

Instructional Framework:
Middle
Grades English/
Language Arts
2014-2015

Cabarrus County School District
Concord, North Carolina



Table of Contents

I. Overall Organization: Workshop

Workshop as a Means of Connecting Research to Practice.....	3
Graphic Representation of Middle Grades Workshop.....	6
Overview of Workshop	7
Taking a Closer Look at Reading Instruction.....	8
Reading Workshop Look–Fors.....	10
Taking a Closer Look at Writing Instruction.....	11
Writing Workshop Look–Fors.....	13

II. Elements of Workshop

Read Aloud with Accountable Talk.....	15
Mini-Lesson.....	17
Strategy Groups.....	19
Small Group Instruction.....	20
Independent Reading.....	22
Conference.....	24
Seminar.....	26
Teaching Share.....	28

III. Resources

Common Language in the Workshop Model	29
Professional Development Resource Suggestions.....	33
Connections Between Research, Practice, CCSS, and NCEES.....	34



Connecting Research and Practice: Workshop

Cabarrus County builds its middle school literacy program on researched best practices in adolescent literacy. These practices, as documented by *Reading Next* (2004) and *Writing Next* (2007), are explicated below.

<i>Reading Next</i> (2004): Infrastructural Considerations	Extended Time for Literacy	<i>Reading Next</i> (2004) calls for two to four hours of literacy instruction per day at the secondary level. Since typical class blocks do not meet this time frame in isolation, coordinated efforts from all teachers provide students with the necessary time and practice for literacy instruction and development.
	Professional Development	The complexities of literacy instruction warrant ongoing, long-term professional development in order to support teachers in effective literacy instruction. Topics for these sessions are indicated by data and teachers' voiced concerns.
	Ongoing, Summative Assessment of Students and Programs	Districts and schools create a comprehensive literacy assessment system for screening, progress monitoring, and student achievement using both formal and informal measures. The results of each assessment within a system are available to teachers, administrators, and evaluators in order to inspect students as individual, cohorts, and schools in an effort to increase student achievement.
	Teacher Teams	Interdisciplinary teams of teachers plan and provide coordinated, consistent literacy instruction. Teams meet together to discuss texts used in each class, strategies and skills necessary to unlock meaning in those texts, and how the ideas and strategies overlap. These discussions guide creation of coordinated, comprehensive literacy programs and ensure students receive the necessary two to four hours of literacy instruction daily.
	Leadership	Within the school, the principal is an instructional leader who demonstrates knowledge of adolescent literacy and attends teachers' literacy PD sessions to continually further his/her knowledge of adolescent literacy. Teacher leaders spearhead curriculum improvements and work with principals and specialists to create and support school-wide vision for literacy.
	Comprehensive, Coordinated Literacy Program	The above elements work together to create a literacy program that is flexible to student needs and fosters collaborations with organizations in the community and outside of school.

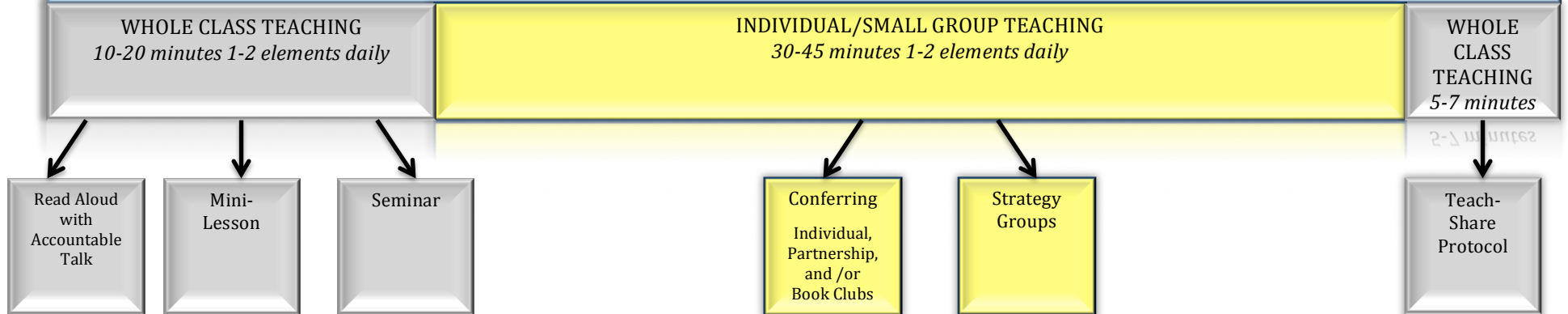
Reading Next (2004): Instructional Practices	Direct, Explicit Comprehension Instruction	Students are provided explicit instruction regarding the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge of strategies as well as explicit instruction on comprehension monitoring and metacognition. Instruction includes teacher modeling and appropriate scaffolding, using apprenticeship models to increase student understanding and confidence with strategy use.
	Effective Instructional Principles Embedded in Content	Teachers share authentic texts and content-area specific strategies for understanding those texts with students.
	Motivation and Self-Directed Learning	Students' motivation is impacted by their sense of autonomy. To this end, teachers provide student choice in selection of texts to read and topics to research. Additionally, teacher-selected texts and topics relate to students' lives outside of school, intentionally fostering motivation and self-directed learning.
	Text-Based Collaborative Learning	Text-based collaborative learning indicates small groups of students interacting <u>around</u> a text. By making text the central focus of small group work, students are positioned to think and talk with a critical-analytic stance.
	Strategic Tutoring	The secondary context creates challenges in finding opportunities, staff, and resources for strategic tutoring. However, in addition to pull-out tutoring, differentiated instruction and strategic grouping can serve as a means of intensive, individualized instruction.
	Diverse Texts	Students' texts cover a range of topics and genres on a variety of reading levels. Not only does this range appeal to students' individual personal differences, but also these texts ensure access to key academic vocabulary and concepts, regardless of student reading ability.
	Intensive Writing	Regardless of genre, writing experiences create contexts for students to engage with academic texts and topics in ways that foster high levels of reasoning, positively influencing students' reading comprehension.
	Technology Component	Technology is "both a facilitator...and a medium of literacy" (<i>Reading Next</i> , 2004, p. 19). As a facilitator, technology can be utilized as a means of support for struggling readers. When using technology as a medium for instruction, including explicit instruction about structure and strategy use is essential to student understanding.
	Ongoing, Formative Assessment	Teachers' assessment of students is informal and occurs regularly and frequently. Assessments are used to guide and differentiate literacy instruction to increase student achievement.

<i>Writing Next (2009)</i>	Writing Strategies	Providing adolescents’ direct, explicit instruction on the strategies writers use during prewriting, revising, and/or editing demonstrates the most significant impact on the quality of adolescents’ writing.
	Summarization	The quality of adolescents’ writing is impacted by direct, explicit instruction on summarizing. Both rule-governed and intuitive approaches demonstrate equal effectiveness.
	Collaborative Writing	When adolescents work together during planning, drafting, revising, and editing their work, they produce a higher quality of writing than working independently.
	Specific Product Goals	Setting clear, reachable goals (i.e., include more details or utilizing specific structural elements) and communicating expectations of the final product improves the quality of student writing.
	Word Processing	Overall, word processing had a positive impact on adolescent writing, especially for low-achieving writers.
	Sentence Combining	Explicit instruction about the procedural, declarative, and conditional knowledge of writing increasingly complex sentences contextualizes grammar instruction and improves student writing
	Prewriting	Providing experiences for students to generate and organize ideas prior to writing benefits students’ writing.
	Inquiry Activities	Engaging students in activities that offer students to opportunity to explore ideas and content by examining concrete objects/data using specific strategies builds student interest and background knowledge and leads to better writing.
	Process Writing Approach	The process approach to writing (as opposed to the product approach) incorporates several activities (including extended opportunities for writing, writing for authentic audiences, cyclical planning and revising, developing supporting writing environments, and personalized instruction).
	Study of Models	Providing students with mentor texts, time, and instruction for analyzing the content and structure translates into positive effects on adolescent writing (when the connections between the mentor text and writing assignment are made clear).
	Writing for Content Learning	Writing to learn (informal, in-class writings with the purpose of exploring content and deepening students understanding) positively impact content area knowledge in all content areas.

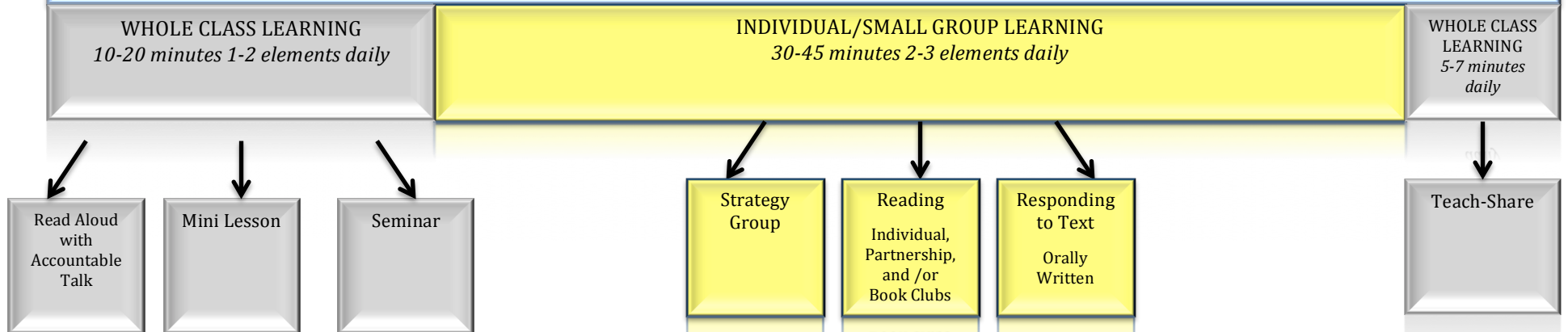
Cabarrus County middle schools implement the Teachers College/Lucy Calkins’ (2000) workshop model as a framework for enacting researched best practices in order to meet/exceed the standards set forth in the Common Core State Standards. What follows is an overview of the workshop model, further descriptions of the key components of workshop, and suggested resources for implementing this model in the classroom.

Common Instructional Framework for Middle Grades Reading Workshop

TEACHING STRUCTURE



LEARNING STRUCTURE



Overview of Workshop: Weekly

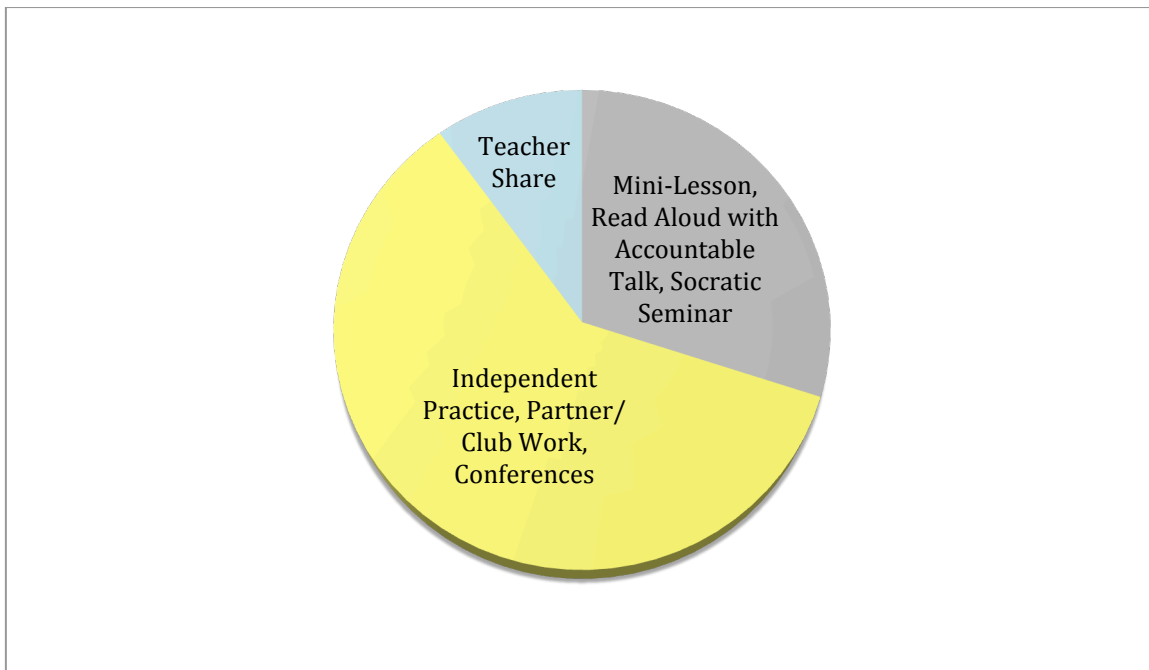
At the middle grades level, Teachers College recommends that a typical week might follow this schedule:

Monday	Modeling of how all strategies work together (Read-Aloud), interspersed with partner/small group work, independent reading, conferring
Tuesday	Mini-lesson to provide further instruction and practice with a strategy modeled on Monday, interspersed with independent reading and partner/club talk
Wednesday	Mini-lesson to provide further instruction and practice with a strategy modeled on Monday, interspersed with independent reading and partner/club talk
Thursday	Mini-lesson to provide further instruction and practice with a strategy modeled on Monday, interspersed with independent reading and partner/club talk
Friday	Independent use of strategy/strategies

Overview of Workshop: Daily

Within a class period, Teachers College recommends the following proportions:

Workshop Component	Reading			Writing
	50	60	75	60
Mini-Lesson	10 – 15	10 – 15	10 – 15	10 – 15 minutes
Independent Practice, Strategy Groups, and Conferences	30	45	60	40 minutes
Teacher Share	5	5	5	5 minutes



Taking a Closer Look at Reading Instruction

What should you see:

- Environment:
 - ✓ Student-centered arrangements of seating that supports conversations and interactive learning (e.g., in partnerships, book clubs, and seminar discussions)
 - ✓ Flexibility in arrangement allowing for whole-part-whole instruction to occur
 - ✓ Possible space dedicated to meeting for a mini-lesson, strategy group, and/or teach-share session
 - ✓ Anchor charts or other evidence of the work of the unit which are teacher/student-generated or student-generated in order to reference strategies and skills
 - ✓ Reading materials accessible
 - Pencils or pens
 - Index cards, sticky notes, notebooks or other organizing pieces
 - Reference materials
 - ✓ Classroom library
 - Many books which are labeled and categorized (i.e., genres, Fountas and Pinnell levels, author studies)
 - Variety of genres, book lengths, and levels
- Teacher:
 - ✓ Meeting with students one-on-one in a conference or in small groups focused on strategies, book talks, enrichment, or intervention
 - ✓ Leading the whole class through a read aloud with accountable talk, teaching a mini-lesson, or facilitating a seminar
 - ✓ Writing anecdotal notes reflecting students' strengths, weaknesses, and growth
- Students:
 - ✓ Reading independently
 - ✓ Meeting in a partnership/club discussing ideas about a current book
 - ✓ Engaged and focused on reading text or responding to text
 - ✓ Sharing and reflecting upon the learning with teacher or classmate
 - ✓ Exhibiting understanding of the procedures and components of reading workshop in their classroom
 - ✓ Writing notes, generating ideas, or reflecting on reading in a journal, sticky notes, graphic organizer, etc.
- Reading Notebook/Folder Possibilities:
 - ✓ Writing about the reading and work of a particular unit
 - ✓ Reading log
 - ✓ Reflections and goal setting writing
 - ✓ Writing about reading: reflections, summaries, connections, thoughts while reading



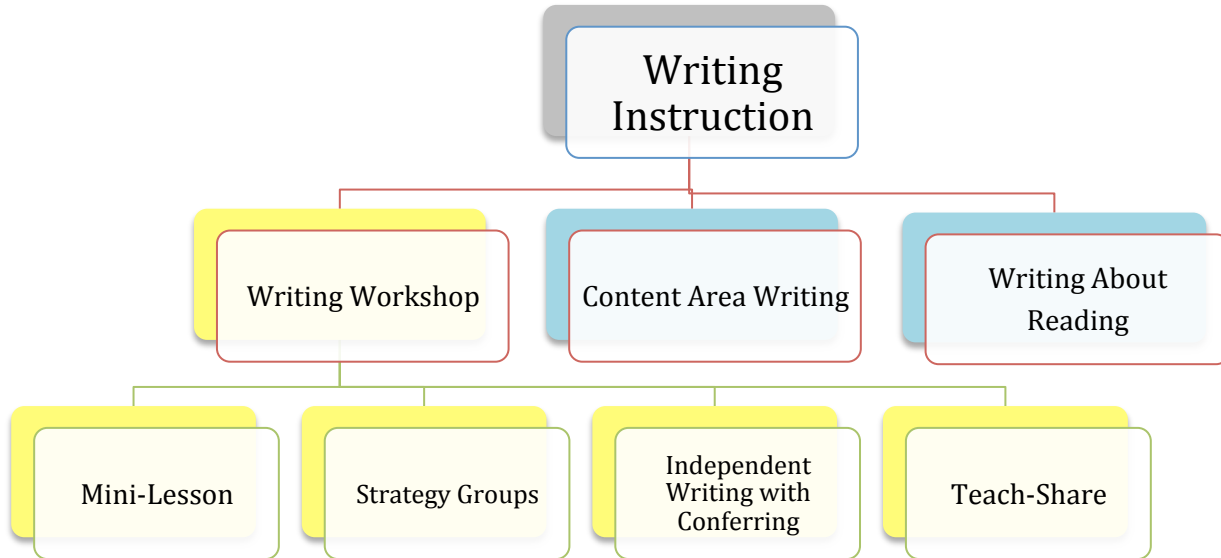
- ✓ Various comprehension pieces: graphic organizers, question stems, exemplar jots
- ✓ Reading logs
- ✓ Teaching points and/or anchor charts

What you should you hear:

- Teacher
 - ✓ Modeling a strategy using common phrases; such as,
 - “Yesterday, we...” or “You already know how to...” to connect
 - “Today, we will...” or “I am going to show you...” to introduce
 - “When I...” or “I am thinking...” or “Watch me as I...” to model
 - “Let’s try it” or “Turn and talk” to actively involve students
 - ✓ Conferring with a student during independent reading or guided reading/strategy groups using phrases; such as,
 - “How’s it going?” or “What are you doing/thinking today as a reader?” to start conference
 - “Show me where you’ve done that” to gain knowledge
 - “I’m noticing you are doing _____ well” to compliment
 - “What I want to teach you is” to start teaching point
 - “Whenever you are reading, you can” or “This is something readers do all the time” to close a conference
- Students
 - ✓ Talking with teacher
 - Responding to questions posed during conference or small group instruction
 - Asking questions or clarifying misunderstandings in conferences and small group instruction
 - ✓ Talking with classmates
 - During mini-lesson, partnerships, book clubs, strategy group, or read aloud with accountable talk
 - Sharing ideas and thinking about the text
 - During independent reading
 - Sharing ideas, notebooks, and thinking about the text
 - Giving suggestions or praise
 - During Teacher Share or Celebrations
 - Reading or sharing a response or some work of the day/unit
 - Giving praise, compliment, or providing feedback and suggestions
 - Sharing learning or idea

Writing Instruction

Cabarrus County middle schools incorporate writing instruction during writing workshop, in content area, and in response to reading. Although the time spent on each genre will vary, instruction and practice with each form supports the others, ultimately benefiting students.



