

BACKGROUND NOTES TO SESSION 5 LANGUAGE PROCESSES 3 - FOCUS ON READING

INPUT AND WORKSHOP

The total time for this section is 80 minutes.

This session, although designed around a series of short workshops, provides a great deal of input on audiotape. Your main role is to coordinate the overhead transparencies with the audiotape. We suggest you run through the tape and overheads before the session so you have an understanding of the activities involved and the timing of the session.

You will note that in some cases you are asked to show an overhead transparency while the tape continues. There are other times when you are asked to stop the tape so the group can discuss the points. This will appear as * in the written script.

The script of the tape is written out for you to follow in this Manual so that you know which overhead transparency to display and when. A point form summary of this script is in the participants' Notebook. You may wish to give participants a copy of the full script to follow along with while listening to the audiotape.

Throughout this session you are required to stop the tape so that participants can respond in various ways.

Use of the audiotape is optional. If you feel confident enough to run each of the mini-workshops which are coordinated by the tape you should have a go. It is important that you have full control of the content if you choose this option. While you may use your own words the message must be the same. You will also need to be very careful with time and timing.

SOME NOTES ON THE PO KARE KARE WORKSHOP

Groups of teachers usually have difficulty in reading this text aloud in unison. Don't worry about this. Make a joke by role playing a stereotypical old-fashioned teacher who insists on perfect choral reading with expression etc. as you lead the group in reading the text, or you could say something like, 'My old grade 1 teacher would have given you three out of ten for that.'

When they discuss the working definition of reading which is offered to them on the tape don't allow yourself to be drawn on the adequacy or appropriateness of the definition. If anyone wants to challenge it as an adequate definition acknowledge their challenge, let them make their point and suggest that it is only a working definition which will most likely change during the Course and request that the group accept it as a temporary working definition. If necessary note the point on the Issues Chart and move on.

SOME NOTES ON THE DIRE STRAITS WORKSHOP

Responses to listing strategies for understanding the Dire Straits text might include:

- ¥ take them to a cricket match
- ¥ explain what all the terms mean
- ¥ develop a cricket glossary and teach that
- ¥ get them involved in playing cricket
- ¥ convince the student that knowing and understanding cricket is worthwhile.

SOME NOTES ON THE SHIPWRECK WORKSHOP

Responses to the Shipwreck Cloze exercise ('What did I do when blocked or looking for a word? What strategies did I use?') include:

- ¥ read on and come back later
- ¥ go to the beginning of the sentence and take a running jump at it
- ¥ guess on the basis of what I already know
- ¥ leave it out altogether
- ¥ ask someone else
- ¥ confidence to have a go.

Some extra factors which might be mentioned in the discussion are:

- ¥ my knowledge of shipwrecks (semantic system)
- ¥ my knowledge of how historical narrative flows (syntactic system)
- ¥ my ability to build up a story line and keep it in my head (semantic system)
- ¥ my ability to make use of the visual information given by the letters at the beginning or end of words (graphophonic system)
- ¥ my expectation that the grammatical flow of words will follow a certain pattern (syntactic system)
- ¥ my knowledge of how writers make decisions (reading/writing connection).

SOME NOTES ON THE BASICS WORKSHOP

As participants begin to respond to what each basic means for the classroom they will discover that many of the same responses are appropriate for each basic. It is likely that 'overlapping-ness' similar to that which occurred in Session 1 with the Conditions of Learning workshop will emerge. Point out that this reflects real reading in that many of the strategies and processes which we identified as being part of effective reading occur simultaneously and mutually support each other.

Thus teacher modeling of many of the strategies is something that applies to a number of the basics; so is explaining how reading works, developing activities which coerce a focus on meaning, or on any of the cueing systems that the student may need help with.

Some responses which could emerge from the participants include the following.

Use texts which have a sensible, coherent story line with syntactically appropriate language.

When students are blocked by an unknown word or phrase ask, 'What would make sense here?' Model the reading process by thinking out loud. Ask yourself, 'What would make sense here?' when you are blocked.

Use activities which coerce a focus on meaning (cooperative cloze, retelling).

Model, by reading out loud, how you pull on different kinds of information as you read.

Discuss the kinds of miscues which different readers make and explain what they mean.

Use activities which focus readers on different cueing systems and encourage them to reflect and share what they discover (controlled cloze as in Shipwreck text).

Choose and read predictable texts.

Explain how predictability in a text helps reading.

Discuss different forms of predictability (rhyme, repetition).

Encourage students to predict what might happen in the text.

Encourage students to justify their predictions.

Use activities which encourage predicting involving all three cueing systems.

Model how you use the graphophonic system to predict and confirm.

Avoid using 'sound it out' as the only response to a student who is blocked.

Explain how the reading process works to your students.

Create many opportunities for the teacher to read aloud from enlarged books, wall charts, overhead projectors etc. and demonstrate a range of processing strategies.

Read aloud from real books every day and use the opportunity to demonstrate how good readers like yourself deal with as many aspects of print as possible.

Bring to conscious awareness the strategies which different readers use when they are blocked.

Encourage students to share with others the strategies they use when reading difficult texts.

Continually give the message that reading is possible for all; pleasurable and extremely empowering.

Give off positive expectations about all of your students.

Avoid stigmatizing readers by labeling or grouping practices.

Surround them with good things to read.

Work closely with the school librarian.

Help parents to understand how to nurture confident, positive readers.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

There are two Instructional Strategies for this session, Cooperative Retelling and Guided Reading K-2. Cooperative Retelling is generally used with more fluent readers. However, it can also be used with early or emergent learners with modification. Because of insufficient time and the difficulty in adequately demonstrating Cooperative Retelling, it would be appropriate for you to have some student examples to which you can refer.

The Guided Reading K-2 strategy in this session is designed for use by teachers at the K-2 level. Guided Reading is a strategy that may require more than a week's time to implement. Encourage participants to assess their use of Guided Reading and take from the reading what they need to move forward.