

## Oral Language, Oral Comprehension & Indigenous Storytelling

Supporting reading comprehension and honouring First Peoples' voices & stories, in and beyond the classroom

Thursday, April 27, 2023

8:30 am – 2:30 pm

Presenters:

Lisa Thomas & Jen Kelly

# Shape of the Day

- 8:30am – Refreshments, Getting Settled to Get Started
- 8:45–10:30am
  - ✓ Welcome, acknowledgement, connections
  - ✓ Oral Comprehension & Oral Language
    - ✓ Building a strong foundation for reading comprehension
- 10:45–12:00pm
  - ✓ Indigenous texts to support oral storytelling & FPPL
  - ✓ Routines to support intentional talk throughout the day
- 12:45–2:30pm
  - ✓ High-leverage instructional routines for language development
  - ✓ School teams will each share stories of your learning journeys this year
  - ✓ Reflections & Next Steps – key takeaways

# Your Padlet Resources

SD 73 Padlet

POPEY • 1m  
**SD73's Inquiry Project: Thursday, April 27th - Henry Grube Education Centre - 245 Kitchener Crescent / 8:30am-2:30pm**  
Resources for POPEY's Inquiry Project with SD73: Building Reading & Writing Foundations: Comprehensive K-3 Literacy Instruction

**HANDOUTS and the Shape of the Day**

SD73 Workshop Handouts - April 27th

POPEY  
Workshop Handouts

April 27th workshop handouts

Session 4:  
**Oral Language, Oral Comprehension & Indigenous Storytelling in Comprehensive K-3 Literacy Instruction**

Click on either link to access the PDF handouts:

[Print Handout](#)

[Electronic Handout](#)

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Archived Handouts  
Session 3 - January 2023

**Articles Shared**

Talk Science Primer: What is academically productive talk?

Talk Science Primer

PDF

Article by Tim Rasinski

WHY READING FLUENCY SHOULD BE HOT!

PDF

Why Reading Fluency Should Be Hot!

From the Research

**Videos Shared**

A 3 year old tells a story

Three Year Old Claire Tells a Story

YouTube

Hands-Down Dialogue: Micro-Lesson

Dialogue Micro-Lesson in Ms. Friend's First-Grade Class

YouTube

Mirrors, Windows & Sliding Glass Doors

YouTube

**Additional Resources**

Authentic First Peoples Resources - First Nations Education Steering Committee FNESC

BCTF: Aboriginal Education

Aboriginal Education

Oracy in the Classroom - Edutopia

Oracy in the Classroom: Strategies for Effective Talk

YouTube

Something to Talk About - Podcast

**Student Activities**

The Conversation Station

BALANCED LITERACY DIET

oise.utoronto.ca

BALANCEDLITERACYDIET :: Index :: Balanced Literacy Diet

POPEY's Word Work Charts

BRITISH COLUMBIA Ministry of Education and Child Care

popey.ca

Word Work

Printable short and long vowel charts, vowel teams, blends and digraphs, and more...

POPEY's Language Games

Language Games to Support Phonological Awareness

PDF

POPEY's collection of Language

# How do you take care of yourself...?

Find 3 people from different schools to make a group of 4, and then take turns to answer one of these Q's:

1

How do you carve out 'me time' during the work day, and what do you do?

2

How do you unwind & recharge after work?

3

How do you care for yourself when you've had a stressful day?

4

What morning routine helps you prepare emotionally for the day?

5

How do you make time for exercise, and what kind of exercise do you like to do?

6

What do you do with your friends or family that re-energizes you?

*With your group, reflect and discuss...*

*...the goal areas you identified at our last session*

- \* What did you notice about your teaching?
- \* What did you notice about your students' learning?
- \* What are your thoughts moving forward?



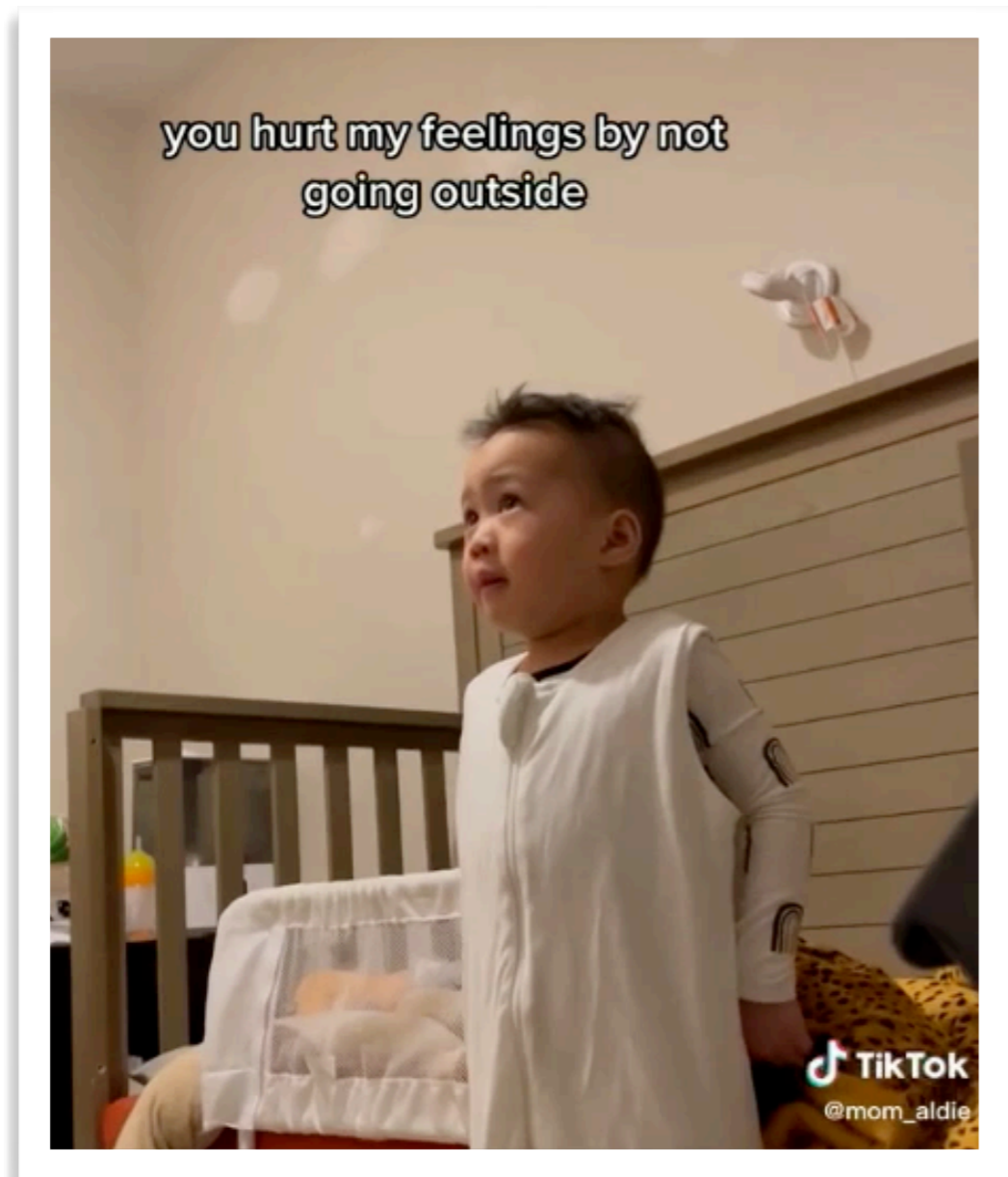
# *Rethinking how reading comprehension begins*

By listening comprehension, we are not referring to how well children follow directions or to how well they can sit for us to offer long explanations. We are referring, instead, to their capacity to understand spoken language. This capacity develops through conversation, through hearing and sharing personal stories, and through interactions with rich texts.

