## Sample Parent Newsletter About Reading (page 22)

Throughout the year, Tim O'Keefe watches for opportunities to share with parents what is important to him about reading and writing processes. He is constantly taking pictures and considering stories and work samples to include in newsletters. Through careful kidwatching and being sensitive to the messages that parents are sending to their children about literacy (such as Maria's father's view that reading is mainly a process of sounding out words), he coaches as well as inspires parents. Here is a sample newsletter that contains his beliefs about research and reading.

3/16/18


Dear Friends,


Comparing different types of solids. Sugar and salt.

Thanks to those of you who could make it to our Curriculum Night last night. The big topic was our South Carolina history projects. You could probably tell that the kids are in different places when it comes to research. Having the Chrome Books has helped as far as finding valuable information. Taking notes about what is truly important is more challenging. But the kids are helping each other and I do my best to model the research and writing process. This week we have focused mainly on reading, learning, writing, and organizing. I think so far, so good. I'll ask the kids to take their notebooks home again this weekend to see if they can fill in a few more areas with research notes. Next week we'll begin the actual drafting on the computers.


Solids in solution.

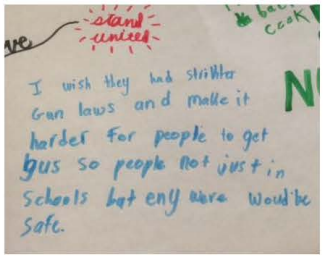

SC researchers.

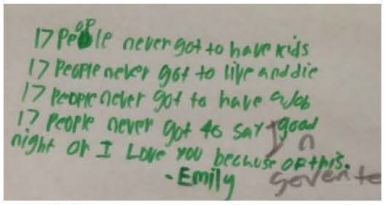

Our "walkout" to bring attention to school violence was so meaningful.

We are enjoying our literature study of *The One and Only Ivan*. This is a reminder of how amazing it is to watch and be a part of children growing as readers. This isn't an easy book. It is probably considered on grade level or above. It is pretty straightforward with the plot – told from the point of view of a single character. But it is also a challenging read because some of the humans in the story are cruel to animals. That is hard to read about. While this is a fictional story, it does make us aware of some of mankind's faults. And our kids are passionate about right and wrong. But not all of the humans are mean. We will soon find out that people are very different. Some are kind, generous, sacrificing. Some are able to see something wrong and do something about it. Isn't that just like the real world around us? Isn't that who we want our kids to be?

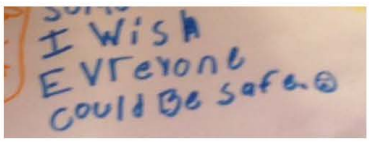
Samples of kids' writing during the walkout.

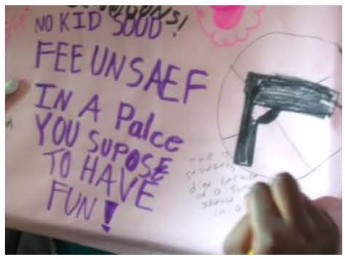
I've made sure that *Ivan* isn't the only reading we do. While we have three assignments during the week, there is plenty of time to read whatever the kids choose. We have time set aside in the class for kids to read independently. So they read *Captain Underpants, Dear Dumb Diary, The Last Kids on Earth, Heroes in Training, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Dork Diaries, Ranger Rick* (nature magazine) *Horrible Harry, Geronimo Stilton, Animorphs* - and so much more. That's the way it should be. We need to have literary exercises and shared reading so we can share and have grand conversations. But kids also need to decide who they are as readers, what books they are passionate about.



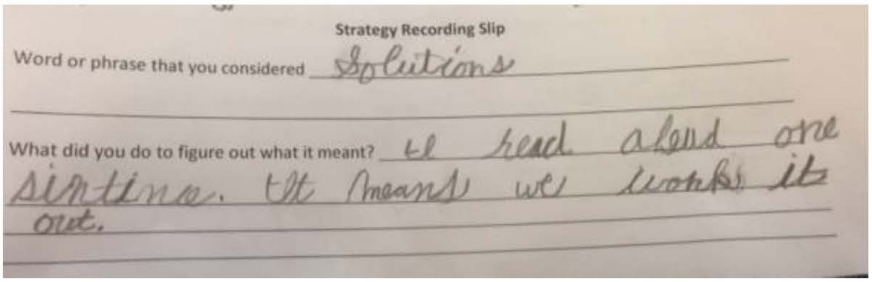




This last week we have had a couple of exercises we call *Mystery Reader*. During this time I play a recording of a mystery reader for the kids to hear. We hear the reader and read along with the same text. We stop the recording and talk about what we notice the reader is doing. We pay close attention to miscues, intonation, and strategies. The children listen as I ask questions to the reader about what happened in the text, what their strategies are when they come to an unknown word or difficult passage. In short, we are all doing what teachers do when we read with and coach children to become stronger readers. The class' insights are amazing. We are not just learning about what a single reader does, *we discover what we do as readers*, we think about our own strategies. As a result we have a variety of powerful meaning-making strategies at our disposal when we read. I hope that we get to share our Mystery Reader Project with you in person. I think you'll be amazed.

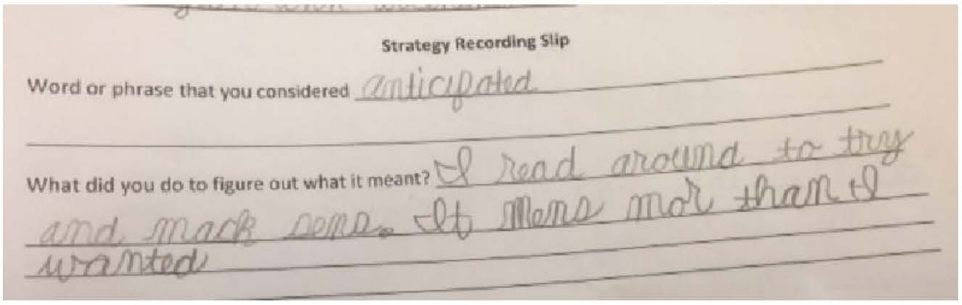


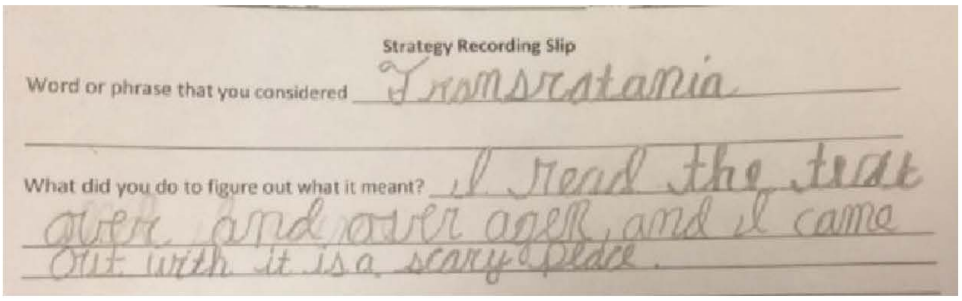

Another thing we do with reading is simply called *strategy sharing*. Often during our independent reading time (IR) kids will record what they did to uncover the meaning of a word or passage when they are reading. After IR time, they'll share out what the tricky part was and how they figured out its meaning. Here are three from today.




"I read ahead one sentence [and then came back to the word]. It means we work it out.




I read around to try and make sense. It means – more than I wanted.



Strategy Recording Slip

Word or phrase that you considered Transylvania

What did you do to figure out what it meant? I read the text over and over again and I came out with it is a scary place.

I read the text over and over again and I came out with... it is a scary place. [This was actually the real word in her book!]

By making kids aware of what we do as successful readers, and not simply giving them reading exercises, they teach themselves (and each other) useful strategies for reading. Our class is a group of SOLID READERS. Every child has grown in the complexity of books they select (although some seem to get a little stuck in series for a while... (*Dork Diaries, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Calvin and Hobbes*, etc.). I see it when I read their written responses to what they read. I hear it through conversations about books and authors, and about the literature study books we have shared. I push them as readers, but they also push each other. That is one the best parts of living and learning in an inquiry classroom. Inquiring into the reading process is one of the most interesting things there is about being a teacher and a learner at CFI.

Enjoying some of Ilee and Sabrina's homemade bread.

The kids have taken their notebooks home with them to work on their research. You may want to help them find websites, or books, or even point out articles for them to bring to class next week.

Thanks for reading and thanks for all that you do to support your young learners.

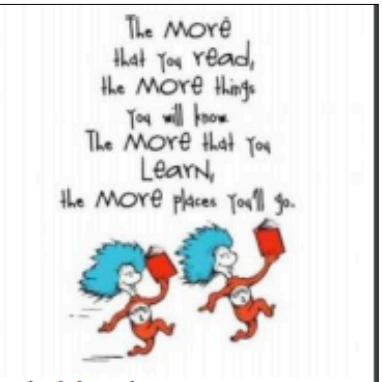
Sharing our research on Curriculum Night.

## Sample Parent Newsletter About Reading Logs (page 27)

Tim O'Keefe' wrote this newsletter with two goals in mind:

1. To help parents understand how he gets to know their children as readers and

2. To explain the purpose and process of reading logs.




8/26/16

Dear Friends,

With our first full week of school behind us, things are going well. There are still some sleepy heads in the afternoons. There is still some confusion about how to do things like homework and what to do with the artifacts in the science area. We are still getting used to our schedule and routines. I'm still getting to know my new little friends and they are still adjusting to my quirky sense of humor. It's all about as normal as a new school year can be.

I've read one-on-one with almost everyone. I'll make sure to get with all of the children for this important part of getting acquainted by the beginning of next week. How else could I coach without knowing our young readers? For this first round of reading, I have asked the kids to bring up whatever they are currently reading to read with me. That tells me a lot about the children. Are they selecting familiar and easy-to-read books? Are they challenging themselves? Are they trying to read something that is too challenging? Do they have favorite authors (Dr. Seuss)? Genres (fairy tales, comic books)? Subjects (dinosaurs, fairies)? All of this tells me a lot.

We had our first meeting with the USC Tall Teachers this week. It was a fun way to begin our journey together.

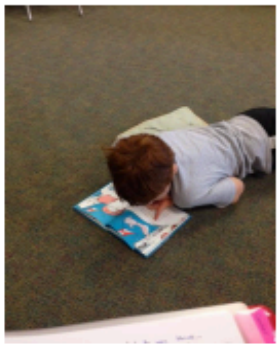
As I listen I record notes about confidence, fluency, miscues and strategies. I have been asking the children what they think about reading and what ways they could grow as readers. It is fascinating. I've gotten very diverse responses that range from *I don't really like reading. It's hard for me* – to - *I love reading. You learn all these stories that you can tell your kids when you grow up.* Of course we want everyone to love reading. Learning to read is harder for some than others. I'm not worried. We'll get there.

I know it sounds almost too basic, but *children learn to read BY reading*. Sure, we can give them strategies, help them to use context clues, focus on letter sounds in context. But we can't do the reading for them. They need to spend time in books. Here are three important ways to help develop your child as a reader. 1) *Read to them*. Sharing bedtime stories, listening to recorded books, having conversations about books that you have read – all of this makes reading a lovely experience and develops strength for understanding and appreciating literature. 2) *Read with them.* This can be done by taking turns reading pages, paragraphs or sentences. This gives you a chance to model good reading habits as well as be an effective (but gentle) reading coach. 3) *Encourage them to read to you.* While you are preparing dinner, in the car on the way home from school, folding laundry – this gives children a caring and thoughtful audience and builds confidence. It is also another opportunity to

stop and talk about stories. What YOU do with your children makes a huge difference in their growth as readers. I'd love to hear what you do to make reading special at your home. If you let me know I'll pass that on in future newsletters.

