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A professional development program for balanced literacy

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Abstract

A balanced literacy framework is a complex yet comprehensive avenue for literacy instruction that has been successfully implemented by the author in a low socioeconomic kindergarten classroom with remarkable achievement gains. This research project first describes the successful implementation and relates it to the professional literature on balanced literacy. A professional development program is then developed that will help teachers discover the importance of implementing balanced literacy practices and gain knowledge and understanding on how to implement the components of a comprehensive balanced literacy framework into their practice.

A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR BALANCED LITERACY

A Graduate Project

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Division of Literacy Education

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Sheila McCullough

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Abstract

A balanced literacy framework is a complex yet comprehensive avenue for literacy instruction that has been successfully implemented by the author in a low socioeconomic kindergarten classroom with remarkable achievement gains. This research project first describes the successful implementation and relates it to the professional literature on balanced literacy. A professional development program is then developed that will help teachers discover the importance of implementing balanced literacy practices and gain knowledge and understanding on how to implement the components of a comprehensive balanced literacy framework into their practice.

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Introduction

For decades, educators, researchers, parents, and policy makers have continually debated over the most effective methods to teach children how to read (Carson, 1999; Gambrell, Malloy, & Mazzoni, 2007; Rasinski & Padak, 2004; Spiegel, 1998). Some of the supporting literature has focused on professional development, group arrangement, instructional programs and practices, modes of instructional delivery, and still others have focused on philosophical perspectives, such as holistic versus skill instruction. Changes have been made, policies have been adopted, and the pendulum has gone back and forth; yet, many children are still struggling to read. Could it be that through trying to adopt one or two specific solutions that we have failed to see the bigger problem which might encompass all of the above? In support of balanced instruction, all of these questions are important, and need to be considered (Rasinski & Padak, 2004). Reading is a complex endeavor and includes multiple variables, so shouldn't our instruction address multiple perspectives meant to differentiate instructional practices and delivery based on what each child needs? Our fundamental goal as educators is to teach all children how to read and write, yet our instructional decisions and best intentions are falling short of the goal (Allington & Gabriel, 2012). A balanced literacy framework uses ongoing assessment, and a teacher's professional expertise and knowledge of his/her students as the foundation for the instructional decision making process, so that all children can learn how to read and write.

Rationale for Topic

As an adult, I returned to school to become a teacher because I wanted to make a difference in the lives of children. Back then, that dream seemed quite simple after living in my middle class world, but I had no idea of the extent that literacy instruction or lack

of played in the life of a child. Over the years, I have come to realize that literacy is the most critical component in education. If a child struggles with reading and writing, he/she struggles in all academic areas. The effects have lasting consequences which can hinder every aspect of a child's life and his/her future.

My experience as an educator has taken place through life lessons and through working in a low socioeconomic school with at-risk children. As a Title I, Reading First, and a School In Need of Assistance (SINA) school, our staff's goal has been to figure out the best practices for teaching children how to read, especially, at-risk children. We sought out the research, listened to the experts, and have implemented many components for a comprehensive balanced approach to literacy instruction. Much like Shirley Carson (1999), I personally am "challenged to consider my own experiences, and resulting philosophies" and "validate" (p. 214) the methods that I choose based on research. As a result of changes in our instructional framework, our scores have skyrocketed, and others are asking us what we are doing. We've had numerous visits from schools within our district and even outside of our district.

As educators, we are always seeking to learn more and make the necessary changes based on the needs of our children. According to Gambrell et al., (2007), "…teachers need a strong knowledge of good evidence, drawn from both professional wisdom, and the research" (p.14) to make the best possible instructional decisions. The series of professional development sessions that will be presented later in this paper, seeks to share our balanced framework and support it through the available literature and research. However, there is no "silver bullet" (Spiegel, 1998, p. 114) or magic "program, method, or practice" (Gambrell et al., 2007, p. 15) that will work for all children; teacher

expertise is the critical component for effective reading instruction.   Effective teachers know the children they teach and know how to differentiate to meet each child's needs.

Purpose of Study

My initial purpose for this study was to share the literacy framework that our kindergarten team had created and successfully implemented over the past several years. Then, I wanted to support its components and our practices through the available literature and research. My secondary objective was to investigate and gain insight into the various descriptions of balanced literacy (often referred to or known as a comprehensive reading framework), and how each individual component supports or enhances the others, and then to use that knowledge to improve my own practice. Through this study, I hoped to define and explain the critical factors for a comprehensive literacy framework found to be effective for one school with an at-risk population, and to learn more as I examined the available literature. I then developed professional development sessions that sought to help other teachers develop their own understandings of these topics and improve their own practice.

Importance of Topic

Children entering kindergarten come with a variety of experiences and abilities. Some have been to preschool, others have had many experiences with literacy at home, and some come with very little to no knowledge or experiences with literacy. This lack of literacy experience has created an achievement gap for at-risk children living in low socioeconomic environments (O'Connor, 2000). At-risk children enter kindergarten already behind their more advantaged peers. However, there is good news; children entering kindergarten believe that they can learn to read and will put forth the effort to do

so. They haven't experienced the failure that alters their desire yet. According to Trelease (2006), "we have 100 percent interest in kindergarten" (p. 1), so as educators, we need to utilize that interest and provide those experiences that will move each child forward.

Reading and writing are the critical pieces that can level the playing field and reduce the achievement gap. Reading creates the background knowledge and vocabulary that children need to be successful in school. Our society cannot afford to ignore the influence that early intervention in reading and writing has on a child's self-esteem and desire to learn. Looking for the perfect method for reading instruction is not new, and has been a focus of debate for decades. However, No Child Left Behind created the sense of urgency to reduce that achievement gap leaving educators searching for answers and solutions, so that all children could meet grade level proficiencies.

In his introduction for the *Read-Aloud Handbook*, Trelease (2006) said that he agrees with the creators of NCLB in that "reading is at the heart of education" (p. xxv) because "The more you read, the more know; and the more you know the smarter you grow" (p. 3). For most children, formal education begins in kindergarten which is the critical time "to begin preventative measures and to stimulate the kinds of knowledge and skills to promote reading acquisition" (O'Connor, 2000, p.43). The younger reading starts, the better the results (Trelease, 2006). Early intervention through balanced literacy instruction is imperative if we are to have any hope of decreasing that achievement gap.

Terminology

Some of the terms within this paper aren't common terms that are used outside educational circles. Therefore, I will define specific terms in order to clarify meaning.

Gradual release of responsibility model is a framework for implementing instructional assistance from an adult or more knowledgeable person in order to lessen the difficulty of a task for a beginner, so the beginner can move toward understanding and independence (Frey & Douglas, 2010). *Homogeneous grouping* is a term that is used to describe grouping small groups of children by similar ability. *Heterogeneous grouping* is a term that is used to describe grouping children by mixed ability (Moody & Vaughn, 1997).

Research Questions

My research questions developed through my coursework, readings, and my own professional practices. After years of experience and professional development, literacy instruction took on new forms within my classroom as I gained knowledge. My goals through my questions were to affirm, learn, and share. This project addresses those goals through my initial questions: What is balanced literacy, and how do early elementary teachers set up and implement the essential components of a balanced literacy program that meets the diverse needs of all children?

Methodology

The purpose for this chapter is to explain the approach that I used to design a series of professional development workshops focused on the components of balanced literacy instruction and how to implement those pieces within an elementary classroom setting. As this project developed in my mind, I looked at the current program design within my classroom, and created a list of the procedures and components that I wanted to explore further. Based on that list, I used the resources available within the University of Northern Iowa's Rod Library. As a distance learner, it was more efficient for me to use the on-line printable resources, so I focused on those. An online book seller also became a significant resource for me, and I found that reading complete works on balanced literacy, differentiated instruction, literacy coaching, and other material on reading and writing instruction guided my search efforts and made me curious about areas of instruction that I hadn't considered.

Developing the Literature Review

To develop my literature review, I primarily used resources available through the Rod Library databases and books that I purchased through an online book seller. The full text articles came from EBSCO Education Full Text, PsycINFO (EBSCO), and PsycARTICLES (APA) databases. However, I found a few resources through Google searches to help me organize the professional development piece. To locate information, I used these terms: balanced instruction, balanced literacy, literacy instruction, differentiated instruction, reading instruction, struggling readers, teaching reading, gradual release of responsibility, explicit instruction, reading block, grouping

arrangements for reading, components for balanced literacy instruction. I searched for each term separately to develop the specific parts of the literature review.

After some frustration to narrow my searches and find useful information, I started looking at the reference sections at the end of my resources. I focused on the titles to find specific information on the various components that I was interested in. Most of the references led me to books which took me to an online book seller. Some of the resources were out of print, but I was able to purchase used copies. I found that going to the original source was very helpful because each one included comprehensive information that was beneficial and useable. Through reviewing the available literature and research, this paper will address the critical components and instructional practices within a balanced comprehensive reading framework. The information will be used to share the plan for balanced literacy instruction that is currently being utilized in a low socioeconomic kindergarten classroom in the Midwest.

Developing the Workshop Design

My original purpose for this project was to share a very successful design that I use within my kindergarten classroom and also used by other primary grade teachers; however through research, I found that it would be beneficial to implement it throughout the elementary grades. I used the available literature and research to identify the critical components and instructional practices for a balanced comprehensive literacy framework that is currently being utilized in a low socioeconomic kindergarten classroom in the Midwest.

The design of the professional development sessions was meant to encompass K-5, but for developmental reasons, it might look a bit different at each grade level.

Designing these professional development sessions was a struggle for me because I am not an instructional coach and was worried about my peers learning from these sessions. I owned a book by Vogt & Shearer (2007) called *Reading Specialists and Literacy Coaches in the Real World* and used some of their information to design the plan and timeline. However, support for my project came through Walpole & McKenna's (2013) book *The Literacy Coach's Handbook*. Most of the information in this book supported the procedures and process that I have used in my classroom for several years. This book and *The Literacy Coaching Challenge* also by McKenna & Walpole (2008) gave me some practical advice for teaching adult learners. First for teachers to embrace new learning and change, they must become a community of learners who are respected as knowledgeable and experienced professionals. They have to be offered choices, not a set of demands (Walpole & McKenna, 2013). The seven principles below which originated in the work of Terehoff (as cited in McKenna & Walpole, 2008) became part of my continual focus as I thought about each session. The principles for successful adult learning include:

(a) Setting up an environment for adult learning; (b) involving adult learners in mutual planning; (c) attending to the adult learners' needs and interests; (d) involving adult learners in setting the program's goals and objectives; (e) involving adult learners in designing an effective program; (f) involving adult learners in implementing the program; and (g) involving adult learners in program's evaluation. (as cited in McKenna & Walpole, 2008, p. 17)

Finally, I found some helpful advice for serving as an effective literacy coach. Literacy expertise is a critical factor, but equally important are communication skills,

approaches for building relationships, and understanding the cycle of change (Walpole &

McKenna, 2013).

Review of the Literature

Throughout history, educators have pondered and debated the topic of literacy and

what were the most effective ways to teach children how to read and write. Over time,

more players have entered the debate and advice has been delivered from a wide variety

of participants including researchers, politicians, psychologists, linguists, psycholinguists,

educators, college professors, and publishers. Even the media has entered the picture

(Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block, & Morrow, 2001; Cowen, 2003; Freppon &

Dahl, 1998; Glazer, 1997; Pressley, Gambrell et al., 2007; Pressley, 2006). Through this

onslaught of recommendations and misconceptions, instructional practices developed into

two predominant ideologies with varying degrees of interpretation. Those ideologies

included the skills oriented approach to reading instruction and the whole language

approach to instruction (Cowen, 2003; Frey, 2005; Honig, 1996; Pressley et al., 2001;

Spiegel, 1998).

The skills proponents believe that children had to be explicitly taught phonics

skills in isolation, and then the skills would be supported within decodable text (Smith &

Goodman, 2008). This model focused on the part-to-whole or bottom-up approach where

children were explicitly and systematically taught sound to symbol correspondence; then

the children used their knowledge of the alphabetic principal as a tool to figure out

unknown words. Skills first, then meaning would follow (Strickland, 1998). In contrast,

many whole language proponents believed that skills would be acquired in the context of

authentic reading and writing activities using real fiction and non-fiction text written for

children (Au, 1998; Biemiller, 1994; Pressley, 2006; Smith & Goodman, 2008;

Strickland, 1998). Meaning was the central focus within this holistic approach, and children mainly relied on context to figure out unknown words. Glazer (1997), however, stated that it was the way phonics was taught that separated the philosophies, not whether phonics was taught or not. Strickland (1998) believed that whole-part-whole instruction was the most appropriate approach for the teaching of phonics.

Each philosophy was also subjected to individual interpretation, so each has received its share of criticism. While both ideologies have merit, neither approach can function in isolation and meet the needs of all children. Through research, a fragile bridge was constructed that linked the two ideologies and provided a more effective and complete instructional framework, which came to be known as balanced instruction (Pressley et al., 2001). Cowen (2003) referred to it as "finding a common ground where whole language and phonics can coexist" (p. 1).

My desire to create this project evolved through several years of improving and refining a balanced literacy framework (often referred to or known as a comprehensive reading framework) that was very successful in my classroom, so I will provide an account of those experiences first through an instructional narrative. Historical background behind balanced literacy will then be reviewed in order to create a path from the past to the present, so the reader can see historically where we've been and where we are headed. The discussion will then move to the essential elements and instructional methods that are integrated into the design and others for balance to occur. These elements and instructional methods include a literate environment and motivation, time on task, grouping arrangements, instructional elements, and methods for instruction.

Instructional narrative. When I started teaching eleven years ago, our district's reading program had no particular structure or framework. The basal series was outdated and considered useless according to many of the teachers. Much of the time, the manuals remained on the shelves. Some teachers used some of the materials and ideas, but many just did their own thing through a mixture of literature focus groups, and various skill activities. Most of the instruction was delivered through a whole group setting, and separated into subject areas. I started as a long-term substitute in kindergarten so basically had no in-service time or instruction in how to use the curriculum that was available and didn't even know it existed for a year. The previous design was centered on having a letter of week, and all the activities were devoted to teaching that letter. Since I was a substitute, I followed what was already in place, and the other kindergarten teacher would help me plan. I remember sitting down with folders of worksheets and coloring sheets, crafts, and fun little activity sheets and then filling out numerous production orders. Many of the worksheets were used to show children how to write their numbers, letters, and some easy sight words; beyond those, we did very little writing.

