

## ESL Developmental Continuum P–10

### Teaching strategy – Shared reading

#### Focuses on

Speaking **Listening Reading** Writing

#### Most useful for students at stages

**A1 A2 BL B1 B2 B3 SL S1 S2 S3 S4**

#### Purpose of this activity

Shared reading can be used with small groups or a whole class group. It provides a non-threatening context in which the reading process can be modelled and the use of effective reading strategies can be encouraged. Enlarged texts such as big books or text on an overhead transparency are used so that all students are able to see the text being read. The focus is on meaning as the teacher does most of the reading of the text and encourages students to read along at different points of the text, depending on their ability to do so. The text is reread at different points over a period of time, providing the opportunity to use the text for different teaching purposes and for the students to engage with the text on multiple occasions.

#### How this helps ESL students in particular

Shared reading:

- promotes reading as pleasurable activity
- provides a model for fluent reading and appropriate reading behaviours
- allows students to join in or read along with other readers
- familiarises students with the conventions of written English
- exposes students to the language structures and organisational features of written texts
- exposes students to the sounds and patterns of English
- provides opportunities for the students to read and respond to a range of fiction and non-fiction texts
- supports students in learning to use illustrations, charts and diagrams
- presents vocabulary in the context of a text
- extends students to make text to self, text to text and text to world connections
- allows for multiple readings of a text to support individual reading of the text.

#### Procedure

**The key steps of shared reading are:**

- The teacher selects a text which will support an identified teaching focus.
- The teacher builds the students' semantic knowledge of the topic of the text to prepare them for reading the text.

- The teacher introduces the text, discussing its features such as the cover, the title, illustrations to help the student predict what the text might be about.
- The teacher reads the text for the first time, with as few stops as is appropriate. The students join in and participate in the reading if they are able.
- The text is reread.

### **Using shared reading with ESL students**

Students at the beginning stages of learning English might not join in with texts as they are read. These students might mouth words or listen to the text as it is read and reread. Using highly repetitive texts with students at these stages is recommended.

Exposure to the sounds, rhythm and intonation of English is very important for students who have limited or no exposure to English prior to beginning school. An effective means to provide this exposure in the early years of schooling is through rhymes such as traditional nursery rhymes, action rhymes or other rhyming texts such as jazz chants or picture books which involve rhyming text.

Another advantage of using these texts is that they also include high frequency words so the students can also become familiar with these words in both their oral and written form.

When introducing the text, take time to ask questions or give clues to tune the students into the text. Introducing texts to students at the beginning stages of learning English will involve a considerable amount of teacher talk. Students at the later stages of learning English will be able to respond to questions posed by the teacher.

Build the students' semantic knowledge of the topic before reading the text, for example:

- build vocabulary lists
- use pictures to promote topic discussion.

Select texts which:

- are about familiar topics to help students to draw on their semantic knowledge
- model aspects of English grammar to build ability to use structural cues, for example simple present or simple past tense, subject-verb-object
- allow for exploration of sound-letter relationships, for example words which begin or end with a particular sound, or include clusters of letters.

Mask the text to allow the students to look at supporting illustrations before uncovering the text and reading it.

Involve the students in discussions which are focussed on the language and organisational features of the texts.

Provide the students with individual copies of the text after the shared reading to allow them to re-read the text independently.

Plan after-reading tasks which allow the students to respond to the text and which extend their understanding, for example:

- innovate on the text
- develop a story map to support a retelling
- sequence a series of pictures to support a retelling of the text
- complete a cloze activity which focuses on a specific element of grammar.

## **Acknowledgments/reference**

Education Department of Western Australia (2004). *Reading: Resource Book, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*. Port Melbourne: Rigby Heinemann.