

Learning to Read and Write Kindergarten–3rd Grade Learning Labs

Learning labs are 3-hour long sessions that focus on practices and instructional routines from our balanced literacy framework. Our K-3rd grade balanced literacy framework is specifically designed to support teachers in an in-depth study of high impact literacy practices with a long tradition and strong research base. Late kindergarten and early first grade are times of rapid development as children make significant leaps in reading and writing skills. During this time instruction shifts to allow longer periods of time for print based reading and writing. Our reading and writing learning labs for this age group are broken down into multiple sessions where teachers study the instructional routine, analyze developmental continuums, and assess how children respond to the practice. Each learning lab deepens knowledge about an individual instructional routine and the developmental continuum of reading and writing, leading to greater knowledge about teaching literacy. Below are a list of learning labs, a description of each, and an estimate of how many sessions are needed for mastery of the practice based on a 3-hour learning lab session. **We will customize a series to fit the needs of your school or district.**

A. Promoting Curiosity, Conversation, and Inquiry in the Classroom (1-2 sessions)

This session examines key developmental principles and research supported instructional practices for teachers to engage young learners in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teachers will learn strategies to build a climate of curiosity and broaden their use of questioning techniques to address the full breadth of higher order thinking and build vocabulary. We also consider the environment for learning including physical space, relationships between teachers and children, and community building strategies.

B. Integrating Play into the K-3rd Grade Classroom (1-2 sessions)

Why are opportunities for play in school essential for young children's learning with peers in kindergarten through 3rd grade? This session explores the importance and necessity of different kinds of play in the school day. We examine the teacher's role in supporting play and making connections between children's play and academic learning across the curriculum.

C. Independent Reading with Conferring (3-5 sessions)

All children should have daily opportunities to select books to read. Our approach to this instructional routine is using the workshop structure of a mini-lesson, independent reading time with conferring, and a share-out. Assessing children as they apply knowledge and reading strategies learned during small group, read alouds, shared reading, and word work is critical in this routine. Setting up the classroom library may be included if appropriate.

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D. Read Aloud with Discussion (1-2 sessions)

What is the most essential literacy routine in any Prek-3rd grade classroom? Reading aloud initiates young children into the world of reading and writing. This session focuses on the significance of selecting high quality and culturally relevant literature for read alouds, developing questions along a continuum, and facilitating discussions with children.

E. Small Group Reading: Guided Reading (2-4 sessions)

Teachers use a variety of small group reading practices to scaffold and support children in reading increasingly complex texts. The focus of this session is the guided reading lesson structure and planning for children across the reading continuum. Books are analyzed for complexity to examine the relationship between reading levels and planning lessons. Planning and implementing literacy centers with meaningful work to support development of language, comprehension, and writing skills can be included if appropriate.

F. Shared Reading (1 session)

How can teachers reinforce concepts of print, foster fluency, and build vocabulary? This session offers strategies to teach and model aspects of the reading process with an emphasis on fluency as teacher and children read text together. Teachers will analyze text and develop a multi-day lesson plan.

G. Writing in K-3rd Grade Classrooms: Storytelling, Drawing, and Writing (3-5 sessions)

Teaching writing to emerging and conventional writers involves dedicated time for writing every day. This session focuses on the components of a writing workshop and balancing teacher and child-initiated writing. The developmental continuums of storytelling, drawing, and writing are analyzed to plan for teaching and assess children's strengths and needs.

H. Shared Writing (1 session)

In this session we analyze shared/interactive writing as a high impact strategy to teach the writing process. We examine the role of the teacher as an expert in leading this rich oral language experience to cultivate children's understanding of how ideas and thinking are transcribed onto paper.

I. Word Study (1-2 sessions)

This session focuses on understanding how letters, sounds, words and language work. The goal is to help children problem solve as new words are encountered while reading and writing. Children need explicit, meaningful, and engaging instruction that balances skill-based instruction with opportunities to apply practices in reading and writing.

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