

The First Reading Tells the Whole Story!

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Why is the first reading so important?

- ❖ the first reading of new text occurs last in the lesson, allowing the child to end his lesson with a powerful learning experience
- ❖ the first read is the best indicator of the child's strategic processing
- ❖ teachers have the opportunity to support kids right at their "cutting edge"

Level of Teacher Support is Critical...

- ❖ teachers must find the balance between too much support and not enough
- ❖ teachers should be thoughtful about what support to give to the child before/during the first read and what to leave for the child to work out on his own...teachers should have a rationale for these decisions!

What might get in the way of a good first read?

- ❖ the first read is often short-changed and rushed due to a lack of time
- ❖ the teacher may be providing too much support
- ❖ the teacher may not be supporting enough

How do we choose our reading material?

- ❖ look at the cover
- ❖ read the title
- ❖ read the back of the book or book jacket
- ❖ read the reviews of the book
- ❖ flip through the text
- ❖ skim the first few pages

Rationale behind the book introduction and picture walk

- ❖ children don't yet know how to introduce books to themselves...they need for us to show them how
- ❖ if children are familiar with *the story, the plot, the words, the sentences, and the writing style* (GB, 37), they will be freed up to do the “reading work” that makes reading the new book such a powerful learning experience
- ❖ a rich book introduction helps children with anticipation, which aids in comprehension and fluency

Book introductions should be conversational...

- ❖ be natural
- ❖ make eye contact with the child
- ❖ make it fun

We have the power to show children how enjoyable reading can be through our 'book talks' with them!

Book choice: factors to consider

- ❖ child's present strategies
- ❖ child's "cutting edge"...what can he do with a little support/teaching from you?
- ❖ structure of story (narrative, informational, poetry, etc.)
- ❖ "book language"
- ❖ characters/point of view

Our job is to really think about how we incorporate these factors into our book introductions!

Provide students with a “healthy diet” of different types of text

- ❖ use books from a variety of publishers
- ❖ expose children to various text structures, including narrative, expository (informational), poetry, mysteries, etc.


If children read and discuss a variety of different genres, they will be able to comprehend in more of a “global” manner.

Point of view is important...

- ❖ tell the child who is telling the story
- ❖ discuss and demonstrate what you mean by “who is telling the story” to make sure he really understand how the book works
- ❖ think about point of view as you compose every book introduction

“Book Language”

- ❖ “giving” children this information will not affect the “reading work” the child should do in text...remember to remind yourself of why you chose a particular book
- ❖ rehearsing the “book language” will help children read in a “feed forward” manner, anticipating what is coming

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“This (repeating new, unfamiliar phrases) allows the children to have a model of the language in their heads to support their reading of the text. It is not memorizing the lines of the book but rather readying the mind and ear to grapple with novelty”

(“Introducing a New Storybook to Young Readers” by Marie Clay, *The Reading Teacher*, Vol. 45, No. 4, December 1991, pp. 264-273).

Finding the balance between “too hard” and “too easy”

- ❖ list words/phrases that you think the child will need to work on
- ❖ think about why you choose a particular book for a student...what kind of reading work do you want him to have opportunities to engage in? (this will change over time)
- ❖ determine which words/phrases you think the child can successfully attempt and which ones you will need to give him
- ❖ consider the list of words/phrases before deciding to introduce a book to a child

Tell children what the books are really about...

- ❖ “really read” the books ahead of time to ensure you really understand what is happening
- ❖ try to find the “deeper meaning” behind the story to catch the child’s interest
- ❖ help the child link the new book to personal experience when possible

Tricky RR Decisions...When to Jump In and When to Stay Out!

- ❖ this is difficult because you can't plan ahead...you have to make these decisions on the run!
- ❖ be sure that you have a strong rationale for jumping in to support the child or staying out to let him/her work it out...be thoughtful about your decision
- ❖ your decisions to jump in or stay out will really affect the child's acceleration




“Learning how to read should never be hard; too much is at stake...perhaps we have confused the idea of “reading work” with “hard work”.

(“Keeping the Processing Easy at Higher Levels of Text Reading” by Patricia Kelly and Judith Neal, *The Running Record*, Fall 1998, Volume 11, No. 1).

Make Teaching Points, not Telling Points

- ❖ when you choose to go back to something, make sure you use that opportunity to teach, not tell
- ❖ teaching points should be generative and help children in the future, not just on this one error in this one text
- ❖ be very selective in what you go back to...ask yourself if your teaching points are on the child's "cutting edge" or are you just correcting for accuracy?
- ❖ remember to leave some work for the next day

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“Acceleration depends upon how well the teacher selects the clearest, easiest, most memorable examples with which to establish a new response, skill, principle, or procedure” (GB, 8).

Thinking about our prompting language...

- ❖ focus on meaning through your prompting language
- ❖ model how to think at the point of difficulty or during a re-search...show how this process is *generative*
- ❖ encourage children to re-read to 'put it all together' after problem-solving

“Good readers constantly ask themselves questions while reading, such as “What do I know that might help? How do I know this? What can link up to this? Is the message still clear?” (BL, 341).

Teaching children to think when they read

- ❖ we need to help children learn to listen to themselves as they read
- ❖ we can model this thinking through our strategy-oriented teaching points
- ❖ we need to make sure children really understand what we're asking them to do when we prompt them to “think what would make sense”
- ❖ we need to ensure that children understand the reading strategies behind the reading behaviors we call for

**After the child's first reading,
ask yourself, "Does he really**

'get it' ???

- ❖ avoid the temptation to only focus on going back to errors for teaching points
- ❖ ask some general questions/make some comments about the story in a conversational manner
- ❖ bring comprehension into your teaching points to keep the focus on thinking while reading

Quick Check on Comprehension

If children aren't re-reading after working on a word or phrase and just continue reading, stop them and ask them what just happened in the story.

❖ **this technique helps children understand the rationale behind re-reading**

❖ **BE CAREFUL not to overuse this technique**

A child's successful first read all depends on how well we as teachers know our students and what skills and strategies they need to make accelerated progress.

