

DOINGWHATWORKS



Slideshow

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Preparing an Interactive Reading Lesson

Syracuse City School District, New York • June 2007

Topic: Preschool Language and Literacy

Practice: Use Interactive and Dialogic Reading

Highlights

- Determining learning objectives
- Selecting books with simple plots, limited words per page, numerous illustrations
- Identifying background knowledge and vocabulary
- Preparing prompts and questions
- Applying differentiation of instruction in interactive reading

About the Site

Syracuse City School District

Syracuse, New York

Demographics:

- 93% Children living in poverty
- 79% Non-Caucasian
- 22% Special Needs
- 15% English Language Learners

Site Highlights:

- Developmental continuum of phonological awareness that guides planning and differentiation of instruction based on children’s skill levels
- Phonological awareness instruction integrated throughout the day into classroom activities, routines, and thematic units
- Explicit and contextualized instruction
- Teacher training in interactive and dialogic reading focused on increasing vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension
- Intensive and ongoing professional development with on-site mentoring by literacy coaches and a focus on individual class needs
- Coach-teacher partnerships that involve teachers in a feedback process focused on inquiry and improvement based on classroom observations and self-reflection

Full Transcript

Preparing an Interactive Reading Session

Hughes Magnet Elementary

Through the Early Reading First program, Syracuse preschool teachers have learned how to plan and conduct interactive and dialogic reading lessons. Teacher Mary Rea shares what she’s learned about planning interactive reading lessons using different storybook examples.

Slide #1: Preparing an Interactive Reading Lesson

Each Friday afternoon, Mary and her teacher assistant plan for the week ahead. They define specific learning objectives, select appropriate materials and books, and then decide how best to engage students with the books.

Audio:

Just three years ago, I had no clue what dialogic reading was, what it meant to have an interactive relationship with the children while reading a book. And I would just read the book straight through and maybe ask a few questions at the end and that was it. And so I feel like I’ve come a long way and I have a lot of resources available to me to help plan. I have our core curriculum, which is our formal reading program to follow. I have our district ELA curriculum. I have professional books.

Slide #2: Learning Objectives

Mary knows she can address many different language and literacy objectives through interactive book reading, including:

- oral language development and vocabulary;
- listening comprehension;
- phonological awareness; and
- print awareness.

She also thinks about other types of learning objectives. Sometimes she selects books like the one shown to teach particular content-science concepts, for example.

Audio:

Eric Carle is my favorite author and he is my favorite illustrator and this book, you can tell, is well loved. The pages are bent, some are torn, it's been taped several times, and that's a good sign. We did a whole unit on night versus day and this was a wonderful book to use. And they come...when they're finished reading this book they know the stages of the moon...and that the little one that has limited vocabulary still comes away knowing the stages of the moon.

Slide #3: Selecting Books

With learning objectives in mind, Mary and her assistant visit the school library and resource room to select books that have

- simple narrative plots,
- numerous illustrations, and
- limited words per page.

Mary is always on the hunt for predictable, repetitive books so children can easily learn the patterned language and then “read” them to her or on their own.

Slide #4: Background Knowledge

Planning for an interactive reading lesson begins with thinking about the background information students are likely to need in order to understand and enjoy the book's plot. Mary thinks about what might be unfamiliar to children—perhaps a different time or place?

Audio:

I guess I also think about the background of books. If I were doing something, a fairy tale, Cinderella, I might have to talk about how things were different a long time ago and that there weren't cars and there weren't cell phones, and just give them some background to make the setting work for them. So right now we're doing a unit on the ocean. That is a concept that is very vague for them. I know that none of my children have been to the ocean. I haven't found any children who have been to Lake Ontario yet. But some have been to a beach, to Green Lakes State Park, to Oneida Shores. So we started just with the idea of thinking about "beach." We did some graphic organizers, some thinking maps. "What's at the beach?" They began to tell me. Someone knew that it was good to go to the beach when it was hot. And someone knew that sometimes the water felt cold. Someone said "You should wear a hat so you don't get sunburned." More and more information came out. That's when we read this little book about Spot going to the beach, and that added more to it.

Slide #5: Vocabulary

Mary zeroes in on specific vocabulary words she wants to call to children's attention, in this case, the word "spoil" in this simple story about Spot.

She pays special attention to academic language-phrases that are found in books but not heard in typical conversations. Mary makes note of a few vocabulary words and a phrase or two to highlight while talking about the book with her students.

Audio:

Some of the important things that I might think about are vocabulary development, book language versus oral expression. Because we don't normally talk like, "Oh dear! Oh dear!" Well, maybe I do sometimes, but...and then about the gingerbread man, "Run, run, run as fast as you can. You can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread man!" It's language structure that's different for them.

Slide #6: Preparing Prompts

Mary reads through the book several times in advance to prepare prompts and questions for recall as well as open-ended questions for higher-order thinking. Here, she's preparing to read *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me*.

Audio:

As you read the book you're going to take time to give them recall prompts. "Tell me why Papa had to help Monica carry the ladder." And it's always good to do some open-ended prompts and, "Oh, tell me what's happening in this picture!"

