

Transcripts

SECTION: Texts

Section Content: Classroom Libraries

How do you organize your classroom library?

Irby DuBose

We have our library, we have our book baskets organized by genre and by author. We have some leveled texts organized by different levels. I like to rotate the texts in the classroom library. I don't have all the books out at one time. Right now the books are mostly what the children are interested in. We have some frog books, some different animal books, some transportation baskets. So I have book baskets of books that they're interested in, I have book baskets aligned with our standards. I like to have baskets from units we just taught, so we just did a Thanksgiving unit, so there's the basket of books we used for that in our classroom library. And then I like to have upcoming units, so there's a penguin basket because penguins are coming up. So I like to have a variety, variety of genres, variety of levels, and then I try to change it out. We just finished an American symbols unit, so those books are there, but as we progress those books will probably go somewhere else and that basket will be something else, another genre.

Apryl Whitman

It took a long time scavenging every Goodwill there was, but my classroom library is divided up by genre. I pull those books to go into their look baskets. So I find books that they're interested in and put them in their look baskets. That's also where I get my read alouds. In their look books, those are the ones that I will pull from my library, the school library, the local library. We have space books in there. We have career day tomorrow so there are career books in there, worm books in there. They're really into this nonfiction, so they'll leave the fiction ones in there and pull out the nonfiction. So I make sure that when I'm putting books in there, they are things they're really interested in.

And then next to it was my leveled texts, and I have Fountas/Pinnell A-O, so those books are right on their levels, and they're labeled, so they get to choose what goes in their bags. I put the baskets to look through, they're above their cubbies, and those come down when it's time for them to shop for new books.

Christy Long

The library is set up several different ways. Some of them are by author. Some of the authors we do author studies on have separate baskets, like Patricia Polacco or Laura Numeroff, we have specific baskets for them, and some of them get really attached and want to read a book by that author and find out more about them. And some of them are by character. I have a basket for Clifford, one for Franklin, Fancy Nancy, and then some are by subject. I have a basket for sports, weather - since that's one of our science standards. Usually for every standard we have a basket so that they can really connect into that if it sparks an interest and learn more about it. So it's by author, by characters, and it's by subject.

When I was a first grade teacher, I made sure I had the library by levels, because they had a harder time picking out books that are on their level. But in second grade, we spent time doing those lessons on how to choose a book that's just right. So they can quickly look through it and see, OK, this is not a book for me, quickly put it away, and quickly grab another one.

What other materials in addition to books are available for Independent Reading?

Irby DuBose

They do have a magazine basket in the classroom library, but that again would be more like in literacy stations, if they wanted to read the magazines. They have poems, and they have these familiar books that we've been reading, and at this point, that's really what they have access to during independent reading.

Interviewer (J. Durham): Are you using any listening station, or is that all during literacy stations?

Ms. DuBose: That's all during stations. We have a listening station, and

Ms. Durham: The computer stuff would also be during stations?

Ms. DuBose: Yes. All the technology and things like that we do during stations. Like they have the opportunity during stations to read books on an I-Pad, but we don't do that during IR, we do it during station time.

Apryl Whitman

They have magazines in their browsing – when we were learning about maps they had maps in there. We've been learning about brochures so there are brochures in there that were appropriate to learn from. And they also have a listening station, but that's during station time.

Christy Long:

We have a basket of magazines, and of course the poems, and we have a listening center in the back for a lot of my ELL students. I will let them listen to books in the mornings to get the language in their heads, since they don't hear the English language much at home. So I have that back there for other times during the day. But during Independent Reading, my line leader and whoever is their partner for the week, instead of going to read from their book bucket, they can choose to go and listen to a story and read along with it. I'm sure there are many different ways you can organize that, but that way there's only 2 of them back there. Because if you get more than 2 back there, they tend to misbehave and want to chit-chat and giggle. So if it's just the line leader and their one partner back there, you know they're doing what they're supposed to be doing.