Let me explain a couple of our classroom structures and routines. First, the **reading logs**. I mentioned that children learn to read BY reading. So, one of the most consistent homework assignments is for the children to read for at least 15 minutes a day (you may have to help with the section for recording how many minutes were spent reading) . The log is for the kids to respond to what they have read. Two or three sentences are enough for now. That's it. The reading log is really wide open. The kids can read whatever they want from books to comics to children's magazines. I'd like for you to sign the log each night so that I can be sure that you are aware of the homework being done. The writing doesn't have to be perfect, but read it over if you have the chance. Don't worry about correcting everything, but I have noticed some coaching with spelling or places where parents have modeled conventional spelling. It is a daily connection with reading and writing that definitely pays off.

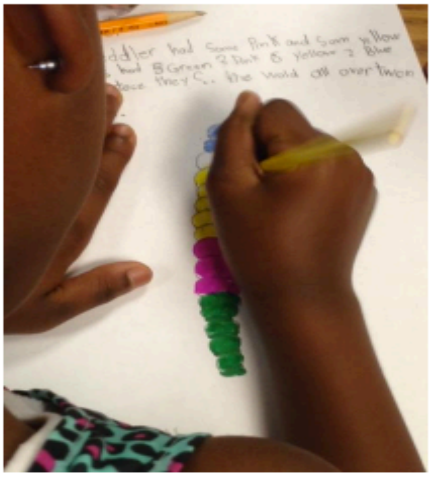
Today I sent home a couple sheets of addition problems that the children did in class. This practice is timed and the goal is to get the children comfortable with the math facts so that eventually they won't have to use their fingers for adding and subtracting (end eventually multiplying and dividing). Don't worry. Like everything else, some children are faster at this kind of thing than others. There is no competition. I ask that children not even share their scores with each other. We won't overdo it. The reason we do these is for the children to be fluent and flexible with math facts. They are much more likely to be able to handle complex math if they don't have to figure out simple math facts every time. Plus, we'll end up graphing these and using them as one sign of growth. Most of the math we do is not simply drill.



Before I close I have a favor to ask you. Would you please write to me about your child? What would you like for me to know about your precious one? Since you know your child better than I ever will, you are the ones to ask. You may want to ask your child to help compose your letter. What are some fears, delights, accomplishments, pet peeves? What are strengths, special skills, sensitivities and areas we should work on? You can email me or write a good old fashioned letter. Any insights that you share with me can only help to make me a more effective teacher. Know that any information you share will be strictly confidential. I want to thank you in advance for the time and energy you put into this.

From time to time, the newsletter will contain an assignment to be done at home with you and your child. I might ask for the kids to read an article to you, to have a written conversation, to gather information and create a graph. The children might be asked to interview you or to write a story with you. But this week, the homework is simply a request for any information you want to share with me so that I might better meet the needs of your child.

Thanks for reading. If you have questions or topics you would like for me to discuss in the newsletters let me know. Have a great weekend. Tim



## Sample Note About Shoebox Autobiographies (page 33)

Date:

Dear _____'s Family,

I am so excited to be working with your child this year! I have a wonderful group of students, and I want them all to feel special.

To help me get to know the children, I'm asking them to bring in six to seven items that represent what's important to them. The items can be photos, favorite objects, toys, and even drawings of things your child loves or loves to do. Please be sure your child includes something she or he enjoys reading or would like to be able read: a book, a magazine, comics—even a cereal box!

Have your child put the items in a bag or shoebox, which she or he can decorate to make it special. I'll take a picture of your child with the collection so everyone can remember it, and send the items home the day she or he shares them.

I know your child is going make a real difference for all of us, and I thank you for helping me. Please feel free to call me at _____ if you have any questions.

All good wishes,

## Information About the *The Show Me Book* and *The Show Me Book for Young Readers* (page 45)

### The Show Me Book

**For students in kindergarten and early first grade**

Possible concepts to observe and teach:

| **Grades K–1 Book-Handling and Literacy Concepts** | |
|---|---|
| • Where to start reading (left and right pages) | • Show last letter of a word |
| • Left to right directionality | • Show one word and two words |
| • Top to bottom directionality | • Locate known words (such as yes and no) |
| • Return sweep at end of line | • Read simple text (such as "I like to read and write?" |
| • Show one letter and two letters | • Write known words |
| • Show first letter of a word | • Write and read their name |

**When introducing the engagement to the class, you might say:** "Over the next few weeks, I am going to hold reading conferences with each of you—a time in which we will talk one-on-one. During that time, we are going to read a book together, and I'm going to ask you to show me some of the things you know about storybooks that you and I read together. I want to understand more about each of you as a reader and know better how to help you grow."

**When meeting with a student, you might say:**

"We are going to talk about this book together. I will ask you to show me some things you notice in the book, to point to some things, and to write some things you know how to write."

(Plan for approximately 15 minutes per student.)

## The Show Me Book for Young Readers

**For students in the middle to end of first through third grade**

Possible nonfiction concepts to observe and teach:

| **Grades 1–3 Book Handling and Literacy Concepts** | |
|---|---|
| • Locate title page | • Identify question mark, period, exclamation point, quotation marks |
| • Point, match, and read title | • Locate correct picture referenced in text |
| • Locate title, author | • Identify caption |
| • Identify type of text | • Use context to define a word |
| • Locate and use table of contents | • Make prediction |
| • Find foreword from table of contents | • Confirm prediction |
| • Describe purpose of forward | • Retell/summarize information from text and other information formats |
| • Locate glossary | • Discuss contents of the book |
| • Locate information from a heading | • Scan pictures, captions, diagrams, and/or labels to derive information |
| • Show were to start reading main text | • Interpret diagrams, captions, information from labels, and graphs |

**When introducing the engagement to the class, you might say:** "Over the next few weeks, I am going to hold reading conferences with each of you. During that time, we will talk one on one and I may ask you to read parts of an informational book to me. I want to understand more about each of you as a reader and know better how to help you grow."

**When meeting with a student, you might say:**

"We are going to use this book together. I will ask you to locate some information, and use graphs, charts, or other things found in informational books, like the table of contents or the glossary. At times, I might ask you to skim or read to answer questions. We will also talk about what we learn as we read some of the book."

## The Advanced Show Me Book (page 45)

[DSN: Insert PDF of the book, *From Surfing to Skateboarding*]

## The Teacher's Edition for the Advanced Show Me Book (page 45)

[DSN: Insert PDF of the Teacher's Edition for *From Surfing to Skateboarding*]

## Two Additional Examples of Skinny Miscue Analysis (page 64)

## Example 1: Taber's Reading of *Sally's Tricks* (DeFord, 2004)

Based on Typescript, Skinny Miscue Analysis, and Observations

Typescript

**Oral Reading Assessment Form**

BENCHMARK 2 *Sally's Tricks*

Student _____ Teacher/Tester _____ Grade _____ School _____ Date _____

| Pg # | *Sally's Tricks* | Student Reading | Errors | Corrections |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 (T): | Sally likes to play tricks. | | | |
| 4 (T): | Sally put a phone in the closet. | | | |
| 6 (S): | Sally put a bug in a box. | ① spider | | |
| 8 (S): | Sally put a hat in a chair. | ② on the couch | | |
| 10 (S): | Sally put a book in the car. | | | |
| 12 (S): | Sally put a plant in the refrigerator. | ③ flower | | |
| 13 (T): | No more tricks, Sally! | | | |
| 14 (S): | Sally put the plant in the window. | ④ sun | | |
| | | Totals | | |

32 ■ Reading & Writing Assessment Portfolio • Part One (This page may be reproduced for classroom use.)

## Skinny Miscue Analysis

| | Semantics | | | Graphophonics | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Y | P | N | Y | P | N |
| 1 | X | | | | | X |
| 2 | X | | | | | X |
| 3 | X | | | | | X |
| 4 | X | | | | | X |
| Total | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Percent | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 |

**Observations**

Taber's teacher, Mr. Michaels, made notes while Taber was reading. Right before all four miscues, Taber paused and looked at the picture on the page. Taber then substituted a word from the picture for the word on the page. For example, on the page which had this text, *Sally put a bug in a box*, there was a picture of a spider. Taber then read, "Sally put a spider in the box." Similarly, when the picture showed what could be a couch or chair, Taber substituted "on the couch" for *in a chair.* When Sally put a plant in the refrigerator and the picture showed a flower, Taber read, "Sally put a flower in the refrigerator." Finally, when Sally put the plant in the sunny window, Taber read "Sally put the plant in the sun."

## Instructional Recommendations

Based on his analysis of miscues and observations, Mr. Michaels decided that what would help Taber the most was to continue to make meaning-based predictions and then use graphophonic information to confirm or disconfirm the prediction. Because there were two other students with a similar miscue pattern (and strong use of pictures), Mr. Michaels formed a short term, small group in which he helped kids predict using meaning and confirm using graphophonic information.

## Example 2: Asha's Reading of *Picture Rocks* (DeFord, 2004)

Based on Typescript and Skinny Miscue Analysis

Typescript

**Oral Reading Assessment Form**

BRIDGING **8A** Picture Rocks

Student _____ Teacher/Tester _____ Grade _____ School _____ Date _____

| Pg # | *Picture Rocks* | Student Reading | Errors | Corrections |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | ① pictured<br>Have you ever picked up a rock | | | |
| | to see a small picture on it? Did you | | | |
| | ② ③ 25<br>see an animal, or a plant, or a shell | | | |
| | on the rock? If you did, you found | | | |
| | ③ tressur<br>a real treasure. | | | |
| 3 | Inside rocks and stones you can see | | | |
| | 50<br>pictures of plants and animals that lived | | | |
| | long ago. These fossils show us the way | | | |
| | the world used to be. They were made | | | |
| | millions of years ago. | | | |
| 4 | 75<br>The best pictures are in limestone and | | | |
| | sandstone, or very soft rock. These rocks | | | |
| | are made as water and new layers of | | | |
| | ④ picture ,tigly ⑤<br>sand and mud are pressed tightly together. | | | |
| 5 | 100<br>When plants or animals die and fall | | | |
| | into the water, they sink to the bottom of | | | |
| | lakes, seas, or rivers. Then the mud and | | | |
| | 125<br>sand begin to cover them up. | | | |
| 6 | Some parts of the plant or animal rot | | | |
| | ⑥ lands<br>away. But as layers of mud and sand | | | |
| | 150<br>build up, the bones, or hard parts, are | | | |
| | preserved. | | | |
| 8 | The minerals in the water make the | | | |

## Skinny Miscue Analysis

| # | Semantics | | | Graphophonics | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Y | P | N | Y | P | N |
| 1 | | X | | X | | |
| 2 | X | | | X | | |
| 3 | | | X | X | | |
| 4 | X | | | | X | |
| 5 | | | X | | X | |
| 6 | | X | | | X | |
| 7 | | X | | | X | |
| 8 | X | | | | X | |
| 9 | | | X | X | | |
| 10 | X | | | | X | |
| 11 | | | X | X | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Total | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
| Percent | 36 | 27 | 36 | 45 | 54 | 0 |

## Findings and Instructional Decisions

Ms. Metzger, Asha's teacher, noted that when Asha was reading this text (of which she knew 96 percent of the words) 36 percent of the time her miscues were semantically acceptable and 27 percent of the time they were partially semantically acceptable. Another 36 percent of the time they did not make sense. This suggests that most of the time she was not making sense of what she read. Asha was paying a bit more attention to graphophonic: 45 percent of the time her miscues were very similar and 54 percent of the time they were somewhat familiar. Asha, however, did not use sound/symbol information to produce words that made sense. Ms. Metzger decided that she would help Asha make more efficient use of sound/symbol information by helping her to focus on meaning. By focusing on meaning, Asha could predict words that would make sense and then use her knowledge of sound/symbol information to confirm or disconfirm her predictions. In this way, on future analyses of her miscues, Asha's percentage for Yes for semantic and for graphophonic might both go up.

