



Reading Counts



Spring 2008

Shared Reading

Laura Kolmetz

What is Shared Reading?

The main goal of shared reading is to model literacy skills for children.

Tips for shared reading

- Ask the children to make predictions about the story after you have read the title. If the title doesn't give enough information, take a picture walk through the book.
- Talk about the different elements of the book: the front and back cover, the author, the illustrator, or any chapters the book may have.
- Read each page with emphasis. If the story has different characters, try to use voices that the children can distinguish from one another.
- Invite conversation about the book while you are reading and afterwards. This will help to keep the students engaged and will allow you to check for their comprehension.
- Pick out different elements of the story. For example, does the story have rhyming words? Compound words? A special sequence or theme?

continued on page 2



Mary Jemison and Native American Culture

Frank Villone

A unit from a fourth-grade class was impressive and interesting. When I began tutoring, at the start of October, I helped some students read the book Indian Captive: The Story of Mary Jemison, by Lois Lenski. This novel recreates the true story of Mary Jemison, who lived in our local area during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. In the novel, she is captured as a young girl by a Shawnee war party during the French and Indian War, and then is rescued and adopted by two Seneca sisters. She learns to live by the Seneca ways, and ultimately chooses to stay with them.

This version of the story is fictionalized and adapted for young readers, written vividly and personally, with beautiful black-and-white illustrations. The students responded enthusiastically to this book and enjoyed reading through it. They read the book from September through the beginning of November, at times as much as a chapter a day.

When I asked their teacher what the students were taught in connection with this book, she responded, "everything about Native American culture." I have helped students read from various texts that have taught them supplementary information about local Native American culture. On the blackboard is a poster listing the "Ten Indian Commandments," a class-made map of New York State's different tribes, and a print-out explaining that the Hiawatha Belt was the original draft of the U.S. Constitution!

continued on page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

-
- 1 Shared Reading
 - 1 Mary Jemison...
 - 2 Working with Kids...
 - 3 Giving Reading the Slip
 - 3 Using Mo William's Books...
 - 3 Contact information

Shared Reading

continued from page 1

Remember, during shared reading you are modeling! Here are some key skills you should try to model while reading:

- Tracking print from left to right
- Making predictions
- Learning to enjoy reading with a high level of adult guidance
- Building a sense of story
- Expanding on vocabulary
- Noticing different concepts about print (ex. Letter spacing, punctuation, capital v. lower case letters)
- to notice sequence events of a story
- to build a sense of story and focus on story elements (setting, plot, beginning, middle, and end.)

For Shared Reading, it is always a good idea to use books that are predictable so students can join you. Some types of predictable book rhyme, repeat a phrase, have questions with answers, patterns, or familiar sequences.

- ❖ Book with Familiar Sequences:
Carle, Eric. *Today Is Monday*.
Sendak, Maurice. *Chicken Soup With Rice*.
- ❖ Books with Patterns
Banks, Kate. *A Most Unusual Lunch*
Dunbar, Joyce. *Four Fierce Kittens*.
Maris, Ron. *I Wish I Could Fly*
Wing, Natasha. *Hippity Hop, Frog on Top*.
- ❖ Books with Repetitive Phrases
Brown, Margaret Wise. *Goodnight Moon*
Guarino, Deborah. *Is Your Mama a Llama?*
King, Bob. *Stop, Thief!*
Martin, Bill. *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*.
- ❖ Rhyming Stories
Jaques, F. *There Once Was a Puffin*.
Punnet, Dick. *Our Brat Cat*.
Wood, Audrey. *Silly Sally*.



Working with Kids Who Don't Want to Learn Math

Rebecca Regetz

I'm sure we've all been there—being asked the question “why do I have to know this?” However, being in a sixth grade math classroom that was studying for the state math test, it seemed like I was hearing it every day. I heard it so often I was starting to wonder how I was going to teach these students if they were going to fight me the whole time. So, I started a little experiment, and these are the “tricks” I found worked the best when working with upper elementary math students:

- Allow students to use the big white board in the front of the room to do their work if possible. This allows them to feel important, there's a lot of cool colors up there, and they can write big (and some of them have taken the whole board to do one problem).
- Draw pictures! When ever possible, draw a representation for the problem. Even if it's a little “dude” for a word problem talking about mowing lawns, draw him. It makes it so that the math is fun, not just reading the problem, finding the numbers, and going through the motions.
- Be funny! Tell them little jokes about the problem—make up little side stories about the problem if its not a word problem to begin with and make it humorous.
- Keep the students relaxed and in a positive mood. They're going to fight the work, so stick to the problem, but don't get mad, lose your temper or give up teaching them. They will eventually come around and enjoy working with you.

Giving Reading the Slip

Rebecca Regetz

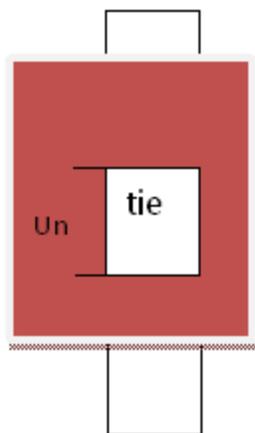
This fun little activity is more like a game than an actual grammar lesson.

To start, you take a piece of construction paper and write your prefix (i.e. un, anti, dis, pre, re) that you want the children to practice putting at the beginning of words. Then, cut a "window" after the prefix by making a slit above and below where you want the word to be. On a slip of paper, write down the words that you want children to slide through the "window". The prefixes will be added to these words. Be sure to space them apart enough so that only one is seen at a time through the window.

The student's job is to slide the paper through the slits/window and read the new word that is formed. Obviously, the student needs to be familiar with the words on the sheet of paper and the prefix that is being added, so it might be best to review both of these separately before doing the activity (not just how to say the words and prefix, but what they mean).

When the word shows up in the window and creates a new word, ask the student to say the word, sounding out the word, prefix first and then word they know.

The same idea can be applied to suffixes: on the construction paper write the suffix (ed, ing, ect) that is desired and place the window in front of the ending.



Using Mo William's Books with Struggling Writers

Deja Miller

Mo Williams is a children's author who writes books that connect with the reader. His books use "talk bubbles" that make the stories more like a conversation than a narration, making the illustrations resemble comic strips frames. For students who are struggling to find something to write about, they can look to Mo William's books for inspiration.

Students can draw pictures on their own or cut out pictures from magazines, then use "talk bubbles" to construct a conversation describing the pictures. With this, children will have fun creating conversations and this will lead to an ultimate enjoyment in the process of writing.

To find out more information on the Caldecott Award Winning author, visit his website:
<http://www.mowillems.com>.

Mary Jemison

continued from page 1

The unit culminated with a class field trip to Letchworth State Park, where students visited Mary Jemison's grave, the museum, and of course the waterfalls. There couldn't be a more memorable event to finish the unit, and it demonstrated to the students how local the book's events and characters really were. The unit was fun and comprehensive, and Indian Captive was a great book for the unit to be centered on.

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