enlarged text, individual books) that meets appropriate grade level complexity as well as the instructional needs of the group
* To provide many opportunities for students to participate in the reading of the selected text
* To provide a common reading experience for students to engage in rich discussions around text,
* To read interesting and concept-rich materials with the students
* To help students build content knowledge and academic vocabulary
* To lower the students affective filters and make the practicing of skills and strategies risk free
* To provide many opportunities for students to explore and apply skills and concepts being learned (In particular foundational skills)
* To look for evidence that students are “taking on” and applying new learning

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To understand concepts of print such as the left-to-right and top-to-bottom progression of text
* To participate in the reading in some way (echo, choral, group, individual)
* To match spoken words or phrases with written ones
* To explore and identify concepts being learned
* To demonstrate understanding of text meaning

**The Administrator will see:**

* Teacher engaging students in learning how to read
* Teacher noticing and commenting on what students are able to do and are doing well
* Students understanding that print carries a message and demonstrating comprehension
* Students participating in the reading in various ways
* Students beginning to match spoken words and phrases with written ones
* Students making attempts to read on their own

**Home/School Connection**

* Encourage families to sit side by side with their child while reading so that both can see the text and invite their child to join in when they are comfortable as they read together

**Resource:** Cunningham & Allington, *Classrooms That Work: They Can all Read and Write*, 1999**;** Fountas & Pinnell, *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency*, 2006**;** Fountas & Pinnell, *The Continuum of Literacy Learning*, 2011**;** Routman, *Reading Essentials*, 2003

K-12 Reader- <http://www.k12reader.com/shared-reading-%E2%80%93-a-critical-component-of-balanced-literacy-instruction/>

**INTERACTIVE READ ALOUD**

**Definition**: “The interactive read aloud with accountable talk provides time for the students to listen to and talk about wonderful books that are most likely beyond their independent reading levels…During interactive read aloud with accountable talk , the teacher models the work that careful readers do to comprehend texts and to foster ideas and theories…Because the teacher is doing most of the reading, children can concentrate on using strategies for comprehension and having accountable conversations about the text.” (Collins, *Growing Readers,* 2004) In an interactive read aloud the teacher holds all the responsibility of reading the text aloud but engages students in the process of interacting with the text in meaningful ways through strategic questioning and conversation prompts. Texts are usually shorter (article, picture book, poem) and may be revisited numerous times for different purposes.

**Purpose:** To improve students’ listening skills, discussion techniques, reading comprehension, ability to analyze complex text, attitudes toward reading, and to build vocabulary and background knowledge. A focus on using evidence from the text to support thinking is a critical component. Texts rich in meaning or language are used as a springboard for other activities. Often mentor texts are used in reading and writing lessons again and again.

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To teach lessons based on a stated or posted grade level standards
* To share texts of appropriate text complexity (in grade level band) with students
* To read a variety of genres- 50% literary and 50% informational
* To model and facilitate the use of effective strategies to access the message in a text before, during, and after reading
* To engage students in thinking within, beyond, and about a text (during and after reading)
* To plan routines like “stop and jot” (students stop periodically throughout the text to jot down their thinking) and “turn and talk” (students face each other and often using specific prompts or language stems to discuss the text at strategic times. The teacher “listens-in” on the partner discussions as a formative assessment technique)
* To look for evidence that students are meeting the rigor of the ELA grade specific standard
* To look for evidence that students can think analytically about texts, noticing the writer’s craft and style

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To enjoy listening to and discussing literature read aloud
* To engage in routines like “stop and jot “and “turn and talk”
* To explore ideas in the literature and informational texts they hear
* To search for evidence to support their thinking and speaking points

**The Administrator will see:**

* The teacher enthusiastically reading literature to students
* The teacher reading rich texts that reflect the cultures and backgrounds of the students
* Evidence of strategic learning through co-created charts
* Students who are engaged in listening and discussing texts being read aloud

**Home/School Connection**

* To read and reread stories and informational texts to and with their children

**Resource:** *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency*, 2006**;** Hoyt, Interactive *Read Alouds,* 2007**;** Routman, *Reading Essentials*, 2003

**CLOSE READING**

**Definition:** Close, analytic reading stresses engaging with a text of sufficient complexity directly and examining meaning thoroughly and methodically, encouraging students to read and reread deliberately. Directing student attention on the text itself empowers students to understand the central ideas and key supporting details. It also enables students to reflect on the meanings of individual words and sentences; the order in which sentences unfold; and the development of ideas over the course of the text, which ultimately leads students to arrive at an understanding of the text as a whole. [Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), 2011, p. 7]

**Purpose:** A significant body of research links the close reading of complex text—whether the student is a struggling reader or advanced—to significant gains in reading proficiency and finds close reading to be a key component of college and career readiness. (PARCC, 2011, p. 7)

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To identify and create access to a short piece of text (no more than 3 pages maximum and often shorter) that is of appropriate complexity (See grade level bands and exemplars in the CCSS Appendix A & B)
* To design a learning experience (typically that spans a few days) which include reading, writing, listening and speaking for students to unlock deep comprehension of the text much like peeling back the layers of an onion
* To ask a sequence of text dependent questions requiring both literal and inferential thinking that will lead students more deeply into a text through authentic discussions
* To gradually release students so that they are asking the text dependent questions that probe their own thinking and that of their peers
* To explicitly teach students how to approach a text to uncover its multiple layers of meaning by exploring aspects such as authors’ craft, text structures, and determining what the author is trying to show without stating it directly
* To provide scaffolded and extended learning that supports and differentiates based on the strengths and challenges of each learner

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To apply strategic reading behaviors to figure out what the text says explicitly
* To use evidence from the text to support thinking
* To figure out how the text worked by examining the authors craft such as organization of the text, what intentional literary devices or text features were used, why the author chose specific language or wording, etc.
* To determine the deeper meaning (themes, purpose) which may not be explicitly stated
* To critically evaluate a text for connecting ideas to other texts and to one’s own life
* To reread the text a number of times to uncover the multiple layers of meaning
* To participate in discussions (listen and speak) with peers to gain and share new perspectives
* To reflect and write about their insights

**The Administrator will see:**

* Teacher setting high expectations for all students
* Teacher providing scaffolding for students who may have difficulty accessing the text
* Teacher providing regular opportunities for students to discuss the text with one another
* Teacher asking text-based questions that unlock levels of meaning
* Teacher formatively assessing students in reference to standards
* Students strategically reading unknown words by using a variety of reading strategies
* Students demonstrating deep levels of comprehension
* Students writing about what they read

**Home/School Connection:**

* Encourage families to read short complex texts (as appropriate) with their child and discuss

**Resources:**

Boyles, *Closing in on Close Reading*, ASCD article December 2012/January 2013

Calkins, Ehrenworth & Lehman, *Pathways to the Common Core,* 2012

Fisher, Frey & Lapp, *Text Complexity, Raising Rigor in Reading, 2012*

**SOCRATIC SEMINAR**

**Definition:** Socratic seminars are named for their embodiment of Socrates’ belief in the power of asking questions, prize inquiry over information and discussion over debate.   Socratic seminars acknowledge the highly social nature of learning and align with the work of John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, and Paulo Friere.

