Reading and Viewing: Fundamental Principles

Students learn to read/view most easily when
- they are immersed in reading and viewing
- they develop a sense of ownership by having choice in what they read and view and how they respond
- they receive response/feedback
- they see strategies demonstrated and modelled
- reading and viewing are regarded above all else as meaning-making processes
- risk taking and approximation are supported
- reading and viewing skills/strategies are taught/learned in context
- they see the value of reading and viewing and develop the desire to engage in these processes
- a balanced approach is used—a combination of shared reading, guided reading, independent reading and read-aloud, as well as modelling, demonstrations, and direct teaching. (Writing and oral language are also integral parts of a balanced reading program.)

Process of Reading/Viewing

Reading and viewing are the processes of constructing meaning from a range of representations including print, film, television, technological and other texts. These are active processes involving the constant interaction between the minds of readers/viewers and the text. As readers/viewers interact with text, they use the strategies of sampling, predicting, and confirming/self-correcting. This complex process requires the integration and co-ordination of four cueing systems or sources of information: pragmatic, semantic, syntactic and graphophonic (or visual in the case of viewing).
Cueing Systems

Pragmatic Cueing System
The use of pragmatic cues refers to readers’ understanding of how text structure works and their purpose for reading.

Readers use this information to predict meaning as they read. Understanding the basic structure of a narrative, as well as the features of a story particular to various genres (fairy tales, mysteries, etc.) allows children to set the appropriate purpose for reading and to predict more successfully. Children learn to recognize the text structure cues related to expository text, such as headings, illustrations, graphs, or bolded words. This allows them to activate prior knowledge and support prediction as they read.
Effective readers have a wide background of experience with language in many situations, although experience will vary in different cultural contexts. To expand students’ knowledge of written language in its various uses, the teacher may

- immerse students in a variety of genres and styles of literature
- read a wide variety of non-fiction to students
- discuss the information readers receive from non-print cues such as illustrations, story pattern and structure
- use a variety of text structures and story mapping techniques with students, helping them to recognize and chart the text structure visually

Semantic Cuing System
Semantic cues refer to the meaning that has become associated with language through prior knowledge and experience.

Semantic context consists of meaningful relations among words and ideas. Readers/viewers construct meaning when they relate the information in the text to what they know. When they use their background knowledge, meaning contained in illustrations, and meaning contained in the words and their relationships, they are making use of semantic cues. The key question readers/viewers ask when they are making use of semantic cues is, What would make sense? Self-correction when the text does not make sense is an indication of the child’s level of appreciation for and effective use of meaning cues.

Effective readers have extensive knowledge of a wide range of topics and related language. To build students’ experiential and language base, and to encourage reading for meaning, the teacher may

- extend students’ background experiences and involve them in as many real-life experiences as possible
- discuss experiences to extend students’ understanding and related vocabulary
- encourage extensive independent reading, to help build students’ experiences with a range of topics
- before reading, have students recall and share what they know about the topic to build their knowledge of the concepts and knowledge in the text
- encourage predictions before and during reading to encourage reading for meaning; explain to students why they are making predictions before they read and how to use this prior knowledge effectively as a reading strategy
- help students clarify and extend understanding by having them respond to reading in a variety of ways, such as through drama, writing, discussion, and drawing
- help students learn to use the semantic cueing system by teaching them to ask themselves as they read, What would make sense here? Did that make sense?
- use oral and written cloze activities, focusing on meaning to predict and confirm

**Syntactic Cueing System**

Syntactic cues refer to the structure of language or how language works.

Readers who use information such as sentence structure, word order, function words, and word endings as they read are making use of syntactic cues. Self-correction of miscues that do not sound right (in terms of normal English sentence structure) provides evidence of the students' appreciation for and use of syntactic cues. It should be recognized, however, that ESL* students will bring a different experience and understanding to the phrase sounds right.

To build students' knowledge of how language works, the teacher may
- read to students from a wide variety of literature
- provide time and opportunity for students to read independently
- provide literature with repeated syntactic and semantic patterns, thus encouraging students to make predictions based on their knowledge of such patterns
- provide opportunities for students to use language for different purposes—to tell stories, to explain, to ask questions, to give directions
- use oral and written cloze activities, focusing on syntactic patterns to predict and confirm/self-correct
- demonstrate through oral reading how to use syntactic cues to predict and recognize miscues (Model self-correcting because of these miscues. Have students listen for parts of the passage that don't sound right so that they can develop an awareness of what the term actually means.)
- encourage students to use the read ahead strategy and explain that this often helps them to predict a difficult word based on the structure of the rest of the sentence

* ESL includes new immigrants and students whose first language is not English.

(See Appendix 8, pp. 313-314, for a list of language skills and strategies, K–3)
Graphophonic Cueing System
Graphophonic cues refer to knowledge about the sound-symbol system and how readers apply this knowledge as they read.

This includes knowledge about directionality and spacing as students develop the concept of word and learn to track print. Effective readers develop generalizations about letter-sound relationships and integrate this knowledge with their use of the semantic and syntactic cueing systems.

Phonological Awareness
Phonological awareness is an understanding of the sound structure of language, which develops initially in oral language.