Slide #7: Rehearsing Comments and Questions

Listen as Mary conveys some of the questions she has planned for an interactive reading of *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me*. Also listen carefully for her prompts designed to stimulate comments and discussion from the children. Children's comments during the first reading of the book prepare them to become the storytellers in subsequent readings.

Audio:

And I'll just read a few pages to give you an idea how I would ask questions. I would start by discussing with them the characters and that there's a little girl in this book and her name is Monica. "Before Monica went to bed she looked out of her window and she saw the moon. The moon looked so near. 'I wish I could play with the moon,' thought Monica. And she reached for it. I wonder if she'll be able to reach that moon? Is the moon close or is it far away? But no matter how much she stretched, she could not touch the moon. 'Papa,' said Monica to her father, 'Please get the moon for me.' How do you think Papa will get the moon for Monica? Hmm...let's see. Oh, Papa got out a very long ladder. Goodness, that is a long ladder. Do you think that's difficult for Papa to carry?"

Slide #8: Preparing to Introduce the Book

Mary plans how to engage children with the book—here, she's introducing *I Can't Get My Turtle to Move*. She might point out an interesting scene on the book cover. Or talk about the book characters during a picture walk. Or ask if they can predict what might happen from the title.

Audio:

Teacher: Who are the characters going to be in this story, I wonder?

Children: (Inaudible).

Teacher: A girl, a dog...

Children: ...and a turtle!

Teacher: Maybe a turtle.

Children: And a chicken!

Teacher: And a chicken. I wonder why her turtle won't move?

Children: It's sleeping.

Teacher: Maybe it's sleeping.

Children: It's hibernating.

Teacher: Maybe it's hibernating. I didn't see the turtle's head.

Children: Or it's snowing.

Teacher: I wonder where his head is.

Children: It's inside him. He's hiding.

Teacher: Hiding? Why might a turtle keep his head inside his shell?

Children: Because. Because somebody was touching him. Because he's scared.

Teacher: Maybe he was staying in there because he didn't want anyone to touch him.

Children: Ms. Mary, I know why.

Teacher: Why?

Children: Because he's protecting his self.

Teacher: He's protecting himself. I can't get my turtle to move.

Children: (inaudible).

Teacher: I wonder how she will get her turtle to move? Hmm.

Children: He's asleep.

Teacher: Yup, but how's she going to...she wants him to move. What should she do? How can she get him to move?

Children: Wake him up!

Teacher: What?

Children: Wake him up!

Teacher: Wake him up. How would you wake up a turtle?

Children: He's going to get mad. Yell.

Teacher: Maybe if you yell he would wake up?

Children: No, he'll cry.

Teacher: Oh, he might cry if you yell?

Children: Do something loud.

Slide #9: Differentiation of Instruction

One aspect of planning ahead is anticipating how to engage children who are at different levels of development. For children with limited language and background experience, Mary will do more scaffolding to prompt responses as she does with the simple story about Spot.

Audio:

Well, even at the beginning of the year you have to have your instruction be differentiated because already the children come in at different levels. Right at the beginning of this year I had someone that was already reading and someone else that didn't know what their name was. I mean, just huge differences. So at the beginning I might choose a simpler book that leaves room for me to do some scaffolding—this is a little...I have a little puppy dog and he has spots on him. And so at first I show them the puppy and we talk about that his name is Spot. And then there's a whole series of these books on Spot and they're simple. It's big print, the illustrations are simple, it's clear and yet there's lots of room for vocabulary development, (for example,) "nuts," and that a "bucket" can also be called a "pail," and some boats are called "sailboats," and what makes the sailboat move. So you can go in depth as much as you want, but also you can keep it as simple as you want.

Slide #10: Differentiation of Instruction

Mary deliberately plans which children she will group together for story sharing. This helps her to individualize her comments and questions and help all the children benefit from the dialogue about the story.

Audio:

I had a little girl named Asia and when she walked into my room she used absolutely no verbal

language at all. I had to use a lot of gestures with her to say, you know, “Come here. Sit down with me,” and give her clues. And we moved on from there and eventually I could ask her simple questions, you know, “Who’s going to get in the box?” And she would just point, no language at all. Eventually, she learned that this was a giraffe and she would say, “Giraffe.” “Yes, a tall giraffe with a long neck is going to get in the box.” And just to add on their language, expand their language, expand their thinking.

Slide #11: Why Prepare?

All this preparation allows Mary to be “in the moment” when reading with children—her students’ lively interactions during book reading are the payoff. They are eager to comment, answer questions, offer their ideas, and then tell the stories to each other. Planning ahead ensures that children will get the most out of the interactive experience.

Audio:

After three years, I know now that interactive, dialogic reading works much better than just straight reading, asking a few questions at the end. I know that you can’t be a successful reader if you’re not a successful talker. It’s all connected. You have to be able to express yourself to be successful in life. We have several assessments that we give, sometimes more than I want to give, and several of the questions target oral language. And we do these assessments three times a year. My children, when they leave pre-k...I did not have one child that wasn’t able to not only pass all the pre-k curriculum and testing, but they were all working on kindergarten level and some beyond that. And so it works!