

Metacognition & reading : Let the text do the talking – interacting with the text

Opportunities and practice with explicit teaching of strategies, role modelling, guidance, and scaffolding

Pupils need regular practice with well chosen complex text in order to develop higher order reading skills. Whenever possible, teachers should let the ‘text do the talking’ so that pupils become active readers rather than passive recipients. This encourages a view that the teacher is not ‘the expert in the room’. Pupils have to read, think, talk and write using multiple texts and invest themselves in their work. Different techniques can be used to help pupils prepare to talk and write about a text. One method is a concept chart called SNAP.

S – SUMMARY OF THE TEXT N – NEW LEARNING (as many key ideas as needed)

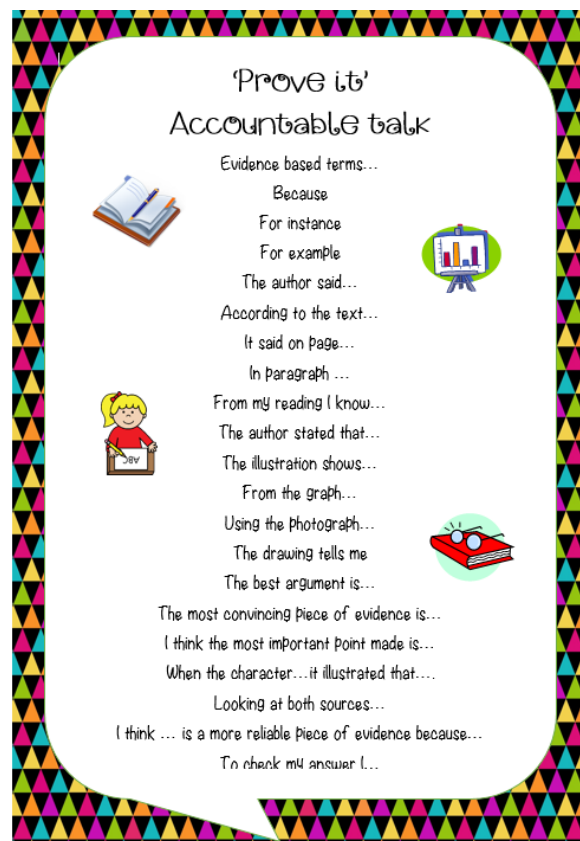
A – INFORMATION THE PUPIL ALREADY KNOWS ABOUT THE TOPIC P – PICTURE that represents an important aspect of the text

Graphic organisers, such as a Venn diagram, can be used by pupils to organise thoughts before engaging in a pair-share or whole class discussion.

In addition, teachers and pupils should ask strong text-dependent questions that serve as an anchor for later discussions and require pupils to ‘mine for evidence’. Questions that require pupils to make inferences, predict, question, summarise and synthesise. E.g. ‘In chapter 2, what does the character do and say that reveals his motivations? Defend your answer with evidence from the text.’

From a metacognition stand point, pupils must see tools such as SNAP and Venn diagrams as ways of interacting with lots of different types of text, they need to be explicitly taught their use, they must be asked to compare the chosen method to other ways of recording their learning and evaluate the usefulness of the tool. They need to opportunities to reflect, and get feedback on:

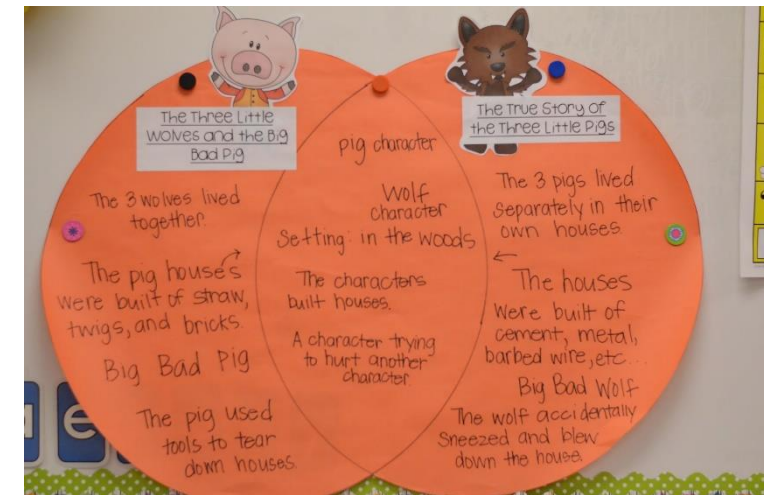
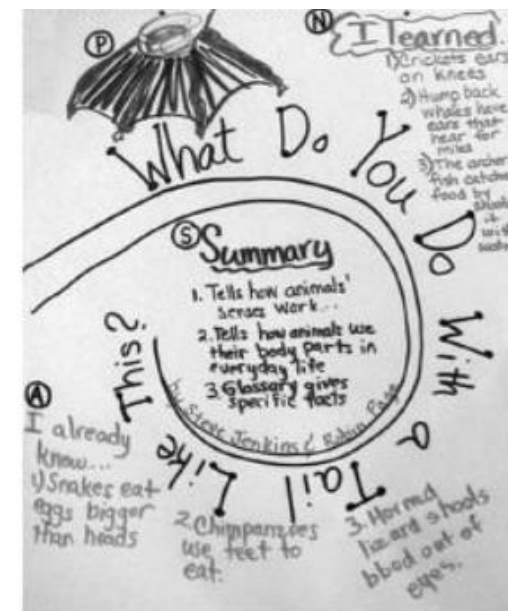
- How effective was the chosen tool for the task?
- How well did you use the chosen tool? Could you have improved how you used the tool?
- How well did you cite evidence from the text?
- Did the way you organised your learning help or hinder you when trying to cite evidence during discussions?
- How well did you build on from other pupil’s ideas during discussions?
- What could you do to improve?