Minutes for Writing Workshops

Workshop Component	Writing
Total Minutes	60 minutes
Mini-Lesson	10 – 15 minutes
Independent Practice, Guided Practice, and Conferences	40 minutes
Teach-Share	5 minutes

Taking a Closer Look at Writing Instruction

What you should see:

- Environment
 - ✓ Possible space dedicated to meeting for a mini-lesson, strategy group, and teach-share
 - ✓ Student seating which allows for interactive learning such as, meeting with writing partners or listening in on a teacher-led conference
 - ✓ Anchor charts which are teacher-student generated or student-generated for reference to strategies and craft
 - ✓ Writing station set up and accessible
 - Drafting and publishing paper
 - Pencils, colored pencils, crayons, or markers
 - Thesauruses, dictionaries, or other reference tools
 - Revision and editing checklists
 - Index cards, sticky notes, or other organizing pieces
- Teacher
 - ✓ Meeting with students one-on-one in a conference or in a small strategy group
 - ✓ Writing anecdotal notes which reflect conferring points
- Students
 - ✓ Writing independently at various stages of the writing process
 - ✓ Meeting with a writing partner discussing writing ideas, pieces, or notebooks
 - ✓ Engaged and focused in writing process, with teacher, or classmate sharing
 - ✓ Exhibiting understanding of the procedures and components of writing workshop in their classroom
 - ✓ Sharing a writing piece or part of a piece with classmates
- Writing Notebooks
 - ✓ Student-generated lists on a variety of topics, sketches, pictures, and/or graphic organizers to give students writing ideas
 - ✓ Rehearsals of writings
 - ✓ Quick writes or multiple re-writes of a part of a piece
 - ✓ Word lists
 - ✓ Entries throughout the year

What you should hear:

- Teacher
 - ✓ Presenting a mini-lesson which models a strategy using common phrases; such as,
 - “Yesterday, we...” or “You already know how to ...” to connect
 - “Today, we will”... or “I am going to show you...” to introduce
 - “When I...” or “I am thinking I...” to model
 - “Let’s try it...” or “Turn and talk...” to actively involve students
 - ✓ Conferring with a student using phrases:
 - “How’s it going?” or “What are you doing today as a writer?” to start conference
 - “Show me where you’ve done that” to gain knowledge
 - “I like how you...” to compliment
 - “What I want to teach you is...” to start teaching point
 - “Whenever you are writing, you can...” or “This is something writers do all the time” to close conference
- Students
 - ✓ Talking with teacher – responding to questions in conference
 - ✓ Talking with classmates
 - During mini-lesson: sharing ideas during active engagement
 - During partner time:
 - Sharing ideas, pieces, or notebooks
 - Giving compliments and/or suggestions
 - During Share or Closure time
 - Reading a piece or part of a piece
 - Giving compliments and/or suggestion

Writing Workshop Look-Fors

Component	Behavior	Evident/Not Evident
Teaching Point	The teaching point is articulated and posted in the classroom.	
	The students are able to explain the teaching point and its relationship to the larger unit.	
Environment	The furniture arrangement allows for independent work, partner/group work, and seminar.	
	There is an organized place for writing materials and students are able to access them.	
	The work of the unit is visible through teacher/student generated anchor charts.	
Schedule	The workshop lasts for the appropriate amount of time (45-60 minutes).	
Mini-Lesson	The workshop starts with a mini-lesson lasting 10-15 minutes.	
Independent Writing	The students work independently for extended periods of time.	
	Students have an opportunity to practice through independent writing the strategies taught in the mini-lessons, strategy groups, and conferences.	
	The students have choice of what they are writing within a set of agreed upon expectations.	
	Students collect and rehearse ideas in their writing notebooks.	
	The students go through the writing process independently within an agreed upon set of expectations. Teacher guides, coaches, and supports students through the process.	
Teach-Share/Celebration	Students meet as a community to reflect upon, share, and summarize their learning.	
	Students celebrate their work through sharing or publication.	

Teacher Name: _____

Date: _____

Comments:

Overview of Read-Aloud with Accountable Talk

What is it?

Read-aloud with accountable talk is one of the whole-group instructional strategies of a middle grades workshop. The teacher uses a text at the higher end of the appropriate complexity band to orally model how a proficient, adult reader comprehends and talks about text while students actively listen and respond.

What does it look like?

While the teacher reads text to the whole class (pausing at pre-determined places in text to model thinking or engage students in the work of higher-level comprehension) students try out the teacher's thinking with a partner. To facilitate these conversations, students sit with a partner or clubs in an established, large group meeting place.

Note: At the beginning of implementation, students need to build stamina with this type of active listening since they may only be used to listening to read alouds in a passive way. At first, students might be unable to answer questions immediately and ask for repeats of the text to do the work. As this practice becomes familiar, students know that participation requires active thinking at all times during the read aloud so that they are prepared when a question is posed. In addition, students understand that their responses may take different forms: turning and talking with a partner/club and/or stopping and jotting on a post-it or in a notebook. These responses hold all students accountable to listening and responding to the text. Teachers should maintain the integrity of the read-aloud work by allowing their students to participate actively for the amount of time the student stamina will allow, and then increasing the time as students' proficiency with the structure increases.

Why do it?

The read-aloud serves as a model to students of how a proficient reader comprehends and discusses texts. Specifically, a read-aloud with accountable talk provides students an opportunity to extend and synthesize their understandings through speaking and listening. Having students "turn and talk" during the read aloud gives individuals the opportunity to engage in more talk than would otherwise be possible in a whole-group discussion. Spending time talking in this type of setting allows for a gradual release as students build stamina and skills to have lengthier and more independent discussions in their partnerships, book clubs, and seminars.

Read-Aloud with Accountable Talk Look-Fors

Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Not Demonstrated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students gather as a community during read aloud. • Considerations for theme, topic, teacher interest, or tradition outweigh consideration of complexity, student interest, and the desired results of the unit. • Teacher pauses periodically to pose questions. Questions may or may not have been pre-determined. • Questions often focus on literal comprehension or guide students toward the ‘right’ answer. • Discourse around the text is typically ‘call and response’ with teacher evaluation of answers. • Student interaction with the text is out of compliance. Teacher provides assignments related to the common text. • Teacher’s focus for read aloud and questioning solely measures student comprehension of <i>this</i> text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students gather as a community next to partners or club. • Considerations for complexity, student interest, and the desired results of the unit were given when selecting text for read aloud. • Think alouds, turn and talk/response prompts are planned and written. • Questioning posed by teacher encourages student interpretation and divergent thinking and is intentionally designed to push past literal comprehension and ‘right’ answers. • The teacher models and supports, through think alouds or writing, the work of the unit. • Students are actively engaged while listening to text. They turn and talk and/or respond in writing to the questions posed by the teacher. • The teacher listens in to partnerships/clubs and records observations systematically. 	<p>Proficient descriptors plus . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn and talk and club conversation, during read aloud, are harnessed as a springboard into seminar discussions around the common text. • Student talk is progressive toward analysis and interpretation. • Student conversations are responsive to each partner or club member. • Teacher utilizes data from read aloud to inform strategy groups, mini-lessons, and conferences. 	

Teacher Name: _____

Date: _____

Comments:

Overview of a Mini-Lesson

What is it?

A mini-lesson is one opportunity for explicit teaching of new reading or writing strategies for students and is applicable to all or the majority of the students. While the lesson is concise, brief, and purposeful, it is not a repetition of strategies or skills that they have mastered, working in tandem to with other instructional practices (e.g. read aloud with accountable talk, conferences).

What does it look like?

The mini-lesson is around 12-15 minutes but lasting no longer than 20 minutes. Frequently, it occurs at a designated meeting place in the classroom. It has a specific architecture: connection, teaching, active engagement, and link.

