

# Teacher talk

## *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc*

Read about evidence-based theories that underpin best teaching practices. By learning more about the theory behind teaching strategies you will develop a deeper understanding of what works best for the learners in your classroom.

**Teacher talk** will help you to understand the pedagogic practices surrounding the '[Big Six](#)' focus areas. You will discover a range of instructional strategies that integrate these core elements of reading development.

Inclusive teaching and learning opportunities that build on the Big Six as well as students' needs, strengths and interests are vital for building student capacity in learning English. This can be a complex and challenging task. Teacher talk offers instructional strategies aimed at scaffolding the learning of a diverse range of students, including English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) students and students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Try these strategies as you share *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc* with your class, and use them in other aspects of your reading program. Discuss with your colleagues the instructional practices that resonate with you, and those that have been effective in your classroom.

## Supporting meaning making

Students can be supported to make meaning through active listening, intentional conversation, visualisation, and exploring illustrations.

### Listening and visualising

For students to benefit from the rich language opportunities accessible through purposefully planned dialogue or conversations, they must be actively listening and paying attention to the speaker (Wasik & Iannone-Campbell, 2012).

Visualising is also an important part of making meaning when listening to texts. The instructional practice of helping students create mental images or supporting students to visualise what is happening within a text helps them to engage with the content presented by the author and assists understanding (Gambrell & Koskinen, 2002).

Use *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc* to engage students in actively listening to the storyteller and to visualise the story as it is being told. You can support your students to pay attention by:

- ensuring they are in a comfortable position
- having them close their eyes to visualise the story - to 'see pictures in your mind'
- reminding them to concentrate and listen to what is being said.

Use the following instructional teaching and learning steps for listening and visualising.

1. Prompt for active listening of *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc*.
2. Have students close their eyes and visualise images as they listen.
3. Discuss the storyline and allow time and opportunity to clarify understandings of word meanings.
4. Invite students to share their responses and visualisations.
5. Using a variety of art mediums, have students spend time creating their visualisations.
6. Have students share and discuss the images they have created as a whole class or in small groups. (See below for more detailed information on exploring, engaging and interacting with visual images.)
7. Through discussion, compare and contrast the creations of the students and the illustrator's images.

### Deeper exploration of images

Callow (2011) encourages teachers as a classroom practice to talk about multimodal texts in relation to messages communicated not only through the written text but also through images created by illustrators or designers.

Use *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc* to explore how visual elements and text work together. The four main scenes from the story provide a great opportunity to discuss the visual features of the setting, characters, props and other features the artist has used to communicate ideas, plot, character qualities and overall message of the storyline.

Working with the visual elements of literature along with rich text and a variety of text types provides opportunities for teachers to spark their students' interest in literature, increase their knowledge of visual elements in communication, and boost their understanding of written language (Callow, 2011).

Use the four scenes and the following guiding questions adapted from the work of Callow to explore visual and written aspects of the texts and how they work together to tell a story and send a message.

### Characters, events and ideas

In the context of the unfolding story, think about how each scene develops the characters and the story, and how it builds ideas and concepts. Help your students to think about the description of the characters, the setting and the events by asking:

- *How do the illustrations help to develop the characters? What extra information do they add to the words you listened to?*
- *How do the visual images and language from the story work together to tell the story?*
- *How are the descriptions in the story that you listened to shown in the illustrations? What extra information do the illustrations give us about the characters or events in the tale?*

### Reacting, relating and interacting

Think about the statements, questions, commands and opinions presented in the text – and how the visual images make us feel about and react to the characters. Notice the literary features of the texts such as personification, metaphor and interesting vocabulary choice and whether these are reflected through the visual images.

Help your students to think about these things by asking:

- *How do the illustrations and the words used in the story make you feel about the characters?*
- *Do you feel differently when you see the illustrations than you do when you listen to the words? How?*
- *Do the words the author uses match the illustrations, or are they different? In what ways are they different?*

### Design, layout and text organisation

Design and layout need to be considered in terms of the four scenes without written text. However, the layout of illustrations is designed to capture four of the main events in the story. Help your students to think about these things by asking:

- *Do you like looking at the four scenes without seeing any words? Would you rather have words on each page that match the pictures? Why?*
- *How do the four illustrations make you feel? Do they inspire you? How?*
- *Does the layout of the four scenes and the choice of illustrations do a good job to show what is happening in the story?*
- *Why might the author and illustrator have made the choice to have the story recorded, and only illustrate four scenes?*

## Supporting language growth

Actively listening to stories, having intentional conversations about the stories and retelling stories support language development and growth. The reading aloud of stories provides enjoyment, exposure to decontextualised language, exposure to wide vocabulary, opportunities to hear the pronunciation of words, and exposure to the rhythm and intonation of language (Fellowes, 2017).

*Little Red and the Big Bad Croc* has been recorded for students to listen to, enjoy, and to be immersed in a different version of the traditional tale *Little Red Riding Hood*. The illustrations created for the audio text will grab students' attention and support their understanding in a fun way.

### Prior to listening

Engage students in a conversation about their preconceptions of the traditional *Little Red Riding Hood*.