Citing evidence and equality of access

Asking pupils to “find the evidence” turns them into detectives. Teachers can use resources, such as accountable talk, to help pupils cite evidence to back up their viewpoints and arguments. The more we prepare pupils to make claims and support them with evidence, the better their chances for success in further and higher education. An individual needs to be able to weigh options, develop solutions to problems, and defend strategies with convincing arguments supported by evidence. This in turns helps to create critical thinkers. In many activities pupils are asked to relate the text to their own experiences and prior knowledge. Having a focus on providing evidence from within the text, illustration, graph, table, etc., helps to level the playing field for disadvantaged pupils who may have a more limited world knowledge and experience. It is not possible to eliminate all the advantages that background knowledge and experience brings to textual analysis – all discussions of text relies on schema beyond the text itself – but, when a discussion continually returns to what is explicitly and implicitly on the page, it is more inclusive for pupils with varying background knowledge. Everyone is grounded in the text and can make a contribution.

Fishbowl activities can be a great activity for responding to a question with text based evidence.



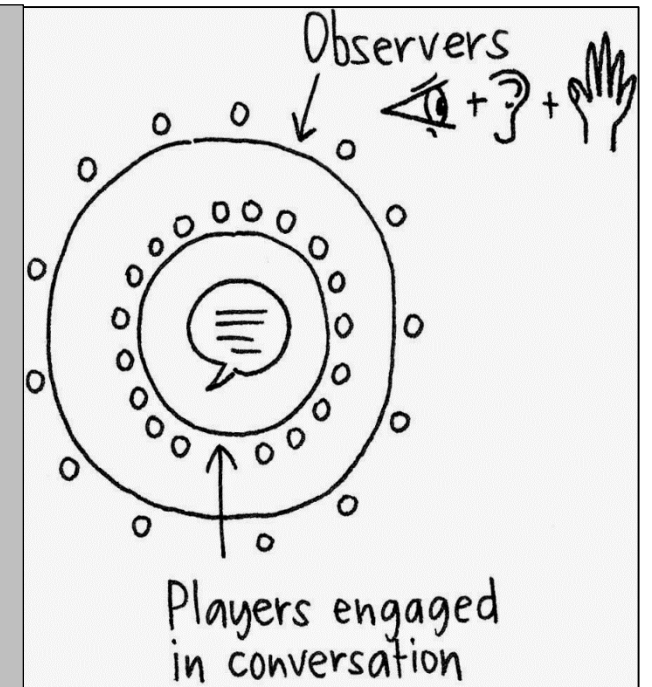
Venn diagram : <http://thelemonadestandteachers.blogspot.co.uk>

Fishbowl evidence based reading

The class is divided between observers and players. The inner circle will discuss the question(s) posed by the teacher and cite evidence from the text to support their opinions. They should use ‘accountable talk’ structures to ensure a high standard of discussion, e.g. I agree with Miriam because it also says.... I disagree with Miriam because you can see in the diagram that...

The outer circle will watch and listen carefully. They will provide feedback to the group on:

- Use of evidence
 - Quality of ideas
 - Clarity of expression
 - Listening and responding to each other
- The groups then swap over.



Classroom routines and activities that strengthen the connections between the text and thinking

- Encouraging pupils to make reference to specific page numbers, paragraphs, and exact phrases in the text to support talking points;
- Using accountable talk sentence frames, such as ‘I can see your point of view, but the text counter argues this when it says...’ or ‘I think you are saying...’, ‘another example in the text that supports this is...’
- Seeking, considering, and presenting multiple sides of an issue;
- Having time before discussions to prepare : notes, annotated text, sticky notes, graphic organisers, etc., that mark key evidence.
- Weighing evidence before making a decision.
- Evaluating the bias and credibility of sources – of any type.
- Citing sources with integrity and accuracy;
- Justifying the validity and significance of data and claims.

Berger and Woodfin, *Transformational Literacy*, 2014.