

Study Guide for *The Literacy Workshop: Where Reading and Writing Converge*

By Maria Walther and Karen Biggs-Tucker

Dear Readers,

Connections...Much of our teaching lives are based on connections. Connections we have with our students, connections that make with each other, and connections that happen in daily learning. These connections can make the work of teaching more effective, but also more joyful. When we came together and began to think about the most important connections that our learners made during workshop time, we discovered that they were between reading and writing. Those connections brought joy, built bridges, and helped us run our workshop more efficiently. Now we want to invite you (and hopefully) a colleague or two...along to think about how you can make those connections in your own thinking about workshop. Join us as we share with you the connections that we made together on our learning journey as we thought about reading, writing, literacy and the joy of teaching alongside your learners!

Maria and Karen

Before you begin your book study, think about what you know about reading workshop and writing workshop.

- If you are currently implementing either or both, what are your successes? What works for you and your students? What challenges you as you work within your workshop time?
- If you aren't familiar with reading and writing workshop, what questions do you have about them? What are you wondering about how to implement them with your learners?

Reading Workshop:	Writing Workshop:

After completing the chart, read the Preview to *Literacy Workshop: Where Reading and Writing Converge* (pp. 1-3). How does this *shift your perspective* about workshop teaching?

Part 1: Exploring the Landscape of Literacy Workshop

Chapter 1: Framing the Literacy Workshop

Let's take a peek into a literacy workshop:

- Read pp. 7-9 and see what literacy workshop looks like in Maria's primary classroom and Karen's intermediate classroom. You may choose the one that best meets your instructional needs or read both because -- as we have learned through our conversations about workshop teaching -- we have more in common than not when it comes to instruction in our classrooms.

- What do you notice?

- How might you integrate one or more of these practices into your own workshop time?

Now, let's think about how reading and writing complement each other.

- Read pp. 10-15 and consider the important connections between reading and writing. These connections are the foundation on which literacy workshop is built and one that will strengthen the learning of your students as they explore their own learning.
- How are reading and writing connected in your own literacy life?

- What is one way that you might use your students' reading to help grow their writing within your literacy instruction?

- What is one way that you might use your students' writing to help grow their reading within your classroom literacy instruction?

Finally, let's consider a new view of your literacy instruction and workshop time.

- Read pp. 16-17 and begin to think about the connections between what you know and what is possible. Write one or two ideas here after you read these pages. What are you pondering after reading this section of the book?

- As you think about how reading and writing are connected to each other, now is the time to ponder a new view of what workshop might look like. How might the lines between your own reading and writing workshops, blur allowing a literacy workshop to emerge?

- What are some of the behaviors that your students show as readers and writers that overlap? (Those behaviors are the common threads that become a starting point for your literacy workshop.) How might you use this as a starting point for your literacy workshop time?

Chapter 2: Planning for Literacy Workshop – Behind the Scenes

As you begin to plan your own literacy workshop, think about how your mindset will help cultivate the teacher actions that will make you (and your students) successful. Teacher actions (p.20) will help you plan your instruction that will guide your learners to success in their reading and writing.

Two important questions helped us (and will help you) prepare for this important work:

- How will my teaching moves during literacy workshop look the same, yet different than my current practices?

- How will I decide when to do literacy workshop with my students?

Students will be one of your most important guides in knowing when and how to make your move to literacy workshop. What are some of the cues that students will give you that will guide your planning to help you know that they are ready for literacy workshop setting?

What do you know about the workshop model of instruction that will help guide you as you move yourself, your instruction, and your students into literacy workshop?

One of the most important tenets of workshop is the “support and send out” model of instruction. How might you use this in your classroom literacy instruction to support your readers and writers? How would it support their independence and growth as literacy learners?

Take a look at the chart on p. 27-28 and ponder how teacher actions from reading workshop and writing workshop converge together to support learners in literacy workshop. What do you notice about how your instruction from reading and writing workshop will support your transition into a literacy workshop?

Teach Demonstration Lessons: Target Integrated Big Ideas

Let's take a look at how lessons are planned to blur the lines between reading and writing within literacy workshop. (pp. 29-34). We use the following teacher actions to help as we plan literacy workshop experiences for our students. What do you notice about each of these teacher actions and how will they engage learners in the process of reciprocity between reading and writing? What might these teacher actions look like with your own students in your own literacy workshop?

- Anchor Learning in Literature

- Converse to Grow Thinkers and Learners

- Demonstrate Strategies and Habits of Literate Citizens

- Record Thinking and Learning

Facilitate Learner Actions: Independent Actions

Now let's take a look at what students are doing as you begin to release responsibility to your learners. (pp. 35-39). These instructional practices allow your readers and writers to begin to take ownership of their literacy learning. What do you notice about each of these learner actions that will help your students as they do the work of readers and writers during workshop time? What might they look like in your own classrooms? How might you support your readers and writers to independence?

