

An Interactive Idea for Independent Reading

Objective

To motivate preteens to read and critically analyze books read independently.

Hook

Post a picture of a book that has strong appeal in the classroom. Listen to the students' comments and write them around the book. Encourage students to record their own responses. Leave the slide up as an independent activity so students can access it throughout the day.

Lesson

1. Explain to students that they need to pick a book to read that they feel strongly about.
2. Have each student send in a picture of the cover of the book they choose and a justification as to why they selected the book.
3. Post one of the books and the student's justification on the IWB as students enter the class. During the attendance routine, have each student comment on the book: either that they did not read it, or their thoughts.
4. Circulate through a different book and interactive discussion each morning. This will expand your students' reading list, encouraging them to critically think about their reading and justify their thoughts.

Closure

Use this attendance routine as a prompt for discussion: *What other books sparked the same reaction? How would you alter the book? What does it remind you of? Can we classify the book into a genre?* Set up tables or charts and have the students move the book covers into various categories as they respond to the prompts.

Many authors have websites where they read their own books aloud on podcasts.

Read-Alouds

Think of that magical time where you share a special piece of children's literature with your students. A read-aloud can be an enchanting part of the day, when all is calm and everyone just listens to a story, when teachers model comprehension strategies and ask critical questions. While reading aloud, you can model a variety of skills: fluency, decoding, reading for meaning, thinking and predicting, etc. There are many interactive technologies available on the IWB to extend your classroom read-alouds.

Traditional

A teacher or other adult reads a story to students as they gather together at a whole-class meeting area. The teacher asks questions, models fluency, and prompts for comprehension. Student responses might be recorded on a chart paper or whiteboard, and posted as an anchor chart for future reference.

IWB Advantage

Using the IWB creates an interactive setting for a read-aloud. Stories can be read and reread by accessing an Internet link. Stories can be read by the author, the teacher, and others outside the classroom so students experience multiple interactive readings of the same text from a variety of perspectives. Students can listen

to and view a variety of people reading stories. Family members can read a story to the class through an online phone call, regardless of where they are in the world.

An Interactive Idea for Critical Reading

Objective

To listen for fluency and intonation in read-alouds.

Hook

Read a children's book as a read-aloud. Choose a book with a pattern or rhythm that encourages fluency and expression; e.g., a book by Robert Munsch.

Lesson

1. Access a website where the author reads the book aloud in his own style. Select a book that was just read aloud in class by the teacher.
2. Create a two-column chart on a blank IWB page to compare how the teacher read the book to how the author read the book: *What are the important words/phrases? Why do you think Robert Munsch changed his voice, making it higher or lower?*
3. Replay the reading. The students listen critically to the text, deciding where to stress words or phrases. They listen for repetition and patterns to see how the author might emphasize certain elements of the book.
4. Post a copy of the text and have students use the pens to track the intonation of the speaker. Have the students change the intonation. *How does that change the text?*
5. Provide the students with one page of the book. Ask the students to practice reading it in groups or pairs. Ask them: *How will you read the text? What did you like that you heard already? What would you change in the reading of the page?* Students can record their own reading of the page in small groups, facilitated by the teacher.

Closure

For closure, introduce the terms *fluency* and *intonation*, describing it as "how an author reads smoothly and with meaning."

Extension

- To add another dimension to the classroom read-aloud, use an online phone system. Contact family members of students to read a story on the whiteboard or share their favorite memory. This adds another dimension to the task, as students are listening to and viewing a story being read. Ask students: *How did seeing a different reader read the story change the experience?*
- After the book has been read, ask students to think about a person they know who best represents the main character. Have them explain their choice. If possible, ask that person to read the voice of the main character so that students can discuss their decision after hearing the new version of the story. Ask them: *Did the voice you chose match the character? What did you like and what would you change?*

Ultimately reading aloud is one of the most engaging moments in a day, and one that students crave. The IWB does not lessen that magic, but can expand it beyond the walls of the classroom.

Shared Reading

Simply writing a short text—a sentence, poem, song, chant, story—on a piece of chart paper provides opportunities for students to practice shared reading, choral reading, repeated readings, predicting missing words, looking for rhymes,

identifying high-frequency words, using word and letter patterns, and analyzing the structure of the text.

If you take this text and put it on the interactive whiteboard, you can still use all of these effective teaching strategies. You can also

- Have students clearly mark up the text you are teaching and easily erase mistakes, creating an errorless canvas.
- Keep the text on file. As you teach new skills, you can easily erase the old markings. As you change the learning focus, you can create new markings.
- Record the voices of your class reading the text and play it later, varying the volume of the reading to emphasize different parts, expressions, and words.
- Access a gallery or library and have students add meaningful visuals to the text that will differ according to students' interests and backgrounds.
- Add links to the text. For example, if the topic is the sun, you can create a link to a blazing animated sun, or to a site that gives information about the sun.
- After interacting with text with the whole class, erase the markings on the text and place it at a literacy centre with instructions for students to search for and mark up the text once again.
- Students can receive immediate feedback if you set the IWB to link to a reading of the text or parts of it. Students or the teacher can be recorded on a podcast and that link can be accessed for students to check their work through the link.
- To incorporate creative thinking, students can expand the text based on their understanding of language patterns and the message. Erase selected words and ask students to replace the spaces with new words that still make sense; have them justify their responses.
- Prompt students to change/rewrite stories using higher-order prompts, such as *summarize*, *compare*, *deconstruct*, *judge*, or *develop* a new story based on one of the elements of the story presented.

Independent Reading

One of the most treasured times for students is when they read independently in a quiet space, choosing their own books, browsing through them, absorbing the pictures, reading the words, and escaping into another world through text. Independent reading creates reading confidence, develops readers' skills, and builds a love of reading. By incorporating digital media, you can further extend the possibilities for independent reading in the classroom. There are various online tools that offer voice recording, allow feedback, and even provide assessment tools.

- Using a microphone, students can record their own voices.
- By listening to text recorded by themselves, peers, or teachers, they can hear fluent, expressive reading on self-selected stories.
- The recorded voice and text combination can also act as a running record, providing teachers with an assessment of student reading.

To follow up on students' reading:

- Create a blog where students can record the titles of books they have read. Provide prompts as the students respond to reading.
- Set up an online library, or create your own template on the IWB that contains all the titles of the classroom books. Students can search for titles and then click on a link that allows them to track and comment on the books they have read.

To extend these ideas further, websites offer primary teachers the opportunity to individualize a reading program for their students.