Feed Hungry Young Minds through Storybook Adventures

Teaching Guide to Lesson 3: Creating visual aids for storytelling

Volunteers have been active in promoting literacy— all over the Commonwealth for years, and with good reason. According to the most recent Kentucky State Assessment of Adult Literacy (http://kyae.ky.gov), over 40 percent of working-age Kentuckians fall into the two lowest of four categories of literacy proficiency, ranging from very few to below average reading skills. Such skill levels are not enough for them to hold good jobs that Kentucky’s economy to grow strong (Kentucky Adult Education Report Card, 2005). For Kentuckians to lead richer lives and compete effectively for meaningful work, all of us must play a role in helping the break the cycle of illiteracy. One of the best ways to help is to instill a love of books and reading in our youngest citizens and their parents, leading to children’s full readiness for school.

Resources Available for this Lesson (Please refer also to A Word about the Teaching Guides and Lesson Plans, below.)
• The fact sheet, A Call to Action, (pages 7 and 8) including information on the critical need for addressing illiteracy, activity suggestions, and the Literacy Action Plan Chart
• Educational behavioral objectives
• List of recommended supplies
• Step-by-step lesson plan
• A separate Literacy Action Plan Chart (Appendix A)
• Black-and-white master visuals for a presentation on the importance of early literacy (identical to the PowerPoint® slides and overhead transparencies)
• End-of-session evaluation sheet (Appendix F)
• Six-month follow-up questionnaire (Appendix G)
• The Resources section (page 27), which provides more in-depth preparation for teaching this lesson. It lists the audio-visual teaching resources, adaptations of lesson activities for specialized audiences, acknowledgements for materials drawn from other sources, reasons for using the six-month follow-up questionnaire, and references consulted.
• The Program Links section (Appendix H), a list of links to Web pages where resources may be located and printed out.

A Word about the Teaching Guides and Lesson Plans
• This is one of three guides that help to build group participants’ skills in using high-quality books with young children. All three guides contain a step-by-step lesson plan that begins with an informational introductory section and optional audiovisual resources. The activity sections of the lesson plans vary in three ways, depending on the interests of the group. Teaching Guide to Lesson 1, planned for a whole-group format, focuses on selecting and reading high-quality, age-appropriate storybooks for children from birth to about 5 years of age. The activity in Teaching Guide to Lesson 2 is meant for a small-group format and includes opportunities for role-playing expressive reading techniques as well as selecting high-quality books. Teaching Guide to Lesson 3, designed to be implemented in either a whole-group or small-group format, centers around craft-
ing visual aids for storytelling. Teaching Guide to Lesson 4 incorporates the group activities from all three teaching guides.

- You may decide to invite your public library’s children’s librarian, a Head Start, Even Start, or kindergarten teacher, or a family resource center coordinator to help present this lesson with you.
- The Literacy Action Plan Chart that is included in the fact sheet, A Call to Action, and as Appendix A, will help members track their progress in promoting early literacy after they have participated in your lesson.
- We hope that you will enjoy helping group participants learn how to feed your community’s hungry young minds through reading and language adventures.

Educational Behavioral Objectives

As a result of your lesson, participants should be able to do some or all of the following:
- Select and expressively read high-quality storybooks with children from birth to about age five.
- Create “props,” or visual aids, to make stories more enjoyable for children to hear again and again.
- Find ways to assist your public library to better serve families with young children, such as repairing worn books, raising funds to purchase more books and audio resources, creating visual storytelling props, and developing promotional methods to attract young parents to the library.
- Volunteer to read stories and model expressive story-reading techniques with children in their homes, churches, libraries, doctors’ offices, childcare centers, or other community settings.
- Encourage at least one service club, faith-based group, business organization, or media outlet in your community to take concrete action to promote reading among families with young children who might not otherwise have access to high-quality children’s books.
- Volunteer to read to children or help with pre-reading or reading activities at your county Head Start, family resource center, kindergarten class, or other school setting.

Recommended Supplies:
- One set of seven posters in the Keys to Great Parenting: Fun and Learning with Your Baby or Toddler program. Order from UK Agricultural Distribution Services by calling 859-257-7571. Mount the posters in numerical order with tape or other fasteners on your meeting room wall.
- Individual copies of the fact sheet, A Call to Action, (pages 7 and 8) enough for all participants
- Optional handouts: Neurons and Nursery Rhymes in a Nutshell (Appendix D, page 41), Tips for Reading with Children (Appendix E, page 43), Project StoryTime [Link 4, page 49], including the three-page project description and Tips for Reading and Recommended Books – Children Birth to Five Years [Link 5, page 49].
- Video, Ready to Learn, available at your county Extension office through the generosity of KIDS NOW, Kentucky’s Early Childhood Initiative, or at the state CYFAR Resource Library (ask your county Family and Consumer Sciences Extension agent for assistance, optional
- Projection screen, needed for the video, PowerPoint® presentation, or overhead transparencies
- TV/VCR, optional
- Reading, Cuddling, and Talking: Food for Hungry Young Minds PowerPoint® presentation [Link 6, page 49] disk or overhead transparencies, optional
- LCD or overhead projector, optional
- Flip pad of black-and-white PowerPoint® presentation masters, perhaps covered with contact paper and mounted on three-ring binder rings, if the above audiovisual resources are not available
- Flip chart, easel, masking tape, and felt-tip markers. List the lesson’s agenda on the flip chart beforehand.
- One or two supply tables for children’s books and craft activity materials
- Selection of library books for children birth to about five years of age, arranged on the supply tables
- Materials for creating the story mitt: Refer to the list of materials and the instructions in Make Your Own Story Mitt and Characters (Appendix B, page 35).
- Materials for creating felt boards and felt figures: Refer to the list of materials and the instructions in, Make Your Felt Board and Make Your Felt Board Pieces (Appendix C, page 37).
- Literacy Action Plan Chart
- End-of-session evaluation form
Step-by-step Lesson Plan