## Brittney's Notes on Her Class

| Student | 1.Understands that reading is a meaning-making process | 2. Believes in ability to make sense of text | 3. Chooses to read (Intrinsic) | 4. Spontaneously self-monitors | 5. Has a repertoire of problem solving skills and uses them efficiently and effectively |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lisa | Y | Y | Y | Y | N (relies more on graphophonic than semantic cues, rereads but not flexibly and consistently, searches pictures at times) |
| Shawn | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y (uses semantic and graphophonic cues, rereads, searches pictures) |
| Kristine | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y (relies more on graphophonic than semantic cues, rereads, will search pictures) |
| Jaybe | Y | Y | Y | Y | N (relies heavily on semantic cues, searches pictures) |
| Zoe | Y | N | N | N | N (does not use cues flexibly and consistently, takes no action when she comes to a word she does not know , continues to read with lack of meaning) |
| Amanda | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y (relies more heavily on graphophonic cues, rereads, searches pictures) |
| Michael | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y (relies more heavily on graphophonic cues) |
| Jenny | Y | Y | Y | Y | N (relies heavily on semantics, rarely uses graphophonic cues, rarely rereads, |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | does search pictures) *EL student |
| Allison | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y (uses semantic and graphophonic cues, depends more heavily on graphophonic, rereads, searches pictures) |
| Scott | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y (uses semantic and graphophonic cues consistently, rereads, searches pictures ) |
| Carter | Y | Y | Y | Y | N (uses semantic and graphophonic cues but not flexibly and consistently. Rereads and uses pictures depending on text difficulty) |
| Ben | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y (uses semantic and graphophonic cues consistently, rereads, searches pictures ) |
| Ken | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y (relies more heavily on graphphonic cues, rereads, searches pictures) |
| Augie | N | N | N | N | N (Does not yet actively engage in problem solving, Does not yet reread, Does not yet use a balance of cues) |
| Ryan | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y (uses semantic and graphophonic cues consistently, rereads, searches pictures) |

## Small Groups

Group 1: (Instructional Focus: Believing in ability to read and choosing to do so) Augie, Zoe (use end of Kindergarten text).

Group 2: (High semantic, Low graphophonic): Jenny, Jaybe, Carter (Carter uses Semantics and graphophonic, but not flexibly and consistently.) (use end of Kindergarten text.)

Group 3: (Low semantic, High graphophonic): Lisa, Amanda, Michael, Allison (use early first-grade text).

Group 4: (Low semantic, High graphophonic): Kristine, Ken
(use middle of first-grade text).

Group 5: (High semantic, High graphophonic: consistently, rereads, searches pictures): Scott, Ben, Ryan, Shawn
(use beginning of second-grade text).

## What Took Place

This week, I have focused on pulling books that were of interest to all the students in each group. For groups 1 to 4, I picked books, which the "lowest" child in each group could read with 98 to 99 percent accuracy. For group 5, I chose a slightly more challenging text. All of the children in this group have a common interest in the outdoors, and I found a book on an early second-grade level that was about a camping trip. I did this because students in group 5 are all able to comprehend books written for the end of first grade. They all hold a generative theory and understand that reading is a meaning-making process. They have a repertoire of problem-solving skills they can use independently and effectively.

Group 1 consists of two students: Zoe and Augie. They are the lowest readers in my class. They do not believe in their ability to make sense of text or choose to read. Augie also does not understand that reading is a meaning-making process. Both Zoe and Augie love animals. This seems to be a common theme in my first-grade classroom. I chose texts that were of interest to both students and which both of them could read with 98–99 percent accuracy. I began by doing a story walk. I invited both children to share experiences that related to the text. I did this by asking them about cats. We also talked about what was happening in the pictures. Next, I read the book to them, talking throughout the story, focusing on meaning. After that we read the book together again focusing on meaning. To conclude, this group whisper-read their book to themselves. I noted the strategies each child used and shared these when they finished reading.

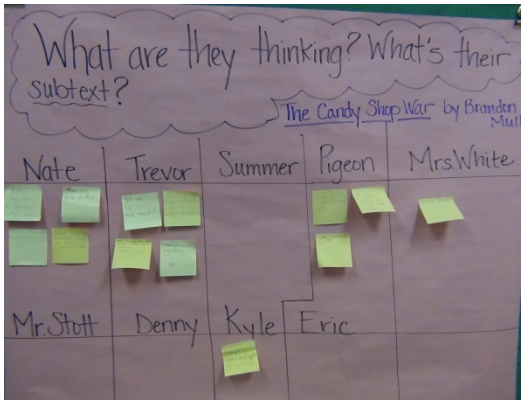
My instruction followed the same format for group 2, which includes Jaybe, Jenny, and Carter. They also read an end of Kindergarten text.

Groups 3 and 4 are high graphophonic and low meaning, I chose books that, again, the lowest child could read with 98 to 99 percent accuracy. We did a story walk, focusing on meaning and accessing students' prior knowledge. I then read the book to the group and had the group read with me after that, with again a focus on meaning. After that students read in a whisper voice and I did a Skinny Miscue. I noted strategies each child was using and shared the strategies with them when they finished reading.

I had the children trace their hands, wrote the name of their strategies on each finger (e.g., predicts, rereads, looks at pictures) and then cut them out and gave them to them. I told them they could place a star sticker every time they used a particular strategy. The entire class was excited about this. All the children seemed to enjoy being in a small group this week and have felt successful with the texts I selected for their groups.

## Capturing Subtext During Chapter-Book Read-Alouds

Emily Elder began integrating subtexting during chapter book read-alouds, pausing periodically to ask what characters might be thinking. Soon her fifth graders were so eager to share that she created a chart displaying characters' names. She then invited kids to jot down subtext as she read. She saved a few minutes at the end of each session for students to share which led to a thought-provoking review of and discussion about characters, events and themes. For *The Candy Shop War* (Mull, 2007) she recorded:



## Introducing Subtexting With Young Children Through Read-Alouds

To introduce subtexting to young children, project the story and invite the children to be the characters. Shelli Barber's kindergartners were subtexting for characters in *Owen* (Henke, 1993), the story of a youngster who adores his blanket. This becomes a problem when the nosy neighbor starts complaining to Owen's parents that he is too old to be carrying his blanket around. Ms. Barber read, "Can't bring a blanket to school, she whispers over the fence." Owen, played by Chase, positioned himself in front of the screen.

"Owen, you just heard Mrs. Tweezers telling your parents you're too old for your blanket—and you *love* your blanket!" Ms. Barber said. "Look at your face and your body, Owen. What are you thinking?"

"I'm thinking, *Pfffthbtbbtthhthh!!!"* said Chase, making a huge "raspberry"sound.

## References

Henkes, K. (1993). *Owen.* New York: Greenwillow Books.

Mull, B. (2007). *The Candy Shop War.* Salt Lake City, UT: Shadow Mountain Publishing.

## Details on Carrying Out Read-Aloud Drama Interpretations

## (page 173)

Drama offers rich opportunities for children to express themselves beyond words alone. Four drama practices are integrated into this experience. Each is described in detail as the lesson unfolds.

***Mime Acting***

Children experiment with and explore the use of facial expressions, body postures, body positions, and gestures to represent what they are thinking and feeling (see Day 1, Part One).

***Teacher in Role/Hot-Seating***

Here, you become a part of the drama, too, imaginatively entering the story world as one of the characters. You will be momentarily on the hot seat improvising your responses to the children's understandings of the story events and the characters' perspectives. As a character, you can provoke the children's wonderings, pose questions about their comprehension of what has transpired so far, while also gently challenging any misconceptions that might interfere with their understanding of the story (see Day 2, Part One).

***Conscience Circle***

In a conscience circle, the children stand together in a large circle with one child acting as a character from the story. This character walks around the inside of this circle facing each classmate one-at-a-time and carefully listens to the advice offered in response to a complex dilemma the story has presented (see Day 2, Part Three).

***Tapping In***

Here you invite the children to consider a few questions and provide thinking time and an opportunity to rehearse their ideas with a partner. You move around the classroom rapidly lightly tapping each child on the shoulder as a signal for that child to share. Children may choose to "pass." Similar to the Conscience Circle, the drama practice of Tapping In makes it possible for all of the children to have an opportunity to offer their thinking for the consideration of everyone (see Day 2, Part Four).

**Introducing Read-Aloud Drama Interpretations**

Say something like this to the class: "Boys and girls, today we're going to be doing some moving around so we need to think about how to be safe in our space. I want you to imagine there's a giant bubble around you. You'll want to make your bubble big enough so that it won't bump into your neighbor's bubble or into anything else in the room. Whenever we move today, we're going to imagine we have this bubble around ourselves."

Introduce the read-aloud-drama experiences by saying: "Lately, I've been thinking about all of the courageous decisions each of us has to make in school. Sometimes these decisions are about how we want to treat someone else or how we want someone to treat us. Sometimes these are decisions about what to do when our lives outside of school is making us feel happy or unhappy."

## How?

### Day 1, Part One: Preparing for the Read-Aloud-Drama Interpretation Using *A Bike Like Sergio's*

"Today I'm going to read you one of my favorite stories. It's about the very difficult decisions and choices this story's main character, Ruben, has to make. We're also going to try something a bit different today when I read aloud. At times, I'm going to take some short breaks from reading the story so that we can imagine what it would be like to be Ruben—to imagine what he is thinking and feeling."

1. *Invite children to look for personal connections.* Help the children consider how what is happening in Ruben's life might be similar to something that has happened in their own lives. Say, "See if you can think about something that you really want. This could be something most of your friends already have—or maybe not—but it's still something that you really wish you could have." Lowering your voice, propose: "Once you have an idea, please keep it to yourself. We're not going to tell anyone about our ideas just yet. We're going to try to use our faces, bodies, and actions—without any words—to show our partners what this thing we want looks like. This is called *Mime Acting.* We'll see if our partners can guess what it is."
2. *Demonstrate what to do.* Say, "Let me show you what mime acting looks like," and then provide a quick demonstration of something that you covet—a new car, some new shoes, a video game—using only your face, body, and gestures to make that object visible.

3. *Ask children to think how they will show what they want.*
4. *Group children in pairs.* When students are facing their partners, say, “Decide which partner will go first.”
5. *Explain the performances.* Next, say, “I am going to count out ten in very slow claps while the performing partner does some mime acting, using his or her face, body, and actions only to show what the special thing is he or she wants. The partners who are the viewers can then quietly call out their guesses about what they’re seeing. If they aren’t able to guess by the end of the ten claps, the performing partner may tell them what it is.”
6. *Launch the performances.* Leave sufficient time for viewing partners’ final guesses and for the performing partners to respond. Ask the children to switch roles.

## Day 1, Part Two: Connecting to the Story

7. *Re-introduce* A Bike Like Sergio's. Say, "Just like each of you chose something that you really want, the character in this story, Ruben, really wants a bike like the one his friend Sergio has." Project the front cover of the story. (Note: If the technology needed is not available, provide small groups with their own colored photocopies.) In the foreground of the front cover illustration, Ruben is pictured walking behind Sergio who is riding his bike. Behind and above these two characters three bikes are parked in front of what we later learn is the bike store window.
8. *Provide sufficient time for children to view the cover.* Say, "Let's see if we can use our illustrator's eyes and imaginations to look closely and to think carefully about the cover."
9. *Invite children's observations and comments responding in an open-ended fashion*. For example, after a student says he noticed there are two boys and because the boy on the bike is smiling "maybe he's going to give his friend a turn to ride," the teacher followed, saying "What do others think?" Some open-ended questions might be:
    - "What do you notice about how the illustrator has drawn the two characters on the front cover?"
    - "Why do you think the illustrator drew these two characters close together?"

- “What do you notice about where these characters have been drawn on the book’s cover?
- “Illustrators try to control the ‘viewers’ gaze.’ Where do you think the illustrator wants you to gaze when you’re viewing this book’s cover?”
- Why do you think the illustrator chose these particular colors for the cover?

## Day 1, Part Three: Co-creating the Story World

Note: During this part of the experience, you'll be using the paper cut-out of Ruben and markers.

