

Accents on Language!

International Languages Educators' Association of Ontario



Message from the ILEA Executive Director - Literacy Focus

This has been another busy year for ILEA Ontario! We are glad to say that ILEA's project focus has continued to grow with the Executive Director continuing regular trips to the western part of Canada as part of the contracts in teacher training that ILEA has been delivering on an ongoing basis with our partners in Edmonton (IHLA) and as well in Calgary (SAHLA). In both of these cities, the focus of the teacher training programs has been on literacy-enhancing activities and promoting storytelling through focused reading and writing activities. As part of an extended focused training in Edmonton, the Executive Director worked with teachers of various international languages to deliver a series of workshops that promoted the development of multilingual children's books/stories that teachers could do with their students. Not only were teachers encouraged themselves to create new children's stories but they were also encouraged to work with their students to create books based on their own stories.

This special issue of *Accents on Language* focuses on some of the ideas or activities related to *Reflecting on the Reading and Writing of Stories*. I hope you will enjoy it!

One part of the training focused on Reading and Communicating About Stories - these workshops promoted the analysis of the standard features of children's stories, what makes a good children's story, how to react to reading, analyzing texts and using different tasks to summarize, reflect on and write about what was just read. The next series of workshops focused on the Writing Process - stages of writing, brainstorming, extending and editing, peer collaborations. In working with the teachers in Edmonton, it was decided that a sample story about a student in International Languages should be produced. Taking the ideas from the group at the Edmonton workshops, the ILEA Executive Director created a story about a little girl attending Saturday morning school. This story was premiered at the Mother Language Day that IHLA in Edmonton has every year - an article about this event appears later in this newsletter.

This special issue of *Accents on Language* focuses on some of the ideas or activities related to *Reflecting on the Reading and Writing of Stories*. I hope you enjoy it! Happy Fall Start Up!

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ILEA Updates

- IL Elementary funding increases are up again this Fall!
- IL Secondary curriculum revision begins this Fall. An Education Officer has been hired by the Ministry of Education in order to oversee the revision of the curriculum documents for International Languages and Classical Studies
- The Ministry of Education has recognized that the Resource Guide for International Languages (Elementary) is out of print and that it needs to be revisited. This process will begin this school year.
- Revisions to the ILEA website will happen this Fall now that funding has been secured due to our projects this year.
- ILEA was contracted along with CESBA to work on mature student language assessments for a project recognizing prior learning aimed at granting credits to new Canadian adult learners.
- ILEA is releasing a contest! The information is on the last page of this newsletter.

We are on the WEB at
www.ilea.ca

Multilingualism

Multilingualism – Statement

Made at the Mother Language Day in Edmonton, Alberta – February 2009

The following is a statement made in Edmonton at the annual International Mother Language Day in Edmonton, Alberta, organized by IHLA, ILEA's partner organization for Northern Alberta. Constantine Ioannou, ILEA Director, is seen in the picture addressing the audience at this vent. Constantine continued to do workshops with teachers of heritage and international languages on ILEA's behalf in both Edmonton and Calgary.



Ms Woo-Paw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak on the value of learning international languages. It has been long recognized that language is one of the most powerful instruments for communication, the preservation and development of our tangible and intangible heritage, and positive human connections. As our world and societies become increasingly pluralistic, global, and multilingual, there's a corresponding increase in the recognition and appreciation for the benefits of learning international languages and maintaining heritage, or mother, languages. This is deemed so important for human development that UNESCO proclaimed February 21 of each year as International Mother Language Day 10 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, having a multilingual population yields benefits in all aspects of life in our society. It helps learners to develop greater ability in thinking, problem solving, as well as improved ability to learn. Multilingualism is also linked to reduction in school dropout rates and enhanced social integration. In our global knowledge-based economy the ability to speak in multiple languages is crucial for conducting business in the international community and critical for advancement of business goals. Having a shared language also strengthens family connections at home as well as relationships around the globe.

The United Nations also recognizes multilingualism as a way to demonstrate respect and inclusion and develop better understanding and appreciation for those from different cultures, countries, and nationalities, which in turn helps reduce racism, xenophobia, and intolerance.

Here in Alberta, Mr. Speaker, international and heritage languages are taught to students in both our public schools and community-based language schools. At the community level over 40 languages are taught to over 12,000 students every weekend by many dedicated leaders, teachers, and volunteers from our diverse cultural and linguistic communities.

As an Albertan who has devoted more than a decade to running community-based language programs and raised three multilingual young Albertans, I look forward to seeing greater development in international language programs in Alberta in the years to come. Thank you.

Storybooks in the Classroom

Picture Books and Language Learning

Why use children's books in a language classroom??

