K-6 Literacy Learning Activity Types[1, 2]

Teaching K-6 literacy is a complex instructional task that requires knowledge of how children learn to read and write. The K-6 literacy learning activity types identified here attempt to simplify the complexity of teaching a child to read and write by subdividing these processes into manageable learning activities that effectively integrate technology, pedagogy and content. This list of literacy learning activity types is offered as a preliminary organizational structure to help scaffold teachers' thinking about how one might design engaging literacy learning activities that challenge young learners to read and write.

As one begins to think about all of the reading knowledge, skills and strategies that are included in teaching elementary literacy, it is easy to become a bit overwhelmed. Although there are several organizational structures that could be used to arrange this information into learning activity types, keeping the categories simple and related directly to the essential components of reading and writing seems most appropriate for primary grade levels. Thus, the K-6 literacy learning activity types focus on helping students develop two very important learning processes: reading and writing. There are also several subcategories within these two categories of activity types that address specific skills or strategies that are required in teaching children to read and write.

The Reading Process Activity Types

Successful readers thoroughly understand the processes involved in reading. The Reading Process activity types are divided into six subcategories that promote the processes involved in learning to read. Elementary children are typically taught specific literacy skills and strategies that they can use before they begin to read, while they read and after they read. Therefore the first three subcategories include: Pre-Reading activity types, During-Reading activity types, and Post-Reading activity types. Additional subcategories also must be included in this list because more skills are critical to the reading process and the development of good readers. These subcategories are components common to most beginning reading programs, and include Vocabulary activity types, Comprehension activity types, and Fluency activity types.

Each subcategory of the Reading Process activity types is presented in a separate table below that names the activity type, defines it, then suggests some technologies that might be used to support the particular type of learning activity named. In all tables that follow, although specific Web sites and software titles are listed to illustrate possibilities for appropriate technologies to

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[1] Suggested citation (APA format, 6th ed.):

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use to support each learning activity type, the authors do not specifically endorse any of these commercial products.

The Pre-Reading Activity Types

The goal of the pre-reading activity types is to prepare students for reading and to activate their prior knowledge before they read.

Table 1: The Pre-Reading Activity Types

Activity Type	Brief Description	Example Technologies
Develop Alphabetic Knowledge	Students name the letters of the alphabet and recognize the letter symbols in print	Educational software (e.g., Bailey's Bookhouse), Read•Write•Think, digital alphabet books, LeapFrog Tag books, Gamequarium (online), interactive whiteboard
Develop Phonemic Awareness	Students hear, identify and manipulate sounds in words	Educational Curriculum software (e.g., JumpStart Phonics), Living Books, podcastinging, Gamequarium (online), Read•Write•Think, interactive whiteboard
Develop Decoding Skills	Students learn the connections between letter patterns and the sounds they represent	Educational software (e.g., Reader Rabbit Series), Reading Pen, interactive whiteboard, Gamequarium (online), Read•Write•Think
Develop Vocabulary	Students are introduced to and learn unfamiliar key words before they read	Educational software (e.g., Clifford the Big Red Dog Series, I Spy), Read•Write•Think, Reading Pen, interactive whiteboard, video clips
Build Interest	Students are oriented (by listening and/or watching) to the reading that they are about to begin	Presentation software, video clips, audiorecordings
Activate Prior Knowledge	Students think about what they already know about the topic prior to reading	Presentation software, word processing software, concept mapping software, video clips, student response system ("clickers"), interactive whiteboard
Make Predictions	Students make predictions about text that will be read	Presentation software, word processing software, video clips, student response system ("clickers")

The During-Reading Activity Types

The goal of the during-reading activity types is to develop readers who check their understanding as they read, integrating their new understanding with existing knowledge.

