10 POWERFUL Strategies for Improving Literacy with Diverse Students

IRA Symposium 2012

Welcome!
The Team

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The mission

To demonstrate ten powerful strategies for involving diverse students in literacy instruction based on their language and literacy levels
The codebook

All students, including English learners, achieve literacy in a development process.
Powerful Strategy #1

Tell a Story, Get a Story!

30 million more words by school age

See Hart & Risley
Narrative development in the classroom

Find moments to listen to students

“Talking to your children makes them smarter.”

Dickinson & McCabe, *The Reading Teacher*
Tell a Story to Get a Story

• Encourages Student Talk
  — If we want students to talk to us, we need to talk to them.

• Assessment
  — Spontaneous Speech Sample
  — Language at its best
  — Compare to retelling

References

• http://pdtoolkit.pearson.com
Tell a Story, Get a Story

• A two-sentence story
  – a spill or a bee sting
  – examples from McCabe and Bliss (2003)
  – Describe a not-too-serious accident that you experienced.
  – “Once I broke my arm. I had to go to the doctor’s office. She put it in a cast. Have you ever broken anything? Tell me about it.” (McCabe and Bliss, 2003, p. 8).

Tell a Story, Get a Story

• To get the student to tell you more:
  – Nod and wait.
  – Repeat back the last phrase
  – Request more information about the event
  – *Tell me more about what happened next.*
• For analyses, write down phrases and hesitations (uhs).
Analyses: Sample 1  
Tell a Story

My Dog  
Tell a Story  
Benita / 2nd grade  
Time: 1:07

Ok, this is my story and it’s about my dog too. Uhm… I had a dog named Rio, and ..uhm... she had a lot of puppies. And one day she went.. walking.. and ..in the woods, and she took her puppies with her, and she didn’t come back for two weeks. And I was scared, because.. she.. was.. kind of my favorite dog, and ..uhm.. when ..she came home, I just hugged her, and hugged her, and hugged her, and her puppies were .. uhm.. bigger cats… a little bit, and uhm.. the next day uhm.. we played a lot and then we went hiking…,

and she got lost again! And uhm... and she,... really kind of ... really got lost and then... she rea.. she came back and... I hugged her again. And that’s my story.

Sharing Stories

PROCEDURES.

• Share your story with enthusiasm and dramatic.

• When finished, ask an open-ended question to get students to tell their own stories. Has this ever happened to you?

• Ask follow-up questions as necessary.

• Bring out picture resources if there is difficulty with specific vocabulary words.
Sharing Stories

VARIATIONS
• Language experience or group experience story.
• Use in repeated readings of familiar materials.

Powerful Strategy #2

Get ‘em Talking!
Reading Lessons

Connection:
• How this fits in with what we’ve been doing

Teach:
• Model for students something we’d like them to try
• Direct instruction – tell students what we want them to know

Active Involvement:
• Students engage with lesson activity AND each other

Link/Off you go:
• Send off with a purpose

Why is it so important?

ELL students need to
• practice English output
• have comprehensible input
• get ideas and language together in a “safe” conversation with one before speaking in front of class
• process complex ideas in L1 before English
Powerful Strategy #3

Master Those Tricky Vowels!

Instructional Strategy

Management
– Stand Up/Hand Up/Pair Up

Quiz/Quiz/Trade Strategy
– Name the picture
– Name the vowel sound
– State how the vowel sound is spelled (pattern)
– Spell the word
Powerful Strategy #4

Poetry Party!

Kickstarting Fluency with a Poetry Party

Day 1: Introduce by reading aloud
   Chorally read aloud
   Vocabulary

Day 2: Expression while reading

Day 3: Rebuilding, word hunts, etc.

Day 4: Pairs or small groups practice
   Chorally read stanzas

Choosing a Kitten

A black-nosed kitten will slumber all the day;
A white-nosed kitten is ever glad to play;
A yellow-nosed kitten will answer to your call;
And a gray-nosed kitten I like best of all.

Powerful Strategy #5

Start With What They’ve Got!
Cognates are words that have similar spellings, meanings, and/or sounds across languages.

bank
banco
banque

Some English-Spanish cognates are:

geography------geografía
president------presidente
lake------lago
carnival------carnaval
When students are guided to use cognates they bring what they know from their home language to their learning of English.

With a partner:

1. Look over the foreign language text excerpts (Spanish, French or Portuguese).
2. See what words stand out to you as possible cognates- highlight or circle them.
3. What can you figure out about the meaning of the text by using cognates?
Powerful Strategy #6

Build Math Muscle with Content Sorts!

Content Vocabulary

• Open sort
  – Sort the triangles and make your own categories.

• Share sort
Content Vocabulary

• Closed sort
  – Sort the triangles by the number of equal sides
  – Use the rulers to measure each side
• Introduce the vocabulary

Powerful Strategy #7

Dictate to Write Great!
Personal Readers and Content Dictations

Dictations and Personal Readers

- Personal Readers
- Individual Dictations
- Bilingual Readers
- Content Dictations
From Words Their Way, Chapter 5

The Little Turtle
There was a little turtle.
He lived in a box.
He swam in the water.
And he climbed on the rocks.
Crackers and Crumbs

Crackers and crumbs
Crackers and crumbs
These are my fingers
These are my thumbs
These are my eyes
These are my ears
They will all grow big in the next ten years.