Additional language learners need frameworks for their own story-creation and links between oral and written language. Children's stories often offer 5 key P words (in English) that assist in the development of language. They are Pictures (that are interesting and key to specific elements of the stories), Pattern (that gives a type of repetitive nature that can help organize for the reader a sequence of events in the story), Prediction (that offers opportunities to pause the story and discuss what you think is going to happen or to even review the sequence of events), Personal (that allows you to bring a link to the reader by discussing before, during and after the reading such things as: Have you ever...? Do you also...? What would you do if...?), Participatory (many stories have key words or phrases that repeat that can allow participants in the storytelling to join in).



Elementary language educators often use children's books in their classrooms but it is important to expand on the use of a story and take it outside of its own covers and apply it to the world around the participants. Instructors should always discuss the theme of the story within an ice-breaker or during pre-reading activities. Follow up activities can include expansion tasks that involve summarizing the story or comparing the story to their lives or other stories. More advanced learners can retell the story. Younger learners enjoy doing specific activities during the storytelling process: listen and draw/put up felt board pieces/ react in certain ways etc.)

Secondary teachers can also use children's books in their classrooms – this can be a very useful assignment, possibly as a summative task as the criteria of a rubric could include the various features identified as important in creating a story. Have students create stories individually or in pairs or groups that can later be presented orally to a group of

younger learners of the language.

Any discussions related to effective children's stories should follow a process of awareness, involvement and activity-based learning. Here is a possible process to familiarize students with working with children's stories – this is a good introduction to getting them to later create their own stories. Ensure students have a chance to discuss and look at stories and be very familiar with their formulas before you start to outline the objectives for their own storybook creations.

Raising Awareness about Children's Stories

Step 1

- Look at pictures/book
- Discuss what you see in the book without reading it
- Catalogue the vocabulary that is relevant about this story
- Expand on the vocabulary with teacher assistance – create a word wall or poster if relevant
- Read the story and check your word bank

Step 2

- Choose people from picture and describe roles and characteristics and their impact on the story (IMAGINE situations with these characters)
- Create sentences about the characters – use vocab-catalogue
- Organize information in a type of graphic organizer or create profile sheets for each character

Step 3

- Describe what happens in the story
- List the actions and then make connections to other events in the story
- Think about CAUSE and EFFECT – because of one thing that happened in the story, what else resulted? What were the causes for something central in the story?

Step 4

- WRITE/SAY/PERFORM summaries of key events in the story or the whole story
- Use standard narratives in writing
- Talk out the story in dialogue form spontaneously
- Act!

Step 5

- Finalize any discussions about the story
- Hear presentations from each group about their story
- Expansion activities
- Do follow up on different genres of stories – how would the story change if it were a different type of story (from mystery to science fiction to comedy to non-fiction)

Storybooks in the Classroom

Listen Up!

Tell your Story the way it should be told!! Students can work in class to understand the key aspects of a storybook but what about story narratives? These are things to consider when getting students to start giving their own oral stories, or other kinds of presentations. This can be used firstly when they are to show a poster and talk about a story they read. These tips can help to explain effective oral storytelling uses – activities that get kids to be more comfortable telling stories about themselves.

Key Aspects for Good Oral Storytelling:

- Dynamics** - show how much you like the story
- show how interesting it is
- Voice** - can we hear you??
- does it give off the right tones?
- Face** - look around and up and down
- what variety of expressions are needed?
- Movement** - are you moving around?
- bring in the body language but don't distract

PRACTICE:

1. The WAH!!! ---- echo the sound that the teacher makes, using expression – you may feel silly but it helps you take the risk and get out there and tell your story!! Get kids to yell out a sound like WAAAAHHH but with different type of expressions or tones based on the models you provide – this gets them to get used to vocalizing.
2. Re-voice! Use a familiar story or chant and change the nature of your voice each time! Anger – Arrogance – Shyness – Exuberance!
3. Listeners always share what they hear – this is the storytelling tradition. So, listen to someone and tell their story to someone else.
4. Get started with mini stories. Each person tells another something about an object they are wearing or have with them. The listener documents key words and then tells the story to someone else.

Retelling

Once students have had a chance to analyze some effective stories of various genres and have also had a chance to start telling stories themselves, try to get them to imagine how stories could change and how you would retell them based on certain changes. Check out these retell cards that have been used for intermediate and senior classes that can be modified for younger learners.

RETELL CARD

Tell your story using one of these genres:

- Mystery
- Drama
- Factual
- Comedy

Genres



RETELL CARD

Tell your story as if you were one of these characters:

- Astronaut
- Actor
- Teacher
- Lifeguard

Characters



RETELL CARD

Tell your story with one of the following settings:

- Space
- Island
- Arctic
- Jungle

Settings



RETELL CARD

Tell your story with one of the following settings:

- Present
- Past
- Future
- "If" possibilities

Times



Storybooks in the Classroom

Change that STORY!!!