Students with well-developed phonological awareness are then able to map their developing knowledge of sound and letter correspondence onto an underlying understanding of how language can be segmented and blended into its component parts. This would include an understanding of words, syllables, rhymes, and finally, individual sounds. For example, the tasks of judging whether two words rhyme or begin with the same sound, or clapping out the sounds in a word require phonological awareness. Recent research suggests there are different levels of phonological awareness. For example, being able to detect rhyme or hearing the syllables in words is easier than being able to hear and manipulate the individual phonemes (e.g., hearing that the word seek contains three phonemes /s/ /e/ /k/).

There is a growing body of evidence suggesting a strong connection between students’ phonological awareness and their reading development. Research shows that being able to segment and blend language is an essential skill if students are to be able to use graphophonic cues effectively in reading. Many children enter school with some phonological awareness. If they have had lots of experience with oral language, they are often able to detect words that rhyme or words that start with the same sound. Phonological awareness continues to develop as children learn to read. Their attempts at temporary spelling also support the development of phonological awareness as they segment the words they want to spell.

Teachers can help students build upon the phonological awareness they have when they enter school in several ways:

- providing many opportunities for students to play with words in oral language to support the development of phonological awareness
- providing extensive experiences with rhyme in contexts such as shared language, read-aloud, and rhyming games so that students can develop the ability to recognize and generate rhymes automatically
• clapping the syllables in a word (e.g., singing : / / - sing ing); listen-
ing for the secret word (saying the word syllable by syllable and
having students guess the word)
• helping students learn to segment rhyming words at the rime/onset
boundary (m-an) orally. This becomes an important strategy in
reading and spelling as children look for familiar word chunks,
rather than having to segment and blend each word sound by sound
• using picture sorts to help students compare and contrast features of
words
• clapping the individual phonemes in a word, e.g., at : / / team: / /
(For students who find this a difficult task, the Reading Recovery
strategy of using Elkonin boxes can be helpful; that is using squares
and counters for each phoneme, and having the child push the
counters into the boxes as he/she says each phoneme); e.g.,
cat
0 0 0
team
0 0 0

Developing Graphophonic Knowledge

Students build upon their phonological awareness in oral language as they
learn to use their developing knowledge of how letters/sounds work. They
make the connection to how sounds and letters work in print through their
attempts to make meaning in what they are reading and as they explore
sounds through temporary spelling in the writing process.

To support the development of the graphophonic cueing system,
students need to learn about the alphabet and the sounds the letters
make. Sound awareness activities focussing on rhyme and alliteration
support the development of this knowledge.

Teachers need to recognize that some students will have difficulty in
learning about the graphophonic system because of difficulties with
phonological awareness and the range of development common to early
primary classrooms. Some students may need more time and more
explicit practice to learn about letters and sounds, as well as to learn
how to use graphophonic cues as they read and write.

As with any strategy, teachers need to be modelling how and when to
use this knowledge in the reading process. Two excellent opportunities
for such modelling are through the use of the morning message and
individual conferences with students.
To help students build graphophonic knowledge and learn to use it in an integrated way with the other cueing systems, the teacher may

- introduce a sound-symbol relationship to children in context—following is a suggestion of one way to do this:
  - Read a poem, rhyme, or book to students. A first reading should focus on meaning and enjoyment, before exploring a particular sound in a sentence or part (e.g., “There’s a hole in my beach ball, and a hole in my kite. There’s a hole in my teddy where Scruffy took a bite. There’s a hole in my school bag and a hole in my glove.” from Oh No!) Without showing students the print, ask them what sound they hear at the beginning of beach, ball, bite and bag.
  - Have students say the sound, focusing on the shape of their mouths as they produce the sound.
  - Have students brainstorm words they know that start with/contain the sound. Start making a list that students can add to as they find more words. Help students make the connection between the sound and the letter that makes it by telling them that the sound /b/ is made with the letter “b”. Show students how to make the letter and have them make it in a variety of ways, e.g., in the air, on the palm of the hand with a finger, on the board with chalk.
  - Return to the context of the book and read it again, this time drawing students’ attention to the sound in print.
  - Help students learn to use this phonics knowledge, along with other cues, in the reading of other Big Books, poems, and rhymes in shared reading, guided reading, and reading conferences. Through shared writing, writing conferences, and mini-lessons, show students how to use this knowledge in trying to spell a word.

- help students develop an understanding of letter-sound relationships by providing opportunities for them to
  - hear language and then see it in print
  - see their own words and sentences in print
  - hear language while following it in print
  - build a sight vocabulary of signs, letters, labels, and other print in their environment

- draw attention to phonics relationships in the context of reading and when modelling writing
- use shared reading experiences, such as big books, poems, songs and chants on charts, morning messages, pointing to the words to reinforce directionality and to focus on particular letter-sound relationships
• provide many opportunities for writing, encouraging students to use temporary spelling until they know the conventional spelling (This exploration of sound through temporary spelling is an integral part of the students’ development of graphophonics.)
• read alphabet books to students providing opportunities for reading and writing alphabet books
• encourage students to develop personal word lists, such as word families and words that sound the same
• have a variety of dictionaries available
• use oral and written cloze activities, focussing on graphic cues along with semantic and syntactic cues to predict and confirm
• make sentence strips taken from familiar books or poems and cut the sentences into phrases/words (The activity of unscrambling the words to make meaningful sentences focuses attention on the print.)
• use picture and word sorts to help students compare and contrast features of words
• help emergent readers develop the early strategies of directionality and one-to-one matching (Using a pointer during shared reading and encouraging emergent readers to read with their fingers help them develop these strategies. Students can be helped to monitor their reading for one-to-one matching with feedback such as, Did that match? or What did you notice?)

