

DOINGWHATWORKS



Presentation

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Buddy Talk

Adlai E. Stevenson II Elementary School, Illinois • November 2010

Topic: Improving K-3 Reading Comprehension
Practice: Engage Students With Text

Highlights

- Julie Dawson, a third-grade teacher at Adlai Stevenson Elementary School, describes Buddy Talk, an activity she leads when she wants students to gain a deeper understanding of a book they have read together.
- Dawson reads open-ended questions, based on Bloom's Taxonomy, and students answer the questions with their buddy, using cubes and whiteboards to track their participation.
- Dawson also describes how she teaches classroom norms that are used schoolwide: be safe, responsible, and respectful. These norms support student conversations about text.

About the Site

Adlai E. Stevenson II Elementary School
Bloomington, IL

Demographics

52% White

22% Black

11% Asian

9% Multiracial

5% Hispanic

47% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

7% English Language Learners

Stevenson Elementary has a coherent and consistent focus on reading comprehension. All teachers are on board and unified with a set of clear learning targets, and they help each child succeed through a variety of approaches:

- All teachers help students become effective members of their community through clear norms and expectations for behavior.
- Reading comprehension strategies are taught across the curriculum.
- Teachers use read-alouds, guided reading, and independent practice to teach comprehension strategies.
- Text structure is a focus of instruction.
- Text discussions are used to further students' learning and understanding in large-group, small-group, and partner formats.
- Staff are leaders within their school and in their district, supporting their colleagues' work in teaching reading.
- Staff use a number of sources of data to monitor student progress and adjust instruction accordingly.

Full Transcript

Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome to Buddy Talk.

Slide 2: Introducing Ms. Dawson

My name is Julie Dawson. I teach third grade at Stevenson Elementary School in Bloomington, Illinois.

Slide 3: Connecting with a partner

Buddy Talk is an activity we do after we have worked through a story.

It really helps me understand if they have gotten some deeper understanding of that particular story or what the message of that author was. The children question one another about different aspects of the story. The question stems that I provide are open-ended questions and they hit all the different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Today, the children were going to be doing Buddy Talk using the story *Grandma's Records*. To begin, we went over our target for the day, which was that they were going to be able to listen to a story and then discuss that story with the partner and then be able to make a personal connection to their life.

Slide 4: Reviewing the ground rules

And after the story was finished, we reviewed our rules of PBIS, which is Positive Behavior Intervention Support. Those rules are to be safe, be respectful, and be responsible. And we talk about you have to work cooperatively with your partner, be a good listener, taking turns talking, ask questions if you don't understand what the person is saying, be kind and friendly, speak softly so that they can talk to one another and the other people can talk to each other.

Slide 5: Role play

So they show me that properly and then they get to show me the inappropriate way to do that, and that's always them turned around looking at somebody else. Someone of course has to shout out loud so that they know that that's not appropriate, but then they get back into the right mode. So we know that those are the rules, but it's important to review these rules because that way the students know exactly what they are supposed to be doing when they are doing their Buddy Talk.

Slide 6: Answering higher-level questions

Now that we have worked with this book for quite a while, my focus was to have the children answer higher-level questions. I use the question stem of each one of the Bloom's to help the students get into deeper thinking, and for their knowledge question, for example, I said to brainstorm different types of music.

I tell them the question, and then they talk about that question to one another. And sometimes, they are using a whiteboard and they both have markers and they are writing their responses on the whiteboard. Sometimes they are using these little cubes and they take turns talking and every time they say something, they put the cube in so they are sharing their time of talking.

Slide 7: Moving from knowledge to analysis questions

I also asked a comprehension question: Describe how grandma and the boy were alike and then describe how

they were different. For example, an application question would be: Predict what would happen if the boy goes to basketball camp instead of going to his grandmother's for the summer.

An analysis question would be: What does the author believe about music. A synthesis question that was asked: Discuss the pros and cons of listening to music. And many interesting comments came out of that. They thought it was bad because of some of the language and some of the songs are violent, but it was also good because it could calm you down. So they kind of got a good understanding about how the music was affecting them and that's exactly a point made in the story too.

Slide 8: Sharing with the class

After they have finished a question, there is a bell that rings and everyone is quiet, and then everyone has an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas with the rest of the class. Not everyone gets to share, but some of them will raise their hand and some of them will agree with some that have already been mentioned, so it's kind of a nice opportunity for everyone to get involved. I believe that the reason that we can do this today is because of lots and lots of modeling. It didn't happen right away; it took a lot of time.

Slide 9: Reading the world

Talking about text can help students in many ways. I believe the students become more confident and they are able to identify story elements a little bit better. They become able to compare and contrast even though they don't know they are doing that sometimes. They can start asking higher-level questions on their own without the prompt. I feel that the students get a deeper understanding of what they are reading, and I think not only are they understanding what they are reading, but they are getting knowledge about the whole world around them.

Slide 10: Learn more

To learn more about engaging students with text, please explore the additional resources on the Doing What Works website.