Again, whole group was the primary setting for instruction. However, some time was set aside for small group reading instruction that grouped children according to their ability. The center activities included crafts, puzzles, and a variety of games because play was a huge part of our day. Children who were identified through our district's kindergarten assessment as struggling with early reading skills were pulled out of the room at various times during the day, and instruction was delivered by a Title I support person. Rarely, did the Title I teachers and classrooms teachers meet to discuss student

needs or instructional practices. Grade level teams did some planning together, and we had grade level expectations to meet; so our planning and instruction focused on those expectations. For the most part, there wasn't any systematic design across the district to follow, so one school could look completely different than another. For that matter, grade level classrooms varied in instructional practices as well.

We were considered an at-risk school, and over 90% of our population met the criteria for free or reduced lunches. Most of our children lived in poverty, and absenteeism and mobility were huge issues. Many of our children came from big cities in other states and were being raised by a single parent. Several of our families shared housing with others, and some had no permanent address which meant they were considered homeless. Our school represented the definition of an at-risk population. It isn't surprising that our Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) scores were low, and we soon became a school in need of assistance (SINA). Our staff included some of the most caring, dedicated, and determined professionals out there who already worked countless hours and dedicated much of their lives to make life better for our students. I was proud to be a part of that family, but we knew we needed to make some difficult changes. The future of our children's lives mattered, so we assembled together and created a unified team that examined our philosophies in order to change our instructional practices. This journey led to a more balanced instructional setting that started through purchasing and implementing programs that focused on systematic explicit instructional practices in phonemic awareness, phonics, and one that focused on vocabulary instruction. Purposeful writing also appeared in our primary classrooms. Our small group instruction focused more on skill and strategy instruction, rather than busy activities. Classroom

teachers and Title I staff started meeting as teams to discuss progress and changes that still needed to be made. Within a year, school wide scores were rising, and kindergarten scores were showing huge improvements. Then, the district adopted a new reading series which we worried would set us back. However, our team discussed how to use this new series and continue with the changes we'd made which set into motion a whole new plan for small group instruction, and a more systematic plan for whole group instruction.

Our new series was designed around themes and included some rich sources of literature, as well as, an abundance of quality material for small group instruction. Whole group instruction utilized the series resources and focused on teaching our children how to use comprehension strategies through explicit instruction. Our team designed a rotation plan for small group instruction, and we utilized our Title I staff within the classroom setting. Children were grouped by areas of need, and groups changed as children's reading developed. Within a forty-five minute block of time, each needs-based group of children rotated to three different instructional settings within the room. Each rotation had a separate focus for instruction but each utilized explicit instruction and the gradual release of responsibility. One group focused on explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, and writing the symbols, one focused on sight word acquisition, and the other used the framework for guided reading which included material at the appropriate level for instruction. Writing instruction was provided outside this block of time, but was included daily. However, our students who struggled the most spent that forty-five minute period in a separate room within a smaller group where instruction was delivered slowly and more intensely, but used the same materials. Most of these children struggled with attention issues, so the quiet setting worked well. The materials were

leveled by grade and included approaching, on, and beyond grade level material and went with the theme or unit of study. Based on observations and assessment data, we made positive changes to our small group rotation each year.

Again, our scores were skyrocketing, and across the district, our kindergarten classrooms had the fewest number of children who needed intensive interventions. School-wide our scores improved to the point that we got off the School In Need of Assistance (SINA) list. People were paying attention and wanted to know what we were doing. Visitors came from neighboring districts, and our principal and reading coach visited their schools to share what worked for us.

Sadly, due to budget cuts our school was eventually targeted for closure. I chose to go to a school that served children with similar socioeconomic backgrounds and needs, but it served a larger population. The good news came when my associate and I were placed together as a team. This new setting came with a new set of challenges and hurdles to overcome. First of all, our class size was huge, and we received very little Title I assistance, so we had to think beyond what had become familiar. Without that support staff and with the increase in class size, I had my doubts about meeting the needs of so many children. Once again, we began to implement our framework and rotations into our new classroom.

Our reading block was broken into an hour for whole group instruction, an hour for small group instruction, and then we added another thirty to forty minutes in the afternoon for writing instruction. We integrated subject material, so small chunks of time throughout the day were available and set aside for independent reading and writing.

During whole group reading, we used three different instructional programs that utilized interactive reading aloud and shared reading. One program included our reading series, another was a vocabulary program, and the third one addressed explicit instruction in phonics with some attention to phonemic awareness. At the start of each day during whole group, the children were taught a sound and the symbol for that sound through listening to a short story. The story was provided through a big book with accompanying pictures, but the story was orally elaborated to gain interest and excitement. Then, we took some time to practice the sound to symbol correspondence together in isolation then within a word and finally, within continuous text. Phonemic awareness activities were also a part of explicit phonics instruction through a game-like atmosphere that asked children to find pictures from the big book. The children had to listen to the segmented word and put the sounds together to find the accompanying picture. Then we moved to the reading series which usually started with an introduction into a strategy or skill that the children would be working on followed by a story. The first reading was presented more for enjoyment in a read aloud format that included rich discussions. Then the story was reread through shared reading with a focus on skills and strategies using a big book, so all children could see the pictures and text. Each day provided an array of genres and purposes for instruction. The reading series took up most of my whole group reading time, so I added the vocabulary story after lunch and did the short explicit instructional activities over the week at the start of our block for writing.

Our small group instruction utilized a variety of instructional practices that were implemented through a rotation method that included four stations. Each station was set up to accommodate a group of seven to eight children. Two were independent stations,

and the other two were teacher directed. Using the knowledge I'd gained through experience, professional development, and my Master's classes, I set up four stations that focused on phonemic awareness and phonics, writing, independent and buddy reading, and one that used the guided reading structure with more of a focus toward differentiated instructional practices. The children rotated through four kidney tables which made teaching and following the routine fairly simple. My associate used a program that focused on explicit instruction in phonemic awareness with activities for each day of the week. Then she moved to writing the symbol for the sound that the children had learned during whole group. The activities became more difficult as the children's knowledge and capabilities grew.

My group was set up using the guided reading model. We started with a few minutes for sight word recognition, and a few minutes practicing segmenting and blending the sounds we'd learned. Then we moved to rereading a familiar story and practicing the skills we'd learned. However, the majority of time was spent on introducing and reading a new story, then discussing it. The new story provided situations where strategy instruction was supported through coaching.

The two independent groups were centered on practicing reading and writing. One kidney table was set up for writing where the children wrote for a variety of purposes. Sometimes, they wrote about a prompt from a story we'd read, and other times they chose what they wanted to write about. In the other independent rotation, they either moved to their seats or to another kidney table that was set up as a listening center. At their seats, they practiced reading using their personal book bags or used a variety of fiction and non-fiction picture books available at their table. The picture books rotated

tables every few days with new books for the children to use. At the last kidney table, they listened to books on tape which were always set up and ready to use. This rotation created some variety for them and was easy to implement because when they left the third rotation, the teacher would remind them to either read at their tables or go to the kidney table for listening to books on tape.

In the afternoon, an extra block of time was designated for writing. This block of time included whole group instruction, and then the children were given time for practice. Some days, instruction lasted for the entire twenty to thirty minutes, but incorporated the use of modeled, shared, and interactive writing. We again used a writing program that the district required, but balanced it through the use of teacher support within the instructional components of modeled writing, shared writing, and interactive writing. Independent practice came after instruction, during our reading rotation, and at other times of the day. Usually, we had about fifteen to twenty minutes of time toward the end of the day for writing workshop where the children could practice what they'd learned through writing for their own purposes.

Technology was a huge piece within this framework, and the children used a computer generated reading program for twenty minutes each day in addition to our literacy block. This program was delivered in episodes from one to eighty. Each episode focused on a particular skill which included sound to symbol correspondence and using sound chunks within words. As the children progressed through the episodes the level of difficulty increased. The children would practice the skills that were introduced in the episodes through an accompanying book. Once a week, they would be given free choice on other supportive reading programs.

These essential pieces worked together to create an integrated whole that was and continues to be the foundation of success for us and our students. The children are immersed in reading and writing activities that are integrated within theme-based and subject-based instruction throughout the entire school day.

Historical perspective. More than a decade ago the topic of balanced instruction gained considerable attention as an alternative for teaching children how to read and write (Cowen, 2003; Freppon & Dahl, 1998; Honig, 1996; Pressley et al., 2001; Spiegel, 1998). Educators and researchers tried to explain the concept through their underlying philosophical beliefs, so a variety of interpretations and models came to light. As the literature on balanced instruction grew, so did the confusion and political pressure from outside sources (Cowen, 2003; Freppon & Dahl, 1998; Honig, 1996; Spiegel, 1998). The state of California started the path to reform when they adopted a balanced literacy approach to battle statewide low achievement scores. The reform model was based on reports from the California Department of Education, and the information in Honig's (1996) book, *Teaching Our Children to Read: The Role of Skills in a Comprehensive Reading Program*. Both cited research to support their idea of a comprehensive reading framework, which is also known as a balanced literacy framework.

The California reports and Honig's model separated instruction into two distinct parts (Freppon & Dahl, 1998). One part focused on explicit instruction in phonics (Freppon & Dahl, 1998) and the other on actual reading of literature and writing instruction. This model took into account the need for authentic reading and writing instruction, but focused on systematic phonics instruction as an integral piece. Flexible instruction based on the individual needs of the child was a necessary component, so each

child could achieve the recommended progress or proficiency standard. Children who didn't meet specific standards or benchmarks received small group intervention based on formal and informal assessments; assessment was the guide for instructional decisions. Honig (1996) believed that for children to gain automaticity and meaning, instruction in sounds, letters, and word knowledge were the prerequisites and the critical link for reading success. He stated in an interview, "Sounding out by definition connects letters and sounds with meaning of the word in beginning readers" and that "Almost all children will be accelerated by explaining how the system works" (as cited in Freppon & Dahl, 1998, p. 241). The work of Chall and then Bond and Dykstra (as cited in Cowen, 2003) supported Honig's position, and their work concluded with the idea that "systematic phonics is a necessary and effective way to teach all children to read" (p.20), and "learning the alphabetic code was essential in beginning reading" (p. 24). However, while Chall "advocated the early use of direct, explicit instruction of the code" (as cited in Cowen, 2003, p. 23), she agreed an emphasis on meaning should follow "through literature, writing, and comprehension" (p. 25).

Honig's opponents countered with the idea that skills should be taught as part of a child's engagement in meaningful literacy activities (Au, 1998). Phonics would be "neither the starting point nor the most important element" (Au, 1998, p. 212). Au based her argument on the constructivist approach to children's learning, where children create their own understanding of literacy based on their experiences which included their family, home, culture, community, and school. The most important aspect for a child according to Au was to gain ownership of his or her own literacy; ownership was defined as the value a child placed on literacy. Furthermore, Au believed that through ownership

children would be motivated and engaged readers and writers who understood the purposes for both. Au's position is supported by Luis Moll in his work with ESL students. Moll (1992) believed that children entered school with a variety of cultural and family experiences, and the key for engagement was to use those previous experiences and prior knowledge to understand new information. He felt that respecting a child's personal background knowledge was the key to comprehension (Moll, Amanti, & Neff, 1992).

As arguments for balanced literacy (also known as comprehensive literacy framework) grew stronger, supporters and adversaries voiced their concerns. Opponents of the comprehensive literacy framework believed Honig's model was lacking and incomplete. They claimed that emphasizing word recognition skills would create students who developed isolated skills, but would not understand the purposes for reading and writing. The result would be children who were both poor readers and writers. Furthermore, they felt that struggling readers often needed more support because instructional decisions didn't consider their diverse backgrounds. Supporters of the whole language approach felt that for Honig's model to be complete and for meaning construction to take place, a child's social and cultural background should be at the forefront of the instructional decision making process.

Interestingly, the two opposing sides do have some similarities. Both believed that there was no perfect program that would work for every student, and that specific student needs cannot be met by a set curriculum. Both agreed that structures for teaching whole group, small group, and individual children needed to be in place, and both sides recognized the fact that instructional practices were growing and changing. However, the

search for an understanding and structure for a balanced approach to literacy instruction continued. As the confusion grew and continued, educators and researchers found themselves asking critical questions to help guide their instructional decisions, so the needs of all children would be met. They wanted to know what balanced literacy instruction really entailed. Should children be taught skills separate from actual reading? Did the answers lie in group size, curricular materials, background knowledge, or modes of instruction? Did balance involve balancing strategies and skills? The truth became evident; there was no easy answer because a true balanced literacy program involved all of the above, and it considered the varying social and individual needs of children. Spiegel (1998) stated "that there is no silver bullet and there never will be" (p. 114). Fitzgerald quoted Pressley's work and stated that "there is no single, right balanced approach to teaching reading" (Fitzgerald, 1999, pg. 100). Fitzgerald (1999) went on to say that balanced literacy is a "philosophical perspective about what kinds of reading knowledge children should develop and how those kinds of knowledge can be obtained" (p. 100).

As the debate and questions continued and more and more educators were implementing balanced literacy instruction within their own classrooms, some instructional guidelines and recommendations were developed. Keeping in mind, the idea that a true balanced program should never be a one size fits all or a fixed program that ignores individual differences in children, and some generic guidelines for practice from a balanced perspective have emerged (Cowen, 2003; Fitgerald,1999; Freppon & Dahl, 1998; Spiegel, 1998).