- **Connection:** The connection is a brief introduction to the mini-lesson. It makes the upcoming learning relevant by connecting it to prior learning and/or the real-world.
- **Teaching:** The focus for the teaching is called a teaching point and is repeated throughout the mini-lesson. It includes the skill that students need to be able to transfer into their reading or writing and a strategy that they can use to be able to do the skill. A teacher might introduce the teaching point by saying, “Today I am going to teach you how to (skill) by (strategy).” During the teaching, the teacher models the skill using the strategy for students.
- **Active Engagement:** During active engagement, students practice the skill and strategy modeled by the teacher by turning and talking with a partner, stopping and jotting on a sticky note or in their notebook, or reading in their independent text prior to talking or jotting.
- **Link:** The link is a final statement before dismissing students to practice independently. It tells students when they should try to do the work modeled i.e., “Today and every time you are...” or “Whenever you are..., then you can”

Why do it?

Mini-lessons provide time for explicit instruction through modeling and guided practice, removing the guesswork out of what students are expected to do independently. This explicit instruction gives students a clear expectation of what to do and how to do it, increasing their engagement and sense of autonomy. In addition, the turn and talk portions of the lesson ensure students’ engagement and help the teacher quickly and informally assess student understanding.

Mini Lesson Look-Fors

Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Not Evident
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mini-lesson has no clear learning objective/teaching point or the objective/teaching point is not linked to the unit. Mini-lesson is solely teacher-driven and /or is more than 20 minutes. Discourse in the mini-lesson is consistently call and response. Teacher consistently lectures and/or distributes an assignment during the mini-lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini-lesson is focused, 10-15 minutes, and has a clear learning objective/teaching point. The teacher connects new learning to previous learning/ experiences. The teacher gives and gathers information through modeling and/or using literature. Students have an opportunity to try out the new work during the mini-lesson (active engagement). Discourse during active engagement is encouraged through turn and talk and/or written response. Teacher ends the mini-lesson with a link. Teaching/strategies are documented during the mini-lesson (i.e., anchor chart). Students have continual access to expectations and strategies. Mini-lesson connects to the written curriculum of the given unit. 	<p>Proficient descriptors plus . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher systematically collects data of student progress or understanding based on active engagement in mini-lesson. Mini-lessons are determined based on a combination of written curriculum and students' needs identified through formative assessments, conferences, and observations. Teacher's skill and flexibility within the architectural components of the mini lesson allows him/her to vary the scope of components to meet the needs of these students in this lesson. Teacher is adept at utilizing teaching and learning from read aloud with accountable talk and whole-class seminar as a common rallying place to begin new teaching. 	

Teacher Name:

Date:

Comments:

A Note About Small Group Instruction

There are various instructional strategies and teaching architectures that teachers employ while pulling small groups of students to teach or coach. For many years, Guided Reading has been a tool educators have used effectively to coach groups of students through text slightly above their independent level. Guided reading can also be an effective tool in middle grades particularly when the primary purpose of the small group teaching is to nudge students into more challenging text. Strategy groups and Guided Reading, although both small group format, have some noted differences. It is up to a teacher's discretion to determine the appropriate teaching structure for their students.

Listed below is a general comparison.

Guided Reading	Strategy Groups
Teacher serves as coach, setting up the group, selecting the text.	Teacher serves as coach, setting up the group. Students bring their current text to the group.
Teacher stays with students through the majority of text, guiding the group with strategies before, during, and after reading the whole text or portion of the text.	Teacher selects and teaches one particular strategy and students practice this strategy, often multiple times.
Teacher is coaching through an entire text teaching into the types of problems students are likely to encounter in this level of text.	Teacher explicitly teaches one strategy, models the strategy with his/her own text, and then coaches students as they practice in their own text.
Readers are on the same reading level.	Readers are frequently on different reading levels.
Readers read from the same text, chosen by the teacher because it is on the group's instructional level.	Readers practice the new skill on a text at their own independent level usually from self-selected text. The teacher sometimes provides the text.
Readers may learn and practice several strategies in one meeting.	Readers generally focus on only one strategy per meeting.
Groups are formed as a result of some type of benchmarking, running record, or assessment to determine reading level.	Groups are formed as a result of teacher observations and data collection during conferences, whole-class teaching, and previous group work.
Once a group is formed, it stays together for several meetings until it is determined that one or more of the students are ready to move to a different level. By middle grades, guided reading groups will change approximately 2-3 times a year.	Groups are formed to address a strategy need, and once that need is fulfilled (usually 1-3 meetings) that exact group does not meet again for the same purpose. Teacher reforms groups based on on-going data collection of strategic needs of students.
Guided reading groups are often helpful when students are being introduced to a new level of text. Through guided reading, students can learn all the new text features and possible pitfalls they might encounter on texts of a new level	Strategy groups are helpful once students are established in their reading level (but not yet ready to move onto the next) and collecting strategies to add to their reading toolbox.

Overview of Strategy Groups

What is it?

Strategy groups are small, flexible groups that a teacher forms based on the strategies with which students continue to demonstrate a need for further instruction and practice. Strategy groups typically include students who vary in reading levels but share the same strategy need. Teachers utilize collected data from whole-class teaching, individual conferences, and formative assessments to determine grouping and strategy group focus.

What does this look like?

The teacher works with a small group of students who have a similar instructional need. Strategy groups follow a particular architecture. The teacher, for example,

- begins the session by naming the strategy the students will learn,
- demonstrates the identified needed strategy by modeling, and
- spends the remaining time observing and guiding students as they individually practice and apply the strategy to a text being read

The texts students read during strategy groups reflect their independent reading level, so students use different texts from one another.

Why do it?

Strategy groups allow for scaffolded, differentiated instruction for a range of reading abilities. It also provides teachers with contexts for assessment and observation, useful in planning subsequent instruction.

Overview of Independent Reading

What is it?

Students read self-selected (within an agreed upon set of expectations) text and practice transferring strategies modeled during whole group, small group, and individual reading instruction with support from the teacher.

What does this look like?

Students read text at their independent reading levels (determined through teacher assessment) in order to increase their comprehension and level of text complexity. Students practice strategies and thinking processes modeled during read alouds, mini-lessons, strategy groups, and seminars. The teacher confers with students one-on-one, in partnerships, or in groups to monitor their progress and provide feedback and strategies.

Why do it?

Supporting students in autonomous, independent reading habits (i.e., choosing texts, monitoring comprehension, discussing with others) increases their motivation and engagement with reading. Since motivation to read influences how much students read, and volume of reading predicts growth in comprehension (Guthrie et al., 1998), supporting students' independent reading habits is crucial to their ultimate literacy success.

Overview of a Conference

What is it?

A conference is a conversation about a student's reading or writing for the purpose of improving his/her skills.