Listening comprehension

– which is built through language interaction –  
is, after all, an essential precondition of reading comprehension.

# What does this little boy comprehend & communicate?



This is 4 year old Aldie,  
from Prince George

How could his thinking, listening,  
and language competencies  
help support his eventual  
reading comprehension?

What skills is he  
already mastering?

How do you think he's  
learned all of this?

## Thoughts from Aldie's mom...

- communication
- express thoughts and feelings
- give them time and space to talk
- ask them questions
- model talking about feelings
- recognize & encourage them

How can we support our students' thinking, listening, and language competencies throughout the school day?

What roles do prior knowledge and vocabulary play in our students' comprehension?

What about modelling and mirroring?



# *Rethinking how reading comprehension begins*

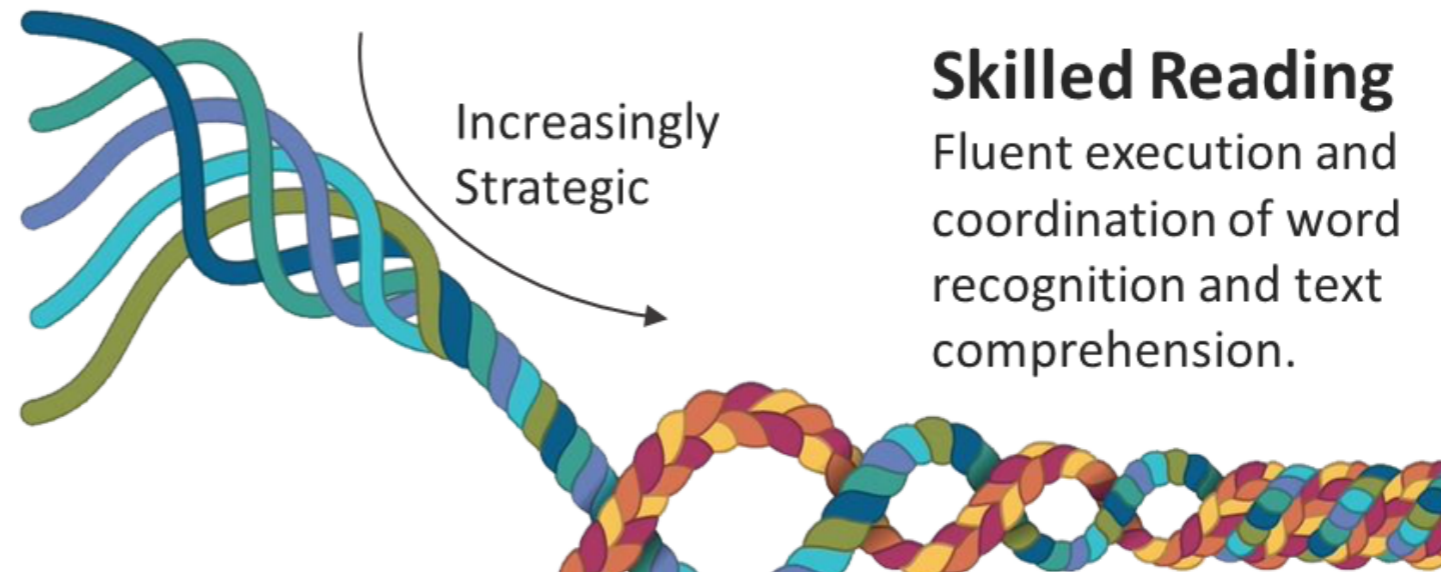
“Listening comprehension happens at a speed that makes lightning look like molasses. Again, given exposure and practice, all of this listening comprehension work comes relatively easy to us ... the work of listening for meaning, of retrieving vocabulary, of using context, of connecting ideas, and of monitoring for sense-making. We have literally been learning how to understand spoken language from the moment we were born. And all of this second-nature listening comprehension, which evolved through language interactions, comes full circle when we eventually use this same language to comprehend what we read.”

# Scarborough's Reading Rope

Language comprehension skills are a critical thread for reading success

## Language Comprehension

- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge



## Skilled Reading

Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

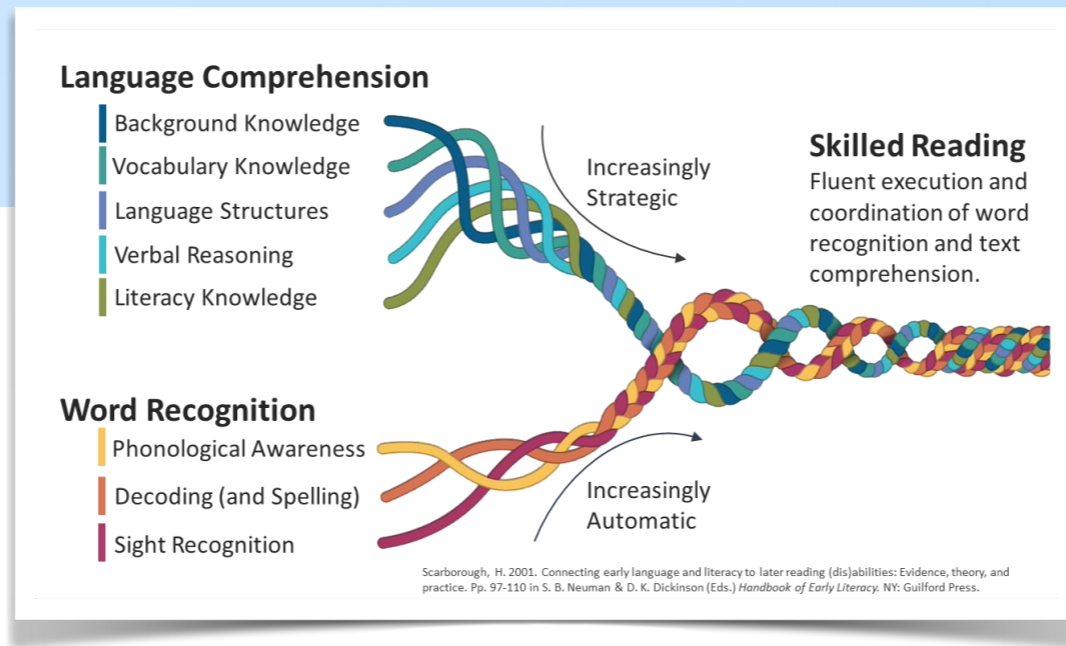
## Word Recognition

- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition



Scarborough, H. 2001. Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. Pp. 97-110 in S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.) *Handbook of Early Literacy*. NY: Guilford Press.





“Being strong on the lower strands affords more opportunities to acquire knowledge of the upper strands and being strong on the upper strands has been shown to enable faster and more accurate decoding of unfamiliar words.

Therefore, if any of the strands gets frayed, it can hold back development of the other strands and by extension can eventually weaken the entire rope.”

# *A three-year-old telling a story*

What does she already understand  
about the elements of a story?