Since no program works for all children, an informed, strategic, and thorough teacher has to be the fundamental answer for implementing all the right pieces for instruction to be effective. The widely held First-Grade Studies from the 60's by Bond and Dykstra supported the idea that training teachers is a critical factor in improving reading instruction (Pearson, 1997). Thirty years later, the National Reading Panel report in 2000 agreed that "staff development in literacy for teachers is related to improvement of student achievement in reading, spelling, and comprehension" (as cited in Cowen, 2003, p. 14). Obviously, the literature points to instructional decision making and delivery as being important factors for improving literacy instruction, and that it is not simply a blend of methods and materials (Pressley et al., 2001). A balanced program has to focus on the methods that should be used to carry out instruction and should include a variety of approaches and procedures (Cowen, 2003). According to Fitzgerald (1999) balanced literacy instruction is a philosophical perspective which includes "local knowledge about reading, global knowledge about reading, and love of reading or affective knowledge about reading" (p. 102). Instructional practices and components are implemented to attain those forms of knowledge, which ultimately created the literacy framework, and as with any quality program, assessment drives the instructional decision making process. The literature is clear; expert teachers and their instructional decisions are the critical pieces. Teachers ultimately use observation and assessment to decide what, when, and how to teach each child (Cowen, 2003; Freppon & Dahl, 1998).

As the demands for higher achievement in literacy increased to meet global changes, recommendations for instruction have also been addressed. Snow, Burns, Griffin, and The National Academy of Sciences (1998) studied the underlying problems

that created difficulties for children in learning how to read. Their work led to a major

national report called *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (PRD). PRD

addressed cultural, socioeconomic, and language roadblocks for children who struggle

with reading, and the research supported early intervention beginning at birth for children

at-risk for reading failure. It also discussed classroom instruction as the pivotal piece in

preventing reading difficulties. The report recommended that initial instruction support

children as they are required to:

- use reading to obtain meaning from print,

- have frequent and intensive opportunities to read,

- are exposed to frequent, regular spelling-sound relationships,

- learn about the nature of the alphabetic writing system, and

- understand the structure of spoken words. (Snow et al., 1998, p. 3)

  According to the report, further instruction should depend on the needs of the child, and

  how he or she is progressing. Instruction beyond the initial level depends on the child

  having:

- a working understanding of how sounds are represented alphabetically,

- sufficient practice in reading to achieve fluency with different kinds of texts,

- sufficient background knowledge and vocabulary to render written texts meaningful and
  interesting,

- control over procedures for monitoring comprehension and repairing misunderstandings,
  and

- continued interest and motivation to read for a variety of purposes (Snow et al., 1998, p.

  4)

The report supported explicit instruction and practice in phonemic awareness, sound symbol correspondence, spelling patterns, and sight word recognition for beginning readers. PRD recommended frequent writing activities that allowed children time to practice those early reading skills through invented spelling which supports the reciprocal nature of reading and writing. In essence, there are many useful guidelines for designing a balanced literacy program because the authors of PRD used information from "cognitive psychology, language development, special education, medicine, and literacy education" (Cowen, 2003, p. 59). According to Pearson (as cited in Cowen, 2003), PRD supported the belief that the use of authentic materials and instruction doesn't have to be hindered or "stand in opposition to explicit instruction in important skills and strategies" (p. 56).

In 2000, the National Reading Panel (NRP) issued a report and identified five key areas of instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Instructional guidelines were developed for each of these areas. The NRP noted that the instructional recommendations were not complete, nor were they meant to be the magic combination. The NRP's report agreed with its predecessors that professional development in reading instruction is critical and does have a positive outcome in high achievement for students (Cowen, 2003, p.70).

Wharton-McDonald and Rankin (1997) state that highly effective teachers know how to balance instruction, understand instructional density and how to achieve a number of goals in one lesson, offer support through extensive scaffolding and modeling, know how to integrate skills instruction with authentic reading and writing activities, have an awareness of purpose, hold high expectations for all students, and are masterful at

classroom management. This far-reaching list of abilities confirms the fact that finding balance is not an easy process and a broad range of factors need to be considered. It is complex and requires flexibility, knowledge and thoughtful planning to coordinate the pieces into a functioning effective program.

Foundational and environmental considerations. The goal for any comprehensive or balanced literacy program is to teach children how to read and write, so they can become life-long readers and writers (Allington, 2012; Duffy, 2003; Pressley, 2006; Rasinski & Padak, 2004; Reutzel, 2007; Trelease, 2006). A child's literacy foundation starts early through life experiences, exposure to oral language, and interactions with print; each child comes to school with varying degrees of foundational experience and instructional needs (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Pearson, Raphael, Benson, & Madda, 2007; Reutzel, 2007). As educators, we have to utilize each child's previous knowledge and experience to move them forward if we have any hope of teaching them how to read and write. Children learn from watching and imitating what adults in their lives do, so each child's background knowledge will be different. They use that background information to make sense of their world, so a literate environment needs to be respectful of the diverse nature of the students it serves. Numerous and diverse exposure and access to language, text, and printed resources are essential for all ages (Trelease, 2006; Walpole, McKenna, & Philippakos, 2011). Children need to be immersed in reading and writing text; then, instruction takes place within that structure. A literate classroom is rich in print, and it is filled with a wide range of text that is exciting and interesting, so students are enticed to read (Duffy, 2003; Gambrell et al., 2007; Reutzel, 2007). A literate environment conveys the idea that literacy is important

by inviting engagement and exploration. A comprehensive literacy program should be balanced in text type and include a variety of genres to promote interest and enthusiasm (Rasinski & Padak, 2004). Recommendations from Cramer (as cited in Walpole et al., 2011) include surrounding children with a variety of books; creating an environment that is attractive, comfortable, and inviting; and displaying literature in a way that entices children to read. Duffy (2003) stated that "students do not learn to read unless they read a lot" (p. 6) of easy connected text. They need to experience many successes to see themselves as readers and writers, so the classroom library needs to include a variety of reading and interest levels. Interest increases motivation and interest develops through positive prior experiences and exposure to printed resources (Pressley, 2006). Children must have access to material that interests them and material that they can read. A classroom that presents reading as an exciting important activity to do will increase enthusiasm.

Pressley (2006) believed that motivation was the key to academic success, and children's sense of self-efficacy influenced their enthusiasm to read; motivation is fragile and needs to be nurtured. Trelease (2006) agreed and stated, "When the want to is missing, it's not a mechanical malfunction; it's an attitude problem" (p. 3). Pressley (2006) added, children must experience success and view themselves as successful for motivation to remain high. Children need to associate success with effort, not ability, for them to persevere. Positive early experiences increase the motivation to put forth the effort to learn how to read. Effective teachers need to send the message that "trying hard fosters achievement and intelligence" (Pressley, 2006, p. 379); failure is a natural part of the learning process. According to Rasinski and Padak (2004), the affective component

helps "students see that reading is a way to enrich one's life" (p. 95), so they choose to read because they love to read and see that it is important. Words are the foundation for gaining knowledge and words enter the brain "either through the eye or through the ear" (Trelease, 2006, p. 4). Children need to hear and participate in reading daily to understand that it is a way of life. Classrooms rich in language and printed resources show children that reading and writing are vital parts of their lives and allows them opportunities to choose according to their interest and comfort level.

Uninterrupted instructional block of time. Time on task is a critical factor for any literacy framework. Much of the literature suggested that an uninterrupted amount of time be allocated for literacy education. Shanahan (as cited in Reutzel, 2007) recommended "a minimum of 120 total minutes" (p. 315) be set aside for literacy instruction. He also advised that a significant portion of that time be allocated for explicit instruction in writing, fluency, comprehension strategies, and the strategies that are used to figure out unknown words.   His recommendation was to allow 30 minutes for each component. According to Allington (2012), some programs suggest 2 ½ to 3 hour literacy blocks. Allington (2012) suggested a minimum of 90 minutes be set aside for "actual reading" (p. 54), not including reading instruction. He defended this statement saying "sheer volume of reading was a distinguishing feature of the high achievement classrooms" (p. 54). It's not the program or method according to him, but the increased time in reading that makes the difference. Honig (1996) suggested a two hour block of time with one hour of direct instruction in phonics and word work. The other hour was designated for whole group instruction that included shared reading, reading aloud, oral communication through conversation and response, and instruction in writing. Walpole

et al. (2011) stated, "Make no mistake about it: If you are to implement a truly

differentiated curriculum in the fourth and fifth grades, you need to make time for

reading instruction" (p.18). With such a wide scope of instruction in the literacy process,

it is easy to understand why so much time needs to be devoted to literacy. When

designing a balanced framework, these recommendations are important considerations;

however, instructional decisions based on ongoing assessment results are the key to how

the time is structured and utilized (Reutzel, 2007; Walpole et al., 2011). During this time

frame, instruction is delivered in a variety of grouping formats which allows for

comprehensive instruction for all children and differentiated instruction to meet the

diverse needs of individual children.

Instructional grouping arrangements. One of the primary obstacles within the

literacy block involves grouping arrangements to allow for the gradual release of

responsibility based on the intensity of individual children's needs. First of all, the

classroom environment should be one where children are immersed in authentic literacy

experiences. Instruction should be delivered through a variety of grouping arrangements

and include "extensive explicit teaching through modeling, explanation, and mini-

lessons" (Wharton-McDonald, & Rankin, 1997, p. 519). Through using a blend of

individual, small group, and large group instruction, teachers have alternatives that they

can use to address the needs of their students.

Whole group instruction involves the core curriculum, and has been the most

effective for management concerns (Reutzel, 2007). Walpole et al. (2011) refers to it as

Tier I instruction where all children are grouped heterogeneously and not by ability. The

emphasis during whole group instruction is on uniformity and less on diversity (Lou,

Abrami, & Spence, 2000). Children receive the same instruction which is delivered the same way for everyone. In this setting, children are not divided into smaller groups that focus on interest, need, or skill (Reutzel, 2007). Within the whole group setting, children are exposed to various genres in the form of reading aloud, shared reading experiences, echo and choral reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Wharton-McDonald, Rankin, 1997). Whole group instruction is inclusive and doesn't single children out; Reutzel (2007) uses the term "safety netting" (p. 323) to describe how whole group instruction protects children from the negative associations that might come with grouping arrangements. Whole group instruction combines the entire class as a community of learners that learn and interact together. Writing instruction is an integral part of the literacy framework and can also be taught in a whole group setting. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) suggest modeled, shared, and interactive writing.

According to Reutzel (2007), whole group instruction "is a popular format for providing explicit, direct, and systematic skill and strategy instruction" (p. 323). Explicit instruction takes place through modeling skills and strategies that good readers and writers use when engaged with authentic purposeful materials and activities, and by providing mini-lessons based on the needs of the students as a group. Explicit teaching also includes an affective component where the teacher models positive attitudes toward reading and writing, so instruction is motivating, exciting, and encourages children to believe in themselves as readers and writers (Wharton-McDonald & Rankin, 1997). Whole group instruction allows children social interaction with the rest of their classmates, and is an important part of the balanced literacy framework (Reutzel, 2007).

However, not all children learn in a whole group setting, so small group instruction with a guided reading component is a vital part within the balanced literacy framework. Within this small flexible grouping arrangement, differentiation in instruction takes place. Flexible groups are not permanent and change according to needs and purposes, so groups are formed and reformed. They are designed around student interests, learning styles, social needs, and instructional needs. Small homogenous groups can be assembled for targeted instruction, then heterogeneous groups can be assembled for other purposes (Walpole et al. 2011). Small groups range in size, purposes, and tasks. Within the small group setting, specific skill areas and interventions can be focused on as needed; intensity of instruction is guided by assessment and need (Wharton-McDonald & Rankin, 1997). Grouping for differentiated reading instruction involves homogenous grouping, and children are placed in grouping arrangements based on "each child's ability to successfully handle and process word decoding and recognition tasks as well as reading within leveled books" (Reutzel, 2007, p.332). However, it is dynamic in that the groups meet for a defined period of time under the guidance and with the feedback of the teacher. Groups change as children progress. Walpole et al. (2011) refers to this type of instruction as Tier 2, which includes targeted instruction for all children based on on-going assessment needs.

Developing independent readers and writers is the ultimate goal of any reading program, so children need time to practice reading and writing for authentic purposes. Cunningham and Stanovich (as cited in Gambrell et al., 2007) stated "lack of reading practice delays the development of fluency and word recognition skills" (p. 21). Practice is a critical piece toward gaining independence, and it provides the avenue for developing

vocabulary and fluency. Gambrell et al. (2007) stated "Good readers tend to have more practice in reading, and consequently they become more and more proficient" (p. 21). Practice can take place within cooperative groups, student partners, or independently. Resources must also be set aside for children who need extra individualized instruction.

Elements of instruction. Once time and grouping considerations have been made, the critical elements of instruction and the methods to be utilized can be considered. According to Shanahan, the areas for instruction that are still focused on today come from The National Reading Panel Report which was central to the federal literacy policy. The five critical elements of instruction were identified as: phonemic awareness, phonics and word study, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The ultimate goal for reading is to understand the message, and four of those elements provide the base for the goal of comprehension. Children need to be able to read the words fluently and understand the words to gain meaning, so it makes sense that each element was addressed. Au (1998) agreed noting that the highest priority should be devoted to comprehension, and she believed fluency and accuracy improved naturally with practice. As fluency and accuracy increased, more attention could be paid to gaining meaning.

The elements for a balanced literacy program or comprehensive reading program should include reading a rich assortment of authentic literature in a variety of genres, a comprehensive daily writing program, and an integrated skills and language approach to instruction (Cowen, 2003; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Honig, 1996). Language is the foundation that drives the process. Rog (2003) simplified the process into instructional blocks under the headings of reading workshop, writing workshop, and word study. The

essential methods that are used to deliver instruction within those blocks include interactive reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, paired reading, independent reading, modeled and shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing, and independent writing. These methods are based on the gradual release of responsibility model for instruction which addresses the amount and degree of teacher or adult support that each provides to move the student forward to independence (Frey & Fisher, 2010).

The instructional methods that are used to teach those critical elements will be clearly discussed, but the controversy that surrounds phonemic awareness, phonics, and word study prompts me to address those separately and in some detail first.

