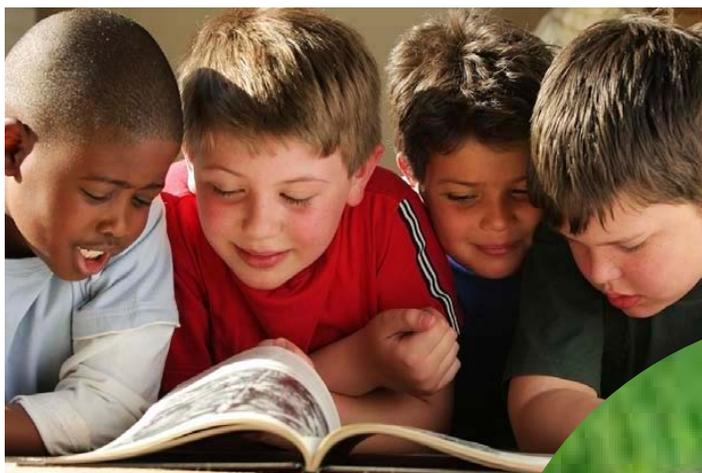


**Chappaqua
Comprehensive Literacy Program
Elementary Grades**



Chappaqua Central School District

August 2013

The Mission Statement of Chappaqua Schools

The mission of the Chappaqua Schools is to create a community for learning, where students, parents and staff are joined in the pursuit of academic excellence and personal growth in a caring environment. We seek to develop each student's full potential through a challenging curriculum, a diversified faculty, and a commitment to intellectual freedom. We will teach the basic skills, foster creative and critical thinking, and provide a foundation for life-long learning. We will nourish our students' emotional lives and guide their social development, instill in them an appreciation of self-worth, of individual difference, and of global interdependence. We will help them learn how to manage free time and to act ethically so that each may become a responsible, contributing member of society.

The Board of Education of the Chappaqua Central School District and its officers, employees and agents, do not discriminate in employment or educational programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, marital status, gender, age or disability. Information concerning grievance procedures is available from Andrew Selesnick, Assistant Superintendent for Leadership Development and Human Resources, School District Executive Offices at 66 Roaring Brook Road, Chappaqua, New York 10514 or please call (914)238-7200.

Over the last decade our literacy program has evolved into the strong, vibrant program of today. Our students read often and well. They write skillfully in a variety of genres, and they have learned and practice the elements of accountable talk. Those for whom learning to read and to write is challenging continue to find success as we develop strong interventions to support them.

At the request of many teachers and administrators, we have decided to put into writing the basic components of our comprehensive literacy program for elementary grades. Our intended audience is you, the teachers and administrators in our district. This document is written to clarify each of the important components of our comprehensive program, and should serve as a springboard for our continued conversations about how best to provide an active, supportive learning environment for students as they learn to read and write.

Educators in the Chappaqua Central School District are asked to respond to the School Board's posed question,

How do we ensure that all students, through acquiring the necessary content knowledge, learn to think deeply, support their thinking, apply problem-solving skills, and actively participate in their learning?

Asked another way, "How do we ensure that students are generating ideas instead of reporting, generating questions and solutions, making meaningful choices, and monitoring their own learning?"

This booklet describes the components that foster the kind of active learning environment referenced in the Board question. It begins with the essential components of literacy instruction followed by the critical attributes of effective literacy classrooms, a discussion about effective reading and writing instruction, and finally a section on assessment. We have provided several links to enhance your access to current resources, realizing that links change. Nonetheless, we hope you will find them valuable.

We would like to thank the many hands that have brought this booklet to fruition. Many staff developers, reading specialists, classroom teachers, special education teachers, administrators, and outside consultants have either worked directly in writing this booklet or have given important feedback upon which many changes have been based. In particular, we would like to thank Dr. Barbara Frye from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, who provided us with her expert knowledge, writing, and guidance throughout the writing of this booklet. We also owe a special thanks to Mary Ford and Sel Shimmerlik, Chappaqua staff developers, who wrote and revised for many hours in response to feedback.

This booklet is a working document. We look forward to ongoing discussion about the important topic of literacy and plan to update our work as we learn together. We hope, in the pages that follow, that you will find useful information that will inform your instruction.

Table of Contents

Standards and Resources

Essential Components of Literacy Instruction	1
Gradual Release of Responsibility	2
New York State Standards for English Language Arts	3
Ten Core Principles of Reading and Writing Instruction	4
Reading and Writing Curriculum Maps	6

Critical Attributes of Effective Literacy Classrooms

Classroom Library	7
Classroom Design for Comfort, Independence, and Collaboration	11
Materials That Foster Independence	11
Print-rich Environments	12

Essential Components of Reading Instruction

Read Aloud	13
Shared Reading	16
Reading Workshop	17
Small Group Instruction	21
Guided Reading	21
Strategy Lessons	23
Word Study	25
Conversations, Discussions and Accountable Talk	27
Elements of Accountable Talk	27
Partner Work and Book Clubs	29

Essential Components of Writing Instruction

The Writing Process	31
Writing Workshop	32
Strategy Lessons for Writing Instruction	33
Important Genres	33
Shared and Interactive Writing	33
Conventions: Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation	34

Assessments

Reading	35
Writing	37
Concepts of Print, Phonemic Awareness, Phonics and Spelling	37

References

39

Standards and Resources

Essential Components of Literacy Instruction

The traditional definition of literacy is considered to be the ability to read and write, or the ability to use language to read, write, listen, speak, and view. In modern contexts, the word refers to reading and writing at a level adequate for communication or at a level that lets one understand and communicate ideas in a literate society so as to take part in that society.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has drafted the following definition:

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his or her goals, to develop his or her knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in the wider society.

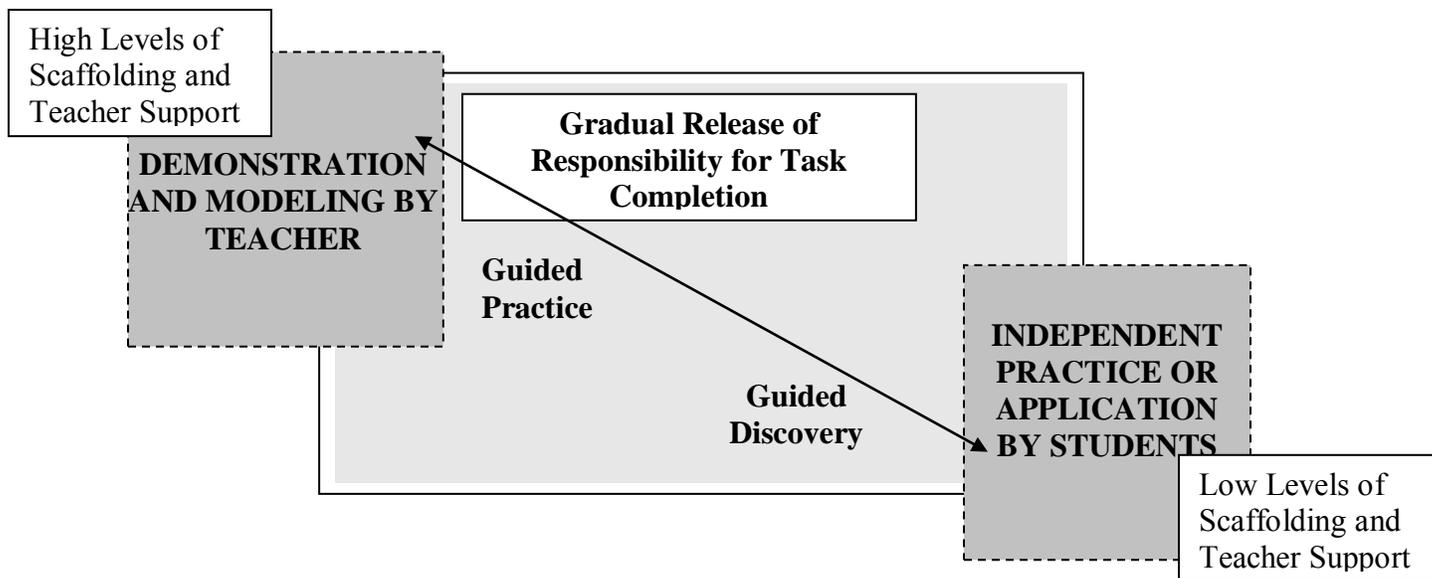
An effective literacy program must therefore include explicit instruction and opportunities for students to develop skills and strategies for maximizing their abilities to read, write, listen, speak and view in order to participate fully and successfully in a complex society.

