

Motivating Children as Readers and Writers Workshop 1



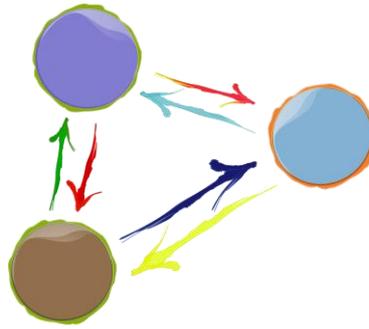
Reading lesson using a Multi-modal Text

As you watch the video of a teacher using a multi-modal text to facilitate literacy development, it may be helpful to consider what is happening in the video under the following headings.

Teacher practice

Learner experience

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS:



Below are some activities that could be used to encourage social interaction in your classroom:

<p>Say Something</p>	<p>Pupils are organised into twos/threes and take turns reading aloud for the others in their group. While reading, they pause occasionally to “say something” about what they’re reading (e.g. how they feel about a character). The other group members offer a response and a different pupil continues (Beers, 2003)</p>
<p>Save the Last Word for Me</p>	<p>Having read a piece of text, pupils take a piece of card and copy a passage they liked on one side. On the other side, the children write why they liked the passage. After this, the children are put into groups. At this point, each person reads their passage for the others and the children discuss the text. In the end, the pupil who wrote the passage reads out their reasons for choosing that passage, giving them the last word (Beers, 2003).</p>
<p>Dialogue Journals</p>	<p>This is a written exchange between individual pupils and the teacher on a weekly basis. Simply put, a child is set up with a copybook or notebook and carry out a written conversation with the teacher over time, sharing ideas and feelings about books (Morretta and Ambrosini, 2000).</p>
<p>Think, Pair, Share</p>	<p>Firstly, pose a question or make an open-ended statement for the children to think about (e.g. What makes a good writer?). Secondly, give the children an opportunity to think about the question. Thirdly, encourage the children to work in pairs to discuss their thoughts. Finally, ask the pairs to feedback to the whole class about what they have learned.</p>
<p>Authors’ Chair</p>	<p>We could create a time and place in our classroom for writers who wish to share their writing with an audience. It is an opportunity for the writer to receive positive feedback from other pupils.</p>
<p>Placemat</p>	<p>Divide the class into groups of four or five and provide each group with a placemat: http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/sssm/html/placematactivity_sm.html. Ask each group member to record their own independent responses within their allotted space in one of the outside sections. Provide time for each student in the group to share his or her recorded responses with the group without discussion or debate from the other students. Ask groups to decide,</p>

	collectively, on the five most important responses and record them in the centre of the placemat—it is important that all group members agree on the top five items. Finally, get groups to feedback to the whole class.
Literature Circles	Literature Circles are small groups of pupils who meet to discuss a piece of literature which they have chosen. Each member of the circle is assigned a role which helps guide the discussion. You will find more information on how to set up literature circles in your classroom here: http://www.readwritethink.org/resources/resource-print.html?id=19
Informal discussions on reading and writing	Ask children to talk about the plot, characters, theme, author’s style and how the texts made them feel. Beers (2003) provides some prompts for teachers and we have included the prompts relevant to plot below. It is suggested that in the beginning, children sometimes need help framing their comments and you may need to provide them with these language scaffolds. Questions to encourage a personal response to the text: <i>What are your first thoughts on this text? What in the text caused those thoughts?</i> <i>What emotions or feelings did you have while reading the text? Identify parts that caused those feelings.</i> <i>What confused you or surprised you in the text?</i> <i>If you could talk to the author what questions or comments would you have?</i>
Collaborative Answering of Questions	Everyone in a group reads the same piece of text and is given the same one or two questions to answer based on the text. The group must work collaboratively to agree on an answer to the question(s) posed.
Coding	Students read the same piece of text and ‘code’ the text as they read. Codes may include; ? something confusing/something I’m not sure about ! something surprising or shocking P this part leads me to make a prediction/change a prediction I I can infer something from this part of the text W I have an ‘I wonder...’ question after reading this ☺ I enjoyed reading this part of the text Students can then share what parts they have coded and discuss them with their group.

Strategies for the selection of writing topics

Getting started by association

(Harrison & Edmondson 2013)

This is a simple method of quickly generating a list of potential writing topics.

Start by putting one word on the board. For example, *ice*? Under *ice*, we'll make a list of words and phrases that we associate with ice.

Now choose something from the first list and write it at the top of a second column. For example, *polar bear*.

This quick exercise gives you a list of 20 topics, but for good measure we can brainstorm a third column.

