**Balanced Literacy Includes:**

**Word Study**

Word Study is the study of our alphabetic symbol system. This involves the areas of phonics (letter/sound relationships), morphemic analysis (using word parts to denote meaning), and automaticity for sight words. Word study involves both the decoding (reading) and encoding (phonics and spelling) of our symbol system so students can make meaning from an author’s message and convey meaning by creating their own message.

**Interactive Read Aloud**

Interactive Read Aloud is a time when the teacher reads a piece of quality writing aloud to the whole class and stops at planned points to ask questions that elicit student response. Students learn to think deeply about text, to listen to others, and to grow their own ideas. This also serves as a demonstration for students on how to interchangeably and skillfully use the strategies the teacher has taught through mini lessons.

**Shared Reading**

Shared Reading is a type of focus lesson in which either enlarged print is utilized, or all students have the text to “share” the reading process with a group of students. The teacher uses this time, explicitly modeling reading strategies and skills that the students need to learn. The responsibility for reading is “shared” between the teacher and the students, although the teacher reads most of the text. Shared reading typically happens in K-2 classrooms only.

**Strategy Groups**

Strategy Groups are sometimes known as a Guided Reading Groups. The teacher meets with a small group that needs to work on a specific strategy or that has a similar reading level. Each student has a copy of the text and reads it quietly. The teacher uses this time to explicitly teach and to have students practice the strategy they need to learn.

**Independent Reading and Writing**

Independent Reading is a time when students read text (either self-selected or teacher recommended) at their Independent Reading level to practice reading strategies, develop fluency and automaticity. Students may respond to the text in meaningful ways through writing, discussing, or sketching.

During writing, students write for extended periods of time on self-selected topics. They write on a variety of topics in a variety of genres with explicit instruction from the teacher on both content (staying focused, adding details, for example), conventions (grammar and structure) and craft (deciding whether or not to use first or third person, circular endings, etc.). Some pieces will be taken through the "writing process” undergoing revisions and editing until the piece is ready for publication.

During both independent reading and writing, the teacher confers with students one-on-one, prompts the use of the strategies, discusses various aspects of the text, and learns about each student as a reader and writer.

**Conferring**

A Reading or Writing Conference is a time when the teacher works one-on-one with a student to teach the student what s/he needs to learn about reading or writing. The teacher uses the conference to assess (research) what the student needs to learn, to decide what to teach the student and then to teach the student. Some people think of a conference as a “private lesson".