

Monica Schnee – NJTESOL Workshop
River Edge Public Schools
5/11/09

Teaching Comprehension Strategies to Parents of English Language Learners

Presenters:

Monica Schnee, ESL teacher River Edge School District
Stella Ji, parent of first grader
Mamiko Liao, parent of first grader
Elaine Zhang, parent of first grader

Purpose of this workshop

- To help teachers organize a literacy club for parents of ELLs
- To discuss the importance of using reading comprehension strategies
- To demonstrate how parents use these strategies at home in their L1 & L2
- To encourage inclusion of the parents of ELLs in the school community
- To support parents and their children in literacy instruction

Two main reasons for the ESL Literacy Club

- To model how good readers interact with the text in a variety of ways and not only decode.
- To make ELLs and their parents familiar with titles that American children read at home.

Why is it important for both, ELLs and their parents to be familiar with reading comprehension strategies?

Some students are great “decoding machines” but are unable to comprehend and interpret what they have read.

Explain to parents that it is very exciting to see their children decode words in English but that what we are really looking for is for them to understand and discover the meaning of what they are reading.

Point out that it works the same way in their own language.

The purpose of getting together to read and learn comprehension strategies is to learn how to become interactive readers in any language.

Things you need to set up an ESL Literacy Club

- A letter inviting parents (see handout)
- A schedule of meetings (see handout)
- Picture books that are age appropriate and relevant
- Post-its and chart paper
- Hand-outs (a good way for parents to take something home)
- An easel if you are reading big books
- A sign-up sheet
- If possible, multiple copies of a title- obtain a grant if you can
- If possible, reading celebration at a local bookstore

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Format of a meeting

Mini-lesson: Doing a Picture Walk and Using Concepts of Print

Model how to do a Picture Walk to set a purpose for reading. Use the cover and title to predict, identify the author and illustrator. Use the back cover if there is any text or pictures to extend the predictions or discussion. Point out the title page and dedication.

As you begin to read, point out words, punctuation, capital letters. Point out that in English, we turn the pages and read from left to right (directionality). Some cultures read from right to left and turn the pages from "back to front".

Once you have finished reading, you may use the same title or have a variety of picture books for parents and children to read using the strategy.

References

Books about literacy and reading comprehension

Reading with Meaning, Debbie Miller

Growing Readers, Kathy Collins

7 Keys to Comprehension: How to Help Your Kids Read It and Get It!,

Susan Zimmermann , Chryse Hutchins

Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding,

Stephanie Harvey, Anne Goudvis

"*Teaching Children to Read*" *Summary Report*, The National Reading Panel
One Child, Two Languages, Patton Tabors

Free publications from The National Institute for Literacy

A Child Becomes a Reader

Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read

Put Reading First: Helping Your Child Learn to Read

Websites

To order free publications call the National Institute for Literacy at EDPubs at 1-800-228-8813 (TDD/TTY1-877-576-7734) or email edpubs@inet.ed.gov, or fax 1-301-470-1244. You can access other publications of interest electronically by searching LINCS.

<http://www.nifl.gov/>

<http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Publications/publications>

<http://www.colorincolorado.org>

<http://readingrockets.org/families>

For further information, you can write to me at monicaschnee@mac.com.

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