It is essential to employ a comprehensive approach to reading and writing instruction in all classrooms for all children. Students in a comprehensive literacy program experience all of the following components of effective instruction.

Reading Instruction	Writing Instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read-aloud• Reading Workshop<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Mini-lesson (Explicit instruction in reading, includes modeling and demonstration)· Independent reading with appropriately leveled books in a variety of genre/conferring/small group instruction/partner work· Sharing• Small group instruction (guided reading and strategy lessons)• Shared reading• Word study - phonics, spelling, and vocabulary [interactive writing in primary grades]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing Workshop<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Mini-lesson (Explicit instruction in writing, includes modeling and demonstration)· Independent writing/conferring/small group instruction/partner work· Sharing• Small group instruction (strategy lessons)• Shared and interactive writing• Spelling, grammar and punctuation work

Gradual Release of Responsibility

Literacy instruction requires highly qualified teachers who take on the role of facilitator, mentor, and mediator, while students apprentice under their leadership and guidance (Vygotsky, 1962). The process of learning to read, write, listen, speak, and gain information from various types of media requires teachers to constantly assess students' learning and make important instructional decisions. Teachers must consistently provide opportunities for students to engage in authentic, purposeful reading and writing activities and to take responsibility for their learning. Skills and strategies required for successful reading must be taught explicitly with the purpose and utility made apparent (Lipson, 1983). Because the goal of literacy instruction is to foster independence, teachers must constantly determine how much support or scaffolding students need on a particular skill or strategy and then responsibility and control is gradually released or given to the learner. Pearson and Gallagher (1983) developed a Model of Teaching and Learning that provides a graphic representation of what they call "the gradual release of responsibility." See the graphic below.



New York State Standards for English Language Arts

The New York State Learning Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) address the skills required for proficient readers and writers.

<p>Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding</p> <p>Students will listen, speak, read, and write for information and understanding. As listeners and readers, students will collect data, facts, and ideas; discover relationships, concepts, and generalizations; and use knowledge generated from oral, written, and electronically produced texts. As speakers and writers, they will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language to acquire, interpret, apply, and transmit information.</p>	<p>Standard 2: Language for Literary Response and Expression</p> <p>Students will read and listen to oral, written, and electronically-produced texts and performances from American and world literature; relate texts and performances to their own lives; and develop an understanding of the diverse social, historical, and cultural dimensions the texts and performances represent. As speakers and writers, students will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language for self-expression and artistic creation.</p>
<p>Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation</p> <p>Students will listen, speak, read, and write for critical analysis and evaluation. As listeners and readers, students will analyze experiences, ideas, information, and issues presented by others using a variety of established criteria. As speakers and writers, they will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language to present, from a variety of perspectives, their opinions and judgments on experiences, ideas, information and issues.</p>	<p>Standard 4: Language for Social Interaction</p> <p>Students will listen, speak, read, and write for social interaction. Students will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language for effective social communication with a wide variety of people. As readers and listeners, they will use the social communications of others to enrich their understanding of people and their views.</p>

In April, all third and fourth grade students are assessed with the ELA examination, which addresses the standards for reading, writing and listening.

Ten Core Principles of Reading and Writing

Much has been learned in the past few decades about classroom instruction that effectively promotes the development of high level reading and writing skills. Based on both literacy research and general research about how children learn, Chappaqua Central School District has established the following ten core principles.

Principles	Implications for Classrooms
<p>#1 Daily opportunities to read and write are the best way to develop and improve students' reading and writing abilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to read and write are designed to help students build stamina throughout the year. • Students engage in independent reading of authentic materials (e.g., books, articles, magazines) for thirty to sixty minutes per day at school in addition to age-appropriate reading assignments at home. • Students in K-1 read multiple little books daily in school and at home. • Depending on length and complexity of text, students in grades 2 and above often read 2-3 books per week. • Students engage in independent writing for about 30 minutes per day at least four times a week.
<p>#2 The majority of students' reading must be in text in which they can read with high accuracy and good comprehension.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students have access to high-quality leveled libraries. • Students are given many opportunities to select their own reading materials. • Students receive instruction and assistance in how to select appropriate books. • Students are not asked to read at their frustration level (below 90% accuracy). • All students receive reading instruction in appropriately-leveled text (instructional level: 90 – 94% accuracy). • All students are given daily opportunities to read independently in appropriately-leveled text (independent level: 95-100% accuracy).
<p>#3 Comprehension, word study (phonics, spelling, and vocabulary [interactive writing in primary grades]), fluency, and writing strategies are explicitly taught and practiced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension, decoding and writing strategies are explicitly taught and practiced in context on a regular basis. • Students are given opportunities to employ and practice reading and writing skills and strategies across all curricular areas. • Classrooms are equipped with large and enticing supplies of nicely displayed books and other materials available to read at school and at home.
<p>#4 Opportunities to generate ideas while engaging in rich discussion are fundamental to learning to read and write.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have daily opportunities to think critically and talk thoughtfully with each other in response to literature. • Students are taught to engage in conversation with one another and given opportunities to practice participating in discussions with peers. • Students learn how to develop ideas rather than report on ideas.

<p>#5 Instruction is designed to help students move toward independent, strategic and self-reliant learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learn strategies to monitor their own understanding. • Instruction is designed to give students opportunities to gradually assume responsibility for their own learning. • Independence, self-reliance and personal responsibility are goals for each child at every grade level.
<p>#6 Student interest and motivation is an essential component in developing a life-long passion for reading and writing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers provide a classroom environment that promotes a love of reading and writing. • The classroom environment is designed to foster a feeling of community where reading and writing are integral parts of the culture. • Teachers consider students' interests and motivation in planning instruction and selecting reading materials. • Students are exposed to a wide variety of genres in reading and writing. • Students are exposed to a wide range of visual media (e.g., art, music, film, technology) • Students explore visual media as a means of better understanding the world and themselves as readers and writers.
<p>#7 Intensive instructional support and enhanced opportunities to read and write daily are designed and provided based on individual needs for children struggling to develop reading and writing skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower-achieving students have access to instructional support efforts that substantially increase the amount of reading and writing they engage in. • Instruction is differentiated to meet the needs of every child. • The culture of the classroom values all readers and writers and encourages their individual growth.
<p>#8 On-going assessment is used to inform instructional practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student progress is continually monitored through varied assessment practices. • Instruction is guided by varied assessments. • Informal and formal assessments provide teachers with the necessary information to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of individual students at all levels. • Students are given opportunities to self-assess and reflect on their own learning.
<p>#9 Consistent, high quality classroom instruction is a critical factor for students' success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers attend staff development on research-based instruction. • Teachers reflect on their practice. • Teachers and administrators work together collaboratively and participate in high-level, reflective discussions.
<p>#10 Students benefit from productive communication between home and school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student progress is regularly reported to parents through report cards, conferences, and other means. • Information is shared with parents to help them fully understand their role in their children's learning. • Parents are encouraged to participate in their children's learning.

Reading and Writing Curriculum Maps

The curriculum maps of the Chappaqua Central School District are available through school and district websites. Through Atlas software, each teacher has an account and can view the maps for all subject areas at each grade level. Parents can also view the maps through the district websites. Each map has the same components:

- Essential Question
- Content
- Skills
- Assessments
- Resources

In each subject area, the maps are organized by units of study. These units provide an instructional focus for approximately four to six weeks. The units of study in reading and writing typically focus on a specific genre or group of strategies to move students forward as readers and writers. These units were developed by representative groups of teachers at each grade-level, using a variety of resources to inform the work. Typically, there are about eight units per year in both reading and writing. For reading instruction, examples of units include Character Study, Nonfiction Reading, Book Clubs and Historical Fiction. Some examples of units of study for writing instruction include Small Moments, Nonfiction Writing, Memoir and Revision.

To view the curriculum maps, log on to the home page of any building and click on the *Resources* tab at the top right of the page. Select *Curriculum Maps* to be directed to the Atlas log-in page (<http://chappaqua.rubiconatlas.org/>).

Critical Attributes of Effective Literacy Classrooms

The classroom environment is critical to the success of an effective literacy program. It should be carefully planned to create an atmosphere that is inviting and gives children access to high quality literature and the resources necessary to develop reading and writing skills. Furthermore, children need support and encouragement to make attempts to apply new skills and strategies in authentic ways. Children will want to come to classrooms with high quality libraries, comfortable meeting or gathering areas, and literacy resources easily accessible to them.

Classroom Library

At the heart of an effective literacy program is the classroom library. The classroom library, typically located near a central meeting or gathering area, is organized in such a way that children can self-select authentic literature that matches their interests and abilities. This is a welcoming place where children can easily browse the collection and select books they would like to read.

A well-equipped classroom library provides children with access to exciting books that motivate them to read. A wide range of titles and publishers of quality books are available to meet students' interests and abilities. The selection of books represents many genres (e.g., biographies, mysteries, historical fiction, picture books, non-fiction). In addition, a well-rounded collection includes a wide range of authors and topics at different reading levels. Multiple copies of books for partnership work, reading within a series, and for increasing students' opportunities to read popular books enhance the collection.

Approximately one-third of the books in the library should be leveled to reflect the range of abilities of the readers in the class. However, kindergarten and first grade classrooms often have up to 50% of their books leveled. As students move up the grades, there should be fewer leveled baskets in classroom libraries. In the upper grades the number of leveled baskets is a much smaller percentage of the entire collection. Instead, there are a greater number of baskets with topics, series, authors and genres.

For consistency purposes, Chappaqua classroom libraries are leveled for reading difficulty using the system developed by Fountas and Pinnell (2006). The Fountas and Pinnell (2006) book-leveling system considers many of the following factors: length, size and layout of print, vocabulary and concepts, language structure, text structure and genre, predictability and pattern of language, and illustration support. Because there are several different book-leveling systems available and referred to in the literature, a comparison chart follows.

Comparison of Leveling Systems

	Guided Reading Levels	Reading Recovery Text Levels	DRA Levels	Lexile Levels	Grade Levels
Early Emergent Readers	A	1 – 2	1	BR–100	Kindergarten
Emergent Readers/ Early Readers	B – C	2 – 5	2 – 4	BR–100-125	Beginning Grade 1
Early Readers/ Transitional Readers	D – G	6 – 12	6 – 12	125 – 325	Middle Grade 1
Transitional Readers	H – I	14 – 17	14 – 16	325 – 425	End Grade 1
	J	18 - 20	18	425 – 475	Beginning Grade 2
	K – L	Reading Recovery ends at Level 20	20 – 24	475 – 600	Middle Grade 2
M	28		600 – 650	End Grade 2	
N	30		650 – 700	Beginning Grade 3	
O	34		700 – 750	Middle Grade 3	
P	38		750 – 800	End Grade 3	
Q – R	40		800 – 900	Grade 4	
S – T			900 – 1000	Grade 5	
U – Z		1000 +	Grade 6		

A suitable classroom library collection is large enough and contains a range of levels so that students in kindergarten to second grade can have eight to twelve books in their personal book baggies (bins, bags or containers). Upper elementary students should have several books (three to five) at a time in their book bags so some are ‘on deck’ or available when they finish a book. With books pre-selected for future reading, precious independent reading time is not lost in the quest to find a new book. Since reading at home is expected and encouraged, there needs to be enough books available for each child to regularly take one or more books home.

To build independence in book selection, books are prominently displayed in labeled baskets. Besides baskets indicating the guided reading levels, other baskets should have labels to indicate different genres, authors, series and topics that catch students’ interest like *Books That Make You Laugh (or cry)*, *Winning Isn’t Everything*, and *A Friend Should Be Forever*.

In the upper grades, rather than shelving all the guided reading leveled baskets together and then shelving all the author or series baskets together, baskets of series may also be shelved next to the corresponding leveled basket. For example, Dan Greenberg’s Zack files should be next to the N level baskets and Beverly Cleary’s Ramona series should be

Teachers need to instruct students how to select appropriate books. It might take several mini-lessons or sessions for students to learn how to select appropriate books and they may need periodic reminders throughout the year. Many teachers steer younger readers to particular baskets and model how to choose ‘just-right’ books, emphasizing the importance of reading appropriate books.

As teachers model their love of reading and deep appreciation for the books in the classroom library, students will also treasure this resource. The library will need regular maintenance to stay organized so the time spent to instruct students how to take books out of the library and, most importantly, how to properly return them will be time well spent. Since library maintenance is such a large task and on-going, depending on the age and maturity of the students, some teachers assign students to maintain different sections of the library rather than making this a single job.



Classroom Design for Comfort, Independence, and Collaboration

The design of an effective classroom must be thoughtful and directly related to instruction. While the library is at the heart of things, the room itself must be arranged to provide space for large group meetings, partner work, independent reading or work, and small groups convened for guided reading, strategy lessons, or work with peers. Meeting areas, comfortable places for students to read, and strategically placed tables and seating are important to support both collaboration and independence.

The well-designed meeting area is an inviting place for students to gather for lessons, sharing, read aloud time, book talks or other events that require the entire class or larger groups to be together. It is critical that the meeting area has enough space for all children to see the teacher and any shared materials. All students must be able to hear the teacher and all related conversations clearly. In addition, it is essential that the children be gathered close enough to the teacher so he or she can be responsive to each learner.

A meeting area usually has a rug so students can all sit comfortably on the floor in a cozy setting with the teacher sitting in a comfortable chair. For older students, a teacher might have some chairs, benches or a couch for additional seating. The meeting area rug is often bordered by library bookshelves. Frequently, a chalkboard, white board, or an easel and writing pad is placed near the teacher's chair for instructional use and can be easily seen by each student.

Ideally, children can find private spaces or nooks and crannies with pillows for comfortable independent reading and writing. When planning and designing classrooms, teachers need to keep in mind their goal to create compelling destinations for young readers and writers.

In addition to the classroom library and meeting area, tables or desks are arranged so students can have opportunities to interact, collaborate, and engage in discussions. A specific table is frequently designated for small group work so a teacher can demonstrate and students can read or write during guided reading and strategy groups.

When not meeting in large or small groups or working independently, children are often asked to work in partners. Desks or other seating are arranged to allow for these activities.

Materials That Foster Independence

Fostering independence is clearly a goal of comprehensive literacy instruction. Materials that students need for reading and writing are clearly labeled and accessible to foster independence. Materials may include different kinds of paper, writing utensils (pens, pencils, felt-tipped markers), bookmarks, staplers, paper clips, scissors, white boards, post-its and other tools that readers and writers need. Teachers model the use of classroom resources and materials and share expectations for students to be self-reliant.

With clear expectations for independence and easy access to materials, students will be more likely to achieve this end.

Print-rich Environments

An inviting literacy classroom is filled with print and reveals the values of the school and teacher. A print-rich environment engages children in story, language and words. Besides a prominent classroom library, books are displayed all around the classroom to connect with classroom studies. For example, if there are chicks in the classroom, there are books on hatching chicks nearby, or in the math center, books on shapes and numbers are prominently placed.

Upon entering the classroom, it is evident that children's work is valued as it is displayed all around the room. Students' writing pieces and writing about reading are two examples of work that one might see. Products of other frequently used instructional activities such as shared writing created by students and teachers may also be seen.

Charts, written together, that reflect the work of the class, are posted where students can refer to them. Rather than using ready-made charts, it is best to co-create them using the language of a classroom. The charts should clearly spell out instructions, like a *how to* with pictures that illustrate concepts and provide examples, so students can use them independently as they work. Teachers regularly refer to charts and model their use for students. These charts are often referred to as *anchor charts* as they help secure students' learning. These charts are not intended to decorate the room, but to be invaluable resources for readers and writers.

In classrooms for our youngest readers and writers there are labels on nearly everything, and in the intermediate grades there may be quotes relating to social studies or science or other studies. Word walls with sight words, spelling patterns, vocabulary, and other word learning cover the walls and serve as resources for learners.

Word walls are commonly used in classrooms as a tool for high-frequency word learning. Displayed alphabetically, the word wall typically contains high-frequency words frequently used by students in their writing. The purpose of a word wall is to provide a resource for students to use during authentic writing experiences. In most grades, three to five new high frequency words are added to the word wall each week. Through brief (approx. 5-7 minute) daily activities, students build automaticity with these words. As students collectively learn to automatically read and spell specific words, they may eventually be removed from the word wall.

