

Balanced Literacy

What is Balanced Literacy? What is a Workshop Model?

(Source: Teaching and Learning Alliance, 2013)

At Bates, we use the Balanced Literacy approach to oral language, reading and writing which is based on research. It is not a specific program or set of materials.

Balanced Literacy is a set of guiding principles and best practices that include:

- a. *Clear (explicit) teaching of basic skills and strategies used by skilled readers and writers, and a literature-rich classroom in which students select, read, and respond to authentic high quality literature.*
- b. *whole class lessons **AND** small group lessons **AND** 1:1 instruction as needed for all students.*

Our Readers' Workshop is a structure for teaching reading that combines explicit, teacher-directed instruction in reading strategies and literary elements with lots of time for children to practice reading independently with books of their own choosing at an appropriate independent or instructional level. The structure is designed to facilitate differentiated instruction in reading strategies, provide plenty of time for children to read, expose children to quality literature in a variety of genres, and create a classroom community in which reading becomes a source of excitement and joy.

Our Writers' Workshop is a time for students to write about topics of their choosing. Students learn that writing involves having something to say; they find real reasons to use writing to express and convey their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Students study professional authors and a variety of genres/units of study throughout the year, and use these studies to learn more about the craft of writing. Teachers explicitly model the process and conventions of writing through focus lessons and individual writing conferences, as well as small group work.

Readers' Workshop

(45 min. – 1 hour)

Focus Lesson (10 - 15 mins)

Teacher Lesson & Guided Practice

Independent Reading

1:1 Conferences & Small Group Lessons

Group Share

Writers' Workshop

(45 min. – 1 hour)

Focus Lesson (10 - 15 mins)

Teacher Lesson & Guided Practice

Independent Writing

1:1 Conferences & Small Group Lessons

Group Share

Phonics/Word

Study

(15 – 30 mins)

Interactive Read Aloud

(15 – 30 mins)