# Why is talk so important?

- ✓ Talk provides a window into student thinking
- ✓ Talk supports robust learning by boosting memory, providing richer associations, and supporting language development
- ✓ Talk supports deeper reasoning and encourages students to reason with evidence
- ✓ Talk primes students in scientific thinking
- ✓ Talk supports the development of social skills and encourages risk-taking with huge payoffs for learning

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If they can't say it, they won't be able to  
read or write it. - Marie Clay

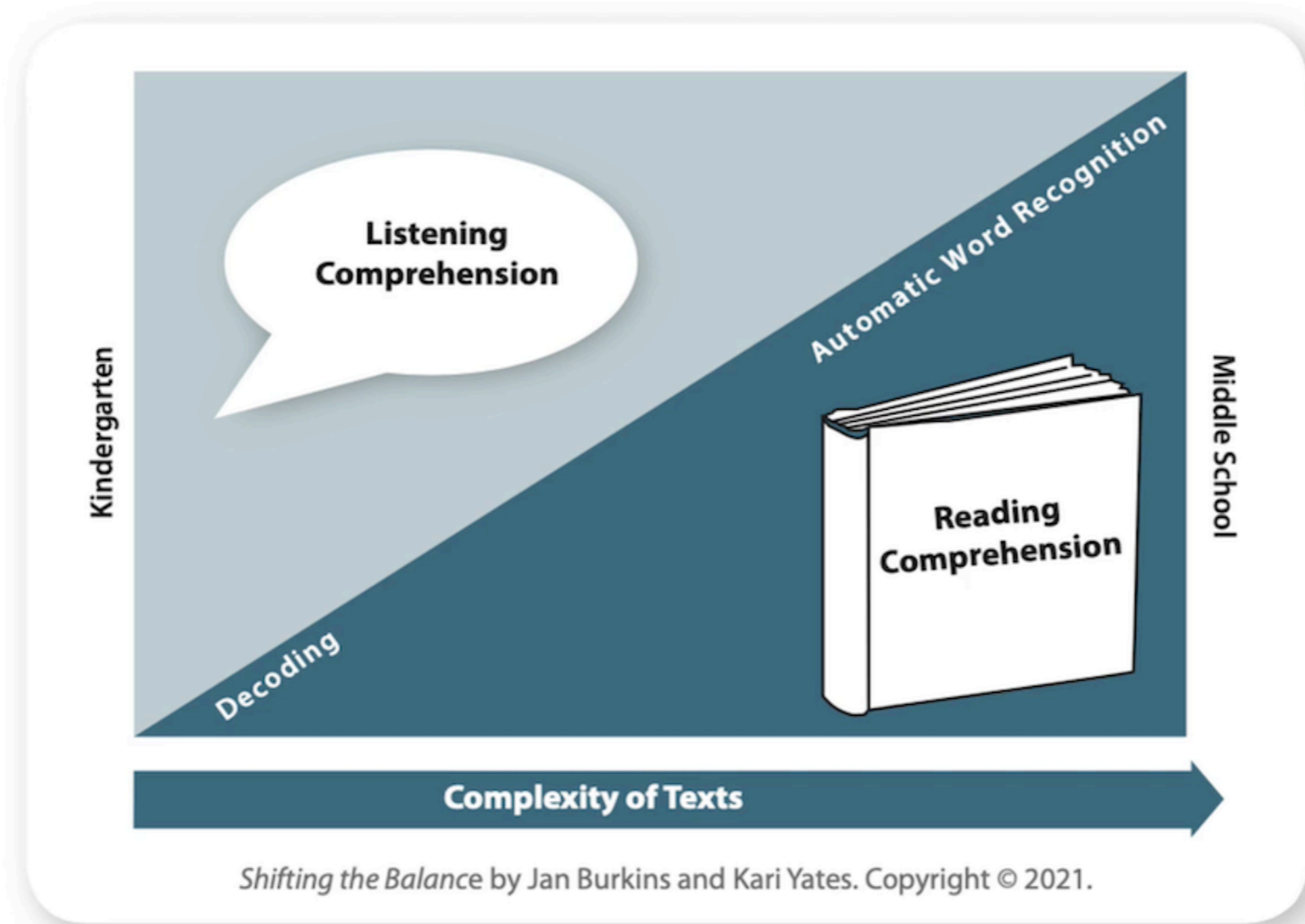
# *The Importance of Language Comprehension*



Our full capacity to  
understand the language  
all around us

# Listening Comprehension & Reading Comprehension

Access to Complex Language and Opportunities for Deep Thinking



Conversations with our students are an investment in their future reading comprehension

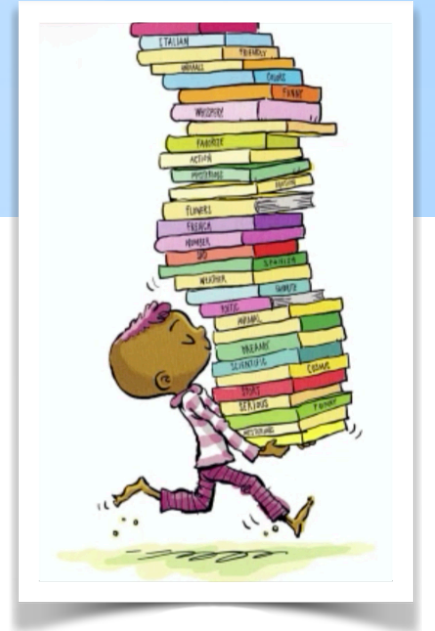
# Skilled Comprehenders Use These Strategies

- \* connecting to prior knowledge – **schemas**
- \* self-questioning – ask themselves **questions** about the text
  - an essential component of **planning** to understand a text
- \* predicting – using **prior knowledge** and **clues** from text to make **hypotheses** about the text **content**
- \* using text **structure** – organize text information to make **meaning**
- \* visualizing – mental **imagery** to remember information from texts
- \* making inferences – **integrate** bits of info and fill in the **gaps**
- \* summarizing – **prioritize** the importance of info to get the ‘**gist**’
  - this requires **complex working memory** and **cognitive flexibility**

*We can explicitly model these comprehension skills and engage students in conversations that allow them to practice language comprehension.*

# Text Sets

Text sets are built around a particular topic or theme and represent a range of text complexity