Word study, phonemic awareness and phonics. First of all, phonemic awareness "is the ability to identify the phonemes of spoken language and how they can be separated, blended, and manipulated" (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004, p. 8). It provides the foundation for putting sounds to symbols. Children acquire it through early rich experiences with language. Children make associations about rhyming, syllables, alliteration, and sound discrimination through playing and interacting with language. Some children acquire it as a natural part of exposure to language resources, yet others, don't acquire it or don't have access to those language resources. Many children have to be taught how to use sounds to figure out unknown words, and all children will profit from understanding how the alphabet system works (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004). Early exposure through playing with language is a critical piece. Children learn how to segment sounds, and put them back together to figure out words. They use their sound knowledge to make analogies from known words to unknown words (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

Vaughn and Linan (2004) state that the National Reading Panel reports in 2000 have documented over 50 studies that supported the positive benefits of early explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, especially when it was combined with instruction in letter names. Thirty years of research by Bond and Dykstra from the First Grade Studies in 1967 supported the fact that the alphabetic principal and phonemic awareness were the most important predictors for early reading success (Cowen, 2003). Our ultimate goal is comprehension, and children have to be able to read the words to understand what they have read. Alphabet knowledge and sound awareness are part of the many tools that children need to become successful readers and writers. The intensity of instruction will depend on the needs and developmental level of the children. Instruction is then transferred to words within text, so children understand why they learned the skill and how to apply it.

Phonics is the ability to match sounds to symbols, and understand these relationships and how to use those sounds with letter patterns and sequences to figure out unknown words. In the primary grades phonics instruction focuses on using individual sounds, combinations of sounds, and analogy to figure out unknown words; however, older readers look at spelling patterns, syllables, and units of meaning. In other words, they analyze the structure of words to figure them out (Walpole et al., 2011). Children need to be able to read words quickly and automatically to gain meaning, and phonics instruction gives beginning and developing readers tools to use when they come to words they don't know (Vaughn & Linan, 2004; Walpole et al., 2011). In Cowen's (2003) review, he concluded "that systematic phonics is a necessary and effective way to teach all children to read" (p. 20) Again, the intensity of instruction depends on the needs and

developmental level of the children, but teaching all children how the alphabet system works gives them strong word recognition skills, which ultimately strengthens comprehension. Instruction in phonics requires modeling, support, and practice within authentic literature, so children understand why, when, and how to use it (Au, 1998).

Based on the literature, the controversy between the whole language approach and the phonics approach to instruction lies in decreasing the motivation of the reader by focusing on the phonics skills rather than focusing on the message. For me, failure results when beginning readers aren't given the tools to be successful. According to Honig (1996) children become frustrated, embarrassed, and begin to dislike reading when they struggle to figure out the words. As a result, they don't read as much, and they "cut themselves off from the best activity to improve their reading and thinking capacity" (Honig, 1996, p. 44). Au (1998) somewhat agreed and stated, "phonics plays a crucial, but temporary role" and it "must be properly timed to achieve its optimal effect" (p. 216). Phonics is not the only tool that children use to identify words according to her, so other methods of figuring out words needs to be considered. She cautioned against the use of a rigid set of lessons and believed that children needed many experiences with reading and writing, so they understand the purpose and not just the process. The key according to her is for children to connect the instruction to the actual process of reading, and understand what they have read. The literature and research overwhelmingly supports instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics that is integrated into the actual process of reading and writing. There is no right or perfect formula, and no perfected or set "sequence of instruction" (Shanahan, 2005, pg. 4); there are only recommendations for instruction. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) think "flexibility is the key" (p. 21) to

implementing an effective literacy framework. Phonemic awareness, phonics/word work, and the other three foundations of instruction are supported through a balance of instructional methods for delivering instruction.

Instructional Components

Reading workshop. Within a reading workshop component, reading aloud and shared reading are typically done within the large group setting, but can be done in small groups. Both are considered part of the core curriculum, are teacher directed, and offer a high level of teacher support (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Rog, 2003; Walpole et al., 2011). Every child receives the same instruction delivered the same way for everyone through the whole group setting, and additional support is provided through small groups. A variety of genres and text types are utilized, such as fiction, non-fiction, realistic fiction, poetry, riddles, news articles, and many other types of text; exposure increases curiosity and interest. These materials are the catalyst for teaching concepts of print, comprehension strategies, word work, and they provide the source for conversations rich in language.

Technology resources can be utilized to increase instructional variety. On-line resources create enthusiasm and interest as the children interact through other avenues or sources. Many times, those on-line resources include animation, heightened expression and tone of voice which inspires and excites the listener.

Interactive Reading Aloud. Reading aloud the critical piece that provides the foundation for literacy acquisition, and needs to be is integrated throughout the curriculum daily (Allington & Gabriel, 2012; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Walpole et al., 2011). We read to children for a variety of purposes: "to reassure, to entertain, to inform

or explain, to arouse curiosity, to inspire" (Trelease, 2006, p. 4). Through listening to and interacting with stories, children learn how oral and written language works and this supports them as they become independent readers and writers. They see that reading is an enjoyable experience and an important part of their lives (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Reading aloud allows all children to gain the background knowledge and vocabulary they will need to be successful readers themselves (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2007; Trelease, 2006). Many children are unable to read when they enter kindergarten, so being read to is a vital part of learning to read on their own; in addition, it permits older children to hear material that they cannot read on their own which strengthens their background knowledge and increases their ability to comprehend more complicated text (Walpole et al., 2011).

According to Trelease (2006) one of the confirmations from the 1985 report *Becoming a Nation of Readers* written by members from the Commission on Reading was the fact that reading builds knowledge. In fact, he quotes the report "The single most important activity for building knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children" (as cited in Trelease, 2006, p. 3). Research overwhelmingly established that motivation to read was the missing factor for reading success in older children. Children love hearing someone read to them, and they will gladly listen over and over again. "Reading aloud is the catalyst for the child wanting to read on his own, but it also provides a foundation by nurturing the child's listening comprehension" (Trelease, 2006, p. 7). Literature that is read aloud is a rich source of oral language and provides a model for children of all ages (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Walpole et al. 2011).

Reading aloud provides that link to background knowledge and vocabulary that struggling readers can't access on their own.

Fluency and accuracy assist comprehension and are modeled as children listen to interesting and engaging text. They hear what expert readers sound like and how reading communicates an exciting and powerful message. Comprehension begins through listening to and talking about quality literature with others (McLaughlin, 2012). Teachers help their students through explaining what good readers do to make sense of what they read, and then talk about their own thinking as they read or reread a particular story. Children deepen their understanding through rich classroom discussions and questioning strategies that are used before, during, and after reading (Liang & Dole, 2006; McGee & Schickedanz, 2007; McLaughlin, 2012; Walpole et al., 2011). They learn how to employ a variety of skills and strategies that good readers use through listening to skillful, proficient readers (Polette, 2005; Rog, 2003; Routman, 2003). Children have access to proficient reading through many resources that are utilized within the classroom. They can listen and interact through books on tape or DVDs, and they have access to numerous digital formats through the use of various forms of technology.

Shared reading. Shared reading uses resources that all children can easily see such as big books, poems on chart paper, multiple copies of a particular text, and large digital display. This enlarged text and cooperative setting gives children the opportunity to see the text and observe an expert reading with fluency and expression, and it allows them an opportunity to practice as they join the process through choral, echo, paired, and whisper reading (Rog, 2003; Routman, 2003; Walpole et al, 2011). Shared reading provides the foundation or setting for explicit instruction, as the teacher demonstrates the

skills and strategies good readers use to navigate print and make sense of the message (Rog, 2003). Explicit instruction can take place in isolation, but then is integrated with meaning; the strategies or skills are connected with meaning and taught seamlessly. Skills such as early concepts of print, phonemic awareness, phonics, letter recognition, vocabulary, decoding strategies, text features, and comprehension strategies can all be taught explicitly; then the strategy or skill is incorporated with continuous text, so children understand the purpose. Through shared reading, teachers instruct, model, support, and encourage children as they move forward on their own (Routman, 2003). Children learn the structure of written language and concepts of print as they interact together. As the text is repeated, children gain confidence, fluency, word recognition, phonemic awareness, and phonics skills (Routman, 2003). Explicit instruction in word work, comprehension, and all aspects of the reading process take place through demonstrations and practice during repeated readings. In a study done by Eldredge, Reutzel and Hollingsworth (1996) shared repeated readings had positive impacts on fluency, accuracy, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension for average and struggling readers. Shared reading provides a setting where all children are reading and practicing their skills which "increases the amount of text that all students read" (Walpole et al., 2011).

Guided reading and differentiated instruction. Guided reading provides a setting in which teachers can show children how to read through small group differentiated instruction. It became popular through the work of Fountas and Pinnell (1996) and their book *Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for All Children*. The guided reading framework "is the heart of a balanced literacy program" (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 1)

and provides the backbone for small group instruction (Routman, 2003). It is an instructional technique that uses observation, assessment, and a child's strengths to design instruction that uses text leveled by difficulty to meet the distinctive needs of the child (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012; Rog, 2003; Routman, 2003). Guided reading is based on the work of Vygotsky and the fundamental concept "is the idea that students learn best when they are provided strong instructional support to extend themselves by reading texts that are on the edge of their learning" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013, p. 269). The teacher models and supports the readers as they "negotiate texts and develop independent reading strategies" (Rog, 2003, p. 12). The purpose of guided reading is for children to actively practice and develop skills and strategies with the support of the teacher (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996); the student applies what she/he has learned, and the teacher provides the scaffolding that is needed "to extend the cognitive reach of the student" (Fisher, Frey & Nelson, 2012, p. 554). It is not a set program, but uses assessment and progress monitoring to drive instructional decisions.

Some scholars, according to Walpole and McKenna (2009), take issue with the concept behind guided reading as an avenue for differentiated instruction because it is based on leveled text and gaining fluency. They feel struggling readers need targeted instruction in specific skills before they can work on gaining fluency within text; their differentiated model focuses on assessed targeted needs, rather than leveled text. They also believe that daily small group instruction is for all children and centered on what each group needs. Fountas and Pinnell (2013) argue that their original design wasn't to be interpreted as just word level reading where teachers pushed a student up levels because the child could read the words; rather the goal was "to help students build their

reading power" (p. 272) through constructing a network of skills and strategies for processing text. The definition and use of balanced literacy instruction changed depending on the philosophical beliefs and interpretations of the user, and the same has happened with the concept of guided reading. Again, knowledgeable teachers and their instructional decisions are the keys to instruction. Differentiation can take place within guided reading and leveled text.

Through the guided reading framework, teachers meet with small groups of children that range in size, but usually include three to six children. Groups can be defined by their interests, strengths, developmental reading needs, or levels of support. These groups are flexible and change as children grow and their needs change (Rog, 2003). As children interact within the small group, they learn and support each other to think at higher levels. Children are grouped for the purpose of offering the level of support and guidance that will move them forward as independent readers, and are given the opportunity to practice their skills through the support of a teacher (Routman, 2003). The small group setting and lesson structure allows teachers to observe individual students' strengths and provide the coaching and degree of support needed to move them forward (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013). The target and intensity of instruction depend upon the needs of the group (Walpole et al., 2011)

Using their knowledge of their students and the reading process, teachers select the material for instruction that "provides the right balance of challenge and support" (Rog, 2003, p. 12), but is easy enough for a child to read most of it using the strategies they know. The text should not be so difficult that children become frustrated and

meaning is lost. Rog (2003) recommended taking an inventory of the available curriculum material and utilizing it, along with the leveled text that was available.

Instruction focuses on how, when, and why to use particular reading strategies that are required for independent reading (Rog, 2003). Teachers monitor the use of those strategies and provide the necessary coaching toward independence. Then, the student practices those skills and strategies as they are reading within the small group setting, through paired reading, and independently.

As the teacher is meeting with each group, the other students are actively engaged in various literacy activities where they can practice the skills and strategies that they have learned. Those activities can be presented in various formats including teacher-assigned activities, guided literacy groups, independent or buddy reading, literacy centers, or self-selected learning through reading and writing (Rog, 2003). Children can rotate through centers, meet with other teachers, and interact in various activities around the room, or work at their seats individually or cooperatively. The ultimate goals are to teach children how to be independent problem solvers and take responsibility for their own learning allowing teachers time to work with other groups of children (Walpole et al., 2011). The routines and procedures are based on teacher expertise, his/her knowledge, experience, and most importantly, what works for the students. Teaching the students the routines and procedures through explaining, demonstrating, modeling, and practicing are critical before implementing a successful guided reading framework (Rog, 2003).

Independent and paired reading. Independent reading is time that is set aside for children to practice applying the reading strategies they've learned through a variety of

text. Through effective practice children gain accuracy and fluency which moves them forward in the reading process. The students have previously received instruction in various reading strategies through demonstrations, modeling, guided practice through reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading; now is the time to release that responsibility to them. With practice they will read for longer and longer periods, and as their stamina increases, they read more. According to Boushey and Moser (2006), once children have practiced their strategies, been taught the routines and what is expected, we need "to stay out of the way and let them read" (p. 25). Research has established the relationship between "students' reading proficiency and the quantity of independent reading they do" (Rog, 2003, p. 16). "Good readers tend to have more practice in reading, and consequently, they become more and more proficient" (Gambrell et al., 2007, p. 21). Independent reading time allows children time to practice uniting the skills and strategies they've been taught, so they learn how to use them automatically, properly, and independently (Gambrell et al., 2007).

Teaching children the routines and expectations are the first steps if we want them to be successful (Boushey & Moser, 2006; Rog, 2003). Whether they read at their seats, in another area of the room, or with a partner, they need to understand the expectations and what to do. Then, they practice those routines and expectations many times before they are expected to do it on their own.

Children need to practice using material that is at their independent level, which means that they can read it with 99 percent accuracy (Boushey & Moser, 2006); "independent reading should be easy" (Rog, 2003, p. 17). Their reading material can contain books they've previously read in guided reading, or the children can be taught

how to choose books on their own. It's important that children choose books that will interest them, keep their focus, and that can be read without difficulty. As adults, we read for a variety of purposes, but choice is the determining factor. Children also need choices so they are motivated to read.

Reading is a social act where meaning is gained through interaction with the text and others (Gambrell et al., 2007). Children love working together, so reading with a buddy offers that excitement and challenges children to think beyond their own ideas. It provides children another avenue where they can practice fluency and understanding (Rog, 2003).

