

Using Cueing Systems from *Handprints*

Below are some general ideas for teaching students to use the various information sources. Abbreviate, alter, or supplement these activities, depending on the particular needs of your students. Suggestions for writing activities are also provided because, at this level, progress in writing corresponds with progress in reading.

USING MEANING CUES

- ◆ Elicit background knowledge, previous experiences.
- ◆ Discuss unfamiliar vocabulary or concepts.
- ◆ Help students use their previous experiences with stories to make predictions about the current story.
- ◆ Talk about illustrations; relate them to language patterns and to story as a whole.
- ◆ Tell students the main idea or general plot of the story.
- ◆ Frequently remind students that what they read must make sense, and that if it doesn't, they should try again.
- ◆ Prompt students to think about meaning as they read (e.g., "What does the picture tell us?" and "Let's see where they go next." or "Were our predictions right?").
- ◆ After the reading, discuss the outcome of the story, the feelings of the characters, and whether the students' predictions came true. Have students relate the story to their own lives, and share your own response to the story.

USING LANGUAGE CUES

Mention the language patterns for the books, but there will usually be no need to rehearse them. Students at this level are less dependent on memorizing the sentence structures because they are learning to rely more on print cues.

Tell students that the book should sound the way we talk, and if it doesn't, they should try again. (Some children with language problems may have trouble determining whether the language structures sound

right. These students may need to have the language patterns repeated.)

Show students how to reread a sentence up to the point of difficulty and how to use the picture, language pattern, and first letter of the word to make a prediction.

Help students begin to read words in phrases. Demonstrate word-by-word reading; then demonstrate reading in phrases of 2 to 3 words. Have them practice 2- to 3-word phrasing while reading familiar books. Reading words in natural phrases leads to fluency and helps students use meaning and language cues.

USING PRINT CUES

Using Print Conventions

Teach the functions of punctuation marks and capitalization. For example, demonstrate how your voice goes up when you come to a question mark.

Explain what a letter, word, and sentence are. Use these terms often.

Remind students, if necessary, that we read from top to bottom and from left to right.

Some students may need to be reminded that when you say a word, you should be looking at it (one-to-one matching of voice and print). The number of words you see should match the number of words you say. Students who do not seem to understand this concept may need to temporarily point to each word as they say it.

Once students have mastered voice-print matching, encourage them to stop finger-pointing and begin to use just their eyes to keep their place. Reading word by word can become a habit that is difficult to break, and stilted reading detracts from reading for meaning.

Learning and Using Sight Words

Help students expand the supply of high-frequency words that they can read by sight. Words can be copied,

then written from memory on paper, on lapboards, in sand trays, or with water pens.

Create a class collection of sight words on the wall, on cards, or in individual notebooks with a page for every letter.

Have students find the words in the text, before or after reading, if you think they will be unable to use meaning, language, or print cues to read the word.

Have students use the known words to check their reading (e.g., “It can’t say, ‘Come *here*,’ because that word (*on*) is not *here*.”).

Put the words on flashcards to practice.

Analyze Words

Reinforce the use of word length and simple inflections to confirm or disconfirm predictions.

Help students use initial letters to make or confirm predictions.

When students can use initial letters to predict words, help them use final letters to narrow down their predictions. (e.g., *Come* isn’t *can* because it doesn’t have an *n* at the end.)

Use lists or magnetic letters to help children see similarities between words with the same initial letters, with the same final letters, and in the same “word families” (e.g., *look*, *cook*, *book*).

Use magnetic letters to demonstrate how to compose and break up words into words and inflections (*play-ing*, *play-s*, *play-ed*, *play-er*), onsets and rimes (*c-at*, *l-ook*, *pl-ay*),* and compound words (*into*, *today*).

*A rime is the part of a syllable that contains the vowel(s) and any consonants following it. The onset is the consonants preceding the rime.

Writing Suggestions

Demonstrate writing a sentence. Remind the children that a sentence begins with an uppercase letter; ends with a period, question mark, or “yelling mark”; and has spaces between words.

Teach the children to check for uppercase initial letter, spaces, and end punctuation when they write a sentence.

Have students write sentences using sight words. You can use the language patterns and topics from stories or adapt them. Have students illustrate their stories.

Insist on correct spelling for known high-frequency words and encourage use of reference materials such as a class dictionary or word wall for unknown high-frequency words. However, at this stage, allow phonetic spelling for content words to encourage writing independence.

Explain that special names begin with uppercase letters.

Put the children’s writing attempts together to make class books or group books.

Ann Staman, *Handprints Storybooks C, Set 1 Teacher’s Guide*, available from Educators Publishing Service.