

## CHAPTER 21 – Planning and managing literacy learning

### Classroom Activities: literacy learning centres

#### Writing centre

In the writing centre, children can make books using word-processing software, paper and pencils, crayons and markers. The books read aloud by the teacher, big books used in shared reading and books used in guided reading may be the stimulus for writing. Sometimes, the writing centre activities encourage creative responses. At other times, there are more structured activities where children innovate on a text.

The writing centre for emergent literacy can focus on innovating on text, pocket charts and book making. All the activities can integrate writing with information technology.

#### Innovating on a text

The sentence beginnings or stems from books read in guided reading sessions can be given for emergent readers to complete; for example:

I like ...  
I have ...  
This is a ...  
Can you see my ...?

#### Pocket charts

Pocket charts are strips of clear plastic in which children place cards with words written on them that have been introduced in books they have read. The children arrange the words in sentences to match an illustration. For example, the following words and punctuation marks were written on cards for the children to arrange in the plastic pocket chart. Children then wrote the sentences they created.



can you see my leg?

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## **Book making**

Children create their own books by drawing pictures and writing about the ideas. Books can be created individually, or by pairs or small groups.

## **Concertina books**

Concertina books are made by folding one piece of cardboard over and over until it opens like a concertina. These books are useful for drawing and writing about the main events in a book or for making drawings and writing the names of book characters.

## **Cumulative books**

Cumulative books start with a line of text contributed by one person. The next line of text is added by the next person and so on.

## **Photo stories**

Photo stories or language experience recounts can be made by small groups or the whole class about local community events, school events or imaginary stories with props such as dolls and toy soldiers in adventures. Digital cameras make it easy to produce these books on the computer.

## **Story maps**

Story maps are maps of what happens in a narrative. Children write and draw to retell the story.

## Classroom Activity: Alphabet centre

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The alphabet centre is for emergent and early readers. As children move through the early and extending levels of reading, the alphabet centre will be replaced by other learning centres. The alphabet centre focuses on activities for phonemic awareness, print awareness and sound-to-letter relationships.

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### Phonemic awareness activities

Phonemic awareness is the awareness of the sounds or phonemes heard in spoken language. It involves recognition of words, syllables, rhyme, alliteration and phonemes.

#### Clapping games

Children can listen to songs and jingles read aloud on CDs and either clap for each beat or word in the songs. In 'Clap around the room', a child points to an object such as a pencil or a box and their partner claps the syllables *pen-cil* or *box* in the word. Becoming conscious of syllables is important when children begin to read and write words.

#### Picture card games

Phonemic awareness picture card games focus on the sounds of the spoken word and for this reason picture cards made from stickers, magazines and catalogues are used. Snap, Concentration and Fish can be played using cards with pictures glued to the front. Rhyming Snap is played with words that have a sound that rhymes, like *cat, mat, sat*; or *sky, pie, I*. It is the sound of the phonemes that rhyme and not the visual pattern of letters that is important here. First Sound Snap is played when pictures have the same initial sound, such as *fish, five, four, fan*.

More complex picture card games involve pictures or objects where one word doesn't fit; for example, in rhyme (*fish, sand, dish*) or in first sounds (*dog, doughnut, snake, dinner*).

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### Print awareness activities

Print awareness involves learning about letter formation, different letter fonts, and recognition and matching of letters. Letters can be cut from magazines and pasted to make collages.

#### Sound-to-letter games

Sound-to-letter games can be made by writing words and illustrating them, when possible, on cards. It is helpful if a picture cue is placed near the word.



Snap, Memory or Concentration and Fish games can be played with cards. You will need 20 to 30 paired cards.

Snap games are played by pairs or small groups of children who have been dealt 5 to 10 cards. The children take turns to place a card face up on the pile. If two cards in a row match, the first to correctly call 'Snap!' takes all the cards. The person who wins is the one with the most cards. Once the game is over, the winner deals the cards again and encourages a new winner.

Memory or Concentration is played by pairs, small groups or individuals. A set of 20 to 30 cards with matching pairs is laid out face down. One at a time, children turn two cards over, trying to make a match. If the match is correct, they take the pair. If the match is incorrect, they turn the cards face down again. The winner has the most pairs when there are no cards left to turn over. The cards are then shuffled and placed face down for the next game.