Reading is a reciprocal process with writing; each improves the other. In support of the reading process, writing is the natural progression for instruction.

Writing workshop. Much like reading workshop, writing workshop uses a combination of methods for instruction which include modeled and shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing, and independent writing. Each method includes a continuum of teacher support that is gradually reduced as responsibility is shifted to the student, until the student can do it on his/her own independently.

Modeled and shared writing. According to Rog (2003), modeled writing is "writing out loud" (p. 9). This activity requires direct modeling by the teacher as he/she "demonstrates the processes involved in generating ideas and putting them down on paper, talking all the while about what she is thinking and doing" (Rog, 2003, p. 9). Digitally projecting the writing enhances the process by enlarging the piece, so the students can clearly see what the teacher is writing. Through this process, the teacher provides direct instruction through creating awareness of sounds, letters, and words, and

how they are used to create a message. This type of writing is done "for students" (p.9), and is usually done in large groups, but can be done with small groups.

In shared writing, the students and teacher compose a message together about a familiar topic or idea based on the purpose for the message. The teacher acts as the scribe to put the message in its written form which is usually done on large chart paper, so all of the children can see it. Again, the teacher talks about specific elements of instruction and the writing process as she writes the message. The message can then be displayed in the room and be used for repeated reading practice. Interactive writing is incorporated into this process because as the teacher and students compose a message together, the teacher allows a student to use the pen and add to the message. As the child is writing, the teacher coaches and the other students observe (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Rog, 2003). Both types of writing are designed to add support while the teacher works with the students and gradually releases some of the responsibility to them. Large group instruction is typically used for both modeled and shared writing, but each strategy can be used in a smaller setting. Again, technology can support the process through larger displays, and the teacher can save the messages, so the children can revisit them later.

Guided Writing. Guided writing offers support, but allows all of the students a chance to write and practice their skills while still having some teacher support. It is typically done in paired or small groups, but can be utilized in whole groups or independently. Sometimes, patterned text from a read-aloud is used as a springboard for writing, and many times children respond to a prompt or use an idea from a story they've heard (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Rog, 2003). The children are writers, and the teacher is

coach. This process establishes the foundation and support for independent writing where children write for their own purposes and practice the skills they've learned.

Independent Writing. Our goal in education is to develop independent readers and writers. Independent writing supports the reading process as children practice doing what authors do. They use what they know to communicate their message to others. In the process, they are learning the conventions of language through the trial and error process of using it. Writing and reading are reciprocal in nature with each strengthening the other. Children have to be given time to practice what they've learned and see themselves as readers and writers. Ray and Cleveland (2004) offer this advice "No matter what, let them write every day" (p. ix).

As educators, we know the importance of choice in providing the motivation for reading and writing. Independent writing allows children choices and provides that fuel and motivation for writing as they learn the craft of writing. Ray and Cleveland (2004) stated "We believe that if children (or adults for that matter) are to learn to write well, they need lots and lots of experience with writing" (p. 24). Fountas and Pinnell (2001) believe that setting apart time for writing "creates a space within the school day when students do what professional writers do-write" (p. 54).

As our students navigate through the writing process, they communicate their message. Their messages can be presented using traditional written formats or digitally using a variety of enhancements and arrangements that both motivates the presenter and appeals to the character of the reader.

Technology. More and more our lives are moving toward using and creating information through the use of digital technologies. I've discussed teaching strategies

and skills for traditional text, but haven't addressed instruction using the new tools that are available to our children. These tools can "have profound implications for how we define literacy and the reading and writing curriculum" (Kinzer, 2010, p. 51). This new source of print has different structures, conventions, and expectations that require different skills and strategies (Forzani & Leu, 2012; Kinzer, 2010). No longer do children need to just understand how to communicate through traditional print; they now need to understand how to navigate and make sense of a variety of print resources. Teachers need to understand how to teach children how to communicate, retrieve information, and think critically about the plethora of information available to them (Kinzer, 2010). According to Forzani and Leu (2012), it is "imperative to integrate new literacies learning into all primary grade classrooms" (p. 421) because "it will define their future" (p. 423). Including the use of technology in reading and writing instruction is a vital part of becoming literate in today's global society.

Professional Development

My overall purpose for this project was to share an effective balanced literacy design that was being used in one at-risk kindergarten classroom in the Midwest. The results of extensive research and reading what the experts had to say has reinforced, strengthened, and improved my instructional practices. This balanced literacy framework evolved over time and became the cornerstone of success for our students.

Effective Practice in Designing a Professional Development

Interestingly at the beginning of this project, I had no idea that balanced literacy instruction was surrounded in such controversy, nor did I know that our beginning design was actually considered a balanced literacy framework. As I plowed through the plethora of information, I found out that the discussions of and debates about balanced literacy have been longstanding and extensive. This material provided the incentive I needed to pursue the topic and share what I had discovered. However, as a teacher and colleague, I felt that I needed some direction on designing the professional development sessions that would effectively share our design for balanced literacy instruction, so that my colleagues would be interested and want to incorporate new ideas into their existing practice. I ordered *The Literacy Coach's Handbook* to compare the information with another source that I already owned. Walpole and McKenna verified and affirmed our structure which gave me the confidence to complete this project.

I used some suggestions from *Reading Specialists and Literacy Coaches in the Real World* (Vogt & Shearer, 2007) as I tried to think about how I could structure these sessions in a way that would connect their previous knowledge and experience to the new. I wanted the teachers to be able to hear the new information and then use it to form

a design that would work for them based on their own background, talents, strengths, and teaching styles. In order for them to use the information and add it to their practice, teachers have to be treated as professionals who are knowledgeable about what they do (Walpole & McKenna, 2013). Respecting and validating their years of experience and knowledge is crucial, so I wanted to make sure teachers were given work time to incorporate some new ideas into their practice. With this in mind, I also wanted to provide a bridge that links their current materials and practices to the new ideas, so they see it as an extension of what they already do and that a balanced literacy approach is not considered the latest fad or new initiative, but rather a set of well-established strategies that will strengthen their practice. Walpole and McKenna (2013) did caution against the idea of "layering" (p. 170) which happens when teachers combine old programs or series and create their own "hybrid program" (p. 170). I took that into consideration when I designed these sessions and focused on integrating the current programs into the design, while still utilizing trade books, leveled materials, and strategies as supplemental resources.

These sessions are designed as "site-based" in-services (Walpole & McKenna, 2013, p.30) with a coaching definition in mind. The sessions are collaborative in nature and supported through weekly team meetings, classroom observations and feedback, district trainings, and peer modeling sessions. As I designed these sessions, I focused on three core beliefs about the instructional decision-making process. Those beliefs include:

- the social nature of learning through interaction and conversations
- a support system based on the gradual release of responsibility

- the importance of integrating reading, writing, and oral language into every aspect of

  instruction (Walpole & McKenna, 2013).

The Professional Development Plan

The underlying purpose for implementing a balanced approach to literacy instruction is to increase the quantity and quality of reading and writing instruction and experiences so that each child achieves proficiency and independence. Each piece within the literacy framework functions in conjunction with the others to create a unified whole where all children can learn how to read and write. The teachers will use the design as an example and source where they can link new ideas to their own practice. They will learn through research, experts in the field, demonstrations, and a book study; then they will be given time to practice and apply what they've learned within their classrooms. The rest of this section will include the professional development plan and timetable for PD sessions; it will also describe in detail the audience, structure, design, and purposes for each session.

The framework for this planning document was derived from Wiggins and McTighe's *Understanding by Design* (2005) curriculum design template. This template consists of (1) determining desired results, (2) designing assessments that will indicate the degree to which desired results are obtained, and (3) designing a learning plan that will enable learners to obtain desired results.

Johnson Elementary School Professional Development Plan:
Implementation of a School Wide Systematic Balanced Literacy Framework
Created by: Sheila McCullough
Facilitated by Johnson's Literacy Team

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Established Goals:

1. Establish a research foundation for, and understanding of a balanced literacy framework.
2. Provide all certified and instructional support staff with in-service information and continuous support that focuses on instructional time, group arrangements, instructional elements, and methods of instruction for implementing a balanced approach to literacy instruction.
3. Use data from formal and informal measures to drive instructional decisions.
4. Increase the quantity and quality of instructional support that leads to extensive independent reading and writing.
5. Improve comprehension through exposure, guidance, and practice.

Understandings:	**Essential Questions:**
Teachers will understand:	What is a balanced literacy framework and why is it important to organize and arrange instructional practices around this framework?
• the rationale and importance of implementing a balanced comprehensive literacy framework • how to implement the balanced literacy components into their practice utilizing the current mandated literacy programs • the importance of using assessment to drive their instructional decisions	How can the current district programs be incorporated into the balanced literacy framework?

Teachers will know the critical elements of instruction and be able to implement those into their classroom environment and literacy instructional block.

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence	
Performance Tasks: Through the implementation of a balanced literacy framework, the desired student outcomes will show: • growth over-time on formal assessments • individual, classroom, and grade-level growth on yearly screening measures • school wide growth through comparison • improved fluency and comprehension through increased exposure , modeling, and practice • an increase in the number of students who reach grade level proficiencies in reading and writing • areas of strengths and weakness on unit testing measures	**Other Evidence:** Teachers will receive feedback through peer modeling, coaching, and through their grade level professional learning communities. Through formal and informal assessment information, teachers will be able to monitor and adjust their instructional practices based the amount of support their students require.

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Learning Activities:

Teachers and support staff will participate in six professional development sessions structured around the components within the balanced literacy framework. These professional development sessions will cover the following topics:

1. Balanced literacy instruction and its framework
2. The components that are typically used during large group instruction
3. Small group instruction that utilizes the guided reading framework and a rotation method
4. Guided reading and differentiated instruction
5. Independent practice
6. Paired reading

Each session will include definitions, explanations, and demonstrations to offer support and increase understanding. Individual, grade level, and small group time will be incorporated to address individual approaches to learning and increase

engagement through conversations and sharing of ideas. Each session will end with an exit slip that addresses the strengths and weaknesses of the session, and those exit slips will be used to modify and improve the next session.

After each session, the teachers will begin the implementation process for that particular topic. Peer modeling and coaching will be provided based specific need and mentors will be provided for beginning teachers.

Professional Resources for Professional Development

Purchase twelve copies (one for each teacher):

Boushey G. & Moser, J. (2006). *The daily 5*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Purchase four copies (one for each primary team) of the following books:

Pinnell, G.S. & Fountas, I. C. (2011). *The continuum of literacy learning grades prek-2.*
    Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Ray, K.W. & Cleveland, L.B. (2004). *About the authors writing workshop with our youngest*
    writers. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Rog, L.J. (2003). *Guided reading basics*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Walpole, S. & McKenna, M.C. (2007). *Differentiated reading instruction strategies for the*
    primary grades. New York: The Guildford Press.

Tyner, B. (2009). *Small-group reading instruction: A differentiated teaching model for beginning*
    and struggling readers. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Tyner, B. (2012). *The literacy jigsaw puzzle: Assembling the critical pieces of literacy instruction.*
    Newark, DE: International Reading Association

Purchase two copies (one for each grade level team) of the following books:

Pinnell, G.S. & Fountas, I. C. (2011). *Guiding readers and writers grades 3-6*. Portsmouth, NH:
    Heinemann.

Richardson, J. (2009). *The next step in guided reading*. New York: Scholastic Inc.

 Walpole, S., McKenna, M.C., & Philippakos, Z.A. (2011). *Differentiated instructions in grades 4*
    & 5. New York: The Guilford Press.

Duplicate and have ready the following articles:

Allington, R. L., & Gabriel, R. E. (2012). Every child, every day. *Educational Leadership*, 69(6),
    10-15.

Liang, L. A., & Dole, J. A. (2006). Help with teaching reading comprehension: Comprehension
    instructional frameworks. *Reading Teacher, 59*(8), 742-753.

McGee, L. M., & Schickedanz, J. A. (2007). Repeated interactive read-alouds in preschool and
    kindgarten. *Reading Teacher, 60*(8), 742-751.

McLaughlin, M. (2012). Reading comprehension: What every teacher needs to know. *Reading
    Teacher, 65*(7), 432-440.

Rasinski, T., & Padak, N. (2004). Beyond consensus-beyond balance: Toward a comprehensive
    literacy curriculum. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 20,* 91-101. doi:
    10.1080/10573560490242813

Wall, H. (2012). Interactive writing beyond the primary grades. *The Reading Teacher, 62*(2),
    149-152.

Williams, C., Sherry, T., Robinson, N., & Hungler, D. (2012). The practice page as a mediational

    tool for interactive writing instruction. *Reading Teacher, 65*(5), 330-340.

