

# Comprehension and English Language Learners

25 Oral Reading  
Strategies That Cross  
Proficiency Levels

**Michael F. Opitz**  
with **Lindsey M. Guccione**

FOREWORD BY **David E. Freeman**  
AND **Yvonne S. Freeman**

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*To the first Michael Opitz, my grandfather,  
an English language learner who  
emigrated from Austria to America  
through Ellis Island.*

—MFO

*To my grandmother, Daisy Lazetich,  
the first English language  
learner I ever loved.*

—LMG

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# Foreword

*Comprehension and English Language Learners* by Michael Opitz provides teachers with twenty-five oral reading strategies to use with their English language learners (ELLs). Teachers face the daunting task of helping all their students, including their ELLs, develop high levels of literacy. As a result, many teachers have focused much of their instruction on reading and writing. While students need to be able to comprehend grade-level texts and write narratives, reports, and other kinds of academic papers, literacy development also depends crucially on students' development of oral English proficiency. *Comprehension and English Language Learners* gives teachers concrete suggestions for building oral language through meaningful reading activities.

Many teachers are familiar with other books Michael Opitz has written, such as *Rhymes and Reasons*, *Good-bye Round Robin*, *Reaching Readers*, *Do-able Differentiation*, and *Don't Speed. READ!* He has partnered with other literacy leaders in writing several of these books and others. The practical ideas and literature suggestions included in his other books are useful resources for any teachers. However, in *Comprehension and English Language Learners* Opitz, working with Lindsey Guccione, has written a book focused squarely on English language learners.

This book comes at a time when the number of ELLs has increased to the point where nearly every teacher needs strategies for working effectively with students who are developing oral and reading skills in English. In the ten years between 1995–96 and 2005–06, the numbers of ELLs in K–12 schools grew over 57 percent to more than five million. This growth compared with only a 3.6 percent growth of the overall school population. And the growth is not only concentrated in a few states. In fact, the largest growth has not been in traditionally high ELL population states such as California, Florida, New York, and Texas, but in states in the southeast like Alabama and Mississippi, and Midwestern states like Nebraska and Colorado. These states all have experienced a 200 percent growth in ELLs (OELA 2007).

It is also important to be aware that not all ELLs are new to this country. While the immigrant population in the U.S. grew by 14 million in the 1990s and is expected to grow another 14 million in the next few years, many ELLs in our schools were born here (Capps, Fix, et al. 2007). Research shows that large numbers, up to 57 percent of the ELLs in secondary schools, are students who were born here and attended school here but still struggle academically. All these demographics highlight why it is important that teachers understand how to help their second language learners develop English from an early age, and Michael Opitz's books are meant to do just that.

English language learners need to develop oral English proficiency as they learn to read and write in English. The National Reading Panel Report (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development 2000), which reviewed literacy research on native English speakers, set the guidelines for much of the instruction children receive in schools. Since that report only looked at native English speakers, a second study was conducted to review the research in literacy for English language learners. This second report, *Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners* (August and Shanahan 2006), was carried out by the National Literacy Panel.

One of the important findings of the National Literacy Panel report was that the development of oral language is important for growth in reading and writing. As the authors of the report state, "For language-minority learners, oral language proficiency plays an important role in the acquisition of skilled reading" (August and Shanahan 2006, 55). In particular, the oral language development was shown to correlate with reading comprehension. In the chapter of the report on second-language oral proficiency and second-language literacy, the panel notes, "Overall, studies of English-language learners in elementary school have found consistently that oral language proficiency in English and English reading comprehension are positively correlated" (133). These studies all point to the importance of helping ELLs develop oral language skills in English as they learn to read and write in English.

ELLs come to school with differing levels of oral and written English. All ELLs need oral language development, but an oral reading

strategy designed to help a newcomer who speaks little or no English would not be appropriate for an ELL who's at a more advanced stage. While teachers can modify good strategies and use them with students at different levels, it is helpful to be provided with strategies geared to the specific proficiency levels. *Comprehension and English Language Learners* is organized in a way that makes it much easier for teachers to find strategies that match with their students' proficiency levels.

TESOL, the professional organization for teachers of English to speakers of other languages, has published the PreK–12 English Language Proficiency Standards (Gottlieb, Carnuccio, et al. 2006). The standards are organized by different levels of English proficiency. TESOL recognizes five levels: starting, emerging, developing, expanding, and bridging.

Different chapters of *Comprehension and English Language Learners* discuss strategies appropriate for a specific level. For example, one strategy for students at the starting level involves using puppets to retell a story that the teacher has read to the class. Another strategy for starting students has them sing together. These strategies allow ELLs to show what they have comprehended from hearing a story read in English. They can do this without speaking or by using only a few words because the strategies provide the students with props and other ways of responding. In contrast, later chapters present strategies during which ELLs use their greater language proficiency and build their oral language as they engage in various activities. Students at the emerging stage, for instance, may be asked to describe to a partner the mental images they formed as they listened to a passage with vivid descriptive writing.

Opitz explains five strategies for each of the five proficiency levels. The chapters follow the same format. Each chapter starts with a scenario that describes one or more students at a particular level. Then comes a chart that cross-references these five strategies presented with specific reading skills the strategies help students develop. The strategy is first briefly described. The description is followed by a step-by-step list of teaching suggestions. These suggestions clearly outline how to implement the strategy. The strategy is then contextualized in a section called Classroom Conversations. In this section Opitz

describes how a teacher uses the strategy with his or her class. For each strategy, Opitz also lists several books appropriate to use with the strategy, related websites, and a short section called Handy Hints. Having this consistent format for each chapter makes the book easy to follow. Teachers can easily find ideas for students at different levels.