(See Appendix 9, pp. 315-316, for a list of sound-letter relationships, and pp. 317-319, for a list of resources related to the teaching of graphophonics.)
Reading is an active process involving the use of the basic strategies of sampling, predicting, and confirming/self-correcting. Readers make use of the cueing systems (semantics, syntax, graphophonics, and pragmatics) in an integrated way to carry out these strategies.

### Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Sample used to Predict Confirm/Self-Correct</th>
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### Sampling

Sampling means attending only to the necessary details after predicting what is coming next based on semantic and syntactic knowledge and cues. Readers then confirm or self-correct and make new predictions. In order for students to sample print effectively, they need to learn to make use of sight vocabulary and significant details of print.

### Sight Vocabulary

Having a sight vocabulary enables the reader to make use of context cues, thus increasing fluency and ease of reading. It is acquired gradually in context through a variety of activities.

- extensive reading where students see the same words and phrases in many different contexts (books, signs, labels, on TV)
- writing where students use common words and phrases again and again
- shared reading and shared writing, contexts in which students' attention can be focussed upon sight words
- rereading of familiar texts to build fluency

For students who require additional practice with sight words, the method suggested by Don Holdaway of creating cards with a word on one side and a sentence containing the word on the other side works well. The sentence may be one students compose or one from a familiar book. These might be used at a playing with print centre or at home. Sight word lists may be built from common words the students are attempting to write and from books they are reading.

### Print Details

Readers also make use of their knowledge of letters, letter-sound relationships, word parts, and print conventions when they sample. Students acquire this knowledge over time through the kinds of experien-
ences listed above (pp. 164–165). With practice in reading, and through demonstrations and feedback, students learn to make use of print details as one reading cue.

**Predicting**
Readers make predictions from what they have sampled of the text by using the cueing systems in an integrated way. This entails making predictions based on

- what would make sense (e.g., What is happening in the story? what does the picture suggest?)—semantic cues
- what would sound right (e.g., How would I say that?)—syntactic cues
- what the print suggests (e.g., What does it start with? ... end with? Do I know another word that looks like that?)—graphophonic cues

Example:
Andy put his pet turtle in the tank. It d— under the water.

In predicting the word dove, readers use their background knowledge about turtles and swimming and the meaning contained in the context (semantic cues); their knowledge of how language works—i.e., that a verb is required here, given what comes before and after; that the verb will be in the past tense, given what comes before (syntactic cues); and print information—i.e., that the word starts with “d” (graphophonic cues).

**Confirming/Self-Correcting**
Effective readers are constantly monitoring their predictions, looking for confirmation. They ask themselves the questions:

- Did that make sense? (semantic cues)
- Did that sound right? Can I say it that way? (syntactic cues)
- Does it look right? If it were “there,” would it have a “th” at the beginning and a “t” at the end? (graphophonic cues)

When readers are uncertain about their predictions, they need to have a variety of self-correction strategies upon which to draw. For example:

- Read on and come back to make another prediction that fits.
- Go back to the beginning of the sentence and try it again, thinking about what fits.
- Sample more of the print information, for example,
  - look at more of the letters
  - break the words into parts
  - think about a word you know that starts the same way or looks similar
  - look for small words in the big word
Students learn these strategies of sampling, predicting, and confirming/self-correcting over time when they are focused on in the contexts of shared reading, guided reading, mini-lessons, and reading conferences. For example, during shared reading, teachers might cover up some of the print to create a cloze activity that involves students in using the various cueing systems to sample, predict, and confirm/self-correct.

With beginning emergent readers, the initial focus needs to be on predicting, confirming, and self-correcting on the basis of what makes sense (semantic and syntactic). As students begin to acquire knowledge about the graphophonic cueing system, they need to be taught how to use this knowledge along with the other cueing systems as they predict, confirm, and self-correct.

Feedback such as the following helps students learn to make integrated use of the cueing systems:

- That made sense, but does it look right?
- That sounded right, did it make sense?
- What would end like that and sound right?
- What can you see in the picture that starts and ends like that?

The decision about which of the various feedback statements to use depends on individual students and an understanding of their particular needs in relation to their development of reading strategies. For example, a student who is relying on a sounding out strategy needs feedback focussing on using semantic and syntactic cues. A student who is relying primarily on contextual cues might need to have attention focussed on the print and his/her use of graphophonic knowledge. Appropriate feedback varies depending on whether the strategies used by the student are successful.