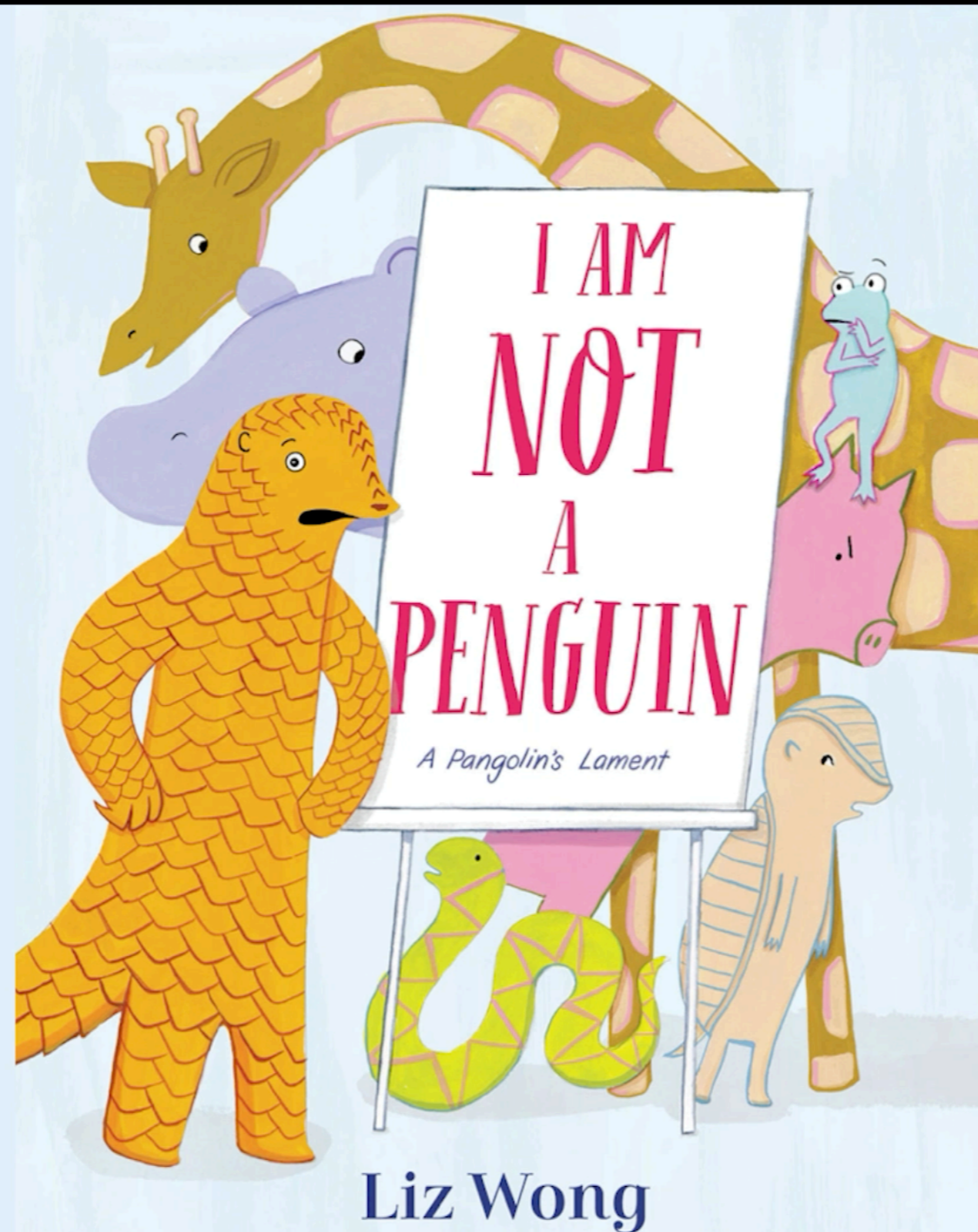
- \* Multiple entry points
- \* Expand vocabulary around key topic
- \* Share knowledge among many different sources of information
- \* Multiple sources to look for answers to questions
- \* Students understand that there are multiple angles to consider
- \* Conversation creates a community of curious learners

Students engage in co-construction of new knowledge about a topic.

## Information Source: Video

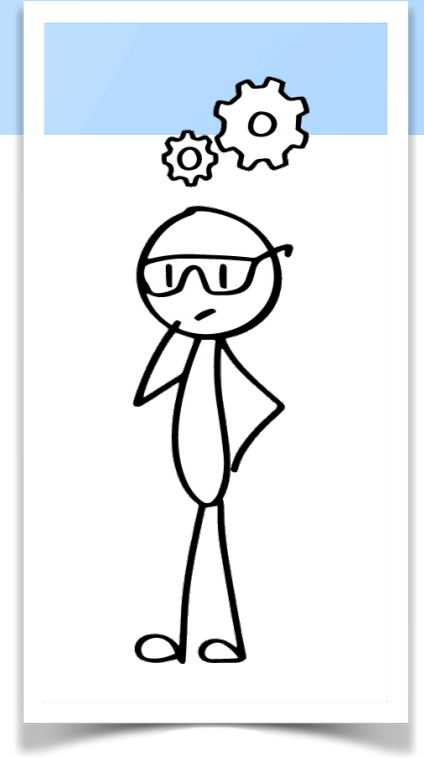


# Information Source: Fiction Text Read-Aloud



# Hands Down Conversations

- \* A short history of hand raising (IRE):
  - ♦ Initiate (Teacher)
  - ♦ Respond (Student)
  - ♦ Evaluate (Teacher) right or wrong



*Socioeconomic level and achievement level is predictive of participation in classroom conversation*

*Question: How can we ensure students feel free and safe to join conversations?*


# Hands Down Conversations

What are they?


1. No hand raising. Listen for a place to slide your voice into the conversation.
2. One voice at a time (more or less)
3. Listen closely to the person speaking



*Snakes are dangerous*



*Disagree      Neutral      Agree*



*Video games are bad for kids*

*Kristy*

*Sean*

*Maddie*

*Video games are good for kids*

*Lynn*

*Bren*

# Your Turn! Having a Hands-Down Conversation

3 minutes

Partner up with another school team.

Choose a topic of discussion – your choice or one of these:

- your favourite kinds of ... *books, movies, food, holidays, music...*

Someone step up to get the conversation started, and then...

1. No hand raising.  
Listen for a place to slide your voice into the conversation.
2. One voice at a time (more or less)
3. Listen closely to the person speaking
4. Can you invite someone quiet into the conversation?

*What was that experience like for you? Noticings? Differences?*

# What do I need to know about First Peoples stories?

Story is one of the main methods of traditional Indigenous learning and teaching. Combining story and experience is a powerful strategy that has always been used and continues to be used by First Peoples, and its power can also be brought into the classroom.

Stories enable holistic learning. They meld values, concepts, protocol, practices, and facts into narratives. Stories also develop important skills of listening and thinking.



Artwork: Roy Henry Vickers – Great Escape – [Roy Henry Vickers Gallery](https://royhenryvickers.com/)

# *What do I need to know about First Peoples stories?*

## Purposes and Forms

Different stories have different purposes.

Traditional and contemporary First Peoples stories are told for:

- \* teaching – life lessons, community responsibilities, rites of passage, etc.
- \* sharing creation stories
- \* recording personal, family, and community histories
- \* “mapping” the geography and resources of an area
- \* ensuring cultural continuity (e.g., knowledge of ancestors, language)
- \* healing
- \* entertainment

- \* Indigenous cultures pass **knowledge** from generation to generation through an oral tradition.
- \* Storytelling is an important activity in Indigenous cultures.
- \* Participation in Indigenous storytelling and other group activities requires **effective** and **responsible** listening behaviours.
- \* Indigenous peoples create create stories, poems, plays, and legends based on specific **themes**.
- \* Many Indigenous stories, poems, plays, and legends have been written down and published by Indigenous authors.

# *What do I need to know about First Peoples stories?*

Although First Peoples worldviews vary from community to community, the following elements have a place within the worldviews of many First Peoples:

- connection with the land and environment
- the nature and place of spirituality as an aspect of wisdom
- the nature of knowledge – who holds it, what knowledge is valued
- the role of Elders and knowledge-keepers
- the relationships between individual, family, and community
- the importance of the oral tradition
- the experience of colonization and decolonization (e.g., residential schools, the reserve system, land claims)
- humour and its role

# Aboriginal Ways of Knowing and Being



Learning is connected to land, culture, and spirit.

We – the two-legged, four-legged, finned and feathered, plants and rocks – are all related. We must always practice reciprocity through acts of giving and receiving.

Learning honours our Ancestors, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Descendants.

It respects and embraces ceremony, protocol, and teachings that are connected to the sacred medicines including tobacco, cedar, sage, and sweetgrass. Important teachings emerge through stories.

