

TEACHING WITH INGENUITY

Using the Newspaper to Teach Reading and Writing

By Susan Hanson

What do you use to teach reading when there is a limited amount of material published in your language? Newspapers and magazines can be a source of reading material that is current, relevant, and motivational for your students. One way to make use of these sources is to select an article or photo caption (with an interesting photo) that would appeal to your students. For classes that are learning in the vernacular, the text can be translated into the local language before it is used with students.

In class, read the title of the selection to the students without showing them the picture and ask them what they predict the picture will be about. Students will immediately be hooked because the activity resembles a game. Asking students to predict what the picture will be about based on the title teaches the important reading strategy of predicting. With teacher guidance, the students use their background knowledge and connect it with the new material to predict what the new material might be about. Once the students see the value in predicting, they will independently use this strategy while reading.

After the students have stated their predictions, show the picture to them. Much to everyone's surprise, the picture will often be different from what they had visualized. You can use that element of surprise to have them then predict what they will learn from the selection.

The next step is to read the article to the students. Afterward, lead a brainstorming session centered on the five Ws: who, what, where, when, and why. Record the students' responses on a bubble chart drawn on the board or chart paper (see Figure 1 on page 15 for an example). Besides information about the five Ws, record any connections and questions the students have. By making connections to their own experiences, the students become more engaged and they develop a deeper understanding of the material. For example, if the selection includes a bamboo raft, they might make the connection to another story they read about a wooden raft to help understand what is happening in this selection. Making connections is a strategy that proficient readers use.

Asking students to think of questions they have about the selection is another strategy that leads to deeper understanding. Consider asking the students: "What questions do you have about this article?" "Do you think this could really happen?" "Why or why not?" "What did you wonder about as you were reading?" Discuss how asking questions helps a reader better understand the material being read.

Once the bubble map is filled with the students' words answering who, what, where, when, and why, and includes connections and their questions, ask the students to write a story about the selection. The words in the bubble map can help direct them in their writing. You can also guide them in using key vocabulary that you want them to learn and use in their

writing by including these words in the bubble map. For example, if the story is about a mysterious raft that might have brought foreigners to their country, ask them: "What new word did we learn to describe people from another country?" This new vocabulary can be added to the bubble map for them to consider using in their writing.

Students will each write their own version of the story and will select a different combination of words from the bubble map. As they string the words together to write a story, they are expanding their vocabulary and reading skills as well as their writing ability. Students will be amazed at how easy it is for them to write a story after participating in the who, what, where, when, why brainstorming activity.

The next step is for them to read their stories to partners and listen to their partners' stories. The students will have fun comparing their writing to their partners', and as they do so, they will also be receiving practice with reading fluently. Fluency, which is the ability to read accurately, quickly, and with expression, is a skill that is key to growth in reading. Because the students have heard the words, spoken them, and used them in their own writing, they will be able to read the story fluently.

The steps for this literacy technique are outlined in the side-

Steps for Using a Newspaper or Magazine Picture and Article to Teach Reading and Writing

- Select a motivational newspaper picture with a caption and/or article.
- Read the title to the students without showing them the picture.
- Ask the students to predict what the picture will be based on the title.
- Show the picture to the students.
- Ask the students to predict what the selection will be about.
- Ask the students to listen to find out the 5 Ws: who, what, where, when, and why.
- Read the selection to the students.
- Ask the students questions using the 5 Ws.
- Ask the students to state any connections they made to their own experiences or any questions they have.
- Record the students' words on a bubble chart (see Figure 1 on page 15 for an example).
- Ask the students to write a news story using the words found in the completed bubble chart as a guide.
- Ask the students to share their stories with partners.
- Ask volunteers to read their stories to the whole class.



bar on page 14. Not only does this technique help students grow in their ability to read with comprehension and fluency, it models the value of using reading materials such as newspapers and it provides students the opportunity to view themselves as capable readers and writers. The experience of reading successfully today provides students with the confidence to read more difficult material tomorrow.

Now you too will become an avid collector of motivational newspaper and magazine articles to use with students. Try this approach with your students, and watch them grow in their reading and writing skills.

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SAMPLE LESSON

Focus/Standards:

Prediction strategies, vocabulary development, word analysis, composing a story.

Introduction:

Read the title of the article *Raft Found on Ant* (see Figure 2), and ask the students to predict what the picture will be.

After the students have made their predictions, show them the picture in Figure 2 and discuss the meaning of the title in relation to the picture.

Introduce the following concepts and vocabulary: bamboo, occupy, foreigners, and investigate.

Read Aloud:

Read the story and caption to the students and discuss the vocabulary and concepts again as they appear in the article.

Writing:

Brainstorm with the students possible answers to *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *why* type questions. Write the students' answers on a bubble chart, connecting each question to its answers with arrows. A sample bubble chart, showing examples of student responses to *why*, is shown in Figure 1.

Invite the students to write their own version of the story, referring to the words displayed in the bubble chart.

Closure:

Ask the students to share their stories with partners. Ask volunteers to share their writing with the group.

Figure 1. Bubble Chart

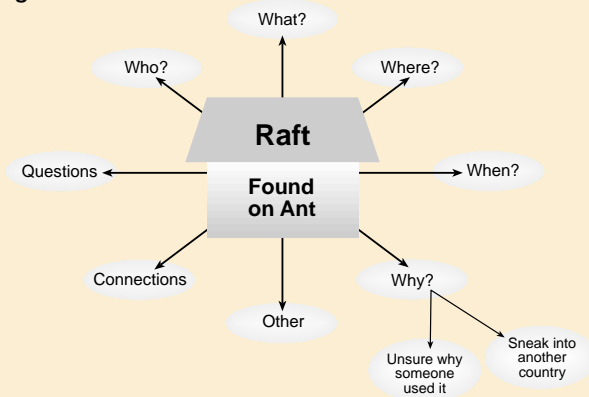


Figure 2. This News Article and Picture Appeared in *The Kaselehlie Press* on March 18, 2004

Raft Found on Ant

By Richard Sehpin

Pohnpei – The raft kept showing up, it was first discovered in Yap State, then in Sapwuahfik atoll, and now it has been discovered in Ant atoll.

A raft was found recently floating in the ocean near Ant atoll, situated a few miles away from Pohnpei, where it was spotted by fishermen from Kitt. The fishermen then dragged the raft from the ocean and brought it in to Ant atoll, where it was then reported to the Department of Public Safety.

Under the order of Pohnpei State Chief of Police Mr. Joe Roby, police officers were then sent to Ant atoll to investigate the raft. When the police officers arrived at Ant atoll they then found out that the raft is very similar to the ones that were found in Yap State and Sapwuahfik atoll. These rafts are believed to be from the Asian countries, according to Chief Roby.

The raft is made out of bamboo and has a small hut on it that can be occupied by 3 to 4 people. No one was found during the discovery of the raft, said Chief Roby. However, the Department of Public Safety is very concerned about the raft, because it may be possible for foreigners to use these rafts to sneak into another country, added Chief Roby.

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▷ This unoccupied raft was found floating off the shores of Ant.