10. *Remind children that you'll be pausing your read-aloud from time to time to invite them to pretend that they're part of the story themselves.*
11. *Begin reading aloud and showing the illustrations for pages 1–2 and for pages 3–4 by slowly walking the book around or by digitally projecting the images.* In these first two-page spreads, we learn that Ruben thinks that "every kid has a bike" except him. Ruben has to run alongside his friend Sergio as Sergio rides his bike. Sergio encourages Ruben to ask for a bike for his upcoming birthday. However, Ruben knows that in his family there won't be money available to buy him a bike for his birthday.
12. *After you have read page 4, pause and say*: "Use your faces, your bodies, and your actions to show—again without using any words—what you'd be thinking or feeling right now if you were Ruben at this point in the story. Let's all stand. I'm going to slowly clap five times while you position your faces, bodies, and actions. When I get to five, I'm going to ask you to freeze and to hold the pose you are in—as if you are statues. Does everyone understand? Ready? …" Pause, then slowly clap five times and ask the children to freeze. As you look around your class, read and name the body positions, postures, facial expressions, and gestures you observe the children making: "I see Marco frowning and he has his arms crossed over his chest. I wonder if he's feeling discouraged. Ana has her

bottom lip sticking out. I think she might be feeling quite sad." Now we're going to imagine that this paper figure is Ruben. On this figure, we're going to write down your ideas about what Ruben is thinking and feeling at different times in the story. We'll use a different colored marker each time we do this so that we can go back to later. Expect responses such as "really sad" and "kind of mad."

13. *Resume the read-aloud while continuing to show the illustrations on pages 5–6.* On these two pages, Ruben and Sergio are at Sonny's Grocery. Sergio is able to buy a pack of football cards for himself. Ruben isn't able to buy something for himself; instead, he has to buy bread for the family. As a lady in a blue coat ahead of Ruben in the line pays for her bags of groceries, she drops a dollar bill on the floor, which Ruben scoops up as she leaves. When Ruben arrives home (pages 7–8), his mom is feeding the baby and the twins are playing. Ruben's mother asks him about his day but he just nods in response to her question and acts busy, keeping the dollar in his pocket a secret.
14. *Keep reading aloud through page 9.* When Ruben is alone in his room, he discovers that what he thought at the store was just a dollar bill is really a one hundred-dollar bill—enough money to buy a bike like Sergio's.
15. *Invite children to mime being Reuben*: "Pretend to be Ruben and notice what you are thinking and feeling." Solicit words or phrases from children who haven't had an opportunity to share. Record these words or phrases on the paper outline using a different-colored marker.

16. *Return to reading aloud and sharing the illustrations on pages 10–14.* After discovering that he has one hundred dollars, Ruben pretends to be asleep when his dad comes home late from work. The next day, Ruben zippers the hundred-dollar bill into a small pocket in his backpack. In his class at school, all Ruben can think about is buying and being on his new bike. After school, Sergio and Ruben visit the bike shop and Ruben climbs on a bike that is just like Sergio's, but a different color. Sergio and Ruben agree that he looks good on it. But Ruben knows that if he buys this bike, he'll have to explain to his parents where he got the money.
17. *Pause after reading page 14 and, this time, without mime acting, ask children to imagine what Ruben is thinking and feeling at this point in the story.* Using a third marker color, record on the paper figure some of their words or phrases.

To wrap up the day, invite the children to re-read the three different colored commentaries about Ruben's thoughts and feelings recorded on the paper figure. As a culminating activity for Day 1, say, "I am curious to know what you are thinking and feeling about what we did today." Pause and invite children to share. To inspire interest and cultivate enthusiasm, ask the children, "Who's wondering what's going to happen to Ruben when we continue reading the story tomorrow?" Tell the children that you don't want them to share their predictions now but rather think about a range of things that might happen.

### Day 2, Part 1: Reconnecting with the Story Through Role Play and Hot-Seating

Note: On Day 2, you'll be making use of the props as you assume the role of one of Ruben's parents.

1. *Begin the second day by once more reviewing with children what was written on the paper figure on Day 1.* Ask the children to turn and sit knee-to-knee and eye-to-eye with a partner and quietly exchange the memories they have of what was happening in the story when each of the different-colored entries was made. When they have had a chance to reflect and share say, "I can't wait to continue reading and dramatizing *A Bike Like Sergio's* with you today. I'm wondering what might happen next. If Ruben is going to buy a bike with the hundred-dollar bill he has in his backpack, then the story is probably going to end pretty quickly. But there are still a lot of pages left in this story, so I don't know. Let's read and find out."
2. *Read aloud page 15 and show the illustration of Ruben and his mother.* On this page, Ruben's mother is making a grocery list but when she sifts through the cash in her wallet, she crosses off items on her list that she doesn't have the money to buy. She looks up and smiles at Ruben telling him that "maybe next week" she'll be able to afford the items she's just crossed off her list.
3. *Pause at the bottom page 15.* During this pause, acting as Teacher in Role, pretend to be Ruben's mother. Becoming Ruben's mother will enable you to learn more about the children's understanding of the story up to this point. By responding from inside the story world to questions the children may have, it

will also further deepen their understandings of the story's subtleties and nuances. To transition from being their teacher to being Ruben's mother, you will need your props—possibly a hairband and maybe a wallet with real or fake bills.

4. *Involve children in your transition:* "Could one of you please hand me Ruben's mother's wallet?" And then, "Could someone else please help me put on Ruben's mother's hairband?"
5. *Participate in Hot-Seating, improvising responses to the children's questions in role as Ruben's mother.* During this improvisation, it is important that your responses, however creative they may be, only expand on information that has already been presented or implied in the story and that doesn't contradict information that has yet to be revealed. Once you are in role, say, "Hi, I'm Ruben's mother. Who are all of you children and where am I?" Respond to the children's comments. "Okay, well, your teacher (fill in your name here) asked me to come here today to answer any questions you might have about anything you've gathered so far about my son, Ruben, or about our family, or about Ruben's friend, Sergio, or anything else you might be wondering about …"
    6. Expect children to ask, for example, if you know that Ruben has a one hundred-dollar bill in his backpack. As Ruben's mother, you would be very surprised: "Really? I can't imagine that. Where would Ruben possibly get a hundred-dollar bill?" Other questions might come up about why you aren't able to give Ruben a bike for his birthday. Stay in role by limiting your

responses only to information from the story. You can ask questions of the children as well: “You probably know that Ruben has a birthday coming up. You’re around his age and maybe you have some suggestions for what we might get him. With four children we don’t have a lot of extra money right now but I’ve been trying to save some money from our grocery shopping ….” Or, you might say, “Ruben is such a responsible son, he helps me out with daily shopping and all kinds of things, but he has seemed so quietly lately, I hope he isn’t coming down with a cold or the flu before his birthday….”

### Day 2, Part Two: Identifying and Naming a Range of Intense Emotions

7. *Read pages 16–21,* in which Ruben tumbles through a range of intense emotions. His mother asks him to get some orange juice at Sonny's and he worries about possibly encountering the lady in the blue coat whose hundred-dollar bill he had scooped up the last time he was there. After school in the bedroom that he shares with his twin siblings, Ruben is stunned to discover that the zippered pocket in his backpack—the pocket in which he had hidden the money—is open and the money is missing! He tells his mom that he's going out. It's raining when he retraces his steps from school to bike shop to home. Sadly, the money is not to be found. The next day, he walks to school "hunched and draggy," and he doesn't respond to Sergio's offer to let him use the bike ramp his brother built in the alley once Ruben gets his own bike. Ruben doesn't tell Sergio that he won't be getting any bike at all.
8. *When you reach the bottom of page 21, ask:* "If you were Ruben, what feelings and thoughts would you have had about what happened over these last pages?" Using a fourth color, record the children's words or phrases on the paper figure.
9. *Resume the read-aloud to the bottom of page 25.* Over these four pages, Ruben's tumultuous emotional experience continues. After a long school day, he tells Sergio that Sergio should just ride home without him. But before Ruben leaves his classroom, he spies the smallest zippered pocket in his backpack. It's still closed. It's this pocket, not the other opened one, where he put the money. The hundred-dollar bill is there. But to get the bike he wants, he will have to tell his

parents about the money. Heading home, he races to Sonny's to pick up the juice that his mother had asked him to buy. At the back of the store, someone bumps into him and "apologizes in a soft voice." Ruben's "feet are frozen, watching as the lady in the blue coat makes her way to the counter with her eggs. She reaches into her purse."

10. *Pause at the bottom of page 25 without showing the illustrations as they give the story away.* Say, "Hmmm, I wonder what Ruben is going to do now? Without talking to anyone else, let's just think for ourselves what each of us would do if we were Ruben right now. What would you be feeling? What would you be thinking?"

### Day 2, Part Three: Introducing the Conscience Circle

A Conscience Circle is created when we ask the children to stand together in a large circle and we invite one child to represent a character in the story (in this case, Ruben) who is facing an ethical dilemma. We ask this child playing the character to walk around the inside of circle, to face each of his or her classmates—one-at-a-time, and to listen to each classmate's advice.

11. *Begin by saying:* "Now that you have had a chance to pause and think about what you would do if you were Ruben, let's try to think of a few words of advice—just a short phrase—that we would offer him at this moment. What's in your hearts? What would you do if you were Ruben in this same situation?"
12. *Once the children are ready, say,* "Now we're going to stand in a large circle (indicate where) that we're going to call a Conscience Circle."
13. *Say,* "Now I need someone to volunteer to pretend to be Ruben. Ruben will stop in front of each of you and ask, 'What should I do?' When he asks you will share your few words of advice. This is a time for you to share your own words of advice for Ruben. It doesn't matter what your friends say. What do you honestly feel that Ruben should do?"
14. *Say,* "Ruben, once you have listened carefully to that child's advice, move on to the next child until you've heard everyone's words of advice. Your job is just to listen, not to say anything back." Children's advice will vary greatly: "Give the money back to the lady." "Do the right thing." "The money doesn't belong to

you." "Give it back and maybe you'll get a reward." "Don't worry, your parents will get you a bike." "Finders keepers; losers weepers."

15. *Acknowledge and value the range of different responses by saying,* "Wow, now Ruben has so many interesting and different ideas to work with as he decides what to do for himself. Let's see what he decides to do …".

## Day 2, Part Four: Witnessing Empathy and Compassion

16. *Show the illustration on page 26.* Read the sentence at the top of this page: *And like a hot blast, I remember how it was for me when that money that was hers—then mine—was gone.* Say, "I think that Ruben is feeling empathy for the lady in the blue coat right now. What do you think I mean by *empathy*?" Invite sharing.
17. *Continue reading aloud to the bottom of page 30.* Ruben follows the lady in the blue coat out of the store and past the bike shop where he catches up with her. In response to Ruben's question, the lady says she did lose a hundred dollars and asks him why he's asking. He tells her he found her hundred-dollar bill and holds it out to her. The lady's face "changes from surprised . . . to joyful . . . to soft." Continue the drama experience by inviting the children, while still seated, to explore these three emotions with their faces.

    On the top of page 30, the lady takes Ruben's "hand in both of hers like a sandwich" and thanks Ruben for blessing her. On the bottom of the page, the author writes that Ruben feels "happy and mixed up, full and empty, with what's right and what's gone."
18. *Pause at the bottom of page 30.* Return to the notes you and the children have made of Ruben's thoughts and feelings recorded on the paper figure. Ask, "Why is Ruben now both 'happy and mixed up?' Why do you think he feels both 'full and empty, with what's right and what's gone?'" Invite sharing.
19. *Given this story, you might say,* "It's like Ruben has been on a roller-coaster of emotions. First, he didn't think he could have a bike like Sergio's, then he finds

the money to buy one, then he loses it, then he finds the money again, then he has to decide if he is going to just pay attention to what he wants or if he is going to also consider how the lady in the blue coat must be thinking and feeling. There are so many emotional changes in this story. What are your thoughts? Using a new color of marker to record the children's ideas.