Project Timetable

Month	Topic
August Day 1- Staff Development **1st Session** 6 hour format	**Balanced Literacy Instruction** Morning Session: Read: Rasinski, T. & Padak, N. (2004). Beyond consensus-beyond balance: Toward a comprehensive literacy curriculum. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 20,* 91-101. doi: 10.1080/10573560490242813 ➤ Discussion relating article to practice ○ What grouping practices are you using during your reading block and what specific things do you teach in each one? How do you utilize independent practice time? ○ How does the environment of your room create excitement and engagement for reading and writing? ○ How do you incorporate text types into your instruction? Is there an area of strength and an area of weakness? ○ How do you meet the needs of your struggling readers? Are they given more instructional time? ○ Does writing instruction hold equal weight and as reading instruction? ○ How do you address the home connection? A detailed PowerPoint presentation will introduce and explain: ➤ a balanced literacy framework ➤ the five elements of instruction ➤ the components used to deliver instruction ➤ setting up the foundation for a literate environment Afternoon Session: Read: McLaughlin, M. (2012). Reading comprehension: What every teacher needs to know. *Reading Teacher, 65*(7), 432-440. ➤ Discussion of what's working and what needs to be implemented to make sure every child has the same amount exposure, ability to choose, and opportunity to read. ○ What are the guiding principles and how do you address those within your instructional day? ○ Are there areas of weakness that you could add more focus? ➤ Small group work designing a classroom arrangement that supports balanced literacy. Examples are included on the PowerPoint and teachers are encourage to use Google searches and the following websites. http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/balancedliteracydiet/Home/index.html http://www.pinterest.com http://www.fcrr.org/ http://mnps2010.wikispaces.com/file/view/Balanced+Literacy+Refere

		nce+Guide+2012.pdf http://www.nkcschools.org/sites/default/files/Balanced-Literacy-Plan.pdf http://www.a2schools.org/academics/files/bal_lit_guide_sept08.pdf
August Day 2- Staff Develop ment		Teachers will be given time to work in their rooms implementing a balanced literacy classroom design, but will meet for a share out session on their room designs from yesterday.
August Day 3- Staff Develop ment **2nd Session** 6 hour format		**Whole Group Instruction** Morning Session: A detailed PowerPoint presentation will introduce and explain: ○ Whole group instruction ○ 5 critical elements for instruction with detailed information about phonemic awareness and phonics ○ The continuum for phonics instruction will be discussed to address the progression from the concrete single sound to units of meaning which teaches older children how to look at the structure of the unknown word. ○ Interactive reading aloud ○ Shared reading ➤ Demonstrations Read: K-3: McGee, L. M., & Schickedanz, J. A. (2007). Repeated interactive read-alouds in preschool and kindgarten. *Reading Teacher, 60*(8), 742-751. ○ During the first reading of a story, what techniques did the authors suggest? ○ What is the purpose of reading a story more than once according to these authors? ○ Discuss why the authors suggested reading a story a third time? ○ Are there any unique ideas that you gained through this article? 4th & 5th: Liang, L. A., & Dole, J. A. (2006). Help with teaching reading comprehension: Comprehension instructional frameworks. *Reading Teacher, 59*(8), 742-753. ○ How does using a comprehension framework benefit you? ○ What frameworks does the article discuss, and what are the advantages and disadvantages? ○ Which one would you like to learn more about and why? ➤ Grade level discussion and comparison

		Afternoon Session:
		➢ A detailed PowerPoint presentation will introduce and explain:
		o Modeled Writing
		o Shared Writing
		o Interactive Writing
		Primary:
		Read: Williams, C., Sherry, T., Robinson, N., & Hungler, D. (2012). The practice page as a mediational tool for interactive writing instruction. *Reading Teacher, 65*(5), 330-340.
		o According to the article, what is the purpose of interactive writing and how is it incorporated into their practice?
		Upper elementary:
		Read: Wall, H. (2008). Interactive writing beyond the primary grades. *The Reading Teacher, 62*(2), 149-152.
		o According to the article, what is the purpose of interactive writing and how is it incorporated into their practice?
		➢ Demonstration using modeled, shared, and interactive writing using Write Tools.
August Day 4 **3rd** **Session** 2 hour format		**Small Group Instruction** ➢ A detailed PowerPoint will introduce and explain: o Small group instruction o Grouping arrangements o Small group rotation ➢ Room Tours
September 2 hour format **4th** **Session**		**Independent Practice** ➢ A detailed PowerPoint explaining and reviewing: o Importance for practice opportunities Article Review: Allington, R. L., & Gabriel, R. E. (2012). Every child, Every day. *Educational Leadership*, 69(6), 10-15. o What are six critical elements of instruction and why are they so important? Read book study chapters 3 & 4: Boushey, G., & Moser, J. (2006). *The daily 5: fostering literacy independence in the elementary grades*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.
October 2 hour format		**Differentiated Instruction Within Guided Reading** A detailed PowerPoint explaining and reviewing: o Guided Reading

5th Session	o	Differentiated Instruction Teachers will create lesson plans
November 2 hour format **6th Session**	**Paired Reading** A detailed PowerPoint explaining and reviewing: o Guided Reading o Differentiated Instruction Read book study chapter 5: Boushey, G., & Moser, J. (2006). *The daily 5: fostering literacy independence in the elementary grades.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.	
December 2 hour format	Needs Assessment	

Discussion of Professional Development Sessions

Certified teachers, Title I, and instructional support staff from Johnson Elementary will participate in two full day professional development sessions, and four two hour in-service sessions. The first two full day sessions will be held at the beginning of the year, and the two hour sessions will be scheduled based on the district's two hour in-service calendar through December. The sessions are filled with ideas, but keep in mind, that the design is meant for the staff to implement the new with what they already do in a more unified fashion. I wanted to present the information upfront before children arrived so the teachers had a chance to think about how to implement and integrate the new into their existing practices. Many of the teachers already use the ideas in one form or another, so the design is meant as a source for inspiration and learning that is used to structure and improve their practice. A needs assessment will be given and reviewed in December, and then the information will be used as the foundation for planning professional development sessions to the end of the year.

August. The first session will begin on the first day back after summer vacation. This session will include an overview of what the research and the experts say about balanced literacy instruction, the environment that supports it, and the plan itself. The teachers will read an article on balanced literacy instruction, and then they will be given time to discuss how the information relates to their practice. In small groups, they will look at resources to improve and support the foundation for that process; they will also work on a classroom arrangement plan that will get their students excited about reading and writing, and one that will facilitate balanced literacy instruction. The following day will be devoted to setting up that literate environment within their classroom, but the staff will meet for approximately thirty minutes to share their designs.

The second full day session in August will focus on the whole group setting and the components that are used to deliver instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics/word work, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The day will be divided into three hour segments with an hour break for lunch. The morning session will address teaching the five elements of instruction through interactive reading aloud and shared reading, and the afternoon session will focus on those five elements through modeled, shared, and interactive writing. The two sessions will begin with a PowerPoint introducing and explaining the components. Each PowerPoint presentation will be followed by two demonstrations. One demonstration will focus on primary grades and the other will address upper elementary grades. Each session will include related articles for the teachers to read that will reinforce and extend the components of whole group instruction.

The third session in August will have a two hour framework and will be held on the first early release day. Since routines and expectations are taught and practiced early

in the year, the timing for this session is critical for setting the tone for the rest of the year. This session addresses small group instruction. This particular session will include a review of small group instruction, grouping arrangements, and how to set up and implement a small group rotation.   The session will include room tours separated by primary and upper elementary. Each teacher will give a short description of their current small group routines and how they might use the information to strengthen their practice.

September. The research and literature overwhelmingly stress the importance of independent practice, so I wanted this session delivered early in the year. It will be held on the first early release day in September, and will address what the research and experts say about independent time for reading and writing. The PowerPoint will focus on what the research and experts say, then the teachers will be given time to read Chapters 4 and 5 in Boushey and Moser's (2006) book, T*he Daily 5: Fostering Literacy Independence in The Elementary Grades.* After reading, grade level teams and their support staff will share confirmations, new ideas, and discuss how to implement independent reading within their classrooms. This session will be supported through the weekly team meetings, and peer coaching sessions.

October. The in-service in August introduced small group instruction through using a rotation method. Since independent practice is a critical piece, I decided to introduce it before providing a more in-depth session on guided reading and differentiated small group instruction. This session will be devoted to guided reading and providing differentiated instruction based on on-going assessments. The teachers will learn through a short PowerPoint, and then they will design a lesson plan for one small group with a specific target for instruction.

November. Our book study covered independent practice and ideas on how to teach the procedures and implement independent reading. This session will take a look at paired reading, its importance, and how to implement it. Chapters 6 in Boushey and Moser's (2006) book, *The Daily 5: Fostering Literacy Independence in The Elementary Grades.* This session will include a short PowerPoint reviewing various types of grouping arrangements.

December. The teachers have been immersed in what it means to incorporate a balanced literacy framework into their practices. In order for the teachers to buy into using it and changing their practice, they have to be included in the decision-making process for professional development. This session will be devoted to filling out the needs assessment and discussing with their grade-level partners and support staff where they feel future professional development sessions would benefit them the most.

The following pages include specific session plans for each of the whole group sessions, including PowerPoint slides designed to summarize content.

Professional Development Session 1

Balanced Literacy Framework

Date: August 2013

Time allotted: 6 hours

Presenter: Sheila McCullough

Audience: K-5

Objectives:

1. Teachers will examine the literature and research, and they will be introduced to the balanced literacy framework.
2. Teachers will create and design a classroom setting that supports the literate environment within a balanced literacy framework.

Materials Needed:

- Multiple copies (15-17) of the following articles
- Rasinski, T. & Padak, N. (2004). Beyond consensus-beyond balance: Toward a comprehensive literacy curriculum. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 20,* 91-101. doi: 10.1080/10573560490242813
- McLaughlin, M. (2012). Reading comprehension: What every teacher needs to know. *Reading Teacher, 65*(7), 432-440.
- Promethean board and computer
- ActiView visual presenter
- Laptops
- Example classroom photos
- Chart paper
- Markers, pencils, highlighters, rulers

8:00-8:20	Schedule 1. The day will start with community time for teachers to gather, share, and interact with their colleagues for the first 20 minutes. Then they are to sit in mixed grouping arrangements and not with their grade level partners.
8:20-8:40	2. Small groups will get to know each other through an icebreaker activity called 3 truths and one lie.
8:40-9:00	3. Teachers will independently read the following article: Rasinski, T. & Padak, N. (2004). Beyond consensus-beyond balance: Toward a comprehensive literacy curriculum. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 20,*

	91-101. doi: 10.1080/10573560490242813.

9:00-
9:15
	4. In mixed small groups, discuss how this article relates to current practice
	    Guiding questions to consider:
	○ What grouping practices are you using during your reading block and
	  what specific things do you teach in each one? How do you utilize
	  independent practice time?
	○ How does the environment of your room create excitement and
	  engagement for reading and writing?
	○ How do you incorporate text types into your instruction? Is there an area
	  of strength and an area of weakness?
	○ How do you meet the needs of your struggling readers? Are they given
	  more instructional time?
	○ Does writing instruction hold equal weight and as reading instruction?
	○ How do you address the home connection?

9:15- 9:30	5. Break and return sitting in grade level teams
9:30- 10:45	6. PowerPoint presentation

10:45-
11:15
	7. As grade level teams, they will discuss and fill out a large graphic
	    organizer (see example Appendix A) explaining the current methods that
	    are being used and how the series materials are integrated.

11:15- 11:45	8. Share out within large group setting
	9. Lunch

1:00-
1:30
	10. Teachers will independently read article the following article: Reading
	    comprehension: What every teacher needs to know. *Reading Teacher*,
	    65(7), 432-440.
	
	    Guiding questions:
	
	○ What are the guiding principles and how do you address those within
	  your instructional day?
	○ Are there areas of weakness that you could add more focus?

1:30-
1:50
	11. Based on the information they've heard so far fill out a grade level
	    graphic organizer (see appendix B) on what's working, what's not, and
	    what might need to be implemented. They will hand in the graphic
	    organizer.

1:50-
3:45
	12. Within small groups, teachers will use available resources or search for
	    their own to create a classroom design that would support a balanced
	    literacy framework. The PowerPoint includes some examples, and the
	    teachers are encouraged to do Google searches and use the following
	    links. Independent breaks can be taken during this time.
	    http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/balancedliteracydiet/Home/index.html

		http://www.pinterest.com http://www.fcrr.org/ http://mnps2010.wikispaces.com/file/view/Balanced+Literacy+Reference+Guide+2012.pdf http://www.nkcschools.org/sites/default/files/Balanced-Literacy-Plan.pdf http://www.a2schools.org/academics/files/bal_lit_guide_sept08.pdf
Follo wing Day- Work Day		The following day will be devoted to working in their room designing a literate environment that works for them. However, the staff will be asked to meet for 30 minutes in the morning to share the designs that they created as a group and fill out their exit slips evaluating the PD. They will be asked to bring pictures of how they set up their classroom libraries, independent reading areas, areas used for whole group and small instruction, writing centers, and any other ideas that they had included.

Balanced Literacy Instruction

By: Sheila McCullough

What is it?

Comprehension

Fluency

Whole Language
Literature-based

Vocabulary

Language

Skills Instruction
Word-based
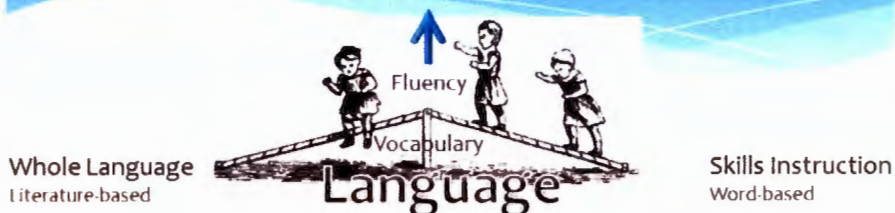
Balanced literacy instruction is

research-based, assessment-based, comprehensive, integrated, and dynamic, in that it empowers teachers and specialists to respond to the individual assessed literacy needs of children as they relate to their appropriate instructional and developmental levels of decoding, vocabulary, reading comprehension, motivations, and sociocultural acquisition, with the purpose of learning to read for meaning, understanding, and joy (Cowen, 2003, p. 10).

What It's Not!

50% phonics instruction and 50% whole language
(Ruetzel, as cited in Cowen, 2003)

Fixed program where one size fits all children (Fitgerald, 1999)

A combination of everything that seems to work
(Rasinski and Padak, 2004)

Blend of materials and methods

Silver bullet (Spiegel, 1998)

Requires

An informed , strategic, thorough teacher who has in-depth knowledge about the reading process, the children she/he serves, and how to design instructional components and practices to meet their needs (Fitzgerald, 1999)

According to Spiegel (1998), it is "a decision-making approach through which the teacher makes thoughtful choices each day about the best way to help each child become a better reader and writer" (p. 116).

Uses assessments, a child's cultural experiences, and their background knowledge as the foundation for instructional decisions.

