

What is Accountable Talk?

A way of talking based on accountability to knowledge, reasoning and community. Accountable talk promotes learning by regularly discussion of academic content that requires students to explain, connect, compare and contrast, provide evidence from text, and use other principles of rigorous thinking in their talking. (Speaking & Listening Standards, 2000)

In accountable talk we come to an intellectual exchange willing to see and hear something new in the exchange and actually creating a newer, stronger understanding because of the exchange. (Bohm, 1996)

Talk that makes students learn is accountable talk. Students need to listen—really listen—to one another. In accountable discourse, students take one another's remarks seriously and respond directly to them: using a statement of evidence supporting a proposition; refuting a statement by offering supporting evidence... If students are to learn from each other they simply can't make bald assertions. They must be able to back up their statements with evidence. (Resnick, 1999)



In accountable talk, we attempt to call forth the best the other person has to offer and put forth the best we can imagine. It requires thoughtful listening and responding. It is a time when participants collaborate and co-produce meaning. Where learning is concerned, I believe the kind of talk to be prized above all others. (Peterson, 1992)

It is talk—by both teachers and students—that responds to and further develops what others in the class have said. It puts forth and demands knowledge that is accurate and relevant to the issue under discussion. Accountable talk uses evidence appropriate to the discipline (e.g., proofs in mathematics, data from investigations in science, textual references in literature) and follows established norms of good reasoning. Accountable talk sharpens students' thinking by reinforcing their ability to use and create knowledge. (Michaels and O'Connor, 2002)

A central feature of accountable talk is keeping talk anchored in the text. We want children to support their thoughts by returning to the text for evidence. It is important that children develop the ability to talk at length on one idea. (Bracewell, 2005)

Accountable talk is classroom talk that is accountable to the learning. In the accountable talk model, students are able to discuss a topic around what they are reading and studying. Students carry on the discussion with minimal interference from the teacher. (LeSchack, 2007)

Components of a Balanced Literacy Framework

Daily	As often as Possible
Reading Workshop 	Shared Reading *
Writing Workshop 	Interactive Writing
Read Aloud with Accountable Talk	Shared Writing
Word Study (Phonics, Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar, etc...)	Story Time
Small Group Instruction (Guided Reading/Strategy Lessons/Interventions)	Inquiry/Choice Time
	Arts

* Shared reading is most likely a daily component in all Kindergarten and many first grade classrooms.

For your consideration:

- Which components of balanced literacy are your strongest? Why?
- Which components of balanced literacy are your most vulnerable? Why?
- As I plan, how might I align the components of balanced literacy so that they support/and or complement each other? (Instructional Synergy)
- How do I kid-watch and assess during the components of balanced literacy so that they are useful in helping me plan instruction for reading and writing workshop? (Assessment-Based Instruction)
- Is the work my students do in the various components evident in their independent reading and writing work? (Accountability and Standards)
- As I look at my instructional plans across a week, a month, is there balance among the components? (Curricular Planning)