Literacy Talks: Whole Group, Differentiated Literacy Instruction

"Literacy is the ability to make meaning from text and express oneself in a variety of modes. This includes comprehending, making connections, critically analyzing, and creating and communicating for a variety of purposes."

(B.C. Ministry of Education, 2019)

What are literacy talks?

Literacy talks are a short, interactive and differentiated instructional routine that can be used to engage students in thinking and talking about reading strategies and skills. While encouraging students to think like readers, literacy talks can also be used to have students deepen and share their thinking in the context of other curricular areas, by making connections to concepts and big ideas being explored.

Why do literacy talks?

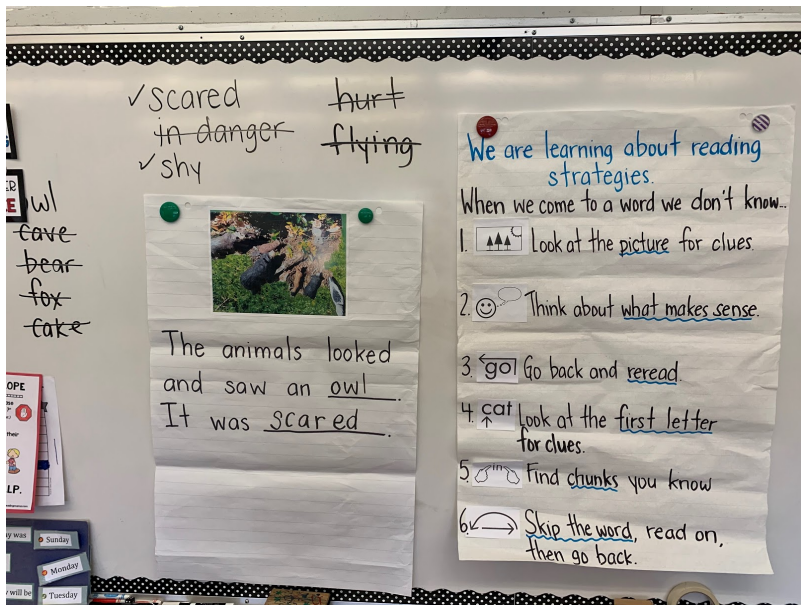
- They are highly interactive
- They engage children in thinking about meaning
- There is a focus on reading strategies
- Instruction can be differentiated by inviting students to engage with the text in different ways (ex: find letters, find words they know, identify new or unfamiliar words, look for certain word families, blends or suffixes, etc.)
- Teachers can embed phonics or skills that need to be targeted to support their students' development as readers
- They can be connected to concepts or big ideas being explored in other areas of the curriculum

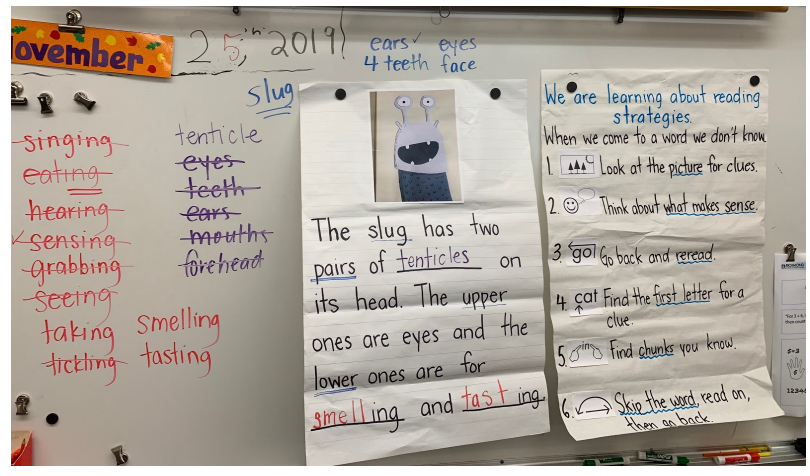
How do literacy talks connect to the curriculum?