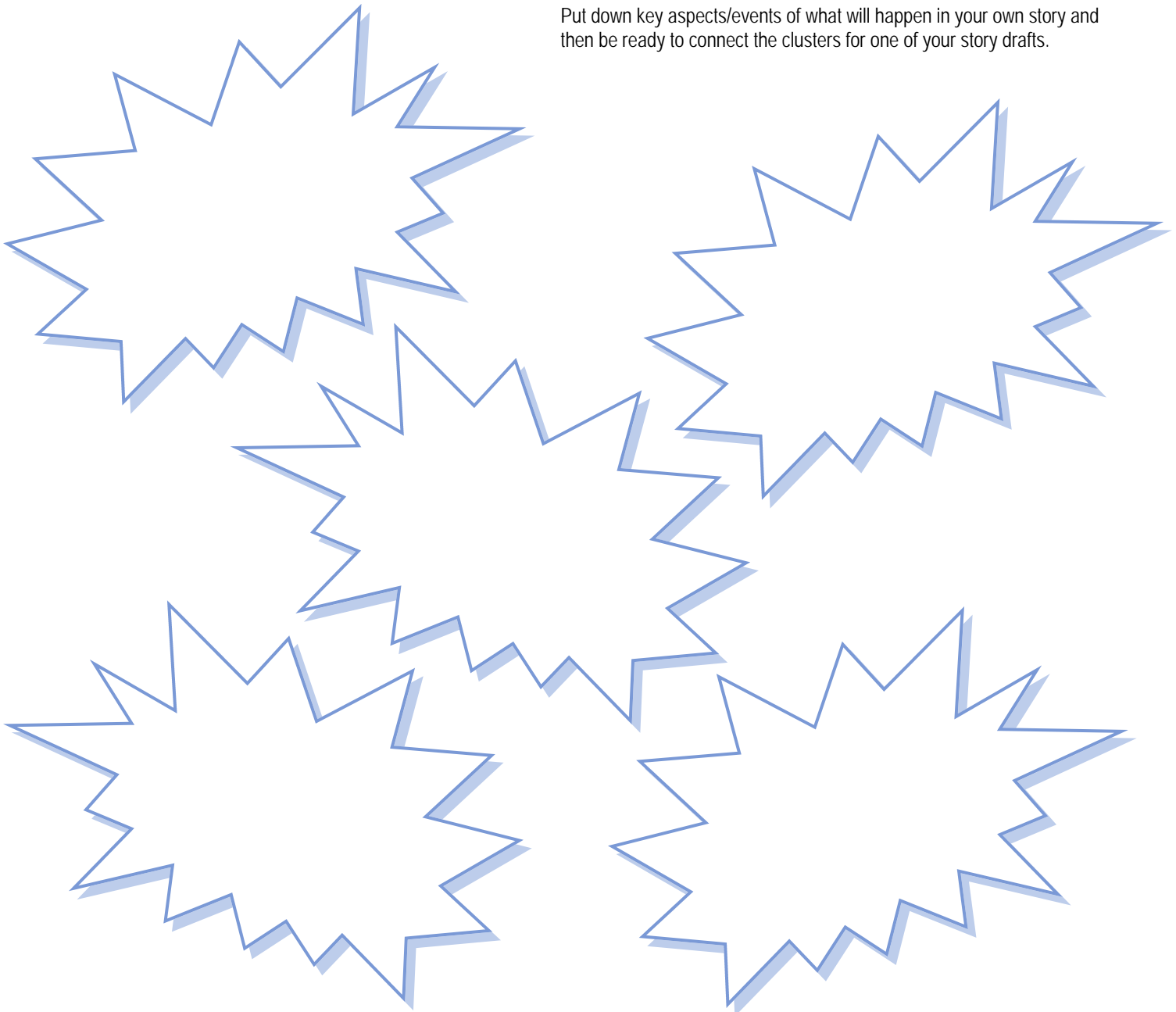
Similar to the RETELL ideas, here are some popular children's stories that suddenly have a switch! See if you can guess the stories referred to. This offers a great opportunity to talk about stories rather than just reading a book and shelving it shortly afterwards. The story thus lives on!!

1. MORTIMER went downstairs.
2. The shoe did not fit!
3. One dwarf worked for the witch.
4. Hansel and Gretel were spoiled.
5. The Paper Bag Princess hired the dragon in the first place.
6. Frosty the Snowman was actually allergic to vegetables.

Story Clusters

Insert key notes of different chunks of the story you have heard and then use these notes to summarize the story! OR

Put down key aspects/events of what will happen in your own story and then be ready to connect the clusters for one of your story drafts.



Storybooks in the Classroom

Story Writing – Process

Pick your theme!

What will you write about?