Table 2: The During-Reading Activity Types

Activity Type	Brief Description	Example Technologies
Read Aloud	Students actively listen to an oral reading of a book	Document camera, Storyline Online, BookFlix, e-books, educational software (e.g., WiggleWorks), podcasting, Leap Frog Tag books
Think Aloud	Students say out loud what they are thinking while reading	Storyline Online, BookFlix, e-books, audiorecording
Ask Questions	Students ask questions about what they are reading; individually, in small groups and/or in large groups	Word processing software, discussion board, blogging comments, audiorecording
Take Notes	Students record essential ideas about what they are reading	Word processing software, wiki, audiorecording, concept mapping software
Guided Reading	Students learn how to think about text by reading in small groups, engaging in discussion, and completing a mini-lesson/learning activity	e-books, BookFlix, WiggleWorks
Directed Listening/Thinking Activity (DL-TA)	Students predict and respond to a story while the teacher reads	Storyline Online, BookFlix, e-books, WiggleWorks, podcasting, student response system ("clickers")
Directed Reading/Thinking Activity (DR-TA)	Students make predictions about a story and then read to confirm or reject their predictions	Storyline Online, BookFlix, e-books, WiggleWorks, podcasting, student response system ("clickers")
Discussion	Students discuss text being read with the teacher, other students or another individual	BloggingBlogging, wiki, online discussion group, student response system ("clickers")
Whole Class Literature Study	Students participate in a literature study that includes reading aloud/along, whole-class/small-group discussions, and whole-class mini-lessons	e-books, Storyline Online, BookFlix, WiggleWorks, podcasting
Literature Circles	Students choose their own books, form small-groups and meet regularly to read and discuss the books	Storyline Online, BookFlix, e-books, bloggingblogging, wiki, online discussion group, podcasting

Reader's Workshop	Students participate in mini-lessons to teach reading strategies, spend time reading independently, and then meet to share, discuss and reflect	Storyline Online, BookFlix, e-books, bloggingblogging, wiki, online discussion group, podcasting
Book Club	Students read books, take part in peer-led discussions, and participate in a community sharing session	Storyline Online, BookFlix, e-books, bloggingblogging, wiki, online discussion group, podcasting
Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)	Students read silently for a designated period of time (10-30 minutes)	e-books, podcasting, Storyline Online, BookFlix
Independent Reading	Students make their own book choices, set independent reading goals and read for extended period of time	e-books, podcasting, Storyline Online, BookFlix

The Post-Reading Activity Types

The goal of the post-reading activity types is to assess students' interpretation and comprehension of the text that was read.

Table 3: The Post-Reading Activity Types

Activity Type	Brief Description	Example Technologies
Summarizing	Students summarize or paraphrase the major points of a story after reading it	Timeline creation software, Read•Write•Think, video creation software, podcasting, comic creation software, wiki, blogging, concept mapping software
Retelling	Students relate what they remember about a story	Timeline creation software, drawing software, video creation software, podcasting, comic creation software, wiki, blogging
Sharing	Students share information with others about books they have read or heard	Video creation software, podcastingpodcasting, video sharing sites (e.g., TeacherTube)

Visualizing	Students use images and visual imagery to recall what they remember about a story	Drawing software, word processing software, imaging software, digital photography, Read•Write•Think, comic creation software, interactive whiteboard
Discussing	Students discuss favorite parts or elements of a story	BloggingBlogging, wiki, online discussion group, student response system ("clickers")
Drawing Conclusions	Students use written or visual clues to figure out something that is not directly stated in the reading	Word processing software, educational simulation software (e.g., Decisions, Decisions), video creation software, presentation software. comic creation software, interactive whiteboard
Synthesizing	Students combine predominant elements/themes from multiple stories or books to develop new understanding	Word processing software, concept mapping software, presentation software, video creation software
Evaluating	Students form opinions, make judgments (e.g., determine importance), and develop ideas after reading	Read•Write•Think, word processing software, presentation software, student response systems ("clickers"), blogging
Quizzing/Testing	Students take a quiz or test about a story or a selection of text they read	Integrated learning system (e.g., Accelerated Reader), online quiz software, student response systems ("clickers")
Creating Projects/Artifacts	Students create a project (e.g., play script, report, book trailer) or artifact (e.g., 3D model, diorama) as a culminating activity that illustrates or applies what they have learned	Comic and/or video creation software, drawing software, presentation software, imaging software, podcasting, Read•Write•Think, video sharing sites (e.g., TeacherTube)

The Vocabulary Activity Types

The goal of the vocabulary learning activity types is to increase the number of words that are recognized and used by a reader.