Elfie Israel succinctly defines Socratic seminars and implies their rich benefits for students:

The Socratic seminar is a formal discussion, based on a text, in which the leader asks open-ended questions.  Within the context of the discussion, students listen closely to the comments of others, thinking critically for themselves, and articulate their own thoughts and their responses to the thoughts of others.  They learn to work cooperatively and to question intelligently and civilly. (89)

(Israel, Elfie.  “Examining Multiple Perspectives in Literature.”  In *Inquiry and the Literary Text: Constructing Discussions n the English Classroom*.  James Holden and John S. Schmit, eds.  Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2002. From: <http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/socratic-seminars-30600.html>)

**Purpose:** The Common Core state standards for speaking and listening state that in order for students to be ready for college and career, they must have “ample opportunities to take part in a variety of rich, structured conversations,” and “listen attentively to others so that they are able to build on others’ meritorious ideas while expressing their own clearly and persuasively.” Socratic Seminars embody these expectations of the Common Core and are a meaningful way to engage students from upper elementary to twelfth grade. (Heather Clayton Kwit, *Just Ask- Making the Common Core Come Alive!* 2013)

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To choose an authentic text that foster genuine inquiry
* To prepare students for the discussion by teaching them how to annotate the text, write about the text, take notes etc.
* To prepare open ended questions that will stimulate the discussion- eventually the students may take over this role
* To consider supplying discussion stems for students especially when students are new to this practice
* To establish student expectations/norms and format for discussion
* To facilitate the discussion but not as a significant participant – ask questions, remind students about procedures-
* Assess student understanding of text and ability to communicate respectfully and effectively based on standards

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To come to the seminar prepared
* To actively participate during the discussion
* To make eye contact when commenting or questioning, and direct their remarks to each other, rather than the leader or the teacher
* To frequently revisit the text, citing page numbers, specific quotes, or relevant excerpts
* To not raise their hands to speak, but rather listen for a time when they can step into the conversation
* To not interrupt one another
* To respectfully disagree with ideas, not the person who shared those ideas

Student role from:Heather Clayton Kwit*, Just Ask- Making the Common Core Come Alive!* 2013

**The Administrator will see:**

* Teacher asking open-ended questions to facilitate the discussion
* Evidence of thoughtful planning by the teacher prior to discussion (norms, format, stems, questions, etc.)
* Evidence of thoughtful preparation by the students prior to discussion (annotated texts, notes etc.)
* Students sitting in a circle or two concentric circles (fishbowl) discussing a text referring to page numbers and quotes to substantiate their thinking
* Students respectfully challenging one another and offering different view points
* Students demonstrating deep levels of comprehension

**Home/School Connection:**

* Encourage families to engage their children in discussions at home about critical issues, articles, and media

**Resources:**

Frey & Fisher, Rigorous Reading: *5 Access Points for Comprehending Complex Texts*, 2013

Frey & Fisher, [*Teaching Students to Read Like Detectives: Comprehending, Analyzing, and Discussing Text*](http://www.amazon.com/Teaching-Students-Read-Like-Detectives-ebook/dp/B006RIFQM6/ref%3Dsr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1388683077&sr=1-2&keywords=socratic+Seminars), 2011

Socratic Seminars: Making Meaningful Dialogue-<http://www.justaskpublications.com/CommonCoreNewsletter/Socratic%20Seminars%20-%20Making%20Meaningful%20Dialogue.pdf>

Socratic Seminar and The Common Core Standards- <http://webzoom.freewebs.com/charlesamesfischer/documents/Seminar%20and%20Common%20Core.pdf>

**SHARE CIRCLE/DEBRIEF - Reading and Writing**

**Definition:** Students have the opportunity to share their learning, thinking, successes, questions and/or problems they encountered during their reading/writing work time. Students share what learning went well, new learning they encountered and/or challenges. Students may also share their work as a celebration or to get feedback from their peers.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the share circle/debrief is for students to reflect on and celebrate their learning.“Research shows that self-assessment is critical to effective reading (Afflerbach 2002).When children know what effective readers and listeners do, they can validate their own activity as well as determine areas needing improvement (Opitz and Rasinski 1998). Therefore, the teaching of self-assessment strategies should be a central part of the balanced literacy curriculum.” (Owocki 2007)

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To develop self-reflection routines
* To ask if anyone was able to apply today's strategy during their independent work time or to highlight a student whom he/she observed applying the strategy during a 1:1 conference
* To consciously plan for students to be reading, writing and talking in order to make meaning of the world around them
* To engage students in synthesizing their thinking and learning
* To look for evidence that students can notice and incorporate new information into their own understanding and can think analytically about texts
* To notice patterns that emerge from student thinking/sharing and decide what students need later to deepen or review their learning
* To celebrate students best efforts
* To give students an authentic audience for their written work

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To share and celebrate their thinking/learning from independent work-time
* To share their writing with an authentic audience and get feedback
* To develop self assessment strategies – what did I learn about myself as a reader/writer today, what did I learn about, what areas do I need to improve…?
* To recognize strengths and weaknesses of their work and how to make improvements and corrections
* To engage in productive large group discussion
* To share connections from the lesson and their independent application

**The Administrator will see:**

* Teacher being respectful of all students’ cultures and backgrounds
* Teacher providing regular time for share circle and reflection
* Students engaged in listening and reflecting on their learning/thinking
* Students developing effective self-assessment – recognizing strengths, weaknesses, how to make improvements and make corrections

**HOME/SCHOOLCONNECTIONS:**

* To establish regular routines that encourage students to share their learning/thinking that occurred at school

**Resources:**

Bennett, Samantha *That Workshop Book* 2007

Owocki, Gretchen *Literate Days* 2007

Routman, Regie *Teaching Essentials,* 2008

**GUIDED READING**

**Definition:** Based on assessment, the teacher works with a small group of students (no more than 5 is ideal) who are reading at about the same instructional level and have similar needs. The students have individual copies of the text (short leveled readers) and independently read orally (whisper read) or silently the entire selection as the teacher observes, coaches, prompts, and evaluates their performance. (**This is not round robin reading**. **Students do not take turns reading a page orally as other students listen.)** The teacher scaffolds instruction as needed building on student strengths and addressing student reading challenges.

