



LITERACY

INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

GRADES 6-12

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Guiding Literacy Education Philosophies

NATIONAL from the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE)

The ultimate purpose is to ensure that *all* students are offered the opportunities, the encouragement, and the vision to develop the language skills they need to pursue life's goals, including personal enrichment and participation as informed members of our society.

STATE from the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs)

Grade 6

Reading: In sixth grade, students are aware of the author's craft. They are able to adjust their purpose, pace and strategies according to difficulty and/or type of text. Students continue to reflect on their skills and adjust their comprehension and vocabulary strategies to become better readers. Students discuss, reflect, and respond, using evidence from text, to a wide variety of literary genres and informational text. Students read for pleasure and choose books based on personal preference, topic, genre, theme, or author.

Writing: In sixth grade, students approach writing with purpose and maintain their focus. They use form, content, technique, and conventions flexibly to meet their own purposes or assignment requirements. Competence is evident in skills of paragraphing, summarizing, and synthesizing in exposition, persuasion, and content-area writing, whereas fiction writing reflects an awareness of its role to entertain, explore human relationships, and persuade. Students work toward precision in spelling in all writing and evaluate honestly both their own work and the work of others, making a concerted effort to improve weak traits. Students consider writing to be an important and effective tool for furthering their own learning.

Grade 7

Reading: In seventh grade, students are aware of their responsibility as readers. They continue to reflect on their skills and adjust their comprehension and vocabulary strategies. Students refine their understanding of the author's craft. Oral and written responses analyze and/or synthesize information from multiple sources to deepen understanding of the content. Students read for pleasure and choose books based on personal preference, topic, genre, theme, or author.

Writing: In seventh grade, students present legible, cohesive, and interesting writing in a form, format, and style appropriate for the purpose and audience. Claims and opinions are well-researched and supported with sufficient examples or facts to produce a response from the reader. They address a range of issues within a variety of forms and modes. Language is descriptive, incorporating details and imagery to enhance ideas. Students use complex sentence structures and complex punctuation with increased accuracy. They revise for specific traits and include suggestions from others to improve writing. Students see writing as a means to an end, as well as a worthwhile activity in itself, and enjoy exploring their ideas through writing and graphics

Grade 8

Reading: In eighth grade, students integrate a variety of comprehension and vocabulary strategies. They are able to adapt their reading to different types of text. Oral and written responses analyze and/or synthesize information from multiple sources to deepen understanding of the content. Students refine their understanding of the author's craft, commenting on and critically evaluating text. They continue to analyze and/or synthesize information from multiple sources to deepen understanding of the content. Students continue to read for pleasure.

LITERACY OVERVIEW: GRADES 6-12

Writing: In eighth grade, students competently write reports and explanations on a range of complex topics, maintaining focus on the theme or issue. The well-researched information is structured effectively in appropriate forms and style for a range of audiences and purposes. Students produce pieces that go beyond formulaic writing. They retrieve, select, organize, synthesize, and evaluate material from a variety of print and electronic resources. They craft a variety of literary texts with confidence. Students are able to manage time to complete a writing task on demand or over several weeks. Students reflect on their own writing and identify strategies to improve the quality of their written work.

Grades 9–12

Reading: In high school, reading is purposeful and automatic. Readers are aware of comprehension and vocabulary strategies being employed especially when encountering difficult text and/or reading for a specific purpose. They continue to increase their content and academic vocabulary. Oral and written responses analyze and/or synthesize information from multiple sources to deepen understanding of the content. Readers have greater ability to make connections and adjust understandings as they gain knowledge. They challenge texts, drawing on evidence from their own experience and wide reading. Students continue to read for pleasure.

