

Powerful Language Interactions in Support of a Strong Literacy Processing System

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Language Interactions

- “Conversations in the lesson should be warm and friendly, but when the child must attend to something, or must pull several things together, the prompts must be short, clear, and direct” (Clay, 2005b, p. 202).



Sustained Shared Thinking

- “The prime objective should be further opportunities for meaningful talk between adult and child, providing cognitive challenge that is manageable for the children” (Siraj & Asani, 2015, p. 413).

Instructional Dexterity

- Definition of Instructional Dexterity: “The flexible application of deep skill” (CPRE, p. 95).
- One expression of instructional dexterity: Judicious use of language.
 - “We found that strong Reading Recovery teachers also make efficient – or, in Reading Recovery parlance, ‘crisp’ – use of language during one-to-one lessons” (CPRE Report, p. 99).

Goals of the Session

- a. Explore language interactions in our work with children and their role in strengthening the child's ability to become a strategic reader and writer.
- b. Present Clay's and other theorists' contributions to understanding the role of language in teaching and learning.

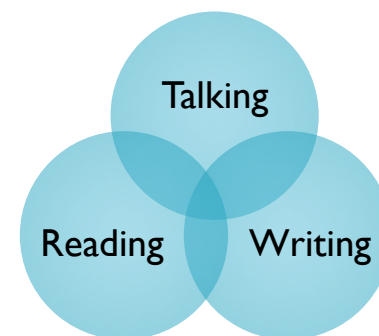
Goals of the Session

- c. Examine select examples from Reading Recovery lessons that illustrate the power of language in supporting active, engaged learners and successful readers and writers.
- d. Discuss opportunities within lessons for powerful intentional language interactions that strengthen teaching and learning.

Clay on Reading and Writing

- "I chose to define reading as a **message-getting**, problem-solving activity, and writing as a **message-sending**, problem-solving activity. Both activities involve linking invisible patterns of oral language with visible symbols" (Clay, 2005a, p. 1).

Visible and Invisible Information



Powerful Language in Early Lessons: Roaming Around the Known

- “Just as a listener tunes into a speaker, so a teacher must observe, listen to and **tune into** a learner. Being sensitive to the learner’s thinking allows the teacher to draw the child’s attention to many things. The teacher in conversation with the child creates opportunities for the child to talk, and to talk more” (Clay, 2005a, p. 34).

Examples from a ‘Roaming Around the Known’ Lesson

- [Transcripts]



Language and Interpersonal Relationships

- “[Language acts] create and express **interpersonal relationships** every bit as much as they create and express content, information, message” (Lindfors, 1999, p. 6-7).

Interacting Powerfully Using Language: Reading Books

- “Arrange for massive opportunities for each child in Reading Recovery to read **enchantingly interesting texts** fluently... [and] briefly question and discuss what he has read to you” (Clay, 2005b, p. 99)..

Introducing, Reading, and Discussing New Stories

- Teacher converses with the child to help him with the
 - Plot,
 - Phrases of language and unusual words,
 - Ideas, and
 - Overall gist of the story (Clay, 2005b)
- Connect these with the knowledge he brings from personal experiences.

Introduction to the New Book [Video Example]



Discussion after Reading the Story [Video Example]



Instructional Conversations

- “deliberately activating the children’s background information, directly teaching a skill or concept where necessary, and deliberately promoting complex language and expression by eliciting student rationales for their statements” (McNaughton, 2002, p. 148).

Comprehending Text

- Thinking within the text
- Thinking beyond the text
- Thinking about the text
 - (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009).

Interacting Powerfully Using Language: Writing Stories

- “...The sentences that the child orally composes are more likely to be more complex and varied if that oral composition is preceded by a scaffolding conversation in which the teacher draws out the child’s ideas...sometimes reformulating what the child says in more expanded form. Then that **language will also be in the air** for the child’s subsequent appropriation into his or her own composition” (Cazden, 2001, p. 96).

Making Meaning

- “Sometimes the **expert sends the message** and the child has to understand (receive) it. Sometimes the **novice sends the message**, and the expert has to try to understand it” (Clay, 2014, p. 23).

Composing a Story [Video Example]



Another Example of Composing a Story

- T: Oh, Christopher! I was just so surprised this morning when the snow came and you forgot to put your boots on... Hmmmm...
- C: I wouldn't... I wouldn't... I wouldn't even if I... Know what I'm going to wear outside?
- T: What?
- C: Uhm, my uhm, my costume, but it's ripped. So I'm gonna have it as, uhm, a plaything.
- T: So you're, so you're going to wear your costume outside?
- C: Because it's my old costume and it's all ripped.
- T: Oh, so you get to wear it outside and play with it, play in it?
- C: (nods)
- T: Oh, say it again so we can write it down.
- C: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah! I'm going to put on my fireman costume!

(Lose, M. K., 2008, p. 13)

Language that Leads to Constructing and Solving Words in Writing

[Transcripts]



Development of Agency

- “Teachers’ conversations with children help the children build the bridges between action and consequences that develop their **sense of agency**. They show children how, by acting strategically, they accomplish things, and at the same time, that *they are the kind of person* (emphasis added) who accomplishes things” (Johnston, 2004, p. 30).

Summary and Conclusions

- Reflect on our use of language at all times during the lesson activities
- Be selective about words/language used
- Engage in precise teaching and prompting to support independent problem-solving

Clay (2004) Recommendations

- Create rich contexts for language learning
- Increase language learning opportunities
- Understand that children learn language easily through conversation
- Consider what things make a child reluctant to speak
- Recognize the importance of reading aloud to children
- Create the need to produce language
- Arrange for sources of new language
- Think about which language structures are easier to learn
- Understand how children discover new rules and find when to use them, and
- Appreciate how children learn to say the same thing in different ways.

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Powerful Language Interactions in Reading Recovery Lessons

Lesson Activities	Opportunities for Warm and Friendly Conversation	Succinct Prompting for Strategic Activity	References from <i>Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals</i>
Rereading Familiar Books			
Rereading Yesterday's New Book			
Letter Identification and Breaking Words into Parts			
Writing a Story or Message			

Konstantellou, E. & Lose, M. K. (2016). Powerful Language Interactions in Support of a Strong Literacy Processing System.

Lesson Activities	Opportunities for Warm and Friendly Conversation	Succinct Prompting for Strategic Activity	References from <i>Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals</i>
Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words			
Reconstructing the Cut-Up Story			
Sharing the Introduction to the New Book			
Attempting the New Book			

Konstantellou, E. & Lose, M. K. (2016). Powerful Language Interactions in Support of a Strong Literacy Processing System.