

Tell Me a Story
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A Snowball Effect:

The more storytelling, the more language; the more language, the more understanding of detail; subsequently, the better idea of how stories hang together, the better the storytelling and retelling, and the more experience they'll bring to reading and writing stories!

Clay, 1998, p. 40

Points to Ponder:

- Do you think of your conversations with children in terms of story-telling?
- How might the idea of "story-telling" change the conversation—and the writing?

Story telling:

- Like conversation, story-telling is a two way street.
- Stories are so all-pervasive that we practically cease to be aware of them.
- Story-telling and retelling makes written language more accessible.

Notes from *Talking, Reading and Writing* (Dr. Clay):

So what can teachers do?

- Create a rich context for language learning and increase language learning opportunities
 - Conversations before familiar reading (retellings?)
 - Conversations around interesting texts
 - Conversations before/during/after the new book.
- Teachers can:
 - Arrange for a joint focus
 - Extend wait time
 - Negotiate meanings

- Personalize the conversation
- Ground explanations in shared experiences
- In what ways are you allowing for this to happen?
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- Understand that children learn language easily through conversation
- Appreciate how children learn to say the same thing in different ways
- Encourage the use of alternative constructions
 - Give it a try!
 - Expanding the phrase (the dog...; my shoe...;)
 - Moving things around
 - Transforming simple statements (I like my mom.)

The Pay Off:

- In Composing
 - Complexity with support
 - Increased accessibility to the task
 - "A highly skilled adult moving a child through his zone of proximal development."
- In Constructing
 - What's the child learning about orthography?
 - What's the child learning about hearing and recording sounds in words?
 - What's the child learning about story-telling?

Ready, Set, Converse!

- **Start up a conversation**, guided by all you know about this child. What do you know?
- **Give some thought prior to the lesson** to how you will get this particular child to compose a message. How can you plan?
- **Keep note of longest utterances**. What can he say?

Remember...

"A teller of simple stories at five or six years of age has a constructive control of oral language, will be able to compose a simple story for his writing task, and will not find it so difficult to reconstruct the author's story he is reading." *Literacy Lessons, Part Two*, p. 162.