Writing: In high school, students write independently with confidence and proficiency. They explore, interpret, and reflect on a wide range of experiences, texts, ideas, and opinions. Students choose the most appropriate form of writing to achieve the desired result for the intended audience. As students persevere through complex writing projects, they write sophisticated, complex literary texts and/or organized, fluent, and well-supported nonfiction. Complex forms of punctuation are used accurately and grammar/language is manipulated to enhance writing. Vocabulary is carefully chosen to create vivid mental images or elaborate on ideas. Students maintain a portfolio or collection of their own writing and continue to regard writing as an essential tool to further their own learning in and beyond high school.

DISTRICT

Because we know this is how people learn, Evergreen supports a workshop model approach to teaching and learning in English Language Arts. This approach helps teachers organize their classrooms and instructional time to teach effective reading, writing, and learning strategies and to help students put them into practice. This model utilizes a combination of whole-class, small group, partner, and one-on-one instruction that focuses on conversations about content, strategies, and processes. The most important goal of the workshop model is the development of independent learners who are equipped with the 21st Century skills and knowledge they will need for a lifetime of learning and thinking.

Learning to demonstrate thinking in all of the language arts involves a variety of strategies. It is an active, constructive, creative, and often collaborative process. Successful learners use these strategies to access text, to make meaning from text, to make connections with and apply those connections in meaningful ways. Proficient learners retain these connections for later use. In learning these strategies and coming to independently own them, students learn how to learn in addition to acquiring important knowledge.

English Language Arts Student Outcomes

READING

- The student understands and uses different skills and strategies to read and comprehend text. (Includes phonemic awareness, concepts of print, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading strategies)
- The student understands the meaning of what is read. (Includes monitoring, activating schema, questioning, creating images, inferring, determining importance, and synthesizing)
- The student reads different materials for a variety of purposes. (Includes literary and informational text forms & features)
- The student sets goals and evaluates progress to improve reading. (Includes self-monitoring and goal setting)

WRITING

- The student understands and uses a writing process. (Includes pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing)
- The student writes in a variety of forms for different audiences and purposes. (Includes text forms and features taught and reviewed)
- The student writes clearly and effectively. (Includes ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice and conventions)
- The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of written work.

COMMUNICATION

- The student uses listening and observation skills to gain understanding. (Includes focusing attention and evaluating information)
- The student uses communication strategies and skills to interact/work effectively with others. (Includes collaborative and intercultural skills)
- The student uses communication skills and strategies to effectively present ideas and one's self in a variety of situations. (Includes planning and use of visual aids in presentations)
- The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of communication. (Includes evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of self and others)

Purpose of this Instructional Guide

The purpose of this guide is to give teachers a vision of the overall secondary literacy curriculum, while also making specific suggestions of methods to both teach and assess particular reading, writing and communication priority standards aligned to the content of English Language Arts courses.

Process for the alignment of secondary literacy curriculum

For the past two years, groups of secondary language arts teachers worked to prioritize state reading, writing, and communication standards. Using work already underway in many schools, these teacher teams—in collaboration with the curriculum department—also constructed unit frameworks for each secondary language arts course. These frameworks were created using a backwards-design approach, commonly referred to as *Understanding By Design*, developed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. Each framework also has a corresponding performance based assessment as well as sample rubric templates. These assessments offer models for authentic demonstrations of student learning through rigorous tasks of high cognitive demand.

Note: Full **Priority Standards** documents for Reading, Writing, and Communication are located online at <http://schools.evergreenps.org>.

The backward design approach consists of three general stages

Stage 1 – Identify Desired Results

In Stage 1 we consider the goals. What should students know, understand, and be able to do? What big ideas are worthy of understanding and implied in the established goals (e.g., content standards, curriculum objectives)? What “enduring” understandings are desired? What provocative questions are worth pursuing to guide student inquiry into these big ideas? What specific knowledge and skills are targeted in the goals and needed for effective performance?

Stage 2 – Determine Acceptable Evidence

In the second stage we consider evidence of learning. How will we know if students have achieved the desired results and met the content standards? How will we know that students *really* understand the identified big ideas? What will we accept as evidence of proficiency? The backward design orientation suggests that we think about our design in terms of the collected assessment evidence needed to document and validate that the desired results of Stage 1 have been achieved.

