

Promoting Interactive Discussions
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Two Ethos

Ethos of Engagement

Ethos of Intellectualism

An Ethos of Engagement: When Do We Really Listen to Others?

Respect for Group Members

Enough Time to Talk

Fits Our Purpose / Needs

We Relate to Group Members

A Topic of Interest / Importance

Space to Talk

Knowledgeable Uncertainty

An Ethos of Intellectualism: What Do We Talk About?

Going "Deeper"

Beyond Literal Meanings

Reject Single Main Idea

Question Traditional Interpretations

Analysis and Critique

Consider Viability of Interpretations

Figurative Language & Symbolism

Interactive Discussions:

1. How to Talk to Each Other
2. What to Talk About
3. How to Support the Talk We Want

Setting Expectations for Discussions

Honestly Reported

Listening Well & Thinking is As Important As Talking Well

Address Other Students as Well as the Teacher

Half Baked Ideas are Accepted and Encouraged

Consider What Has Been Offered

Part I: Working With Picturebooks

Why Picturebooks?

Micro-Texts - able to read and discuss complete text in a single session

Contain a wide variety of genres, topics, themes, authors, illustrators, formats, literary devices

Introduce strategies in familiar contexts

Provide opportunities for discussion of significant topics

Picturebooks draw upon several systems of meaning (text, image, design)

Picturebooks offer a connection between School-Based Literacies and Multi-Literacies.

Turn, Pair and Share

Noticings – Connections – Wonderings Chart

Noticings – Meanings – Implications Chart

Noticing

What Might It Mean

So What?

Noticing	What Might It Mean	So What?

Four (4) Post-Its

1. One Way a Character Changed
2. Something That Challenged You as a Reader
3. Something You Expected
4. Something that was Missing from the Story

Additional Strategies

Graffiti Boards

Insider - Outsider Perspectives

Times When You Feel Like an Insider - Can Directly Relate to What is Happening

Times When You Feel Like an Outsider - Cannot Relate to What is Happening

Story Structures

Speech Bubbles

Story Comics

Word Storms: Have students write down ten words that come to their minds as you are reading a book aloud. Then each student chooses three words and writes a brief reflection concerning their reasons for choosing those three words. Discuss choices and reasons in small groups or whole class.

Word Storms (Ten Words):



Research Suggests:

- As little as ONE Minute of Discussion PER DAY can have Significant Results in Students' Reading Abilities.
- Guessing What is in the Teacher's Head is not a discussion.
- The purpose of Discussion is to Expand the Thinking of ALL Participants.
- Without Conscious Attention to Patterns of Classroom Discourse, Teachers Revert to Traditional Ways of Talking and Interacting with Students.

Part II: Working With Novels

How I Have Used Novels

- Students read novels or extended texts for homework reading each night.
- Classroom Read Alouds
- Literature Study Groups
- Reading Novels makes up about 33% of my Reading Life... therefore reading in school
- Never have used them as whole class set, or round robin reading.

Reading a Novel

- Willingness to Read Another
- Enjoyment
- Knowledge of World and Self
- Vicarious Experience
- Basic Literal Comprehension
- Cultural Capital
- Sense of Novel as a Genre
- Ability / Willingness to Discuss the Book
- Develop a Social Imagination
- Connections to Other People

Discussion Strategies for Working with Novels

Character Timelines

MySpace for Characters

Intertextual Connections

Open Coding

Reflecting on Codes

Open Coding - 3 Coders

Literary Dinner Party

Comparing Covers

Illustrated book covers are a publisher's or illustrator's interpretation of the characters or story

Using different covers opens up room for multiple interpretations

Covers are a marketing device that responds to social influences

The Whipping Boy 1987	The Whipping Boy 1995
The Whipping Boy 2003	The Whipping Boy Unit
The Whipping Boy Movie	Misc

Reading Lessons in Action: Approaching a Novel

Help students attend to Extra-Textual resources

Set Expectations for Reading

Activate Relevant Prior Knowledge

Attend to Visual and Textual Cues

Determining Significance

The Lesson Continues...

In pairs or threes approach the texts provided in the same manner as was demonstrated.

Keep track of what you do, what works, and what challenges arise.

Be ready to report to the group about what you did.

Make Visual Display of Ideas

Instructional Trajectory

How the lesson will affect reading in the future in the classroom?

Look for indicators of use in reader response notebooks

Purposefulness / Relevance of strategy

Demonstrate continued strategy use during read alouds

Things We Don't Want to Unintentionally Demonstrate

There is one right interpretation of a text and only the teacher or the "Cliff Notes" knows it.

The text is more important than the images. What we do after the reading is done is more important than the reading itself.

The only way to know if students understand what they read is by asking them questions, lots of questions.

You read for enjoyment at home, you read what teachers want at school.