Specifically, conferences

- have a point,
- follow a predictable structure,
- pursue lines of thinking with students,
- provide conversational roles to students and teachers, and
- promotes positive relationships between students and teachers (Anderson, 2000).

What does it look like?

Conferences generally take place during independent practice. There are several different types of conferences: research-decide-teach, coaching, and table. Research-decide-teach conferences are the most common. They are quick conversations designed to assess and build a student's understanding. These conferences take approximately five minutes and follow this structure:

- **Research:** Teacher finds out what the student is working on as a reader or writer
- **Decide:** Teacher notices what the student is able to do and where they are as a reader or writer. Then, the teacher compliments the student on this. The teacher then decides what the student needs to have next and tells the student what she will teach them.
- **Teach:** The teacher teaches the student and gives him the opportunity to try this work. The teacher ends the conference by telling the student when he should do this type of work in his reading or writing.

Coaching conferences “coach” students through the teaching of work the student has already done and been working on during previous conferences. During this type of conference, the teacher is pushing a student toward independence by providing scaffolded instruction. Table conferences are essentially the same as coaching or research-decide-teach but delivered to a group of students. It may start with one student with others joining in or it may begin by asking a group of students a specific question about a strategy or skill.

Why do it?

Conferences give teachers the means to really get to know their students, and they are a powerful way to teach students how to be better readers and writers, because they are focused on the individual student's or like-group of students' present needs. They are the teacher's opportunity to provide individualized instruction to each student and assess students' strengths and weaknesses and determine what the students' needs are as a class or small group to guide further instruction. Conferences provide a structure to intervene, scaffold, and/or extend student learning on a regular basis.

Conference (Research, Decide, Teach*) Look-Fors

Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Not Demonstrated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher is attempting to develop a system to determine who and when he/she will confer with students. Conversation and/or teaching frequently <i>tells</i> the student the strategy without demonstration and/or practice. Teacher rarely utilizes student's jottings or notebook to determine the level of thinking/writing occurring while reading. Teacher may not invite student to try out the work and/or monitor progress as the student begins. Teacher's record keeping for conferences is not yet systematic or purposeful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher has a system for determining when and with whom conferences will occur. Teacher researches student's progress by asking questions. Teacher points out to the student something he or she is doing well or has progressed with as a reader. Teacher tells student what he/she will be teaching. Teacher models the teaching he/she is sharing with the student. Teacher invites student to try this work out and monitors progress as student begins. Teacher closes the conference by linking this new teaching for student. The teacher records compliment and teaching point from the conference in a systematic manner. Teacher confers with all students on a regular basis. 	<p>Proficient descriptors plus . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student participates in the research phase of conference with self-determined purpose and agency. Teacher may offer two to three teaching points in the appropriate place in the continuum of this student's progress and the student chooses the teaching for the conference he/she determines best. The compliment and teaching point are closely aligned. The new teaching follows a logical progression based upon this student's current development as a reader/writer. Teacher is fluid with modeling utilizing literature, his/her own jottings, other student's work, and additional tools. Data gathered from systematic record keeping in conferences drives strategy groups, additional conferences, and/or whole class instruction. 	

Teacher Name: _____

Date: _____

Comments:

*This rubric assesses a *Research, Decide, Teach Conference*. Modifications to this rubric may be necessary before evaluating other conference types.

Overview of Seminar

What is it?

The seminar is a formal discussion, based on a text or section of a text, in which the leader asks open-ended questions. Within the context of the discussion, students listen closely to the comments of others, thinking critically for themselves, and articulate their own thoughts and their responses to the thoughts of others. They learn to work cooperatively and to question intelligently and civilly.

What does it look like?

The physical setting of a classroom for seminar requires that all participants see each other during the discussion. To accomplish this in a classroom of twenty-five to thirty students, teachers generally arrange the desks or tables in a circle, semi-circle, or horse shoe arrangement. The leader of the discussion, most often the teacher, is not a part of the circle. He/she remains outside of the physical space only stepping in to ask extension questions, prompt students to cite evidence, or strategically facilitate/ redirect the discourse of the class.

The discussion in a seminar centers around a common text that all students participating in the discussion have read/heard. In a workshop, the seminar discussion most often builds from the mentor text utilized during a read aloud. After listening to (at least once) and discussing predetermined questions with their partner or club, students extend this talk into a class discussion around a carefully written question or idea. In sixth through eighth grade classrooms, seminar should occur approximately once a week. Length of seminar should build over the course of the year, lasting as long as students can sustain meaningful, independent conversation. The end goal being about twenty to twenty-five minutes.

The leader (teacher) remains neutral during seminar. He/she is not offering his/her own opinions or answers to the questions. The leader does not join in the discussion or facilitate the class to a predetermined answer and refrains from passing judgement or affirmation on student opinions or ideas. The facilitator may, however, prompt students to find evidence from the text supporting his/her ideas or opinions.

Why do it?

Seminars prize inquiry over information and discussion over debate and acknowledge the highly social nature of learning. These academic discussions create a forum for students to refine their thinking, provide textual support for ideas, and connect ideas and texts across content areas.



Seminar

Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Not Evident
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher’s prepared factual or evaluative questions or did not prepare question(s) prior to seminar. Seating arrangement does not allow all participants to see or hear one another. Teacher rarely documents comments, ideas, or participation during the seminar. Teacher rarely utilizes strategies to engage all participants. Discourse is primarily between select students or between the teacher and select students. Teacher enters the conversation offering his/her own opinions or interpretations. Teacher is evaluative in response to student ideas (“That’s a good thought!” or “I’m not sure about that idea. Anyone have a different idea?”) Teacher talk dominates discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher prepared interpretive question(s) by actively reading and marking up the selected text. (read aloud with accountable talk text). Teacher begins and anchors the discussion with an interpretive question. Seating arrangement allows all participants to see and hear one another (ex. circle, horseshoe). Teacher utilizes the record keeping during seminar to maintain pace and refer participants back to their own ideas or the ideas of others. Discourse is primarily between students, with attempts to build on each other’s ideas and/or support their own ideas with evidence. The teacher refrains from offering their own opinions, interpretations, or evaluations of students’ responses. Teacher utilizes a repertoire of strategies to engage and value all participants. Student talk dominates discussion. Teacher talk is minimal. Teacher enters the discussion to pursue follow up questions, redirect discourse, asks for clarification or evidence. 	<p>Proficient descriptors plus . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher analyzes the record keeping from seminar to track student participation, critical thinking, use of textual evidence, and consideration of the ideas of others. Teacher utilizes the record keeping analysis to inform decision making for future whole-class, group, and individual teaching. Teacher utilizes varying ideas to pose interpretive questions (ie. character motivation, unusual use of language, prominent details, etc.). Pursued lines of thinking further the work of the unit and/or a need determined by formative assessment. Discourse is primarily between students. Students consistently build on each other’s ideas and/or support their own ideas with evidence. Teacher flexibly utilizes a variety of facilitator strategies to motivate and engage all students of all levels. Teacher enters and exits the discussion fluidly posing follow up questions, redirecting discourse, and/or asking for clarification or evidence. 	