Stage 3 – Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction

With identified results and appropriate evidence of understanding in mind, it is now time to finalize a plan for the learning activities. What will need to be taught and coached, and how should it best be taught, in light of the performance goals? What sequence of activity best suits the desired results? In planning the learning activities, we consider the question: How will we make learning both engaging *and* effective, given the goals and needed evidence?

Big Picture Planning Steps

(a synthesis of *Understanding by Design* by Wiggins and McTighe)

1

Prioritize the Big Ideas of the Unit

*“For any subject taught ... we might ask [is it] worth an adult’s knowing, and whether having known it as a child makes a person a better adult.” – Jerome Bruner (1960). What BIG IDEAS do you want students to UNDERSTAND at the end of the unit? These big ideas can come from a wide variety of sources: **State and National Standards** (many times, the PREFACE to standards help you figure out why they matter!), what experts in a field/discipline known that novices do not, books (fiction and non-fiction), articles, textbooks, etc. These include both goals about content – heart of the discipline ideas, and the processes of coming to know and being a lifelong learner – habits of mind. It is easy to test if a big idea is big enough to design a unit around. You should be able to answer easily: “How would understanding this idea make a person a ‘better’ human being?”*

1a

Writing Guiding Questions

*Does the question reside at the heart of the discipline? Is there a “right” answer? (If yes, rethink it!) Is the question framed to provoke and sustain student interest? Does it allow students to **generate** rather than **consume** information (doing REAL work)? What is the potential for engaging students? Can it be explored, questioned, played with, used in realistic contexts, rephrased, and verified as important in some ways? Do the questions recur naturally – once you figure out one layer, can you ask the same question again and read, write, and talk more to go deeper? These questions give students a REASON to read, write, and talk on a daily basis...they are the NEED TO KNOW knowledge, and DEVELOP skills on a daily basis.*

2

Design the “Big” Demonstration of Understanding

What does it look like if students understand the enduring understanding and guiding questions? What does it look like in the real world for readers, essayists, authors, social scientists, historians, city planners, designers, mathematicians, engineers, biologists – people who do this work, study this topic in the world? For maximum motivation, engagement, and impact, the product/performance should have a purpose and audience BEYOND the teacher in the classroom.

2a

Write Learning Targets for product/project

When we know where we are going we can get there. For teachers these should be tied to a series of mini-lessons. For students these are the basis for the rubric. As a student, I can judge for myself if I’ve met the targets, and I can ASK for the instruction I need to reach the target if I don’t understand how. These learning targets support assessment FOR learning and assessment AS learning.

(continued)

Bennett 2009

Big Picture Planning Steps *(continued from previous page)*

3

Plan backwards from the due date for the final product on a Calendar

Get out a calendar. Assign a due date for the final product/project then literally plan “backwards”.... (Weeks to build background knowledge, begin drafts, critique/revise/refine, go out into the world and “see” it ... etc.)

3a

Plan the ways to “know” if students are developing understanding along the way: Assessments FOR Learning

(Planning workshops each day to collect this kind of evidence over time to assess knowledge, skills, and understanding) for example:

- Annotation of texts – anchor texts and other texts (quotes, article, essays, political cartoons, etc.)
- Reflections in journals to a variety of texts related to the guiding questions
- Reflections to prompts about process (becoming a better reader and writer, using thinking strategies, grammar, vocabulary, literary terms, etc.) Labs (procedures and write ups)
- Conferring notes
- Exit tickets to guiding questions over time
- Multiple drafts of essays (other products, projects – debates, performances, lab designs, etc.) with targeted feedback over time