**Purpose:** To support and encourage the development of strategies to process increasingly challenging texts with fluency and understanding leading to independent reading. “…the greatest strength of guided reading is that it offers support for all the readers in our classrooms; the strongest and the weakest, the motivated and the indifferent, the million-word kids and the thousand-word kids.” (Rog, *Guiding Readers*, 2012)

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To utilize data from running record assessments such as the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment and on-going formative assessments to determine student strengths, challenges and the implications for instruction
* To group students into guided groups by level and needs
* To provide opportunities for students to read at their instructional level
* To select instructional level text for students to read and discuss in a range of genres (literary and informational 50/50)
* To read the text ahead of time and strategically plan intentional lesson(s) around the book features based on the needs of the specific learners in the group
* To support the development of students’ vocabularies by selecting materials that expand their knowledge of words and promote language development
* To make specific teaching points before and after reading of text aligned to standards and effective literacy behaviors (foundational skills, reading, writing, language etc.)
* To model strategies and provide practice for identifying unknown words
* To demonstrate and model strategies to use when comprehension breaks down
* To observe reading behaviors and provide prompts as needed
* To foster the reciprocity of reading and writing through intentional extended writing activities

**The Role of the Students is:**

* To identify an increasing number of words by sight
* To use a variety of reading strategies to read unfamiliar words
* To use comprehension strategies (e.g., rereading, predicting/inferring, questioning, etc.) to understand text and when meaning breaks down
* To participate in group discussions
* To write about the text

**The Administrator will see:**

* Teacher setting high expectations for all students
* Teacher utilizing knowledge of specific students to implement lesson plan scaffold instruction
* Teacher evaluating student reading behaviors on the spot and adjusting instruction as needed
* Teacher providing opportunities for students to share and collaborate
* Students strategically reading unknown words by using a variety of reading strategies
* Students monitoring for meaning and demonstrating comprehension
* Students writing about what they read

**Home/School Connection:**

* Once introduced, students should practice reading their guided reading books to family members

**Resources:**

Burkins & Croft, *Preventing Misguided Reading*, 2010

Fountas & Pinnell, *Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for all Children*, 1996

Fountas & Pinnell, *The Continuum of Literacy Learning,* 2011

Rog, *Guiding Readers*, 2012

Serravallo, *Teaching Reading in Small Groups*, 2010

*FYI: Knowing when to advance students to the next level involves a number of factors:*

* ***Informal running records:*** *Ideally the use of informal running records (a warm read) with students using a small variety of guided reading books (at least 3) to see if they fall into the "independent" category is a perfect indicator to move students to the next level. A text read with 98-100% accuracy and excellent or satisfactory comprehension is considered independent. Too often we hold students back wanting to make sure they can read many books at one level (with the best of intent). Consider keeping students in their “zone of proximal development” through additional scaffolds if necessary rather than holding them back.*
* ***Level characteristics:*** *Using the Leveled Overview of Reading Stages found in your DRA assessment kit under the title of “Moving Into Instruction (found on page 120), teachers can use the characteristics of each level and move students up as they are able to tackle the known characteristics. Keep in mind however that not all leveled books are created equal. Students should be able to apply skills and strategies in a variety of texts at a single level. In combination with "time," attending to a student’s ability to master specific characteristics of a level before moving forward makes sense.*
* ***Time:*** *Students scoring Basic and Below Basic on the beginning of the year D.R.A.*

*will receive intervention through Progress Monitoring Assessments throughout the year.*

* ***Upping the level:*** *Finally, there is a lot of conversation out there about spending more time with struggling readers scaffolding frustrational level “stretch” texts with the implementation of CCSS. Fisher and Frey suggest that at the primary grades it makes sense to continue using mainly leveled texts while at the intermediate grades adding more grade level complex texts into the small group work. Of course this requires lots of scaffolding at first gradually releasing students to take on more and more application of skills along the way. Their research has found this to actually accelerate student reading growth.*

**FLEXIBLE STRATEGY GROUP**

**Definition:** An alternative to the traditional guided reading group that is more fluid and flexible. Based on formative assessment, students are placed in groups (ideally of no more than 5 participants) based on targeted skill or strategy gaps for short term intense instruction. Students may be reading at different reading levels but have the same targeted need. The lesson sequences align to the gradual release model with modeling then guided instruction eventually leading to independent application. Students may read the same or different texts during the lessons with the outcome of applying the focused strategy. Groups can last as little as 3 days or as long as 3 weeks depending on need. Some students may need to stay longer than others.

**Purpose:** To differentiate reading instruction in a focused, intense manner in order to address specific skill or strategy gaps.

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To formatively assess students strategic reading behaviors as well as ability to decode, comprehend, read fluently, and master standards on a continuous basis using formal (D.R.A. and Progress Monitoring Assessments) and informal (1:1 Conferring) tools
* To use evidence from assessments/observations to identify skill or strategy gaps and group students accordingly- the skill gaps should be very specific – note that not all students will be in a group at the same time
* To find the most appropriate resources to teach the skill/strategy through modeling and guided instruction
* To design a series of lessons using the gradual release of responsibility format
* To facilitate targeted instruction around the strategy- these groups are usually short in duration (5-10 minutes because they are so focused)
* To release students from the group as they acquire the new skill and form new groups as the need arises – strategy groups may be used in conjunction with other types of groupings

**The Role of the Students is:**

* To actively participate in their strategy group
* To practice the focus strategy in their own independent reading

**The Administrator will see:**

* Teacher facilitating the application of a specific skill or strategy with a small group of learners
* Teacher assessing the students ability to apply the strategy in an effective and efficient manner as appropriate to a text
* Students attending to the modeling and practicing the focus strategy
* Students engaged in the lesson

**Home/School Connection:**

* When students are in a strategy group it’s important to share the focus skill/strategy with the family so that they can encourage and support their child as they read at home

**Resources:**

Boushey & Moser, *The CAFÉ Book,* 2009

Szymusiak, Sibberson & Koch*, Beyond Leveled Books* 2008

**TOPIC OR GENRE STUDY GROUP**

**Definition:** An alternative to traditional guided reading that addresses student motivation and engagement by creating groups based on student interest in a topic or genre. The students can be reading books at different levels but share their learning about the topic or characteristics about a genre. Groups can be as few as two people or as many as 5 and typically last a week to a month depending on the study.

**Purpose: “**We may spend weeks designing the perfect novel units, carefully selecting interesting texts and crafting meaningful activities, only to discover that our students merely plod through the book and our assignments. In addition, no one text or activity can possibly meet the needs of the diverse range of reading levels and interests found in the typical classroom…Numerous studies prove that wide reading improves children's comprehension, background knowledge, vocabulary, fluency, and writing (Krashen, 2004). Unfortunately, in many schools the poorest readers read the least, often as much as three times less than their peers (Allington, 2006).” –Miller, 2010

One way to encourage reading and engagement is to group students together who are interested in reading and learning about a specific topic or genre of their choice.

