Balanced Literacy

Read Aloud/Modeled Reading
Shared Reading
Interactive Reading
Guided Reading
Independent Reading

Write Aloud/Modeled Writing
Shared Writing
Interactive Writing
Guided Writing
Independent Writing

Breaking Down the Literacy Walk-through in the Primary Grades
Physical Environment Primary

- Classroom library organized by genres, interests, authors, etc.
- Many different types of authentic reading materials available to students
- Browsing boxes grouped by levels
- Materials at all levels
- Supplies (teacher and student) easily accessible
- Meeting area with literacy easel
- Room set up to accommodate a variety of types of work (large group, small group, one-on-one, centers, etc.)
- Expectations and routines clearly posted

Reflective Questions/“Look Fors”

- Is the classroom set up in a way where whole group (with literacy easel), small group (guided reading table, books, and resources), and independent work (workstations/centers) are in practice?
- Is the classroom a print-rich environment with easily accessible books grouped in a variety of levels, genres, and topics? Are learning resources (manipulatives and stations) used independently by students?
- Are anchor charts visible and accessible?
Classroom Climate  Primary

- Balance of quiet and talk activities
- Interactive conversations concerning reading and writing
- Classroom routines in place, students can self-regulate
- Students engaged in meaningful literacy work
- Higher level questions are asked by the teacher and students
- Independent literacy work is open-ended, encouraging higher level thinking skills
- Transitions between activities is smooth and efficient
- Evidence of on-going assessment of student progress

Reflective Questions/ “Look Fors”

- Is there evidence of routines and classroom procedures in place for the facilitation of whole group, small group, and independent work?

- Are students able to work independently? Do they know what they are to do independently and are they able to understand and comprehend the reading and/or literacy task?

- Are students talking about their learning with each other in their workstations and with the teacher? i.e. is there a “literacy buzz” in the classroom?
Whole Group (Primary)
- Mini lesson with specific teaching points
- Shared reading OR Interactive Read aloud
- Evidence of think alouds and modeling
- Evidence of student engagement (interacting with text)

Reflective Questions/“Look Fors”
- Does the teacher focus on one or two concepts?
- Is the mini-lesson short (about 5-10 minutes)?
- Are students actively engaged and responding?
- Are the students gathered together in a whole group arrangement around the literacy easel?
Small Group (Primary)

- Appropriate grouping of students and text
- Evidence of anecdotal note taking/Running Record
- Evidence of planning (binder/lesson plan)
- Components of Guided Reading:
  - Familiar reading,
  - Book introduction
  - Comprehension strategies
  - Read & discuss book
  - Word work
  - Text connections

Reflective Questions/“Look Fors”

- Is there evidence of guided reading lesson plans and anecdotal notes being taken.
- Are there 2-3 all groups being met with each day? With one RR per group per day?
- Are groups flexible?
- Are groups solely based on levels at all times or are they also based on strategies and skills?
- Are book introductions brief?
- Are students actively and authentically engaged with text a majority of the time?
- Does the teacher address in small group what was taught in whole group?
- Who is doing most of the work—the student or the teacher?
**Independent Work (Primary)**

- Evidence of students reading and responding to “just right” books
- Evidence of students working independently in literacy workstations

Examples of Primary Literacy Workstations:

- Book Boxes
- Buddy Reading
- Writing
- Readers Theater
- Genre Stations (Poetry, etc.)
- ABC/Word Study
- Word Wall
- Oral Retelling
- Listening
- Computer
- Big Books

**Reflective Questions/“Look Fors”**

- Are students able to identify their “just right” books? Are there individual browsing boxes or books available in the classroom library that are leveled?
- Are there workstations present? And are there routines evident within each workstation and when transitioning between them? Are directions posted at each station in kid-friendly language?
- Are students able to work independently at each station? Are the activities developmentally appropriate and have the level of thinking needed?
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Shared Reading
Interactive Reading
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Breaking Down the Literacy Walk-through in the Intermediate Grades
**Physical Environment**

**Intermediate**

- Classroom library organized by genres, interests, authors, etc.
- Many different types of authentic reading materials available to students
- Browsing boxes grouped by levels or student interest
- Materials at all levels
- Supplies (teacher and student) easily accessible
- Meeting area with literacy easel
- Room set up to accommodate a variety of types of work (large group, small group, one-on-one, centers, etc.)
- Expectations and routines clearly posted

**Reflective Questions/“Look Fors”**

- Is the classroom a print rich environment?
- Are books accessible at students’ levels and interests?
- Are there a variety of texts and genres?
- Are anchor charts and content word walls visible and accessible?
- Is the classroom set up in a way where whole group (literacy easel), small group, and independent work stations are in practice?
**Classroom Climate**

**Intermediate**

- Balance of quiet and talk activities
- Interactive conversations concerning reading and writing
- Classroom routines in place, students can self-regulate
- Students engaged in meaningful literacy work
- Higher level questions are asked by the teacher and students
- Independent literacy work is open-ended, encouraging higher level thinking skills
- Transitions between activities is smooth and efficient
- Evidence of on-going assessment of student progress

**Reflective Questions/“Look Fors”**

- Are students engaged in authentic literacy work? Can you hear a literacy “buzz”?

- Are students working in a variety of settings: independently, with each other, and with the teacher?

- Do students feel comfortable talking?

- Do students know what to do while the teacher works with small groups?

- Is that work meaningful?
**Whole Group (Intermediate)**

- Mini lesson with specific teaching points (genre focus)
- Evidence of think alouds and modeling
- Model, Model, Model
- Evidence of student engagement (interacting with text)

**Reflective Questions/ “Look Fors”**

- Can students identify the features of the genre being studied?
- Does the teacher focus on one two key points?
- Is the mini-lesson actually “mini”?
  
  *Please know that This can also be a longer anchor lesson at the beginning of a unit.*
- Are students actively engaged in the lesson?
Small Group (Intermediate)

Genre/Reading Strategy Focus

- Appropriate grouping of students and text
- Evidence of anecdotal note taking/RR
- Evidence of planning (binder/lesson plan)
- Components of Guided Reading:
  - Activating schema
  - Read & discuss book
  - Vocabulary/Word work
  - Reader response
  - Text connections,
  - Comprehension strategies

Reflective Questions/“Look Fors”

- Is the small group lesson a continuation or reinforcement of the whole group lesson?
- Do students respond to text in a reader’s notebook?
- Do the teacher’s notes reflect teaching points as well as praise points?
- Does the teacher plan the lesson to meet the changing needs of growing readers?
- Are students responding in some way? (Writing down their thinking or identifying textual evidence?)
- Are the groups flexible?
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<th>Independent Work (Intermediate) Genre Focus</th>
<th>Reflective Questions/“Look Fors”</th>
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<td>• Work stations (evidence of rigor and reflection)</td>
<td>• Are stations with meaningful literacy work evident?</td>
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<td>• Literature Circles</td>
<td>• Are students reading and responding to text?</td>
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<td>• Reader response</td>
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<td>• Vocabulary/word work</td>
<td>• Are students leaving evidence of their thinking behind?</td>
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Examples of Intermediate Literacy Workstations:

- Independent Reading with students responding to text and with peers
- Foldables (Interactive Notebooks) to practice skills/strategies
- Literature Circle responses
- Genre Workstations