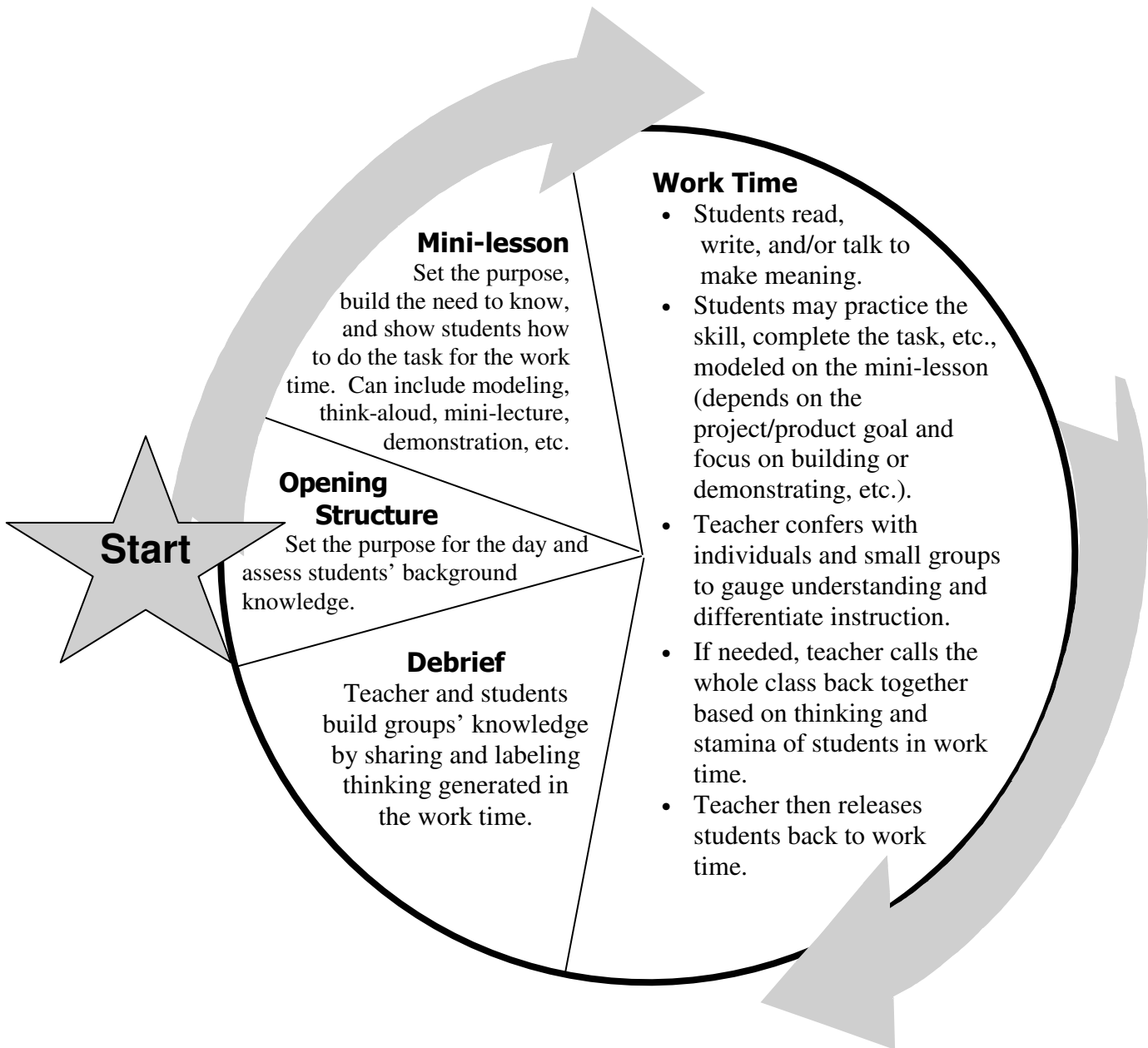
4

Do your own assignment

... and refine steps 1, 2, & 3 once you see what knowledge, skills, and understanding you have to use to actually do it!

Bennett 2009

Maximum Student Learning



Adapted from Samantha Bennett, *That Workshop Book*, Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2007.