20. *Begin reading the final two pages of the story on page 31.* At this point, everyone is at home waiting for Ruben. He finally shares his lost and found story with his family. His dad says, "What you did wasn't easy . . . but it was right." Ruben's mom shows her feelings by pulling Ruben close to her. She says, "We're so proud." The story ends with: *And in that warm house, with my family all around and my birthday almost here . . . I am proud, too*. Feeling the love of his family and being conscious of the pride he feels in himself is the reward that Ruben receives for his compassionate actions.
21. *Say,* "What a story. Let's just allow what we're feeling right now, at the end of this story, to settle inside ourselves perhaps, noticing what we're feeling and where in our bodies we notice these feelings." After a few moments of silence, invite the children to share how they are feeling at the end of the story.

To wrap up the second day, for the final time, return to record Ruben's thoughts and feelings on the traced outline. Be sure to invite children who haven't contributed to do so. Finally, say, "So, let's reread all the words and phrases we've listed on the outline. Perhaps, as we slowly read what we have written here, we can each replay the story in our minds."

## Detailed Steps for Disciplinary Literacy Charts (page 213)

Literacy Charts as a Unit of Study can take five weeks depending on how teachers choose to use their time. It has four parts:

- Part One: How Do We Use Content Area Literacies in School?
- Part Two: How Do We Use Literacies to Learn Outside of School?
- Part Three: How Do Professionals Use Literacies to Learn?
- Part Four: How Do Adult Family Members and Friends Use Literacies to Learn?

## Part One: How Do We Use Content Area Literacies in School?

1. Say to the class, "We're going to start by looking at how the things we do in school are related to science, math, and history. Here is the first chart we are going to use." Post an oversized chart up on the wall and also hand out copies.

| Content Area | Kinds of things we read | Kinds of things we write | Special materials we use | Special tools we use | Special words we use |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Science | | | | | |
| Math | | | | | |
| History | | | | | |

Chart for "Reading the Room"

2. Explain, "I'm going to ask you to read our room to find everything related to science we have in our classroom. That means we're going to pay careful attention to all the things we see in the room that are about science.
3. "We're starting with science, and the first column on the chart is about the kinds of things we read in science. The next column is about the kinds of things we write, then what special materials we use, and finally what special tools we have in our room that are related to science. The final column is about what special words we use. I'm going to give you and your partner, the person on your right, about 10 minutes to walk around the room and write down everything you see

that is related to science. But let's make a couple of observations together so you'll know what to do."

4. "First, let's think about the kinds of reading we do when we study science. I know we use our science books, so I'll add that to our chart; but what other kinds of things do we read in science?" Kids may suggest such things as books, websites, and homework. Add their suggestions to the chart, then say, "As you and your partner look around, write down other things you notice that we read."
5. "Now, let's look at the next column on this chart. What kinds of writing do we do in science? When I look around, the first thing I see is are (e.g., science journals and displays of kid work). These are two of the kinds of writing we do in science."
6. "The third column is special materials. What kinds of materials do we use in science? I see a…" (e.g., mobile, an animal skeleton). I think they belong under materials." Invite kids to talk about why.
7. Talk about special tools and then words. Say, "So far, we've got one thing in each column, but there are more. Now, tell me what you understand about reading the room." Answer any questions, then distribute a packet of sticky notes to each pair of kids.
8. "Now it's your turn. Work in pairs with the person on your right, taking your copy of the chart with you. Write your observations on your sticky notes. Be sure to write big; we want to be able to read them when we post them to our class chart. Remember, you'll be looking for things we read and write, as well as materials, tools, and special words or language we use in science. Again, you'll

have 10 minutes to write down everything you see that is related to science. I'll let you know when you have two minutes left."

9. After partners have recorded their observations, have them select another pair of student with whom to share their results. Say, "Now that you are in groups of four, take turns sharing with what you and your partner discovered. If you have some of the same things, just stack those notes up together. You have 10 minutes. I'll let you know when you have two minutes left."
10. Call on one group of four at a time: "Let's take turns adding sticky notes to our chart until we've got all of our ideas posted. Use a little piece of tape so your sticky note stays put." Rotate calling one group at a time to give just one idea. Continue calling until all groups have had a chance to add their findings. Then, start with the first group again until all ideas have been shared. If more than one group has the same idea, have students post their sticky note on top of the one already posted.
11. Continue using a similar procedure to address the other content areas on the chart. Once all the content areas on the chart have been filled, inform students that (tomorrow, next week or whenever you schedule allows) we'll talk about how we use the content areas outside of school."

## Part Two: How Do We Use Literacies to Learn Outside of School?

1. Ask the class, "How many of you think you use science outside of school? Math? History?" Give time for children to respond. "So, when you are home and you want to learn something like how to play a video game or fix a bike, how do you go about learning it?" Allow time for the kids to respond and then choose two of their suggestions for your focus, asking about reading, writing, materials, tools and special words. Share a chart of these categories.

| What I Learned | Reading | Writing | Materials/ Tools | Special Words | (Science) | (Math) | (History) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Making a paper airplane | | | | | | | |
| Making a woven bracelet | | | | | | | |

Example: If a student mentions learning a new video game, you could ask, "What kinds of reading did you have to do to learn the game?" If kids struggle, add, "Did the game come with directions? Did you read anything online? Sometimes people who use games write reviews to tell other people

what they thought of it. Have you read any reviews online?" With each question, give your students time to think, then accept all responses and record them on the chart.

2. Next ask about writing. "Did you have to do any writing (filling out a registration on the site) before you played the game? Were there any forms you had to fill out?" Then, "Any special tools you have to use (gaming console or joy stick) or special words associated with the game (*multiplayer* or *action command*)?" Record responses about reading, writing, tools, and special words on the chart.
3. Now focus on how different disciplines might support out-of-school learning. Explain, "Some of the things we have learned comes from our knowledge of science. That is called scientific information. Some of what we know comes from our understanding of math and some of what we know comes from our knowledge of history. Talk to your neighbor about where you think science is used (e.g., when making a paper airplane or a woven bracelet)." Give the students a few minutes to talk and then record some of their responses in the 6th column, which you label Science. Repeat this series of questions, asking about math (7th column) and history (8th column). Again, accept all responses.
4. Using another student's suggestion, repeat the process. The goal is to get kids thinking about the categories on this chart so that they can complete it at home independently.
5. Explain to students, "Tonight, I want each of you to think about something you have learned to do outside of school and think about how you learned it." Give

them a blank copy of Literacy Chart and ask them to bring it back filled in tomorrow.

6. The following day ask students to share what they learned about the literacies they used and also how science, math, and history were involved. Once several students have shared with the whole class, ask students to share with their neighbor.
7. To give closure to this engagement and to transition to a larger inquiry, say, "Over the next few weeks, we will be finding out more about science and math and history in and out of school and we'll come back to a chart like this at the end."

### Part Three: How Do Professionals Use Literacies to Learn?

Before introducing this part, make copies of the articles you found and bookmark the online sites that describe how people in particular professions use science, math, and history in their work lives.

1. Say to the class, "Now that we have learned about how we use reading, writing, science, math, and history in our lives, we are going to learn about how professionals use them. I have gathered articles and videos about (name the professions). How do you think (profession #1) uses science? Math? History?" Record students' information on a chart like the one below.

| Job | What kinds of reading do you think people in the job do? | What kinds of writing do you think they do? | What kinds of Materials/tools do you think they use? | What special words do you think they use? | How do you think they use science in their work? | How do you think they use math? | How do you think they use history? |
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"Now that we've written down what we think we know about how (profession #1), we're going do some research to see if our predictions are accurate. We're going to gather information in two ways. First, we're going to read some short articles and then watch some videos about (name the

professions) to see what else we can learn. Over time, we'll learn about different professions. We're also going to interview grown-ups, both friends and members of our family. Every time we gather new information, we'll add it to the chart. Once we have gathered lots of data, we'll look at all that information and see what we've discovered.

2. "You and your partner will read one of these articles together to find new information that we could add to our chart. You will be highlighting the important information. Let's do one together so you'll know exactly what to do." Start with a short article. Provide copies. Project the text on your smart board. "When we read informational texts, there is sometimes so much information that it can be overwhelming. I'm going to show you one thing I do**.** I'm going to stop my reading every so often and use my highlighter so that I can remember what is important to me in this article. I am going to pay close attention to the kinds of reading, writing, math, science, history, and materials, tools, and special words the person uses, because that's my purpose in reading the article. Later, we can add this information to our chart."
3. Demonstrate how to highlight a text. For example, as you read an article about pilots, stop and say, "I just noticed something. This article says that pilots have to be mathematicians because they have to know how much fuel they have and how far they have to go. But they also have to know how wind speeds, temperature, and weather will affect their fuel use, so they are also using science. I think that's an interesting and important fact and I'm going to highlight

it." When you notice vocabulary which is unique to mathematics say, "Look at this word—*calculate*. That means to figure out the amount or number of something. In this case, the pilots have to calculate, or figure out, the amount of fuel they need. That's a word that is special to mathematicians." I'm going to highlight it. As you continue to read, stop when you come to the phrase like, "the propellers develop *thrust*" and say something like, "I know what the propellers are, but I'm not sure about *thrust*. I think it is about how the propellers push the airplane, but I'm not sure. I'm going to highlight it. Let's keep reading and see if it makes sense if we read further. If not, one of you can look it up."

4. When finished, inform students that they are going to add information from this article to the literacy chart. Ask students for their suggestions about how to fill in each of the cells with this new information. Have students who made the suggestions write them on the chart.
5. In the following days (or as your schedule permits), provide copies of an article or websites about a different profession. Ask students to read it together with a partner and to use the information they find to add to their charts. Have students do a third profession (by reading an article or watching a videotape) if you feel they still need to refine their research skills.

## Part Four: How Do Adult Family Members and Friends Use Literacies to Learn?

1. Say to the class, "I bet your families use math, science, and history every day at home. To find out about your family, you will be interviewing your family members. You will need to ask them about what kinds of reading and writing they do at home or at work and if there are any special tools or words they use, too."

   Give an example: "Let's assume one of my children came home from school and asked me about who I know who uses math or science or history and how they use it. I would probably tell them about Clint, a friend who is a carpenter and builds furniture. He reads a lot of carpentry books and magazines to learn about different styles of furniture and how to build them. That is history, because a lot of the styles of furniture were popular in different times and places. I know he uses science, too, because when he starts to build things, he sometimes tries out something first to see how it will look or work, and then he rethinks and revises his plans if he needs to. He also uses a lot of math. The first thing he does is draw out the piece of furniture he wants to make, and I know that he uses math to make sure the pieces of wood in the furniture are the right size. He uses a calculator to figure out how much the piece of furniture is going to cost. He has to buy the right amount of wood and he uses addition when he goes to the store to buy materials, adding up the costs of things like wood, screws, and glue because he has to stay within a budget. He uses some special words, too,

like, *adze* (a tool with a sharp cutting edge), and *wood router* (a tool used to shape the edges of wood)."

2. Say, "I made a handout for you to take home that will help you keep track of the information your family tells you" (see handout below). "Let's practice answering the questions by using the story that I just told you about my friend, the carpenter.
3. After students have interviewed family members, have students work in small groups. "Together, use the information you collected to fill out a chart. (Note: You might what to share what you learned by doing this assignment yourself and sharing your data with the students. As you fill in the chart, review what it means to use math [numbers/figures/computations], science [experimenting with what they do and revising as needed] and history [referring to how others may have done something in the past] in their work].
4. Explain, "I am handing out a blank chart for your small group to use. Choose a scribe who will fill out the chart for your group. After giving groups time, ask them to share some of their ideas with the whole class. Kids will have collected a variety information given who they interviewed. Post their charts on the bulletin board so that everyone has a chance to read about what they learned.