English language learners need to develop oral English proficiency as well as the ability to read and write English at the same level as native English speakers. This process takes time. However, teachers can scaffold instruction for their ELLs by engaging them in meaningful literacy activities that involve reading, writing, speaking, and listening. *Comprehension and English Language Learners* gives teachers useful oral reading strategies aligned with the different proficiency levels ELLs move through. Although there are a number of books available for helping ELLs develop their English reading and writing skills, this book is one of the few that focuses on oral language development, a crucial but often overlooked component of academic development for ELLs. As such, it helps fill a gap in the professional resources teachers need to help their English language learners reach high levels of oral and written English proficiency.

—David and Yvonne Freeman

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Krashen, S., and T. Terrell. 1983. *The Natural Approach: Language Acquisition in the Classroom*. Hayward, CA: Alemany Press.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. 2000. *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Instruction*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). 2007. *The Growing Number of Limited English Proficient Students 1995–96–2005–06*. Washington, D.C.: Office of English Language Acquisition.

# Introduction

*“Okay, Natasha, time for you to go to the fourth grade for reading,” third-grade teacher Brad reminds. Hearing his reminder, Natasha, an English language learner (ELL) who reads well above grade level, gathers the necessary materials and exits with a Tigger-like gait. As a result of being provided some excellent instruction, Natasha’s first language skills transferred to learning English with relative ease. And at her current school, where students are grouped across grades for reading instruction, Natasha reads with the fourth graders.*

*One hour later, Natasha returns, her Tigger-like manner replaced with an Eyeore demeanor. Without prompting, she shares, “Fourth grade reading is s-o-o-o boring!”*

*Surprised and curious, Brad asks, “What’s so boring about it?”*

*Hands on hips, Natasha launches into her explanation:*

*“Well, all you do is sit in a circle and take turns reading a story you have never read. One person reads out loud while the rest are supposed to follow along. When that person is finished reading a page, the next person starts reading. Then after everyone has read one page, you have to go around the circle again until the story is finished! Then the time is over. You don’t even get to talk about the story or ask others about their ideas. See what I mean? It’s s-o-o-o boring!”*

I do see what Natasha means. What she describes is *round robin reading*, “the outmoded practice of calling on students to read orally one after the other” (Harris and Hodges 1995, 222).

And I also see that Natasha is an astute learner who knows that discussing a story is one way to further and deepen one’s understanding of it. Finally, Natasha provides evidence that she is able to comprehend and use both conversational and academic English with ease. Although she is a mere eight years old, she is nevertheless functioning at the last and most advanced English proficiency level, *bridging*.

Students like Natasha helped me see the need for this book, for while using oral reading teaching strategies to help children advance as readers certainly has its place in the reading curriculum, *round robin reading* does not. How, then, can well-meaning teachers best use oral reading teaching strategies as literacy scaffolds to help all ELLs at all English language proficiency levels advance as readers?

The answer to this question is the aim of this book. I begin by presenting my definition of reading and ten reasons for using oral reading. True, silent reading is used most often both in and out of school thus it needs to remain the primary mode of reading. Still, oral reading has a place in helping children to acquire a greater understanding of how to best comprehend when reading silently and how to communicate this understanding with others. Consider the times when you want to share information you have first read silently with another, such as a saying you have come across, a poem, or a funny anecdote. You will use oral reading to share (e.g., “Hey! You have to listen to this!”). To be sure, all children, ELLs included, need to use both silent and oral reading in order to become proficient readers as I define them in Chapter 1.

Given that ELLs are front and center in this book, I also provide a definition of ELLs, describe the English language proficiency levels through which they advance, and present an overview of the oral reading teaching strategies that are most appropriate for each level. As the chart on pp. 10–11 shows, each strategy is intended to enhance ELLs’ comprehension strategies (i.e., listening and reading) and vocabulary (i.e., conversational and academic).

A word of caution is in order here. The whole purpose of identifying levels of language proficiency is to help understand where children are and where they need to be. Helping them advance through the levels effectively and efficiently is the primary mission. The goal is to help them become proficient in both conversational and academic English. Likewise, the descriptions are designed to show general trends rather than discrete attributes that must be mastered before children can be seen as having advanced to the next proficiency level. As Baynham (1993) reminds, language learning is anything but linear. Instead, it

fluctuates depending on the task and context at hand. Clearly, what is most important is being able to use language for a variety of purposes, both conversational and academic, rather than taking on a label.

But how will you know if children are becoming proficient? In Chapter 2, *Effective Oral Reading Assessment Strategies for English Language Learners*, colleague James Erekson and I provide some answers to this most important question. As you will discover, in order to best assess children, we need to ask and answer three questions: *What do I want to know? Why do I want to know it? How can I best discover this information?* Questions asked and answered leads to selecting and using specific assessment techniques that will help you to tease out what children know and need to know in order to continue their growth as ELLs. An interpretation of students' performance on the different assessments then guides selecting the most appropriate oral reading strategy and using it in the ensuing instruction.