Section Content: Choosing Books

How do you teach children to choose appropriate books for Independent Reading?

Denise N. Morgan

Teachers have to help kids know that a book is right for them. So at the beginning, we might have to help them a bit more, and ask them questions so that they understand how do I know this book is OK, like what should I be able to do after I read this book? Then eventually the teacher has to turn that over to the kids, so that the kids start to take responsibility for that. But we talk to the kids about there is this little sweet spot, where you can read, and you know what's going on, and you're not having too much trouble, and you're really enjoying your reading, and there's a part where it's a little more difficult, and you're not really understanding, and you don't really want to talk to anyone about it because it's too hard. So this (gestures) is where we really want you to be. Occasionally you might read this book, but this is the better book for you.

Here's the thing. Comprehension is the same, kindergarten to college, you use the same strategies, they don't change. We have to infer, we have to predict, evaluate – none of that changes, just the text we use changes. So kids can learn to apply all those comprehension strategies in text that is appropriate for them. If they're reading a text that's too hard for them, then all these wonderful strategies that we're teaching them, they can't even apply them because they are working so hard to get through the text. The comprehension strategies stay the same, so it's better that kids practice with texts where they can actually show comprehension. When we give kids texts that are too hard, they can't. So we don't really know is it a result of the text being too hard, or is it a result of them not understanding the strategy. And because we have a rich classroom library, there are lots of books for them to choose from, so they never feel like I only get to read this kind of book. There is a plethora of books that, if we have them in our library, can really support the student being successful.

Choice matters. We love choice. We live for choice. Just think about going to the supermarket and all the choices that you have for cereal. We want choices for what we want to watch, or to wear. You know what, kids like choice too. It matters to them. There are so many books out there, and it matters that kids find the books that speak to them. The payoff is that you have kids who want to read, and who are comfortable as readers, and know who they are as readers. They'll say, "I'm the kind of reader who likes this book, or "I'm the kind of reader who likes that book," or "You know what, I need to challenge myself and this is the book I need to read." So you get kids who aren't waiting for teachers to tell them what to read, or parents to tell them what to read. You get kids who are taking action because they are readers and they like certain kinds of books, and those are the books that they want to read.

One other thing that teachers really have to do is they have to let go of control. So there's an issue with control and knowing what kids have read in IR. When you have a bunch of kids reading all different titles, you as the teacher haven't read all of them. So sometimes you worry about, oh, I don't know if he really comprehended that book. But we have to shift our conversation from a comprehension interrogation to a comprehension conversation. There are many times as an adult when you talk to people who have read different books than you, and you don't test them on the book. You trust that they have read the book, and then you have that conversation. We need to extend that trust to kids.

Irby DuBose

The concept of a just right book is kind of new to them. If you think about being a kindergarten reader, they have one line of text, so we're teaching them what makes a just right book – it's interesting, you can read most of the words, it's a book that you like, things like that. And then a look book, we talk about it's a book that you're still interested in, but you're kind of just looking at the pictures and getting your comprehension, making meaning from the pictures. But in kindergarten that's a really good skill that I like to teach them, because I don't want them to neglect the pictures.

I think with just right books we really need to revise – just because you can read most of the words, doesn't mean it's a just right book. Like that little boy by the cooler, he could read 2 out of 3 books, but it still wasn't a just right book, because it just wasn't right for him. Something else with just right books that we need to hit on that this other conference reminded me of is with just right books you have to be sure you have some background knowledge about whatever it is you're reading or you won't be able to figure out the words. So that's where we'll go next.

Apryl Whitman

We preview the cover, so they look at it for interest. Once they find one that they like, they open it up and browse through it quickly. If they're still interested, I tell them to go to the first page and start reading the first page. Now the look books might be difficult and that's OK, I've taught them that, especially with nonfiction. I'll say, you can read all the other features in there as well. But read some of those first words, and if it's too, too difficult for you, let's put it back and maybe we'll try another one. And sometimes they'll keep it, but I'm not going to tell them, especially with the look books, "No, this is too hard, you can't get that, because if it's something that interests them, they're going to learn something from it, whether from the pictures or the headings or the captions, they'll get something from it.

Christy Long

About choosing a book – first of all to choose one that you’ll be interested in. You don’t just pull one out of the basket. Think about what do I like? Do I like sports? If I’m not into sports, don’t go to the sports basket. It seems like common sense to us, but to them, it helps to point it out. And it kind of rings a bell, oh, OK, I will pay attention to which basket I’m walking up to. So we talk about what is in all my baskets – this is a basket about Fancy Nancy, this is about sports, this is a basket with weather. We just go up and show them where they are in the room. Because that’s half of it, knowing where to go when you want a new book. So pick something that you’re interested in. And as they pick it up, flip through it. First see what the text looks like. Are you up for reading a chapter book, or if that’s not right for you, so flip through it. And just because it may be a smaller book you still need to open it up, because some of those smaller books have very small print, and just very small pictures. So we talk about – don’t just pick a book by its cover and what it looks like.

Open the book up and read a page, and see how many words – we have our 5-finger rule here on our chart. If it’s too easy but they still really want to read it, it’s something they’re really interested in, they can still take it and read it, but it might not be one they want to keep in their basket to read over and over again. If it has 2 to 3 words that they need to break apart or go back and reread or correct their mistakes, then that’s probably not a just-right book for you. You don’t want one that’s too easy so you won’t get better at reading, but you don’t want to get bogged down so you miss the reading. So it makes sense to get a book that isn’t too hard. So if on 1-2 pages where there are 5 words that they’re trying to figure out, we talk about how that if it doesn’t flow, you want to think about what you’re reading, and here spending time figuring out parts of words and things like that, you’re going to miss the whole meaning of the book, you’re not going to get to talk about it. So we talk about, choose a book that’s just right. And that takes time for them to learn to do too.

Interviewer (J. Durham): So you might at the beginning where your mini-lesson might just be about choosing the book?

Ms. Long: Definitely. And we practice. Initially, having some lower level readers, the challenge was getting the correct books in their book buckets on their levels. And some of them had a hard time choosing those books, so I had to back up and reteach how to choose books, and help them find the books in the room to put in their buckets. If that’s not on your level, let’s put it back and we’ll try to get it in a few weeks. That also gives them something to look forward to. And I make sure that if I say let’s try that in a few weeks, that I really am going to let them try it in a few weeks, and when I see her bump up, I’ll go pull that book again and try it with her, and she’s going to see, wow—

Ms. Durham: I can read this book now. That’s exciting. Such concrete evidence for the child.

Should teachers also choose some of children's books?

Irby DuBose

It's a combination. Some of them I put in there because they're books I think, knowing them as readers, I think, hey, this child is ready for this, or this child might need a little help cross-checking, so I'm going to try some books in there that I know will provide them with an opportunity to do that. If you let them choose all of their books, they might not choose the books that they need to practice the strategies that I know they're ready for. Here's what I know they need, but let me give them some choice, too, because then they'll be interested. Also that's a good way to see if they know what's a just right book for me, but it's definitely a combination of me intentionally putting books in their bag based on them as readers and then books that they choose.

Christy Long

I choose which books we use in our groups as I plan my lessons, and I try to make sure that I use fiction, nonfiction, and try to give them a variety of books, and it also depends on who is in my group. I have several ELL kids so I make sure that I choose books that they won't have too many troubles with the concepts. I try to very carefully pick out which books would be great fits for the specific children. And then we have our group with it, and after that, they put it in their book buckets. They can take it home if they want. They have to sign it out and take it home for a few days and bring it back and put it in their book buckets.

I have some levels. They start at G and then go up to N. So if I need other levels, lower than G, which I needed a lot of this year, we have a book-nook in our library for teachers to use and it's just sets of books that are leveled, and there are lots of them to choose from. They're just checked out under my name. We just make sure that by the end of the year we get them all back.

How do you use Just Right Books and Look Books?

Student Commentary, Kindergarten, Pate Elementary School, Darlington, SC Choosing Just Right Books

(T = Teacher, Katena McDonald, 5K Teaching Assistant; S = Student)

T: OK, K, what kind of book do you have?

S: It's a book that somebody gives something to other people.

T: Something that what?

S: That gives something

T: OK, but we're talking about just right books. So what kind of book do you have?

S: I have a book that's just right because I can read all of the words.

T: All of the words or some of them?

S: All of them.

T: OK, can read the title for us?

S: This is For You

T: Wow. OK, keep going.

S: This is for you. The rose is for you. The picture is for you. The ball is for you. The kitten is for you. The dog is for you. The basket is for you. The car is for me!

T: So K can read that book, so that's a just right book for you. Can you tell me, K, what is a just right book?

S: It's a book where you can read all the words or almost all the words.

T: Or almost all the words, just like we've got our chart up there. It says Just Right Books, we can read most of the words, it makes what – sense. We understand – so did you understand your story?

S: Yes

T: What about – did you like your story?

S: Yes

T: What did you like about it?

S: I liked that somebody was being nice, and she gave people stuff, and somebody gave her something at the end.

Student Commentary, Kindergarten, Pate Elementary School, Darlington, SC
Choosing Look Books

(T = Teacher, Katena McDonald, 5K Teaching Assistant; S = Student)

T: All right, you ready? What kind of book did you get?

S: A look book

T: A look book. Why did you choose a look book?

S: I like the cover.

T: You like the cover. You know some words in it?

S: No

T: OK. Let's flip through it and see. (child starts to flip pages)

Oh, this is Curious George. I like Curious George.

T: You just like all these pretty pictures that this book has? What do you think is going on in it though?

S: I think what's going on is George is about to read a book. I think he's done taking a bath.

T: OK

T: What about this page?

S: He spilled his milk.

T: OK. You see any words you know?

S: No.

T: None? But you can tell what's going on in the story because you're looking at your what?

S: Pictures.

T: Have you ever read a Curious George book before?

S: No

T: OK, we might have to read one. What do we notice about look books?

S: A look book is something you can't read but you just look

T: And you read the what?

S: Pictures.

T: OK, and what else did we put when we talked about it this week? You look at it and it looks what?

What makes you pick it up, because it looks - You remember that big word we put up? It looks interesting. And that's probably why you picked it.

Have you all ever picked up a newspaper and read it? To try to read it? Why?

S: I picked up a magazine though, in the library.

T: What made you pick it up?

S: I just wanted to see what the pictures looked like

T: What the pictures were about?

T: I know Ms. McDonald likes pictures. Sometimes I go to the grocery store, and I'll just flip through their magazines and look at all of their pictures. And that's how I choose my magazine.

Katena McDonald
The Importance of Book Choice

Most of the time I'll let the children pick their books. Sometimes I've encouraged them by telling them, if I come across a book I've read as a child, I'll say, "Oh, I read that when I was little," so I encourage them that way. Lot's of times I try to give them choices too because if you dominate them, and try to make them read, you don't want them to go back and not read.

It's great to let them have choices because just like adults, we want choices in our life, and you don't want to discourage them. If you give them books that they think they can't handle, they probably go back and won't want to read. I notice with working with 5K, the first thing they tell us when they come to us is, "I can't read." And they really can read, whether it's words, pictures, symbols – but when you encourage them that they can do it, and give them choices, you would be better off and you'll have better readers.

What are some effective techniques to interest children in choosing books?

Linda Gambrell

Book Baskets

One of the things that we know is that children are more likely to read books that they know a little bit about. The most powerful technique that I have seen in my career to encourage children to read is what we call "Book Basket." We know that teachers typically in the primary grades read aloud to children, and sometimes a book or 2 a day, and it's wonderful to have children enjoy those books. But a more powerful way to increase their motivation to read is to take say 10 books and maybe once a week do a book basket. You have a range of books of different difficulty levels, picture books, chapter books, you might have some informational text, newspaper articles. You can have all kinds of reading materials in this book basket. What the teacher does, instead of reading one book, shares just a little bit from each of those books.

For example, *Pig Sty* by Mark Teague is one of my favorite books, so the teacher might hold up *Pig Sty* and say, "Oh, I think you might like this book if you like pigs. The little boy in this book is Wendell Flutz. Wendell comes home from school one day, and there's a pig living in his bedroom. And his bedroom is getting messy. Second day Wendell comes home and there are 2 pigs living in his bedroom. It's even messier. And you guessed it, the third day he comes home, and there are 3 pigs living in his bedroom. Wendell has a pig problem. Now if you want to find out how Wendell solved his pig problem, you'll have to read this book.

And here's another book, *Ruby the Copycat*. Ruby the copycat loves to go to school and she particularly likes the girl who sits behind her, Angela. But Ruby has a bit of an imagination problem, because almost everything that comes up in class, when Angela says, 'Oh, I was in my sister's wedding over the weekend,' well Ruby always raises her hand, and whatever Angela has done, she says 'I did that too.' Oh, I was in my sister's wedding this weekend too. The classroom teacher always says, "Oh, what a coincidence. If you want to find out what happens to Ruby, who's a big copycat, you'll have to read this book."

What the teacher does is go through and share just a little bit about those books. And the kids are always very excited about reading the books that teachers tell them just a little bit about. It raises their curiosity, and almost without exception, if you put those books over on a table, after you do the book share, you'll see the kids gravitating to that table, and wanting to read those books that you've shared. So teachers play a powerful role in terms of motivating children to read and creating an environment that celebrates books and gets kids excited about books.

Book Frenzy – Classroom in Action
Christy Long, Teacher, Inman, SC

T: Ok, guys, good morning. I told you yesterday that we're going to do something brand new today. And it's called a book frenzy.

T: Are you ready to learn what it is?

S: YES!

T: Well a book frenzy is a fun way of choosing a new book that you've never seen. Let me tell you how it's going to go. When I tell you to – not now, when I tell you – you're going to stand in a circle. OK. I'm going to put you with a partner, but you're not going to do anything with your partner at first. I'm going to give everybody a book, OK. Ms. Johnson is going to start the music. When you hear the music, that means start passing the books. You're not going to look at every book. As soon as you get one, you're going to pass one. Get one, pass one. Get one, pass one. When the music stops, you stop. And whatever book you have in your hand, it will be your time to preview that book. So we'll take about 30 seconds for you to preview the book, like I did. Read your title, look through your text features, and see if that's one you want to read or not. Is it OK if you don't want to read that book?

S: Yes

T: Yes. It might be something you're just not interested in. So then, after about 30 seconds of getting to preview the book, I'm going to ring the bell, and you're going to turn to your partner. So you'll already know who your partner is. And you're going to take turns telling your partner if you would like to read that book or not, if this is one that you would pick to read during independent reading time. And then you tell them why, or why not. OK?

(Music starts) T: Take a book, give a book. (Kids pass books) (Passing, then music stops.)

T: OK,

S: Oh, yea! Cool.

T: Take the book that's in your hands 6:45 Who doesn't have one?

S: I don't have one.

T: Who has 2?

S: Me.

T: Thank you. OK, your 30 seconds starts now.

(Students previewing books)

S: Awesome! (students preview)

(Bell rings) T: Turn and talk with your partner. (kids talking to partners)

S: I didn't know they could (inaudible) and I didn't know they could (inaudible).

T: So would you like to read this book and find out more about it?

S: (nods yes)

T: OK, because you're interested in the police part of it. OK. What about you, T?

S: I learned that-

T: Would you like to read this book? Would you choose this one? Tell him why or why not. (rings bell) OK, everybody freeze. Everybody freeze. You're going to sit down where you are. You're going to put your book out in front of you. OK, who would like to share? Let's see, A___. Share what you just said about the Sports Illustrated Kids Edition.

S: I would not like to read this because I don't like to play sports.

T: OK. You would not want to read that magazine. Is that OK? Yes. Because she's not really into sports. OK. That's a good reason. What about you, W.

S: I would like to read this book because I want to find out about all the emergencies and when I grow up I want to be something like that, like a police officer or a firefighter.

T: OK. Is that a good reason to read that book?

S: Yes.

T: Sounds like he's put a lot of thought into that, right.

When can children choose books for Independent Reading?

Irby DuBose

We have the classroom library that they visit, they can get books from there. But not during IR time. We don't like them changing books during IR because it's a sacred time. I want you to go and read during that time. When we go to literacy stations they go to the classroom library then, and that's when they can get new books.

Right now it's really guided. It takes either me or my assistant to be in there with them, so we can say, let's pick out some just right books, some look books, and the books they have in their bags right now, where they can go. It's very guided. I think that works for this time of the year. I think if you just let them go in the library right now it's not going to be as successful.

Apryl Whitman

Mondays are our shopping for leveled texts. So they get 4 books every Monday that they choose on their own. They could be below, on or above their level, and they get to choose. And most will choose on their level. And then the look books that they have are a variety, that's twice a week. So usually my routine is Monday and Wednesday, sometimes it gets pushed back. And sometimes kids will keep a book. They'll say, "I don't want to turn that in, I'm still reading it, learning from it." That's fine.

Christy Long

it's really just whenever they feel like they need another book, they have the freedom to get up and look in the baskets. If they feel like I want to get a Froggy book, or a Fancy Nancy book, then they know exactly where to go. And we talked about – choose your book quickly. Let's not spend 5 minutes picking out another book for your book bucket. Let's have an idea of what you want, do you want a fiction book, a nonfiction book, a book about animals, and then you go to that basket and then go sit down and read it, spend your time actually reading.

Closer to the beginning of the year we were spending more time picking out the just right books, and then every once in a while we will spend time cleaning out our book buckets. If there's a book you've had in there for 2 months and you don't really read it anymore, or if it's way too easy for you now, let's put that back and let someone else read it. We talk about let's share our books, so don't keep one too long. But if it's a book you really like and you'd like to read it a few times, keep it in your book bucket. Of course, if it's a chapter book, I let them know that they shouldn't have more than one chapter book in their bucket, because some of them like to hoard the chapter books for some reason. But you can really only read one chapter book at a time.

How do children keep their individual books for Independent Reading?

Irby DuBose

We have bags of books. Each child has a Ziplock bag with books in it, and that's a combination of books that they've chosen, books they're familiar with, books that are just right for them, a few look books, so they have their individual baggie with their books in it. Those are at their tables. Then they have folders on the back of their chairs that have familiar poems and more familiar books.

Apryl Whitman

So they have their own little reading bags that you probably saw, and those go home with them night as well. They sign a contract and their parents do that I will take care of the books in this bag, and I'll bring them back every week. And they know if they don't bring back however many books they checked out, they don't get that many books.

Christy Long

In their book bucket they have some books that they have chosen from the classroom. They also have some books that I have chosen for them. These are books from our guided reading groups, so I know for a fact that they have just-right books. There may be a few new words in there, but we've worked through those together, and I know they are reading the correct words so they can start to work on things like fluency. So they have the just-right books in there, they have their ELA notebook where we do any kind of reader's response or ELA skills or a graphic organizer, a Venn diagram or something like that, so we can refer back to it. They also have their poetry folder. I try to put in some poems that connect to our science and social studies standards. Like this week we're reading Dear Mr. Blueberry, we've been reading that together, so they're practicing that every day, writing a friendly letter and Dear Mr. Blueberry is about whales. So I found them some poems about whales, (these) and then a harder one on the back. So they're poems that I try to make connect to what we're doing in other subjects.