HANDOUT 6A
Story Retelling Motivators

Planning for Reading to Support Comprehension

Before reading a book to children, teachers should do the following:
➢ Clarify the plot in the story.
➢ Determine what the characters are trying to accomplish and why.
➢ Identify possible points of confusion.
➢ Determine the gaps in information (unstated action, motive, reaction).
➢ Think about what is unclear, what the character sees or knows.
➢ Consider accommodations for special needs and English learners.
➢ Select specific vocabulary for Text Talk.

Reading #1:
➢ Introduce the book; discuss the cover and predict what the story is all about.
➢ Read the entire story without asking questions—avoid interrupting the flow.
➢ Clarify challenging vocabulary as the story is read (briefly and subtly).
➢ Take some time for a brief discussion or Text Talk.

Reading #2:
➢ Start with prediction and recall focused questions (before and during the reading) and move to more complex questions.
➢ Lead follow up conversations; ask open ended questions (avoid "Did you like that?").
➢ Discuss the storyline, characters (roles, feelings, reactions), and setting.
➢ Clarify possible points of confusion (gaps in information, unstated motives, character thoughts/actions).
➢ Address vocabulary (Text Talk).

Reading #3/4:
➢ Link the story to the personal experiences of the children.
➢ Discuss the sequence of events in the story.
➢ Engage children in reconstructing the story (flannel board story, dramatize story, assign roles for acting, retell story with props or puppets, retell story using sequence cards)*.
➢ Encourage children to use new vocabulary from the story.
  *See the back side of this handout for more story reconstructing ideas.

(Based on notes from David Dickinson, "Oral Language, Seeds for Early Literacy,"
Research Symposium, 10/27/05.)

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Environment material motivator: Story Stones

Print or draw images of the characters and main events from the story. Use Mod Podge to secure the images to flat stones. Flat river rock stones can be purchased or collected and brought in by families. Place the stones in an interest area for children to use to replicate and retell the story.

Teacher tip: Model how to use the stones on day three or four of the story reading.

Possible considerations for children with special needs: Use a variety of stone sizes that match the grasp abilities of your students. Provide multiple sets of the story stones so that more than one child can manipulate the stones while retelling the story at the same time. Start with a story that has only three or four main characters or events so that students learn how to retell with a smaller number of story stones.

Environment material motivator: Story Area (Dramatic Play)

Use real materials that represent the story to create a dramatic play center that represents the setting of the story.

Possible considerations for children with special needs: Carefully plan the story area space to ensure that children can easily move and engage with the materials.

Environment material motivator: Flannel Pieces (PCF, Vol. 1, p. 150)

Use felt pieces to recreate the characters and main events from the story.

Possible considerations for children with special needs: Add dimension to the felt pieces to support children who have difficulty using the pincer grasp to manipulate objects and to support children who have visual impairments and have an easier time seeing edges.

Environment material motivator: Story String

Draw or print images and characters that represent the sequence of the story. Laminate each image individually and place it in the appropriate interest area with paper clips and string for children to use as they retell the story.

Teacher tip: Model how to use the story string by utilizing it to tell the story on day three or four.

Possible considerations for children with special needs: Provide a variety of paper clips to attach the images to the string. Create images on a background with clear contrast. Hang the string first so it is tight and easier to attach the images to it.

Other ideas to remember: