

Literacy in English: in the Middle Years – Kathy Rushton

Introducing Poetry:

The Breakfast rap – Indij Readers www.indijreaders.com.au

HO Poetry starters, Blueback, Aidan Chamber's "Special Questions".

Read some students' poems- go through the various scaffolds.

Hand out The School Magazine and allow participants to look at the scaffolds for poetry.

The School Magazine: Fax 9889 0040 Tele. 9889 0044

Introducing the Narrative:

HO Discuss the strategies used in "Blueback" and the role of questioning in teaching Narrative.

Discuss Aidan Chamber's questions.

Share the picture books suitable for Stage 3 & 4 and discuss how they can be used with novels such as *Wolves in the walls* and *Coraline* used in the unit *Into the night and other dark places* to support learners of all abilities. Free download of unit available from ATESOL NSW professional teachers association www.atesolnsw.org. See secondary ESL units on homepage.

List of picture books and possible links to themes suggested in workshop:

Neil Gaiman *The Wolves in the walls* – fantasy a child overcoming separation from home and family.

John Heffernan & Andrew McLean *My Dog*- war and a child overcoming separation from home and family.

Margaret Wild & Ron Brooks *Fox* – Australian environment, friendship and betrayal, identity.

John Marsden & Shaun Tan *The Rabbits*- Australian history – invasion- Indigenous perspective.

Katrina Germein & Bronwyn Bancroft *Big Rain Coming*- Australian environment – Indigenous perspective.

Ian Abdulla *Tucker*- history – growing up in the country last century – Indigenous perspective

Shaun Tan *The arrival* overcoming separation from home and family in a new country

Lauren Child *Who's afraid of the big bad book?* – deconstructing "the book".

Norman Jorgensen & Brian Harrison-Lever *In Flanders fields* – WW1 – hope and peace

Isobelle Carmody & Steven Woolman *Dreamwalker* –fantasy -deconstructing "the book", a teenage girl and boy form a relationship through their love of art.

Handouts:

Poetry Starters

From Kenneth Koch (1970). *Wishes, Lies and Dreams*. New York:Vintage

I wish...Joint construction:-

I wish I was a green goanna

I wish I was a blue bird

I wish I was a pink parrot

I wish I was (describing adjective/ noun. Develop phonemic awareness (K))

I wish I was a pink parrot ***that lived in a glass tree*** (add ***an adjectival clause*** by asking information report questions like: *Where does it live? What does it eat? What does it do?*

Develop complex sentences (K))

2. I used to be (adjective)

But now I am (adjective)

3. I seem to be (adjective)

But I really am (adjective)

4. Comparisons – simile

Spring is like...

Autumn is like...

Summer is like...use a colour/and a word from your language

Winter is like... grey ciel

5. Metaphors

The snow is a snowflake

The blue sky is an ocean

The blackboard is a black notebook

An apple is a red rose

A bat is a big fat stick

Mrs Wiener is a lovely flower which shouts

Tomas Torres Y4 from "*Wishes, Lies and Dreams*"

6. Lies

The Dawn of me

I was born nowhere

And I live in a tree

I never leave my tree

It is very crowded

I am stacked up right against a bird

But I won't leave my tree

Everything is dark...

Jeff Morley Y5 from "*Wishes, Lies and Dreams*"

Strategies for working with a narrative text

“Blueback” by Tim Winton

Before Reading:

Student:

Using only the cover illustration.

1. Write a description of the diver.
2. Write a scene, one paragraph describing the event taking place as they imagine it.

Teacher:

Use paragraph 3 P5, “ He fell back into the water **with a cold crash**..” to help students develop their descriptions and scenes using adverbial phrases of manner **with a cold crash**, simile a cloud of **bubbles** swirled around him, clinging to his skin **like pearls** and metaphor **a cloud of bubbles**.

Display the quotes and ask students to think about what they want to express. Ask them to use the same grammatical features as Tim Winton. Ask the class to share some of their ideas, write them up.

* **Adverbial Phrases P76 “A grammar companion” Beverly Derewianka**

During/After Reading:

Student:

3. Write a scene, one paragraph describing a place.

Every scene should have a goal – why are you describing this place, why is it important to the plot/your character? Does something happen there? Does it have special meaning for a character?

Teacher:

Use paragraph 1 P67/68 simile “He saw **the sun melting like butter** on white dunes.” Unusual use of adjectives to evoke images and feelings “long **sugary** beaches”, “saw the great, **strange** land through the **wobbly** glass of the waves.” Brainstorm some unusual adjectives in sentences which describe something in your story.

* **Noun Groups P18, Adjectival phrases P41 “A grammar companion” Beverly Derewianka**

Student:

4. Use the storyboard and develop the characters and their motivation.

Teacher:

Point out to students that the events are not what constitutes the story, it is also about the development of feelings both the readers’ and the characters’.

Students can read a particular chapter and concentrate on one character, for instance Abel in Chapter 8. If you fill in the whole story board – do any questions arise that you can’t answer? Does the story flow smoothly?

8. Abel kills the tiger shark and goes back to school.

“Abel went back to school in the new year **feeling** older, different. That summer he **learnt** that there was nothing in nature as cruel and savage as a greedy human being.” A tiger shark killed his father but it was only following its nature and its nature was not as cruel and savage as Costello’s and men like him. Abel killed the shark to save it from suffering he was growing into a kind man not a cruel one.

