



Provincial Outreach  
Program for the Early Years

[www.popey.ca](http://www.popey.ca)

# Story Workshop and Bookmaking

Date: April 16, 2025

Time 8:30-2:30

Presenter:  
**Megan Zeni**



[www.popey.ca](http://www.popey.ca)



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POPEY 

**We acknowledge that our work takes place on the traditional and unceded territories of the Indigenous Peoples of British Columbia, home to 198 distinct Nations. Across Canada, we also recognize the 46 treaties and agreements that reflect ongoing relationships with the land.**



We are grateful to the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples for their care and teachings about the Earth.

This acknowledgment reminds us of our responsibilities to these relationships and the ancestral lands where we live, work, and learn.



## Strategies, resources and ideas to build Story Workshop and Bookmaking opportunities in your classroom

### Story Workshop

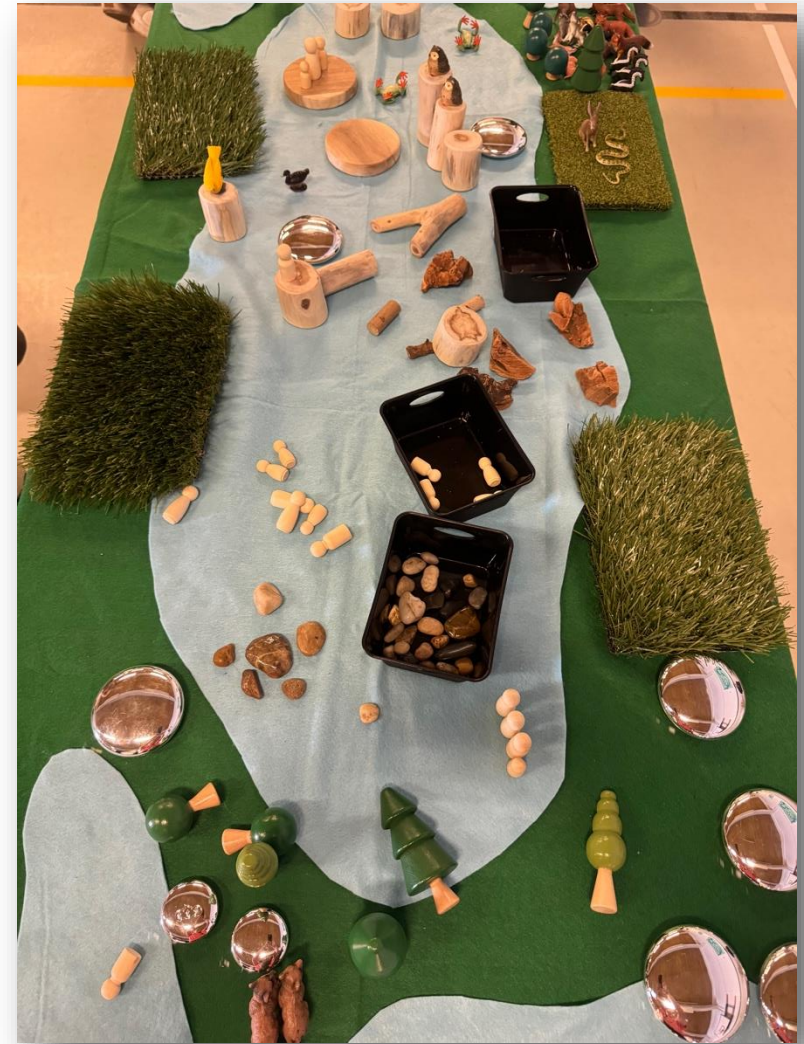
- ✓ What is story workshop?
- ✓ Why story workshop?
- ✓ What can story workshop look like?
- ✓ Extensions and opportunities
- ✓ Role of the teacher

### Bookmaking

- ✓ What is bookmaking?
- ✓ Why bookmaking?
- ✓ What can bookmaking look like?
- ✓ Extensions and opportunities
- ✓ Role of the teacher