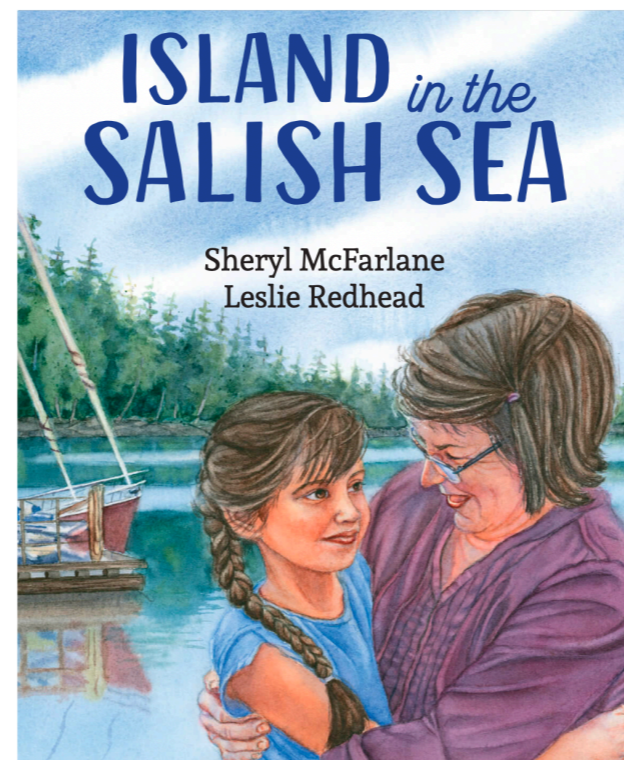
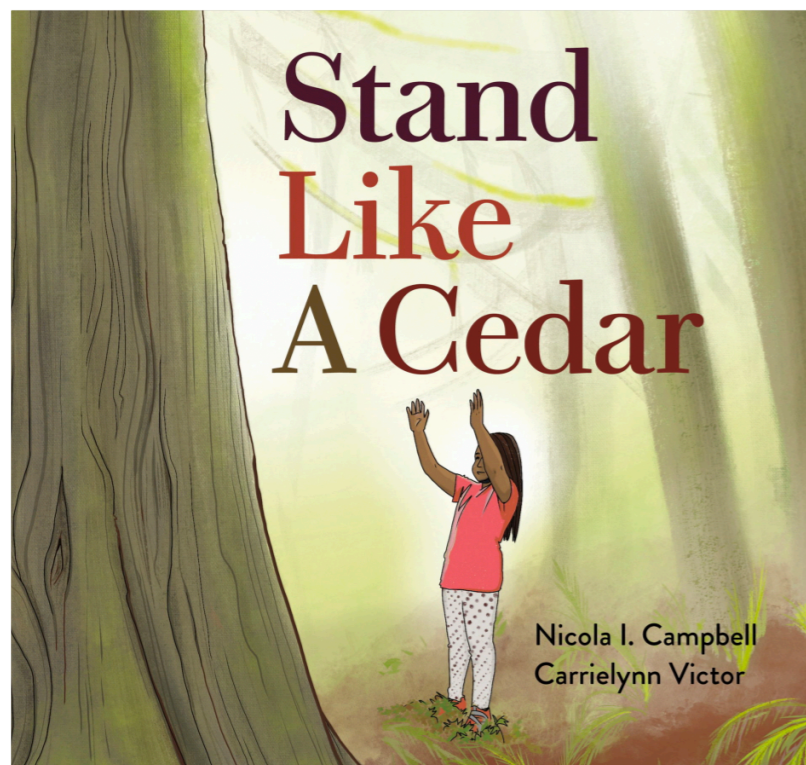
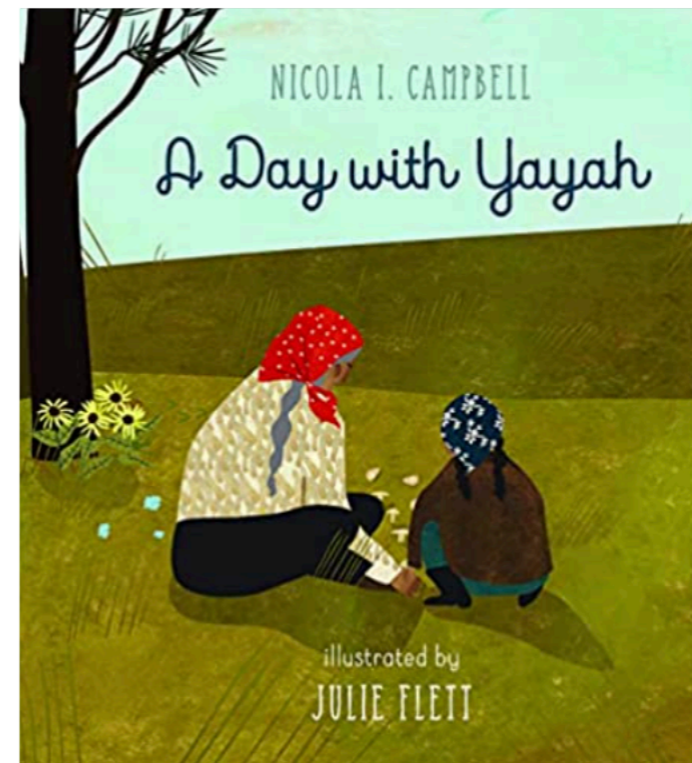
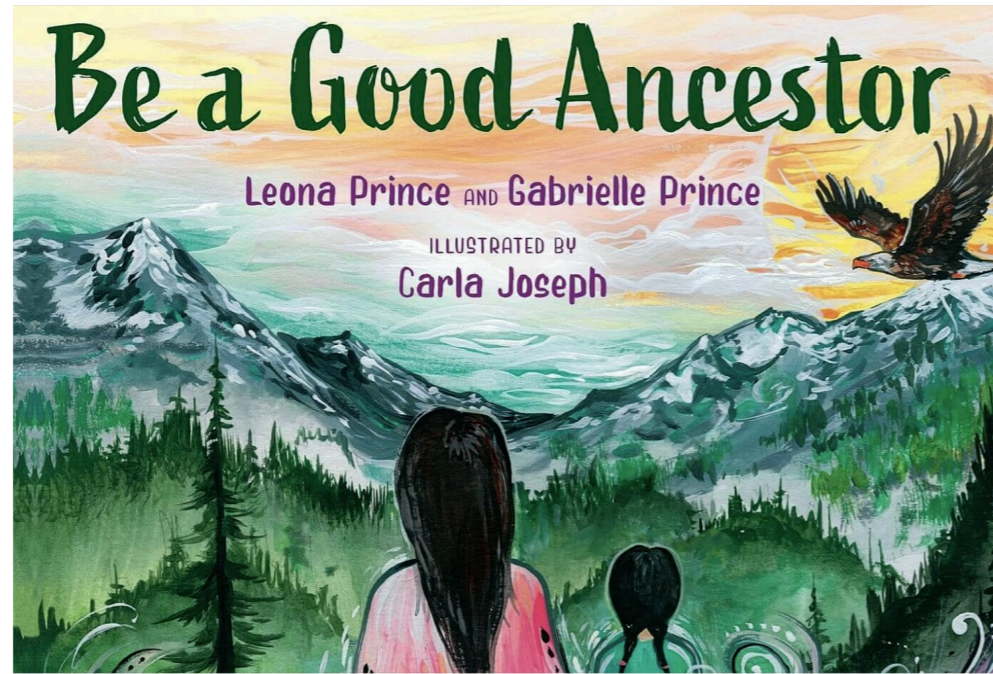
Learning involves developing relationships, respecting distinct cultures, and honouring the perspective of others in our communities.