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To seek out and discover the interests of their students through methods such as surveys, interviews, and listening to what motivates and engages their students
* To look for trends in interests, pair students and find sources that match the readers and the topics that motivate them
* To design (or co-design with students) a plan for learning about a topic or genre and sharing their learning with each other. This may include a forum to share with others outside the group as well
* To create time and space for students to read, write, listen and speak about their topic/genre
* To intentionally plan for instruction/extend skills/review if needed so that students can more easily access the texts and communicate new learning

**The Role of the Students is:**

* To communicate interests and what motivates them to the teacher
* To partner with others that share the same interests
* To follow the plan designed by the teacher or co-designed by the group
* To read and apply strategies as applicable to learn new information from/about the text

**The Administrator will see:**

* Teacher facilitating the group through a strategic plan
* Teacher instructing/coaching the students as needed often through 1:1 support
* Students engaged in the exploration of a topic or genre as evidenced by their enthusiastic reading, writing, and discussing of their discoveries about the topic/genre

**Home/School Connection:**

* Families are a perfect source to probe for interests. Teachers can partner with them to learn about what motivates their students
* When families know about topic studies they can often support their child by seeking out additional information sources on the web or local library

**Resource:**

Rog & Krop- *Hooking Struggling Readers: Using Books They Can and Want to Read -*<http://www.hip-books.com/teachers/hooking_struggling_readers/>

Buhrow & Upczak Garcia- Ladybugs, Tornadoes, and Swirling Galaxies 2006

Miller, Becoming a Classroom of Readers, Ed Leadership March 2010

**RECIPROCAL TEACHING GROUP**

**Definition:** Reciprocal teaching refers to an instructional activity in which students become the teacher in small group reading sessions. Teachers model, then help students learn to guide group discussions using four strategies: summarizing, question generating, clarifying, and predicting. Once students have learned the strategies, they take turns assuming the role of teacher in leading a dialogue about what has been read. Reciprocal Teaching is also a great way to teach students how to determine important ideas from a reading while discussing vocabulary, developing ideas and questions, and summarizing information. It can be used across several content areas; it works particularly well with textbooks and non-fiction text.

**Purpose**: To improve reading comprehension by equipping students with strategies needed to monitor comprehension and construct meaning. It is designed toencourage students to think about their own thought process during reading. It helps students learn to be actively involved and monitor their comprehension as they read. It teaches students to ask questions during reading and helps make the text more comprehensible.

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To utilize data from formal and informal assessments to form reading groups (ideally 4 students)
* To select appropriate text for students to read or provide them an opportunity to select their own text based on interest or from a menu
* To model and explain the coordinated use of the four reading strategies: predicting, clarifying, questioning and summarizing often providing tools to assist implementation and discussion
* To provide opportunities for students to read the required text for their reading group
* To lead dialogues about text in small groups, repeatedly modeling the strategies
* To gradually release the responsibility of the group discussions
* To provide feedback as students take turns leading dialogues
* To move from group to group observing progress and providing assistance as needed

**The Role of the Students is:**

* To read the assigned text and come prepared for their discussion group
* To actively participate in the group discussion and assume one of the four roles
* To gradually take the responsibility of using the four reading comprehension strategies on their own and provide their own feedback
* To take turns leading dialogues using the four strategies in small groups with other students and give each other feedback on strategy use with teacher support as needed

**The Administrator will see:**

* Teacher setting high expectations for all students
* Teacher providing regular opportunities for students to read their assigned text
* Teacher observing group discussions and providing feedback
* Anchor charts or cards/tools describing the four comprehension strategies
* Students reading and getting prepared for their reading discussion groups
* Students working in groups and taking responsibility for their own learning by leading their own discussion using the four comprehension strategies within the reciprocal teaching framework

**Home/School Connection**

* Parents can take on one of the four roles using prompting cards to support a discussion about what the student has read

**Resources:**

Hoyt, Linda. *Revisit, Reflect, Retell*. 1998

Oczkus, Lori*. Reciprocal Teaching at Work-Strategies for Improving Reading Comprehension*. 2010

**LITERATURE CIRCLES**

**Definition:** “Literature Circles are small peer-led discussion groups whose members have chosen to read the same story, poem, article, or book. While reading each group assigned portion of the text (either in or out of class) members make notes to help them contribute to the upcoming discussion and everyone comes to the group with ideas to share. Each group follows a reading and meeting schedule, holding periodic discussions through the book.” (Daniels 2002)

 **“**This is not unstructured talk time but, rather, focused discussion on characters and events, personal experiences that relate to the text, and observations of the writers craft. As children share their opinions and reflect on their reading experiences, their comprehension grows in sophisticated ways. Unlike traditional discussions, in which the teacher poses questions to get the students to think in a particular way, literature circles provide a context for children to ask their own questions and help each other answer them.” (Pollack Day & Spiegel 2012)

**Purpose:** In the world of Common Core one aspect of being college and career ready is to demonstrate independence. The Common Core authors describe independence as “students [who] can, without significant scaffolding, comprehend and evaluate complex texts across a range of types and disciplines, and [who] can construct effective arguments and convey intricate or multifaceted information. Likewise, students are able independently to discern a speaker’s key points, request clarification, and ask relevant questions. They build on others’ ideas, articulate their own ideas, and confirm they have been understood.” (CCSS pg. 7) In order to achieve this goal, teachers from elementary to high school have a responsibility to begin preparing students for this outcome. One way to do that is by using Literature Circles as a forum for independent text talk with scaffolding to support the process.

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To find high interest texts that match the readers in their class and to present book talks that engage the student’s interests
* To design routines and procedures that make for good discussions and teach and monitor student use
* To introduce and monitor structures for responding to literature and discussion stems to support oral language development
* To encourage students to extend and expand their ideas
* To serve as a participant (especially at the beginning) to model the sharing of opinions & ideas using evidence from the text
* To be “kid-watchers,” formatively assessing students’ reading comprehension and communication skills, and intervening if necessary to redirect

**The Role of the Students is:**

* To select a text in conjunction with the teacher
* To read the agreed upon amount of text and prepare for the discussion by organizing thoughts in advance
* To attend the group meeting at the designated time
* To use text based evidence to support their thinking
* To “share the air” following the “rules of conversation” utilizing discussion stems if applicable
* To serve as facilitator when designated

**The Administrator will see:**

* Students reading and preparing for group discussions
* Students engaged in deep discussion around text using text-based evidence to support their thinking
* Students following norms for effective discussion
* Teacher listening in on group discussions and participating if appropriate
* Teacher formatively assessing comprehension and communication skills

**Home/School Connection:**

* Families can support students by ensuring they have time and space to read and prepare for discussions if necessary

**Resources:**

Daniels, Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups, 2002

Fountas and Pinnell, Guiding Readers and Writers Grades 3-6, 2001

[Pollack Day](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Dntt_athr_dp_sr_1?_encoding=UTF8&field-author=Jennifer%20Pollack%20Day&search-alias=books&sort=relevancerank),  [Spiegel](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Dntt_athr_dp_sr_2?_encoding=UTF8&field-author=Dixie%20Lee%20Spiegel&search-alias=books&sort=relevancerank), [McLellan](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Dntt_athr_dp_sr_3?_encoding=UTF8&field-author=Janet%20McLellan&search-alias=books&sort=relevancerank) [& Brown](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Dntt_athr_dp_sr_4?_encoding=UTF8&field-author=Ph.D.%2C%20Valerie%20B.%20Brown&search-alias=books&sort=relevancerank) , Moving Forward with Literature Circles, 2012

Short, Kaufman, Kaser, Kahn & Crawford, “Teacher – Watching; Examining Teacher Talk in Literature Circles,” 1999

**PEER PARTNERSHIPS**

**Definition:** Students are paired with their classmates to engage in meaningful reading and writing partnerships. All readers are given strategies/tools to help them support their peers as they help their partner apply methods to address challenges in reading and writing and make meaning of text. The partners meet regularly to either write or read together or discuss a common text that they have both chosen to read. Reading partners each have their own copy of the agreed upon book, and they set-up times to meet and read and/or discuss the text throughout their reading. Writing partners set aside time to read each other’s writing and give feedback or actually create text jointly.