As students become more experienced in using a range of reading strategies, the feedback provided might focus more on helping them recognize what strategy they used and whether or not it was effective, as well as suggesting an alternate strategy. Examples of such feedback comments include the following:

- How did you figure out that word. Is there any other way you could figure it out?
- You stopped for a moment. What were you thinking? What did you notice?
- Can you find two ways to check that word?

(See Appendix 2, p. 280, for further suggestions for feedback comments.)
Reading/viewing are active meaning-making processes. Readers/viewers construct meaning as they interact with the text. The prior knowledge and experience they bring to a text has a profound influence upon what they comprehend.

Effective readers are active readers. They use a multitude of strategies before, during, and after reading.

**Prereading/viewing strategies** are a critical component of the reading/viewing process. Central to this aspect of the reading process are two elements: activating prior knowledge, which sets the stage for the reader to actively engage with the text, and setting a purpose for reading. Some such strategies are
- brainstorming what one already knows about a topic and what one expects or would like to find out
- predicting what a written text will be about based upon such things as front and back covers, title page, table of contents, pictures
- asking questions to organize one's search for information

**During reading/viewing strategies** are used during the process of reading to—can help readers to make sense of a text and to monitor their understanding of what they are reading. Some such strategies are
- confirming or modifying initial predictions and continuing to make predictions about what will happen next
- asking oneself questions as one reads
- visualizing or making a picture in one's mind about the text
- going back and rereading when the text does not make sense
- making personal connections with the text.
- making notes from the text

**After reading/viewing strategies** are used after reading to confirm, clarify, and integrate what was read. Examples of such strategies are
- reflecting on one's predictions and how well they matched
- thinking about and explaining or mapping what one learned from the text
- thinking/telling about what one really liked about the text
- drawing or dramatizing one's understanding of the text
- rereading the text or parts of the text
- talking to others about the text
- retelling the text in one's own words
- writing reflectively about the text
- asking questions about the text
- creating a new product
Helping Students Develop These Strategies

Comprehension strategies need to be developed in the context of authentic reading and viewing and in the exploration of ideas and concepts across the curriculum. **Teachers need to provide instruction where they explain and demonstrate these strategies.** They need to build time into the daily schedule for reading/viewing where students can apply the strategies in guided and independent practice. They also need to provide opportunities for students to respond to texts in a variety of ways (e.g., writing, discussion, drama, art).

Comprehension strategies are developed through a variety of daily activities in the curriculum, such as independent reading and writing, shared reading and writing, response journals, art and drama responses, mini-lessons, reading conferences, literature circles, story mapping, and webbing.

Teachers can use a variety of assessment strategies to monitor students' development in reading, using the information they gather to inform their teaching. Some of the key information they look for in the primary grades includes information about students' understanding, attitudes, and strategies, for example, whether they

- understand reading as a meaning-making process
- understand the concepts of directionality and one-to-one matching
- make use of the cueing systems in an integrated way to predict, confirm, and self-correct
- use a variety of self-correcting strategies
- have a number of sight words they recognize automatically
- read/feel confident and positive about reading
- comprehend what they read (e.g., make predictions, make connections, ask questions, recognize genres)

Strategies teachers use to gather, analyse, and keep track of information about students' reading development (which are explained in the Assessment and Evaluation Section, pp. 263–278) include

- running records
- miscue analysis
- reading conferences
- interviews/questionnaires
- observation
- anecdotal records
- checklists
- retellings

(See also assessment suggestions in the Outcomes section, pp. 76–115)
Contexts for the Reading Process

Read-Aloud

Reading aloud to students is an essential component of any reading program. It is one of the best ways to interest them in reading and to demonstrate that reading can be enjoyable and worthwhile. Reading to students helps them to understand the nature and purposes of reading. It also helps them become familiar with the patterns of written language. It can interest them in different types of literature and different authors. Reading aloud can also be used to model effective reading strategies and to help students build awareness and understanding of such strategies (e.g., predicting, making connections, creating visual images, rereading when they don’t understand). Reading aloud to students has been shown to have positive effects on:

- reading comprehension
- listening comprehension
- quality of oral and written language
- reading interests

A variety of texts should be used for read-aloud, including fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. The age, needs, and interests of students, as well as their previous exposure to books, need to be taken into consideration in selecting texts for read-aloud. Appropriate texts are those that extend students’ thinking, develop their imaginations, increase their interests, and expose them to interesting language and illustrations.

Read-aloud suggestions:

- Read aloud daily.
- Become familiar with a book before reading it to students. (Don’t read books you don’t like; think about how you will use the book.)
- Read with feeling and expression.
- Introduce the book, drawing attention to the front and back covers, title page, author and illustrator, etc.
- Before reading, help students to listen actively by inviting them to make predictions on the basis of the title and cover and helping them to build background knowledge.
- During reading, pause when appropriate to share illustrations, have students confirm/revise their predictions, make further predictions, or model reading strategies.
- After reading, allow time for students to relate the book to their own experiences and to other books read.
- Have students respond in a variety of ways to read aloud selections. (See Response section, pp. 199–206.) Modelling responses to a text read aloud is an excellent way to introduce students to various kinds of responses.
The art of teaching is a continuous balancing of when to provide support and when to require children to take more responsibility. Commonly used teaching practices can be placed on a continuum, as shown above. (Margaret Mooney, Reading to, with, and by children, Richard C. Owen Publishing USA, reprinted in Literacy Tree Program Guide, Prentice Hall Ginn 1998)

It is important to move back and forth along the continuum as the needs of the children dictate. For example, if a text is too difficult for the child during guided reading, it may be necessary to provide more support through shared reading.