Fortunately, there are several effective ways of using oral reading with ELLs who appear to be functioning at various levels of English language proficiency. They form the content of Chapters 3 through 7. In each chapter, I showcase five specific oral reading teaching strategies that elicit and enable specific language competencies. Each chapter follows a similar format. I begin with a brief description of the English language proficiency level the given chapter showcases. I then provide five teaching strategies best suited to that stage. Each teaching strategy includes a description, teaching suggestions, sample appropriate children's literature titles, teacher and children's voices to show how teachers use the strategy and how children respond to it, related websites, and some additional ways that the strategy can be used and modified.

Although Chapters 3 through 7 are written as stand-alone chapters, keep in mind that many of the strategies cut across the various stages. *Teacher Read-Aloud*, for example, is showcased in Chapter 3 as a way to help children in the *starting* level. Nevertheless, it can be used at other levels, too. In other words, the strategies are presented as they are to help busy teachers access those that are *best* suited to a given proficiency level; there is nonetheless some overlap.

As a result of reading and using the suggestions herein, I am confident that you will see for yourself that there are many advantages to using these oral reading teaching strategies as scaffolds to help ELLs become increasingly better readers of English. You'll agree that reading in general, and oral reading in particular, doesn't have to be, in Natasha's words, "s-o-o-o boring!" See what I mean?

# *Say It with the Puppet*

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## **Instructional Information**

Puppets provide a safe environment for ELLs who feel uncomfortable talking face to face. Krashen (1982) emphasizes the importance of this safe environment when explaining his affective filter hypothesis of acquiring and learning a language. According to Krashen, when the classroom atmosphere is relaxed, the affective filter is low, which enables children to be more receptive to input resulting in accelerated language acquisition. Using puppets is one way to create this relaxed atmosphere because puppets take the focus off of students allowing them to talk to others with much greater ease. Talking enables students to further enhance conversational English (BICS) and creates an opportunity to further develop listening comprehension. When children watch a puppet play, for instance, they need to stay focused on the meaning rather than how the puppet is articulating words to more fully engage in the show.

## **Savvy Suggestions**

1. Select a whole text or a text passage to read aloud. The text should contain a simple story line with easily identifiable characters. Enlarge the text for all to see.
2. Read the text aloud. Once finished, use oral language prompts to encourage students to talk about the text. Appropriate prompts for emerging ELLs include, “Show me . . . ,” “Which of these . . . ?”, “Point to . . . ,” and “Is this a . . . ?”
3. Introduce the puppets that coincide with the story. Model how to use the puppets to act out the text.
4. Provide guided practice by having students join you with puppets for the other characters to model for the class. Read through the text and practice using the puppets with different students multiple times.

5. Put the text and the puppets in a center for literacy time. Small groups of students can practice reading, summarizing, and/or silently using puppets to reenact the story.

### Classroom Conversations

Recognizing that some of his second-grade ELLs were at the starting level, Tom decides to use puppetry as one way of helping students acquire and use conversational English. Today he has selected *Finklehopper Frog* (Livingston 2003) because the book has two primary characters who talk with one another. Both characters convey acceptance of one another's differences and help the other minor characters in the book to do the same. Tom begins by reading the book aloud to the students. When he is finished reading, he invites students' comments saying, "So what did you think of the story?" Once students have had an opportunity to volunteer their ideas, Tom then takes them back through the book and uses specific oral language prompts to encourage their talking. Turning to page 1, he says, "Show me Finklehopper Frog." Turning to page 2, he comments, "Which of these is Finklehopper?" He proceeds through the book in like manner. Once finished with the review, Tom pulls out the puppets he has brought that go with the story. Using the frog puppet, he models how to use it to say something that Finklehopper said. He then tries on the rabbit puppet and does the same. Once he has modeled for the students, he suggests that they give it a try. After students have had this time to practice using the puppets, Tom closes the lesson saying, "Puppets can help us to understand what we have read. They can also help us to talk with one another. I'm going to put the book and the puppets in the puppet theatre center so that you can use them during center time."

### Terrific Texts for *Say It with the Puppet*

| Title                | Author (Last, First)              | Publisher/Year     | ISBN          |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| <i>Ping Pong Pig</i> | Church, Caroline                  | Holiday House/2008 | 9780823421763 |
| <i>Say Hello</i>     | Foreman, Jack<br>Foreman, Michael | Candlewick/2008    | 9780763636579 |

| Title   | Author (Last, First) | Publisher/Year                | ISBN          |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| <i>Five Little Firefighters</i>   | Graham, Tom          | Henry Holt & Company/<br>2008 | 9780805086973 |
| <i>Finklehopper Frog</i>  | Livingston, Irene    | Tricycle/2003                 | 9781582460758 |
| <i>Little Panda</i>   | Liwska, Renata       | Houghton Mifflin/2008         | 9780618966271 |
| <i>Peter and the Wolf</i>   | Raschka, Chris       | Atheneum/2008                 | 9780689856525 |
| <i>Little Hoot</i>  | Rosenthal, Amy       | Chronicle/2008                | 9780811860239 |
| <i>Melvin Might?</i>  | Scieszka, Jon        | Simon & Schuster/2008         | 9781847385079 |
| <i>Hello World! Greetings<br/>in 42 Languages<br/>Around the Globe!</i> | Stojic, Manya        | Cartwheel Books/2002          | 9780439362023 |
| <i>Blue Goose</i>   | Tafari, Nancy        | Simon & Schuster/2008         | 9781416928348 |

## Winning Websites

**www.puppetools.com** provides a wealth of resources for creating and purchasing puppets as well as ideas for how to use them.