Includes

Literate environment

Frequent opportunities to hear and read print

Environment that displays the importance of reading and writing

Motivation

Student Choice and Interest

Just right text

Multiple opportunities to read and write for their own purpose

Time on task

2 hour block of time

Grouping arrangements

- Whole group
- Small group
- Independent

Explicit instruction model

Gradual release of responsibility

I do, we do, you do

Gradual Release Model
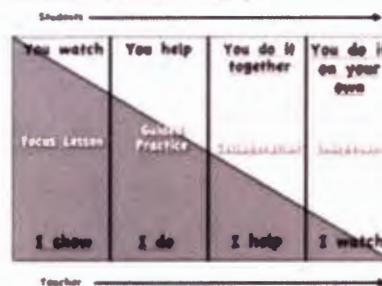
Differentiated instruction based on student need

http://www.cornerstoneliteracy.org/newsletter-archive/revisiting-the-gradual-release-of-responsibility-model

Elements for Instruction

Comprehension

Fluency

Vocabulary

Phonics

Phonemic Awareness

http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/balancedliteracydiet/Food_Groups/index.html

Design

Independent Readers and Writers

What is Balanced Literacy?

http://pirate.shu.edu/~jamesjan/literacy.htm
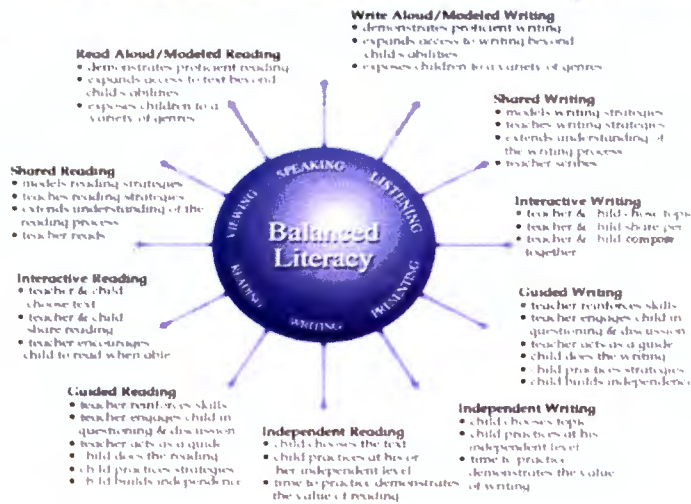
Foundation

Literate Environment

Honors diversity

Exposure to text and print that is immersed in rich language experiences (Trelease, 2006)

Print rich classroom (Duffy, 2003; Reutzel, 2007)

Motivates children to read and "is a fragile commodity" (Pressley, 2006, p. 372)

Filled with a wide range of text Including many genres that are exciting and interesting (Rasinski & Padak, 2004)

Engaged readers and writers who see themselves as successful (Pressley, 2006)

- Effort is the key to intelligence and failure is a part of learning
- Choose to read because they love it and see its importance
- Understand that words are the foundation for gaining knowledge

My Room Design

Room Design Example
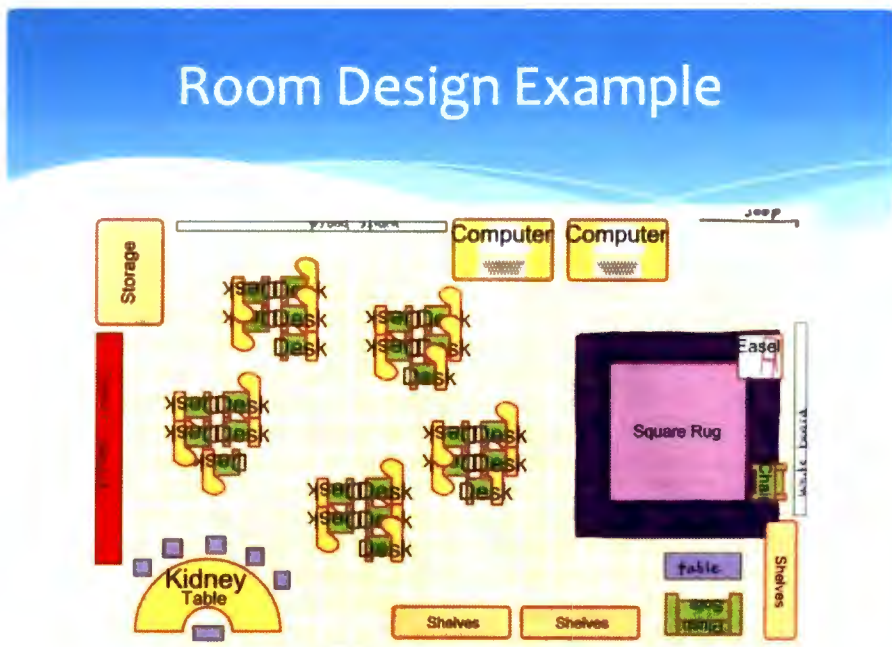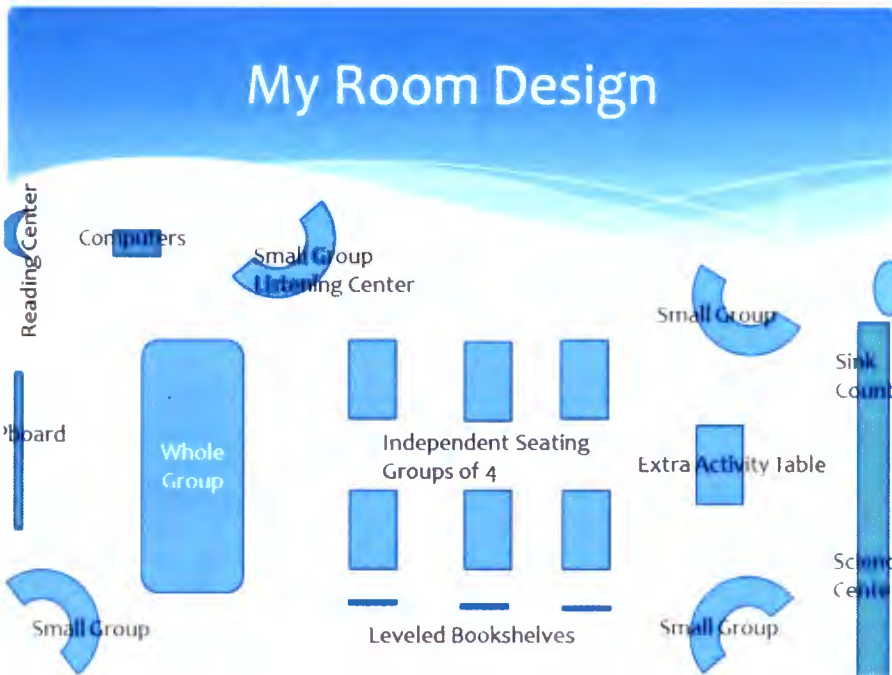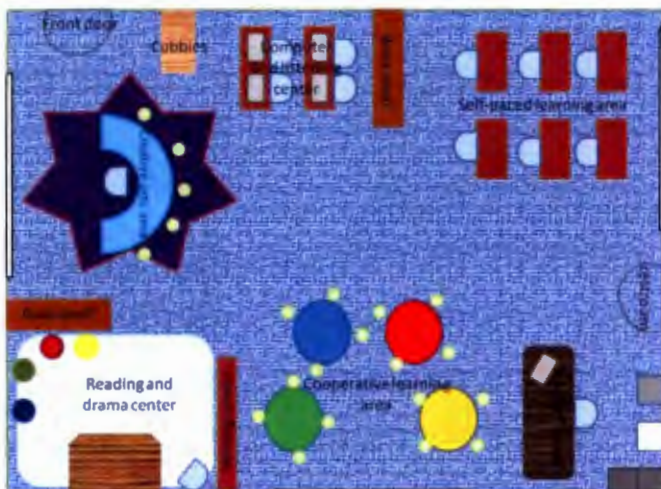
Example 2

Example 3

Extra Resources

http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/balancedliterac
ydiet/Home/index.html

ht p://www.pin erc t.con

ht p://www.terr.or

Professional Development Session 2

Whole Group Instruction

Date: August 2013

Time allotted: 6 hours

Presenter: Sheila McCullough

Audience: K-5

Objectives:

1. Teachers will learn about integrating oral language into Interactive Reading Aloud and Shared Reading with the goal of strengthening comprehension.
2. Teachers will read and learn some new ideas to encourage student conversation during whole group reading activities.

Materials Needed:

- Multiple of the following articles-
- Morning Session: 7 of the Liang article for 4-5 grade and 9 of the McGee article for primary grades
  - Liang, L. A., & Dole, J. A. (2006). Help with teaching reading comprehension: Comprehension instructional frameworks. *Reading Teacher, 59*(8), 742-753.
  - McGee, L. M., & Schickedanz, J. A. (2007). Repeated interactive read-alouds in preschool and kindgarten. *Reading Teacher, 60*(8), 742-751.
- Afternoon Session:
  - Williams, C., Sherry, T., Robinson, N., & Hungler, D. (2012). The practice page as a mediational tool for interactive writing instruction. *Reading Teacher, 65*(5), 330-340.
- Promethean board and computer
- ActiView visual presenter
- Chart paper
- Markers, pencils, rulers

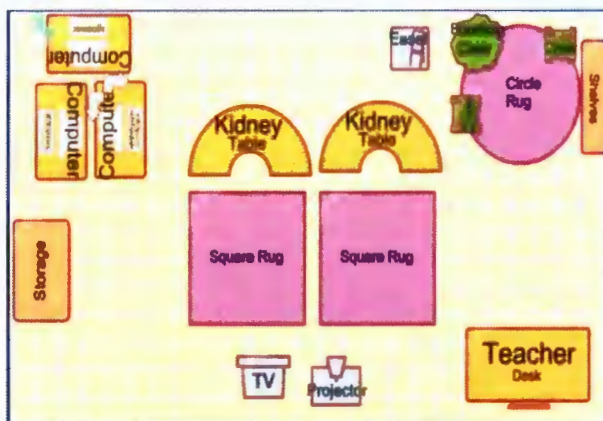| 8:00-8:20	Schedule
8:00-8:20	1. The day will start with community time for teachers to gather, share, and interact with their colleagues for the first 20 minutes.
8:20-8:40	2. The teachers will sit in their grade level groups and take a few minutes to discuss the progress they are making within their rooms. They will create a list of items or support that they might need to develop their rooms further.
8:40-9:00	3. PowerPoint on integrating oral language through whole group methods of instruction

9:00-9:30	4. Demonstrations
9:15-9:30	5. Break
9:30-10:30	6. Teachers will independently read designated articles for primary and upper elementary: Liang, L. A., & Dole, J. A. (2006). Help with teaching reading comprehension: Comprehension instructional frameworks. *Reading Teacher, 59*(8), 742-753. 　Guiding questions: o How does using a comprehension framework benefit you? o What frameworks does the article discuss, and what are the advantages and disadvantages? o Which one would you like to learn more about and why? McGee, L. M., & Schickedanz, J. A. (2007). Repeated interactive read-alouds in preschool and kindgarten. *Reading Teacher, 60*(8), 742-751. 　Guiding questions: o During the first reading of a story, what techniques did the authors suggest? o What is the purpose of reading a story more than once according to these authors? o Discuss why the authors suggested reading a story a third time? o Are there any unique ideas that you gained through this article?
10:30-11:15	7. Grade-level teams fill out large T-chart comparing new information to current practice, then the teachers will rotate reading their colleagues charts either posted on the walls or at tables.
11:15-12:45	Lunch
1:00-1:30	8. PowerPoint explaining the components within Writing Workshop
1:30-2:00	9. Teachers will read the following articles: Primary: Read: Williams, C., Sherry, T., Robinson, N., & Hungler, D. (2012). The practice page as a mediational tool for interactive writing instruction. *Reading Teacher, 65*(5), 330-340. o According to the article, what is the purpose of interactive writing and how is it incorporated into their practice? Upper elementary: Read: Wall, H. (2008). Interactive writing beyond the primary grades. *The Reading Teacher, 62*(2), 149-152. o According to the article, what is the purpose of interactive writing and how is it incorporated into their practice?

		10. Break
2:20- 3:15		11. Write Tools Demonstration showing how Modeled and Interactive Writing is integrated within this program.
		12. Teachers fill out exit slips

Whole Group Instruction

What and Why

o Involves core curriculum/Tier I instruction
o Most effective for management of time and resources
o Uniform instructional delivery for the entire classroom
  - All children receive the same instruction delivered the same way
o Inclusive design
  - Community of learners who interact and learn together
o Exposure to reading and writing a variety of genres through various levels of teacher support
o Instruction that all children need to hear and "is a popular format for providing explicit, direct, and systematic skill and strategy instruction" (Reutzel, 2007, p. 323)

Purpose

o Children learn strategies and skills that good readers and writers use through teacher demonstrations, her/his thinking, modeling, and interacting until they can perform those strategies and skills on their own.

Addresses

Five Critical Elements for Instruction

o Phonemic Awareness
o Phonics
o Vocabulary
o Fluency
o Comprehension

http://child-1st.typepad.com/my_weblog/2013/05/incorporating-the-essential-components-of-reading-into-classroom-instruction.html

Methods of Instruction

Language is the Foundation For Instruction

o Reading Workshop
- Interactive Reading Aloud
- Shared Reading

o Writing Workshop
- Modeled and shared writing
- Interactive Writing
- Guided Writing

Phonemic Awareness

o It is "one of the best predictors of how well students will learn to read during the first two years of school" (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004, p.9)

o Phonemic awareness "is the ability to identify the phonemes of spoken language and how they can be separated, blended, and manipulated" (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004, p.8).

o Children acquire it through early experience with rich language, but it can be taught through explicit teaching and playing and interacting with language.

- o According to the National Reading Panel over 50 studies support the "positive benefits from explicit instruction in phonemic awareness" (as cited in Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004, p. 9

o Basis for how the alphabet system works

Phonics

o Sound to symbol correspondence

o Tools to figure out unknown words through understanding letter patterns and sequences and relating those to unknown words

o Cowens (2003) review of the research concluded " that systematic phonics is a necessary and effective way to teach all children to read (p.20).

o Instruction must be integrated into the process of reading and writing.

