



Class news – Transforming *Show and tell* into a writing and reading experience

Class news is a great way to turn your traditional “Show and tell” session into an effective literacy-focussed teaching episode.

Incorporating features of approaches such as language experience, modelled writing and reading, and shared book, *Class news* teaches reading and writing in context in a way that connects with and shows value for children’s lives.

If you question the value returned for time spent in *Show and tell* sessions, then *Class news* might be for you.

About *show and tell*

In a traditional “Show and tell” sharing session, children take turns to tell their classmates about an item they have brought in to show, or relate a recent event in their lives. The practice introduces children to public speaking, helps to develop confidence and oral communication skills, and encourages attentive listening.

However, children may fidget rather than listen and, with their minds elsewhere, are often more interested in talking about themselves than in learning about others.

Although children may be encouraged to ask questions after each talk, their questions are often standard, repetitive, and lacking in thought. They may be unrelated to anything the speaker said, or may request information already supplied. They are often asked by children who want to be seen doing the right thing, rather than from a desire to know more or to participate in genuine discussion.

Changing it up

In *Class news*, children still take turns to tell their classmates about items brought from home or relate a recent event in their lives, but their contributions are recounted, written, and read. A blend of modelled and collaborative writing, the sessions offer rich opportunities for targeted teaching in an integrated approach to literacy; including:

Features of written language:

- Format and directionality: where to start, which direction to go, where to go next, spaces between words
- Punctuation: capital letters, full stops, commas, exclamation marks
- Spelling: letter-sound correspondence, alternative spellings, spelling patterns

But more importantly, it:

- builds upon children’s own interests and language
- shows that they, their lives and experiences, are valued
- provides a purpose for writing and a meaningful context for reading
- teaches writing and reading as a whole of language experience

Class news – the basics

Class news can begin from the first day of school or introduced any time during the year. The jointly constructed texts are excellent for beginning readers. They are richer in interest, content, language, and vocabulary than any first reader.

- A child shares an item of news as in a traditional *Show and tell* session.
- The teacher and children jointly construct a recount of the child's news.
- The teacher writes the recount.
- The children read the written report.

Text length can be adjusted to the children's ability. One sentence may be sufficient at the beginning of the year. The number of sentences can be increased to four or more as children progress. A headline (main idea) can also be added as the text length increases.

A piece of lined A4 or A3 paper (wide blue lines) attached to an easel, in easy reach of teacher and children, and a set of felt pens is all that is required.

Writing and reading *Class News*: The process



Sharing

The child shares.

Because the child is relating a personal experience, it is usually a first-person statement; for example, "I went to the beach."

Occasionally it may be a third-person statement; for example, "My father got a new car."

The teacher and children may request more information; for example:

- When did you go to the beach?
- Who did you go with?
- What did you do there?

Composing

The teacher invites children to report the child's news.

The teacher and children jointly compose a statement which will be used to create a written record.

Note: The news is reported and written in the third-person; for example, "Georgie went to the beach on the weekend." Children quickly understand the necessity for this when it is explained.

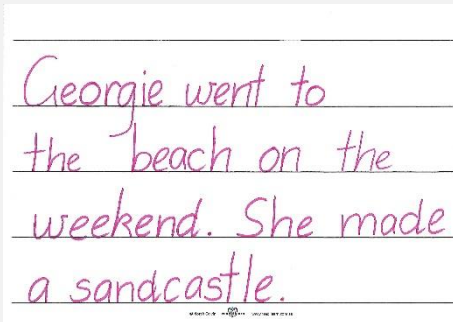
Writing

The teacher scribes.

The teacher models the process of writing by *thinking aloud* each step; for example:

- I start at the top left.
- I always start a sentence with a capital letter.
- What do I write first?
- What will I write next?

- What sounds can I hear in (word)? What does it begin with? What comes next? How do I write (letter)? How do I write (word)?
- I go this way (left to right).
- I must remember to leave a space between words.
- I put a full stop at the end of the sentence.
- Let me check what I've written. Does it make sense? Have I written everything?



The teacher invites children to participate in the writing by:

- sharing their knowledge to join in the thinking process, and
- writing what they can; for example:
 - Georgie could write her name
 - other children could write letters they know, or even whole words they can spell.

The greatest benefit of the teaching episode comes in the discussion which targets features appropriate to the children's developing literacy knowledge.

Sight words can be highlighted, as can unusual or alternative spellings.

It is important for the teacher to be encouraging. If a child should suggest a double 'e' spelling for *beach*, the teacher should confirm that a double 'e' is a possible way of spelling the sound, but that in *beach* we use the letters *ea*. This affirms children's developing knowledge of written language and builds on that knowledge.

As children in the class are at different levels of development, some will be ready to take this on board, others may need to encounter it many times.

Reading

Reading is involved in every step of the process.

The text is read and re-read during writing to ensure all information is included, that it makes sense and sounds right. This is a great opportunity to introduce and demonstrate the editing process, adding and deleting words, correcting tense and spellings, inserting punctuation.