**www.puppet.org** provides information about the Center for Puppetry and its many resources for teachers and parents alike.

**www.puppetryinpractice.com** provides several ideas for how puppetry can be used to teach the arts. This particular site offers information about the value of using puppetry with ELLs.

## Handy Hints

Puppets can be used in many content areas. Children can use them to reenact something they have been reading in social studies. For example, children in upper elementary grades might create a puppet of a president or another historical figure and use the puppet to tell information about the given individual.

# Shared Reading

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## Instructional Information

Donald Holdaway conceived the idea of *shared reading* (i.e., *Shared Book Experience* or *SBE*) in 1979 as a way to engage the ELLs he was teaching in Australia. In addition to emphasizing that the reading experience needed to be enjoyable, interesting, and relaxed, Holdaway also emphasized that shared reading was a way to expose children to good literature and students' socialization simultaneously. He emphasized that the experience should emulate the nonthreatening reading experience a child might have at home. Thirty years later, we have some evidence that it is an effective way to increase students' ability to analyze words, both literal and inferential comprehension, writing, and grammar (Reutzel, Hollingsworth, and Eldredge 1994; Elley and Mangubhai 1983). Elley's findings in particular (Elley 1989, 1991) point to the success of shared reading as a way of boosting ELLs' reading ability.

Given that students at the *emerging level* can communicate by using memorized phrases and groups of words, shared reading is an appropriate way to engage them. That is, many of the books used for shared reading encourage students to memorize and use repetitive phrases and groups of words. Students are seated in front of an enlarged text (i.e., big book) written with supportive language elements such as rhyme, rhythm, and repetition. Elements such as these make the book predictable (Opitz 1995). After a focused introduction and a first read by the teacher, students chime in on a second reading. Students are afforded with numerous opportunities to develop both BICS (as a result of talking with one another about story events) and CALP (by hearing and reading a story that uses academic vocabulary). Students learn about language by using it to accomplish specific purposes.

## **Savvy Suggestions** *(based on Holdaway 1979)*

**71**

Using Oral  
Reading with  
Emerging Language  
Learners (Level 2)

1. Choose a big book that meets the needs of the group. What's most important here is to choose a book that showcases specific language features such as rhyme, rhythm, and repetition. The book must be large enough for all to see. Sometimes books are manufactured specifically as big books. Or, you can enlarge the text using overhead transparencies of the text or an Elmo projector.
2. Set a purpose for the shared reading.
3. Introduce the book by pointing to and reading the title, author's name, and illustrator's name. You may briefly introduce a character or a small portion of the events that will allow the students to connect with and anticipate the story. Provide time for students to predict what the book might be about.
4. Read the text aloud to the students. Point to the words as they are read in order to demonstrate that the written words convey meaning.
5. Read the text again and stop occasionally to point out how your manner of reading changes according to the meaning of the text (i.e., dialogue or rising action).
6. Reread the text several times over several days. Invite students to read along, as they feel comfortable. As students become more proficient with the text, allow individual students to read and designate a text pointer.
7. Encourage students to talk about the story (e.g., likes, dislikes, funny parts, connections).
8. Place the book in the reading center so that students can reread it during independent reading time.

## **Classroom Conversations**

Josh wants to help all of his kindergarteners understand that words are often associated with specific content. He realizes that this work

helps all students, including *emerging level ELLs*, learn some academic vocabulary. Following the previously listed procedures, Josh gathers students in the reading area to share *Hey Mr. Choo-choo, Where Are You Going?* (Wickberg 2008). He opens the lesson by talking with students. He comments, “Tell me what you know about trains.” Students have no difficulty sharing their ideas. Miguel takes the lead, “The train that goes by my house is very loud!” Julie chimes in, “I got to ride a train. There was a funny looking man telling us to get on the train.” As they share, Josh writes some of their ideas on the chart paper he has displayed. He then comments, “Wow! You know a lot about trains! Today we’re going to read a book that tells you even more.” He shows them the cover of the book and states, “This particular author is trying to help you to better understand words that people use when they talk about trains. Listen as I read the book to you and see if you can hear some of these words. After I’ve read it, we’ll take another look at the book and you can tell me the words you heard.”

Josh reads the book, pointing to the words as he reads. He then takes the students back through the book and gives them time to share words they heard that relate to trains. “I heard *conductor*. That’s the name of the man who was telling us to get on the train,” Julie comments. Another student states, “I heard *clang*. That’s the sound the bell makes.” As they share words, Josh states, “You discovered several words! Let’s put them on this chart so that we remember them.” He creates a word display, writing “Train words” in the center. He then writes the students’ words around the center, drawing a connecting line to each word.

On a second read, Josh invites students to read along. “Now that you’ve heard the book and taken a look at some of the words, I’ll bet you can join me. I’ll start the reading and you join in when you want.” He then proceeds to take students through the book a second time.

To close the lesson, Josh states, “You are excellent readers! You read the text; you found some words that tell about trains. And you did something else good readers do: You read the book more than once! We’re going to use this book for the next few days but I’ll leave it here in the reading center just in case you want to read it on your own during independent reading time.”