Brainstorm your theme by doing a web chart!

What are the topics or aspects of this theme that you will want to highlight? What kind of message do you want to transfer to the audience?

What is the point?!

Decide on what the main ideas of the plot will be and write them down in no more than three concise statements. For example:

The hungry caterpillar eats every day. The caterpillar overeats. The caterpillar becomes a butterfly eventually.

Who is in charge? -- Develop your characters.

Figure out the key primary and secondary characters and map out their traits and their important roles in your story. Fill out a chart that gives a profile of them.

Outline the story. Two steps here!

5a **CHUNK IT and CLUSTER** - - - - make note of the kinds of features or events that should happen in the story.

5b **OUTLINE it!** - - - - - make an outline with a template, including the following features: name of story, main characters, short summary (three sentences), the start, the main conflict/highlight, the end, the type of style and the setting

Write it and rewrite it and rewrite it!

use a good opening or starter

start the action right away

get people to predict from your title and opening

go in order by time

think about the pictures

vary your paragraph starters

work on tone



With this Special Newsletter.....

ILEA's first storybook.

ILEA plans to use this story for future materials development activities such as translation into other languages and follow up activities with use of this story. Enjoy! This story will also be posted on ILEA's website later this year.

Storybooks in the Classroom

Story-Writing or Story-Reading Summery Template

Working Title:

Authors:

Place:

People:

Perspective/Style:

Start

Main Event

End

Summary

Things Included:

Language/Theme of Story:

IELA Calendar



IEEA is planning to produce a 2010 calendar promoting language learning. It will be illustrated with children's art.

Please send us the most interesting drawings created by children in your classrooms not later than October 20, 2009. An IEEA Committee will decide on the pieces for inclusion. Suggested themes – peace, culture, nature, family...

Scanned art works, high resolution (preferably 300 dpi) images in JPG or TIF format could be e-mailed to:

irina.khetsouriani@ottawacatholicschools.ca OR

Mail original drawings (preferably on letter size paper) to:

IEEA
25 Kimberwick Crescent
Ottawa, ON K1V 1K6

IEEA members submitting 5 or more drawings will be mailed a free hard copy of the calendar.

Interesting Languages Statistics & Facts

- Number of living languages: **6912**.
- Number of those languages that are nearly extinct: **516**.
- Language with the greatest number of native speakers: **Mandarin**.
- Language spoken by the greatest number of non-native speakers: **English**.
- Country with the most languages spoken: **Papua New Guinea** has 820 living languages.
- How long have languages existed: **Since about 100,000 BC**.
- First language ever written: **Sumerian or Egyptian** (about 3200 BC).
- Oldest written language still in existence: **Chinese or Greek** (about 1500 BC).
- Language with the most words: **English**, approx. 250,000 distinct words.
- Language with the fewest words: **Taki Taki** (also called **Sranan**), 340 words.
- Language with the largest alphabet: **Khmer** (74 letters).
- Language with the shortest alphabet: **Rotokas** (12 letters).
- The language with the fewest sounds (phonemes): **Rotokas** (11 phonemes).
- The language with the most sounds (phonemes): **!Xóó** (112 phonemes).
- Language with the fewest consonant sounds: **Rotokas** (6 consonants).
- Language with the most consonant sounds: **Xóó** has the most consonants (77).
- Language with the fewest vowel sounds: **Abkhaz** (2 vowels).
- The most common consonant sounds in the world's languages: **/p/, /t/, /k/, /m/, /n/**
- Language with the most vowel sounds: **!Xóó** (31 vowels).
- The most widely published language: **English**.

From *World Languages and Cultures* website:

<http://www.vistawide.com/languages/gifts_language_learning_cds.htm>

Memberships

Institutional

Institutional members are appointed by their school boards to attend meetings. Any school board in the Province of Ontario interested in sending a representative to the meetings may do so. Members hold a supervisory or administrative position with regard to the program, and have the authority to discuss policy and procedures on behalf of their respective school boards.

Representatives from the Ministry of Education, Faculties of Education and other associations are invited to meetings to address relevant issues. Embassies, Consulates and travel or exchange organizations often also become members.

Individual

Membership opportunities have been extended to individual instructors, teachers and others. IEEA invites all educators to join in order to promote the importance of IL education and establish good program practices for programs across Ontario.

Membership fees will support the work of the association and will include two e-mailed news bulletins relevant to language teaching. Memberships can be obtained by using the membership form available on IEEA's website (www.ilea.ca). Check the "Resources" link too.

We look forward to seeing individual educator memberships from all school boards in Ontario. Remember, IEEA works because of volunteers so each membership is important to building our profession.

Accents on Language!

This is our ninth newsletter. We welcome your feedback.

Please email us at info@ilea.ca.

Look for our next newsletter in the Fall of 2009!