



The Kindergarten Chronicles

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Spring is in the Air

Has spring sprung in your kindergarten classroom? In last month's issue of *The Kindergarten Chronicles*, I shared my personal experiences regarding the English Language Learners in my classroom. I shared accommodations and strategies for phonemic awareness and phonics that have helped me better meet the needs of my ELL students. This month, I will discuss vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing. There is a wealth of research available on English Language Learners. I am, however, sharing strategies and accommodations that I have found to help increase student achievement throughout my 17 years experience in the classroom.

Vocabulary: Vocabulary presents the greatest challenge to my ELL students. They have a large oral vocabulary in their native language. They understand idioms and word plays from their native country. However, the English counterparts are not as easily understood. The use of picture cards and literature with a consistent text to picture match have helped me to teach vocabulary explicitly. Abstract concepts such as beginning, middle, and end are modeled several times and a Tree Map visually demonstrates the concept. I also make three-fold flip books with the students to illustrate events happening at the beginning, middle, and end of stories we read.

Fluency: Regardless of whether our ELL students have had literacy experiences in their native language, we can provide them with rich experiences in English. Reading aloud several texts each day is a powerful

way to develop fluency for all students. Remember to include all genres such as poetry, narrative, and informational texts.

Comprehension: In last month's newsletter, we discussed *7 Keys to Comprehension* by Susan Zimmerman and Chryse Hutchins and provided activities for each key. Creating sensory images, developing background knowledge, questioning, inferencing, determining main idea, synthesizing, and using fix-up strategies are all "key" to developing proficient readers. On the back of this newsletter, you will find ideas for creating big books for shared reading in your classroom. Shared reading allows a teacher to use illustrations to support vocabulary development, to model think-alouds to teach comprehension strategies, and to build background knowledge for the text. These are supportive practices for ELL students.

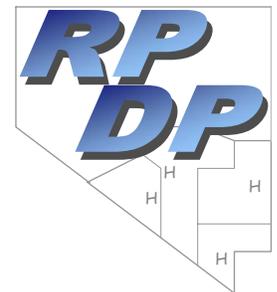
Writing: A balanced writing program provides opportunities for modeled, shared (or interactive), guided, and independent writing. The Daily News has been a concrete way for students to realize that "If I can think it, I can say it. If I can say it, I can write it. If I can write it, I can read it." The thinking and discussing parts are extremely helpful for ELL students. I have also seen the strong link between drawing and writing in my classroom. I encourage students to illustrate their writing. Through illustrations, we can lay the foundation for writing traits such as voice and organization.

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Bill Hanlon, Director

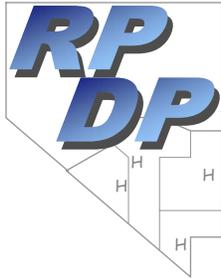
Food for Thought

"Using informational text is particularly helpful to children who are learning English as a second language. The concrete nature of the real world makes it easier for these children to create bridges between their first and second languages. A worm is a worm, conceptually, in any language."

- Linda Hoyt

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Summer Institute 2006

This year, RPDP's Summer Institute will be held the week of June 12- 16 at Greenspun Junior High in Henderson. Teachers will have the opportunity to take one-credit graduate classes in the areas of math and literacy. Summer Institute class offerings and descriptions are attached to this email. All registration is done through Pathlore. Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your teaching and earn credit!

Literacy Centers for K-1 Classrooms will be offered during Summer Institute. There will be a morning and an afternoon session.

Using Big Books for Shared Reading

Big books are typically a staple in kindergarten classrooms. Different reading series have big books available to support the stories in the basals. Although shared reading can also consist of charts, diagrams, or poetry, big books are a must for shared reading. The large print and text is easily viewable by all students in a group setting. If you do not have big books for your shared reading, read on to discover ways to create your own!

Classroom created big books are a great way to stretch your dollars and reinforce writing and reading. Students develop writing skills, story sense, and creativity. Teachers may want to initiate the story line, but allow students ownership in the details and the illustrations.

My classroom library consists of both fiction and nonfiction big books. Of all the big books in my classroom, the students repeatedly read the class

created books more so than the purchased books.

Reproduction: These are simply larger versions of our favorite books such as *The Gingerbread Man*, *Nursery Rhymes*, *The Wheels on the Bus*, and other songs and chants. To create these books, I type the text in large font (72 point works well), cut it, and paste it onto 18x24 sheets of art or butcher paper. The students work in cooperative groups to provide the illustrations. They use crayon drawings, painting, or collage.

Innovation: An innovation may extend a well-loved text, change one of the story elements, or construct a different ending. We extended the nursery rhyme of *Mary Had a Little Lamb*. The setting for our *Adventures of the Gingerbread Man* takes place in the desert. *What an Odd Bird!* is a nonfiction innovation on *Tacky, the Penguin*. For each innovation, I have a clear idea of what will

be changed. My students brainstorm ideas for innovations. We choose two ideas and the students vote on their favorite. Together, we write the text, I type it, and the students provide illustrations.

Original Text: This type of book is often my students' favorite. These big books are unique. We create the text. The students brainstorm character, the setting, the problem, and the solution if we are writing a narrative. The voting process is the same - I choose a few ideas and the students vote. The nonfiction books integrate information from content units. In these books, each student writes (using guided writing) his or her sentence. The sentences are combined with illustrations to create a book. Some of our original titles include *Where Do teeth Go?* And *Bats and Owls*.

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