

Integrating Reading Intervention into Story Teaching – Comprehensive Writing in Storybook Report

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Introduction

In order to help children in lower literacy level to progress in reading comprehension, reading intervention is a well known program in accelerating the development of children's literacy skills. Those children who are not progressing in the class are often the ones that teachers find difficult. With lower literacy level, children not only have problems in catching up what teachers teach in class but also have difficulties in understanding texts and storybooks. It is really frustrating for a child to go to school if he or she is a struggling reader. Therefore, with reading intervention, teachers can help children to develop their literacy skills through a lot of listening, speaking, reading, and writing programs. Step by step, children can advance their literacy skills and have achievements in reading. In other words, through reading intervention programs, children can gradually develop their literacy ability and advance their growth in comprehending the texts and storybooks. In California, the teachers in Elliott¹ elementary school make good use of intervention reading programs to help children who are struggling with reading to progress their literacy skills. In Taiwan, with modifications, reading intervention can be integrated into storybook teaching, and at the same time, develop children's comprehensive writing skills in storybook report. Since Taiwan is an EFL (English as a foreign language) language context, this article shows that reading intervention, by adopting its essence and modifying its way of teaching, can be used in a different way for young learners in reading storybooks, and advance their comprehensive writing skills in storybook reports, too.

Definition

Reading intervention aims to help children who are in lower literacy level to progress in their literacy skills, gain the achievement of comprehension, and finally feel successfully in reading. Tonya Abari (n.d.) defines reading intervention “a program, supplementary to an existing literacy curriculum, that is provided to students for the primary purpose of increasing reading levels. Such programs can be administered both in and out of the traditional classroom environment.” Also, as William E Tunmer (2007) mentioned in “Recent

¹ Elliott elementary school, belongs to ABC unified district, is located in Los Angeles County, California.

Developments in Reading Intervention Research: Introduction to special issue”, he identifies that reading intervention refers to “instructional approaches and programs designed to either prevent or remediate persistent reading difficulties. Prevention programs typically focus on at risk children with limited amounts of crucial reading-related knowledge, skills and experiences at school entry who often, but not always, come from low-income family backgrounds. Remedial programs target students who are failing to make adequate progress in learning to read”. For children, it would be very upset and disappointed if they have to struggle with reading all the time both at school and home. Gradually, those struggling readers will have more and more difficulties in comprehension and even hold a negative attitude toward reading. Thus, to progress struggling readers’ literacy skills and build up their confidence in reading, reading intervention is indeed a great help.

Reading Intervention in US

In United States, reading intervention is used in many schools that have children struggling with reading. And there are many reading intervention programs which are designed for children to meet their needs in advancing literacy skills, such as CIRP (Comprehensive Intervention Reading Program), is intended for children whose literacy skills are below regular grade, and for children who are struggling with lots of reading skills, and TSRP/TIRP (Targeted Supplemental/ Intervention Reading Program), is also provided for children to develop their literacy ability and grow in reading. Basically speaking, before intervention reading program is started, children will be assessed to determine what their reading levels are. When intervention reading program begins, teachers work mostly on sight words, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, extensive use of oral language and comprehensive reading. Sometimes, making good use of multimedia or computer software can also be part of the activities to advance children’s academic abilities. Also, children often work in a small group or with one teacher several times a week in intervention reading. Take Targeted Intervention Reading Program for example, children work with the teacher one-on-one for fifteen minutes a day, four days a week. Even though there are different forms and various activities, helping children to be able to read and comprehend is the only goal that intervention reading achieves.

In Los Angeles, teachers from Elliott elementary school make good use of intervention reading to help children who are struggling readers, too. In the beginning of the school year, leveled assessments will be administered for reading in all grades. In Elliott primary school,

intervention reading is divided into two parts. One is from 1st to 4th grades, and the other is from 5th to 6th ones. The former is named “Horizon”, and the latter is called “Gateway”. Both programs work on helping struggling readers to accelerate the development of their literacy skills and feel successful in reading.

Teaching Process in Horizon

Take Horizon for instance, intervention reading is about 40 minutes every morning from Monday to Friday. From 1st to 4th grades, each grade has twelve struggling readers. According to their assessments, those twelve struggling readers are divided into two levels, and two teachers are assigned to each level. One is for lower level students, and the other is higher ones.

In the beginning of intervention reading, the teacher works on sight words individually. Sometimes, the teacher just points to sight words and the students read them word by word. And then the teacher asks the students to practice in pairs. What the teacher does when the students practice with each other is to make sure that all students are involved in the activity and correct their mistakes in pronunciation. After practicing sight words, the students have other activities about letter recognition and phonemic awareness. The teacher collects 26 letters in the envelope for each student to sound them out. For some fast learners, the teacher even puts new vocabulary for them to read out loud. Later, the teacher asks the students to sit down in a circle for story reading. Story reading is the main activity throughout the whole session. During the process of reading, the teacher asks the students to read out loud by turns, too. After reading, the teacher asks the students some comprehensive questions about the story. According to their answers, the teacher can know how much the students comprehend the story. Usually, the teacher works on the students’ fluency of speech and comprehension of the story. Finally, the teacher gives the students some writing activities. Most of the time, the teacher asks the students to write down 3 to 4 sentences to retell the story on their own, and draw pictures with each sentence. However, with some slower learners, they are asked to work on penmanship only.

Reading Intervention integrated in Taiwan

With modifications, intervention reading of Horizon in Elliott elementary school can be used in Taiwan for teaching young learners storybook and practicing comprehensive writing in storybook report. First of all, students should be leveled with their reading before the class

is started. Many ways of assessments through listening, speaking, reading, and writing will be held in their regular English classes. Frankly speaking, it is much easier for the teacher to set up teaching plans and design appropriate activities to meet the students' needs if they are leveled. Before reading the story, the teacher shows some new words in the storybook and asks the students to pronounce them out loud. It is really a good way to practice phonemic awareness to help the students to sound the new words out, and pronounce vocabulary correctly. Simultaneously, the students not only practice pronunciation but also review phonemics awareness. Once the students are familiar with the pronunciation of new words, they can read the story more fluently later.

When it comes to story reading, firstly, the teacher asks the students to read the story out loud by turns. After reading, the teacher asks comprehensive questions to help the students to gain a more general idea about the story. Usually, the plot of the story can not be remembered easily if the students just read it once. Only with different forms of repetition, the story can be memorized in their mind. Making good use of mind map is a good way for the teacher to reorganize and retell the story efficiently. It is a simple way to draw the students' attention on integrating the story and help the students to remember the drift of the story, too. Through mind map, the students are impressed by clear concepts of the whole story. With integrated idea of the whole story, it benefits the students to work on comprehensive writing in storybook report later, too.

After reading the story, storybook report is a good choice for the students to show their understanding of the story. It is a good way to present their apprehension of the story and practice writing skills, too. With various forms of storybook report, the teacher can select related themes of the story. And according to different reading levels, the teacher can pick suitable storybook reports for the students to meet their needs.

For lower level students, the storybook report can just focus on some fundamental information about the story such as the title, illustrator, and author. Or, the teacher can just ask the students to write some simple sentences to show their comprehension about the story. To meet their needs, the storybook report can focus more on drawing and coloring to illustrate their thoughts. For instance, the teacher can ask the students to make a storybook poster (see appendix 1) by writing down the title, illustrator, author and type of the story. Or, the teacher can ask the students to make a flip-book (see appendix 2~3) only by drawing and coloring pictures to illustrate their idea of the story. Additionally, the teacher can ask the students to write down 3 to 4 simple sentences (see appendix 4) to retell the story. After writing, just like

the way that's used in intervention reading in Elliott elementary school, the teacher can ask the students to draw pictures to illustrate the sentences, too.

Besides, the teacher can vary the kinds of storybook report to make writing more interesting. For example, the teacher can ask the students to make a stand - up storybook report (see appendix 5) by writing some simple sentences to show their opinions of the whole story. With different activities of folding, drawing, cutting, coloring in storybook report, lower level students can practice their comprehensive writing and enjoy in storybook report, too.

For slow learners, the teacher can ask advanced students to work on more sentences, or even some short paragraphs to illustrate their idea about the story. For advanced level students, the storybook report can focus more on comprehensive questions and their reflections about the story. Included basic information such as the title, illustrator, and author, the teacher can ask the students to pay more attention to the details of the story, for example, characters, places, process, or the situations happened in the story. The answers can be more narrative and descriptive. For instance, "What is your favorite part of the story?", "List four words to describe the place.", "What is your opinion of the story?", or "Write two sentences about something important the character did". Meanwhile, those storybook reports for lower level students can also be modified to be more extensive to meet the needs of advanced level students. For advanced level students, adding something interesting in comprehensive writing is important, too. If there is always something about writing, it could become a boring task for both lower and advanced students. Thus, increasing some fascinating elements of drawing, coloring, folding or cutting for advanced level students in the storybook report can make comprehensive writing more enjoyable.

Reading Intervention integrated in "When Sophie gets angry - really, really angry..."

Here are the steps of how intervention reading is integrated into Molly Bang's masterpiece "When Sophie gets angry - really, really angry...". Before the class is started, the students are all leveled with their reading. Firstly, the teacher picks some new words from the story for the students to practice pronunciations in pairs. Next, the teacher demonstrates the correct pronunciations of the words and reveals their meanings; meanwhile, the teacher reminds the students to review phonemic awareness of each word, too.

After getting more familiar with those new words, the teacher guides the students to read the whole story. According to the numbers of student, the teacher can group them and ask them to read by turns. Later, by asking the students questions of the story, the teacher can

realize how much they've comprehended the story. It is, through questions and answers, the teacher helps the students to gain the whole idea and understand the story more.

Building up mind map in the blackboard is a good method for the students to get a better understanding of the story. When the teacher asks questions, it is easier for the students to get involved in retelling the story in an organized way. In the story "When Sophie gets angry - really, really angry..." the flow map is good for the teacher to integrate the whole idea of the story. Through sequencing, students can have deeper impressions about the process of why Sophie becomes angry and how she deals with her anger. Most important of all, with integrated idea of the whole story, the students can have a better idea in processing their comprehending writing.

Comprehensive Writing in "When Sophie gets angry - really, really angry..."

After reading, the teacher can ask the students to express their idea of the story through writing storybook report. Writing storybook report is not only a method for the students to practice their writing skills but also a good way for them to show their comprehension of the story. However, according to different reading levels, the teacher should design different worksheets for the students.

Lower Level For lower level students, the teacher can just ask them to write down some sentences to show their understanding after they read "When Sophie gets angry - really, really angry...". Basically speaking, questions and answers is an easy way to help the students to gain integrated idea of the story and process their comprehensive writing. In "When Sophie gets angry - really, really angry...", the teacher can ask the students "why Sophie gets angry in the beginning?". Then, "how does Sophie deal with her anger in the middle?", and finally, "what comforts Sophie in the end?". By answering three comprehensive questions shown above, lower level students can fulfill their own comprehensive writing in storybook report. (see appendix 6~9) Also, the teacher can ask the students to draw pictures to illustrate each sentence at the same time. In addition, another choice for lower level students is a stand - up storybook report. The students can write and draw in the comprehensive writing. And by folding it, the form of storybook report changed. For lower level students, by adding some interesting, they can enjoy lots of fun in comprehensive writing.