Word walls should be placed strategically where students can easily see the words. In some classrooms, weekly updated copies of the word wall are placed on tables, in writing centers and in writing folders. Students are held responsible for spelling word wall words correctly in their writing. Word walls may also be used to highlight spelling patterns and content area vocabulary.

There is, however, a delicate balance between a print-rich classroom and an environment that is so packed with print that it is over-stimulating. A teacher should stop periodically and look around his or her classroom to be sure the print laden environment isn't overwhelming. As children progress, charts and other resources that are no longer useful should be removed.



Essential Components of Reading Instruction

Read Aloud

Read aloud is an essential daily component of any comprehensive literacy program. The read aloud session is controlled by the teacher with students invited to participate when beneficial to the learning process. Books selected for reading aloud are most often suitable for the students' listening levels and usually above their independent reading levels, although it is important to read aloud from a range of levels that match the class. Books selected for reading aloud to children have many benefits that include, but are not limited to:

- *fostering a love of reading,*
- *demonstrating to our students the "...habits, values, and strategies of proficient readers." (Lucy Calkins, The Art of Teaching Reading),*
- *modeling how "good readers" think and reflect upon their reading,*
- *engaging in conversation around literature,*
- *supporting literacy development,*
- *supporting reading and writing instruction,*
- *supporting learning related to other content areas,*
- *demonstrating that reading is pleasurable,*
- *increasing students' vocabulary,*
- *improving listening skills,*
- *improving attitudes toward reading,*
- *and improving reading comprehension.*

Reading aloud can take place at any time during the day. Books might be selected to be read aloud for what Rosenblatt (1978) refers to as the "aesthetic" experience. These read alouds are primarily focused on providing enjoyable experiences with quality literature.

Most read alouds are interactive. They are carefully planned with an instructional or "efferent" focus in mind that enhances students' literacy learning through demonstration and modeling. With the interactive read aloud, students are invited to participate in a discussion about a skill or strategy that they might find useful as a reader or writer. For example, students may be asked to stop and jot, stop and sketch, and/or turn and talk to respond to prompts. Often times a new skill or strategy is first introduced through a read aloud through teacher modeling. Read alouds can also be used to enhance concepts learned in other content areas.

Some possible titles to use for interactive read aloud can be found at the TC web site. <http://www.tc.edu/rwp/booklist/lists/READALOUDSk.8.pdf>

Purposes for Read Aloud

There are many opportunities across a day for reading aloud. Texts chosen for reading aloud are based upon the purpose. There are five main purposes for reading aloud to students:

1. Read aloud to support emergent literacy
 - requires materials with a strong story line with clear picture support
 - is always a picture book
 - teacher reads through the entire book before any discussion

2. Read aloud to support talk about a key learning
 - is of strong interest to students
 - may be picture books, chapter books, articles
 - may be fiction or nonfiction
 - may be read across several days
 - teacher decides places in advance to stop and talk in the midst of reading
 - amount of talk on some days might exceed the amount of text read

3. Read aloud to support writing or reading workshop
 - is often part of the mini lesson
 - is often chosen to illustrate a reading or writing strategy
 - may be student or teacher work
 - are texts representing a variety of genre (poems, articles, mysteries, autobiographies)
 - may be an excerpt or a series of quotes

4. Read aloud to support math/science/social studies/other content curriculum
 - are texts directly related to the topic that is being investigated
 - are often nonfiction texts
 - teacher often stops in the middle to discuss particular parts, either teacher or student initiated
 - conversations often center more on content of curriculum than strategies of readers
 - beginning of difficult text sometimes read aloud as support

5. Read aloud purely for pleasure or for an aesthetic purpose
 - may be read in one sitting, especially for younger children
 - may be chapter books, read over many days
 - often touches students' emotions
 - often read without interruption or questioning

Shared Reading

Shared reading is an enjoyable and inviting interactive reading experience that replicates bedtime story reading. During shared reading the students gather close together so that everyone can easily see the book or text. Shared reading is highly controlled and scaffolded by the teacher; however, as the name indicates, students always participate and share in the reading process. This is an opportunity for the teacher to model and students to join in together.

The teacher selects a text appropriate for the focus of the lesson. Due to the high level of teacher support, a more challenging text may be selected as it will present less risk for students in this setting. The teacher and the students (whole class or small group) share the task of reading the text aloud. Teachers may model effective reading strategies that good readers use. For example, when the teacher comes to a tricky word, she might ask “*Does it look right? Does it sound right? Does it make sense?*”

Poetry and songs may also be used as shared reading material. Whatever text is chosen, it is important that the text is rich enough to allow for multiple readings. The teacher models reading behaviors and thinking about text. Typically, the instructional focus is on skills and strategies that students will be encountering soon in guided and independent reading. Students are invited to participate in the reading of the text with the teacher.

At the upper elementary levels, shared reading may take place using an excerpt of a book, a poem, or a news article, for example. The important concept is that the teacher is controlling the reading process although sharing the task with the students. The purpose is to scaffold students in text that presents new or different challenges, with the teacher modeling reading behaviors or thinking about text that the readers are not yet proficient at using.

The benefits of shared reading may include but are not limited to:

- *emulating cozy bedtime story experiences,*
- *developing confidence in readers as they participate in enjoyable and non-threatening reading experiences,*
- *enticing students to want to be readers themselves by participating and behaving like a reader,*
- *providing students the opportunity to hear, read, and discuss stories in a risk-free setting,*
- *improving students’ word attack strategies and extending students’ vocabularies by modeling strategies to figure out words or word meanings,*
- *introducing students to a wide variety of authors and illustrators,*
- *teaching students to behave like readers and writers or laying a foundation for reading and writing skills, strategies and behaviors,*

- *providing opportunities for students to practice fluency, phrasing and phonological awareness,*
- *and modeling for students how readers make connections with text.*

Reading Workshop

Reading workshop (Calkins, 2001) includes explicit instruction and modeling, guided practice, independent practice, and a time to reflect and share. It is an integral part of the elementary comprehensive literacy program. It is a way of structuring instruction so each student engages in meaningful literacy activities that develop his or her reading and writing skills. The reading workshop includes time for explicit whole class instruction and also allows ample time for students to practice independently with authentic text. Through a predictable, consistent structure, reading workshop carefully builds a community of learners.

The reading workshop generally has three parts.

1. The minilesson
2. Independent reading time
3. Time to share

The Minilesson

Minilessons, according to Lucy Calkins (Calkins, 1994), are “brief explicit teaching opportunities that follow a certain architecture.” They have a clear instructional focus or teaching point, are carefully planned, and include explicit instruction and the opportunity for practice.

Minilessons typically have the following components:

- *Connection:* A minilesson begins with how the *teaching point* fits with the work the class has been doing - yesterday’s lesson, the on-going unit of study, observations of student work or students’ lives as readers and writers. After the connection, the teacher explicitly and clearly states the teaching point (the skill or strategy) she will be teaching. Teaching points for reading include lessons on management, on literary analysis, on reading skills, and on strategies.
- *Demonstration:* Students are taught in one of several ways. The teacher can explain or describe, demonstrate or model exactly what is meant, or even re-enact a point like a *how-to*. Demonstration or modeling is particularly powerful as students can see what their work should look like. Teachers often use phrases like, *Watch how I...* and *Please notice that...*
- *Active Engagement:* Next, students are given an opportunity to practice the teaching point during the *active engagement*. At this time, students

get to try the skill or strategy, usually with a partner, or they act like researchers as they watch a demonstration or plan their work aloud.

- *Link*: Before the students leave the carpet or meeting area, the teacher restates the teaching point and reminds students to try it in their work during independent time. This *link* connects the on-going work of the day to past learning so it becomes a part of each child's repertoire of skills and strategies.

Independent Reading Time

Independent reading time is the time for students to read so they can practice the skills or strategies introduced in minilessons. At this time, it is critical for students to read books of their choice at their own level, either independently or with a partner. Students may read in special nooks, at their desks, or anywhere in the classroom that is comfortable.

❖ Conferring

During independent time, the teacher confers with individual students. This is a time when the teacher meets one on one with students to further their reading or writing. It provides an opportunity to learn more about students' reading or writing, to assess their progress, to provide guidance and instruction, and to inform one's teaching.

As Sharon Taberski noted in *On Solid Ground (2000)*, "What better time than during a one-on-one conference to help students use strategies and skills that will make them better readers (or writers)? Reading (and writing) conferences are at the center of teaching.

