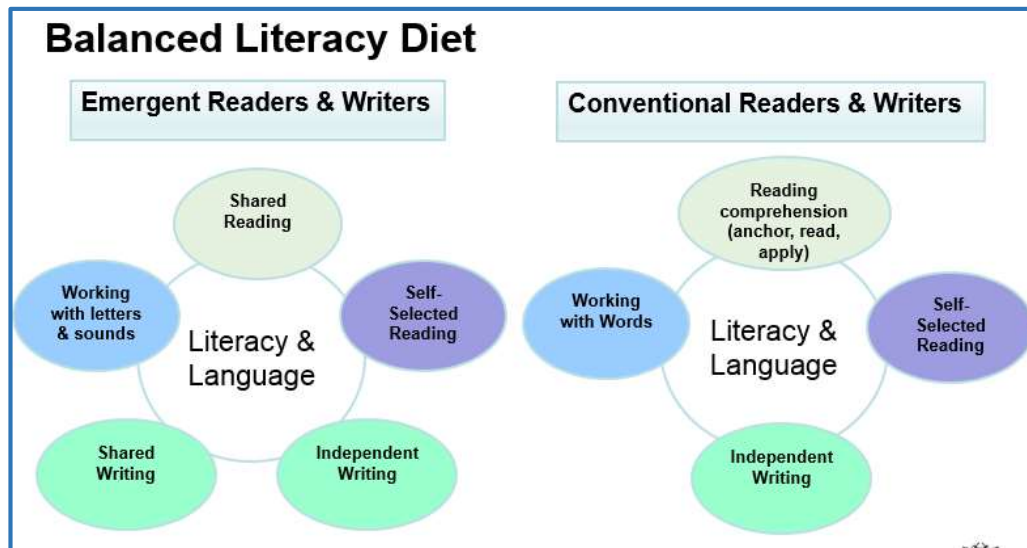


Balanced Literacy

The concept of “A Balanced Literacy Diet” (Hall & Williams 2000) involves exposure and practice with all aspects of literacy on a daily basis. Reading to and with students, providing opportunities for them to read by themselves, writing for and with students and providing opportunities for students to write by themselves.



At Western Suburbs State Special School teachers collect data at the start of each semester using research based assessment tools which are appropriate for students with complex communication needs. By carrying out diagnostic assessment and interpreting this information staff are able to make informed decisions to provide differentiated instruction that meets the needs of both emergent and conventional literacy learners within their class groups.

Western Suburbs has invested in a number of services and consultants to ensure the staff are provided current and ongoing professional learning and support in delivering effective balanced literacy programs. Jane Farrall is an Australian literacy consultant with experience both as a Special Education teacher and a Speech Language Pathologist. Jane has extensive knowledge of effective literacy practice for students with a disability which she presents regularly at conferences across Australia and international events. Haylee Parfett is a highly regarded Speech Language Pathologist who is also supporting the school in effectively using augmented communication. Both consultants are providing whole school professional development, in-class coaching and modelling to support teachers implementing current evidence based practices to develop the students' communication and literacy skills.

Balanced literacy is the schools overarching priority for 2017 and its delivery is enhanced by the use of explicit teaching which underpins the school's pedagogical framework. Another very important aspect of balanced literacy in our school is how resources are differentiated to support all students accessing the different aspects of the literacy lessons. Teachers are supported to consider and use the most effective “pencil” for individual students, use electronic or adapted books and innovative letter and phonics resources to enhance student engagement.