Fish is similar to Snap except 10 cards are dealt to pairs or a small group of children. In turns, children try to make pairs of matching cards by asking other players in their group for a card. If the group members do not have a card, they say 'Fish' and the person asking picks up a new card from a pile in the centre of the group.

Card games can be played with:

- words with the same onset
- words with the same rime
- words with the same vowel sounds.

## Classroom Activity: Word centre

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In the word centre, children practise making and breaking words and reading high-frequency words. The word centre is set up with a range of games and activities, and focuses on high-frequency words and analogy with onset and rime.

### Card games

Write high-frequency words on cards for children to play matching games, such as Fish, Concentration and Snap.

### Making and breaking

Making and breaking activities involve making a word with plastic letters, such as *cat*, then breaking the word into word families or onset and rime: *c at*. Next, a list of *at* words is made. Onsets and rimes such as these can be made with plastic letters:

an	at	dog	in	but
pan	cat	log	pin	cut
can	mat	frog	fin	rut
man	sat	fog	thin	gut
	rat		grin	shut

### Word sorting

Word sorting games can be developed for children to sort words that have the same onset or the same rime; for example, *cat*, *sat* (same rime); *can*, *candle*, *cake*, *cot* (same onset).

### Word ladders

Word ladders are made when children change one letter; for example:

in	go	to
pin	got	top
spin	goat	stop
	goats	step

### Jigsaw puzzles

Jigsaw puzzles are made with sentences containing high-frequency words.

## Classroom Activity: Interactive literacy centre

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In an interactive literacy centre, the children interact to practise reading and writing and to respond to texts. There are multiple copies of books for pairs or small groups to read aloud. Sometimes the interactive session involves paired reading, where children of the same reading interests and skills read together. Buddy reading occurs when older children read with younger children to share stories. Sometimes a paired tutoring occurs, where children are engaged in coaching each other with reading.

There may be dramatic retellings or re-enactments of the books read. The materials encourage dramatic responses to texts. Puppets and storybook characters made from felt for felt board stories are made available.

There may be audiobooks and DVDs or iPads with multimedia presentation of a text. Children can record music or other sound effects to use in the dramatic retelling of the text they have read. Some classrooms have tablets that are used to record children's performances of readers theatre. Some classes use video to create responses to the texts read.

Readers theatre activities can be developed where a book can be read aloud by a group of readers. The readers theatre may be performed for other children in the class. Groups of children can draw story maps and create group responses in murals, models and other forms of artwork.

### Chalk talk

A marker, pen, pencil or chalk can be used in a chalk talk. An individual child or small group chooses a topic to make into a story. They may write their own story to be made into a chalk talk or choose a book, television show or movie as a starting point. In a chalk talk, only one or two parts of the book are told as the child does a drawing to illustrate the ideas. If a small group is doing a chalk talk they may take turns in drawing and telling the story. It is a good idea to make sure that everyone has a job, such as the planner, illustrator, storyteller and materials maker.

It is necessary to prepare the chalk talk by deciding on which parts of the story to tell, and it is important not to tell too much—just one event or two that are particularly interesting. The chalk talk can be told to another small group or the whole class. It may be easiest to work on whiteboards.

- 1 Write the story if it is your own or choose a book/TV show/movie to use in the chalk talk.
- 2 Decide what parts of the story will be shown in the chalk talk.
- 3 Get the things you will need, such as pen, pencil, marker or chalk, paper, other drawing materials.
- 4 Everyone has a job, such as the planner, storyteller, illustrator, materials gatherer.
- 5 Practise drawing the pictures that you will need.
- 6 Make any other materials that you may need.
- 7 Practise telling the story while the illustrator does the drawing.
- 8 Tell the chalk talk to a small group or the whole class.
- 9 Talk about how well your chalk talk was done and what you may do next time.

See Chapter 8 (pages 180–2) for ideas on readers theatre.

## Puppets

There are many different kinds of puppets—shadow puppets, glove puppets, finger puppets, stick puppets and marionettes. Shadow puppet plays can be performed behind a screen. Puppet theatres can be made from cardboard boxes or from tables turned on their side.

## Felt stories

Felt stories are created with characters and props made with pieces of coloured felt cut out and glued together. The characters and props are stuck onto a felt board and removed when the character is no longer playing an active role in the story.