After completion, the entire text is read by the teacher and children together, and the child is asked to confirm that the text is an accurate record of what was shared. If necessary, any additional edits or revisions can be made.

Because the text was written collaboratively with the children, about a subject with which they are familiar, it is easy for them to read.

The teacher invites a child or two to read the text independently, praising attempts, and offering support and encouragement.

The purpose of the teaching episode is to progress, not test, children's learning so all interactions should be positive, supportive, and encouraging.

However, children's responses provide teachers with valuable information that can be used for future planning.

But is it *real* reading?

Recall of what was heard and collaboratively written contributes greatly to the children's ability to read these shared texts. While memory supports their reading, they are also developing effective writing and reading skills. Because it is real language used in real contexts, it contains words that would not appear on a sight word list. Reading in context teaches children that reading is about meaning and demonstrates that writing is done by people, just like them, for particular purposes.

They are learning that:

- Text is speech written down, but written text is not always the same as spoken language; for example, we may phrase it differently, or leave out words, repetitions, or false starts.
- Text is written by people (writers, authors, journalists) for a purpose.
- Speech is represented by letters used in combination.
- There are conventions that govern the way text is written; for example, we leave spaces between words, we start sentences with capital letters and finish them with full stops.
- The message in print remains the same no matter how many times it is read.
- Reading is a process of making meaning from written text. We use an interaction of cues to help us unlock the text and its meaning; including, knowledge of what the text is about (semantics), understanding of patterns of language (syntax), and knowledge of letter-sound correspondence (grapho-phonics).

Class news teaches literacy skills in context and provides support for students at all levels. Phonemic awareness, phonics, and sight word knowledge are embedded in a meaningful context that also involves the use of appropriate syntax, spelling, and punctuation. Children see how all the parts interact to make a whole living meaningful language.

Developing sight words and sound-letter knowledge

Supporting children's developing sight word and sound-letter knowledge is built into the process.

Children very quickly learn to recognise each other's names and other high interest words that may recur; such as, weekend, beach, holidays, family, mother, father, soccer, swimming.

The teacher focusses children's attention on the print by asking children to; for example:

- identify high interest or sight words
- find words that begin with a particular letter
- find words that rhyme with (word)
- find and read the answers to questions provided in the text.

Extending the learning

- To provide even more opportunities for reading, print the *Class news* for children to take home to read to parents and carers each day. Reading the class news is something that everyone enjoys because it is about them and their friends. Add some information about what you've been doing in class that day and it becomes as much an opportunity for sharing and communication as it is for reading.
(Note: While I am not necessarily fond of homework, it is an expectation of some school communities. I consider *Class news* to be an effective and enjoyable homework activity.)
- At the end of the week, gather all news items and staple them together to make a book which can be placed in the reading corner for independent reading.

Examples of Class news throughout the year

IB News Monday 31 January 2011

On the weekend Brooke went to a party. She got some water balloons.

On the weekend Sarah went to her friend's house. She had a swim.

Things we did today:

- We read a story called "Bess and Barnabas", then we wrote our own story about the lion we made on Friday. We did our work.
- We did some tables to see who brought in a birthday cake, and we did some tables in our Go Maths book. We counted the spots on dinosaurs.

Remember: You have four things to bring with class each morning: your homework folder, your hat, your lunchbox and your water bottle.

1. Find these words in the words. Circle them. Then write them on the lines.

went to

2. Find words that begin with this letter. Underline them in the news. Trace and copy the letter below.

S S S S S S S S S S S S S



iB News Tuesday 5 April 2011

High on a Swing

Last weekend Carrie went to
the park. She went on the
swings. She went so high she nearly fell off!

Welcome Nahyun

We have a new girl in our
class today. Her name is
Nahyun. Welcome Nahyun!

Things we did today:

- ① We noticed and learnt about our trip to the Zoo tomorrow.
- ② We did some maths work, drawing our favourite letter 'y' three along million and a graph to find what numbers are near the thousands.

Reminders:

- ③ The Cyber Safety talk scheduled for tonight has been postponed.
- ④ Only 2 more days to make your Easter Egg as preparation for the parade on Thursday.
- ⑤ Remember the collection after the parade on Thursday.
- ⑥ Over the holidays, if you are not able to pack and photograph, please take photos of your favourite gift/gifts you prepared. Next term we will be designing and making models of our favourite playground equipment.

1. Find these words in the news. Circle them. Then write them on the lines.

high name


2. Find words that begin with this letter. Underline them in the news.
Trace and copy the letter below.

n n n n n n n n n n

IB News Monday 30 May 2011

The Snow Tiger

Jake brought his Build-a-Bear toy to show us today. It is a snow tiger. It has a black jacket and blue pants. Jake keeps his tiger on his bed. It is a special bear and it is cute!



Things we did today:

- ① We talked about Reconciliation Week and read a story "The Last of the Tribes".
- ② We did our Maths assessment about 2D and 3D shapes. Did you know snow isn't white?
- ③ We got together with our buddies and played some games.