**Shared Reading**

Shared reading (often known as shared language in its broader context) is an important classroom routine used in the primary grades. An extension of the bedtime story, shared reading is a step between reading to students and independent reading. It provides an important way in which students can learn to read by reading. Shared reading involves the whole class and the teacher sitting close together as they share in the exploration of rhymes, songs, poems, and stories. The enlarged print often used makes the print accessible to all students. In primary classrooms, teachers often begin the day with a shared reading session.

**Functions of Shared Reading**

- shared reading provides motivation for reading, demonstrating for students the joy and fun of being part of a club of readers
- shared reading provides the opportunity for students to practise reading in a supportive risk-free environment
- shared reading provides the opportunity to teach numerous concepts, skills, and strategies in the context of reading (e.g., concepts such as directionality, words, spaces, capitals, contractions; reading strategies such as using the cueing systems to sample, predict, confirm/self-correct; sound-letter connections; book knowledge such as concept of story, illustration, genre; high frequency words; punctuation

**Procedure**

- Materials for shared reading include
  - morning message displayed on the board or chart stand
- rhymes, chants, poems, or songs on charts or overhead transparencies
- books, Big Books

- A first reading should focus on reading for meaning and enjoyment. On successive readings, students can be invited to chime in or read together as the teacher or a child points to the print. There are numerous variations in how students can enjoy reading together (e.g., different groups reading different sections or parts; small groups reading some parts, whole groups reading other parts).

- Successive readings can also be used to teach a variety of essential concepts, skills, and strategies such as phonological awareness and knowledge of sound-letter connections. It is important, however, not to try to teach too many skills/strategies at once. Decisions about what skills to focus upon should be based on careful observation of students and what they are trying to figure out. Some ways teachers use shared reading to teach such strategies, skills, and concepts include the following:
  - asking students what they notice
  - demonstrating strategies
  - drawing students' attention to specific features of print
  - covering up some of the words with post-it-notes to create a cloze activity (an excellent way to teach students how to use the cueing systems to sample, predict, and confirm/self-correct)
  - working with sentence strips made from the text (e.g., cutting the sentence strip into words and having students remake the sentence)
  - finding similar words in the text (e.g., words that rhyme, words that start/end the same, words that have the same spelling pattern)
  - finding high frequency/sight vocabulary words
  - pointing to the words as the text is read, which helps students develop the concept of word and voice/print matching (A variation is to involve the students in taking turns with the pointer.)

- Shared reading can also be used to model a variety of ways to respond to what is read and to engage students in response (e.g., discussing, illustrating, story mapping, webbing, writing).

- Following shared reading, students should have opportunities to read the text independently, either through small versions of the same text or by returning to the enlarged version in small groups or individually at other times during the day.

**Guided Reading**

Guided reading is an important component of a balanced reading program. In guided reading sessions, teachers support small groups of students (or sometimes individuals) in reading texts they are unable to read independently. The focus is on helping students to develop...
concepts, skills, and strategies, and to learn to apply them in other reading situations. A particular guided reading session might, for example, focus upon a strategy such as one of the following:

- directionality or one-to-one matching
- selecting appropriate texts
- using prior knowledge and experience to make sense of a text
- using semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cues to predict, monitor, and self-correct
- rerunning or reading on as one strategy to use when one runs into difficulty

The focus for a guided reading session is based on careful observation of students and their needs as well as an understanding of the reading process and reading development.

For guided reading, teachers generally form flexible groups of four to six students with similar needs. In this way, teachers are able to choose a text and a focus of instruction appropriate to the needs of the particular group. Teachers generally structure guided reading so that they are able to meet with each group about every four or five days, although it may be necessary to work in additional sessions for students experiencing difficulties.

Procedure

- Decide on a focus of instruction for the particular group, based on observation of students reading independently; choose a text at the group's instructional level. (A text is considered to be at instructional level when students can read it at an accuracy level of 90–94 percent.)

- Help students experience success by first giving them an idea of the storyline (e.g., This is a non-fiction book about bears.), asking them to make predictions based on the cover illustrations and title, and by talking emergent readers and writers through the pictures. It is important to explain to students how they can use these predictions as they read. Brainstorm with the students some of the words they might expect to find in the text. After reading, ask them if these words were in the story and if they can find them.

- Ask the students to read the text. Emergent and early readers will generally be reading aloud. Observe/listen, intervening where appropriate to help students develop reading strategies and become aware of these strategies. This can be used as an opportunity to model, explain, and make strategy knowledge more explicit. (e.g., Support the student who is not using semantic cues by saying something such as, You said ... Does that make sense? and by encouraging him/her to think of another word that would make sense. (See Appendix 2, p. 260, for other examples of feedback appropriate for different situations.)
Follow-up to reading the text may include talking about the text, focusing on features of print, rereading, or responding through writing, drama, or art.