Advanced Level As for advanced level students, the teacher can demand they work more on writing skills. The teacher can ask the students to write more sentences or even short paragraphs to show their comprehension after they read "When Sophie gets angry - really,

really angry...”. Those storybook reports the lower level students work on can be modified to fit the needs of advanced level students, too. Similarly, the teacher can ask the students to write more sentences in making a stand - up storybook report. Another suggestion for advanced level students is that the students can introduce “When Sophie gets angry - really, really angry...” to their friend and share some reflection through “Jot a Note” (see appendix 10). In “Jot a Note”, as a letter form, the students can draw a picture of their favorite part of the story and color it on the back of the paper. A storybook report can be something about reflection and something about amusement, too. No matter in which levels, lower or advanced, comprehensive writing in storybook report can be something about writing, something about comprehension, and something about fun.

Conclusion

In intervention reading, struggling readers can make growth in literacy skills. It really works to bridge the gap between struggling readers and non struggling ones. Even though there are culture and language background differences in EFL (English as a foreign language) learners, with some modifications, intervention reading can be integrated into story teaching and comprehensive writing. Through phonemic awareness, new words recognition to comprehensive writing, children enrich their vocabulary and have a better understanding of the story. Also, with leveled worksheets, the students can illustrate their idea of the story and practice their comprehensive writing in storybook report. With improved literacy skills, children will feel successful and confident in reading. The more achievement children gain in reading, the more exciting and positive attitudes toward learning they will hold.

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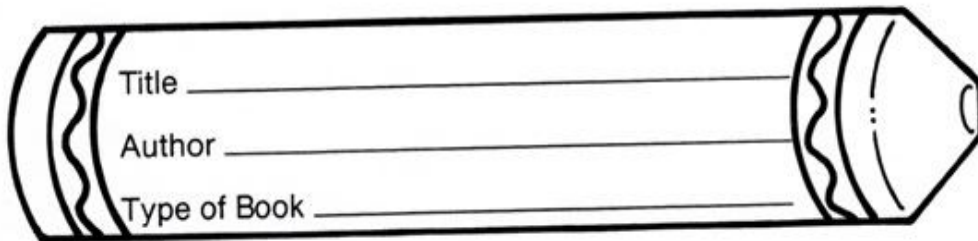
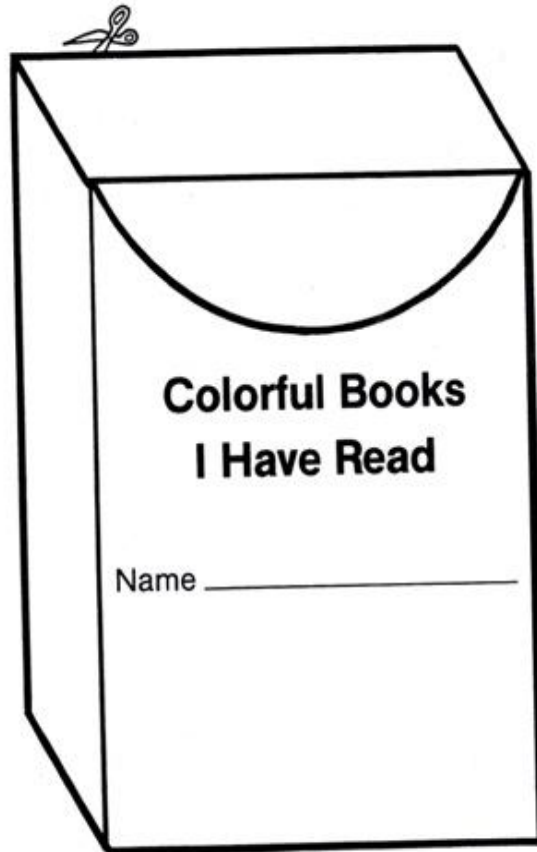
appendix 1

Name _____

Skill: Book report

My Book Poster

Color and cut out the box and crayon patterns.
Paste them onto construction paper to make a book poster.
Add a crayon for each book you read. Use the crayon pattern to make extra crayons.