The deepest learning takes place through lived experience. It requires exploring our identities, learning from our mistakes, and having gratitude for our gifts.

Learning is a journey that takes courage, patience and humility.

It is about striving to become a better human being and living with balance in body, mind, heart and spirit.

# Let's Discuss: Stories with Indigenous Perspectives



## *Let's Discuss:* Stories with Indigenous Perspectives

Partner up with another school team and...

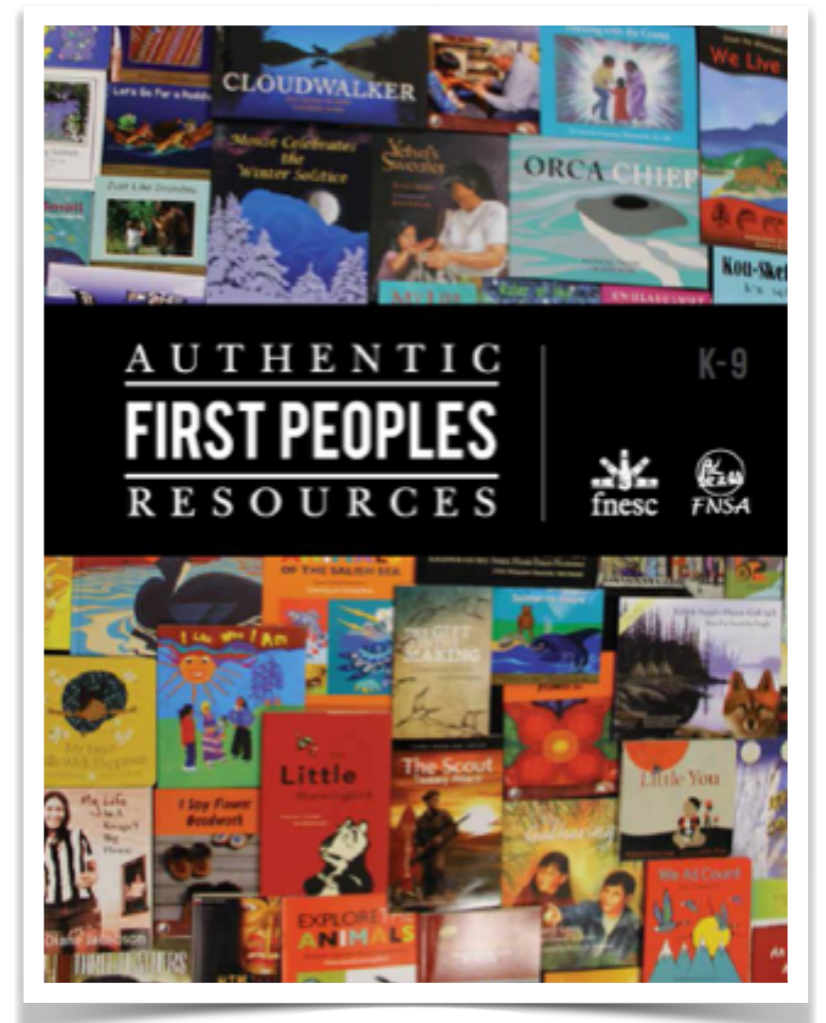
- \* Read your book together
- \* Discuss the ways your story is connected to Aboriginal Ways of Knowing and Being
- \* How would you use this book in your classroom?
  - \* What **questions** would you ask?
  - \* What **concepts** would you discuss?
  - \* What **connections** could you make for your students?
  - \* Could you do any **further learning** around this **topic/theme**?

*Share your ideas with the rest of the group*

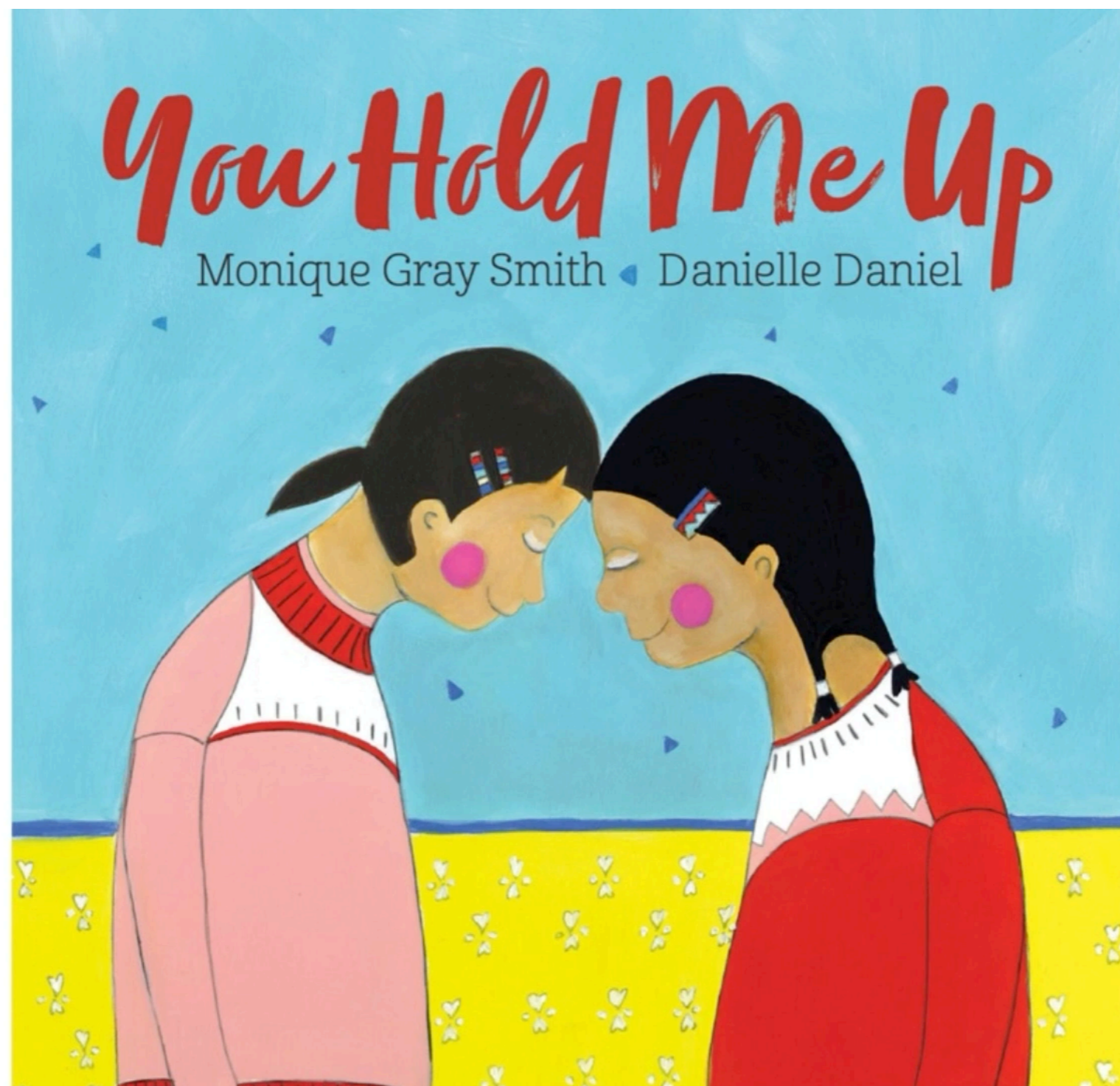
# Why is it important to use authentic resources?