Table 4: The "Vocabulary"

Activity Type	Brief Description	Example Technologies
Vocabulary Awareness	Students increase their knowledge of words by building sight vocabulary and understanding phonological and morphological patterns	Read•Write•Think , educational software, drawing software, interactive whiteboard, Reading Pen, video clips
Vocabulary Analysis	Students build and sort words to study their patterns	Word processing software, concept mapping software, educational software, Read•Write•Think, drawing software, interactive whiteboard
Vocabulary Use	Students study how words combine to form sentences	Read•Write•Think, word processing software, educational software, interactive whiteboard

The Comprehension Activity Types

The goal of the comprehension activity types is to ascertain a reader's understanding of a passage of text.

Table 5: The Comprehension Activity Types

Activity Type	Brief Description	Example Technologies
Cloze Technique	Students insert words that have been omitted as they read to complete and construct meaning from text	Cloze software, online "Mad Libs," word processing software, interactive whiteboard
Semantic Feature Analysis	Students use a grid to explore the similarities and differences among events, people, objects or ideas	Spreadsheet software, word processing software (tables), concept mapping software, interactive whiteboard
Graphic Organizers/Charts	Students use visual and graphic organizers that illustrate relationships among facts, terms or ideas	Concept mapping software, interactive whiteboard, word processing software
Cause and Effect	Students identify how an action or event will produce a certain response to the action in the form of another event	Concept mapping software, e-books, educational software, interactive whiteboard

Comparison and Contrast	Students identify how things are alike and different	Concept mapping software, e-books, educational software, Read•Write•Think, interactive whiteboard
Inference-Making	Students use clues to learn more about the story and make a conclusion or judgment based on that information	Educational software, e-books, interactive whiteboard
Story Pyramid	Students summarize a story by building a pyramid of information (e.g., describe main character, setting, state the problem)	Concept mapping software, e-books, word processing software
Picture Walk	Teacher guides students through text by looking at and discussing the pictures before reading	Document camera, presentation software, imaging software, interactive whiteboard
SQ3R	Students use a 5-step reading strategy (i.e., survey, question, read, recite, review) to formulate a purpose for reading	e-books, word processing software
Reciprocal Teaching	Students and teacher participate in dialogue structured by summarizing, question generating, clarifying and predicting to bring meaning to text	e-books, audiorecording, video creation software
Reciprocal Questioning (ReQuest)	Students analyze their comprehension while reading by developing questions to ask the teacher after reading a selection	e-books, audiorecording, word processing software
Point-of-View	Students identify the author's point of view and purpose	e-books, educational software, digital photography
Question-Answer Relationships (QAR)	Students search for answers based upon the type of question that was asked (e.g., Right there, Think and search, Author and you, On my own)	e-books, online newspapers/magazines
Think-Pair-Share	Students talk about the content they are reading by thinking about a question or prompt, pairing up with a student to discuss and sharing their thinking with rest of class	e-books, online newspapers/magazines, Web sites

Story Map	Students identify and map the basic elements of a story (i.e., setting, characters, problem/conflict, point of view, resolution)	Concept mapping software, Read•Write•Think, interactive whiteboard
3-2-1 Chart	Students summarize and rethink key ideas by listing: 3 things they found out, 2 interesting things, and 1 question they still have	Word processing software, spreadsheet software, concept mapping software

The Fluency Activity Types

The goal of using the fluency activity types is to improve a reader's speed or rate of reading and his/her ability to read with expression.