**Purpose: “**Lev Vygotsky, a Russian teacher and psychologist, stated over 50 years ago that we learn through our interactions and communications with others.  Vygotsky examined how our social environments influence the learning process.  He suggested that learning takes place through the interactions students have with their peers, teachers, and other experts.  Consequently, teachers can create a learning environment that maximizes the learner's ability to interact with each other through discussion, collaboration, and feedback.  Moreover, Vygotsky argues that culture is the primary determining factor for knowledge construction. (1962)” – (Adapted from Neff, *Learning Theories Website*) Lev Vygotsky’s work provided a springboard for other researchers to examine the benefits of learning partnerships that continues to hold true today.

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To model and present step by step skills partners will need to work together in productive and supportive ways (Choosing a partner/a spot/a topic or text, noise level, how to assist, sharing the work/task, etc.)
* To provide on-going support for students to learn how to listen carefully to their peers, offer assistance, share materials, and share responsibility for the work or task
* To give time and space to practice the explicit skills taught and then actually implement prolifically

**The Role of the Students is:**

* To reflect on their reading and writing interests and strengths
* To choose a "just right/good fit" book to read with a partner (Reading partners)
* To choose a topic and design a “prewrite together” (Writing partners)
* To adhere to a teacher or co-developed plan on when to meet in the class and what the time will look/sound like
* To use routines/rules/tools to work productively and supportively with their partner

**The Administrator will see:**

* Teacher explicitly teaching students how to work with their partner
* Charts that remind students about what productive partnering looks/sounds like
* Teacher coaching students and giving them feedback to support their work
* Students reading, writing, listening and speaking to one another in an engaging, respectful, productive manner such as asking open-ended questions, prompting to assist at challenging points, offering feedback for editing and refinement, co-creating text, etc.)
* Evidence that students are learning from one another and benefiting from the partnership (new learning evidenced by high quality spoken and written communication)

**Home/School Connection:**

* Families can read and write together with their student to practice the “give and take” nature of partnerships

**Resources:**

Boushey & Moser- *The Daily 5*, 2006

Miller -*Reading with Meaning, Teaching Comprehension in the Primary Grade,* 2002

Neff, Learning Theories Website <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/lsn/educator/edtech/learningtheorieswebsite/vygotsky.htm>

Newingham, *Reading Partnerships* <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/reading-partnerships>

**LETTER/SOUND/WORD STUDY**

**Definition:** Instruction used by the teacher to introduce, teach, and provide students with opportunities to practice using their knowledge of phonemic awareness, letter recognition, letter-sound relationships, phonics, spelling patterns, and vocabulary. “Such information enables the teachers to design instructional experiences that build systematically on what students know.” (Ganske, *Word Journeys, 2000.)*

**Purpose:** To help students’ achieve the automatic word recognition necessary for fluency and proficient comprehension. “The purpose of word study is twofold. First students develop a *general* knowledge of English spelling…Second, word study increases *specific* knowledge of words---the spelling and meaning of individual words.” (Bear; Invernizzi; Templeton; & Johnston. *Words Their Way*; Fourth Edition, 2008)

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To see that all students develop phonemic awareness
* To teach letters, sounds, spelling patterns and decoding in a systematic progression
* To monitor students’ progress consistently and to provide early intervention for students whose demonstrated weaknesses are limiting their progress and placing them at risk of failing to learn to read
* To provide opportunities for students to use phonetic spelling as conventional spelling develops
* To provide opportunities for students to read independent and instructional level texts to facilitate the fluency required for comprehension
* To use activities such as word walls, word sorts, and making words to promote students’ word recognition, decoding, and spelling

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To use knowledge of sounds and letters to decode, read and spell words
* To use the spelling patterns of known words to decode, read and spell new words

**The Administrator will see:**

* Whole-group or small-group explicit instruction in working with letters and words
* Students using the word wall and other class resources (charts etc.)
* Evidence of word banks or student dictionaries
* Students writing daily at their developmental level
* Students practicing word work activities such as word sorts, word games, and making words with magnetic letters and other devices and materials

**Home/School Connection:**

* To listen to their children read familiar and easy text
* To play word games with their children
* To encourage their children to use phonetic and conventional writing
* To talk regularly with the teacher about their children’s progress

**Resources:**

Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston; *Words Their Way*, Fourth Edition, 2008

CCSS Appendix A pages 17-22

Cunningham, Patricia*, Phonics They Use*, Third Edition, 2000

Ganske, *Word Journeys, 2000*

National Reading Panel, *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction*, 2000

**INDEPENDENT READING**

**Definition:** Students read individually from a variety of materials and genres at their independent or instructional reading level. The books are primarily self chosen using a previously taught method to determine “just right” or “good-fit” books. Books are kept in individual book boxes or bags and a system is used to monitor and replace books at appropriate times. “Primarily, the learners are using what they have already learned and practiced to problem solve successfully on their own.” (Routman, *Reading Essentials*, 2003)

**Purpose:** “Students who have in‐school independent reading time in addition to regular reading instruction do significantly better on measures of reading achievement than peers who have not had reading time. Reading time was especially beneficial for students at earlier stages of reading development: students in lower grades, those experiencing difficulties in learning to read, and students learning English as a second language.” (Lewis & Samuels, 2005) Richard Allington writes, “Replacing whatever went on in classrooms with added reading time was just as effective as, or more effective than, traditional instruction in enhancing reading comprehension.” (2000)

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To provide students daily opportunities and spaces for independent reading practice
* To match texts to students’ abilities and support students in choosing their own texts
* To provide individual book boxes or bags for each student
* To monitor students’ choices of materials for independent reading
* To foster a literate climate that encourages students to read widely and engage in analytic evaluation and reflective thinking about texts

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To use reading for various purposes
* To enjoy reading
* To practice reading strategies and fluent reading in different genres
* To be meta-cognitive, analyze, reflect and discuss texts and to make critical connections between texts

**The Administrator will see:**

* A print-rich environment with an ample classroom library organized for easy access with texts that are appropriate levels for students to read independently. The goals is to have 50% literary and 50% informational text
* Teacher providing time daily for students to read self-selected books
* Teacher encouraging students to solve their own problems and to take ownership of their own learning
* Students reading independently with fluency and accuracy
* Students reading for different purposes

**Home/School Connection:**

* To build their children’s love of literature in all of its forms
* To visit libraries and/or bookstores regularly
* To discuss with the teacher what their child’s strengths and challenges as a reader are
* To engage their children in activities that require reading for many purposes
* To support with reading materials their children’s interests or hobbies

**Resource:**

Allington, *What Really Matters for Struggling Readers: Designing Research‐based Programs*, 2000

Fountas & Pinnell, *Matching Books to Readers: Using Leveled Books in Guided Reading, K-3*, 1999

Lewis & Samuels*, Read More, Read Better? A Meta‐analysis of the Literature on the Relationship Between Exposure to Reading and Reading Achievement.*, 2005

Routman, *Reading Essentials*, 2003

**EVIDENCE BASED WRITTEN RESPONSES**

**Definition:** The Common Corerequires students to communicate their thinking about the complex texts they hear and read through speaking and writing experiences. Students analyze language, synthesize ideas and details, trace symbolism, understand the implications of text structure, compare themes across multiple texts, and develop their thinking through information and argument writing. Even our youngest readers and writers can reflect on text and use evidence to support their thinking through pictures, words and dictation. While responding in writing to text is nothing new in education in the Common Core students’ responses are tied closely to the text itself and evidence from the text is required to support claims.