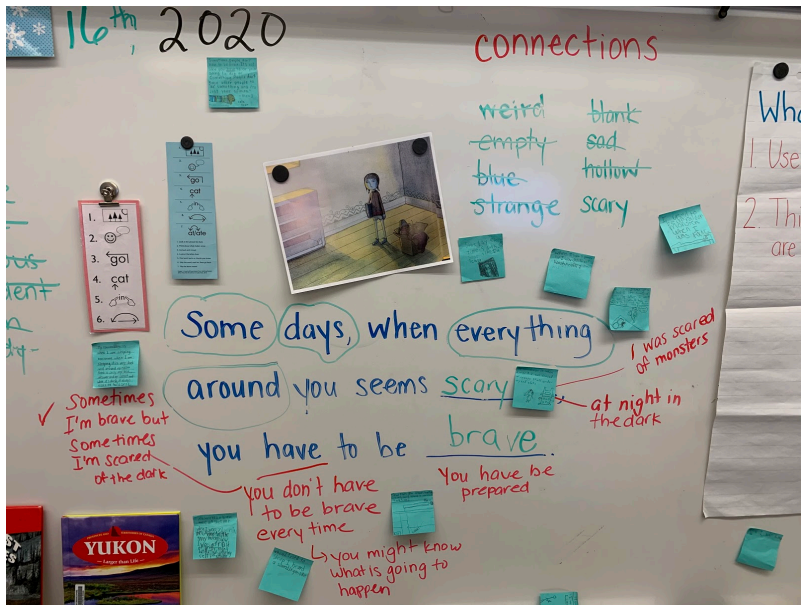
Core Competencies	
T	What reading strategies can I use to help me understand the text?
C	How can I communicate my thinking with others?
PS	How am I growing my understanding of myself as a reader and learner?

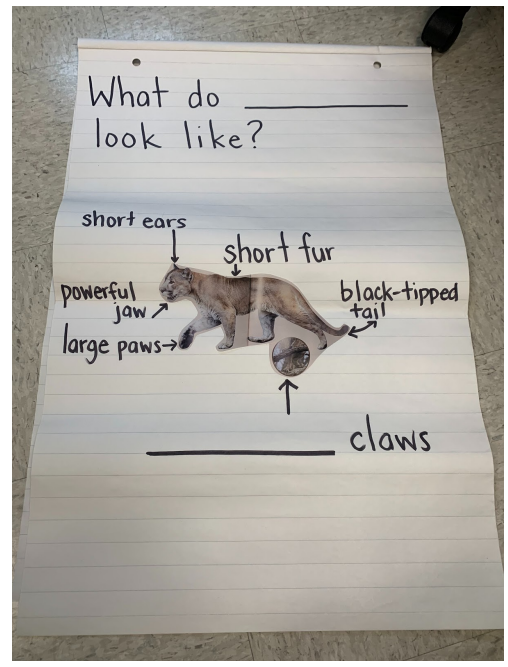
Curricular Competencies	
K-3	● Use sources of information and prior knowledge to make meaning ● Ude developmentally appropriate reading, listening and viewing strategies to make meaning ● Engage actively as listeners, viewers and readers, as appropriate, to develop understanding of self, identity and community
4-5	● Apply a variety of thinking skills to gain meaning from texts ● Recognize how literary elements, techniques, and devices enhance meaning in texts
6-9	● Apply appropriate strategies to comprehend written, oral, and visual texts, guide inquiry, and extend thinking ● Think critically, creatively, and reflectively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts ● Recognize an increasing range of text structures and how they contribute to meaning

<u>What might a literacy talk look like?</u>









Below you will find a variety of ideas you can adapt to your own practice. The ideas are intended to be flexible in their use, based on the interests, strengths and needs of your students.

- Introduce or review the reading strategies and let the students know that we will be practicing using our reading strategies to work together to read this text. Encourage the students to identify as readers.
- Invite students to look for letters, words, or certain aspects of phonics that you are hoping to target and circle them. This provides different entry points for all readers to engage with the text.
- Read the entire piece of text, leaving out the missing words. Some teachers like to have their students clap or do an action in place of each missing word.
- Starting with the first missing word, have the students brainstorm all of the words that could make sense. Record these ideas and invite all possible ideas while checking with the reading strategies.
    - Some possible sentence starters for sparking conversation about the words and the text are:
        - “I have the same idea as _____.”
        - “I think _____ because _____.”
        - “I wonder _____.”
        - “What if _____.”
        - “I disagree with _____ because _____.”
- Give the students part of the word (first letter, a chunk). How does that change the possibilities for the word? Continue this process until the students have found the missing word. Reread to make sure it makes sense.
- Repeat this for all missing words.
- Invite students to reflect on the reading strategies the class used to read the text.

- Extension: Invite the students to do some thinking about the text.
    - What do you think?
    - What do you wonder?
    - What do you think the story might be?

What other literacy experiences can you connect to a literacy talk?

- Literacy centres
- Literature circles
- Independent reading
- Inquires across the curriculum

Resources:

Johnson, P., & Keier, K. (2010). *Catching readers before they fall: Supporting readers who struggle, K-4*. Portland, Me: Stenhouse Publishers.

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