Table 6: The "Fluency" Activity Types

Activity Type	Brief Description	Example Technologies
Fluent Reading Modelling	Students listen to readers who read words fluently and automatically	Audiorecording, podcasting, video creation software, video sharing sites (e.g., TeacherTube), educational software, Storyline Online, BookFlix
Choral Reading	Students read aloud as an entire group in unison	Audiorecording, podcasting
Paired Reading	Student and a fluent reader read text together	Audiorecording, podcasting, educational software
Repeated Reading	Student reads the text aloud with a fluent reader, then rereads the text alone	Audiorecording, podcasting
Reader's Theater	Students perform an oral reading with an audience present using a script	Audiorecording, video recording, podcasting
Radio Reading	Student reads aloud a selection of text and then initiates a discussion with an audience by asking specific questions	Audiorecording, podcasting
Recitation	Students present a spoken performance of a speech or piece of poetry in public	Video/audiorecording, video sharing sites (e.g., TeacherTube)
Drama	Students perform, usually by memorization, a play or story for an audience	Video recording, digital storytelling, video sharing sites (e.g., TeacherTube), podcasting

| Storytelling | Students tell stories or narratives often by improvisation or embellishment | Digital storytelling, video creation software, audiorecording |
| Debate | Students hold a structured discussion by debating both sides of an issue/proposition | Audio/videorecording, podcasting |

The Writing Process Activity Types

Good readers are good writers. The writing process activity types include five subcategories of activities that promote the processes involved in learning how to write. Elementary children are typically involved in writing programs like Writer's Workshop and/or 6+1 Trait Writing to develop their writing skills. The three subcategories that contain activities related to the writing process include pre-writing, during writing, and post-writing activity types. Two other subcategories included here contain writing conventions and writing genres activity types.

Each subcategory of writing process activity types is presented in a separate table below, naming each activity type, defining it, and suggesting technologies to support its use for learning.

The Pre-Writing Activity Types

The goals of learning that is structured using pre-writing activity types are to prepare students for writing and to activate their prior knowledge before they write.

Table 7: The Pre-Writing Activity Types

Activity Type	Brief Description	Example Technologies
Brainstorming	Students list as many topics as possible to write about	Word processing software, concept mapping software, Read•Write•Think, interactive whiteboard
Concept Mapping	Students develop a visual or diagram that illustrates the relationships among concepts	Concept mapping software, timeline creation software, interactive whiteboard
Storyboarding	Students develop a series of panels that outline the sequence of what pictures will be seen and what audio and/or voice will accompany the pictures	Concept mapping software, timeline creation software, presentation software, interactive whiteboard, comic creation software
Visualizing	Students create mental images before they write	Drawing software, imaging software, Read•Write•Think
Freewriting	Students start writing and just keep going, not worrying about style or mistakes	Word processing software

Journaling	Students write journal entries to brainstorm topics of personal interest, to note observations and to reflect upon their thinking	Word processing software, bloggingblogging, wiki
Listing	Students generate a list of topics, phrases, and/or sentences before they begin to write	Word processing software, concept mapping software, interactive whiteboard
Organizing/Outlining	Students use a formal system of planning to think about and organize their writing	Word processing software, concept mapping software, Read•Write•Think, interactive whiteboard

The During-Writing Activity Types

The goal of the during-writing activity types is to develop writers who constantly improve their writing by revising, editing, and considering feedback from others.