Teacher Name: _____

Date: _____

Comments:



Overview of Teaching Share

What is it?

Teaching share is the wrap-up/closure to workshop. It reiterates the teaching and learning of the day.

What does this look like?

The teaching share takes place at when the class comes back together as a community in the last five to seven minutes of the workshop. Students gather their texts, sticky notes, notebooks, or writing pieces with them. The teacher concludes the workshop by having partnerships/clubs recall and reflect upon their work of the day/unit and share something learned. The teacher might highlight the work of a specific student, partnership, or club that encompasses the teaching point of the day to creates a model for other students could follow.

Why do it?

Teaching share restates the teaching point(s) of the unit and the learning gained from students in order to encourage application to students' own reading and writing.



Common Language in the Workshop Model

Active Engagement: noun; Time during the mini-lesson where students are given an opportunity to try what is being taught in the mini-lesson. This typically involves turning and talking with a partner.

Agency: noun; The capacity of the student to act independently and make informed, thoughtful decisions that lead to the progression of their personal literacy development.

Anchor Chart: noun; A chart you create as a class that contains new teaching, information, or strategies that students are learning or working toward during a particular unit of study. Students are taught how and when to use the anchor charts. Charts generally remain accessible to students until most students are utilizing the new learning and the charts are no longer needed as a reference point.

Book Club: noun; A group of students who come together (typically four students-two partnerships) to read and discuss text. They may be same-text clubs, or not. In middle grades clubs, generally remain together for extended periods of time (weeks, units, whole year). They read and discuss multiple books and build their conversations to discuss larger ideas and strategies that incorporate more than one text.

Celebration: noun; An opportunity at the end of a unit for students to share pieces with others created during the workshop to showcase what they learned, i.e., published pieces.

Confer: verb; The act of holding a conference with a student.

Conference: noun; A meeting which takes place between the teacher and the student and focuses on that particular student's needs as a reader or writer. A compliment and a teaching point are typically given.

Conference, Coaching: noun; a conference with a student or group of students in which the teacher reminds or reviews teaching that has already occurred. New teaching does not occur in a coaching conference. It is the time where the teacher reminds students of work he/she can and should be doing.

Conference, Table or Group: noun; A meeting which takes place between the teacher and a group of students. It focuses on the needs of this particular group. A compliment and teaching point are typically given.

Connection: noun; The beginning point of a mini-lesson where the teacher connects the day's lesson with a previous lesson, the larger unit, or to something outside of reading/writing.

Craft: noun; Author's style of writing which may be noted in a mini-lesson for students to apply in their own writing or study to increase comprehension of text during an author study.



Guided Reading: noun; Small group instruction focused on a specific skill or strategy. Students are selected by similar needs and/or reading levels. Common text is typically used and is on the students' instructional levels.

Independent Reading: noun; Block of time devoted for students to read by themselves and try out the strategies taught during the mini-lesson(s). Text is at the students' independent reading levels. The teacher typically confers or meets with a guided reading or strategy group while students are reading.

Independent Writing: noun; Block of time devoted for students to write by themselves and try out the strategies taught during the mini-lesson(s). The teacher typically confers or meets with a strategy group while students are writing.

Jotting: verb; The act of writing ones thoughts, understandings, and ideas while reading.

Just Right Book: noun; A book that has been selected for independent reading. The student is able to read the text fluently stopping only occasionally on each page to use fix-up strategies. The number of unknown words typically is 2-4 words per page, but depends on the number of words on a given page. Students should be able to comprehend the text.

Link: noun; The closure of the mini-lesson where the teacher connects the teaching point to the expectation during the independent block time.

Mentor Text: noun; A text that is chosen to model a particular strategy or skill. A mentor text or excerpts from the text are read aloud and referenced during a mini-lesson and available for students to reference during the independent block of the workshop.

Mid-Workshop Interruption: noun; A brief moment during the independent block of workshop where the teacher stops all of the students for a teaching point or clarification. The mid-workshop interruption would be decided upon after conferring/observing several students and determining that many students need the same teaching.

Model: verb; During a mini-lesson or strategy group, the teacher will show students how utilize a strategy by thinking aloud or writing or reading using the strategy in order for students to see the strategy in action and apply it to their own reading or writing.

Partnership: noun; Two students who come together to read, write, or discuss text. Partnerships in a workshop are typically established and last for longer periods of time (weeks, units, or the year). Students remain together forming a relationship around text and the work of reading and writing.

Publish: verb; Taking a writing piece through the entire writing process.



Read Aloud with Accountable Talk: noun; Whole group instruction devoted to increasing students' comprehension of text with higher-level complexity. The teacher models strategies that support upcoming mini-lessons and the essential outcomes of a unit. The students observe and respond to questions and text using higher level thinking skills independently and with a partner.

Seed Idea: noun; Student idea for a writing piece. The idea may or may not be chosen for a writing piece.

Seminar: noun; A formal discussion based on a common text, in which the leader or a participant asks an open-ended question(s). Within the context of the discussion, students listen to other participants, think critically, and articulate their responses based on textual evidence. The teacher serves as facilitator refraining from sharing opinions or evaluating student responses.

Shared Reading: noun; Whole or small group instruction in which the teacher and students share the responsibility of reading a short text at or slightly above the students' independent reading levels with the goal of improving fluency.

Status of the Class: noun; A quick survey of students' plans for the independent time block.

Strategy Group: noun; Small group instruction focused on students of similar strategy needs in reading and/or writing. Groups do not meet on a regular basis as with guided reading groups. They meet as needed. Students are not necessarily at the same reading level, but have same instructional needs.

Stop and Jot: verb; During instructional or independent practice, students may be asked to quickly share their thinking or approximations with a strategy by writing it down on a sticky note, index card, or in a notebook. Sometimes stop and jots are collected for formative assessment purposes. Students use stop and jots while reading text independently to show the thinking processes and keep track of ongoing information or ideas gathered. In middle grades, these initial jots are used as ideas for longer writing about text.

Touchstone Text: noun; Another name for a mentor text

Teaching Share: noun; A brief wrap-up of the learning for the day that includes intentionally selected sharing of work of or by a student. Work or thinking is highlighted with the purpose of reiterating the teaching of the day and/or showcasing the work of a particular student/partnership/club.

Teaching Point: noun; Another name for the lesson's objective.



Turn and Talk: verb; During the mini-lesson or guided/strategy group, student partners may be asked to share with one another their ideas about a teaching point or other question asked by the teacher.

Word Study: noun; Small group instruction and/or practice with how to look at words to develop patterns that construct an understanding of how spelling works to represent sound and meaning.

Workshop: noun; An instructional model for teaching which incorporates a mini-lesson, independent practice time, and a closure. The time is broken into whole group, small group/independent work, and whole group.