Again, choose something to put at the top and go!

Now we have a list of thirty potential writing topics to choose from.

Ice	Polar bear	Hunter
Cubes	Big white bear	Tiger in the jungle
Cold	Lives where it's cold	Dragonfly
Water	Seals	Spider
Something to drink	Eskimos	Deer season
Ice cream	Hunter	Looking for remote
Freezing	Endangered	Looking for bargains
Frozen pond	Glaciers	Mosquitoes
Ice skating	Bearskin rug	Shark
Glass of ice	Bear cubs	Hunting my socks
Polar bear	Hungry	My cat

Expert lists

(Geiger 2013)

Model creating an expert list. This is a list of topics, places, people, etc that you know a lot about, and therefore you may enjoy writing about. Model making your own list with for the students;

"Sometimes, good writers aren't sure what to write about. It helps them to make a list of topics. One thing that can help writers is to think of things they are expert at. Do you know what that means? Today I'm going to make an expert list. It will be a list of things, people, or places that I know a lot about. Hmmm..."

Students can create their own list to use when they are searching for something to write about. They can also add to it over time.

Sample ideas;

Drawing four images on a page

- 1) favourite person
- 2) a special place you like to go
- 3) a food you love to eat
- 4) something you like to do

5 things you love & 5 things you dislike

Write the letters of your name in a column. For each letter, write one thing that you know about or how to do that begins with each letter.

Drawing ideas from text

Teachers can model the drawing ideas from texts which students have experienced;

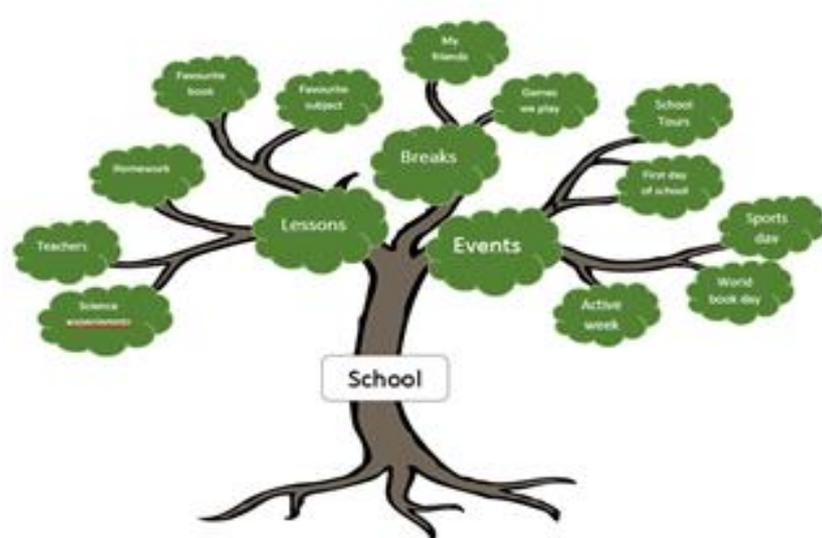
Today I want you to help me with my writing. When we read Owl Moon it gave me a great idea for a text that I want to write. Sometimes books will do that, they will give us an idea that we can work on as writers. In this book Jane shares a special experience she had with her dad. I want to write about my own special

experience, the first time I saw the sea. I was six years old and it was the first time my family every went to the beach. I thought about this a lot last night and what I wanted to write. It was a very special experience.

Class chart of shared experiences

(Jamison, 2007)

Children are eager to write about themselves and what they know. One way to support this process is by creating a class chart of shared experiences that may be turned into writing pieces. Each time the class studies a new theme, goes on an outing, discusses an important issue, celebrates an event we can list the items on a “Things to write about” chart. When the chart is full, it can be cut into individual lines and left in a writing area, or in an ‘ideas bag’ that students can draw from if they need an idea. As genres are introduced we can vary the chart titles, for example, “things we can do”, “Things we know about”, etc



Topic Tree

(Jamison, 2007)

Sometimes students select topics that are too broad for focused writing. A topic tree (or similar graphic organiser) can help students split one topic into a series of smaller, more focused sub-topics. We can then choose from one of these subtopics, being mindful of our intended audience.

Pre-writing discussion

(Jamison, 2007)

Having emergent & early writers pre-tell what they are going to write about helps them rehearse their ideas and enables them to focus more attention on getting them down on paper. Even among proficient writers, telling a story out loud can help organise thoughts.

Pre-writing discussions can help a reluctant writer to get inspiration from another student. For example, if a student is going to write about getting a new dog, another student may be inspired to write about their cat.

Teachers can model this process for students;

I really like Johns idea to write about his holiday in Spain. I went on holidays in France last year...maybe I could write about that.

Choosing what to read

Struggling readers often make poor choices about texts to read for pleasure, most often selecting books that are too difficult. These students need help in learning how to choose appropriate reading materials. Autonomy is supported when students acquire strategies for choosing books they can read and for finding interesting books, and acquire books for personal ownership (Gambrell 2011). The following are some suggestions to help facilitate agency among students choosing what to read.



Read aloud	Many times the story we begin reading aloud to students in class is the story they will want to read at home, or to read on their own once we've finished reading it in class. An effective read aloud is more than just reading; it requires the teacher to be familiar with the text, to read with expression, excitement and assurance.
Read & tease	Reluctant readers are less reluctant to read if you have read the first chapter or two aloud to them. Stopping at a particularly interesting point may motivate students to continue reading themselves. Similarly, having regular "booktalks" in your class can tempt students to read books you think they will enjoy. A booktalk is more of an oral advertisement of a book than a summary.
Create a book-jacket bulletin board	Put copies of book jackets on a notice board. Allow students time to examine them & to write their predictions of what will happen in the book on sticky notes stuck around the book jacket. After a while, read the predictions and discuss them with the class or have a booktalk about the book.
Take your students to the school/local library	Trips to the library indicate the value we give to reading. They provide all students the opportunity to explore a wide world of texts and exercise agency in their development as readers.

Create a good books box	Until you are comfortable with authors, genres and interests it can be hard to find a 'good' book. The level of choice in a library can be overwhelming for some students. We may need to narrow that choice for students. This is the idea of 'bounded choice' and can be achieved in many different ways. For example, a 'good books' box of high quality literature which you feel your students may enjoy can create a manageable level of choice for students.
Know your students interests	Quick chats with students about their interests, hobbies and reading preferences can help teachers ascertain what books, authors or genres may be best to engage students in the reading process. It may also inform teachers on how best to provide a suitable bounded-choice for reluctant readers.
Talk about the authors	Talk to students about different authors. Providing interesting information on an author can generate further interest in their books and encourage students to seek out more works by particular authors.
Book sells	Students will often place high value on recommendations by their peers. Providing a forum where students can tell others about their favourite books and recommend or advertise them to their peers provides further meaningful choice for students.
5-finger rule	<p>Teachers can model for students how to discern if a book is at an appropriate difficulty level for them, using the 5-finger rule. The teacher models reading the first two pages of a very difficult book and counts a finger each time he/she comes to a word/phrase that he/she doesn't understand or finds confusing. If we get to 5 fingers then "I am not really able to read this book without help yet, so I'm going to choose a different book". This approach can be modelled for students and help them make appropriate book selections.</p> <p>(Beers, 2003)</p>

TIME

These teachers maintained a “reading and writing versus stuff” ratio that was far better balanced than is typically found in elementary classrooms.³ In other words, these teachers routinely had children actually reading and writing for as much as half of the school day — around a 50/50 ratio of reading and writing to stuff (stuff is all the other things teachers have children do instead of reading and writing). In typical classrooms it is not unusual to find that children read and write for as little as 10% of the day (30 minutes of reading and writing activity in a 300-minute — five-hour — school day). In many classrooms, a 90-minute “reading block” produces only 10 to 15 minutes of actual reading — that is, less than 20% of the allocated reading time is spent reading. Worse, many classrooms devote only 20 minutes of the entire school day — less than 10% — to actual reading (including reading in science, social studies, math, and other subjects).⁴

When stuff dominates instructional time, warning flags should go up. This is true even when the activity, in some form, has been shown to be useful. For example, research supports activating students’ background knowledge before reading⁵ and holding discussions after reading.⁶ But spending most of a 90-minute reading block on building background knowledge seems an unlikely strategy for improving reading proficiencies. Three to five minutes of this activity would be sufficient.

There is also a lot of stuff going on in less effective classrooms that is not supported by reliable evidence for *any* amount of use (e.g., going through test-preparation workbooks, copying vocabulary definitions from a dictionary, completing after-reading comprehension worksheets).

Extensive reading is critical to the development of reading proficiency.⁷ Extensive practice provides the opportunity for students to consolidate the skills and strategies teachers often work so hard to develop. The exemplary elementary teachers we studied recognized this critical aspect of instructional planning. Their students did more guided reading, more independent reading, more social studies and science reading than students in less effective classrooms.

Notes