## Closure/Stepping Back

Ask student to study the charts that have been created and what it is they think they can conclude given the data they collected. Talk with the students how being successful in a job typically demands a broad knowledge base. Invite students to think about why it is we study the subjects separately in school when in real life, most jobs call for people being well rounded and knowledgeable in science, math, and history.

Date:

Dear Family:

We are learning about the kinds of reading, writing, materials/tools, and special vocabulary that people use in their work or everyday lives and how science, math, and history can inform our work. Your child would like you to tell them about someone you know who uses math, science, and/or history in the work they do or at home, the kinds of reading and writing they do, and any special materials/tools or vocabulary they use. Your child will take notes on the handout below and should bring the notes back to school tomorrow.

- Who do you know who uses math, science, and/or history in their work or everyday lives at home? (For example, for math they might use measuring, calculating, reasoning, problem solving. For science they might experiment with something to see how it works (or doesn't work) and revise their plans when they retry it, and for history they might read about how something was done previously)?

- How do they use it?

- What kind of reading do they do? What kinds of things do they read?

- What kind of writing do they do (e.g., reports, notes, contracts)?

- What kinds of special materials or tools do they use (e.g., calculators, rulers, computers)?

- What kind of special vocabulary do they use? (Are there special words that they use in their work that we don't use in our everyday language, for example, calculate, multiply, average, ratios, percentages?)

## Detailed Steps for Community Interviews (page 200)

**Preparation**

- Arrange for someone in your building—a cafeteria worker, custodian, secretary, administrator, librarian, etc.—to come in so you can demonstrate how to conduct an interview.
- Because you will be bringing people from the community (either actually or virtually) into the school and your classroom, be sure to tell your principal your plans from the beginning. He or she will want to know who is coming into the building and may prove to be a resource for recommending people to interview.

**Introduction**

"Today, we're going to talk about interviews—what they are and how to do them. Later, in groups of two or three, you are going to name careers that interest you and interview someone who has that career. You will be finding out what reading, writing, materials, tools, and special vocabulary they use as well as if they use math, science, or history in their work. Our goal is to gather more information about how people who have different jobs learn and share knowledge outside of school."

"Who can tell us what an interview is?" (Give kids time to respond.) "An interview is actually a meeting at which information is obtained from a person (merriam-webster.com/dictionary/interview). Have any of you ever watched interviews—maybe on TV—like when a reporter sits down with a famous person or a sports' star and asks questions about something that person does?" Invite kids to share some examples. "Well, get ready, because that's going to be us pretty soon! We will ask people to come to our classroom or we might interview them on our classroom computers. "Remember, our goal is to find out what kind of things they do in their jobs and how they do them."

### Day 1: Observe an Interview

1. Say to the class, "Today Mr./Ms. _____ is going to be our guest, and each of us is going to have a job. I'm going to interview her/him, and you're going to be detectives. Turn and talk with your partner. What does a detective do?" Invite kids to share, then say, "Detectives are trying to solve a problem, or understand something, so they look for clues. Today, your job is to watch to see what I do when I interview somebody, and then we'll talk about it."
2. "What kinds of things do you think I should ask Mr./Ms.___?" Write their ideas on poster paper or on the board. Kids often come up with questions such as, "What is your job?" "Where do you live?" "Do you have kids?"
3. "While I'm interviewing Mr./Ms._____, you are going to take notes. I am going to highlight the questions on our chart that I've decided to ask…" (if not already on the list, add questions that ask the interviewee to describe their work and about the kinds of reading and writing, materials, math, science, history, and special vocabulary they use). "Pay really close attention. Write down what I say, and listen to the person's responses. Afterwards, we'll talk about what you noticed. See if you spot anything surprising."
4. Conduct an interview with your guest, taking notes as he or she talks, asking follow-up questions as appropriate: "Can you tell me more about that? What happened next? What did you do when that happened? Conclude: "We're trying to learn what people in various occupations do and how they use reading, writing, math, science,

and history as well as special materials, tools, and language in their jobs. Is there anything you'd like to add or to ask us?" Afterwards, thank your guest.

5. After the guest leaves, say to the students, "At your tables, take five minutes to talk about this interview. Write down some of the things you noticed."
6. "Okay, what did you notice?" Somebody is likely to notice that you asked a lot more questions than you had on your list. "Good observation. What are some questions I added?" Record kids' observations where you recorded their initial questions. Gather information from them by asking things like: "Why do you think I did that? Which questions seemed to be most useful? What makes you say that?"
7. Summarize what the kids noticed in your interview. Remind them that a good interviewer does not pepper her interviewees with one question after another; rather, they listen carefully and ask further questions based on what the person says. Your goal is to have each student walk away with the idea that good interviewers should a) be able to get their interviewee to talk, and b) be a very good listener.

## Day 2: Watch a Video Interview

1. Select a video interview to share with kids, such as a) kids interviewing Barack Obama. (scholastic.com/browse/collection.jsp?id=843), or b) a child interviewing her grandparents. (bing.com/videos/search?q=kids+conducting+interviews+with+grandparents&view=detail&mid=9D0A0077C0922D6E7C3E9D0A0077C0922D6E7C3E&FORM=VIRE).
2. "Today, we're going to watch a video of an interview of (describe the person briefly). But before we watch the video, we're going to brainstorm questions *we* would like to ask if we were doing the interviewing. With a partner, take a few minutes and write five questions you want to ask."
3. Invite kids to share a few of their questions. "Now we're going to watch the video. As you watch, note which ones match yours and which ones are different."
4. After watching the video, ask, "What did you notice about the interviews? Was the interviewer a good listener? Did the interviewer ask any of the questions you thought of? Were there some things you didn't think of? What else did you notice?"
5. You want your kids to recognize that certain kinds of questions get better answers than others. When the interviewer asked yes/no questions, the interviewee didn't have very much to say. However, when the interviewer asked how, what, or why questions, the interviewee responded. Tell them, "Good

interviewers listen carefully and ask follow-up questions like, ‘Can you tell me more about that?’ ‘What happened then?’ or ‘What did you think about that?’” Write these follow-up questions on the board. The students should walk away from this experience understanding that yes/no questions shut down further discussion but that how, what, and why questions open the door to further conversations.

## Day 3: Choose an Interviewee and Group Students for Interviews

1. Today, you are going to decide on the career of a person you might want to interview. Please take a couple of minutes to list the three types of jobs you would most like to talk to someone about. I'm going to group you with people who have similar interests. Be sure to put your name on the paper."
2. Collect student lists and ask them to read independently while you sort them into groups of 2 to 3 based on their interests. When you are done, call out the name of a career and the corresponding group members. Have the students move so they are sitting with their group members. Post this list of groups and their corresponding career interests on the board.
3. Say to students, "Please take about five minutes to list the seven most important things you want to ask your person. Remember that we want to find out about what they do in their jobs and how they use reading, writing, math, science, history and special materials, tools, and words in their work. That goal should guide you in figuring out your questions."
4. Circulate around the room offering support and reminding students that who, what, when, why, and how questions provide more information than questions that can be answered with a yes or no. Have them put their names on their papers, and collect their questions.

### Day 4: Contact Interviewees

As you begin to identify and contact people to interview, remember that you will need to collect contact information for each of the interviewees as the kids will be sending them letters. Start with your principal and ask for his or her suggestions for potential interviewees. This serves two purposes. One, it will keep your administrator informed, and secondly, he or she may have some great suggestions for people to contact. After your visit with the principal, start thinking of resources in your school district. For example, if some of your students want to interview a football or basketball player, contact the high school coach and get a recommendation. If a group wants to interview a nurse, contact your school nurse. If you have students who are interested in actors or acting, contact your school's drama coach or the local community theater. Additionally, if they want to interview a community worker such as a firefighter, librarian, or policeman, call the local fire house, library, or police station to explain your project and ask for a volunteer. Another strong resource is your students themselves. They may already know someone who they admire that works in the profession of their choice. Invite them to participate in identifying interviewees. Students might interview family members to get names of people willing to participate. Keep in mind that identifying people may take several days.

### Day 5: Compose a Letter

Using a shared-writing process, compose the letter with you and the students contributing. “Today, we are going to write a letter to the people we wish to interview to find out if they are willing to participate and allow us to tape record our interview with them.”

Write the letter on the board. Demonstrate your thought processes as you go along. For example, after writing the date and greeting, say: “When I start a letter like this, I always try to remember to include the who, what, where, when, and why information because that is a good way to cover everything that needs to be covered. People will want to know about what we are doing and where and when they should come. How can we say all of that?” After you complete the body of the letter using their suggestions, continue by saying, “What I’m wondering now is how these people will let us know if they want to be interviewed or not. How could they do that? Also, how can the interviewees let us know if they would be able to come to school? What if they would prefer to have a computer interview?” Encourage the kids to include places in the letter to say yes/no to the invitation and include dates/times/ and contact information. (See sample letter for further ideas.)

After the composing process has been completed, explain to the students that when they interview people, they will be recording their voices on a tape recorder. This will allow them to go back and listen and re-listen to the answers after the interview so that they don’t forget anything important. Have multiple recorders available. Demonstrate how it works by recording your own voice. Pass out recorders to groups

and have them practice the steps of inserting the tape, turning on the machine to record, speaking into the microphone, and rewinding to make sure they recorded their voices.

### Day 6: Complete and Mail the Letters

Have students who will be interviewing the same person write out the letter of invitation, address the envelope, and then mail the invitation.

## Day 7: Create a Schedule

1. Working with students, use the information about availability to work out a schedule for the interviews. Once you have a schedule, explain: “We are going to start our interviews this week on ____ morning, and we will also have people coming in on _____ and _____morning. I am going to post the schedule on the bulletin board so you can see who is coming, what time slot they have asked for, and which groups will interview them. If you look in the back of the room, you can see that I have set up a special table with chairs by the bookshelves with an audio recorder for the interviews.”
2. Continue the preparation work by asking, “What kinds of things can we do when our guests arrive to make them feel welcome?” Students may give suggestions such as having the interviewers greet the interviewee at the door and introduce themselves, introducing the visitor to the class, and taking them back to the interview table. “How can we make sure the rest of the class won’t disturb the people being interviewed?”

## Day 8: Prepare for the Interviews

1. Prepare an interview guide for the students (see sample). Make sure there is place for the students' names at the top of the paper. Below that, put a space for the name of the person to be interviewed. Number the rest of the page, 1 to 7 so students can write the questions they created on Day 3 at each number. Leave plenty of space between each number for students' notes.
2. Pass out the guides and the questions the kids generated. On a second sheet, ask students to write down who will ask each question and any follow-up questions, who will take notes, and who will be in charge of the tape recorder. At the bottom of the second page, list some of the follow-up questions you talked about in class.

### Days 9, 10, and 11: Conduct the Interviews

1. During the actual interviews, make sure your students have their interview guide sheets with the name of their visitor written at the top. Have the rest of the class engaged in independent reading and position yourself near the interview station in case your students need assistance. This would be a great time to ask a parent volunteer or a fellow teacher with a coinciding planning period to come to the class to attend to the needs of the other students during the interviews.
2. After the interviews have been completed, create a thank you note to send to the interviewees from the students in your class (see sample below). Using a shared-writing approach, compose the letter together. Ask your students if they have ever sent a thank you note to someone or if they ever received one. Ask them the kinds of things that were included in the note. Write their ideas on the smart board or poster paper. Then, ask them what kinds of things they appreciated about the person's visit, what surprised them about this person's work, and things they would still like to find out about this kind of work. Based on their responses, compose the thank you letter.

As soon as possible after each interview, ask students to listen to the audio recording of the interview to make sure they didn't forget anything important. Have them add further notes on the interview guide.

### Day 10: Reflect on the Engagement

1. Create time for the small groups to share what they learned.
2. Post a large version of the interview chart in the classroom. Have groups come up to the chart and fill it out based on the information they collected. After the chart has been completed, ask students what they noticed about how people use reading, writing, math, science, history, as well as special tools, materials, and words in their work.