I. Introducing the topic
A. Welcome participants and introduce the public children's librarian or other early childhood professional. Roll call suggestion: Name your favorite children's story, poem, or nursery rhyme and explain briefly why it is meaningful to you.
B. Announce the title of this lesson and its central goal. (Please refer to the fact sheet, A Call to Action [pages 7 and 8], for the goal statement.)
C. Review the agenda for the lesson.

II. The importance of promoting literacy for Kentuckians of all ages
A. Explain briefly the importance of promoting language activities and the love of reading, using the information in A Call to Action.
   Note: For more information, please refer to the Resources section, page 27.
B. Show the video, Ready to Learn, or an excerpt from it. Alternatively, show and narrate the PowerPoint® presentation, use the PowerPoint® slides as transparencies for an overhead projector, or hold up 8½ by 11-inch paper copies of the PowerPoint® slides.
   1. Be sure to preview the video or PowerPoint®/overhead presentation beforehand and decide where to pause for discussion.
   2. When the video or PowerPoint®/overhead presentation ends, ask participants what struck them as especially important information for promoting literacy.
   3. Write their thoughts on the flip chart for later reference in section IV, #4.
C. Discuss the critical importance of parents, grandparents, and other family members in “feeding” babies and young children a rich diet of love, conversation, good storybooks, play, opportunities to explore, positive guidance, and safe, healthy places to live.
   1. Point out each of the Keys to Great Parenting posters on the wall as you talk about the seven principles, or keys, of wise parenting.
   2. Focus on Key #2, Cuddle, Talk, and Read with Your Child. Go over the main points of the poster, pointing out how critical it is that parents and other adults show their love to children while talking, listening, playing, singing, and reading.
   3. Encourage participants to share their experiences with children and language.
   4. Emphasize that television and other video materials should be carefully limited. Babies and young children learn language most effectively through direct contact with caring adults. Television chatter only seems like background noise to them.

III. Creating visual aids for storytelling
A. Ask the children's librarian or other early childhood professional to highlight the characteristics of high-quality, age-appropriate books for various age groups of children from birth to about five years of age. Some books will especially lend themselves to storytelling with visual aids such as a story mitt or felt board and characters.
B. Divide participants into small groups according to which visual aid they would like to make.
C. Hand out instruction sheets for each visual aid and review them. Complete instructions are available on the Web sites listed in the Resources section.
D. Ask a representative from each group to go to the supply table to select a book appropriate for 3- to 5-year-olds and materials for their activity.
E. Permit sufficient time to complete the construction of the visual aids. Move from group to group to check in on their progress and to supply any needs they may have.
F. Call the group back together. Ask each small group to demonstrate briefly their visual aids with their selected books and discuss appropriate community uses for story reading using such aids. Be sure to compliment the groups on their creativity.

IV. Literacy Action Plan Chart
A. Call attention to the Literacy Action Plan Chart. Distribute pencils.
   1. Give participants a few minutes to think through their personal Literacy Action Plan and write it on the chart. Suggest a
reasonably small and specific commitment for their action plan. Having a definite game plan will help the participant follow through.

2. Once everyone has had an opportunity to complete the Literacy Action Plan, go around the group, allowing each person to share his or her plan. As you listen, freely give compliments and encouragement. Every goal is important for promoting literacy.

3. Remind participants to bring their Literacy Action Plan Chart with them to the next meeting. Knowing that they will have an opportunity to report on their action plans will likely be an added incentive for following through.

4. Call attention to the ideas the group generated while watching the video or PowerPoint® slides. These ideas are the reasons why their Literacy Action Plans are so important.

B. After participants have completed their Literacy Action Plan, invite them to close their eyes, take several deep breaths, and relax.

1. Ask them to imagine that they are successfully carrying out their action plans just the way they want.

2. Lead them in visualizing the positive results and in experiencing how good their success feels. Explain that mental pictures can be a very effective way of learning. Many athletes find visualization to be an essential technique for improving their skills.

3. Tell the group that you will check back with them at the next meeting and again in six months, so that the group can share their progress in promoting literacy.

V. Program Evaluation Form and Dismissal

A. Distribute the End-of-Session Evaluation form. Explain its importance for you in planning follow-up literacy promotion activities. Tell them you will keep their forms and hand them back during your follow-up session with them in six months, when you will ask them to complete the Follow-up Questionnaire.

B. Give the group a few minutes to complete the evaluation sheet and hand it in before they leave.

C. Thank participants for their attention and interest in the topic. Leave them with the thought that promoting literacy in the Commonwealth is a never-ending challenge, but their dedication will make a big difference to individuals, families, and their community.