

Shared Reading: An Effective Instructional Model

Basis for Shared Reading Model

The shared reading model was developed by Holdaway (1979). It builds from the research that indicates that storybook reading is a critically important factor in young children's reading development (Wells, 1986). The storybook reading done by parents in a home setting is particularly effective (Strickland & Taylor, 1989). However, in school, in most cases, a teacher reads to a group of children rather than to a single child. The shared reading model allows a group of children to experience many of the benefits that are part of storybook reading done for one or two children at home (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Schickendanz, 1978).

The shared reading model often uses oversized books (referred to as big books) with enlarged print and illustrations. As the teacher reads the book aloud, all of the children who are being read to can see and appreciate the print and illustrations.

Repeated Readings

In the shared reading model there are multiple readings of the books over several days. Throughout, children are actively involved in the reading (Yaden, 1988). The teacher may pause in the reading and ask for predictions as to what will happen next. Because many of the books include predictable text, the children often chime in with a word or phrase. Groups of children or individual children might volunteer or be invited to read parts of the story. Through repeated readings and the predictable text, children become familiar with word forms and begin to recognize words and phrases (Bridge, Winograd, & Haley, 1983; Pikulski & Kellner, 1992).

Purposes for Rereading

The repeated readings of the same story serve various purposes. The first reading is for enjoyment; the second may focus on building and extending comprehension of the selection; a third might focus attention on the interesting language and vocabulary; a fourth might focus on decoding, using the words in the selection as a starting point for teaching word identification skills (Yaden, 1989).

Benefits of Shared Reading:

- Rich, authentic, interesting literature can be used, even in the earliest phases of a reading program, with children whose word-identification skills would not otherwise allow them access to this quality literature.
- Each reading of a selection provides opportunities for the teacher to model reading for the children.
- Opportunities for concept and language expansion exist that would not be possible if instruction relied only on selections that students could read independently.
- Awareness of the functions of print, familiarity with language patterns, and word-recognition skills grow as children interact several times with the same selection.
- Individual needs of students can be more adequately met. Accelerated readers are challenged by the interesting, natural language of selections. Because of the support offered by the teacher, students who are more slowly acquiring reading skills experience success.

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