## Closure/Stepping Back

Have students work together to study the charts that the class produced and come up with one conclusion that can be reached from the data collected. Create a poster showing the various conclusions students reached. Together as a class, decide if the data supports each of the conclusions generated and what specific data supports which conclusion. As a culminating experience, have students generate things they would still like to know and as well as topics for further inquiry.

## Sample Invitation Letter

Name of School, Room #

Address of School

Teacher's School Email and School Telephone Number

Date:

Dear _____,

Our class is learning about how people use reading and writing and the different kinds of tools/materials and special vocabulary in their real lives at work. We have been reading articles from books and online about people with different jobs, but what we would really like to do is to interview a person from our community.

The interviews will be very short and will take place [dates and times of interviews] either in our classroom (if you can come to our school) or on Google Hangout (if you cannot). If you give us permission, we will audio record the interview so that we can listen to it later and take notes.

If you are willing to be interviewed, would you please let us know by completing the information below? If you say "yes," our teacher will either call or email you to set up the exact date and time for our interview.

Sincerely,

Name: _____

Occupation: _____

I am willing to be interviewed (circle one) YES NO

If you are willing to be interviewed would you prefer to come to our classroom or be interviewed using Google Hangout? _____

My email and telephone are: _____

I am available between [proposed times and dates]

## Sample Interview Guide

Page 1:

Your names:

Name of the person you are going to interview:

Questions:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Page 2:

Who will ask each question and follow up questions?

1. Name
2. Name
3. Name
4. Name
5. Name
6. Name
7. Name

Who will take notes when the other person is asking questions?

Who will be in charge of the audio recorder?

Sample follow-up questions:

- Could you tell me more about that?
- And then what happened?
- What did you think about that?
- How did you feel about that?

## Sample Thank You Letter

Name of School, Room #

Address of School

Date:

Dear _____,

Thank you very much for coming to our class and allowing us to interview you. It was so nice getting to know about your work. We learned a lot from you about what it is like to be a _____. We especially enjoyed finding out about _____, and we were really surprised to learn about _____.

We know that you are very busy and appreciate your spending time with us.

Sincerely,

## Three Sample Reading Mini-Lessons (page 227)

### Mini-Lesson 1: Naming

Jennifer Story

In the first few months of the year, I noticed a widespread problem among my third graders; most of them got hung up on pronouncing names. They spent so long attempting to decode the word that the meaning of the text became lost. It was time for a mini-lesson on reading proper nouns, though I did not intend to use that technical term at this point.

I began by introducing our mini-lesson: "I have noticed that a lot you have a difficult time when you get to a name that you can't pronounce. Sometimes it even stops you for so long that you can't remember where you were in the story. Today I want to help you learn how to get past words like that."

"When you come to a hard word, how do you know if it's the name of something?'" The students volunteered immediately that it "had capitals." I asked, "Any more ways?" Logan raised his hand. "It might say Mr. or Mrs. with it." I affirmed his comment, "Right, if it's an adult, and then we know it's a person's name.

"So in real life, do you know anyone with a hard-to-pronounce name?"

There was a moment of silence then, "Miss Patalinghog," Lexi said shyly, naming a second- grade teacher at our small school. "And what do kids call her when her name is so long?" I asked. "Miss P!" the students chorused. "You've got it!" I said. "Now try this one." On the white board, I wrote *Mister Mxyzptlyk*.

"That's nonsense." Dustin almost sneered as I finished my sentence: "Mister Mxyzptlk is an enemy of Superman." "Now does it make more sense?" I asked. "No," Dustin muttered. "It's a name," Lexi said doggedly. "Because it has 'Mister'."

"So, you can understand the sentence," I asked, "even though you can't say the name?

What does the sentence mean?"

"That this guy is Superman's foe, he's a bad guy," Matissa said pedantically, as though I were an idiot,

"So," I said, signaling by my tone of voice that I was drawing the lesson to a close. "What can you do if you are stopped by a word, like this," I said, underlining Mr. M's name, "you can't easily pronounce?" Darby offered, "You need a place marker. Like Miss P, you say Mister M."

"You have a very good point," I said. "Because the name very likely will come up again as we continue a story." I continued, "Actually, what made me think about this problem is that I got stuck on a name myself. I was reading a new mystery, and one of the character's names was…" I didn't say the name but wrote it, *Bayard,* on the whiteboard. "I didn't know how to pronounce it, but I stopped and tried." "BAY-yard," Tyrone advised me. I replied, "I thought of that, but I also wondered if it should be pronounced Buh-YARD. Even though it didn't really matter, every time I saw his name again, I stopped and thought, 'BAY-yard or Buh-YARD'. But, I should have just called him Ben or Barnyard so I could read my book more easily. I should have used a 'What did Darby call it?" "Place Marker," several students answered.

I wasn't sure how many "got it," but I hoped that, with reminders, this lesson would help both my hesitant and confident readers become more fluent, improve in comprehension, and gain more pleasure from reading a good story, no matter what the names of the characters.

## Mini-Lesson 2: Think-Aloud in First Grade

Lindsay Head, Beth White, and Jennifer Story

"Today, we're going to talk about what we're thinking as we're reading," Lindsay announced at read-aloud time. She had begun to feel that too many of her first graders believed that reading was just following the plot line. She decided to show them how to delve deeper into a book and enjoy it more by demonstrating a Think-Aloud Mini-Lesson.

"This book is called *The All-I'll-Ever-Want Christmas Doll" (*McKissack, 2007*),* Lindsay said, holding it up. *"*Think about the cover and the title," she invited. "I think she's poor," Anya said, "'cause her clothes aren't that nice." "And her socks," Allison added, "they're rusted." Roberto suggested, "She is sad because she doesn't have a smile on her face."

Lindsay joined the conversation, "I hear Allison building on what Anya said. I am thinking about the title, too. If she's poor and maybe doesn't have a whole lot, I wonder about the title—*The All-I'll-Ever-Want Christmas Doll."* Ryan said, "She wants a toy that's a doll because it says (reading the title) *All-I'll-Ever-Want Christmas Doll."*

Lindsay responded, "I like how you used the title to think that she is going to want some kind of toy, probably a Christmas doll. I also like how some of you noticed that you could tell her feelings from her face, that she might be sad because she's not smiling. It's important to pay attention to a character's face because sometimes they tell us how the character is feeling. Now, continue thinking about the things we've said as I read the book to you."

Allison then pointed out that the family had to share everything because they didn't have their own things and added, "Santa won't come because the house is dirty, so they need to clean it up, Stacey said.

Lindsay queried, "What makes you think that the house being dirty makes them poor?" Maria explained, "They can't afford a vacuum cleaner or a duster or laundry pods. They don't have the things we have now." Lindsay commented, "Maybe it took place a long time ago, and we can find out if we keep reading. Let's see if our predictions are confirmed." Lindsay continued reading:

"*Baby Betty is all I ever want," I announced the week before Christmas.*

*"Stop, Nella!" shouted Eddy Bernice, who never let me forget she was the oldest.*

*"We're in a Depression! Why you wishin' for somethin' you ain' never gon' get?"*

*"Yeah, not in a million, zillion years," little Dessa added, giggling* (p. 5).

Lindsay thought aloud, "Eddy Bernice just said, 'We're in a Depression.' That's a pretty big word, and I have to think about that, figure out what it means. Nella just said she wanted that doll, and then, her sister said they were in a Depression and she was wishing for something she wasn't going to get. I have to use what we talked about on the previous pages. What do we know about this family?" Madelyn said, "It's a poor place." Lindsey added, "I remember from my teachers that the Depression was a time when a lot of people didn't have work, and they didn't have jobs. We know what happens when people don't have jobs." "They don't have any money,' Mayra said.

"Yes," Lindsay confirmed, "Her parents won't be able to afford to buy the doll. It's important when we're reading and we get to words like *depression* that we stop and

think or talk about what those words might mean." Jase's scrunched up expression showed how he had been struggling to verbalize a thought. "And like, they're fussing," he said. "If you really want something and you can't get it, you don't need it. That's just a want. That's not a need." Lindsey agreed, "You're right. This doll is a want, and when you don't have a lot of money, you usually buy what you need and not what you want."

When Lindsay continued to read, Samuel noticed from an illustration that the entire family slept in the same bed. "I noticed that, too," Lindsay said, "that they're all sleeping in the same bed, and the mommy and daddy are there. That tells me something else about their family. They may be poor money-wise, but I notice something about this family and each other." "They *are* poor," Jase insisted, "They don't have any stairs where there is more room where there are more beds." His voice was rising in his concern.

"Does everyone agree?" Lindsay asked. Everyone except Samuel agreed. "I think they love each other to sleep together," he said. Lindsay asked, "Oh, tell me why you think that." "When you are poor and you don't have a lot of money, you have to love each other to get along. They are all in the same room, and the dad tells them stories. They have to love each other."

Lindsay reflected on Samuel's profound comments, "I like how you're thinking. You weren't afraid to disagree with your friends. You were thinking something different. I don't know about the rest of you, but when Samuel said that, it changed my thinking a little bit. They may be poor money-wise, but they are rich with their love for each other.

Let's keep reading and keep in mind what Samuel was saying—that they love each other." Samuel said, "It's called loving poor."

Lindsay continued reading the book aloud, sharing her thinking and eliciting thoughts from her students. However, her own thoughts kept returning to the discussion they had just had. She had begun the mini-lesson with the intention of broadening her student's thinking. Instead, she came away realizing that all of them, including herself, had been enriched by thinking, responding, and talking together.

## Mini-Lesson 3: Think-Aloud in Third Grade

Margaret Nickerson, Beth White, and Jennifer Story

Because so many of her third graders seemed too focused on facts (characters, setting, etc.) when they were reading fiction rather than deeply engaging with the story, Margaret decided to introduce a Think-Aloud Mini-Lesson. She reasoned that sharing her thoughts—indeed, *showing* that readers have thoughts while they read, might help her students to experience and enjoy their books more completely. She chose to demonstrate with their chapter book read-aloud, *Wonder* (Palacio, 2013), a book about a boy with badly disfigured face who has been home schooled and begins to attend public school.

The kids opened their books to the day's chapter, "First Day Jitters," and Margaret explained, "While I am reading, I'm going to do a think aloud for you. I'm going to demonstrate what is happening in my mind while I'm reading. See if what I do gives you some ideas about what you might do as a reader."

Margaret read aloud. Each chapter is written from a different character's perspective; this one was Auggie's. "Okay, so I admit the first day of school I was so nervous that the butterflies in my stomach were more like pigeons flying around in my insides (Palacio, 2013, p. 35)." Margaret then looked at the students and said in a puzzled voice, "I'm picturing pigeons flying around in his stomach, but I don't think that's what the author actually means. I think they're just talking about that feeling you get when you're really, really nervous about something. As a reader, it tells me how scared Auggie really is." Margaret continued to read:

> Up until a few days before, we still weren't sure I would be going to school at all. After my tour of the school, Mom and Dad had reversed sides on whether I should go or not. Mom was now the one saying I shouldn't go and Dad was saying I should (Palacio, 2013, p. 35).

She also read the next paragraph in which the narrator, Auggie, explains how his parents used to feel and how they feel now. Auggie also explains how his feeling have changed.

Margaret commented, "I'm realizing that I guess I'm a little confused by this part." "I am, too," Anna said. Margaret stood at the whiteboard. "Yesterday, I remember the characters were switching their opinions on going to school, and now, this is so back and forth that I am a little confused. To help me I am going to draw a graphic organizer. You can use this too when you read. So, let me remember what I knew about these characters".

"At the beginning, the mom wanted Auggie to go to school," Margaret said, "And her dad didn't want him to go to school." And she wrote: *Mom: Yes to school. Dad: No to school.* "Let me think," Margaret mused, "At the beginning, how was Auggie feeling about going to school?" The students said, "No to school." Margaret wrote, *Auggie: No to school* and then commented, "All of this was just a few days ago in the story. Then, after all those events something changed. I'm going to read it again" Margaret reread the paragraph so the kids would understand that the characters had changed their minds. This demonstrated to the kids that readers can reread when they are confused. Margaret then changed Yes to No for mom, and No to Yes for dad.

Margaret frowned and asked, “How about Auggie?” Tyler responded, “Kind of. He said yes, but he probably doesn’t want to go to school.” Sonya added, “He’s kind of nervous.” Margaret asked, “Can you feel yes and no at the same time?” Several kids said, “Yes.”

“That’s a really good observation, and I think that describes how he is feeling,” Then, Margaret recapped what she had done as a reader. “I had to go back and reread, and that helped me organize how the characters were feeling. Now, I can go forward and know what I am reading.” She continued:

> As soon as we turned the corner, we saw all the kids in front of the school—hundreds of them talking to each other in little groups, laughing, or standing with their parents, who were talking with other parents. I kept my head way down (Palacio, 2013, p. 36).

Margaret looked up contemplatively and wondered, “Why would he say he kept his head way down?” David suggested, “He didn’t want the other kids to see his face.” “I can understand why,” Margaret said. “I can feel his nervousness. It’s like I put myself in his place. So, he’s got what feel like pigeons in his stomach. He’s going somewhere brand new, a place where he feels like everyone already knows each other. He also has that feeling of knowing that he is different. I hate that he has to feel that way.”

“When I read this, I could feel what he was feeling.” Margaret continued. “When you’re reading, I want you to be mindful of what the characters are feeling. When you do, you’ll enjoy the book more. You learn things about how characters see themselves.” Margaret then told the students she wanted them to use what she had demonstrated in

the think-aloud, “Today, readers, I want you to be thinking while you are reading. If you get confused, what can you do?” Students responded, “Reread.” Margaret nodded, “Yes, and if you think a graphic organizer would help you, try that as well. If you try it and need help, let me know.”

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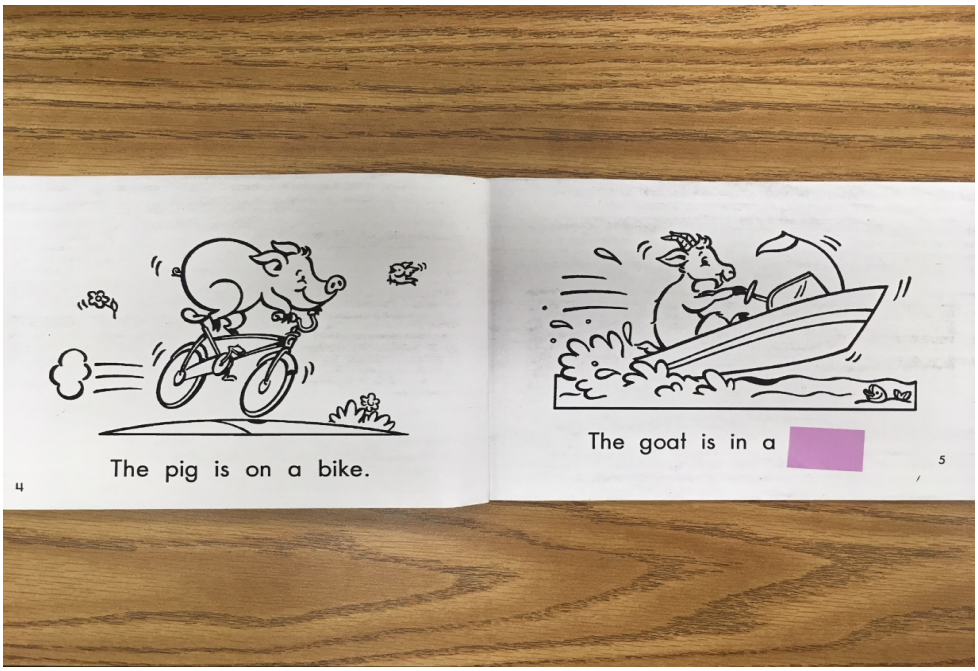
## Focused Instructional Conversation 1: Using Pictures to Make Predictions

Margaret Nickerson with Jennifer Story

After analyzing miscues that my first graders had made, I noticed that Zoe, Augie, and Shawn were over-relying on graphophonic cues. They often sounded out individual letters, ending up with non-words. They also ignored the meaning of the story. Instead of working individually with these students to address the overuse of one cueing system, I felt their reading patterns and reading levels were similar enough to group them together and hold a small focused instructional conversation. I chose to focus on the strategy of picture clues with them because I thought it would be the quickest way for them to be successful. I previously had gathered books which I had matched to my instructional focus.

Box of books I put together based on students' strengths and needs

I picked one of the books that I thought was appropriate for these early readers. I had already covered words with sticky notes. Because it was critical that the kids experience success, I chose a text in which I felt they would be able to predict all the covered words.




Page from *Go Animals Go*, used in Example 1

I reasoned that if I did not cover the words, the kids probably would silently sound them out in their heads while pretending to check the picture**.** I also removed all graphophonic cues to prove to them this strategy would work. I began my meeting with them by making clear the reason we were meeting, the strategy I had seen them over-using, and by naming the new strategy they would learn to use.

As I passed out the books, I said, "We've been learning lots and lots of reading strategies, and today we're going to practice looking at the pictures to get some clues. I've noticed that sometimes when you're reading, you really try to sound the word out and you forget to use your other clues. So, today we're going to work on trying to use our picture clues."

"I covered up some of the words. We're going to use the pictures to figure out some of these words."

Each time we came to a word that was covered, we would check the picture together, make a prediction, and then lift the sticky note to check if the word was correct. “How did you figure that out?” I marveled at Augie when he made the first prediction. I just looked at the picture.” “But I covered up the words!” I exclaimed. Augie smiled conspiratorially as I said, “Let’s pull off that sticky note and see if you were right.”

My next goal for this group was to have them cross-checking graphophonics and meaning. However, I did not want to distract them with too many strategies at once so I did not point out particular letters in the revealed word. My focus was checking the picture so my comments related only to that. (That is also how you keep your meeting short, sweet, and successful!)

At the end of the book, we reviewed the strategy together. “So, let’s talk about what we did. When we were reading, I covered up some of the words. And how did you figure them out?” Shawn raised his hand and said, “We used the pictures because we couldn’t see the words and sound them out.” (Spoken like a true decoder that has seen the light!) “So, when you’re reading, is this a strategy you would use? What’s the name of the strategy? Let’s say it together: Look at the Pictures.”

Because of these short, focused conversations, the first graders were able to name the reading strategies they were using and add more to their reading toolbox. They knew why they were using these strategies and also knew that our next meeting would be a check-in style meeting during which we discussed the usefulness of a given strategy for them.

## Focused Instructional Conversation 2: Reacting to Texts

Anne Downs with Jennifer Story

Fourth graders Ben and Ryan were both very enthusiastic about reading during our time together. They couldn't wait to get to my classroom, almost knocking other students over as they raced to arrive. They begged to stay in reading intervention and not go back to their classrooms. Over their time in intervention, they grew from being able to comprehend texts written well below their grade level to reading and understanding grade-level texts. In theory, at that point, I should have recommended that they be "discontinued" from intervention services. However, I hadn't done that because neither Ben nor Ryan chose to read outside of our time together.

When students are not yet taking on reading on independently, I usually question my practices. I ask myself, "Am I doing the work for them? Do they only read when they are with me because I am carrying the meaning-making process?" As I analyzed these possibilities, I came to understand that, no, I was not doing the work of their reading. So why, then, were they not yet reading outside of our time together?

As I thought further about Ben and Ryan as readers, I realized that when I read aloud with a whole class, my main goal was for the students to have strong reactions to the texts. I wanted the students to be different people as a result of experiencing a text. However, with Ryan and Ben, I had not been expecting them to deeply engage with texts, to react. And because they were not engaging deeply, because they were not reacting, reading itself was not pleasurable for them. They therefore chose not to do it. With Ryan and Ben, I had inadvertently stepped away from what I believed to be best

practice and focused too much on volume, on time with text. I had stopped short of reaction.

Once I realized this, I decided that Ryan, Ben, and I should talk together about the experience of reading. I brought back our well-loved copies of *Waiting for the Magic* (MacLauchlan, 2012) because I wanted them to explore what it meant to react and think deeply with a book we had already read. "Remember reading this one? We've talked a lot about how much this book meant to our reading family," I said as I slid the copies to them. "Yes!" Ben exclaimed. That is the best book!" "I love those dogs!" Ryan agreed. They flipped to the pictures and commented, "Remember Grace? Aw. Remember Elinor? She was so funny." I said, "Let's find a place in the book where we had a reaction to what was happening in the story." Ryan asked, "Do you mean our favorite part? Here is my favorite part." "That's my favorite part, too," Ben said.

Both kids turned to the part of the text where the father leaves his family, and Ben amended, "But this is a sad part so it isn't our favorite." Then I commented, "So are you saying this part really affected you? Caused you to have strong feelings?" "Yeah. It's not my favorite part but I was mad at this part," Ryan said. I agreed, "Me too. Let's read it again so we can put ourselves back into the book." Ryan read:

> It was early on a Saturday summer morning when my mother and father stopped arguing and Papa walked away. He is a teacher of literature at the college, so he could have said words when he left. He didn't. And this time he didn't slam the door. He shut it with a small soft sound that made me jump. "Click," said my

four-year-old sister Elinor, looking up from her coloring book. I stared at the door. I could feel my heart thump. And I could feel tears coming. (p.1)

"Ryan," I said, "You read that in a way that brought the words to life." Ben explained, "I think because he knew what was coming and he knew it was serious, he read it serious." "Yeah," Ryan agreed. "The first time you read something you, like, don't really know how to read it yet so you just read it. But, after you read something, you know *the way* you are supposed to read it. Like this part." He turned to the next section and read with emotion and inflection:

Dear William,

I've gone off to do some writing. I will call you. And I'll be back to see you soon.

I'm sorry for this.

I love you,

Papa (p.2)

"See how I read that part slowly?" Ryan asked me. "Yes," I responded, "It was like you knew those few words had a lot of meaning and you read them like each one was very, very important." "Yeah," Ryan said. I added, "I feel like we are falling even more in love with this book and not just feeling a little but feeling a lot. I wonder if we keep rereading parts of our book if we will get more and more out of it." Both boys agreed, "Yeah, this is awesome."

I asked Ben and Ryan if there were any other books they wanted to think more deeply about; they rattled off titles such as *More Than Anything Else* (Bradley, 1995) and *Once Upon a Time* (Daly, 2003). We spent a month rereading texts to savor. Then, with

our new stance as people who react to text, we read *The One and Only Ivan* (Applegate, 2015) for the first time. We cried as we kept rereading the part where Stella died. We didn't just say "Oh, how sad."

Ryan and Ben and I continued to think about the many ways readers can react to text. We distinguished between what we called surface reading and reactive reading. As a result of our reactive reading, Ryan and Ben both began reading when they were not with me. They started to bring in books in which they had marked passages they wanted us to talk about as a reading family. They became passionate about certain authors and stacked what we called "I can't wait to get to" books in the order they wanted to read them. Their teachers told me how much reading the two kids were doing during Independent Reading. Their parents told stories about them sneaking in reading time wherever they could—on the way to the grocery store, in doctor's offices, etc.

To help Ben and Ryan choose to read independently I could have planned lessons about reacting and thinking deeply about texts. I could have formulated broad and narrow questions and showed them the difference. However, I resisted the "teacher of reading" urge to develop deep questions or deeper prompts. I chose to be a teacher of readers and embrace the power of conversation. Ryan and Ben led me to the places they wished we had spent more time. I simply listened, and with the focus of becoming people who react to text, we were able to achieve our goals. Now they come in and say, "Listen to this," and reread portions of new text they want to savor and think through together. They categorize books not into surface-level categories—"Books with

characters we like"—but into categories such as "Books that are important to the world." We got there through genuine conversation.

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