**Purpose:** “Writing practices complement reading practices and should always be used in conjunction, with each type of practice supporting and strengthening the other.” A Meta-analysis done by the Carnegie Corporation in 2010 found “that students’ reading abilities are improved by writing about texts they have read; by receiving explicit instruction in spelling, in writing sentences, in writing paragraphs, in text structure, and in the basic processes of composition; and by increasing how much and how frequently they write. Evidence shows that these writing activities improved students’ comprehension of text over and above the improvements gained from traditional reading activities such as reading text, reading and rereading text, reading and discussing text, and receiving explicit reading instruction. The empirical evidence that the writing practices described in this report strengthen reading skills provides additional support for the notion that writing should be taught and emphasized as an integral part of the school curriculum.” -(Graham & Hebert, 2010)

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To explicitly model and teach students how to use evidence from the text to support their thinking
* To require students write about their reading frequently and/or consistently in conjunction with whole group, small group, and individual reading experiences (at least once a week)
* To provide or require students to have readers notebooks that capture their development of ideas
* To monitor, assess, and provide feedback on written responses to reading using rubrics and anchor papers that have been shared with the class
* To collaborate with grade level peers on written response expectations

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To read thoughtfully and capture developing ideas in their readers notebook
* To understand the expectations of their written responses and how it will be used to evaluate their comprehension and ability to meet priority standards
* To write about the texts they read using evidence to support their claims as required by the teacher
* To reflect on their written responses, evaluate their strengths and challenges, and set growth goals

**The Administrator will see:**

* Teacher modeling and teaching expectations for high quality text-based written responses
* Rubrics and anchor papers available for students to access and self evaluate
* Students creating written responses to text at least once a week using evidence to support their claims

**Home/School Connection:**

* Families can talk with students about the texts they are reading and ask them to use evidence to support their thinking in preparation for written responses

**Resource:**

Angelillo, *Writing About Reading*, 2003

Graham & Hebert, *Writing to Read: A Report from Carnegie Corporation of New York Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading*, 2010

**LISTENING TO READING**

**Definition:** Children take great pleasure in listening to texts being read to them, and there are some terrific books on audio files and CDs available on-line and at most public libraries. A copy of the text is required as students follow along as the narrator reads either by themselves on a device or at a listening center. Listening to reading enriches your students’ multi-sensory experiences with books and can expose students to a wide variety of genres, content and vocabulary. Hearing a book read…helps students see how the words on the page can come alive in a fluid, expressive way and allows them to focus on the sounds of words read without interruption. Beyond their sheer enjoyment of audio books, children also develop a sense of text structure and understanding of language. *Audio books* help them to grasp the rich and various ways in which language distills and conveys meaning. - (Adapted from *The Literacy Benefits of Listening,* 2013)

**Purpose:** Oral language development precedes and is the foundation for written language development…Children’s oral language competence is strongly predictive of their facility in learning to read and write….Sticht and James found evidence strongly suggesting that children’s listening comprehension outpaces reading comprehension until the middle school years (1984)… The research strongly suggests that the English language arts classroom should explicitly address the link between oral and written language, exploiting the influence of oral language on a child’s later ability to read by allocating instructional time to building a child’s listening skills. –(Appendix A CCSS)

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To access audio books and their accompanying hard copy
* To set up a venue for listening to books using devices or a listening center
* To set up and communicate expectations for who, when, and where children can listen to books
* To model and allow students to practice the procedures for “listening to reading”
* To monitor student use and benefits of listening to reading

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To follow the procedures set up by the teacher
* To listen attentively and enjoy the books read to them
* To make meaning of the words they hear and document their comprehension/thinking if required

**The Administrator Will See:**

* Specific areas or devices identified for students to “listen to reading”
* Teacher communicating/modeling procedures and expectations
* A chart or directions detailing expectations as a review
* Students listening attentively at the designated area
* Students possibly doing follow-up activities to demonstrate their comprehension such as an entry in their reading notebook

**Home/School Connection:**

* Encourage family members to read aloud daily with their children and discuss books
* Inform families on where and how they can access audio books for their children

**Resource:**

*The Literacy Benefits of Listening,* 2013 <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/developing-reading-skills/literacy-benefits-listening>

Boushey & Moser, *The Daily 5,* 2006

**ONE ON ONE CONFERRING**

**Definition:** Conferring involves teachers initiating conversations with individual students. These conversations provide the most useful opportunities for formative assessment of students’ reading and/or writing - assessment for teaching and learning. They allow teachers to gather information about their students’ reading and writing habits, interests, processes and strategies. Conferring provides the opportunity to make instructional decisions that match the individual reader/writer and to choose methods that grow and change with the student.

**“**Conferring is…..sitting beside them, shoulder to shoulder. We’re digging deeper now, working hard to individualize our instruction and support children as they apply what we’ve taught them in large and small group settings.” -(Miller, 2009)

**Purpose:** One-on-one conferences enhance the relationship between teacher and student, giving the teacher a better understanding of what each student is capable of doing, and what each student needs to do to move toward independence. One-on-one conferences can improve self-esteem and aid in the development of a literate community (Calkins 1986). They also encourage daily interaction and create specific time for a student and teacher to talk.

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To provide daily opportunities to confer with students
* To establish classroom procedures and expectations for independent work time so conferring can happen without interruptions
* To highlight what worked, identify areas that could improve and offer suggestions for change
* To collect formative/anecdotal data about a student’s learning
* To listen and provide feedback to the reader or writer that will help improve their future reading and writing

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To come to the conference prepared (book, reader’s response journal, writing journal, writing project, etc)
* To follow the classroom expectations during the time set aside for conferring
* To actively participate in the conference by sharing their work , thinking and understanding
* To establish a goal(s) to move their skills/understanding forward

**The Administrator will see:**

* Teachers providing regular and consistent times for one on one conferences
* Teachers and students sitting side by side having a conversation about the student’s work and learning
* Teachers providing feedback, individualized instructional support and goal setting
* Teachers taking formative assessments/anecdotal notes as a child reads or shares their writing/work

**Home/School Connection**

* Share with families their child’s strengths and goals
* Parents can support their child meet their individual academic goals

**Resource:**

Allen, Conferring: *The Keystone of Reader's Workshop*, 2009

Anderson, *How’s it going? A practical guide to conferring with students*, 2000

Johnson, *One Child at a Time,* 2006

Miller, *Reading With Meaning*, 2002

Serravallo & Goldberg, *Conferring with Readers*, 2007

**DEMONSTRATION/MODELED WRITING**

**Definition:** The teacher demonstrates the act of writing by thinking aloud as he/she composes a text in front of students. “The teacher or expert shows precisely ‘how to do it’ by initiating, modeling, explaining, thinking aloud, and writing aloud. … The teacher also demonstrates the satisfaction she takes in writing.” (Routman, *Writing Essentials*, 2005)