## Terrific Texts for *Shared Reading*

| Title  | Author (Last, First) | Publisher/Year                   | ISBN          |
|--|----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| <i>Captain Flinn and the Pirate Dinosaurs: Missing Treasure!</i> | Andreae, Giles       | Margaret K. McElderry Books/2007 | 9781416967453 |
| <i>The Little Yellow Leaf</i>                                    | Berger, Carin        | Greenwillow/2008                 | 9780061452246 |
| <i>Gingerbread Friends</i>                                       | Brett, Jan           | G.P. Putnam's Sons/2008          | 9780399251610 |
| <i>Bedtime at the Swamp</i>                                      | Crow, Kristyn        | HarperCollins/2008               | 9780060839512 |
| <i>The Wolves Are Back</i>                                       | George, Jean         | Dutton/2008                      | 9781430105909 |
| <i>My Dog Lyle</i>   | Goldfinger, Jennifer | Clarion/2007                     | 9780618639830 |
| <i>Off Go Their Engines. Off Go Their Lights</i>                 | Milusich, Janice     | Dutton/2008                      | 9780525479406 |
| <i>Here, Kitty, Kitty! / Ven, Gatita, Ven!</i>                   | Mora, Pat            | Rayo/2008                        | 9780060850449 |
| <i>Goodnight Goon: A Petrifying Parody</i>                       | Rex, Michael         | G.P. Putnam's Sons/2008          | 9780399245343 |
| <i>Hey Mr. Choo-choo, Where Are You Going?</i>                   | Wickberg, Susan      | G.P. Putnam's Sons/2008          | 9780399239939 |

## Winning Websites

**[www.ngsp.com/Products/ESLELD/BigBooksforESLELD/tabid/82/Default.aspx](http://www.ngsp.com/Products/ESLELD/BigBooksforESLELD/tabid/82/Default.aspx)** provides sets of big books for specific grade levels that have been selected with ELLs in mind.

**[www.teacherbigbooks.com](http://www.teacherbigbooks.com)** promises to save teachers a tremendous amount of time by giving a compilation of all big books available for purchase online. Search the site by title, author, or catalog format.

## Handy Hints

1. Once students are familiar with the enlarged text, provide them with smaller versions of the same text and provide time for them to practice reading the book either alone or with interested others. Students might want to assign different parts to one another.
2. Encourage children to innovate on the text by giving them a sentence frame used in the text and having them fill in their own words to finish it. One fourth-grade teacher we know used Bill Martin's *Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?* (1970) as a way to launch students writing about different states.

# *Find the Signs*

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## **Instructional Information**

Typographical cues are similar to road signs. The reader, like a driver, must be able to read the signs to navigate their way through the roads or pages of text. *Find the Signs* helps *developing ELLs* do just that by emphasizing the impact that various typographical signs have on meaning. It is important to remember that like road signs, typographical signs do not look the same in every language. For example, Spanish uses speech dashes to indicate speaking instead of quotation marks (Cappellini 2005). Therefore, drawing attention to and modeling how to read typographical signs like punctuation marks, font size, bold print, underlining, italics, and various combinations of these signs helps *developing ELLs* understand the author's intended meaning. Using these cues to assist prosody development and reading comprehension are just a few of the benefits of this oral reading strategy.

## **Savvy Suggestions** *(adapted from Opitz and Rasinski 2008)*

1. Select one or two specific typographical signs or cues that you want to introduce or highlight. Figure 5–2 lists several signs, what they mean, and examples of how they are used.
2. Write sentences from a book that has previously been read or will be read that includes the specific signs that you are going to emphasize on an overhead transparency, sentence strips, or chart paper.
3. Tell students that you want them to listen to you as read the same sentence two times because they will need to decide which reading gives them the best understanding of what is happening.
4. Read the sentence the first time using monotone voice and don't adhere to any typographical signs.

| Typographical Signs                     | What Do They Mean?                                   | Examples  |
|---|--|---|
| Comma                                   | Pause reading; placement of comma can affect meaning | Henry, my dog is happy to see you.<br>Henry, my dog, is happy to see you. |
| Period                                  | Longer pause because it marks the end of a sentence  | The boy loved his new book.   |
| Question mark                           | Raise intonation at the end of the question          | What is that?   |
| Exclamation mark                        | Read with emotion                                    | I can't believe it!   |
| Quotation marks                         | Someone is speaking                                  | Ben said, "What are you doing?"   |
| Underlined, enlarged, and/or bold print | Read with special stress                             | That is what <u>she</u> thinks.<br><u>That</u> is what she thinks.        |
| Combination                             | Read meaningful unit with special stress             | My father yelled, " <b>Lindsey</b> , you get back here right now!"        |

**Figure 5–2.** Typographical Signs and What They Mean (adapted from Opitz and Rasinski 2008)

5. Read the sentence the second time using all typographical signs.
6. Ask students which reading provided a better understanding and why. Ask students how the first reading was different from the second reading. Point out, if it wasn't already mentioned, the typographical signs in the sentence and how you used them to help you provide the audience with a better understanding of the sentence.
7. Invite students to read with a partner and try to *find the signs* in a self-selected text.
8. Have partners read aloud one sentence in which they found a sign, and have them tell what the sign indicated they needed to do when reading aloud.

## Classroom Conversations

Karen notices that some of her fourth-grade students are reading in a monotone voice and ignoring typographical cues. She wants to help her *developing ELLs* understand how authors use these typographical cues as signs to help the reader understand the meaning of the text. *For You Are a Kenyan Child* (Cunnane 2006) seems like a perfect choice because it has quotation marks, question marks, bold and italicized text in varying sizes, in addition to the typical commas and periods that her students encounter on a daily basis.

She opens the lesson by reading aloud using a loud voice for the large, bold print text and changing her voice to sound like different characters when reading words in quotation marks. After reading the book, she puts up an overhead transparency of the text and says, “I am going to read this two times, and I want you to be thinking about which reading gives you the best idea of what is happening in the story.” She first reads in a monotone voice without adhering to the typographical cues. The second reading includes different voices for the text found in quotations, rising intonation for the question mark, emotion for the exclamation mark, and special stress for the bold and enlarged text. Then she asks students, “Which reading provided a better understanding and why?” Saraya answers, “The second one was more exciting because you read it with voices.” Juan chimes in, “Yeah, the voices were cool, but I liked it when you shouted really loud when you called out their names.” Karen agrees and discusses how these typographical signs helped her understand how the author intended to convey meaning. She introduces and places a chart like Figure 5–2 on the wall for students to reference when needed.

Karen invites students to select a text with a partner. She asks students to find the signs in the text that help convey the author’s intended meaning while they read aloud with their partner. Students are invited to share one sentence in which they find a sign and tell the class what the sign indicates they needed to do while reading. Karen closes the lesson by saying, “Now that you know that authors use signs to help you understand the story, you can use these clues while reading in small groups, partners, or individually.”

## Terrific Texts for *Find the Signs*

| Title  | Author (Last, First)              | Publisher/Year          | ISBN          |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| <i>The Queen of Style</i>                            | Buehner, Caralyn<br>Buehner, Mark | Dial/2008               | 9780803728783 |
| <i>Hurry! Hurry!</i>                                 | Bunting, Eve                      | Harcourt/2007           | 9780152054106 |
| <i>For You Are a Kenyan Child</i>                    | Cunnane, Kelly                    | Atheneum/2006           | 9780689861949 |
| <i>Rainy Day!</i>                                    | Lakin, Patricia                   | Dial/2007               | 9780803730922 |
| <i>The Cardboard Piano</i>                           | Perkins, Lynne                    | Greenwillow/2008        | 9780061542657 |
| <i>Cat &amp; Mouse</i>                               | Schoenherr, Ian                   | Greenwillow/2008        | 9780061363139 |
| <i>Gobble Gobble Crash! A Barnyard Counting Bash</i> | Stiegemeier, Julie                | Dutton/2008             | 9780525479598 |
| <i>Roadwork</i>                                      | Sutton, Sally                     | Candlewick/2008         | 9780763639129 |
| <i>Frederick Finch, Loudmouth</i>                    | Weaver, Tess                      | Clarion/2008            | 9780618452392 |
| <i>Booming Bella</i>                                 | Williams, Carol                   | G.P. Putnam's Sons/2008 | 9780399242779 |

## Winning Websites

<http://teachers.net/lessonplans/posts/3595.html> has lesson plans about the Amazon that include a *Find the Signs* activity.

[www.songsforteaching.com/grammarpunctuationspelling/punctuation/periodquestionmarkcommacolonastropheexclamation.htm](http://www.songsforteaching.com/grammarpunctuationspelling/punctuation/periodquestionmarkcommacolonastropheexclamation.htm) links to a song that helps teach punctuation marks.

[www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson\\_view.asp?id=260](http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=260) provides a lesson plan using Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" to demonstrate how much meaning is carried through punctuation marks.

## Handy Hints

1. Instead of presenting the students with a chart like Figure 5–2, have students create their own class chart of typographical signs that they know and find in their own reading.
2. Copy the classroom chart like Figure 5–2, but omit the examples. Have students do a *find the signs* search during their next reading, using the chart like a cloze activity. With a partner, they can try to find examples in their self-selected text of as many signs as possible.
3. Provide students with a passage that is missing all typographical signs. Ask them to work in small groups to add signs to make the passage more meaningful. Have groups share their completed passage with the class to compare how the passage could be interpreted differently when typographical signs are not present.

# Get the Picture

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## Instructional Information

*Imaging* (Chamot and O'Malley 1994) is a strategy that helps students create a mental image of text to support their comprehension and understanding. The teacher facilitates the initial creation of mental images (also called visualizations, mind movies, pictures in your head) by selecting and reading a text or portion of a text that will assist students in being able to imagine the scene being described. Students can describe or illustrate their mental image of a scene or summary from the teacher-selected passage. The focus on creating and describing mental images allows not only for nonthreatening and authentic uses of English but also for engaging opportunities for interactions and scaffolding surrounding strategy use.

Researchers investigating reading comprehension have reported findings that proficient readers use imaging while poor readers do not (Irwin 1991). Because of these findings, Herrell and Jordan (2008) recommend imaging as one of fifty suggested strategies for teaching ELLs. For *expanding ELLs*, use *Get the Picture* with a variety of text genres to encourage the use of mental imaging to enhance comprehension.

## Savvy Suggestions

1. Select a text that provides language to encourage vivid imaging.
2. Tell students that you are going to start with one scene, so you want them to focus on creating a mental image from the short passage you are going to read.
3. Read a short passage.
4. Invite students to sketch on paper the image that they see in their mind. Have students describe their sketches before showing them to a partner and discussing similarities and differences.
5. Read the next short passage.

6. Ask partners to describe and compare their mental image without drawing a sketch.
7. Continue using steps 5 and 6 for the remainder of the activity.
8. Remind students to use imaging in their daily reading because it will help them to comprehend the text and to enjoy it, too.

## Classroom Conversations

Understanding the strengths and needs of her *expanding ELLs*, Katey uses her small-group reading time for strategy instruction and practice in her third-grade classroom. This week she decides to teach imaging because she knows it is a strategy that proficient readers use to help with comprehension. *Imagine a Place* (Thomson 2008) is perfect to use with the *Get the Picture* strategy because of its emphasis on imagination and vivid descriptions that lend themselves to mental imagery.

Katey opens the lesson by saying, “Strong readers create mental pictures or movies in their minds as they read. Today we are going to use *Imagine a Place* to help us *Get the Picture* in our minds. I will read you a short passage, and I want you to make a picture in your mind.” Katey reads the first page and then asks students to sketch their mental images. Students describe their image to a partner and then compare sketches. She walks around the room to observe and interact with the partners. All the sketches are different and students are describing and comparing. Katey reads the next short passage, “Imagine a place . . . where water is solid, light is liquid, sky a frozen river flowing under your feet.” After giving students a moment to visualize, she tells them, “Turn to your partner and describe the picture you created in your head.” As she walks around she hears Kareem say, “I see myself walking through clouds like grass on the dark frozen river in the sky.” Anastacia replies, “Me too, but I also see the sun turning into drops like rain!” Katey and the third graders continue in this manner until the book is finished and she closes the lesson by saying, “Good readers create mental pictures when they’re reading to help them comprehend. Today, you learned how to do that too! We will

continue practicing this next time with our partners. Remember that making movies and pictures in your mind is something you can always be doing when you read. The pictures you create should help you understand the story.”

**123**  
Using Oral  
Reading with  
Expanding Language  
Learners (Level 4)

**Terrific Texts for *Get the Picture***

| Title  | Author (Last, First) | Publisher/Year                   | ISBN          |
|--|----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| <i>You Can, Toucan, Math: Word Problem-Solving Fun</i> | Adler, David         | Holiday House/2006               | 9780823421176 |
| <i>Soup for Breakfast</i>                              | Brown, Calef         | Houghton Mifflin/2008            | 9780618916412 |
| <i>The Girl Who Drew a Phoenix</i>                     | Demi                 | Margaret K. McElderry Books/2008 | 9781416953470 |
| <i>What’s Under the Bed?</i>                           | Fenton, Joe          | Simon & Schuster/2008            | 9781416949435 |
| <i>Bow Wow Meow Meow: It’s Rhyming Cats and Dogs</i>   | Florian, Douglas     | Harcourt/2003                    | 9780152163952 |
| <i>Wonderful Words</i>                                 | Hopkins, Lee Bennett | Simon & Schuster/2004            | 9780689835889 |
| <i>A Is for Art: An Abstract Alphabet</i>              | Johnson, Stephen T.  | Paula Wiseman Books/2008         | 9780689863011 |
| <i>Racer Dogs</i>                                      | Kolar, Bob           | Dutton/2003                      | 9780525459392 |
| <i>Punk Wig</i>  | Ries, Lori           | Boyds Mills Press/2008           | 9781590784860 |
| <i>Imagine a Place</i>                                 | Thomson, Sarah L.    | Atheneum/2008                    | 9781416968023 |

**Winning Websites**

**[www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson\\_view.asp?id=797](http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=797)**  
includes a lesson using a visualizing strategy to help synthesize information.

**[http://primary-school-curriculum.suite101.com/article.cfm/nonfiction\\_text\\_features](http://primary-school-curriculum.suite101.com/article.cfm/nonfiction_text_features)** provides ideas for using visualization to teach comparisons and nonfiction text features.

**[http://reading.ecb.org/teacher/visualizing/visual\\_teachingtips.html](http://reading.ecb.org/teacher/visualizing/visual_teachingtips.html)** provides great teaching tips for imaging.

## Handy Hints

1. Instead of stopping after each passage and asking for a scene description, read the entire book. Then, ask students to illustrate or describe a mental image they created to summarize the text.
2. Use this strategy with poetry or nonfiction to encourage students to visualize new and unfamiliar information.
3. Ask students to describe their mental image using a minimum of five adjectives.
4. Imaging can be used across curricular areas including math, science, writing, music, social studies, etc. For example, this strategy can be used with word problems during math. Ask the students to close their eyes and create a mental picture of the items or objects involved in the problem. Students can then describe and solve the problem mentally or draw a sketch to illustrate the mental picture created from the word problem.

# *Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)*

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## **Instructional Information**

Even students at the *bridging* level, who can express themselves fluently in both everyday and academic settings, may need practice with making predictions as they read. *Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)* is a strategy that boosts reading comprehension by making transparent how proficient readers make and confirm predictions while they read (Diaz-Rico 2008). Similar to the *DLTA* found in the previous chapter, Stauffer (1975) reported that *DRTA* was an effective method for using prior knowledge to improve reading comprehension, schema, and thinking skills. The *DRTA* is facilitated by teacher support before, during, and after reading to provide a model of active questioning that students will eventually be able to carry out independently without teacher scaffolding (Peregoy and Boyle 2008).

The *DRTA* is a great activity to help teach reading for meaning. It is carried out in the same manner as the *DLTA* except students read the text to themselves instead of listening *to it*. Because of the increased proficiency at the *bridging* level, these ELLs are ready for a more challenging activity in which they have to focus on the strategy, *making predictions*, and simultaneously read the text.

## **Savvy Suggestions** *(based on Stauffer 1975)*

1. Select the text you want the students to read. While previewing the text, make note of logical stopping points for the readers to make predictions and have discussions.
2. Discuss and activate students' schema related to the topic or book that they are going to read.