One of the challenges faced by teachers with guided reading in the primary grades is to manage to find a stretch of uninterrupted time (approximately 15 minutes) to work with the guided reading group and have the rest of the students engage in meaningful, independent work. Many teachers include some of the following activities, sometimes set up as centres through which students rotate:

- reading independently
- reading in pairs
- reading Big Books/chart poems as a small group
- responding to texts in a variety of ways
- working at a playing with print centre which includes such things as magnetic letters, sentence strips, Plasticine or play dough for making letters
- listening or reading along at a listening centre

The guided reading session offers an excellent opportunity to gather assessment data about students' developing concepts, skills, and strategies. Such information is important in planning for future guided reading sessions.

**Language Experience**

Language experience is an important component of a reading program for beginning readers. It involves having students compose a text with the help of a scribe and using the published text for shared and independent reading.

Texts appropriate for language experience are based on classroom events such as field trips and presentations by classroom visitors, or anything that captures the interest of the students. Although the teacher does the writing, it is the ideas and the words of the students that are recorded. The students are also involved in helping the teacher revise and edit the text.

Language experience is a useful strategy for

- helping emergent readers and writers see the connection between oral and written language
- helping students understand the reading/writing connection
- providing a text for beginning readers that is predictable—since the ideas and the words are their own, and since the context is familiar
- modelling the writing process

**Independent Reading**

A balanced reading program includes independent reading as well as shared and guided reading. An independent reading program involves
time, choice, and response. Students need time during each school day to choose their own texts from a wide variety of literature. Choice stimulates interest and builds motivation to read. Students do, however, sometimes need guidance in choosing appropriate texts. Students also need opportunities to respond to what they read, and to receive feedback/response from others (e.g., oral discussion in the context of literature circles and reading conferences, response journals and other forms of writing; art, drama, retellings patterned stories). This does not mean, however, that students should have to respond to everything they read or view. Independent reading can take a variety of forms, including the following:

**Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR)/Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)**

Some schools build in time for independent reading by setting aside a time when everyone in the whole school reads.

**Paired/Buddy Reading**

Paired or buddy reading offers another audience for students. Many teachers make partner or paired reading a part of their regular classroom routines. For example, during reading workshop when teachers are conferencing/meeting with one group of students, paired reading is one activity in which some of the rest of the class might engage. Some teachers also pair up their students with another class at a different grade level. There are many benefits for both younger and older students when they select and practise a book to read to each other.

**Home Reading**

Most teachers have a home reading program in addition to the reading students do in school. Each day students take home a book (one at an appropriate reading level and generally one they themselves select). They are responsible for:

- reading the book to a parent/caregiver
- bringing the books back and forth
- keeping their reading logs with the help of a parent/caregiver

Reading logs, such as the one that follows, can be an effective way to involve parents(s)/caregiver(s) and to help the teacher monitor what the student is reading. It is important to help parents(s)/caregiver(s) learn to read with their children. For example, they need to know that emergent readers can benefit from walking through the pictures or hearing the book read before they read or that it is appropriate to read the same book several times since rereading builds fluency, sight word knowledge, and a feeling of success. They also need to know what strategies are being taught and how they should respond to children's miscues or requests for help. Demonstrations on parent night or special
curriculum presentations can be a very effective means of educating parents(s)/caregiver(s).

Reading Workshop
Reading workshop is one way to organize many of the components of independent reading. Reading workshop is

- an excellent way to build a community of readers
- a vehicle for giving students the opportunity to engage in the behaviours of real readers—reading and responding
- a close parallel to writing workshop
- an effective way to manage a literature-based approach

Structuring Reading Workshop
The reading workshop, which usually lasts for 45–60 minutes, is often divided into four parts: instruction, reading, responding, and sharing.

Instruction
This instructional time is often called the mini-lesson. Here the teacher teaches some procedure, concept, skill, or strategy. The mini-lesson often takes the form of modelling or demonstration. Examples of mini-lesson topics include the following:
• Procedures
  - responding in response journals to topics such as I predict, or
    This story reminds me of ...
  - demonstrating other kinds of responses such as creating story maps
  - modelling talking about books
  - letting students know expectations/rules for reading workshop

• Strategies/Skills
  - choosing appropriate books
  - reading strategies such as predicting
  - using the cueing systems (what makes sense, what sounds right, and what it starts with/ends with, etc.)
  - making predictions about what the book will be about

• Concepts about literature
  - story structure (e.g., beginning, middle, end; character, setting)
  - different genres (e.g., folk tales, circular tales)
  - focus on a particular author or illustrator

Reading
During this part of the reading workshop (15 to 20 minutes), every student is engaged in reading. Generally, students are reading individually, although sometimes they may be reading in pairs. At this time, the teacher moves informally around the classroom, dropping in briefly on individual students to listen to them read or to chat with them about their books.