Name _____ Skill: Book report

Flip-Book Fun

(Page 1)

Draw and color pictures to illustrate a book you've read.
Cut and staple the pages together to make a seven-page flip book.



Book Title and Author

1

Setting of the Book

2

My Favorite Character

3

Name _____

Skill: Book report



Flip-Book Fun

(Page 2)



At the beginning of the story,

In the middle of the story,

4

5

My favorite part of the story,

At the end of the story,

6

7

Brainwork! Choose your favorite part of the book. Read that part to a friend.

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16

FS-8616 Book Reports

Name _____

Stand-Up Book Report

Write about a book you read. Draw a picture about each part. Cut on the solid lines. Fold on the dotted lines to make a stand-up book report.



Stand-Up Book Report

Name _____

Title _____

Author _____

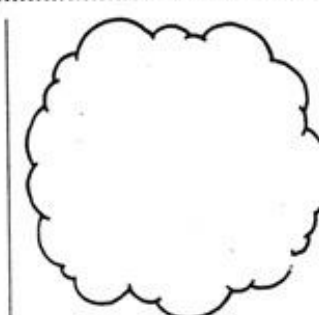
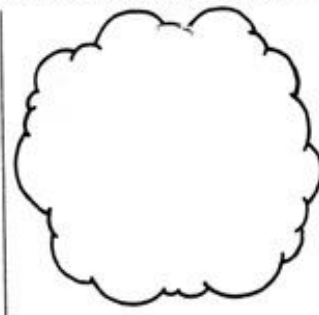
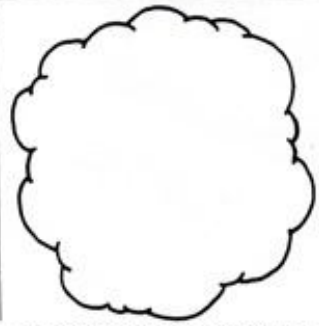
Type of Book _____






At the end of the book, _____

In the middle of the story, _____

At the beginning of the book, _____



Brainwork! Draw a picture showing a different ending for the book.

Beginning	Middle	End
		
<p>Sophie sister grab bed her toy, Sophie fell... over the truck.</p>	<p>Oh my god Sophie is very angry. She kicks. She screams. She runs and runs towards her.</p>	<p>She see wide world comforts her and Sophie at home. She's not angry anymore.</p>

50921



Title When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Author BY MOLLY BANG



Beginning

Sophie's Gorilla was

grabbed her sister

Sophie fell over the

truck



Angry Middle

SMASH

Sophie is very angry.

Her hair is flying

She kicks. She screams

She wants to smash the

world to smithereens.



End

The wide world comforts


her.

51020 黄懷基

Title When Sophie Gets Angry - Really, Really Angry


Author MOLLY BANG

Beginning




Sophie was playing
her gorilla. Her
sister snatched gorilla
away. Sophie fell
over the truck.

Middle






Sophie **is** ever angry now
She kicks. She screams.
She wants to smash
the world to smithereens.

End



She goes home,
Sophie really likes her
home. She really likes her
family.

<p>Title When Sophie Gets Angry - Really - Really Really</p>	<p>Author Molly Bang</p>	
<p>Beginning</p> 	<p>Angry...</p> 	<p>End</p> 
<p>Sophie was playing her gorilla, but her sister grabbed her gorilla.</p>	<p>Sophie is very angry angry, and she kicks She is a volcano, ready to explode.</p>	<p>Sophie climbs the old beech tree, and she sees the water and the waves. She's not angry.</p>

Name _____ Skill: Book report

Jot a Note

Write a letter to a friend about the book you read.



_____ (date)

Dear _____,

I read a book called _____

by _____

It was about _____

I think you would like the book because _____

My favorite part of the book is _____

I hope you'll be able to read this book soon!

Your friend,

P.S. I drew a picture about the book on the other side of this paper.

Brainwork! Make a book jacket for the book.