If students are not familiar with it, you can read a version of the traditional tale [Little Red Riding Hood](#), or view versions by searching the internet.

Introduce the text *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc*. Read the title and ask students to make predictions about plot, characters, storyline and events. According to Duke & Pearson (2002) prediction is an effective comprehension strategy that encourages students to tune in to the story to see how their predictions turned out. This engagement can trigger deeper understanding. Furthermore, predictions also encourage students to activate prior knowledge, and use this to facilitate their understanding of new ideas encountered in the text. Activating prior knowledge allows students to connect the known to the new. *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc* is an innovation, and definitely a new version of *Little Red Riding Hood*.

Encourage students to make predictions by asking them questions such as:

- *Will the story follow the same predictable events of the original Little Red Riding Hood? How might it be the same? In what ways might it be different?*

- *Who do you think Little Red is? What about the Big Bad Croc? What might these characters be like?*
- *How might the story begin? Will there be a happy ending? Why do you think this?*

## During listening

Pause the story and check your students' understanding by asking responsive questions and offering think-aloud statements that support how the story is unfolding, vocabulary understanding, character development and setting descriptions. This will be important as the storyline and characters are quite different from the traditional tale.

When working with English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) students, teachers need to consider their English language proficiency and support them to follow the storyline (Fellowes, 2017). When pausing the story consider students' level of attention and comprehension. You can support their memory of what happens as the story progresses can by offering quick statements that recap events.

## After listening

After listening to the audio, provide rich, high-quality talk about the story and illustrations. This should involve both teacher-to-student and student-to-student talk (Duke & Pearson, 2002).

Encourage discussions at a number of levels including:

- clarifying information and events
- discussing particular vocabulary
- discussing the plot - and how it differs from the traditional *Little Red Riding Hood*
- making interpretations about character qualities
- making connections to characters, events, settings and the plot
- identifying the underlying messages that are intended by the author.

## Retelling the story using the four scenes for support

Use the retelling of a story to provide students with an opportunity to use and practise language (grammar and vocabulary). After having sufficient exposure to the story through repeated listening and discussion, this activity can be introduced to EAL/D students. Small-group instruction will help to further develop students' story comprehension, recollection of the language of the text and extend their English language learning (Fellowes, 2017).

When students are retelling the story, use the four scenes to trigger their memory, encourage them to use language from the text and prompt them for extra information as required.

## Recording students' retellings

Have your students orally retell *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc* and record them using an audio-recording device. Recording your students as they retell the text will assist you to observe their:

- understanding
- use of sentence structure
- vocabulary selection
- organisation
- fluency, intonation, tone, and expression when speaking
- use of pronouns, verbs, nouns, contractions and prepositions.

For more information, see:

[Exploring comprehension through retelling](#)

[Specific strategies for improving reading comprehension](#) (US Kindergarten to Grade 3, but equivalent to Australian Foundation to Year 3)

## Arts-based literacy instruction

Arts-based literacy instruction uses multiple bodies of research – academic, cognitive, motivation and social – to inform and increase the range of methods teachers can use to engage their students with read-alouds and have them learn from read-alouds (Cornett, 2006). Arts-based teaching can be integral to meaning-making and growth in comprehension.

Use these arts-based literacy pedagogies and the story *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc* to support the extraction, construction and demonstration of meaning.

### Guided drama

The use of drama as an instructional strategy for language development, understanding stories and improving literacy outcomes can be an engaging method of participation, giving students voice, purpose and motivation as a way forward for literacy learning (Ewing & Simons, 2016; Harden, 2016).

Guided drama allows students to attend to and rehearse language for the purpose of communicating a story, emotions, messages and other information such as descriptions of settings and characters.

Enactment and embodiment are very helpful ways to support oral language and understanding (Ewing, Rushton & Callow, 2017). *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc* offers teachers an entertaining narrative full of opportunities for the creation of guided drama activities. Embodiment (where students use their bodies to demonstrate emotions or situations through actions) can be used for students to gain confidence before adding dialogue.

Possible scenarios for the use of dramatic situations (small-group or whole-class):

- Guided by the teacher as narrator, students act out the story.
- Select phrases from the text for students to act out using body movements, for example 'There was a brave and inquisitive girl called Abigail', 'skipped off', 'floated along the path', 'a smile on her face'. *How can this be demonstrated through body actions?*
- Students create conversations between different characters from the text.
- Students create dialogue for Crocodile after he was relocated up north, telling his friends or family about his adventure with Little Red.
- Act out a conversation between Little Red and her parents after her adventure. *What would Little Red say to her mother or father about her adventure?*
- Use dramatic play, including settings and props, as a way for students to recreate the story.
- Students pretend they are one of the characters, describe the setting they are in and tell and act out what they are doing. For example, *'I'm Little Red, I'm walking through a park and I'm carrying some cupcakes ...'*
- Use musical instruments to add another element to the scenarios.

## Exploring illustrations

Revisit the text to explore the visual information provided through the illustrations for *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc*. This will help to support students to make meaning of the story.

Discuss with students that visual information is a mode of communication. As suggested by Ewing, Rushton & Callow (2017), illustrations can be explored through features of line and colour and how they work together to support the meaning of the story.