Dunn, Stenhouse Publisher
CONTENT DICTATIONS WITH OLDER STUDENTS

WHY? STUDENTS' NEEDS:
Ease Demand of Written Expression
Find Instructional Level Materials
Encourage Discussion / Interesting Materials
Access to Content
Rereading for Fluency
Word Study: Orthographic Knowledge & Content Specific Vocabulary

Content Dictation from *Junior Scholastic* read to student by teacher to a EL Transitional reader

"Russia: Putting On a New Face"
by Yen

Money goes up. Things that used to cost one dollar now goes up to thirty dollars. They are fighting to have freedom. They don't have any money.
"Russia: Putting On a New Face"
by Kris
It says that people don't live okay in this country because they don't have any money, and they're fighting for that. Some people wait for 10 years to get their own apartment. They still live in a group apartment. In 1992, when this guy (Gorbachev) was president, there was more freedom. They didn't have much money then either. Other places are having trouble, too, with war and thousands of people are dead.

Ecosystems are where we live. We can't live without plants because they breathe out oxygen and we breathe it in. Animals who eat plants are herbivores, and if they eat animals we call them carnivores. Worms are decomposers and so are mushrooms. When they burn down too many trees all the dirt washes away and they have to cook with manure for fuel.

Deer in the Grand Canyon grew too many and then there wasn't enough food because the animal that ate deer died. Green plants use sunlight to make food.
Add Some Action!

Academic Language

- **"Brick" words** - vocabulary specific to the content and concepts being taught (government, mitosis, metaphor)

- **"Mortar" words and phrases** - basic and general utility vocabulary required for constructing sentences; the words that hold our language together and are essential to comprehension
  
  – For example: Connecting words (because, then, but, sometimes, before, therefore, however)

Dutro, S. (2002). Rethinking English Language Instruction: An Architectural Approach
Academic Language Actions

Procedure:
1. Create a large chart with the titles and two columns (Optionally, you could add a third column for a visual representation). You fill this in with the students throughout the year as you collect more text devices.
2. Introduce the idea that some text devices are used to create coherence. When sentences, ideas, and details fit together clearly readers can follow along easily, the writing is coherent, and the ideas tie together smoothly.
3. Find a text that uses some of these terms. As you read aloud or do a shared reading, emphasize a text device and tell students that they will be learning how these devices help readers and writers of academic texts. Throughout the year, they will help you create an ongoing chart.
4. Then read the term in context and ask students to share what it means. Ask them to think of a hand motion to remember the meaning of the text device.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Device</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>however, but, yet, nevertheless, on the contrary</td>
<td>Look at one hand in front of you and then put out the other and look at it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and, furthermore, moreover, in addition</td>
<td>Two index fingers making a plus sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>therefore, for this reason, because of this, thus,</td>
<td>Hand making a rolling motion forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>granted, of course</td>
<td>One hand out with palm up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>firstly, to begin with, on top of that, then, finally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ever since I moved into my own apartment last fall, I have gotten out of the habit of making my bed--except on Fridays, of course, when I change the sheets. Some people may think that I am a slob, however, I have some sound reasons for breaking the bed-making habit. For instance, I am not concerned about maintaining a tidy bedroom because no one except me ever ventures in there. If there is ever a fire inspection or a surprise date, I can dash in to fluff up the pillow and slap on a spread. In addition, I find nothing uncomfortable about crawling into a rumpled mass of sheets and blankets. On the contrary, I enjoy poking out a cozy space for myself before drifting off to sleep. Furthermore, I think that a tightly made bed is downright uncomfortable: entering one makes me feel like a loaf of bread being wrapped and sealed. Finally, and most importantly, I think bed-making is an awful way to waste time in the morning. For this reason, I spend those precious minutes checking my email or feeding the cat rather than tucking in corners.

Powerful Strategy #9

Liar, Liar...
Listen and Speak with *Who’s Telling the Truth?*

Speaking and Listening Standards K-5

Grade 3, for example:

4. Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.

6. Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification. (See grade 3 Language standards 1 and 3 on pages 28 and 29 for specific expectations.)

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Listen and Speak with *Who’s Telling the Truth?*

- Three per group is ideal
- Each person gets X minutes to tell a personal story
- Group gets X minutes to decide whose story they will *all* tell
- Each person tells the *same* story to the rest of the class.
- Class decides *Who is telling the truth?*
Powerful Strategy #10

Get a Personal Trainer!

Training Plan

1. Assess current status
2. Show student a model of what the action looks like
3. Practice together
4. Provide explicit feedback to improve performance
A teaching example:

1. Elicit a writing sample from the students to assess strengths and challenges.
2. Select a next step for growth.
3. Construct a model to demonstrate the skill. Have students review the model, noticing its features. Provide a visual to guide them.
4. Have students try out the skill and give them explicit feedback.

Jessica’s example

Look at the writing sample that follows. Your class needs to develop the standard-based skill, “Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.” How will you coach Jessica on this skill?
Possible model

On my trip to the (forest) I saw ___ and ____. What I liked most was ____. It was so (dark) in the (forest) that my (friend/family member) said, “__________________.” I said, “__________________.”

Visual: Post on a chart

On my trip to ____________ I saw _________________. What I liked most was ______________. It was so _____ that _____ said, “________________.” Then I said, “________________.”
Explicit feedback might highlight:

- Use of correct punctuation
- Connection of dialogue to description of setting
- Connection of dialogue to set the mood

Questions and Answers
These strategies are effective because they motivate, involve, and engage students at their developmental levels.

These teaching practices build on what students know from their families and home cultures, and connect this knowledge to academic practices in the schools.

Thank you!

We hope you have a super-powerful end of the year!