Professional Resources

<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; background-color: #ffffcc; padding: 10px; width: 150px; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>Literature and Informational Text</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beers, Kylene & Probst, Robert. <i>Notice and Note: Strategies for Close Reading</i> • Beers, Kylene, Probst, Robert, and Rief Linda. <i>Adolescent Literacy: Turning Promise into Practice.</i> • Beers, Kylene. <i>When Kid’s Can’t Read What Teachers Can Do: A Guide for Teachers 6-12.</i> • Daniels, Harvey, Hyde, Arthur, Zemelman, Steven. <i>Best Practice Brining Standards to Life in American Classrooms.</i> • Frey, Nancy & Fisher, Douglas. <i>Rigorous reading: Five Access Points for Comprehending Complex Text</i> • Fountas, Irene & Pinnell, Gay Su. <i>The Continuum of Literacy Learning: A Guide to Teaching.</i> • Serravallo, Jennifer. <i>Teaching Reading in Small Groups: Differentiated Instruction for Building Strategic, Independent Readers.</i>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; background-color: #ffffcc; padding: 10px; width: 150px; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>Writing</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anderson, Carl. <i>How’s It Going? A Practical Guide to Confering with Student Writers</i> • Atwell, Nancy. <i>In the Middle</i> • Calkins, Lucy. <i>The Art of Teaching Writing</i> • Fountas, Irene & Pinnell, Gay Su. <i>The Continuum of Literacy Learning: A Guide to Teaching.</i> • Lehman, Christopher. <i>Energize Research Reading & Writing: Fresh Strategies to Spark Interest, Develop Independence, and Meet Key Common Core Standards.</i>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; background-color: #ffffcc; padding: 10px; width: 150px; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>Speaking and Listening</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fountas, Irene & Pinnell, Gay Su. <i>The Continuum of Literacy Learning: A Guide to Teaching</i> • Marzano, Robert J. <i>Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement.</i> • Jacobs, Heidi Hayes. <i>Active Literacy Across the Curriculum: Strategies for Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening.</i>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; background-color: #ffffcc; padding: 10px; width: 150px; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>Language</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beck, Isabel, McKeown, Margaret, & Kucan, Linda. <i>Bringing Words to Life.</i> • Beck, Isabel & McKeown, Margaret. <i>Creating Robust Vocabulary.</i> • Bear, Donald. <i>Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction.</i> • Ehrenworth, Mary. <i>The Power of Grammar; Unconventional Approaches to the Conventions of Language.</i> • Pinnell, G. & Fountas, I. <i>The Continuum of Literacy Learning: A Guide to Teaching.</i> • Weaver, Constance. <i>Teaching Grammar in Context.</i>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; background-color: #ffffcc; padding: 10px; width: 150px; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>Content Specific Reading and Writing</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daniels, Harvey and Zemelman, Steven. <i>Subjects Matter; Every Teacher’s Guide to Content-Area Reading.</i> • Fountas, Irene & Pinnell, Gay Su. <i>The Continuum of Literacy Learning: A Guide to Teaching.</i> • Jacobs, Heidi Hayes. <i>Active Literacy Across the Curriculum: Strategies for Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening.</i>

Connections Between Research, Practice, Common Core State Standards, and NCEES

Characteristics of Effective Adolescent Literacy Programs (<i>Reading Next</i> , 2004; <i>Writing Next</i> , 2009)				
Classroom Contexts for Learning	Pedagogical Decisions	Instructional Content: Texts and Tasks	Assessment	Leadership/Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Motivation and self-directed learning ✓ Extended time for literacy learning ✓ Text-based collaborative learning ✓ Collaborative writing experiences ✓ Process writing approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Direct, explicit comprehension instruction ✓ Effective instructional principles embedded in content ✓ Strategic tutoring ✓ Direct instruction in writing strategies ✓ Direct instruction in summarization ✓ Direct instruction in sentence combining (writing instruction) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Diverse texts ✓ Technology as a tool of literacy learning ✓ Intensive writing ✓ Specific product goals for writing tasks ✓ Prewriting opportunities ✓ Inquiry activities ✓ Model texts for writing ✓ Writing for content learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ongoing formative assessment of students ✓ Ongoing summative assessment of students and programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Professional development (ongoing and long-term) ✓ Teacher teams ✓ Leadership ✓ Comprehensive and coordinated literacy program
What might this “look” like in a middle school workshop model?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Knowledge goals ✓ Literacy goals in service of knowledge goals ✓ Opportunities for collaborative learning around text (CR, Idea Circles, Literature Circles) ✓ Authentic text and task choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Contextualized strategy instruction (autonomous vs. ideological approach to reading) ✓ Literacy learning that transfers to other disciplines ✓ Authentic use of time and literacy resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Concept-based units ✓ Authentic tools and tasks are used to deepen understanding and display new knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Comprehensive assessment plan uses a variety of formal and informal assessments to give an accurate picture of students’ understanding ✓ Assessment plan to evaluate effectiveness of Reader’s Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use of literacy skills and strategies fostered in other (content area) classes ✓ Principal’s deep understanding of Reader’s Workshop, and adolescent literacy development ✓ Provision of time and resources necessary to successfully implement Reader’s Workshop ✓ Unified understanding of county literacy goals and the ways in which Reader’s Workshop meets those goals
What “college and career ready” characteristics and abilities does this foster? (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2010)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Independence ✓ Strong content knowledge ✓ Respond to varying communication demands ✓ Comprehend and critique ✓ Value evidence ✓ Understand other perspectives and cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Strong content knowledge ✓ Comprehend and critique ✓ Understand other perspectives and cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Strong content knowledge ✓ Respond to varying communication demands ✓ Comprehend and critique ✓ Use technology and digital media strategically and capably ✓ Understand other perspectives and cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Value evidence 	
Alignment to NCEES				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Standard 1: Teachers Demonstrate Leadership ✓ Standard 2: Teachers Establish a Respectful Environment for Diverse Population of Students ✓ Standard 3: Teachers Know the Content They Teach ✓ Standard 4: Teachers Facilitate Learning for their Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Standard 3: Teachers Know the Content They Teach ✓ Standard 4: Teachers Facilitate Learning for their Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Standard 2: Teachers Establish a Respectful Environment for Diverse Population of Students ✓ Standard 3: Teachers Know the Content They Teach ✓ Standard 4: Teachers Facilitate Learning for their Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Standard 1: Teachers Demonstrate Leadership ✓ Standard 4: Teachers Facilitate Learning for their Students ✓ Standard 5: Teachers Reflect on Their Practice ✓ Standard 6: Teachers Contribute to the Academic Success of Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Standard 1: Teachers Demonstrate Leadership ✓ Standard 2: Teachers Establish a Respectful Environment for Diverse Population of Students ✓ Standard 5: Teachers Reflect on Their Practice