During a conference, the teacher sits right next to a student while he or she is reading or writing. It is critical that each teacher develop a system for keeping anecdotal records to inform the conferring process and future teaching. During a conference the teacher refers to these notes about past conferences, demonstration pieces, or other observations about the particular child's reading or writing.

One common type of conference, the Research-Decide-Teach conference suggested by Lucy Calkins (2001) of the Columbia Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, consists of the following steps.

- *Research* - Possible approaches to research include reviewing what you already know about a student, observing the student reading or writing for a few minutes to determine if he or she is appropriately engaged and applying strategies you have taught, reading with the student, or looking at a student's writing and chatting with the student about his or her work. Entry points for discussion might be

questions like, “*How’s it going? Last time we talked about... What’s happened since?*”

- *Decide* – Based on the information gathered, select a teaching point for the conference.
- *Teach* – Begin by giving the student a compliment about something he or she is currently doing well that’s related to your teaching point. Then, demonstrate or explain your teaching point. Next, have the student practice. At the end, remind the student to keep using this new strategy in his or her on-going work.

Students should be active participants in conferences. They need to learn what to expect in a conference and what roles they can play when conferring with their teacher. Depending on the age of the student, some roles they play might include demonstrating how they are applying strategies, developing or sharing personal goals they have set, reading orally and/or retelling.

It is important to remember to keep conferences short. A conference should not be more than 5 - 8 minutes. By focusing on only one strategy or skill and using notes from prior conferences with the child, conferences can be kept short and will be more effective.

❖ Small Group Instruction

Besides conferring with students during independent reading time, the teacher also meets with small groups of students for guided reading or strategy lessons. See the section on small group instruction for a more detailed description of guided reading and strategy lessons.

❖ Mid-workshop Interruption

The mid-workshop interruption provides an additional opportunity for instruction during reading workshop. At some point during independent reading or writing, the teacher stops the class, states a teaching point and gives a quick example. The teaching point in the mid-workshop interruption can reinforce current class work, can be related to the teaching point of the day’s mini-lesson or can be a teaching point that is coming up later in the unit.

For example, during the mid-workshop interruption, the teacher can highlight something a student has tried. If the class is studying visualization and a student added background sounds or weather conditions to the movie in his mind, the teacher can share that with the class to reemphasize the teaching point and encourage students to try visualization during their independent reading.



Sharing

At the end of the workshop, students join together in the meeting area to share. There are many options for sharing time. The teacher may choose to share her/his thinking by discussing what she noticed as a reader or she/he may carefully select one or two students to share. Also the teacher might highlight a few students who successfully tried a recent teaching point from a minilesson. She might share something that worked, reinforce or extend the mini-lesson or review something for which everyone needs help. This time may also be used to introduce something new or plant seeds for future learning.

Reading Workshop

Minilesson (10-15 minutes)	Teacher describes and models one specific teaching point (reading strategy) to whole group.
Independent Reading (20-40 minutes depending on age and stage of children)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained independent reading • Conferring • Strategy groups • Guided reading groups • Partner reading
Mid-workshop Interruption (less than 5 minutes)	An optional structure for the teacher to quickly introduce another teaching point for whole class or reinforce the current teaching point
Sharing (5 - 10 minutes)	Whole group comes together for a few students to share. The teacher often reinforces an idea already taught or introduces a new idea to be further developed at another time.

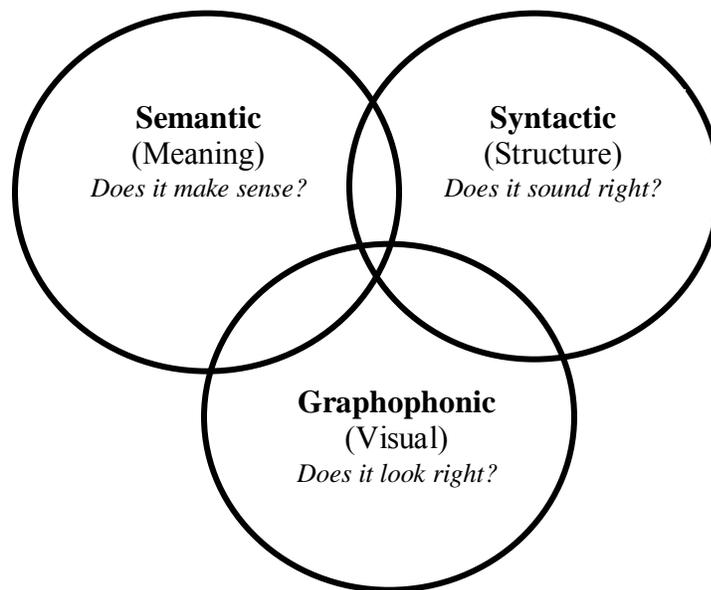
Small Group Instruction

Small group instruction is critical for optimal learning to occur. It is through small group instruction that teachers differentiate to meet the varying needs of students. Small group instruction may be as informal as keeping three children behind after a mini-lesson to provide extra practice with a skill or strategy, or as formal as pre-selecting a text to move a group of students into the next level. During small group instruction, students practice applying skills and strategies under teacher guidance. Regardless of the structure, small group instruction is essential in developing strong readers and writers.

There are many ways we instruct students in small groups. Two of the most common and frequently used are Guided Reading and Strategy Lessons.

Guided Reading

Teachers typically use guided reading groups for instruction at levels A-J when children are learning to read. The primary purpose of guided reading is to teach students to use the three cueing systems (meaning [semantic], structure [syntax] and visual [grapho-phonetic]) and to self-monitor their effective use as they read connected text.



A typical guided reading group takes about 10-15 minutes to conduct. Teachers select a book at the instructional level of the students in the group. All students read the same text. Guided reading is particularly supportive when students first enter a new level of text. Much of the teaching involves setting children up for the features of the next level, especially those that the teacher anticipates will be challenging to the youngsters. When learning to read, some students need frequent guided reading instruction to ensure flexibility and automaticity with the use of semantic, syntactic and visual cueing systems.

Guided reading groups consist of 2-6 students with similar reading abilities and instructional needs. It is theorized that students progress fastest in their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) or at a level where they struggle but can succeed with support or scaffolding. In applying this theory to reading, students are instructed at their instructional reading level or in text that they can read with approximately 90-94% accuracy.

The teacher's role is to provide just enough support or scaffolding for each student to succeed. Too much support is detrimental and will impede the student's progress toward independence. The main components of guided reading are (1) a book introduction, (2) students reading while the teacher coaches, and (3) sharing/reinforcement. The structure of a guided reading lesson before, during, and after reading is as follows:

Before reading the teacher should:

1. assess students and select a group of students with similar instructional needs.
2. select a text that is appropriate for the students based on reading level and instructional needs.
3. provide a book introduction

The book introduction is a critical component of guided reading. During this time, the teacher sets the purpose for reading, introduces vocabulary, talks about strategies good readers use in this level of text, and takes a partial picture walk or previews parts of the text, as appropriate. At lower levels, a picture walk in which the teacher previews the title and most of the pictures in the text, as well as a few words that could be especially problematic is important to do. As a student becomes a more proficient reader in a level, the book introduction becomes more lean and the teacher offers continually less support. It is important to leave some challenges for students to solve independently as the teacher coaches or supports them through the text. After level J, a picture walk usually is not necessary, however it is important to remind students of the importance of previewing text if they are not doing so.

During reading the teacher should:

1. ask each student to read the text silently (or in a whisper voice for younger students) to him or herself. All students are reading to themselves at the same time. This is not a time when one student reads and the others listen and follow along as in round robin reading.
2. "listen-in" to individuals and coach or guide as needed.
3. provide wait time for students to promote independence in their use of reading strategies.
4. give prompts or clues, as needed by individual students. For example,
 - Try that again.
 - Does that make sense?
 - Look at how the word begins.
 - Does it sound right?"

After reading the teacher should:

1. address explicit teaching points that emerge as he/she observes students processing the text.
2. discuss with students the meaning of the text and/or revisit parts of the text as necessary. In some cases, the students may discuss among themselves.
3. identify, for the group, particularly effective strategies observed to be used by students.
4. address explicit word work, (for just a minute or two) that emerged as students were reading the text. The focus of this word work is to build automaticity and flexibility in solving words and word parts.