- Let Them Go: Application in Practice

- Sit Among Learners: Small-Group Support

- Sit Beside Learners: Individual Conferences

Share and Celebrate: Synthesize New Understandings (p. 36)

What are some ways that you celebrate learning with your students? How do those celebrations help readers and writers grow in their confidence to better understand who they are as literacy learners?

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Chapter 3: Launching the Literacy Workshop – Developing a Purposeful and Joyful Learning Community

Now that you've spend some time considering the thinking that underscores converging reading and writing workshop into literacy workshop and the actions that both teachers and students are involved in during workshop, you're ready to launch your own literacy workshop time. Remember that your workshop time will be as unique as you and your literacy learners. So, as you move forward, think about how you will use the routines that you have established in both reading and writing workshop to help students transition to literacy workshop time.

Great books are a wonderful way to engage learners with literacy workshop routines. The chart on pp. 49-50 suggest a few titles that you might use. Which ones might you like to share with your readers and writers?

What books of your own might add to that list that could engage your students with reading, writing, and the literacy connection?

Involving your students in a shared definition of literacy workshop is one way to not only build community, but to also help them build an understanding of what the “work” of workshop will look like on a daily basis. See pp. 53-59 for ideas on how to engage learners in a variety of ways. How might this look for your own students?

One of our favorite things about literacy workshop is that it builds on the routines of both reading and writing workshop...blending into routines for literacy workshop. See the chart on p. 62 with some of the learner actions/routines (and read more about them on pp. 63-71) that help students grow in their reading and writing each day! How might you support your learners as they practice these actions in literacy workshop?

- Read and/or write

- Research topics of interest

- Create products

- Converse to deepen understanding as readers and writers

- Write about learning

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Chapter 4: Fostering Independence and Engagement During Literacy Workshop

As we see our students transfer routines they have learned from reading and writing workshop time, we see a level of engagement that fosters independence. That is one of our goals as educators and also one of our greatest joys as we create experiences that move our students to become independent, successful literacy learners.

In Chapter 4, we introduce the instructional habits and strategies that move students to independence during literacy workshop. Consider each of these and how they might manifest during your own literacy workshop time. What might they look like? How will you know that students are engaged in their literacy learning and moving toward independence during literacy workshop time?

- Question – Teach questioning stances

- Plan – Promote proactive planning

- Investigate – Invite investigation

- Innovate – Inspire innovation

- Reflect – Encourage reflection

Part 2: Zooming In – Literacy Workshop Demonstration Lessons

Now it's time for you to begin to make the connections between literacy, learning, workshop, and your own students. We have taken some of the experiences that have been most meaningful during our own literacy workshop time and shared them with you, but we know how important it is to take ownership of that learning to make it belong to you and your students. So, we encourage you to try these demonstration lessons, think about what worked well during your workshop time, then reflect on what you might tweak as you move forward with this learning with your readers and writers. Also, consider additional book titles you have on your shelves that could extend these lessons as you reinforce this learning throughout the year, increasing the complexity of the text or providing additional opportunities to continue the conversation about how literacy enriches our lives!

For each of each of the big ideas to guide your literacy workshop, we share some foundational research and then a demonstration lesson with a mentor text (along with additional mentor text selections), followed by conversation possibilities to grow the thinking of your literacy learners, suggestions to demonstrate habits and behaviors, ways for learners to record their thinking, and, finally, ideas for what is next in your students' learning. We encourage you to try each of the demonstration lessons and use the reproducible reflection sheet on the following page to consider what went well instructionally, what you learned about your students' successes, and how you might adapt that lesson to better meet their needs.

DEMONSTRATION LESSONS - REFLECTION SHEET

Chapter: _____

Big Idea: _____

- What did you learn about the research behind the big idea presented in this chapter and how it applies to literacy workshop?

- When implementing this demonstration with your students what went well?

- What did you learn about your students' successes as they were conversing to show their thinking, demonstrating their habits and behaviors, and recording their thinking?

- How might you adapt this lesson moving forward to better meet the needs of your students?

We began this guide thinking about the importance of connections and we return to that idea as we wrap things up. We trust that you have made many new connections throughout this guide. Connections that validated authentic, engaging, and valuable literacy practices already in place in your classroom that you can easily incorporate into your literacy workshop. Connections that helped you reconsider certain routines in ways that will engage your students as readers and writers during literacy workshop time, making your instructional day run more efficiently. And finally, connections that have stretched your thinking, challenging you to try something new and allowing your literacy learners to grow in new ways as they make connections among reading, writing, and one another during a reimagined workshop time. Maybe you have even made a connection to a new colleague, one with whom you'll be able to share books, teaching ideas, and excitement as your students experience success. Success... because of the time you invested in capitalizing on the ways reading and writing converge in literacy workshop.

Enjoy reading, writing, and loving literacy!

Maria and Karen