Bill of Rights for Writing

“What does the Bill of Rights in the Teaching of Writing consist of for the learners in our care? What conditions are so essential that every child deserves these conditions, these opportunities to learn? A system must adopt common denominators that are within reach of the people in that system and that are aligned to the system’s standards.”

Lucy Calkins

A Guide to the Writing Workshop, p.7-11

- We need to teach every child to write. At least 50 minutes of writing instruction almost every day.
- We need to teach children to write texts like other writers write – memoirs, stories, editorials, essays, poems, reports – for an audience of readers, not just for the teacher.
- Writers do not write with words and convention alone; writers write above all with meaning. Children will invest themselves more in their writing if they are allowed – indeed, if they are taught – to select their own topics and to write about subjects that are important to them.
- Children deserve to be explicitly taught the skills and strategies of effective writing, and the qualities of good writing.
- Teachers need to be responsive to what students are doing and trying to do as writers.
- Children deserve a teacher who demonstrates a commitment to writing.
- We need to provide children the opportunity and instruction necessary for them to cycle through the writing process regularly as they write, rehearse, draft, revise, edit and publish their writing – a recursive process.
- Writers read. Writers read text of all sorts, and we read as insiders, aiming to learn specific strategies for writing well.

Core Understandings about Reading

1. Reading is a construction of meaning from text. It is an active, cognitive and affective process.
2. Background knowledge and prior experience are critical to the reading process.
3. Social interaction is essential at all stages of reading development.
4. Reading and writing are reciprocal processes; development of one enhances the other.
5. Reading involves complex thinking.
6. Environments rich in literacy experiences, resources and models facilitate reading development.
7. Engagement in the reading task is key in successfully learning to read and developing as a reader.
8. Children's understandings of print are not the same as adults' understandings.
9. Children develop phonemic awareness and knowledge of phonics through a variety of literacy opportunities, models, and demonstrations.
10. Readers learn productive strategies in the context of real reading.
11. Students learn best when teachers employ a variety of strategies to model and demonstrate reading knowledge, strategy, and skills.
12. Students need many opportunities to read, read, read.
13. Monitoring the development of reading processes is vital to student success.

Braunger, J. & Lewis, J. (2006). *Building a Knowledge Base in Reading*. IRA and NCTE: Newark, DE.

Comprehension/Thinking Strategies

Monitoring Comprehension: The Inner Conversation

Proficient Readers...

- Pause to reflect on their growing understandings
- Recognize when they understand the text, and when they don't
- Identify when and why the meaning of the text is unclear
- Identify the ways in which a text becomes more understandable by reading past an unclear portion and by rereading text
- Decide if clarifying a particular confusion is critical to overall understanding
- Explore a variety of means to remedy confusion
- Consider and sometimes adjust their purpose for reading
- Check, evaluate and make revisions to their evolving interpretations of text
- Identify confusing words
- Employ a range of options for reestablishing meaningful reading

Activating & Connecting to Background Knowledge: A Bridge from the New to the Known

Proficient Readers...

- Activate relevant, prior knowledge before, during and after reading
- Build knowledge by deliberately assimilating new learning with their related prior knowledge
- Clarify new learning by deleting inaccurate schema
- Relate texts to their world knowledge, to other text and to their personal experiences
- Activate their knowledge of authors, genre, and text structure to enhance understanding
- Recognize when prior knowledge is inadequate and take steps to build knowledge necessary to understand
- Apply what they know about sounds/letter relationships and word parts to make sense of unknown words

Asking Questions: The Strategy Which Propels the Reader Forward

Proficient Readers...

- Generate questions before, during and after reading about the text's content, structure and language
- Ask questions for different purposes including clarifying their own developing understandings, making predictions, and wondering about the choices the author made when composing
- Realize that one question may lead to others
- Pursue answers to questions
- Consider rhetorical questions inspired by the text
- Distinguish between questions that lead to essential/deeper understanding and "just curious" types of questions
- Allow self-generated questions to propel them through text
- Contemplate questions posed by others as inspiration for new questions
- Pose self-monitoring questions to help them understand unknown/unfamiliar words

Comprehension/Thinking Strategies *(continued)*

Visualizing and Inferring: Making what's Implicit Explicit

Proficient Readers...

