

COMPONENTS OF A LANGUAGE ARTS LESSON

Students learn to read, write, speak and listen successfully when a variety of instructional approaches are provided. The following approaches provide the framework for the implementation of Irving Independent School District's literacy program. Reading/Language Arts instruction at each elementary campus is provided for a minimum of two and one-half hours per day, using the following format:

1. Reading Aloud

Reading aloud introduces students to the joys of reading and the art of listening. Students develop understanding of the patterns and structures of written language and learn new words and ideas. Through reading aloud students learn about and locate models of particular genres or forms of writing. They understand that the language of books is different from spoken language. Reading aloud offers the reader many opportunities to model reading strategies.

2. Shared Reading

Shared reading with an enlarged text, overhead or a text everyone can see provides an opportunity for all students to successfully participate in reading. Students and teachers share the task of reading the text which otherwise might prove to be too difficult for most children. During the reading, teachers identify and discuss the conventions, structures, and language features of written texts. The teacher demonstrates the reading process and strategies that successful readers use. The story 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.

3. Guided Reading

The purpose of guided reading is to promote independent reading by helping students develop effective reading skills and strategies, fluency and confidence. Students are matched to appropriate instructional texts (read with 90-95 percent accuracy) determined by performance on a running record or reading inventory. During the lesson the teacher works with small, homogeneous reading groups that are flexible and change regularly based on students' needs. Because guided reading groups are comprised of students at similar stages of reading development, they present ideal opportunities for systematically teaching skills and strategies. Students read texts on increasing levels of difficulty, with each step providing opportunities for the kind of problem solving strategies that build independent reading systems. Students are prompted to use a skilled reader's strategies (predicting, questioning, confirming, checking, rereading and self-monitoring).

4. Independent Reading

The more students read materials they *can* read, the more they improve and progress toward independence. Teachers designate a specific daily time for independent reading

and provide the rules for quiet reading. Independent reading provides students with the practice needed to gain fluency and independence. Students have access to a wide range of literature from which they can make choices. Teachers teach students how to choose books at their independent level to read successfully. Students read independently, not only books but also other printed material in the classroom. (e.g., poems, songs, pieces composed through interactive and shared writing, signs, directions, charts and posters). They read to themselves or with partners. Students may draw and write about the stories they read independently.

5. Word Study

Word study provides students with the opportunity to become aware of sounds in words and how they relate to symbols in written language. Word study prepares students to become familiar with both the visual aspects of letters and words and the phonological pattern of words. Beginning readers are taught to segment sounds in words, the alphabet, the relationship between sound and letters, blending of sound-letter links, high frequency words as well as regular spelling patterns. Students need a repertoire of strategies for recognizing words, including the use of phonics, context, word family patterns (onsets and rimes), and structural analysis that they can apply flexibly in a variety of contexts. When students cannot decode a word in context, the teacher models a number of different strategies, such as reading ahead a bit, using context clues, rereading, sounding out the word, or thinking of words that resemble parts of the unknown word.

6. Modeled Writing

Modeled writing is a think-aloud process. Teachers model their own writing processes including rethinking, revising, and editing. Students observe the teacher sorting through various options and questions and making choices appropriate for the intended purpose and audience. Teachers show their own planning strategies, demonstrating that even expert writers work tentatively, revise often, and still may need to start over – and over. Teacher demonstration and articulation of the process of writing is critical to student's understanding.

7. Interactive Writing

The teacher guides group writing of a large-print piece, which can be a list, a chart, pages of a book, or another form of writing. The teacher models and demonstrates the writing process and also shares the pen with the students. The text is constructed word-by-word with all students participating in various aspects of the writing. The teacher selects letters, words, or other writing actions for individual students to do. The piece of writing is read many times by the group during the process and as shared reading.

8. Shared Writing

During shared writing time, students share experiences and interests with the support of the teacher, to generate ideas and language for composing the text. Acting as scribe, the teacher helps them shape their words and ideas into a coherent message. The teacher coaches the process of putting ideas into written language. Editing and proofreading as a class, provides students the opportunity to practice strategies for self-correction and meaning making. Shared writing enables all students to participate and helps them to gain confidence when writing independently.

9. Guided Writing

Teacher demonstration and articulation of the process of writing is critical to student's understanding. During guided writing, students construct individual pieces of writing (with teacher and eventually peer guidance, assistance, and feedback). A guided writing session consists of a mini-lesson, writing/conference time, and sharing. The goal of guided writing is continuous growth in the writers as they learn more about the writing process.

10. Independent Writing

Independent writing provides an opportunity for students to practice using the writing strategies they have learned in modeled 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, helping each other at times. 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 interactive writing.