Responding
When students are involved in responding, the teacher meets with a group of four or five students. Teachers usually set up their schedules so that they meet with a different group each day. In response groups, students might be asked to talk about the books they had been reading at home the previous night. They might, for example, share their favourite parts, discuss characters in their books, or consider how their books are characteristic of a certain genre. Examples of some discussion topics include the following:

  • favorite part and why
  • problem and how it was solved
  • predictions/questions
  • connections to their own experiences and to other books

While the teacher is meeting with the small group, the remaining students will be working independently engaged in a variety of meaningful activities (e.g., responding in some way to what they have been reading, reading individually or in pairs). Some teachers have found it
works well to set up groups which rotate through different activities during the week/cycle. For example, on one given day, groups might be working as follows:

- Group 1—Responding
- Group 2—Listening to books at a listening centre
- Group 3—Reading Big Books/poems on charts
- Group 4—Reading in pairs
- Group 5—Working at a playing with print centre
  (e.g., manipulating magnetic letters, playing word games, working with sentence strips or word sorts)

Sharing
The fourth component of reading workshop is a few minutes of sharing time with the whole group. At the end of the workshop, one or two students may be invited to tell the class about the book they have been reading or to share a response.

Reading Conferences
Reading conferences are an essential part of reading workshop. Students need feedback or response from teachers on a regular basis to nourish their growth in reading. The reading conference also provides an excellent opportunity for teachers to gather data about students' reading development. As teachers interact with students, they observe and record growth in their repertoire of strategies as well as areas in which they need help. The reading conference also provides an opportunity to engage students in self-evaluation and goal setting.

Both individual and group conferences can be built into reading workshop. Group conferences provide the opportunity for teachers to meet with students who have similar needs and for students to interact with one another. Individual conferences often occur when students are engaged in reading. Teachers move around the class dropping in to talk to as many students as possible. These conferences are usually kept very brief, often no longer than one minute. Students need to know that they can expect help at this time. During these brief conferences, teachers listen to students read, respond with questions that help them learn to use the cueing systems and develop reading strategies, and talk with them about their ideas about what they are reading. Using a class list to check off the students who have had conferences is a way to ensure that nobody gets missed.
Example of a brief individual conference:

Jamie is reading Buffy (Literacy 2000—Set 1C)

Mr. S. What are you reading?
Jamie Buffy ... I have a dog!
Mr. S. Is your dog like Buffy?
Jamie Yep! He chases things too.
Mr. S. Oh, Buffy chases things, does she? Why don't you read some for me ...
Jamie (reading) Buffy chased a ball
Mr. S. Buffy chased a bone
Jamie Buffy chased a ... (looks at picture) ... a branch?
Mr. S. What do you think? Could it be a branch? How can you tell?
Jamie It looks like a branch in the picture.
Mr. S. Yes it does. That was a very good guess. But if it were branch, do you think it would start with “st”? What else could it be?
Jamie Oh ... stick ... Buffy chased a stick.
Mr. S. Good for you. You figured it out.
Response to Texts

In addition to having time to read and view texts and some freedom to exercise choice in text selection, students need opportunities to respond to texts in a variety of ways. An effective response approach extends students' understanding, engages them in many levels of thinking, and invites them to represent their understanding in a variety of ways.

Personal Response

A curriculum outcome for reading is that students by the end of grade 3 will respond personally to a range of texts. In order to achieve this outcome, students need to be exposed to a wide variety of types of text and the work of different authors and illustrators. They also need regular opportunities to consider the thoughts, feelings, and emotions evoked by texts and to make connections to their own experiences and to other texts.

Critical Response

The kindergarten–3 English language arts curriculum also expects students to respond critically to texts, applying their knowledge of language, form, and genre. A major focus of learning to read critically in the primary years is gaining an understanding of different types of print and media texts, and their conventions and characteristics. Emergent readers can learn to identify some basic types of print and media texts. Early readers should be able to recognize some of their conventions or characteristics elements. By the end of grade 3, students should begin to consider how these conventions help the reader make sense of the texts they read and view.

Curriculum expectations for the later primary years also require students to understand the concept of point of view, realizing that there are varying points of view from which a text might be told. Teachers can help students develop this concept in a variety of ways.

Another aspect of critical reading, also a curriculum expectation for late primary, is the developing awareness of instances of bias, prejudice, or stereotyping found in some texts. Students in the primary grades can be helped to develop a sensitivity to such language and situations.

Learning to question the validity of texts by using their own knowledge base as a reference is also a critical reading skill students in the primary grades can develop. Teachers can help students learn to do this by modelling during read aloud and shared reading.

(See also Critical Literacy section, pp. 250-251)
Creative Response

As well as responding personally and critically, students need opportunities to respond by creating their own written, oral, or visual products. Creative responses include such things as puppet shows drawing role-play creating with clay creating maps or diagrams writing another version painting writing a poem telling a story creating a poster

The Role of Questioning in Response

One of the ways in which teachers can help students grow in their response to text is through questioning. Sometimes teachers use questions to guide or focus the discussion. Sometimes they use them to encourage students to reflect further, deepening their response. It is important that students as well as teachers be involved in asking the questions.

The kind of questions asked, however, is key. Effective questions are significant questions that promote both critical and creative thinking, open-ended questions that have more than one right answer, questions that encourage students to use their prior knowledge and experience to make meaning. Effective questions do more than simply ask students to recall what was read. They make students think before, during, and after reading.

