



Getting Started with Balanced Literacy and *Literacy Place for the Early Years*

How Do I Fit It All In?

(originally posted February 26, 2010)

As you begin to incorporate *Literacy Place for the Early Years* into your current literacy program, you may wonder how to organize your schedule to maximize use of classroom time. Effective literacy instruction occurs in an extended block so students have ample opportunity to practice skills and strategies being learned. Ideally, a literacy block should be 100 to 120 minutes daily. The key to scheduling is to include time every day for all the major literacy components. In the chart below, you will find each component of a balanced literacy program and a suggested range of time. Be aware that lesson plans in *LPEY* have been determined using these suggested times.

Readers' Workshop	Time	Writers' Workshop	Time
Read Aloud - whole group modelling - Think Alouds	10-15 min.	Warm-up - includes Quickwrites, peer discussions, read aloud	5 min.
Shared Reading - whole group explicit instruction	15 min.	Explicit Teaching - Modelled/Shared Writing or Craft/Convention Mini-lesson	10 min.
Working with Words	10 min.		
Independent Reading/Literacy Centres - teacher can conduct Guided Reading (20 min. per group) or confer with students	20-30 min.	Independent Writing - small group instruction in Guided Writing groups or conferences with students	20 min.
Sharing Time - partners, or small groups	5-10 min.	Sharing Time - Author's Chair	5 min.
Oral Language - occurs throughout the above approaches		Oral Language - occurs throughout the above approaches	
Total	60-80 min.	Total	40 min.

As you create your daily schedule, keep the following in mind:

- keep your schedule consistent to produce a predictable routine for young students
- maintain a balance of whole-group and small-group instruction (a whole group Shared Reading session could be followed by Guided Reading)
- if two Guided/Small-Group Shared Reading sessions are scheduled in one day, organize them around recess time (for Kindergarten and Grade One) to break up time that students need to be focused on literacy activities

For more information on scheduling and for examples of timetables, see pages 30–32 in the *Program and Planning Guide*.

If you have a question you would like answered, please email your request to: workshops@scholastic.ca.