- Draw conclusions about their reading by connecting the text with their schema
- Make, confirm, and /or revise reasonable predictions
- Know when and how to infer answers to unanswered questions
- Form unique interpretations to deepen and personalize reading experiences
- Extend their comprehension beyond literal understandings of the printed page
- Make judgments and create generalizations about what they read
- Create a sense of expectation as they read
- Use context clues and their knowledge of language to predict the pronunciation and meaning of unknown/unfamiliar words

Determining Importance: The Nonfiction Connection: Reading to Learn

Proficient Readers...

- Identify key ideas, themes and elements as they read
- Distinguish between important and unimportant information using their own purposes as well as the text structures and word cues the author provides
- Use text structures and text features to help decide what is essential and what is extraneous
- Use their knowledge of important and relevant parts of text to prioritize what they commit to long-term memory and what they retell and/or summarize for others
- Consider the author's bias/point of view
- Use the filter of essential other to clarify usefulness when applying other cognitive strategies to their reading
- Determine which words are essential to the meaning of the text
- Know when choosing to skip words/phrases of text will or will not impact their overall understanding
- Make decisions about when unknown/unclear words need clarification immediately and accurately, and when substitutions can be used to maintain meaning and fluency

Summarizing and Synthesizing Information: The Evolution of Thought

Proficient Readers...

- Continually monitor overall meaning, important concepts and themes while reading
- Recognize ways in which text elements fit together to create larger meaning
- Create new and personal meaning
- Develop holistic and/or thematic statements which encapsulate the overall meaning of the text
- Capitalize on opportunities to share, recommend and criticize books
- Attend to the evolution of their thoughts across time while reading a text, and while reading many texts
- Select specific vocabulary from the texts to include in their synthesis because they know that specific language is highly meaning-laden
- Know when certain vocabulary is critical to the text's overall meaning, and therefore, must be understood if comprehension is to be achieved

Adapted from *Strategies that Work* by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis and PEBC Thinking Strategies Institute 2007-2008.

Optimal Learning Environment (OLE)