Guided reading lessons are particularly important because they:

- guide students to recognize the meaning, structural, and visual (grapho-phonics) cues presented in text.
- enable students to learn and practice independent reading strategies and skills with increasingly difficult texts.
- provide explicit instruction based on the identified needs of the students.
- engage students in discussion about the text and their strategy use while reading.

Strategy Lessons

Strategy lessons are brief lessons (10-15 minutes) that focus on the use of particular reading strategies or characteristics of text. Although appropriate at all levels, strategy lessons typically take place at levels J and above. Although most strategy lessons are focused on comprehension strategies, word solving strategies may also be targeted. Strategy lessons are typically used when students have been working at a specific level and need to practice their use of strategies in an independent text before moving to the next level.

Strategy lessons focus on specific skills and strategies within and across levels. It is not imperative in a strategy lesson that all students are on the same reading level or in the same text. For example, students could bring their independent reading books for practice or the teacher may have selected a short text all students can read. Typically, strategy lessons are short with students practicing most of the time.

The main components of a strategy lesson are (1) modeling/demonstration, (2) applying a strategy while the teacher coaches, and (3) sharing/reinforcement. The structure of a strategy lesson before, during, and after reading is as follows:

Before reading a teacher should:

1. assess students and select students with similar strategy instructional needs (but not necessarily on the same instructional reading level).
2. ask students to bring their independent reading books to the lesson or select a short text that all students in the group can read and that will provide practice with the strategy these students need to practice.

3. tell students what they will be learning, why it is important, how they might use this strategy, when this strategy is used, and where or in what kind of text or reading situation they might find this strategy helpful.
4. demonstrate the strategy or share an example

During reading a teacher should:

1. ask the students to read (usually silently) and try the demonstrated strategy
2. interrupt the practice and prompt students about challenges by asking questions like:
 - Today you watched as I practiced asking questions as I read. What questions are you asking as you read your book?
 - Today we practiced going back into the text to learn more about our main character. What are you finding when you do that?
3. provide more time for practice.

After reading a teacher should:

1. ask students to demonstrate how they used the specific strategy highlighted in the lesson OR show how they approached a difficult word or concept that most members of the group found challenging
2. coach or guide students as they share, using questions such as:
 - What strategy might you use to figure out that tricky word?
 - What other strategy might you use to help you infer what the character wants?
3. review the strategy or teaching point and briefly discuss what, why, how, when and where students might use this strategy.

Strategy lessons are particularly important because they

- focus on explicit strategy instruction based on the identified needs of the students.
- allow students time to practice the use of specific and challenging strategies in the context of what they are reading.
- allow students time to discuss, in the context of what they are reading, how they apply specific strategies to increase their understanding.
- enhance students' comprehension.
- guide students to bring background knowledge, skills, and experiences to the reading.

Word study (phonological awareness, phonics, word analysis, and vocabulary)

Learning about words in terms of sounds, letters and meaning is vital to any literacy program. Based on extensive research, it is clear that most students benefit from systematic explicit instruction in the development of phonemic awareness and phonics knowledge (Adams, 1990; National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Stahl, 2001). Word Study or Word Work encompasses phonemic awareness, phonics, word analysis, and vocabulary. Word Study provides students with an opportunity to manipulate words (and parts of words) in meaningful and enjoyable activities. Reading and writing abilities can improve dramatically as word study lessons develop experience with:

- letters and their corresponding sounds,
- components of words, such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes,
- patterns of how words are spelled, such as word families or phonograms, and
- how chunks or parts of words often give hints to the meaning, spelling and pronunciation of a word.

Word study activities involve active problem-solving. Students are encouraged to look for spelling patterns, form hypotheses, predict outcomes, and test them. These activities require students to continually ask themselves, "What do I know about this new word, and how is it similar to words that I already know?" Word Study is essential to both reading and writing instruction as it helps students to:

- *appreciate the usefulness of letters, sounds, and words,*
- *develop a curiosity and love of language,*
- *help students make connections between words,*
- *introduce and reinforce new concepts,*
- *learn to read and spell high-frequency words,*
- *recognize patterns in words,*
- *develop an understanding of word meanings and word parts, and*
- *develop a rich vocabulary.*

Several resources for word study instruction are available for teachers. They include Donald Bear's Words Their Way resources, Fountas and Pinnell's Word Study Lessons, Cunningham's and Hall's Month by Month Phonics. Although these resources vary, all embrace a differentiated approach to word study instruction in which letters sounds and words are taught in the context of authentic reading and writing experiences.

Word study instruction should be balanced so that some of the work with words occurs in isolation and much of it occurs within the context of reading and writing. Synthetic Phonics program, such as Orton-Gillingham, Wilson, Linda Mood Bell and direct instruction programs such as Distar or Reading Mastery may be appropriate for a very small percentage of students although there is relatively limited research on these programs despite their longevity and wide-spread use. (Ritchey and Goeke, 2006) It is most important to recognize that, irrespective of the approach used to teach phonics, effective phonics instruction (Adapted from Stahl, Duffy-Hester, and Stahl, 1998):

- begins early and is systematic.
- develops the alphabetic principle.

- develops phonological awareness.
- provides a thorough grounding in the letters.
- encourages students to develop and explore hypotheses rather than teaching through rules.
- encourages students to manipulate letters, chunks and words to foster deeper understanding of how words work.
- leads to automatic word recognition.
- is one part of a comprehensive literacy program.

In most classrooms, word study is a twenty to thirty-minute block of time that takes place three to five times per week. Typically, about five to ten minutes each day are spent on word wall activities for high frequency words. The remaining twenty to twenty-five minutes are spent on small group instruction or whole group lessons. Small groups are formed according to the students' stage of orthographic development as determined by the results of a qualitative spelling inventory and teacher observation of student writing.

In most cases, students in a small group meet with a teacher once per week when new concepts are introduced, and work in independent or partner routines on the other days. Whole group lessons usually take place on days when small group work does not occur. These lessons are focused on an instructional need that is appropriate for most of the class at that time. For example, all second graders may learn about compound words through a whole group lesson, although some students may need to do more focused work on compound words within their small groups. In most classrooms, whole group lessons take place between three and ten times per month, while differentiated small group work takes place three to four times per week. Teachers usually meet with one small group per day while other groups work on independent word study routines.

Conversations, Discussion, and Accountable talk

Elements of Accountable Talk

Conversation, a critical component of a thinking environment, should be a valued academic component in all classrooms. According to Lauren Resnick's *Principles of Learning* (1999), accountable talk is a cornerstone in deepening learning when students respond to and develop what others have said, base their talk on accurate and relevant knowledge and follow the norms of good reasoning. Discussion leads to deeper comprehension and supports the development of ideas.

Conversations can take a wide variety of forms. Sometimes conversations involve the entire class, especially when responding to a read aloud text. Other times conversations are among small groups such as book clubs or between partners as they discuss books they are reading independently.

Teachers can model skills of discussion by questioning, probing, and leading conversations. Students need to be taught the skills required for meaningful conversations. Students learn to be good listeners by stating back what they just heard, asking follow-up questions, asking for clarification, building on the idea being discussed or asking for evidence to substantiate the idea.

Students of all ages should be taught to listen carefully to understand and respond to the ideas being discussed. They learn to generate ideas and to select an idea to stick with or focus on so the conversation becomes narrowed and deeper. Students must also learn to disagree respectfully so they challenge the claim, not the speaker. Finally, students are taught to reflect on and evaluate their conversations so that over time they grow and deepen.

Supporting Higher and Higher Levels of Learning

Lucy Calkins, *The Art of Teaching Reading*, A Curriculum of Talk, page 227.

At First...	Later...
Students talk about the texts we read aloud.	Students talk about the texts they read independently.
Students' talk is scaffolded by us, as teachers.	Students' talk is student led.
Students talk about the texts they've just heard or read in school.	Students talk about the texts they read at home.
The thinking happens primarily through talk.	The thinking and idea-building happens through talking and writing.
Reading is interspersed with talk (often every few pages).	The talk comes after a larger chunk of reading or at the end of the text. This means readers do more synthesizing and summarizing.
The talk continuously roams among many assorted points.	The talk eventually lingers over, probes and develops an extended idea or two.

There are many different ways to respond to text including talking, sketching and/or writing. The following phrases are some ways to respond verbally to text.

- I noticed...
- It reminded me of...
- I wonder why...?
- I didn't understand...
- My idea changed when...

