

What is a Reflection Session?



It is a time for readers or writers to share with classmates what they have learned or tried. It is a time for the teacher to highlight and "get behind" something that a few readers/writers attempted or did successfully (most often, in connection with the crafting lesson) that the whole group would benefit from.



It is a time for readers/writers to reflect out loud on how their use of a certain strategy (or literate behaviour) will help them as a reader or writer, so that their learning is more permanent and applicable to future learning situations.



Teachers model various ways in which responsible learners might respond to their classmates' work. In responding to a child who is sharing his work, the teacher might model and then expect the listeners to:

- praise the attempt or successful use of a taught (or "child generated") strategy,
- question the child's process, future plans, ideas about how this will be useful to her as a reader/writer,
- suggest other strategies or behaviors, ways to continue the work, next steps, etc, and
- challenge (even argue diplomatically about) what is being shared in order to push the child to expand his/her thinking.



Teachers model various forms of Reflection Sessions before asking students to use them.

Different forms might be sessions in which:

- a few individuals share,
- partners share (pairs, trios, etc.)
- the whole class shares (ex: children reading snippets of their writing into a circle, saying one sentence about a mental image they made while reading, etc.), or
- children teach students outside the immediate class members.



Teachers model and explicitly teach children to "teach" their peers in a Reflection Session.

While reflecting/sharing their work, children should eventually be expected to:

- clearly explain how the strategy or skill will help them as a reader or writer,
- emphasize ways in which their "students" can apply what they learn to future situations (i.e. how they might use the strategy being shared in other books or in their own writing),
- conclude their share with a challenge to their classmates to apply what has been taught to their own reading and writing.



All class members need opportunities to share and conduct Reflection Sessions. The session is a time for the group to benefit from hearing about something that a classmate did that will enhance their own work in the future. The session is intended for the good of the group's learning, not necessarily the person sharing. The teacher needs to be sure she isn't having children share just for the sake of giving them "air time" in front of the group. However, a skilled teacher is always individualizing instruction so that each child succeeds on some level. The thoughtful teacher is able to facilitate or identify successful attempts at the strategy/skill taught that day, however emergent they may be, in all her students so that each child has opportunities to share during the course of the year.