

Balanced Literacy Components



Module 1 - A: Introduction

Viewing Time: 9 minutes

Balanced Literacy Module 1 - Activity 2

Balanced Literacy is a framework of components designed to help all students learn to read and write effectively. These components include:

- Modeled, Shared, Guided and Independent Reading
- Modeled, Shared, Guided and Independent Writing
- Word Study

Activity Objective(s):

1. Review definitions of the Balanced Literacy components.
2. Align the components of Balanced Literacy to the instructional elements of your current reading and writing program.



Overview: It is important to understand each component of Balanced Literacy. For this activity, you will review definitions of common Balanced Literacy components. Once you understand each component, you will match what you teach and how you teach it to the common components of a Balanced Literacy.

Estimated Time to Complete Activity: 30 minutes

Materials: *Balanced Literacy Components Matching Tool*



Step 1: Describe the elements of your current reading and writing instructional program. What do you teach and how do you teach it? Record and describe each element in a separate row on the *Balanced Literacy Components Matching Tool* (chart one - column one).

Step 2: Read the definition for each of the common components of Balanced Literacy on the *Balanced Literacy Components Matching Tool* (chart two - column two).

Step 3: Draw a line to match the elements of your current literacy program to each of the Balanced Literacy components that your elements fit with (chart one - column two).

Step 4: Reflect about your current literacy program and answer the questions (below chart two).



Balanced Literacy Components



Adaptations or Extensions for this Activity:

For Professional Reflection: After viewing the course, return to the *Balanced Literacy Components Matching* Tool. Refer back to the components of Balanced Literacy that you were not using at all before you started this course. Make a concrete plan to implement these components in your classroom. Which component will you start with? What else do you need to know about the component before you can begin? What tools and materials do you need to get started? Do you have any colleagues that you can turn to for assistance?



For your Professional Portfolio: Does this activity help accomplish a school wide improvement goal or an individual goal for professional growth? Include a copy of this activity in your Professional Portfolio as evidence of reflective practice in the area of reading and writing instruction. This activity can serve as a portfolio artifact that demonstrates your effort to apply what you have learned in order to improve your reading and writing instruction.



For Professional Learning Groups/Independent Study (peer or small group):

Meet with your Professional Learning Group after completing the *Balanced Literacy Components Matching* Tool on your own. Share with the group which components of Balanced Literacy you are already implementing and which components you are hoping to learn more about. After viewing the course, decide which components of Balanced Literacy you are ready to start using and choose a component that your group would like to study more in depth.



Course facilitator for this course (university or professional development setting):

Utilize this activity as a part of your course topic and/or video program introduction. Have participants complete the *Balanced Literacy Components Matching* Tool. Ask the participants to find a partner who is using or knows about a component that they are not familiar with. Have partners share with each other how they are using the component in their current literacy program or how it is being used in a literacy program that they have observed (for a teacher not currently practicing in the classroom).



For sharing this activity on a Learning Community Site (such as the EI Online Community Bulletin Boards):

Select one of components of balanced literacy that you matched to your current literacy program. Post the component and describe your current literacy program as it relates to that component. Review the other posts for this activity discussion. Is there anyone else who posted about a component that you are not using? How is their literacy program similar to yours? Did the comment prompt you to remember another way that you are implementing Balanced Literacy that you did not think of?

Balanced Literacy Components Matching Tool

Directions:

Describe the elements of your literacy instruction (column one – chart one). Read the definition of each component of Balanced Literacy (chart two). Return to chart one and draw a line from each element (column one) to one or more of the balanced literacy components that it fits with (column two). Below chart two, answer the reflective questions about your current implementation of the Balanced Literacy components.

Grade Level:

What are the elements of your current literacy instruction? What do you teach for reading and language arts, how do you teach it and how often do you teach it?	Balanced Literacy Components
	Modeled Reading
	Shared Reading
	Guided Reading
	Independent Reading
	Modeled Writing
	Shared Writing
	Guided Writing
	Independent Writing
	Word Study



