



Instructional Practice Guide: English Language Arts

Review of Best Practice and Implications for ELA Instruction

This resource is meant to serve as a tool for educators and administrators to utilize when considering how to best design literacy instruction to generate strong student engagement and success. This is not a comprehensive list nor should it be seen as a set of teaching practices that must be implemented or followed. Rather, this document is meant to support educators in making evidence based decisions regarding the instructional practices they wish to implement in their classroom, school, or district.

Current KSDE-ELA Resources

Kansas Guide to Learning: Literacy

This document is available through the KSDE ELA page. It outlines the various elements related to classroom instruction across the domains of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. Use this document to review the various instructional considerations and recommendations for each domain and the standards addressed under each consideration.

Access [here](#).

Supporting Students through Complex Texts

Reading Standard 13 states that students should be able to read, comprehend, and analyze texts at grade level. In order to facilitate this in your classroom, you must analyze each text's complexity to make sure it is quantitatively and qualitatively appropriate for your readers and the task. To support you in evaluating text complexity, you can utilize the resource page on our KSDE ELA site.

Access [here](#).



Best Practice in Teaching

Gradual Release of Responsibility (Fisher and Frey)

This model of teaching asks educators to model expectations for students before asking them to work collaboratively and then independently. In the Language Arts classroom, this could mean providing students with model or mentor texts, engaging in read alouds, or facilitating guided reading (these are only a few examples). The goal of this instructional model is to provide students with a safe and structured opportunity to practice and ask questions before taking on the learning task individually.

Resource [here](#)

Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky), Universal Design for Learning (Meyer and Rose), & Differentiated Instruction (Tomlinson)

Vygotsky's research tells us that in order for students to thrive academically, they must receive instruction within their zone of proximal development. Meaning, if work is too easy, students will disengage out of boredom; however, if work is too difficult, they will disengage out of stress and inability. As educators, it is then important that we design our lessons and activities to meet the needs of every student. This means that what we create for our classes should come in many shapes and forms. The Universal Design for Learning framework tells us that we must differentiate our practice by adapting the 'what', 'why', and 'how' of teaching and learning. Learn more about redesigning your classroom by reviewing the sites linked below.

Resource [here](#) and [here](#)

Mastery Learning

In a Mastery Learning Classroom, the focus is not on activity or assignment completion but on the demonstration of proficiency by students in regards to the standards connected to each learning task. Under this approach, learning objectives are shared with students and students are co-creators of the learning objectives and targets. These objectives are derived from the standards and students help determine the path they will use to demonstrate proficiency. Students should have multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency and teacher feedback should be based on the standard and learning targets. Under this approach, instructional design, practice, and assessment are aligned to the standards, and students are given multiple opportunities to interact with the standards being taught and assessed.

Resource [here](#)



Best Practice Implications for the ELA Classroom

Suggested Readings

“Key Practices in the English Language Arts: Linking Learning Theory, Assessment, and instruction”

This article, published by Educational Testing Services (ETS), reviews various methods of instruction that can be used throughout a unit of study in the K-12 ELA classroom. This article directs teachers to create systems of Cognitive Based Assessments of, for, and as Learning (CBAL) that are grounded in Evidence-Centered Design (ECD).

Resource [here](#)

“Content Area Literacy Guide”

This document was assembled for the Chief Council of State School Officers in 2007. As we know, reading and writing is not exclusive to the ELA classroom. In this article, they outline strategies that teachers (across disciplines) can use before, during, or after reading to ensure quality comprehension and to allow for strategic thinking and growth. Every strategy discussed is linked to the development of a critical literacy skill and can be utilized at some point in the Before, During, and After best practice continuum.

Resource [here](#)

Reading Foundations

Principal’s Guide for Evaluating Early Literacy Instruction- The role of the principal is meant to be that of the instructional leader. Additionally, the role of the principal is also that of evaluator. For principal's unfamiliar with the intricacies of early literacy and reading instruction, evaluating teacher practice and effectiveness can feel overwhelming. This guide, published by the Center on Instruction, assists the principal in evaluating literacy instruction in the K-3 classroom.

Resource [here](#) (see pages 30-33 for walk through checklist)



Early Literacy Interventions- In 2008, the National Center for Family Literacy published a report for the National Literacy Panel synthesizing data from numerous literacy studies to derive recommendations for interventions that will best support students in early literacy programs. This report outlines five interventions that when implemented in K-3 programs improve student literacy development and bridge achievement gaps. These five intervention include: code-focused interventions; shared reading interventions; parent and home programs; preschool and kindergarten programs; and language-enhancement interventions.

Resource [here](#)

Reading

Reciprocal Teaching- This reading strategy asks students to interact with a text before, during, and after reading. Within Reciprocal Teaching, students engage in four activities: predict, question, clarify, and summarize. This strategy should be modeled and taught to the students before students are expected to engage in all four activities independently. However, this strategy can be handed over to the students and used in small groups or for individual learning. By having students engage in all four activities, they are able to develop context through prediction, interact through questions, monitor their own understanding through clarification, and reflect on the text and their own learning through summary.

Resource [here](#)

Guided Reading- This reading strategy asks that educators group students by their current reading level to deliver modeled and supported instruction in the reading process. This procedure ensures that every student is able to access texts at and above their level of proficiency with teacher support and is exposed to critical thinking questions and modes of thinking.

Resource [here](#)

Peer Assisted Reading- In this program, students are asked to work with a peer through a reading activity in which each person serves as the reader and coach. In this model, students take turns supporting and correcting one another. The teacher assigns objectives for the coach and reader and the assistance each student provides is meant to align the instructional “look fors” established by the teacher.

Resource [here](#)



Writing

Explicit Instruction & Model, Practice, Reflect- The attached resource outlines three key recommendations for writing instruction and its effectiveness in promoting learning and retention. The first recommendation is that educators explicitly teach students how to plan, design, and reflect on the learning that occurred during their writing. This is referred to as a “model, practice, and reflect” cycle of instruction. Additionally, the research recommends that educators integrate writing tasks across the curriculum and provide students with actionable feedback.

Resource [here](#)

Writing to Read- The attached resource from the Center on Instruction outlines various strategies educators can use in order to improve students’ reading comprehension through writing. There are strategies that revolve around using writing to process what has been read and strategies that ask students to analyze what has been read for various strategies/techniques employed by the author.

Resource [here](#)

Other Writing Resources-

[Evidence-based Practices for Teaching Writing](#)

[Evidence-based Practices for Writing Instruction](#)

Vocabulary

Vocabulary Strategies- The attached resource walks through four different approaches to the teaching of vocabulary. These include: providing rich language experiences, teaching individual words, fostering word consciousness, and teaching acquisition strategies.

Resource [here](#)



Organizations that Review Educational Practices and Materials

- IRIS Center
- What Works Clearinghouse
- Center on Instruction
- National Center on Intensive Intervention
- The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
- Edreports.org

Professional Organizations for English Language Arts and Education

- National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE)
- Kansas Association for Teachers of English (KATE)
- Reading Recovery Council
- International Literacy Association
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- Kansas Masonic Literacy Center
- Reading is Fundamental
- National Reading Panel
- Literacy Network of Kansas (LiNK)
 - [Striving Readers](#) Database for Best Practice
- National Writing Project

Conducting Research on Educational Practices

- [“Guide: How Research-Practice Partnerships Can Support ESSA Implementation for Educational Improvement and Equity”](#)
- [How Research-Practice Partnership Can Support ESSA Implementation for Educational Improvement and Equity](#)