Interactive Reading Aloud

o Foundation for literacy acquisition (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996)

o Teacher directed with a high level of teacher support (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Rog, 2003)

o Utilizes a variety of text types and genres to increase curiosity and interest

o Vehicle for teaching concepts of print, comprehension strategies, phonemic awareness, phonics, and word work

o Based in language and reinforced through rich conversations

o Literature is a rich source of oral language and provides a model for children of all ages (Fountas & Pinnell, 1998)

- *o* Children learn how oral and written language works which supports them as they become independent readers and writers.
- *o* Children gain background knowledge and vocabulary (Trelease, 2006)
- *o* Provides children access to material that they cannot read on their own
  - Increases their ability to comprehend more complicated text
- *o* According to the 1985 report *Becoming a Nation of Readers, reading aloud is "The single most important activity for building knowledge required for eventual success in reading"* (as cited in Trelease, 2006, p. 3)
- *o* Pleasurable experience which inspires a child to want to read on his/her own

Shared Reading

- *O* Use resources that all children can see, so they can observe and practice what expert readers do (Rog, 2003)
- *O* Children see how to navigate text and learn concepts of print through observation
- *O* Foundation for explicit instruction through teacher demonstrations, modeling, support, and encouragement (Routman, 2003)
- *O* Children learn strategies and skills which are incorporated into continuous text, so children understand the purpose
- *O* Repeated readings increase fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension

Writing Workshop

1. Brainstorm
Find your idea

2. Draft
Get it down on paper

3. Review
Evaluate and get feedback

4. Revise
Rework your piece

5. Polish
Edit and check your writing

6. Publish
Share the final product

Modeled Writing

- *o* Modeled writing is done for students and is "writing out loud" (Rog, 2003, p. 9)
- *o* Teacher models her/his thinking on how she/he constructs ideas and transfers those into written form
- *o* Through direct instruction, children gain an awareness of sounds, letters, and words

Shared Writing

- *o* The student and teacher compose a message together about a familiar topic
- *o* Teacher acts as the scribe to put the message into written form
- *o* Teacher highlights specific elements for instruction and discusses the writing process as he/she writes the message

Interactive Writing
Teacher Shares the Pen

Student writes while the teacher coaches

The object of teaching a child is to enable him to get along without his teacher.

Elbert Hubbard
American writer
(1856-1915)
QuoteHD.com

Professional Development Session 3

Small Group Instruction

Date: August 2013

Time allotted: 2 hours

Presenter: Sheila McCullough

Audience: K-5

Objectives:

1. Teachers will brainstorm and definitions for fixed ability grouping and flexible grouping, then they will compare the similarities and differences using a Venn diagram.
2. Teachers will learn how to implement a rotation method for small group reading.

Materials Needed:

- Promethean board and computer
- ActiView visual presenter
- Chart paper
- Markers, pencils, rulers

2:00-2:15	Teachers will sit in mixed grade levels and brainstorm a definition for fixed ability grouping and flexible grouping, then they will compare the similarities and differences on a Venn diagram. Share out whole group.
2:15-2:40	PowerPoint explaining small group instruction, defining grouping arrangements, and implementing a rotation method.
2:40-3:30	Room tours All teachers will visit my room first, and I will explain how we use the rotation method, then teachers will visit their colleagues classrooms based on upper elementary and primary. Each teacher will share their current practice and how they might utilize a rotation method.
3:30-4:00	Meet as a whole group and popcorn out ideas they felt were helpful and fill out exit slip evaluating PD.

Small Group Reading Instruction

Why use small groups

o Allows for differentiated instruction based on what a small group of children need to move them forward in the reading process

o Offers varying levels of teacher support as children "negotiate texts and develop independent reading strategies" (Rog, 2003, p.12)

o Children are actively practicing and developing skills and strategies (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Reutzel, 2007, Lou et al., 2000) through teacher guidance, peer support, and independent practice

o Offers flexibility for pacing and instruction (Lou et al., 2000)

o Social cooperative learning atmosphere increases motivation and communication skills (Lou et al., 2000)

New thinking for Small Groups

Homogeneous	Heterogeneous
o Groups children according to "each child's ability to successfully handle and process word decoding, and recognition tasks as well as reading within leveled books" (Reutzel, 2007, p. 332)	o Mixed groups of children meeting for different purposes (Reutzel, 2007)
o Members are compatible which allows for targeted instruction based on area of need	o Creates a cooperative environment
o Needs to be flexible and change as needs change	o Children are grouped this way for small group activities throughout the day
o Should never be a fixed grouping arrangement	o Not focused on a specific area of need, rather on interest and the social nature of learning

Rotation method

o Allows for independent practice while it frees up time for the teacher to work with small groups of students

Professional Development Session 4

Independent Reading

Date: September 2013

Time allotted: 2 hours

Presenter: Sheila McCullough

Audience: K-5

Objectives:

1. Teachers will review the importance of setting aside independent practice time through an article review.
2. Teachers will read, discuss, and learn how to teach the routines for independent reading.

Materials Needed:

- Promethean board and computer
- ActiView visual presenter
- Laptops
- Chart paper
- Markers, pencils, rulers
- Book study book

2:00-2:30		PowerPoint for article review: Article Review: Allington, R. L., & Gabriel, R. E. (2012). Every child, Every day. *Educational Leadership*, 69(6), 10-15. o What are six critical elements of instruction and why are they so important?
2:30-3:15		Read: Boushey G. & Moser, J. (2006). *The daily 5*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers. Chapters 4 & 5
3:15-3:35		Demonstration
3:35-4:00		Short discussion on what they've learned and find helpful. Fill out exit slips.

Independent Practice

Importance

- "The more you read, the better you get at it; the better you get at it, the more you like it; and the more you like it, the more you do it" (Trelease, 2006, p. 3).

- "The more you read, the more you know; and the more you know, the smarter you grow" (Trelease, 2006, p. 3)

Why

- Generates and strengthens background knowledge (Trelease. 2006)
- Increases fluency and comprehension
- Gives children a chance to practice the skills and strategies they need to become independent readers and writers.

Every Child, Every Day
Richard Allington
Research-Based Elements

- Access

  According to Krashen (2011) "self-selected texts improves students' reading performance" (as cited in Allington. 2012. p. 12).

- Choice

  "Students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they have the opportunity to choose what they read" (Allington. 2012. p. 10).

  Increases motivation

- Accuracy
  - 98% accuracy increases comprehension
  - Solidifies word recognition, analysis, vocabulary, and comprehension
  - Understanding leads to enjoyment
  - Struggling readers get frustrated and read less
- Comprehension
  - Number one goal of reading
  - Skill instruction has to be linked to connected text and practiced within connected text
  - Struggling readers need many opportunities to read text that they can read accurately, fluently, and then understand what they have read.

- Writing
  - "Writing provides a different modality within which to practice the skills and strategies of reading for an authentic purpose" (p. 13).
  - Children need to write daily about things that matter to them, so they have the motivation to use the conventions that will make their writing make sense to others.
  - Struggling readers need to write because it gives them practice in skills and strategies, plus it generates text that they can read.

- Peer interactions and conversations

  Improves language, comprehension, and engagement

  Allows them to think about text beyond teacher questioning

  Struggling readers need to be able to do more than answer literal questions

  Combines and strengthens the skills that children use in speaking, writing, listening, and reading.

- Listening to expert fluent readers

  Increases fluency and comprehension

  Children hear what fluent reading sounds like

  Increases background knowledge, vocabulary, awareness of text structure, and sense of story

Allington's Recommendations

- Eliminate almost all worksheets and workbooks
- Buy books for classroom libraries
- Use the time for self-selected reading, writing, reading aloud, and conversations
- Get rid of test preparation activities
    - They don't increase reading proficiency
- Spend time and money on developing readers and writers

Professional Development Session 5

Guided Reading and Differentiated Instruction

Date: October 2013

Time allotted: 2 hours

Presenter: Sheila McCullough

Audience: K-5

Objectives:

1. Teachers will learn about using assessment to guide their small group reading instruction.
2. Teachers will design a week long lesson plan addressing a specific target for instruction with one small group within the rotation.

Materials Needed:

- Promethean board and computer
- ActiView visual presenter
- Laptops
- Chart paper
- Markers, pencils, rulers
- Screening Assessments and Informal Assessments
- Example Lesson Template
- Resources:
  o Walpole, S., & McKenna, M. C. (2007). *Differentiated reading instruction: Strategies for the primary grades*. New York: The Guildford Press.
  o Walpole, S., McKenna, M. C., & Philippakos, Z. A. (2011). *Differentiated reading instruction: In grades 4 & 5*. New York: The Guilford Press.
  o Tyner, B. (2009). *Small-group reading instruction: A differentiated teaching model for beginning and struggling readers*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
  o Tyner, B. (2012). *The literacy jigsaw puzzle: Assembling the critical pieces of literacy instruction*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association

2:00-2:15	PowerPoint presentation	
2:15-3:30	Teachers will use screening assessments and informal assessments to design a targeted lesson plan for one small group using material from an upcoming Unit within series and alternate supplementary materials from the guided reading library.	

Differentiation within Guided Reading

Target Instruction

Coaching Within Text

Word Work Review

New Book

Fluency Practice

Guided Reading
Uses instructional leveled text based on accuracy scores to integrate skills

Differentiated Instruction
Focuses on skill & strategy instruction, so children vary in level of reading
Considers developmental

Target SLE:

Station 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
PA/Phonics/Word Work					
Sight Word Introduction and Review					
Choral read short poem or familiar material					
Vocabulary & Strategy Instruction Within New Book					

http. www.classworks.com index.cfm states indiana 8steppro cess

Professional Development Session 6

Paired Reading

Date: November 2013

Time allotted: 2 hours

Presenter: Sheila McCullough

Audience: K-5

Objectives:

1. Teachers will learn about and share ideas for additional grouping practices.

Materials Needed:

- Promethean board and computer
- ActiView visual presenter
- Laptops
- Chart paper
- Markers, pencils, rulers
-

2:00-2:30	Teachers will read Chapter 6 Boushey, G., & Moser, J. (2006). *The daily 5: fostering literacy independence in the elementary grades*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.
2:30-3:00	Demonstration
3:00-3:30	Teachers will share other effective grouping practices they use within their rooms.

Conclusion

This project was developed as a design for sharing an effective balanced literacy framework that has been implemented within my classroom for the past several years. As teachers, we are constantly bombarded with new ideas and ways to do things. My project was designed as an affirmation of the research-based practices that need to be included in every classroom, as well as a framework that was fairly easy to implement using the mandated series materials, along with the essential supplemental material. Since this project began, many changes have been made. I have changed schools, and we are now adopting the Common Core Standards within our district. I still believe that the information within this project is valuable information, and that teachers would benefit from it. However, with all the new policies coming out, I will not be able to share it at this time. Nevertheless, I have learned a great deal and my instructional practices have improved considerably. I regularly reflect on how to integrate the current curriculum and the components within reading and writing workshop, so my instruction always reflects balanced literacy.

I was concerned about my topic being outdated, but found that even the current literature supports balanced literacy instruction, so I believe that my original questions have been answered and supported through the research and available literature. A balanced literacy framework addresses the diverse needs of our children, and teachers can still make the decisions that best suit the children they serve. A balanced literacy framework can be used in conjunction with district programs. In fact, the framework enriches our current practices. A comprehensive balanced literacy framework is the critical piece where all children can become lifelong readers and writers.

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Appendix A

Elements Implementation

Method	Materials	Current Practice
Interactive Reading Aloud		
Shared Reading		
Guided Reading		
Independent Reading		
Modeled, Shared, & Interactive Writing		
Guided Writing		
Independent Writing		

Appendix B

What's Working	What's Not	Where Help is Needed

Appendix C

Example: Small Group Lesson Plan Template for Primary

Target SLE:

Station 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
PA/Phonics/Word Work					
Sight Word Introduction and Review					
Choral read short poem or familiar material					
Vocabulary & Strategy Instruction Within New Book					

Station 2-Writing	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Writing					

Station 3-Word Work	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Phonemic Awareness-Haggerty					
Sound Review-Blending/Segment Practice					
Jolly Phonics Written Symbol or Handwriting Program					

Station 4	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Independent Reading or Listening Center					

Appendix D

Johnson Elementary Needs Assessment

Strongly Disagree		Unsure		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

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1. In our school, the idea of using a balanced literacy framework has been embraced.

Strongly Disagree		Unsure		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. In our school, classroom teachers are consistently implementing the components of a balanced literacy framework.

Strongly Disagree		Unsure		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. The use of a balanced literacy framework is benefitting the students.

Strongly Disagree		Unsure		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. In what area would future in-service sessions be beneficial?

5. Where would classroom and peer support be most beneficial?

6. Comments and suggestions:

Appendix E

Johnson In-Service Evaluation

Strongly Disagree		Unsure		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

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1. This in-service met my expectations and the information was helpful.

Strongly Disagree		Unsure		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. The pacing of today's in-service was appropriate.

Strongly Disagree		Unsure		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. The activities we participated in were engaging and helpful.

Strongly Disagree		Unsure		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. The articles were applicable to my practice.

Strongly Disagree		Unsure		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. One idea I will remember and implement will be:

6. An idea that is unclear:

7. I would like more support in:

8. Overall I would rate this in-service as:

Very helpful	Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Okay	Not Helpful

Appendix F

Sample Daily Schedule

9:15-9:30   Phonics program

- Short story and introduction for sound to symbol correspondence
- Practice putting sounds together to find specific pictures in the story
- Practice segmenting and blending sounds

9:30-9:45   Vocabulary program

- Monday is an introduction to 5 designated words followed by a story
- Tuesday through Friday involves short activities that review the same 5 words

9:45-10:00   Whole group reading

- Basal Program
o Each day has a different story with comprehension activities

10:00-11:00   Small group rotation

We follow a rotation with each group meeting for each activity for 15 minutes.

Seats Independent Work and practice reading familiar books	Teacher Directed Phonemic Awareness Program	Kidney table Independent writing that is integrated through basal program or theme	Teacher Directed Guided Reading Setting

11:05-11:30   Lunch

11:35   Recess

11:55-12:40   Small group math rotation

Curriculum Topic	Teacher Directed Activity	Kidney Table Independent Activity	

12:40-1:10   Computer Reading Program in computer lab

1:15-1:30   Writing-Direct Instruction

1:40-2:15   Specials

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Art-2nd floor	PE	Music-1st floor

2:20-2:40   Writing Workshop-Spanish every day 2

2:40   Calendar and whole group math

3:00-   Centers/Social Studies/Science