



Balanced Literacy Elementary: The Reader's Workshop

EDUO 9200 3 Semester Credits/Units

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Note: This is a Public syllabus of the course. For a full detailed syllabus please email the instructor.

Course Overview

Balanced Literacy is an approach with a goal of developing lifelong readers and thinkers. It exposes students to the habits of good readers by interacting with many genres and styles of literature. Components of balanced literacy, including the reader's and writer's workshop models, will be explored. Creating effective mini-lessons, grouping students appropriately, and planning effective guided reading lessons will be an integral part of the course.

Course Objectives:

By the end of Session 1, participants will be able to:

Identify the components of *balanced literacy*: the reader's workshop.

- A. Read-aloud
- B. Independent reading
- C. Guided reading
- D. Response to literature
- E. Reading conferences

By the end of Session 2, participants will be able to:

Explore the structure and format of the mini-lesson in the reader's workshop model.

- A. Investigate the format of the mini-lesson
- B. Identify mentor or anchor texts that can be used to support lessons
- C. Assess a mini-lesson for effectiveness

By the end of Session 3, participants will be able to:

Plan for and conduct guided reading groups.

- A. Explore guided reading as one component of balanced literacy
- B. Understand the varying levels of literacy development and how to plan instruction aimed at meeting these individual needs
- C. Identify characteristics and behaviors of students at different reading levels
- D. Establish guided reading groups through effective assessment

Session 1: Identifying the Components of Balanced Literacy

Overview

Balanced literacy is an approach to teaching reading and writing that attempts to balance the teaching of phonics while exposing students to a rich body of literature through the use of whole language. The skills that all students must learn in order to become effective readers and writers include phonemic awareness (matching sounds and letters), decoding or sounding out words (phonics), advancing vocabulary, practicing reading, and building comprehension skills. The ultimate goal is for teachers to create fluent readers who use reading as a tool to learn.

There are many components to an effective balanced literacy program. Teachers make time during their literacy block to include many of the following components in their instruction. In her article, [Understanding the Language of Balanced Literacy](#), Arlyne LeSchack defines several of these components:

- reading aloud - In the balanced literacy model, the teacher reads aloud to the whole class or small groups. The texts are carefully selected from children's literature and a variety of genres are represented. Favorite texts may be reread several times. The model we are using includes "read-alouds" that provide opportunities for students to "turn and talk" to each other about various story-related subjects.
- shared reading - The teacher uses an enlarged text that all the children can see, and involves the students in reading together, perhaps using a pointer. Big books, poems, songs, or the class' own interactive writing may be used for this activity.

Assignment for Session One (Resources for Sessions are included in the Full Syllabus)

Explore the information about balanced literacy presented on the various websites

COMPONENTS of BALANCED LITERACY

1. Identify the components of balanced literacy that you already incorporate into your teaching.
2. To what extent have they been effective?
3. Cite your evidence.

Session 2: The Structure of the Mini-Lesson in the Reader's Workshop Model

Overview

Through the use of the mini-lesson, the workshop approach allows the teacher to guide students toward meeting standards and building various skills needed to develop their reading and writing proficiency. Teachers conduct workshops by creating learning experiences that model correct reading and writing strategies. Content area texts and various genres of literature are used to anchor the lessons.

According to Arlyne LeSchack, both the reading and writing workshops start with a 10 to 15 minute mini-lesson. The mini-lesson has a definite structure. The first part is the connection; the teacher starts by connecting the current lesson to something previously done. Next comes the teaching point, when the teacher states explicitly and repeatedly exactly what she is teaching in this lesson. Next the teacher models or demonstrates exactly what she wants the students to do. Then the active engagement occurs, when all the students try out or discuss what it is they are supposed to do. The last part of the mini-lesson is the link when the teacher tells the students what they will do during the independent work time of the workshop. During this period, the students

work independently while the teacher walks around and confers with individual students. After about 30 minutes, the teacher briefly shares, using a student's good work as an example.

Mini-lessons are brief, focused on specific skills, appropriate for the whole class, and allow time to apply the new skill. They are followed by a period of practice via independent or small group work, and then sharing.

Assignment for Session Two

Explore the information about mini-lessons presented on the various websites.

1. Using the mini-lesson format found in the readings, develop a reading mini-lesson for your classroom. Include the lesson the grade level you teach when typing out the lesson, as well as any materials necessary to present the lesson. Deliver the mini-lesson.
2. As part of the mini-lesson you share, cite at least two mentor or anchor texts that would support the lesson. Be sure to identify the title, author, and grade level for which you used it.
3. In what ways can you adapt an anchor or mentor text to make it appropriate for your students who are struggling or lack proficiency?

Session 3: Guided Reading

Overview

Guided reading is the heart of a balanced literacy program. It is a small-group approach to teaching reading where the teacher works with a small group of students with similar reading ability. The book must be at the students' instructional level. The teacher spends the first part of the lesson discussing concepts in the book and scaffolding information. This lays the groundwork for reading success.

To establish an effective guided reading group, teachers must assess and place groups of no more than five or six students with similar needs. Teachers must also account for meaningful activities for the rest of the class while they are working with their guided reading group. Assessment is ongoing, and instruction is differentiated as readers transition from one group to the next when they have achieved a higher level of proficiency.

Assignment for Session Three

Explore the information about guided reading presented on the various websites.

1. Develop and present a guided reading lesson in your classroom.
 - A. Describe the students you worked with.
 - B. What level were the students?

Assessment

Plan a content unit for your class employing balanced literacy strategies. Identify the content area. Identify and describe the anchor text(s) you will use for guided reading. What concepts do you plan to teach using this text? Describe the reading skills you will emphasize in your mini-lessons. Which strategies will engage and motivate a diverse group of learners? Describe your formal and informal assessments. What culminating activity will bring this unit together and celebrate student achievement?

Course Assessment Rubric

| EXCELLENT Meets or Exceeds Course Objectives: A to A- | ACCEPTABLE Majority of Work Meets Course Objectives; B+ to B- | NOT ACCEPTABLE Needs Considerable Improvement: Resubmit Work Suggested: C or below |
|---|--|--|
| All work is very well organized. | Most work is generally well organized. | Work shows little or no organization. |
| Answers are well thought out and demonstrates reflection on the material. | Answers are complete and demonstrate some reflection on the material. | Answers are brief and do not demonstrate any reflection on the material. |
| Assignment use specific examples or references from multiple sources. | Assignment use specific examples or references from just a few sources. | Assignment do not use specific examples or references from the readings. |
| All assignment are completed using complete sentences. | The majority of the assignments are completed using complete sentences. | Assignments are not completed in complete sentences. |
| Work is free of spelling and/or grammatical errors. | Work has few spelling and/or grammatical errors. | Work has numerous spelling and/or grammatical errors. |

Supplementary Materials are included in the Full Syllabus

- You are allowed 9 months to complete the course. Course questions? Contact your instructor by email.
 - For questions involving your registration or to change your address please contact us at support@dominicanCAonline.com or call (800) 626-5080.
- For Dominican Self-Guided course information go to <http://dominicancaonline.com/Dominican-CA-Online-FAQ>