Three Final Things to Consider

Breaking the myth of "Main Idea" is an important starting point.

Introducing Strategies in Micro-Texts is Easier than through novels.

A text needs to be conceptualized as a "Point of Departure" for discussions.

Interactive Discussion Strategies

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These strategies are designed to help students and teachers engage in dialogue concerning pieces of literature. They are not designed as assessment devices, nor as products to turn in for a grade. They are designed to be done by students and then used to reflect on the reading experience and share ideas within a community of readers. It's not necessarily the activity itself, it's how it is carried out and used to promote invested discussions.

Turn, Pair and Share – After I have read a book to the class, I invite children to turn to a partner and share their ideas. Some children may be reluctant to share their ideas in a large group setting, and often find this "pair share" more inviting. I then ask students to share any ideas that were discussed with the whole class.

Share Circles – When students sit in a circle and face one another, they tend to have more to say and are better positioned to listen to each other. I find that when students sit in a traditional arrangement most of the comments are directed towards the teacher, rather than towards each other.

Word Storm – Have students write down ten words that come to their minds as you are reading a book aloud. Then each student chooses three words and writes a brief reflection concerning their reasons for choosing those three words. Discuss choices and reasons in small groups or whole class.

Graffiti Boards – As you reading aloud a picture book or chapter from a novel, students are invited to write "graffiti" on a large piece of chart paper in small groups. Sometimes it's easier if you read the book twice and students write/draw the second time through. Symbols, words, sketches are all acceptable. Share with class.

Walking Journals – Purchase a notebook for students to respond to read alouds. After reading a picture book or chapter in a book, write some ideas, reflections in the notebook and give it to a student to read and respond. The student reads your ideas and then responds. The notebook circulates around the room until the next day when you can use the ideas to begin a new discussion.

Character webs – Since so many novels for children focus on characters, have students either independently or in small groups create a web of ideas about a particular character in a novel. These ideas can be shared with the whole class.

Storyboards – Either take apart old paperback copies of a picture book, or make color copies of the book and display them in storyboard fashion on the wall. You can discuss the illustrations only, the text only or the interplay between them.

Letters to Characters – Have students write letters to a character asking them questions or telling them what they thought about their actions. Give these letters to other students to respond the way they think the character would respond.

Interview a Character – Have one student pose as a talk show host and another as an important character in a story. Interviewer asks questions and the student must respond the way they think the character would respond. Student must be able to defend responses based on what is known about the character.

Sketch to Stretch – Students are given drawing paper to sketch some ideas that stretch their understandings of the story being discussed. This is not easy to make work. Students want to draw covers and illustrations. This is designed to take students' thinking farther, it is not an art lesson.

Impressions / Connections / Wonderings Charts – Create a class chart with the following headings; Impressions – what impressed you about the book, what did you notice; Connections – what literary and personal connections did you make with the story; Wonderings – what questions or wonderings did you have about the story. These charts can be used across books or for individual titles.

Commentary Bulletin Board – Have students write down their thoughts about a read aloud on post-its and post on bulletin board. These can be used to extend discussions.

Illustrated Quotes – After a book has been read aloud, students are invited to select a particular quote from the story and illustrate what they think goes with the quote. The more abstract the quote, the more interesting the illustrative possibilities.

Pass a Note – Have students write back and forth about what they have been reading. No talking is allowed. Students must read each others notes before responding. This slows students down and forces them to attend to other readers' thoughts.

Visual Story Line – Using chart paper, have students visually diagram the structure of the story. Demonstrations are essential for success. The hero cycle, multiple storyline books, complicated plot twists work well here. This should be done as a whole class before students do it on their own.

Jigsaw Reading – Students are each given a part of a story or poem. They read their part then meet in small groups to explain what their part was about and build interpretations with other students that have read other portions.

Official Meanings (What would the test ask?) – In order to help students on standardized tests, we want to help them understand the different things they will be asked on these tests. In a double entry journal, on one side have students list what they think might be asked on a test, and on the other side what they think is important.

Summary 3-2-1 – After reading a picture book, have students write a three sentence summary, then a two sentence summary, then a one sentence summary. Discuss what was left out each time and how they chose what to include. Look at the Library of Congress summary on the copyright page for more ideas. Discuss why they might be different.

Element of Literature Chart – Have students complete a chart that asks them to identify the plot, characters, theme, mood, setting, symbols etc of a book. This chart can be used across several books about the same subject or different versions of the same story.

Language Games – Vocabulary knowledge is essential for understanding texts, especially informational texts. Students need to attend to unknown words. Have students keep lists of words that challenge their meaning making processes.

Book Music – Have students select songs that they relate to a particular story or poem. Be able to discuss the connections made.

Story Scripts – take a story or poem with dialogue and turn it into a play or skit. Include blocking, stage and set directions and dialogue. This can also work in reverse, have students take a play and write a story.