An increased use of authentic First Peoples resources will benefit all students in BC:

- Indigenous students will see themselves, their families, their cultures, and their experiences represented as being valued and respected.
- Non-Indigenous students will gain a better understanding of and appreciation for the significance of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples and cultures within the historical and contemporary fabric of this province.



# You Hold Me Up



## *Windows, Mirrors & Sliding Glass Doors*

Can all of our students see themselves in the stories we choose to read & tell?



Rudine Sims Bishop

Professor Emerita  
Ohio State University

¡Colorín  
colorado!

# Supporting a Classroom of Talkers AND Listeners

Our students need...

- \* a sense of safety, joy and belonging in the classroom
- \* a classroom culture of appreciation and respect
- \* time to talk (built into their daily schedule)
- \* a balance of partner talk, small group talk, whole class talk
- \* demonstrations of and practice with:
  - ♦ compliments – what they're noticing others do
  - ♦ asking questions and listening to answers
  - ♦ sharing their opinions, with reasons/evidence
  - ♦ oral rehearsal for what they're writing

*Question: Am I structuring and leading intentional conversations?*

# Supporting Intentional Conversations

Who's doing the work?

Engage students by having them respond to an **interesting statement**, instead of a yes/no question.

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At your tables, take turns choosing one question/statement and respond with your opinion and reason why, or an agree/disagree and reason why...

- ▶ Would you rather have a beach or mountain holiday? Why?
  - ▶ Non-fiction books are better than fiction books.
- ▶ Would you rather have a party or go on a trip? Why?
  - ▶ Would you rather watch a movie or a concert? Why?
    - ▶ Tigers are scarier than sharks.

### Preparation for whole class discussion:

- \* Students have the time to process, try-out, and strengthen their thinking
- \* Can be pre-planned when you have a pre-determined question to ask the class that may require time to process a response
- \* Can be spontaneous when too many voices are silent OR when too many voices are clamouring to be heard at once

Requires all children to get their thinking out, as they have an immediate responsibility to their partner.

# Revisiting Conversation Stations

Who's doing the work?

## Bringing in purposeful dialogue:

- \* students actively listen to each other
- \* interactions are driven by students
- \* educators have the opportunity to develop and expand students' language
- \* can have theme-based picture cards or photos that spark opinions or thoughts
- \* establishing rules about talking and listening can be discussed and developed with the whole class

# U Lead - Facilitation Cards

Routines to engage, connect,  
reflect & build community

- ★ Select a card that appeals to you – either the image or the text
- ★ Find someone you haven't yet talked to today
- ★ In partners, ask each other your questions
- ★ Look at the MOOD on your card – share what makes you feel that way... *e.g. I feel inspired when I am in nature*
- ★ What do you imagine is the setting of the photo on your card? Share your thoughts with your partner



# *Supporting Oral Language & Oral Comprehension*

Time spent on this is a **huge** investment in future reading comprehension.

Strong oral language can reduce the need for comprehension strategy instruction, so intentionally supporting oral language development in the classroom is important.

It is important that beginning readers have access to complex ideas through read-aloud, conversation, content area instruction, and other language-developing opportunities.

**Shift:**

Reading comprehension is fundamentally the same work as listening comprehension.

Reading comprehension actually involves translating the words on the page into spoken language and “listening to them,” either by saying them aloud or saying them in our heads.

So if children cannot understand enough of the words and sentences when they are spoken, they will not comprehend the same words and sentences when they read them.

This means that opportunities to grow **oral language** – including vocabulary, background knowledge, sentence structure, and more – actually develop the comprehension mechanisms of **reading**.

## **Shift:**

Treat oral language development as an essential ingredient for comprehension.

Gather what you need to support language comprehension:

### ✓ **Read-aloud texts**

- ★ choose texts that will stretch listening comprehension by providing exposure to rich ideas, wide vocabulary, background knowledge, and novel language structures

### ✓ **Text sets**

- ★ built around a particular topic/theme, representing a range of text complexity. These will provide multiple entry points for students to build background knowledge, acquire language structures, and expand vocabulary around key topics

### ✓ **A collection of high-leverage instructional routines**

- ★ for building and extending both intentional and incidental classroom conversations – including reading aloud and using interesting words

## *Shift:*

Treat oral language development as an essential ingredient for comprehension.

### High-leverage instructional routines for language development:

- ✓ Make space for planned and incidental conversation
- ✓ Ask quality questions
- ✓ Provide wait time
- ✓ Repeat and expand
- ✓ Use interesting words
- ✓ Read aloud
- ✓ Teach with text sets to build content area knowledge

# High-Leverage Instructional Routines

Routine, Purpose, Examples –  
the What, the Why, the How

## ✓ Make space for planned and incidental conversation

- ★ Leverage conversation throughout the day and give children practice articulating ideas, listening, adding on, and asking relevant questions
- ★ Examples:
  - Lets talk about...
  - This is so interesting. Let's talk more about it...
  - Tell us about what just happened.
  - Talk to your partner about...
  - Who wants to add on to \_\_\_\_?

## ✓ Ask quality questions

- ★ To ensure students have opportunities for higher-level thinking, such as describing, explaining, comparing, evaluating, and inferring.
- ★ Examples:
  - What do you think about...?
  - How are \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ alike or different?
  - Why do you think that is more important?
  - Explain what really happened.

# High-Leverage Instructional Routines

Routine, Purpose, Examples –  
the What, the Why, the How

## ✓ Provide wait time

- ★ To give children the time they need to process information, formulate thoughts, and organize their language to express their ideas
- ★ Examples:
  - *After posing a question, wait.*
  - (Silence)
  - I'll give you some time to think about what you want to say
  - Let your partner think.

## ✓ Repeat and expand

- ★ To reinforce, extend, and clarify student language
- ★ Examples:
  - *Wow, that's so interesting. You had...*
  - *So you...*
  - *I don't understand. Tell me more about...*

# High-Leverage Instructional Routines

## Routine, Purpose, Examples – the What, the Why, the How

### ✓ Use interesting words

- ★ To teach new vocabulary and encourage students to use it, and to teach children to notice and acquire new words
- ★ Examples:
  - Let's all be on the lookout for new and interesting words
  - Let's take some time to learn this powerful word.
  - Let's see if we can all find ways to use this word today.

### ✓ Read aloud

- ★ To introduce students to new vocabulary, to build background knowledge, to expose children to language and text structures, and to provide children with joyful experiences with books.
- ★ Examples:
  - Let's read this book to see what we can learn about ...
  - Let's read this sentence again and try to figure out what it means.
  - Why did you love this story?
  - What's working talking more about?
  - Tell the story to your partner in your own words.

# High-Leverage Instructional Routines

Routine, Purpose, Examples –  
the What, the Why, the How

- ✓ **Teach with text sets to build content area knowledge**
  - ★ To use text sets across read-aloud and shared, guided, and independent reading – including that in content area instruction – to build background knowledge and interest in a topic
  - ★ Examples:
    - Today we're going to learn more about \_\_\_\_\_ by reading \_\_\_\_\_.
    - Let's start a basket for all the books we are collecting about \_\_\_\_\_.
    - You'll be excited to find some of the same words and ideas from the other book(s) we've read. Tell us about the connections you find.