Examples of such questions follow:

- What does the story make you think about? How is it like another story you have read?
- Where and when does the story take place? How do you know?
- Which character do you think is the main character? What kind of a person is he/she?
  How does the author show you?
- Are there other characters who are important? Who are they? Why are they important?
- Is there suspense in the story? How does the author create it?
- Is there a problem in the story? What is it? How do the characters solve the problem?
- How did the story make you feel? Why?
- Why do you think the author ... ?
- What questions would you ask the author if he/she were here?
- What do you predict the story will be about? What do you predict will happen next? Were you right?
- What did you learn? What was the most interesting/surprising thing you learned?
- What would you like to find out/what do you expect to learn? Did you find the answers to your questions?
**Examples of a Variety of Responses to Texts**

**Writing**
- Response journals/learning logs where students share their reactions to texts in writing (for example, how they feel, what they have learned, what connections they are making)

- Creative responses such as
  - writing a journal entry or letter from a character's point-of-view
  - writing a different ending
  - writing a text patterned after another text
  - creating a new product after engaging in the information process

- Written retellings, both unguided and guided:
  Involving students in evaluating their retellings with guides like the one that follows can help students grow in their comprehension of texts.

### Retelling Guide

**Introduction** - It began ...

**Setting** - Time/Place - The story took place ...

**Characters** - Main/Other - The story was about ...

**Plot** - The problem/goal was ...

**Events** - What happened first, next?

**Resolution** - The problem was solved/the story ended when ...

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Aunt Isabele Tells a Good One

Author: Kate Duke

This book is about a rich family who lives the only son. He was stolen by a big bear. A little girl named Dolly met the panda bear and when she heard about the plan, she said she wanted to rescue him.

My favorite part of this book was when the king and queen got a letter from Odious Mole and Bad Egg Elf and when the queen painted a map, I enjoyed this book a lot.

Name: Amanda
Age: 8
Visual Representations

- Various Types of Maps
  - Venn diagrams to compare and contrast texts or characters

Venn diagrams are useful in helping students think about similarities and differences.

This Venn diagram was created by a grade 2 class after reading Go Ducks Go and Rosie's Walk.

- Character webs
- Story maps (fiction)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>The Dragon Who Had the Measles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>A castle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>Princess Petra, Puffy McDuffy, Aunt Fiddlesticks, Queen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>Puffy McDuffy is not happy when he gets the measles and the Castle doctor send him to bed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event #1</td>
<td>Maids get Puffy ten mattresses and thirty quilts and Princess Petra gets him 150 hot water bottles and a pair of sunglasses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event #2</td>
<td>Aunt Fiddlesticks waves her wand and makes Puffy sneeze.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event #3</td>
<td>The Queen gives Puffy 14 gallons fruit juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event #4</td>
<td>Princess Petra refills his hot water bottles and reads him stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution</td>
<td>Puffy McDuffy gets better, but Princess Petra gets the measles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Concept maps (non-fiction)
• Drawings

  - showing sequence of events in a story
  - describing the setting
  - describing a character
  - illustrating an event in the story
  - predicting what might happen next
  - showing what images are brought to mind

A grade 1 student uses drawing to sequence events in the story, Goldilocks and the Three Bears.
- Graphs/Charts

Fairy tale features chart completed by a grade 3 class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>The Beauty Who Would Not Spin</th>
<th>The Balloon Tree</th>
<th>The Queen Who Stole the Sky</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happens a long time ago</td>
<td>The story begins, “M any years ago...”</td>
<td>The story begins, “Long, long ago...”</td>
<td>The illustrations and the clothes and the home tell us it was a long time ago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually has royalty</td>
<td>Prince and the Queen who lived in the castle</td>
<td>The King and the Archduke and Princess Leora</td>
<td>Queen Tallyrat who lived in a castle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often has something magic</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>The balloon tree</td>
<td>The dress made from the sky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often includes a task which if completed involves a reward</td>
<td>If Anastasia could spin flax into thread, she could marry the prince.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Queen Tallyrat’s tailor was commanded to make a dress from the sky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often has a fairy godmother, fairies, elves or witches</td>
<td>The big-footed lady, the jug-shaped woman, and the reed-nosed woman acted like fairy godmother to Anastasia.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Tabatha acted like a fairy godmother when she saved the village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually has a happy ending</td>
<td>The story ends, “And they all lived in happy harmony for many years.”</td>
<td>The King and Princess Leora had a big party and the Archduke and the meanest guards were locked up.</td>
<td>Tabatha saved the village and Queen Tallyrat locked herself away in the castle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Oral Responses**

- **Discussion**

Various components of the school day such as shared reading, read-aloud, or literature circles provide opportunities for students to engage in oral discussion about texts. Responding orally is an effective way into written responses for emergent readers/writers.

- **Drama**

Drama provides a powerful way for students to construct meaning from texts. Representing through drama can take a variety of forms, which include

- **Readers’ Theatre** in which students read from prepared scripts adapted from texts
• Role-play (e.g., role-playing a town hall meeting to problem solve; interviewing characters; dramatizing situations)

• Puppet Plays

(See also The Role of Drama section, pp. 253-254)