**Purpose:** To allow students to hear the thinking that accompanies the process of writing, including topic choice, how to start the piece, looking for a better word, revising, and editing. “Students observe the teacher planning, drafting, making choices, rereading, evaluating, revising, editing, and monitoring. They may be invited to participate in a limited way, but there is no pressure to perform.” (Routman, *Writing Essentials*, 2005)

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To use explicit language and actions to model critical writing-process concepts
* To think aloud about actions and choices in writing
* To show students the meta-cognitive strategies involved in reading and writing
* To use modeled writing as a mini-lesson to introduce the process of writing in a particular genre
* To demonstrate the importance of composing a meaningful, coherent message for a particular audience and a specific purpose
* To demonstrate the correct use of print conventions (print directionality, capitalization, punctuation, conventional grammar)
* To demonstrate spelling strategies and connect word study to phonics lessons
* To demonstrate rereading as a process to help students to remember what they are writing about
* To show how to use graphic organizers
* To model writing using a prompt

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To listen and watch
* To use strategies that have been modeled by the teacher

**The Administrator will see:**

* Teacher modeling, explaining, thinking aloud about the writing process
* Whole-group and small-group instruction
* Use of chart paper or technology
* A focused lesson usually no longer than 30 minutes
* Students reading (chorally, pairs, and possibly individually) what the teacher writes

**Home/School Connection:**

* To model their own writing through functional genres (e.g., letters {formal/friendly}, grocery lists, notes)
* To encourage and support their children by providing materials and opportunities for writing

**Resources:**

Graves & Kittle, *Inside Writing: How to Teach the Details of Craft,* 2005

Fletcher & Portalupi, *Writing Workshop*, 2001

Ray, *In Pictures and In Words, 2010*

Routman, *Writing Essentials*, 2005

Owocki, [*The Common Core Writing Book, K-5: Lessons for a Range of Tasks, Purposes, and Audiences*](http://www.amazon.com/Common-Core-Writing-Book-K-5/dp/0325048053/ref%3Dsr_1_10?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1388684272&sr=1-10&keywords=teaching+writing+to+elementary+students), 2013

**SHARED WRITING**

**Definition:** An activity—either whole-class or small-group—in which the teacher and students share the composing process. The key is the composition. By recording what he/she and the class want to say, the teacher reinforces concepts of print. “The teacher is still in charge (and holds the pen), but now the children collaborate on the writing a much as they are able. Scaffolded conversations---as a class, in a small group, with a partner---are integral to the composing process.” (Routman, *Writing Essentials*, 2005)

**Purpose:** To help students learn about the writing process through structured conversations during the sharing session. The focus is on the content of the message. The content can be a daily message, response to literature, lists, and so forth. “Shared writing experiences make it possible to write challenging text that no single child could write independently; they raise expectations for what’s possible.”

(Routman, *Writing Essentials*, 2005)

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To introduce the lesson/topic by modeling how to begin writing
* To plan text and to help students generate ideas for writing
* To record students’ ideas
* To compose text with students
* To reinforce print conventions (print directionality, capitalization, punctuation, conventional grammar)
* To utilize composed text as a model, example, or reference for student writing and discussion

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To provide ideas for the writing
* To contribute to class/group composition
* To read and reread the composition with the teacher

**The Administrators will see:**

* Teacher working with students in whole-class or small-group settings
* Teacher modeling what he/she is doing as he/she records what the group wants to say
* Students contributing ideas to the writing
* Students discussing correct use of print directionality, capitalization, punctuation, conventional grammar
* Students reading/rereading the composition with the teacher

**Home/School Connection:**

* To encourage their children to write for a variety of purposes, (e.g., lists, letters, invitations, diaries, stories, poems, and plans for a trip).

**Resources:**

Routman, *Writing Essentials*, 2005

Shared Writing from Read Write Think website, <http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/shared-writing-30686.html>

**INTERACTIVE WRITING**

**Definition:** Writing in which the teacher and students compose, with the teacher “sharing the pen” with students at strategic points. “A teaching context in which teacher and students cooperatively plan, compose, and write a group text; both teacher and students act as scribes (in turn).” (Fountas & Pinnell, *The Continuum of Literacy Learning*, 2011) Interactive writing is usually most appropriately used with primary students.

**Purpose:** To provide opportunities to plan and construct texts, models the connection among and between sounds, letters, and words, increases spelling knowledge, produces written language resources in the classroom.

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To introduce the lesson by modeling how to begin writing
* To plan the text and to help students generate ideas for writing
* To co-create text using students’ ideas collaboratively, reinforcing print conventions such as capitalization, punctuation, and print directionality
* To reinforce students’ phonemic awareness through writing
* To make connections of unknown to known words
* To ask students to participate in the writing at strategic points by asking individuals to contribute a letter, word, or a phrase
* To move students to independence by not doing what they can do for themselves

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To provide writing ideas
* To serve in an apprentice role
* To engage actively in writing the composition, contributing known letters and words
* To reinforce print conventions such as capitalization, punctuation, and print directionality
* To read and reread compositions with the teacher
* To confirm correct responses

**The Administrator will see:**

* Teacher working with whole groups and at times, small groups of students
* Teacher modeling and reinforcing what she/he is doing as she/he records or watches students record what the group wants to say
* Teacher encouraging students to write parts of the composition using his/her knowledge of students to strategically call on writers
* Teacher helping students to make connections between unknown and known words
* Students contributing ideas to the composition
* Students contributing to the composition by supplying known letters, words, and phrases

**Home/School Connection:**

* To encourage their children to experiment with writing
* To encourage their children’s curiosity about writing and to model the usefulness of writing by writing (e.g., letters, invitations, diaries, grocery lists, notes)
* To read with their children to expose them to a variety of writing genres

**Resources:**

Fountas & Pinnell, *The Continuum of Literacy Learning*, 2011

McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas. *Interactive Writing: How Language & Literacy Come Together, K-2,* 2000

Swartz, Klein & Shook, *Interactive Writing and Interactive Editing*, 2001

Owocki, *Literate Day,* 2007

**INTERACTIVE EDITING/REVISION**

**Definition:** A method of teaching effective writing in which teacher and students work together to edit and revise correct (what is called error-free text) that has been previously read and not text that might have errors (such as their own writing). Editing and revising from known material that is accurate provides an opportunity for students to understand how good writing is constructed in form, style, vocabulary, and other key elements, and how these understandings can be used or replicated in their own writing. Teachers and students manipulate known text to experiment with content and style. Interactive editing is most often used with intermediate students.- (Adapted from Swartz, Klein & Shook, 2001)

**Purpose:** To provide an effective way for teachers to model the thinking process that accompanies writing. Teachers can make a variety of teaching points in areas as diverse as grammar, phonics, spelling patterns, content, word choice, and the effective expression of ideas as the teacher and student co-create revised text.