Key features of illustrations can be discussed through the different types of lines conveying different meanings. For example, as vertical lines suggest height, jagged lines suggest tension and curved lines suggest ease and comfort. Key features of illustrations can also be discussed through colour selection and how it helps to create moods or reactions in relation to a person, place or object, as well as cultural meanings that have been assigned particular colours. Further types of line and use of colour can be investigated using the other 11 [Shared reading texts](#) or other story books. This can also be done using the students' own illustrations.

Revisit *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc* and return to each scene to discuss the illustrations. Identify any of the elements listed above or any other features that capture your students' attention.

Provide time for students to talk about their interpretations and express their feelings. Prompt them by asking question such as:

- *What interesting things have you noticed in the illustrations? What have you learnt about the characters or the story by looking at them?*
- *What different messages do you get by looking at the different illustrations?*
- *How has this image made you feel?*
- *How have the illustrations helped you to understand the story?*

## Creating illustrations

Students can respond to texts by creating their own illustrations through a variety of art mediums. After having engaged with the story *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc* and talked about the illustrations, provide time for students to create representations of ideas, themes, objects, settings or characters. Students can respond to particular aspects or events in the story through a variety of artistic mediums. Opportunities to create illustrations to represent ideas about stories and opportunities to visually respond to stories through a variety of artistic mediums are very important for children (Mackenzie & Veresov, 2013).

Mackenzie (2018) exemplifies a strong case for the recognition of drawing as an important aspect for the meaning-making process. As students create their representations, allow them to talk as they generate ideas. Talking and drawing are powerful together as they allow for individual imagination, creation and expression of language (Mackenzie, 2018).

These suggestions for literacy development whereby students enjoy, understand and think deeply about stories shared with them, and are provided the opportunity to talk about illustrations and create personal illustrations, cannot be underestimated (Ewing, Rushton & Callow, 2017).

## Character mapping

Students can engage in character mapping through text and illustrations. Revisit the story *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc* to engage in discussion about the use of language, including dialogue and vocabulary choices, in relation to character traits and qualities.

Character mapping can be used (Fellowes, 2017) to record and illustrate the traits of the characters, using evidence from the text. In this instructional method the students can take note of the vocabulary used to describe characters, the language that provides a context for making inferences about character qualities and the pictures that support this information.

Here are some ideas for mapping the characters in *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc*.

Character mapping of Little Red/Abigail (explore through language and images)

- Brave and inquisitive
- Skipped off (*what does this imply about Little Red's character traits?*)
- Floated along the path (*what does this imply about Little Red's character traits?*)
- Smile on her face (*what does this imply about Little Red's character traits?*)
- Investigates a 'splash' (*what does this imply about Little Red's character traits?*)

Character mapping of how Little Red/Abigail changed (explore through language and images)

- Never left the path
- Never went near the creek
- Never spoke to strangers

*What do these dot points imply about Little Red's character traits at the end of the story?*

Character mapping of Crocodile (explore through language and images)

- Stretched on a log (*what does this imply about Crocodile's character traits?*)
- Bathing in the bright sunshine (*what does this imply about Crocodile's character traits?*)
- Formed a plan (*what does this imply about Crocodile's character traits?*)

Character mapping of Grandma/Ranger Evie (explore through language and images)

- 'Stop right there', 'you're not going anywhere' (*what does this imply about Grandma's character traits?*)
- Looped a rope lasso around Crocodile's strong jaws (*what does this imply about Grandma's character traits?*)
- 'You don't belong in these waters', 'we'll relocate him up north where he belongs', 'I'll radio my team' (*what does this imply about Grandma's character traits?*)

Students can respond individually by character mapping through visual arts. Encourage them to create and share their individual artistic and imaginative representations of each character. Students can then select vocabulary to describe their characters.

## Responding using music and sounds

Students can use music and sound to respond to texts read and heard. Visit this website for an instructional sequence based on the traditional tale *Little Red Riding Hood*.

[Literacy teaching toolkit: Literacy experience plan - Red Riding Hood soundscape](#)

In this instructional sequence students learn to analyse various aspects of the story and, in response to this analysis, create a soundscape using musical instruments to accompany the story. This experience should be differentiated depending on the individual student and/or group level/s. This instructional sequence can also be adapted to use with *Little Red and the Big Bad Croc*.

### Australian Curriculum links

**Foundation:** [AC9EFLA02](#), [AC9EFLA05](#), [AC9EFLE02](#), [AC9EFLY01](#), [AC9EFLY02](#), [AC9EFLY05](#)

**Year 1:** [AC9E1LA01](#), [AC9E1LA02](#), [AC9E1LA08](#), [AC9E1LE03](#), [AC9E1LY05](#)

**Year 2:** [AC9E2LA02](#), [AC9E2LA04](#), [AC9E2LA08](#), [AC9E2LA09](#), [AC9E2LE02](#), [AC9E2LE03](#), [AC9E2LY05](#)

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This document is part of the **Literacy Hub's shared reading set**.  
[Access more texts and related teaching materials.](#)