Sometimes readers can sketch what they are thinking or jot down some ideas first before entering a conversation. This process, however, is not linear. Sometimes the teacher engages the whole class in a conversation, then allows time for writing to reflect or extend current thinking, and concludes by having students talk with a partner.

According to Lucy Calkins (2001), for deep conversation to occur the group needs to “establish a focus and, for as long as possible, talk, think, jot, reread and talk some more around that focus.” The idea is to build the conversation collaboratively.

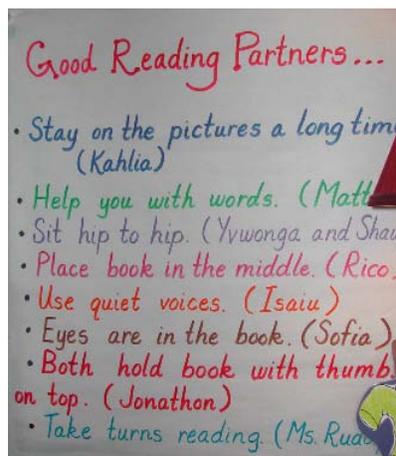
Some possible phrases that encourage students to enlarge other's ideas are:

- I agree with what you are saying because...
- Why did you say that? Can you show me how you got that idea?
- Could you say more?
- I hear what you are saying, but I see it differently...

Some possible phrases to add on to other's ideas or “piggyback” are:

- I'd like to add on to what you said.
- I have another example of what you said.
- Another thought about that is ...
- One example of your idea is...

From Calkins, *The Art of Teaching Reading*, page 242



Partner Work and Book Clubs

Book clubs are an instructional approach to literature study more typically used in upper grade classrooms. In a book club, students meet in small groups to read the same story, poem, article or book. While clubs mostly read the same material, sometimes clubs read different books by the same author or on the same topic.

One way to ease students into collaborative book club work is through partnerships (pairs). Once partnerships are established and going smoothly, two partnerships can merge to form a book club.

Students in book clubs discuss, respond and reflect on the reading material by collaborating with the other members of their club. It is the conversations with other club members that broaden and deepen everyone's thinking.

According to Fountas and Pinnell (2001), the key elements of book clubs are:

- reading and thinking about works of literature,
- collaborating with others to reflect on, analyze and criticize literature,
- developing and sharing aesthetic responses to literature, and
- extending understanding through talk and /or writing.

Ideally, a book club consists of four members, although this number can vary from two to five. The members of these clubs are required to organize their work, determine how many pages will need to be read each day or week, be accountable to their club by actually reading the assigned pages, come to meetings prepared to have a conversation, and to participate fully in the club conversations.

This type of literature study is designed to:

- increase students' enjoyment of reading,
- make students aware of the value of their personal response to what they read,
- engage students in meaningful literary discussions,
- provide rich experiences with a range of genres,
- deepen students' understanding of the qualities that make a well-crafted piece of literature,
- demonstrate new ways of interpreting and analyzing text, and
- foster critical thinking

Fountas and Pinnell (2001)

The selection of texts for book clubs must be done carefully and deliberately. Each student in the club should be able to read the selected text. In addition, the texts should be rich enough to offer opportunities to discuss layers of meaning, worthwhile issues, represent our diverse world, be interesting to the readers, and offer a variety of perspectives. (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001)

The teacher's role is to support, scaffold, and mentor the club in a variety of ways. Supporting clubs can mean being a proficient partner in conversations, teaching strategies

directly to the club in the form of a strategy lesson, facilitating or redirecting their conversations, 'whispering in' to have students ask each other questions, modeling routines and behaviors of good conversations and observing to collect assessment information.

Good readers...

Thinking	Post-Its	Partner Talk
Make text-to-self connections	TS	This reminds me So I think...
Make text-to-text connections	TT	This reminds me So I think...
• Make wonderings	W	I wonder... What do you think?
• Make predictions	P	I predict... because My prediction was..
• Choose a favorite part	♥	This part was my favorite because...
• Make noticings about characters	!	I think... because...
• Notice their feelings	😊 😞	This part made me feel... because...

Essential Components of Writing Instruction

The method of writing instruction used in the Chappaqua elementary classrooms is based on the belief that students should see themselves as writers and be deeply involved in writing. Through direct teacher instruction, independent efforts at writing, and collaboration with peers, students learn how to incorporate elements of craft, write in different genres, revise and edit their work. All this takes place within a community of writers as it is essential that students share their texts with others throughout the writing process.

The Writing Process

The writing process is recursive and involves the following phases or components:

- Rehearsal or Planning: This is the time when the writer is thinking about his or her writing and may be the telling of a story across a primary grade student's fingers or the writing of small snippets in a writers' notebook in the upper grades. This phase or component occurs before writing a piece, but the writer may return to this phase throughout the process of crafting a piece.
- Drafting: This is the time when the writer is actually writing and attempting to get ideas down on paper. Young writers are trying to get ideas down on paper while translating oral language to the written word while older writers are searching for meaningful ideas about which to write. They may scour their writer's notebooks to find seeds upon which they can elaborate. Again, this phase or component may occur at various times. A writer may draft for a time and then stop to think and plan some more.
- Revising: Revision is the time the writer revisits the piece he or she has drafted to improve the overall quality and to incorporate the elements of craft that have been learned. Again, this phase may occur throughout the writing process, and the writer may choose to return to the planning phase or even the drafting phase as he or she crafts a piece of writing.
- Editing: At this time, the writer is typically finished writing and is rereading the piece with a different lens, this time checking for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and other mechanics.
- Publishing or Sharing: Sharing and receiving input from others is an important component of any writing endeavor. Students need ample opportunities to share their writing during the entire writing process. Not every piece needs to go through the entire publishing process, but throughout a school year students should be expected to publish some of their pieces. Publishing takes many forms, including class books, completed pieces hung in the classroom, or sharing with small groups.

Writing Workshop

Writing is most often taught through a daily workshop that includes three parts: a minilesson, independent practice and sharing time. In a minilesson, the teacher gives direct, explicit instruction to students. After the minilesson, students have a chance to write independently. Independent writing is the time provided each day for students to engage in authentic, purposeful writing at their independent level without teacher intervention or evaluation. This is a time when students consciously apply and explore skills and strategies that they are trying or have learned.

During independent writing time, the teacher confers with students about their writing, or meets in small groups for strategy lessons. In most cases, students write about topics of their own choosing. These topics come from their life experiences, interests and passions. Topics emerge from students' noticing, questioning, wondering and remembering. Students select their own topics regardless of the genre. For example, students studying content area writing with the Arctic as the focus of study could choose the aspect of the Arctic they will write about.

During sharing time, the teacher could ask a few students to share a segment of their writing for which they are proud or desire feedback. The teacher could also highlight something new a student has tried or is a good example of the minilesson's teaching point.

See the chart below for typical timing of the writing workshop.

Writing Workshop

Minilesson (10-15 minutes)	Teacher describes and models one specific teaching point (writing skill or strategy) to whole group.
Independent Writing (20-40 minutes depending on age and stage of children)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustained independent writing• Conferring• Strategy groups for writing instruction
Mid-workshop Interruption (less than 5 minutes)	An optional structure for the teacher to quickly introduce another teaching point for whole class or reinforce the current teaching point
Sharing (5 - 10 minutes)	Whole group comes together for a few students to share. The teacher often reinforces an idea already taught or introduces a new idea to be further developed at another time.

Strategy Lessons for Writing Instruction

Strategy lessons focus on the use of particular writing strategies (e.g., dialogue, ‘show don’t tell,’ developing inner thoughts of characters). Strategy lessons might occur in a classroom after a minilesson and some students need more guidance in using a particular strategy or when the teacher notices several students need extra work on a particular skill or strategy. In a strategy lesson, the teacher describes and models the strategy, and then watches as each child individually applies that strategy to his or her own writing.

Important Genres

The writing curriculum is rich and varied with many different genres taught in elementary classrooms. While the units of study can occur at different times in the school year, all students from kindergarten through fifth grade learn to write personal narratives to launch the school year. In the primary grades, these stories about their own lives are called ‘*small moments*,’ but, regardless of the grade level, we encourage students to zoom in on a single, short moment in time. Many classes take the skills and strategies learned in personal narratives and apply them to writing fiction stories later in the year.