Reminders:

- ① Firefighters arrived on Wednesday. Please return your form by then.
- ② Red Shield arrived on Wednesday. Please bring a gold coin donation and write a real message.


Write the answer to this question.

What clothes is Jake's tiger wearing?

1B News Thursday 16 June 2011

Being Healthy

Today Zeek told us what he does to stay healthy. He runs in the mornings with his father and his brother. He eats fruit every day. He brushes his teeth in the morning and at night. He drinks lots of water.



Things we did today:

- Ⓢ We had morning games in the morning. (We did lots of different games – some were so weird, some we had to compete, and some independently and some on the school board.)
- Ⓢ We did writing pages. (We all did our writing. Some played a magic game. Some played a 'Simon the wizard' game. Some played an adding game, and some did a few problems on the whiteboard.)
- Ⓢ We talked about having a game plan or what to include on your best day here. (We decided what food we all liked, and what we didn't go on and things.)

Reminders:

- Ⓢ Please remember water.
- Ⓢ Sports Day next Wednesday. (Do you have your names under 'I don't want for the day'?)

Write the answer to this question. Make sure you write a whole sentence and use a capital letter to start the sentence and a full stop at the end.

What does Zeek do to be healthy?

18 Novs Monday 28 July 2018

At Sea World

On the weekend Oshan went to Sea World. He went to the movies and went on a ride.

A Birthday

On Saturday it was Jonathan's birthday. He had a number 7 birthday cake.

Going to the Shops

On the weekend Bianca went to the shops. She bought a toy puppy to play with.

Sick Bay

Last week Ariam went to the doctor. The doctor gave him a mask to help him breathe better.

Things we did today:

- ① We read a very special "The Very Blue Thingamajig" by Marilee Oliver. We used to having a visit from Marilee Oliver in a couple of weeks. It is exciting.
- ② We read "Dinosaur, Off to Sea World" by Eric Cline and talked about the growing pattern in the story. I see we made some growing patterns of our own.

Write the answer to these questions. Make sure you write in a sentence.

1. When did Jonathan have his birthday?
2. What did Oshan do at Sea World?

IB News Wednesday 26 August 2018

<p>Going Swimming</p> <p>On Tuesday Nahyun went swimming. She swam all the way to the end of the pool. She touched the bottom of the pool. She had fun!</p>
<p>Going on Rides</p> <p>On the weekend Bryce went to Sea World. He went on the cable cart and the monorail. It was lots of fun!</p>
<p>Staying at Home</p> <p>On the weekend Jake stayed at home. He watched TV with his brother and sister. Then he went outside to play on the trampoline.</p>
<p>Going to the Hotel</p> <p>Last Friday Ariam went to the hotel. He played with his brother.</p>

Things you did today

☐ We had a reading group in the morning and another group in the middle session. They wrote one story of about a game of catch. They were amazing to tell the tale on an audience.

☐ We had music and sport in the afternoon.

Comments:

☐ Learning something: Please bring your story book to your writing group.
☐ Personal Reading Challenge starts on Friday. Please return your reading records by then.

Write the answer to these questions. Make sure you write in a sentence.

1. When did Nahyun go swimming?

2. Where did Bryce go on the weekend?

Note the drawings in some examples. After sharing their news, children drew their pictures in Paint. The drawings were saved and copied into the news. While the children loved illustrating their news, and it is another way of showing off their skills, it is not necessary.

Note: At the beginning of the year I created a *Class news* template in Word. Changing the content each day was then a simple process.

At the beginning of the year, I placed all children's names into a box and drew out two names randomly each day for sharing. Later in the year, when other items were added to the session, I drew up a roster which was sent home with an explanation.

A sample introductory letter is provided on the next page.

Sample letter explaining Class news to parents

Dear Parents and Carers,

Regular Homework begins today with the first edition of our *Class news*.

Class news will be published daily and include news of 2-3 children each day, giving everyone a turn at least once a fortnight. Please share reading this news with your child.

Encourage children to read what they can, or read it for them and discuss the content with them. Point to each word as you read. Then help your child find the listed words, circle them in the text, and write them on the page.

Praise your child for all attempts. Don't expect too much. Encourage them to have a go.

Do not sound out words. Simply tell your children any words they don't know, or read the whole text for them. Don't worry if you think they are just remembering, rather than reading. This is an excellent beginning. As confidence grows, your child will begin to instantly recognize many of the recurring words and so develop a "sight word vocabulary".

As an additional discussion-starter, I will include a brief description of one or two of our day's activities, and reminders for the week.

Please do not make an issue of homework. The children usually enjoy reading about themselves and their friends; and if you give them encouragement, support and lots of praise, they will enjoy it even more.

While I will appreciate your support with this set work, the best homework always, is having fun with your children, talking with them, reading to them and just spending time with them, appreciating the wonderful people they are.

I hope you enjoy these home activities too. Please speak to me if you have any concerns.

Best wishes

(Class teacher)