Balanced Literacy Components Matching Tool

Components	Definitions <i>What is it?</i>
Modeled Reading	It is <i>reading to students.</i> Modeled Reading is also known as read aloud or interactive read aloud. When utilizing modeled reading, a teacher combines reading aloud with planned and purposeful teacher think-aloud to demonstrate the explicit application of an isolated comprehension strategy (e.g., use of schema or background knowledge; questioning; determining importance; story elements), decoding strategy (e.g., letter-sound association; word attack) or reading behavior (e.g., enthusiasm/excitement for reading; reading with purpose). Typically, “read aloud” is the term most commonly used to describe reading with the purpose of expressing enjoyment for reading and motivating/interesting your students in reading. “Interactive reading” is the term commonly used when more intentional planning goes into the think-aloud aspect of your read aloud. In most settings the terms are used synonymously with “modeled reading” being the umbrella term over both types.
Shared Reading	It is <i>reading with students.</i> Shared Reading is when the teacher reads an enlarged text aloud (e.g., overhead; big book; charted story or poem). The students participate by reading along, using strategies when they encounter difficulty. The teacher builds the meaning and structure up, so that students can bring in the visual sources of information as they compose meaning from a text. The teacher demonstrates the reading process and strategies that successful readers use. The text is revisited many times and attention is drawn to phonics elements for blending words, sight words for creating word collections, unfamiliar words, as well as other skills that students need. Shared reading provides an opportunity for all students to successfully participate in reading.
Guided Reading	It is <i>reading with and by students.</i> Guided Reading is when a teacher works with small groups of children who have similar reading processes and needs. The teacher selects and introduces new books carefully chosen to match the instructional levels of students (90-95 percent accuracy) as determined by performance on a running record or reading inventory. During guided reading the teacher works with small, homogeneous reading groups that are flexible and change regularly based on students' needs. Readers are carefully prepared when being introduced to a new text and various teaching points are made during and after reading. Guided reading fosters comprehension skills and strategies, develops background knowledge and oral language skills, and provides as much instructional level reading as possible. Students are prompted to use a skilled reader's strategies (predicting, questioning, confirming, checking, rereading and self-monitoring). Students are exposed to a wide variety of texts and are challenged to select from a growing repertoire of strategies that allow them to tackle new texts more independently.
Independent Reading	It is <i>reading by students.</i> Independent Reading is when students self-select and independently read appropriate books (95% to 100% accuracy). Students are taught how to choose books at their independent level in order to read successfully. Students typically respond to independent reading by drawing and writing about the stories they read.
<i>Please note: in some balanced literacy programs, the terms modeled writing, interactive writing, and shared writing are used interchangeably to describe the same process of the teacher and students collaborating on the writing process with the teacher usually acting as the scribe. For the purpose of this activity, we differentiate these three components by the amount in which the “development of the piece” and the “pen” are shared.</i>	
Modeled Writing	It is <i>writing by the teacher for the students to watch and listen.</i> Modeled Writing is a planned think-aloud process. Teachers model their own writing processes (e.g., rethinking, revising and editing) while students listen and watch (e.g. chart, overhead, chalk or dry-erase board).
Interactive Writing	It is <i>writing by the teacher with students' verbal input.</i> Interactive Writing is when the teacher guides whole-group writing of a large-print piece, which can be a list, a chart, pages of a book, or another form of writing. The piece of writing is constructed by the teacher and students with the teacher doing the actual writing. Acting as scribe, the teacher helps

Balanced Literacy Components Matching Tool

Components	Definitions <i>What is it?</i>
	students shape their words and ideas into a coherent message. Teachers may use a think-aloud to help students understand a certain aspect of the writing process. It is different from modeled writing because students are encouraged to give ideas and answer the teachers think-aloud questions. The piece of writing is read many times by the group during the process.
Shared Writing	It is writing by the teacher and the students . Shared Writing is when the teacher models and demonstrates the writing process but also shares the pen with the students. The teacher selects letters, words, or other writing actions for students to do. The message or story is composed by the group and then constructed word by word with all students participating in composing and constructing various aspects of the writing. The teacher coaches the process of putting ideas onto paper.
Guided Writing	It is writing by the students with the teacher's support and direction . Guided Writing is when the teacher conducts a mini-lesson followed by time for the students to write, conference with the teacher and share. Guided writing is typically utilized as a part of the Writing Workshop. During guided writing or writing workshop, students construct individual pieces of writing with teacher (and eventually peer) guidance, assistance, and feedback.
Independent Writing	It is writing by the students . Independent Writing provides an opportunity for students to practice using the writing strategies they have learned in modeled writing, interactive writing, shared writing and guided writing. Students write for authentic purposes, for different audiences and use a variety of styles. They write their own messages and stories. They use journals to reflect and respond to what they are learning. They independently write their own version of a familiar text and illustrate, label, and write speech bubbles of what the characters would say. They are taught how to use the resources in the room to find words they cannot write independently. Teachers conference with students and encourage them to publish their work. Observing independent writing helps the teacher plan for guided writing mini-lessons and suggests teaching points to raise during the other components of writing instruction.
Word Study	It is learning about words . Word study is an alternative to traditional spelling instruction. It is based on learning word patterns rather than memorizing unconnected words. Students learn a repertoire of strategies for recognizing words, including the use of phonics, context, word family patterns, and structural analysis that they can apply flexibly in a variety of contexts. Word study can be done in small flexible groups based on the students' instructional levels.

Part 2: Reflect and answer questions.

1) Were you surprised at how many balanced literacy components you are utilizing?

2) For which components do you consider your use to be proficient?



Balanced Literacy Components Matching Tool

3) Which components are you using but want to use more often?

4) Which components are you not using at all and how do you plan to begin using them?