



## Scaffolding Language through Storywalking

Storywalking provides a way to scaffold language for young dual language learners. The strategy builds upon Marie Clay's notion of "an orientation to a story before reading". Through the orientation, the teacher will "make the child familiar

- with the story,
- with the plot,
- with the phrases of language he might never have heard,
- with unusual names and new words,
- And with old words used in an unusual way" (Clay, 2005, p.91).<sup>1</sup>

***A simple 'picture walk' is not enough. Be intentional.***

***Prepare to read the story to children.***

### What are the key components of storywalking?

#### **Step 1: Preparing for the storywalk**

Teachers must intentionally prepare for this literacy event. This includes thinking about which children should participate, matching the book to their needs, targeting the vocabulary and/or skills that you will focus on, and developing extension activities for language practice.

#### **Step 2: Initial storywalk**

Generates interest and motivation in the story and helps children focus on details that will help them access the language, cope with the challenges in the text and comprehend the content. You **do not read** the text.

#### **Step 3: Read-aloud**

Children enjoy the text as you read and begin to make connections.

#### **Step 4: Follow-up storywalking**

Provides opportunities to apply and practice vocabulary

#### **Step 5: Extension activities**

Provides opportunities for using the language for a variety of purposes

 ***The steps take place over several days. Not all on one day!*** 

<sup>1</sup> Clay, M. M. (2005). *Literacy lessons designed for individuals, part two: Teaching procedures*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, (p.91). Available for purchase at: <http://books.heinemann.com/products/E00917.aspx>

<sup>2</sup>Collins, M. F. (2004). *ESL preschoolers' vocabulary acquisition and story comprehension from storybook reading*. Unpublished dissertation, Boston University, Boston, (p. 167).

## Step 1

### Preparing for the storywalk

- Decide which **small group** of children will participate in the first story walk
- Decide whether to use **home language (L1) or English (L2)**
- **Select a book**, with a particular child, or children, in mind; based on children's interests, theme, etc. Become familiar with the book
- Identify **target vocabulary** for the first storywalk, focus on words that will build comprehension, help children understand the story
- Complete an **Activity Plan**. Refer to the *California Preschool Learning Foundations*

#### **Choosing Target Vocabulary**

- Do the words appear in the **illustrations**? Are the words related to illustrations?
- Do I include **different types of words**? (e.g. nouns, verbs, and adjectives)
- Do the words help to **understand the plot**?
- Do I include **everyday** and **academic** words?
- Do I include words related to the **theme**?

#### **Should I use the home language or English?**

Be intentional when deciding which language to use for the storywalk, for example:

- Use a **book in the home language** and **storywalk in the home language** to promote home language development
- Use a **book in English** and **storywalk in the home language** to tap into previous knowledge and bridge to English language development
- Use a **book in English** and **storywalk in English** to introduce vocabulary and support English language development

## Step 2: Do the initial storywalk

The initial storywalk scaffolds **comprehension** of a story prior to reading a book with a small group of preschool English learners:

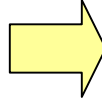
- Explain to children that you are going to “walk-through” the book and have a conversation about the story
- State title, author, illustrator found on book cover
- Storywalk the book page-by-page **anchoring the language**, e.g. teaching vocabulary through rich explanations
- Don't read the ending! Reveal the resolution of the story when you read the story aloud

#### **Anchoring Language**

- Provide a **brief definition** or **similar word**
- Point to **relevant illustrations**
- Use **props**, pictures, concrete realia
- Say something about meaning of word that is **relevant to children's lives**
- **Role-play** meaning of words
- Use **nonverbal cues**, e.g. gestures, pantomime, facial expressions, etc.

### Step 3: Read-aloud

- Read the **story joyfully**. Don't be afraid to ham-it-up!
- Use **child-directed speech**<sup>2</sup>
- Use **nonverbal cues** to convey meaning, e.g. gestures, pantomime, facial expressions
- Can happen on same day as step 2



#### ***Child-Directed Speech***

- Establish and keep a child's attention
- Use animated intonation, exaggeration, e.g. Use a Papa Bear voice and a Baby Bear voice
- Use repetition and expansions
- Use pointing, or gestures to direct child's attention to what is happening in the story
- Help children understand when they appear confused

### Step 4: Follow-up storywalking

On a different day, do **another storywalk** and focus on:

- **using language for a variety of purposes**, *Handout: Purposes of Language Use in Curricular Activities*
- **language structures**, for example questions and sentence frames that are repeated in the story, are novel (new) for the children, *Handout: Scaffolding Language Structures*
- **components of language** (e.g. how you make words using endings such as *-ed* or *-ing*), *Handout: Addressing Components of Language*
- **academic words** *Handout, Promoting Vocabulary: Everyday & Academic Words*

### Step 5: Additional extension activities

On a different day . . .

- **Re-read the book** to children at another time!
- Engage children in **dramatic re-enactment** of the story.
- Lead a discussion with **higher-order thinking questions**, *Handout: Higher Order Thinking and Shared Reading* and *Handout: Scaffolding Language Structures*)
- Provide opportunities for children to **recycle the language** in other settings:
  - ✓ What props can you place in the *dramatic play area* and the outdoor play area to encourage use of the target vocabulary and other rich language?
  - ✓ How can you model target vocabulary in *conversations at mealtimes?* *Conversations throughout the day?* (and *Handout: Scaffolding Rich Language*)
  - ✓ What are some *relevant songs* to use at transition time?



***Be intentional. Complete activity plans for all follow-up activities***



<sup>2</sup> Valdes, G. (2007). Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the California Association of Bilingual Education, San Jose, California.