

Book Introductions

Book introductions are important because they give children access to the new book. Clay tells us to think of book introductions as a conversation between two people. For the listener to understand the conversation, the speaker must help the listener develop a context for the conversation.

There are several factors a teacher might include during a book introduction. For example, the teacher might call upon the child's background experience, discuss the meaning of the text by conducting a "story walk" through the pictures, and/or use difficult vocabulary in conversation (for a complete listing see *Guided Reading* p. 137-138). Book introductions change over time as the children become more proficient readers.

(See p. 136-147 in *Guided Reading*)

Strategies for Problem Solving New Words ("on the run")

Since information is communicated in a number of ways, readers can call upon several sources of information to problem solve new words. Readers are encouraged to use their knowledge of language (Example: Jim saw a _____. Readers' knowledge of how English works tells them that the word is a noun.) to assist with fast, accurate decoding. The visual information in the text will also assist readers (Example: In the sentence *The rabbit hopped away*, a young reader might use picture cues to identify the animal. The visual information in the word will help the reader know that the text says rabbit, not bunny.) Readers also use context (Example: Jim looked in the nest. He saw a _____. The readers knowledge of nests and what is typically found there limits the possibilities.) Note: Fountas & Pinnell (p. 155) suggest we should not encourage young readers to read on because it can interfere with meaning and the efficient use of all sources of information.

Page 161 in *Guided Reading* contains suggested prompts to support strategy use in young readers.

(See *Guided Reading* p. 154-156)

Managed Independent Learning

Thinking about the words in the term managed independent learning will help you understand the concept. While the teacher is engaged in guided reading with a small group of children, the majority of the class will need to work independently.

Managed: There is a system that the children understand and can use independently. A work board or a listing on the chalkboard are two common management systems.

Independent: The children should be able to complete the activities without interrupting the teacher or other children. Children should be able to independently use materials and supplies, and complete each activity without teacher assistance.

Learning: Each activity should be planned so that children are actively engaged in learning throughout the entire time.

(See Chapter 5, p.53-70 in *Guided Reading*)

Comprehending

Holdaway tells us that “reading without meaning is a string of meaningless noise.” Comprehending is the process of getting meaning from text as we read. Readers should come to text expecting it to make sense. For good readers, the process begins when they first pick up a book. Using information contained in the words and pictures on the cover of the book, the comprehending process begins.

Running records give us behavioral indicators of comprehending through the use of accuracy rate, cuing systems used, fluency, conversations about text, and the behaviors children display as they search for meaning.

(See p. 156-162 in *Guided Reading*)

Learning About Letters and Words

It is important for children to understand the relationship between letters and sounds as it is an important source of information for readers. Clay's research suggests that through experiences and good teaching, children will become readers of words in three categories:

- 1) Words that can be sounded out
- 2) Words that contain letter patterns that can be said two or more ways (ow in cow; ow as in flow)
- 3) Words, such as could, that are not sound sequences.

Word work can occur during the story introduction as the teacher calls attention to unknown words before reading. After a guided reading lesson the teacher may teach explicit phonics or vocabulary lessons.

Clay cautions us to avoid a "fixed sequence" approach to phonics instruction. She tells us, "What a fixed sequence misses is the broader, deeper knowing about words."

Phonics and vocabulary instruction take place in many contexts. Read aloud, shared reading, writing workshop, centers, word walls, interactive writing and guided reading offer many opportunities for phonics use and vocabulary growth.

(See Chapter 13, p. 163-176, in *Guided Reading*)

Reading Strategies

Strategies are in-the-head processes readers use to connect and integrate new information with known information. Since these processes take place in the readers' head, teachers can only look for observable evidence of strategy use.

Clay places strategies into the following categories:

Strategies for Maintaining Fluency: Reading rate, fluency and accuracy are highly related to comprehension. Being able to recognize words quickly helps children maintain fluency. Fluent readers also use what they know to help themselves quickly decode unknown words.

Strategies for Detecting and Correcting Errors: Good readers make errors but are able to recognize the error and correct it. They self-monitor, checking to see if what they've read looks right, sounds right, and makes sense. If not, they return to the troublesome part and correct the error.

Strategies for Problem Solving New Words: Good readers read for meaning and at the same time pay attention to the visual aspects of text. Clay (1991) tells us that children solve unfamiliar words by using the meaning of the story or sentence, repeating the line up to the unknown word, sounding out and linking parts of words, noticing how part of a word is like a known word, and by letter-by-letter analysis.

(See p. 150-156 in *Guided Reading*. Also see p. 161 for prompts to support strategy use.)

Learning About Words (Phonics)

Marie Clay (1993) tells us that a competent reader “*uses not just the sound of letters but phonological information from several levels of language. ...He will select a larger rather than a smaller unit for efficiency and may check one source of information against another.* (P.290)

In Guided Reading Fountas & Pinnell share the following insights:

- The phonics children learn in other settings (writing, centers, etc.) can be called up during guided reading lessons. The reading-writing connection is very important to early readers.
- Guided reading is a good place to teach phonics because it allows phonics to be taught in context as it is needed.
- During guided reading lessons, teachers take the opportunity to teach both predictable letter-sound relationships as well as words that do not have predictable relationships.

(See p. 164-165 in *Guided Reading*)

Fluency

Since rate, fluency and accuracy are all highly related to reading comprehension, it is important that we teach for fluency. Good readers adjust their reading rate according to the difficulty of the text. Teachers support fluent reading when they assist children as they become rapid processors of the visual information in text. Fast, automatic recognition of words allows readers to maintain fluency. Strong book introductions and careful book selection also support fluency.

Young readers reading on Level 5 or higher should track with their **eyes, not their finger.**

(See p.150-151 and 16-18 in *Guided Reading*)