# Read & Discuss the Seven High-Leverage Instructional Routines

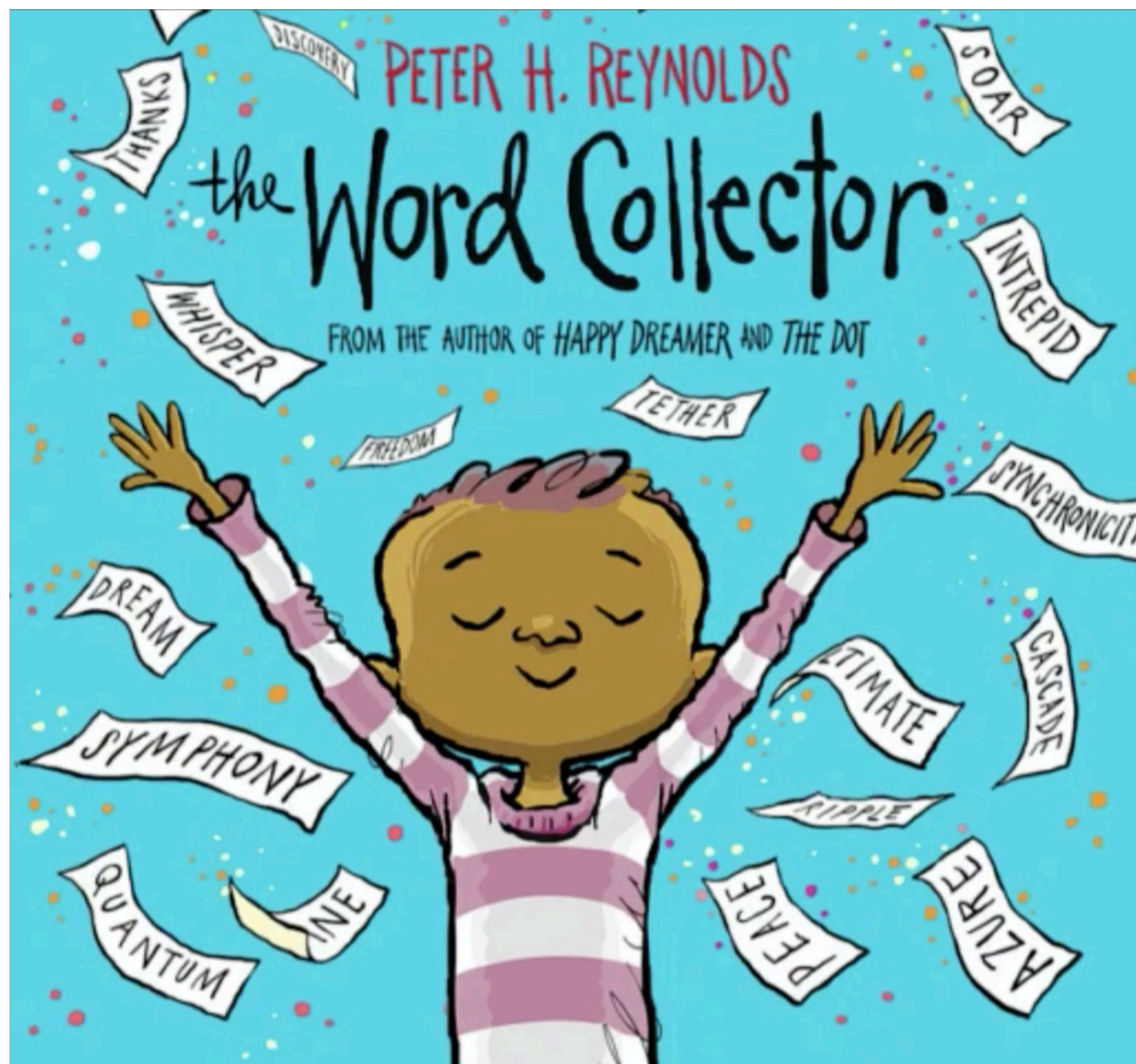
In your school groups, **read** the **handout** and **discuss** what these **seven routines** do or could look like in your classroom:

1. Make space for planned and incidental conversation
2. Ask quality questions
3. Provide wait time
4. Repeat and expand
5. Use interesting words
6. Read aloud
7. Teach with text sets to build content area knowledge



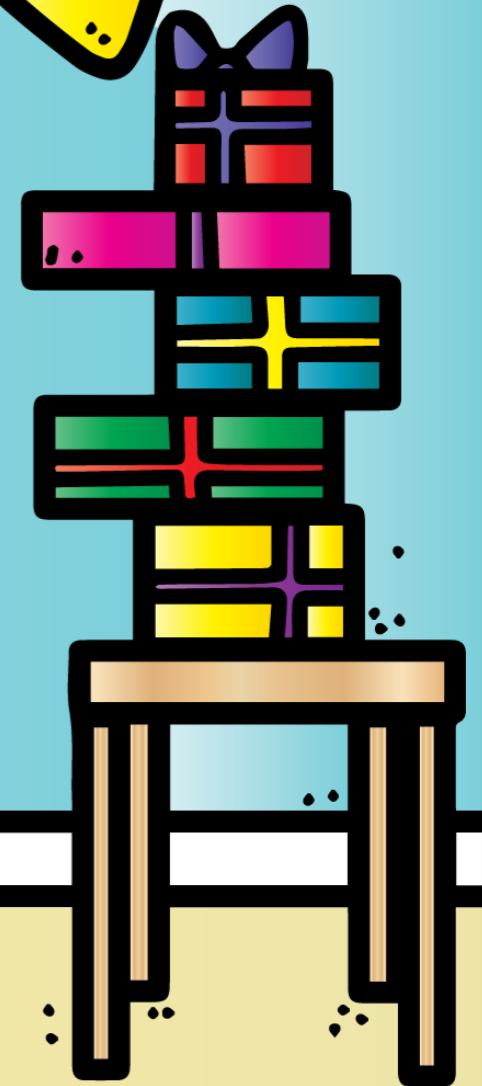
How can you intentionally support oral language development to maximize early listening comprehension in your classroom?

# The Transformative Power of Words



# *Celebration of Learning!*

Highlighting our literacy learning  
success from this school year





Lisa Thomas  
[lisa@popey.ca](mailto:lisa@popey.ca)



Jen Kelly  
[jen@popey.ca](mailto:jen@popey.ca)

# Sources

\*All resources available at your [SD 73 Padlet](#)

## Info Links

[Talk Science Primer by Sarah Michaels & Cathy O'Connor: TERC \(Technical Education Research Centers\)](#)

[In Our Own Words: Bringing Authentic First Peoples Content to the K-3 Classroom – FNEESC](#)

[First Peoples Principles of Learning – BCTF](#)

[Authentic First Peoples Resources K-9 – FNEESC](#)

[Something To Talk About](#), Stenhouse podcast

[Balanced Lit Diet](#) Conversation Stations

## Books & Presentations

Shifting the Balance – Burkins & Yates

Executive Skills & Reading Comprehension – Cartwright

Hands Down Speak Out – Wedekind & Thompson

Shared Learnings: Integrating BC Aboriginal Content K-10

Comprehension Through Conversation – Nichols

Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities – Scarborough

## Videos

[Tik Tok – Aldie's Emotions](#)

[Tik Tok – Aldie's Mom Reflects](#)

[Video: Q&A with Hollis Scarborough – YouTube](#)

[YouTube: Three Year Old Telling a Story](#)

[Dialogue Micro-lesson](#)

[Mirrors, Windows & Sliding Doors](#)

[Oracy in the Classroom: Strategies for Effective Talk – Edutopia](#)

[A Balloon's Story – Brad Montague](#)