* **P58 Sensing verbs (feeling/thinking) “A grammar companion” Beverly Derewianka**

Student:

5. Write a character profile including the following information.

Name, age and family details – names of family members, occupations, and peculiar character traits.

Appearance – height, hair colour, eye colour, build

Behavioural traits

Character traits

Job/hobby

Where living and why

What type of transport – describe how they get around car, train, horse

Favourite things and why they are enjoyed

Any other personal background relevant to the story

Teacher:

With whole class do a joint construction of character profile, encourage students to write as well as offer their suggestions orally. Then ask students to attempt their own.

* **Opinion adjectives P35 “A grammar companion” Beverly Derewianka**

Storyboard “Blueback” by Tim Winton

1. Abel meets Blueback.	2. Abel and his mother can't find Blueback.
3. Abel goes to school and daydreams.	4. Macka dies.
5. Abel goes to boarding school.	6. Abel takes his boat out and watches the whales.
7. Abel and his mum beat Costello.	8. Abel kills the tiger shark and returns to school.
9. Abel goes to high school and his mother beats the developers.	10. The pilchards die.
11. Abel goes to university and meets his future wife Stella.	12. Abel becomes a marine biologist.
13. Abel goes home.	14. Baby Dora is born.
15. Dora dies.	16. Baby Dora meets Blueback.

Student:

6. Get into the head of the character.

How does your character get information? – by using their senses or by intuition/feeling.

How does your character work things out? –by thinking and feeling.

How does your character relate to the world and work out good from bad? –

by judging people and situations and observing and understanding.

Write a scene and show how your character works something out.

Teacher:

Use paragraph one P109 “Abel Jackson went to university to figure out the sea.....and let him go.” Ask students to say what is revealed about Dora and Abel – make a list and show what words suggested it eg.

Dora – observant “*he’d lived half his life...*”, lover of the sea “*his mother smiled about that*”, puzzled “*she shrugged her shoulders*”, easy going “*and let him go*”

Abel – determined “*Abel Jackson went to university to figure out the sea*”, lover of the sea and its creatures “*he’d lived half his life...*”, mislead “*it seemed a bit mad to her*”

Student:

7. Analyse paragraph one P109 “Abel Jackson went to university to figure out the sea.....and let him go.” and write down all the verbs Tim Winton uses. List them under these headings: **Action, Saying, Sensing, Relating.**

Teacher:

Display lists of different types of verbs and discuss how writers use a range of verbs when developing their characters.

Action: went, to figure out, smiled, had lived, was leaving, shrugged, let go

Saying:

Sensing: to learn,

Relating: was, seemed

* **P54-60 Action, saying, sensing and relating verbs “A grammar companion” Beverly Derewianka**

* **P93-95 Moving from spoken to written language in “Talking to Learn” ed. Pauline Jones**

Student:

8. Play detective find some *themes* or *motifs* in “Blueback” and explore how Tim Winton has woven them through his story and what their hidden meanings might be.

Teacher:

Theme: A major focus of the story.

The sea as a metaphor for the world, the story is both about the sea and the environment and the coming of age of a young boy.

P 53 “***In his sleep Abel swam and remembered and saw things he needed, things he wanted to see, and some things he didn’t expect.***”

P106 “***The ocean is sick.***” “***the whole sea seemed to be a puzzle. Abel wanted to figure it out.***”

P118 “***Blueback still swam through his dreams.***”

P127. “***They were like a coral spawn, those letters, tiny white messages that drifted out from Longboat Bay into the offices of people all over the country.***”

Motif: A repeated reference which runs through the story.

The colour blue associating the blue of the sea and the blue groper which are natural in that environment and the blue of Abel’s face which signifies his struggle to grow up away from the sea. A struggle like that of a person diving without oxygen. His absence from his home and the sea is like living without breathing. Blue is also the colour of his dreams, dreams of home and the sea.

P95 “*In his high school years, Abel Jackson felt like he was holding his breath. It was like diving.*”

“*something inside him took a deep breath*”

P100 “*Abel knew that it was his mother’s love that kept him going all those dull high school years while he was stuck inland, holding his breath until he was blue in the face.*”

P151 “*He was the colour of all their dreams*” (Blueback)

Other motifs: shells, the peppermint tree, the tiger shark, learning

The Special Questions

Aidan Chambers (1994) *Tell Me Children, reading and talk* Newtown:Primary English Teaching Association

How long did it take the story to happen?

Are there parts of the story that took a long time to happen but were told about quickly or in a few words? And are there parts of that happened very quickly but took a lot of space to tell about?

Where did the story happen?

Which character interested you the most?

Was there anyone who doesn’t appear in the story but without whom it couldn’t have happened?

Who was telling – who was narrating – the story? Do we know? And how do we know?

Is the story told in the first person (and if so, who is this person)? Or the third person? By someone we know about in the story, or by someone we know or don’t know about outside the story?

Think of yourself as a spectator. With whose eyes did you see the story? Did you only see what one character in the story saw, or did you see things sometimes as one character saw them, and sometimes as another, and so on?