3. Ask students to make predictions based on the title and cover illustration.
4. Establish a purpose for reading.
5. Have students read the text that you have selected. Be specific by giving students a designated stopping point to confirm or change their predictions and make predictions for the next text segment.
6. Discuss their confirmations, modifications, and new predictions for the next text selection as a class before giving them the next stopping point. Continue in this manner.
7. Have students summarize the text in some way. This can be an oral summary, an illustration, or a written statement.
8. Remind students that thinking and making predictions are necessary for understanding a text when they are reading.

## Classroom Conversations

Holly selects *Chee-Lin: A Giraffe's Journey* (Rumford 2008) for a DRTA she designs for her fifth graders. She thinks *Chee-Lin*, a story based on the life of a real giraffe's travels from Africa to Bengal to China, will be an ideal text because of its logical connection to their world geography unit and naturally occurring stopping points of storybook chapters. Knowing that *bridging ELLs* have a strong command over technical and academic vocabulary, Holly wants to focus on helping students acquire and use reading comprehension strategies independently during their reading. The strategy focus she envisions being most beneficial today is *making predictions*. In preparation for the lesson, she makes copies of world maps for each student. Students will be using the map to document Chee-Lin's travels and the people he meets along his journey. To activate schema and establish a purpose for reading she says, "We have been studying world geography and how to read maps, so this book will be a great way to use what we already know to help our comprehension when reading about Chee-Lin's journey. Judging by the title and cover illustration, what do you think this story will be about? Take a moment to think about it and share your ideas with your partner." Once partners have shared, Holly asks for volunteers.

Andres shares, “I think it will be about a giraffe that travels around the world in a circus.”

“I think it will be about a giraffe’s journey to find his home because the title says it is about a giraffe’s journey,” says Amina.

Holly responds by asking students, “Where do you think Chee-Lin will go on his journey? Sketch the route you think Chee-Lin will take using dashed lines with their pencil. Make sure to add the dashed line to a key at the bottom and label it *initial predicted route*.”

Holly asks for volunteers to come to the map displayed on the overhead transparency and share their predicted route with the class. Manuel comes to the overhead and explains, “Well, I think the giraffe will start in Asia and then end up somewhere crazy like Antarctica.” He sketches his route on the overhead using dashed lines, and Holly calls on the next volunteer to share their predictions.

After the sharing, Holly asks students to read the first page, which reveals that the Chinese found Chee-Lin in Africa. She asks students, “Were you correct? Did you have Chee-Lin’s journey starting in Africa? Africa is a big continent; think about where in Africa you want to start your second predicted route.” She asks students to use a blue-colored pencil to start a new predicted route for Chee-Lin and reminds them to add the new color to the key and mark it *second predicted route*. Holly continues in this manner throughout the first ten pages. In closing, Holly encourages volunteers to help her review Chee-Lin’s journey to this point. She then says, “Today you did a lot of thinking, reading, predicting, and checking predictions. Analyzing your predicted routes and changing them to fit the story shows that you were comprehending what you were reading. You can make predictions before and during your independent reading to help you better understand the text.”

### Terrific Texts for *DRTA*

| Title                            | Author (Last, First) | Publisher/Year     | ISBN          |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| <i>The Moon over Star</i>        | Aston, Dianna        | Dial/2008          | 9780803731073 |
| <i>Pirates of the Underwhere</i> | Hale, Bruce          | HarperCollins/2008 | 9780060851286 |
| <i>Bird Lake Moon</i>            | Henkes, Kevin        | Greenwillow/2008   | 9780061470769 |

| Title                                    | Author (Last, First) | Publisher/Year                | ISBN          |
|--|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| <i>Seekers: The Quest Begins</i>         | Hunter, Erin         | HarperCollins/2008            | 9780060871222 |
| <i>Night of the Moon</i>                 | Khan, Hena           | Chronicle/2008                | 9780811860628 |
| <i>The Dragon Tree</i>                   | Langton, Jane        | HarperCollins/2008            | 9780060823412 |
| <i>The Mystery of the Martello Tower</i> | Lanthier, Jennifer   | Laura Geringer Books/<br>2006 | 9780061257124 |
| <i>T4</i>                                | LeZotte, Anne        | Houghton Mifflin/2008         | 9780547046846 |
| <i>Rosa, Sola</i>                        | Martino, Carmela     | Candlewick/2005               | 9780763623951 |
| <i>Chee-Lin: A Giraffe's Journey</i>     | Rumford, James       | Houghton Mifflin/2008         | 9780618717200 |

## Winning Websites

**<http://teachers.net/lessonplans/posts/2259.html>** provides a *DRTA* lesson plan using work of Edgar Allan Poe.

**[www.philtulga.com/Prediction.html](http://www.philtulga.com/Prediction.html)** has a prediction game certain to entice students.

**[www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/tools/index.htm](http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/tools/index.htm)** includes a graphic organizer for making predictions, revisiting, and modifying them.

## Handy Hints

1. The *DRTA* was traditionally used with narrative texts. However, Peregoy and Boyle (2008) recommend that *DRTA* be used with expository texts. Teachers can model how to make predictions using headings and bold or italicized print.
2. *DRTA* can also be done in small groups or with partners. Students read the selected text to themselves seated with others in small groups or with partners before discussing their predictions, confirmations, and modifications. After the discussion, the students can vote on the most likely prediction from the group and use that to share out and discuss with the entire class.



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