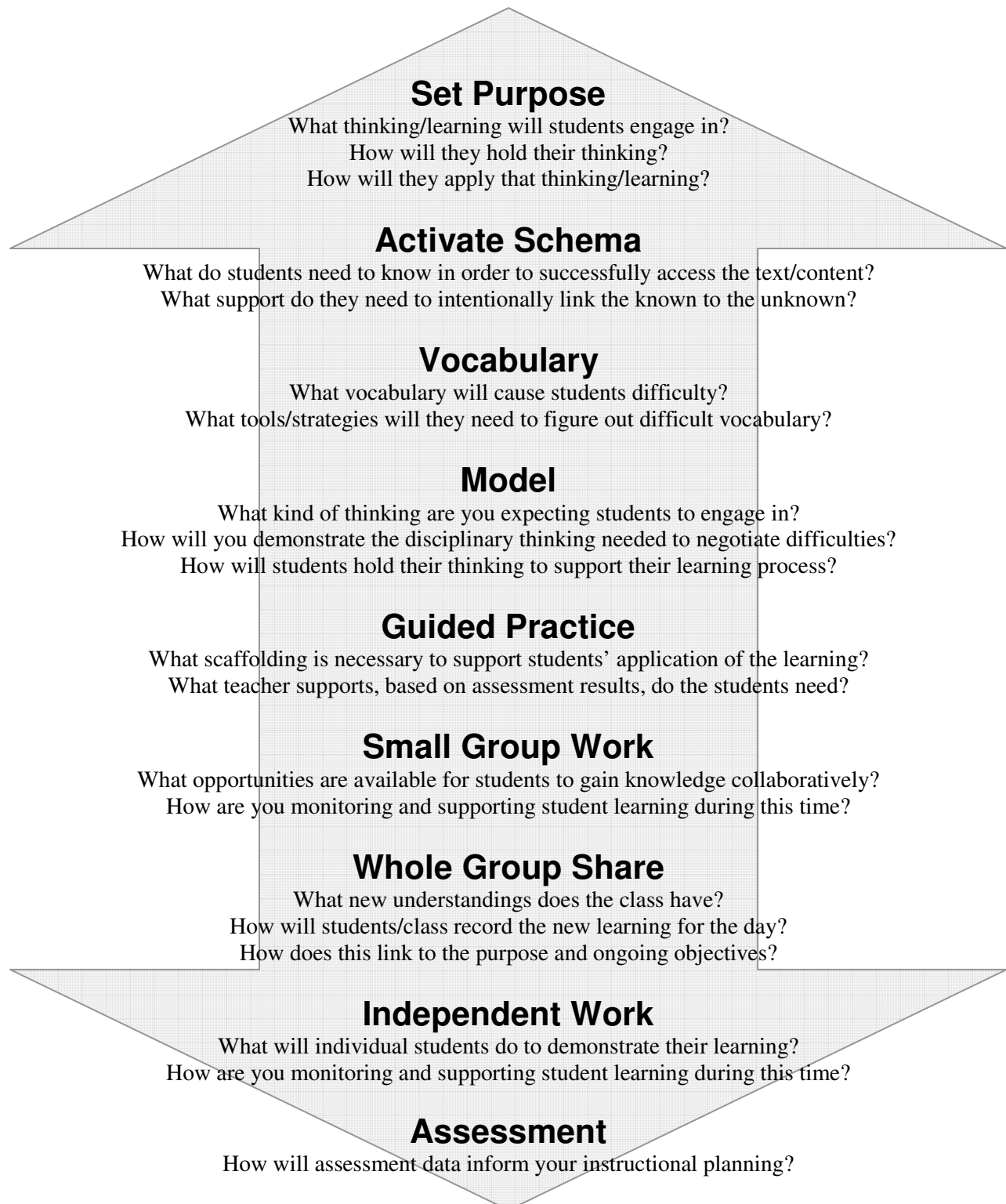
Optimal Language and Literacy Learning Conditions

Student Choice	Students exercise choice in their learning when possible: writing topics, books, research projects, and thematic cycles.
Student-Centered	Lessons begin and revolve around students’ personal experiences, background knowledge, and interests.
Whole-Part-Whole Approach	Lessons begin with whole texts (books, poems, newspaper articles) to maximize the construction of understanding; then move to the analysis of reading process components such as strategies, or smaller units of language forms (phonics, spelling, punctuation) and then return to the text as a whole.
Active Participation	Students actively engage in lessons with frequent and long turns in both oral and written language.
Meaning First, Followed by Form	Students construct meaning from (reading) or through (writing) in text first, then move to a focus on correct forms of language such as spelling and grammar.
Authentic Purpose	The end-products of lessons have a real-life function that often extends beyond the classroom; real audiences, real purposes.
Approximations	Students are encouraged to take risks and successively approximate language and literacy skills (following a developmental course).
Immersion in Language and Print	The classroom is saturated with different print forms and functions, and with opportunities to understand and use language for a wide range of purposes.
Demonstrations	Teachers demonstrate their own reading and writing, and share their ongoing efforts with students. More “expert” students also serve as models for their peers.
Response	Students receive timely responses to their oral and written texts that go beyond letter grades to personalized and thoughtful acknowledgments of their ideas, experiences, and efforts.
Community of Learners	Students, parents and teachers form a community of readers, writers, and learners who explore a range of questions relevant to them.
High Expectations	Teachers, parents and the students themselves expect that students will become proficient and independent speakers, readers, and writers.

