

Planning for Comprehensive Literacy Instruction

Oregon Department of Education

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umtAiDmNZdk>

Narrator: In this video, we will hear educators respond to the question, how do you fit reading comprehension, foundational skills, writing, speaking, and listening into your literacy block? We will first hear from Francesca Aultman, district language arts specialist, then Marissa Quesada, kindergarten and first grade teacher, and then Bekah Sabzalian, education consultant. Supporting all students in core instruction.

Francesca: One of the things that I hear most often is, how do I meet the needs of so many different students at once? And that can make it feel like the time is not enough when you're really trying to differentiate and to meet all the needs of students as all of our teachers are trying to do. And so I think one of the parts that's at the heart of my own belief, and I do believe of my district's, is that all students should have access to core instruction. And so when we shift our thinking to really all students need access to this tier one instruction, now how do I scaffold up to help get them there? And so the conversation really shifts to here's the content for that time; now what supports can I add to help all of my students be able to access it.

Narrator: Structuring literacy block time.

Marissa: When I think about fitting all the components of literacy and I also feel a little overwhelmed, but it helps to take my district guidance. So I look at what my district gives me; they give me 25 minutes of reading comprehension. So I use that: I do a read aloud, I focus the read aloud on a specific skill, and then I do a little bit of language. I embed sentence frames in there, too. We also do 30 minutes of foundational skills, so I explicitly teach sound-spelling correspondences, decoding, blending, segmenting in that 30 minutes. And then I do three minutes of phonological awareness, as well. I usually try to do the phonological awareness before I start the foundational skills to kind of get the brains warmed up for it. And then I actually have 50 minutes for writing and language. The more that the students talk, then the easier it is to process language and process what's going on. So I incorporate a ton of turn and talks in my reading comprehension block. And whenever we do reading comprehension and we pause for a question, I say, "Okay, think about your answer." And then they will take turns sharing with each other so that they get that language piece, they get the listening piece, and everybody gets to share their comprehension strategy as well as their thoughts. Supporting fluency and comprehension in my room looks like reading a book multiple times. So during our foundational skills part of the day, my students are decoding those words. We're going sound by sound. They're blending those words together and working on that accuracy piece. Later in the day, you use those foundational skills to build how to decode words and encode words, and then you use those strands and they're interwoven into that comprehension piece. So if students aren't able to decode words, they're not going to be able to accurately read. And without that comprehension piece and that accuracy piece, they're not going to understand what they're reading.

For small reading groups, I pull that exact same text that they worked on accuracy with, and we work on fluency and comprehension. So during that small reading group, after they've read the piece again, they turn and talk and tell their partner everything they remember. We start with the setting and then we go characters. What happened first, then, next, last or what was the problem? What was the solution? Or if it's informational, what's something that was surprising to you or what did you learn? Or if they're up for

a challenge, I'll have them restate what their partner learned. And that's really complicated. But it gets them to rephrase something in a different way. And then they also get that student's idea doing it that way.

Narrator: Embedding literacy instruction across the school day.

Bekah: A way in which to weave literacy throughout the day in your classroom is to make sure that you have really strong practices in your literacy block that can be then replicated, whatever subject you're working with. So you're teaching science, you're teaching social studies, and the students know these fun and engaging practices. Say it's vocabulary; they know you're going to do an action with it. They know it's the same practices, but in a different subject, and it reinforces your literacy time. How to manage your time and making sure you cover all the foundational skills in your literacy block really comes down to management. So there's, you know, there are those hard skills and there's the time management, but it really is the classroom management skills. And that your students know what to expect. They know who you are, they know you value them, and they all want to be a part of the community. That is foundational to anything we're talking about.

Francesca: Something that our district's put in place that's been really helpful is essential agreements for reading instruction. And so that really helps frame what are the basic structures of the day. How much time should I be allotting ideally to comprehension, to foundational skills? What should that look like? And really starting with that as my baseline. And then of course looking at the students in front of me, looking at our context and looking at within that framework, how can I integrate as many opportunities as possible? So thinking about speaking and listening, for example, we can be turning and talking frequently during a lesson. We can be building in those structures throughout our day. We can be writing throughout our day. I can really think about where are those places where I can be creative about infusing, for example, speaking and listening throughout our day, or opportunities to write, or to share throughout the entire day so that not everything is limited to that 90 minute reading block.

Narrator: To learn more, visit the framework website at oregoninstructionalframeworks.org and download the Early Literacy Framework.