Non-fiction is another type of writing taught at all levels. The ‘*how to*’ is an example of procedural writing taught in kindergarten and first grade. ‘*All about*’ books, in kindergarten – third grade, tell everything a student knows about a particular subject. These books are organized into chapters and may contain a *how-to* section. In fourth and fifth grade students learn to write essays. Students at all ages write content area books or research papers related to their studies in different areas of the curriculum.

Persuasive writing is another type of writing taught in many grades. Persuasive writing can take the form of letters about subjects students have strong feelings about or reviews of movies, books, or essays. Most grade levels also teach poetry. Writing is used across the curriculum to investigate and develop ideas. This is especially true in literature. Students in the older grades have reader’s response notebooks where they write about their thinking about the literature they read.

Shared and Interactive writing

Reading and writing are closely related processes. As children are learning to write, they are also learning to read. For example, word study, interactive writing and shared writing guide students to hear the sounds in words and to see word structures that will support them as they grow as readers.

Shared writing involves teachers and students working together to compose text. The class might write about a recent experience, a class trip, yesterday’s fire drill, or a story or poem. The students tell the teacher what to write, the teacher scribes the piece on chart paper and together they work out conventions of print, spelling and grammar. In the upper grades, shared writing might be used to demonstrate how to respond to

literature, write letters or take notes in the content area. Primary students participate in shared writing two or three times a week and older students participate in this type of activity on a less frequent basis.

During interactive writing in kindergarten, first, and second grades, the teacher and student(s) share the pen as they compose a brief message or text together. The teacher determines the most appropriate places for the students to share in the writing. For example, the teacher may ask students to write high frequency words within the message while the teacher writes the more difficult words on the chart or white board.

Interactive writing is important because it gives students an opportunity to practice writing letters and words they know and to do some problem-solving on partially known words in the context of the message. This can also be a time to work on concepts of print and conventions like capitalization, punctuation and spacing. Because students are supported by an adult, the children are able to do more than they could do alone. The teacher's support allows students to work at the outer limits of their ability.

Conventions: Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation

Grammar and punctuation can be addressed during both the revision and editing stages of the writing process. Guidelines for teaching conventions can be found at the end of each grade level's writing map and in each Chappaqua writing binder. When teachers plan their writing units across the year, they should incorporate lessons that focus on two or three conventions for each unit.

Conventions are also addressed during shared and interactive writing. Spelling is also a focus of word work.

Assessments

There are a variety of assessments teachers can use to assess students' skills and strategies in reading and writing and to match students to appropriate texts for independent and small group instruction. Chappaqua teachers have many assessment resources available to them in addition to the informal observations and anecdotal notes they keep. Some assessments are consistently given throughout the grades while others are optional. An assessment schedule is distributed at the beginning of each year.

Below are some of the common assessments available.

Reading

Running Records

Created by Marie Clay in the late 1960's, a running record is a systematic way of recording students' reading behaviors. The teacher is a neutral observer recording everything the student says and does in the process of reading connected text. Instruction can take place after the running record is completed, but not during it.

A running record:

- provides an accurate and objective description of what actually occurs in the course of reading,
- provides diagnostic information on how the reader is processing print,
- indicates what the reader knows/can do,
- provides insights about what needs to be learned next,
- allows the teacher to make informed decisions concerning instructional needs, grouping reading levels, and suitable materials, and
- provides documented information for other teachers, administrators, and parents.

During a running record:

- the child reads informally from an unfamiliar or familiar text.
- reading generally proceeds on an independent basis. However, the teacher may supply a word if the child has stopped. This strategy is given as a last resort!
- The teacher records the reading using a "short hand" miscue recording technique. For purposes of consistency, it is encouraged that teachers use the DRA (citation) recording method which is slightly different from Clay's.

Teachers College (TC) Reading Assessments

Teachers College personnel developed a quick informal reading assessment for all levels. The assessment consists of three sets of books at levels A through K (two from Beboop and one from Scholastic) and two sets of texts for levels L – Z. The assessment for each

story includes a running record, retelling, literal and inferential comprehension questions and prompts. Students respond orally to the questions and prompts while the teacher takes notes. There are guides and student models to help teachers determine a student's basic understanding of each text and appropriate level.

In addition, Teachers College also provides guidelines for giving an "In-book Assessment" using any text a child is reading. In-book assessments include a running record and some general comprehension questions to guide teachers toward determining the student's independent reading level.

All students are assessed with the TC Reading Assessments. An assessment schedule is updated each school year and shared with all teachers. More guidance on the Teachers College assessments can be found in the Chappaqua assessment binder or on the website. (<http://rwproject.tc.columbia.edu>)

Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2), 2nd Edition (2006)

The DRA2 was created for primary classroom teachers to authentically assess students' reading progress and identify instructional needs. The DRA2 kit contains leveled texts and forms (Observation Guides) for running records and assessment of comprehension. There are two DRA2 kits available to teachers: the K-3 kit (levels A – 40) and the 4-8 kit (levels 20 to 80). Teachers hold individual conferences with students to record oral reading and evaluate comprehension of text. Written responses are used to assess comprehension at level twenty-eight and above.

All classroom teachers have a DRA kit for an optional reading assessment in addition to the TC Inventory. In most cases, reading specialists, ESL and special education teachers assess students with DRA to provide additional in-depth information on reading fluency and comprehension.

Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI™) (2001)

SRI is a brief, computer-based assessment instrument for grades 1- 12 that allows educators to quickly assess reading comprehension and match students to books. Students read excerpts from children's and young adults' classic literature, as well as newspapers, magazines and periodicals. SRI software is installed in our computer labs and adjusts passages, either increasing or decreasing the difficulty of the passages as the assessment is administered. Teachers may choose to give SRI to students as an additional assessment.

Writing

Chappaqua Narrative Writing Continuum

Based on the Teacher's College Writing Continuum, The Chappaqua Narrative Writing Continuum has been developed to assist teachers in their evaluation and assessment of students' development as writers. This is a valuable tool for teachers to use as they plan their instructional path. The continuum is based on twelve stages of writing development and assesses students' writing in terms of structure, elaboration, concept of writing and/or craft, meaning and/or significance. The Chappaqua resource binder contains personal narrative anchors for each stage of writing development, as well as suggestions for instructional next steps.

On-demand Writing Assessments

It is valuable to have an on-demand writing assignment at the beginning of the year so you have an entry level piece for each student to determine the basis of instruction. These on-demand pieces can be used to guide mini-lessons and form small writing groups for strategy lessons. From these pieces, the teacher can see what students are able to do independently before instruction. These pieces can be saved across the length of a unit so the teacher and the writer can see growth. They also can be used across the year so the teacher and student can have documentation of writing growth each year. Whenever possible, administering an on-demand assessment at the beginning of each new genre will help to guide instruction.

Concepts of Print, Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Spelling

K-1 Primary Literacy Assessments

All K-1 students are given the Chappaqua Primary Literacy screening when they enter school. This assessment provides benchmarks and data on letter identification, phonemic awareness, high frequency words and concepts of print. If students do not meet benchmarks on the September screening in kindergarten, they are considered for literacy support services and re-screened in February and June. Students who were identified at any point in kindergarten are re-assessed in the beginning of first grade. Based on teacher input and student growth, students may be re-assessed in February and June of first grade as well. These assessments, along with the student's independent reading level, help teachers determine instructional priorities for whole class and small group lessons, and support school-based teams in determining the most appropriate level of literacy support, when necessary.

Qualitative Spelling Inventories

Based on the work of Edmund Henderson (1985) at the University of Virginia, many spelling inventories were designed with the purpose of assessing students' knowledge of key spelling features that relate to different spelling stages. These stages represent a developmental progression of orthographic knowledge, and can also provide valuable information about development in reading. *Words Their Way* (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton and Johnston) suggests three different spelling inventories for grades K-12.

Each identifies a stage of spelling development for individual students and helps teachers to differentiate word study instruction. A feature guide is provided to analyze results and inform instruction.

Fountas and Pinnell Word Study Assessments

Each teacher in kindergarten through third grade has a Fountas and Pinnell Word Study Resources binder for his or her grade level. In each Fountas and Pinnell Word Study Resources binder, there is an assessments section, which has several word study assessments appropriate for students at that grade-level. They are organized by the nine categories of word study learning outlined by Fountas and Pinnell in their kits: Early Literacy Concepts, Phonological and Phonemic Awareness, Letter Knowledge, Letter/Sound Relationships, Spelling Patterns, High Frequency Words, Word Meaning, Word Structure, and Word Solving Activities.

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