Ruiz, N. T., Garcia, E., & Figueroa, R. A. (Unknown date). The OLE curriculum guide: creating optimal learning environments for students from diverse backgrounds in special and general education. Unpublished manuscript, OLE Project, California Department of Education Press & Migrant Education International Office.

Framework for Learning

This framework is a non-linear representation of best practices literacy instruction, based on the Reading Apprenticeship, Reader/Writer Workshop, and Gradual Release of Responsibility models.



K-12 Scoring Guide: Content, Organization and Style

CHARACTERISTICS	4	3	2	1
Focus	My piece is consistently focused on the main idea and my purpose.	My piece is adequately focused on the main idea and my purpose. My picture matches my words.	My piece is inconsistently focused on the main idea and my purpose. My picture matches most of my words.	My piece has little or no focus. My picture tells a different story than my words.
Details	I consistently used relevant details to explain my main idea. These details are layered, building on one another.	I adequately used details to explain my main idea. These details are listed, not layered.	I inconsistently used details; not all details are relevant to my main idea.	I have used very few details to explain my main idea. The details I chose to use interfere with the meaning of my message.
Organization	I have an introduction, body and conclusion. All of my key ideas are consistently included and supported so my reader has a complete understanding. There is a sense of wholeness, or completeness, to my piece.	I have an introduction, body and conclusion. My key ideas are adequately included and supported, giving my reader some understanding about of my message. There is a sense of wholeness, or completeness, to my piece, though it may feel as if something was left out.	There is some organization to my piece. My key ideas are inconsistently supported, leaving my reader to wonder about my message. There is little sense of wholeness or completeness.	There is little or no organization to my piece. Key ideas are not supported and my reader has no understanding about my message. There is no sense of wholeness or completeness.
Transitions	I have consistently used a variety of words or phrases to connect my ideas throughout my piece.	I have adequately used words or phrases to connect my ideas throughout my piece.	I have inconsistently used words or phrases to connect my ideas throughout my piece.	I have used very few words or phrases to connect my ideas. Those I have used are used inappropriately.
Word Choice	I have used effective, specific and appropriate words for my intended audience and purpose.	I have adequately used appropriate words for my intended audience and purpose.	I have inconsistently used appropriate words for my intended audience and purpose.	I have not considered my audience when choosing my words. My word choice is inappropriate for my reader.
Sentence Fluency	I have consistently used a variety of sentence structures. It is easy to read out loud and it flows.	I have used sentences and phrases that are somewhat varied in length and structure. It is fairly easy to read out loud.	I have a limited variety of sentence length and structure. My piece sounds choppy when read out loud.	I have little or no variety in sentence length and structure. My piece sounds boring when read out loud.
Voice	My reader understands my position or feelings about my message. I have been able to consistently choose appropriate ways to express myself throughout my piece of writing.	My reader has some understanding of my position or feelings about my message. I have chosen appropriate ways to express myself throughout my piece of writing.	My reader has little understanding of my position or feelings about my message. I have attempted to express myself throughout my piece of writing.	My reader has no understanding of my position or feelings about my message.

K-12 Scoring Guide: Conventions

	2	1	0
Grammar	I consistently use correct grammar.	I generally use correct grammar.	I rarely use correct grammar.
Spelling	I consistently spell high frequency words correctly. I use spelling rules to write challenging words.	I generally spell high frequency words correctly. I attempt to use spelling rules to write challenging words.	I rarely spell high frequency words correctly. I do not attempt to write challenging words.
Capitalization	I consistently use capitals in all the right places.	I generally use capitals in all the right places.	I rarely use capitals in the right places.
Punctuation	I consistently use punctuation rules.	I generally use punctuation rules.	I rarely use punctuation rules.
Complete Sentences	I consistently use complete sentences when writing.	I generally use complete sentences when writing.	I rarely use complete sentences when writing.
Presentation	I consistently write neatly with spaces between my words. I use paragraphs as appropriate.	I generally write neatly with spaces between my words. I attempt to use paragraphs.	I rarely write neatly and tend to run my words together. I do not use paragraphs.