Table 8: The During Writing Activity Types

Activity Type	Brief Description	Example Technologies
Drafting/Composing	Students write a draft of a story, putting ideas into sentences and paragraphs	Word processing software, wiki, Storybook Weaver Deluxe, drawing software, video creation software
Revising	Students improve their writing by adding details, rearranging information, deleting information, and/or replacing information	Word processing software, drawing software, video creation software, collaborative word processing software
Editing	Students correct mechanics, grammar and spelling	Word processing software, collaborative word processing software
Responding	Students offer suggestions to peers for improving content, organization and clarity of writing piece	Word processing software, podcasting, videoconference, educational software, collaborative word processing software
Conferencing	Students meet with teachers and/or peers to discuss and evaluate a piece of writing	Collaborative word processing software, podcasting, videoconference

The Post-Writing Activity Types

The goal of the post-writing activity types is to provide opportunities for students to share, publish, evaluate and present their final writing pieces to an audience.

Table 9: The Post-Writing Activity Types

Activity Type	Brief Description	Example Technologies
Sharing	Students orally share their writing with peers/others	Audiorecording, presentation software, podcasting, collaborative word processing software
Publishing	Students publish their writing for peers/others	Word processing software, drawing software, video creation software, presentation software, podcastingpodcastinging, digital storytelling, online publishing sites, Read•Write•Think
Evaluating	Students evaluate writing of peers and provide feedback	Word processing software, bloggingblogging, online discussion group, wiki
Presentating	Students combine textual and visual elements to present their writing for peers/others	Presentation software, drawing software, video creation software
Performing	Students present a dramatic performance of their writing for peers/others	Audio/videorecording, presentation software, podcasting

The Writing Conventions Activity Types

The goal of the writing conventions activity types is to develop writers who can enhance the readability of their writing pieces.

Table 10: The Writing Conventions Activity Types

Activity Type	Brief Description	Example Technologies
Letter/Word Formation	Students write/type lowercase and uppercase letters; students write/type words (i.e., root, prefix, suffix)	Word processing software, interactive whiteboard, drawing software, Read•Write•Think
Word Choice	Students choose words appropriately to communicate meaning clearly	Word processing software, vocabulary Web sites, interactive whiteboard

Sentence/ Paragraph-Writing	Students construct complete sentences and combine sentences to compose a paragraph (topic sentence, supporting details, closing sentence)	Word processing software, drawing software, interactive whiteboard
Spelling	Students use correct spelling when writing	Word processing software, educational software, Gamequarium (online), interactive whiteboard, student response system ("clickers")
Mechanics	Students use correct punctuation and capitalization when writing	Word processing software, Gamequarium (online), interactive whiteboard
Grammar	Students use formal rules about language usage including parts of speech when writing	Word processing software, Gamequarium (online) Read•Write•Think, student response system ("clickers"), interactive whiteboard

The Writing Genres Activity Types

The goal of the writing genres activity types is for students to write across genres, understanding form, purpose and content for each. The activity types are listed in the table below.

Table 11: The Writing Genres

Activity Type	Brief Description	Example Technologies
Descriptive	Students describe people, places, objects, or events using details	Word processing software, Read•Write•Think, audiorecording, comic creation software, presentation software
Expository/ Informative	Students give information or convey an idea to another person	Word processing software, podcastingpodcastinging, drawing software, comic creation software, presentation software, video creation software
Narrative	Students tell a story from a particular point of view	Word processing software, Storybook Weaver, Read•Write•Think, drawing software, comic creation software

Summary	Students analyze information and then restate in their own words	Word processing software, presentation software, Glogster, drawing software, comic creation software, imaging software
Persuasive	Students present a case for or against a particular position	Word processing software, Read•Write•Think, presentation software
Technical/Procedural	Students explain instructions or directions for completing a task	Word processing software, presentation software, video creation software, comic creation software
Poetry	Students express imaginative awareness by using repetition, meter and/or rhyme	Word processing software, Read•Write•Think, drawing software, comic creation software, presentation software, audiorecording
Creative	Students express their thoughts and feelings in a unique way	Word processing software, Storybook Weaver, Read•Write•Think, drawing software, comic creation software, video creation software, presentation software
Transactional	Students write to communicate ideas with each other	Email, bloggingblogging, wiki, online discussion group, Read•Write•Think