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To choose a text based on instructional purpose
* To provide students access to a short piece of known text usually on a chart or projector
* To share with students the editing/revision goal- paraphrase, summarize, add to, replace sections of the text, change the purpose or audience, add literary devices, etc.)
* To co-plan based on the goal
* To edit or revise text using students’ ideas collaboratively- students often revise in their own notebook or with a partner using a copy of the text and then share
* To make connections to other mentor texts
* To ask students to participate in the writing at strategic points by asking individuals to contribute sections
* To move students to independence

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To provide writing ideas
* To serve in an apprentice role
* To engage actively in editing/revising the composition
* To read and reread compositions with the teacher

**The Administrator will see:**

* Teacher working with whole groups and at times, small groups of students
* Teaching setting a purpose for the lesson aligned to standards and effective writer’s craft
* Teacher modeling and reinforcing what she/he is doing as she/he records or watches students record what the group wants to say
* Teacher encouraging students to write parts of the composition using his/her knowledge of students to strategically call on writers
* Students contributing ideas to the composition
* Students contributing to the composition

**Home/School Connection:**

* To encourage their children to experiment with writing
* To encourage their children’s curiosity about writing and to model the usefulness of writing by writing (e.g., letters, invitations, diaries, grocery lists, notes)
* To read with their children to expose them to a variety of writing genres

**Resources:**

Swartz, Klein & Shook, *Interactive Writing and Interactive Editing*, 2001

**IMMERSION AND DISCOVERY**

**Definition:** The teacher selects multiple examples of a specific type of text that clearly display the characteristics of the genre or form. Students are immersed in exploring the exemplars then analyzing and identifying the key components that are characteristic of that genre/form. This can be done in a constructivist or more guided experience. Once students have a fairly solid understanding of the key characteristics of the genre or form non-examples can be provided allowing students to compare and contrast text types based on their new knowledge. Finally students apply their understanding as they find and submit their own examples that match the designated category and criteria. (Adapted from Kauth & Verhaar, 2002)

**Purpose:** It is difficult to make something if you don’t know what it’s supposed to look like when you are finished. The immersion and discovery process is done prior to effectively teaching students to write using a specific genre. The process builds an understanding or foundation that students can draw upon as they experiment with creating their own written piece of that same type of text. (Adapted from Kauth & Verhaar, 2002)

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To identify a text type (genre or form) aligned to grade level priority and supporting standards that you would like students to learn about and create
* To identify and collect multiple examples (minimum of 8) of the text type (genre or form) for students to read, listen to, analyze, evaluate and discuss. The teacher may choose 2-3 as focus texts
* To plan a process for students to interact with the texts and identify key characteristics- usually a series of lessons
* To plan a way to visually display the key characteristics for future reference- chart
* To co-create a checklist or rubric that students can later use based on the key characteristics

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To work collaboratively with peers in the immersion and discovery process
* To explore the examples and identify key components that are characteristics of all the texts in the set

**The Administrator will see:**

* Teacher facilitating a process for students to explore the text set and identification of key components
* Teacher monitoring student discovery phase supporting new learning and taking note of misconceptions
* Teacher and students co-creating a checklist or rubric
* Students collaborating with peers
* Students participating in the construction of key component list and using evidence to support their claims

**Home/School Connection:**

* Families can assist students in finding additional examples of texts that fit the designated category

**Resources:**

Wood Ray, *Study Driven,* 2006

Kauth & Verhaar, *Kent School District Elementary Writing Curriculum*, 2002

**GUIDED WRITING**

**Definition:** In small groups or with partners the students select a topic or are given a topic by the teacher. They simultaneously go through the writing process either creating individual or one collective piece. The teacher acts as a guide or coach giving advice or asking thought provoking questions while formatively assessing and adjusting support as needed. A variation of this is to use formative assessment methods to identify students that have the same gaps or needs and provide a short term guided writing experience that addresses the skill gap or next step identified. The skill may be one that has already been taught in whole group lessons or may be one that a few students are ready for but not the whole class. This is similar to a strategy reading group.

**Purpose:** To provide focused writing instruction to a small group of students in order to lead them to independent writing.

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To observe and assess students’ writing
* To meet with individuals or small groups who have similar needs
* To prompt, coach, and guide students through the writing process
* To reinforce print conventions such as capitalization, punctuation, and print directionality
* To respond as a reader
* To ask opened-ended questions
* To extend students’ thinking in the process of composing
* To aid students in developing their voice
* To foster writing independence

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To make choices and decisions
* To write for a variety of purposes and audiences
* To write in a variety of genres
* To respond to peers and to receive peer responses to writing

**The Administrator will see:**

* Whole-group, small groups and individuals involved in writing facilitated by the teacher
* Teacher interacting with students and adjusting instruction as needed
* Teacher formatively assessing student work
* Students collaborating with peers
* Students trying on new writing techniques or strategies to improve writing

**Home/School Connection:**

* To encourage their children to experiment with writing
* To encourage their children to apply what they have learned about writing by writing (e.g., letters, invitations, diaries, grocery lists, notes)
* To read with their children to expose them to a variety of writing genres

**Resources:**

Cunningham, & Allington, *Classrooms That Work: They Can all Read and Write* (2nd ed.), 1999

Routman, *Writing Essentials*, 2005

Oczkus, *Guided Writing: Practical Lessons, Powerful Results*, 2007

**INDEPENDENT WRITING**

**Definition:** Teacher/students choose a particular form or genre and students utilize their newly acquired knowledge and skills to improve their craft and become lifelong writers. Students may practice writing numerous drafts prior to choosing one to take through the entire writing process to publication.

**Purpose:** To encourage students to experiment in all three writing types (narrative, informational, argumentative), choose their own topics, problem-solve, monitor, and explore the use of written language based on audience and purpose.

**The Role of the Teacher is:**

* To create opportunities for students to engage in authentic, purposeful writing
* To respond to the content of the students’ writing and give timely specific feedback
* To assist students with the revision and editing process
* To hold conferences with individual writers

**The Role of the Student is:**

* To write for their own purpose (e.g., to document what they have learned, express feelings)
* To select the topic and content for writing
* To write in various genres and forms (Sometimes based on teacher choice and sometimes student choice)
* To revise and edit writing
* To accept feedback from peers and the teacher

**The Administrator will see:**

* Students engaged in writing
* Teacher interacting with students
* Teacher creating enthusiasm for writing in a rich literacy environment
* Teacher creating authentic purposes for writing

**Home/School Connection:**

* To encourage writing for a variety of purposes and provide opportunities and materials for writing (e.g., lists, letters, invitations, diaries, stories, poems, or plans for a trip).

**Resources:**

Graves & Kittle, *Inside Writing: How to Teach the Details of Craft,* 2005

Fletcher & Portalupi, *Writing Workshop*, 2001

Ray, *In Pictures and In Words, 2010*

Routman, *Writing Essentials*, 2005

Owocki, [*The Common Core Writing Book, K-5: Lessons for a Range of Tasks, Purposes, and Audiences*](http://www.amazon.com/Common-Core-Writing-Book-K-5/dp/0325048053/ref%3Dsr_1_10?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1388684272&sr=1-10&keywords=teaching+writing+to+elementary+students), 2013