

Look Fors and Ask Abouts in a Balanced Literacy Classroom

How does the CLASSROOM look?	Present?
Standard and Essential Question displayed and easily visible according to the lesson being taught	
Literacy Rich Environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student work with teacher commentary • Interactive vocabulary word wall • Classroom library with a variety of texts on various levels • Graphic organizers, anchor charts, etc. 	
Evidence of small group, large group, and individual instruction	
Resources (books, supplies, technology) are easily accessible to teachers and students	
Daily lesson plans are available for review and include 2 ½- 3 hours of literacy instruction	
Daily schedule is posted	
What are the STUDENTS doing?	
Actively participating in classroom learning activities...a component of balanced literacy... (read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, modeled writing, shared writing, interactive writing, independent writing, word work)	
Asking questions to help clarify their thinking	
Interacting with each other as well as working independently, just as adults do	
Actively engaged in reading fiction and non-fiction. Self-selecting texts appropriate for age, interest and level.	
Actively engaged in some part of the writing process; prewriting using graphic organizers, drafting, revising, or editing.	
Using adopted materials as well as other materials necessary to support grade level standards.	
Communicating and clarifying deep understanding of text through peer conferencing, discussion of learning and written responses.	
Working in groups to discuss comprehension of text, with each group member highly involved	
Working regularly to develop reading fluency	
Students use technology (research, publish, word sorts, handwriting...)	
What are the TEACHERS doing?	
Using a variety of instructional models such as whole group instruction, small group instruction, and individual conferencing	
Continually referencing the standards and clearly setting the learning target for students	
Actively implementing a component of balanced literacy (read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, modeled writing, shared writing, interactive writing, independent writing, word work)	
Using higher order questions to encourage students to build a framework for understanding challenging text	
Encouraging and requiring students to consistently communicate their literary thinking	
Guiding students to make appropriate use of literature and technology	
Assessing student work frequently in multiple ways and making instructional decisions based on the assessment data	
Emphasizing vocabulary across all areas of the curriculum	
Moving around the room to keep everyone engaged in productive work	
Differentiating literacy lessons to address students' academic needs and learning styles. Utilize Guided Reading as a structure for providing differentiated, small-group lessons	
Collaborating and planning with other teachers within and across grade levels	
Working to strengthen their understanding of the content standards that they teach by studying their literacy standards and seeking out the best methods by which to teach those standards	
Teacher uses technology to engage students (modeling, showing lifted text and examples...)	