

Teacher talk

How to Make Perfect Popcorn

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 *How to Make Perfect Popcorn* 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.

Scaffolding meaning, vocabulary and oral language

Purpose, audience and text structure

With your students, identify the main purpose of the text and who the audience is. Help the students to understand that the purpose of this text is to give a set of instructions that can be followed to reach a goal, and the audience is the person who is making the popcorn.

Through discussion, help your students recognise the structure of the text and its layout. Highlight that *How to Make Perfect Popcorn* lists the equipment needed to make popcorn and the steps that need to be followed.

Investigating procedural texts

To enhance students' comprehension, provide time and opportunity for them to explore procedural texts as a whole class, in small groups, in pairs or individually.

Assist students to:

- become familiar with the layouts of different types of procedural texts. Explore varied examples of instructional or procedural texts such as science experiments, directions, instructions, school codes of conduct, and recipes.

- create classroom procedural texts (teacher modelled, jointly constructed and/or independent) about authentic real-life tasks that have relevance to students' experiences such as how to brush your teeth, directions to the school office, how to grow plants or vegetables or how to make breakfast. Using particular text genres can provide the opportunity to bring authentic literacy into the classroom (Duke et al., 2006) and in turn this can have a positive impact on motivation and engagement.
- explore the layout of *How to Make Perfect Popcorn* by identifying that it requires specific materials and equipment and that it involves following numbered steps in order.
- look closely at the language structure of *How to Make Perfect Popcorn* and explain that each step begins with a verb. Use this opportunity to discuss action verbs: what they are and when they are used.

Talking, reading and writing

Talking, reading and writing share common ground and complement each other. They are reciprocal processes that teachers and students can utilise to facilitate new ways of responding and new learnings.

Involve your students in talking, reading and writing opportunities related to the exploration of procedural texts. Here are some ways you can do this:

- **talk** about procedural texts and discuss the purpose, structure and language used
- **read** procedural texts aloud and use them as mentor texts that can be revisited
- **deconstruct** the texts to focus on particular vocabulary, sentence structure and text features
- **create** procedural texts through modelled writing or guided practice
- have students **construct** and **write** their own procedural texts.

Read more about specific [teaching-learning cycles using reading and writing connections](#).

Read more about [authentic literacy tasks](#).

Australian Curriculum links

Foundation: [AC9EFLY05](#), [AC9EFLY03](#), [AC9EFLA03](#)

Year 1: [AC9E1LA03](#), [AC9E1LA10](#)

Year 2: [AC9E2LY03](#), [AC9E2LA03](#)

Phonological awareness and word knowledge

Segmenting compound words

Identifying units of oral language is an important stepping stone in learning to read. Students need to understand that oral language can be broken down into words and words can be broken down into smaller parts.

Help students understand that 'popcorn' is made up of two separate words that are put together to make another word. To focus on phonological awareness your students can clap the two word parts in 'popcorn' as they say the word. This awareness can take place without any written words.

Now you can embed the task of hearing syllables within an activity that uses the written word 'popcorn'. To help students to hear and identify syllables and segment compound words you can:

1. Write the word 'popcorn' onto a cardboard strip.
2. Demonstrate by cutting the word 'popcorn' into two words.
3. Use magnetic letters to demonstrate how the word 'popcorn' can be broken into two words.
4. Have students construct the word 'popcorn' independently, and then break it into two words using the magnetic letters.
5. Model other compound words familiar to students and demonstrate how these words can be broken into two words.
6. Have students think of other compound words, and identify the individual words within them.

Australian Curriculum links

Foundation: [AC9EFLY15](#)

Year 1: [AC9E1LY15](#)

Year 2: [AC9E2LY10](#)

Phonemic awareness

When learning to read and write it is important for your students to be able to hear in sequence the individual sounds within a word. Some students may need additional support to do this. The following tasks will support them to hear, isolate and manipulate phonemes within words.

Isolating sounds in words

Teach students how to use sound boxes as a supportive framework for isolating the phonemes in words.

Use the word 'pop' and the sound boxes to isolate the word's three individual phonemes (this can be done with one student or in a small-group setting).

1. Slowly articulate the word for the student to hear.
2. Ask the student to say the word slowly.
3. Use boxes and three counters as a visual model for the sounds articulated.



4. Demonstrate the procedure for the student. Say the word slowly for the student and push the counters into the boxes, sound by sound.
5. Now ask the student to do this.
6. If the student finds this challenging support them by sharing the task. The student says the word while you push the counters up into the boxes, and/or you say the word slowly and have the student push the counters into the boxes. You could further support the student by guiding their hand to push the counters up into the required boxes.

Australian Curriculum links

Foundation: [AC9EFLY10](#), [AC9EFLY12](#)

Year 1: [AC9E1LY09](#), [AC9E1LY11](#)

Manipulating sounds in words

Students need to know how to manipulate phonemes in spoken words by addition, deletion and substitution of initial, medial and final phonemes to generate new words. Use this oral task to support students' development of this skill.

Use the word 'pop' from 'popcorn' to:

1. substitute the initial phoneme in the word 'pop'. Have students add the sound 'sh' to 'op' to make 'shop' and 't' to 'op' to make 'top'
2. substitute the medial 'o' sound of 'pop' to make 'pip' or 'pup'
3. substitute the final phoneme 'p' to make 'pot' or 'pod'.

Read more about [phoneme substitution](#).

Australian Curriculum links

Year 1: [AC9E1LY10](#)

Recording sounds in words

Build on the phonemic awareness understanding that your students have to reinforce the relationships between sounds and letters, and therefore their understating of phonics. Knowing about these relationships will help students to decode, and this is crucial for their continued reading development.

To develop students' early understanding of phonics you can incorporate explicit teaching of the graphemes that represent the phonemes in words. You can use magnetic letters and handwriting on whiteboards to do this, and this will also reinforce knowledge of the lower-case graphemes.

Word work

Teaching morphemes

Build word families from common morphemes taken from the text, for example 'pop', 'pops', 'popping', 'popped' and 'popcorn'.

Here are some ways this word work can be done:

1. Create a list of words and talk about the spelling patterns in each one. *How are the words similar? How are they different?*
2. Have students make these words using magnetic letters.
3. Ask students to write these words on small whiteboards.
4. Use the words to create meaningful sentences. Have students say the words in a sentence. Use modelled writing to record their sentences. Students can then read the sentences that you have scribed.

Australian Curriculum links

Foundation: [AC9EFLY15](#), [AC9EFLY12](#)

Year 1: [AC9E1LY15](#)

References

Duke, N., Purcell-Gates, V., Hall, L., and Tower, C. (2006). Authentic literacy activities for developing comprehension and writing. *The Reading Teacher*, 60(4), 344-355.



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