# What is Story Workshop?



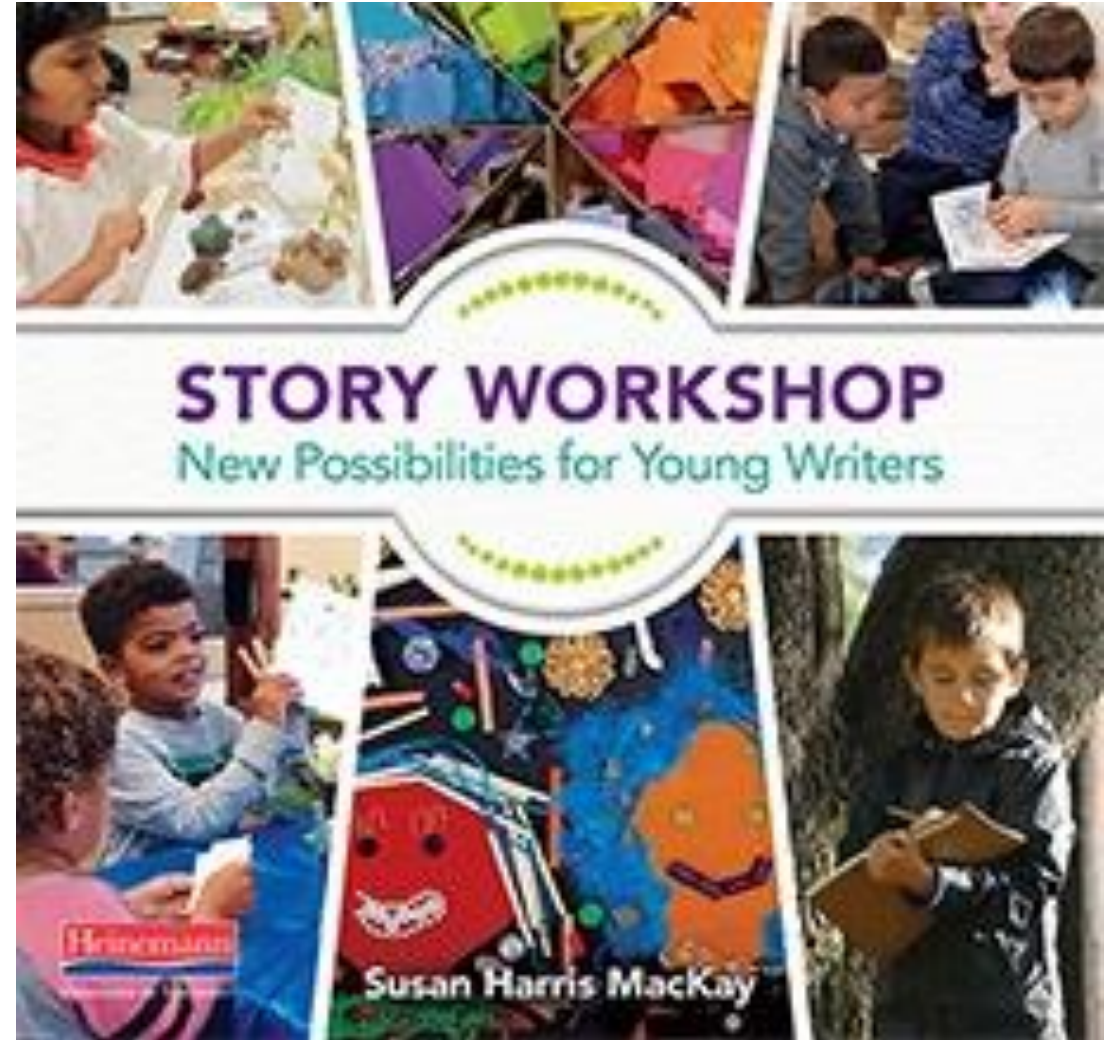




# Why Story Workshop?

“Story Workshop is designed to create conditions for children to think about and make stories from the world they have experienced”

Susan Harris McKay





# Why Story Workshop?

The sharing of stories

Immersion in the arts

Time for play

A focus on meaning making





# Why Story Workshop?



- ✓ Honours student voice
- ✓ Inclusive and accessible
- ✓ Practices agency
- ✓ Low prep, high yield routine
- ✓ Responsive to lived experience
- ✓ Nurtures metaphor
- ✓ Contributes to a learning community
- ✓ Children become story creators, not just story consumers
- ✓ Builds meaningful contexts for story writing
- ✓ An effective and equitable assessment tool

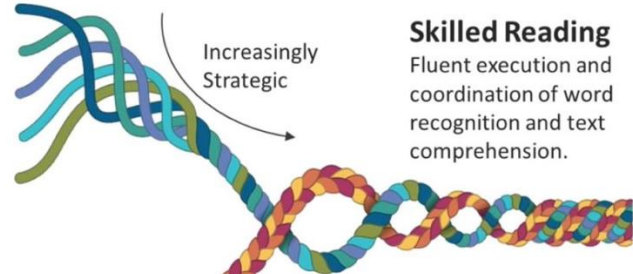




# Why Story Workshop?

## Language Comprehension

- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge



## Skilled Reading

Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

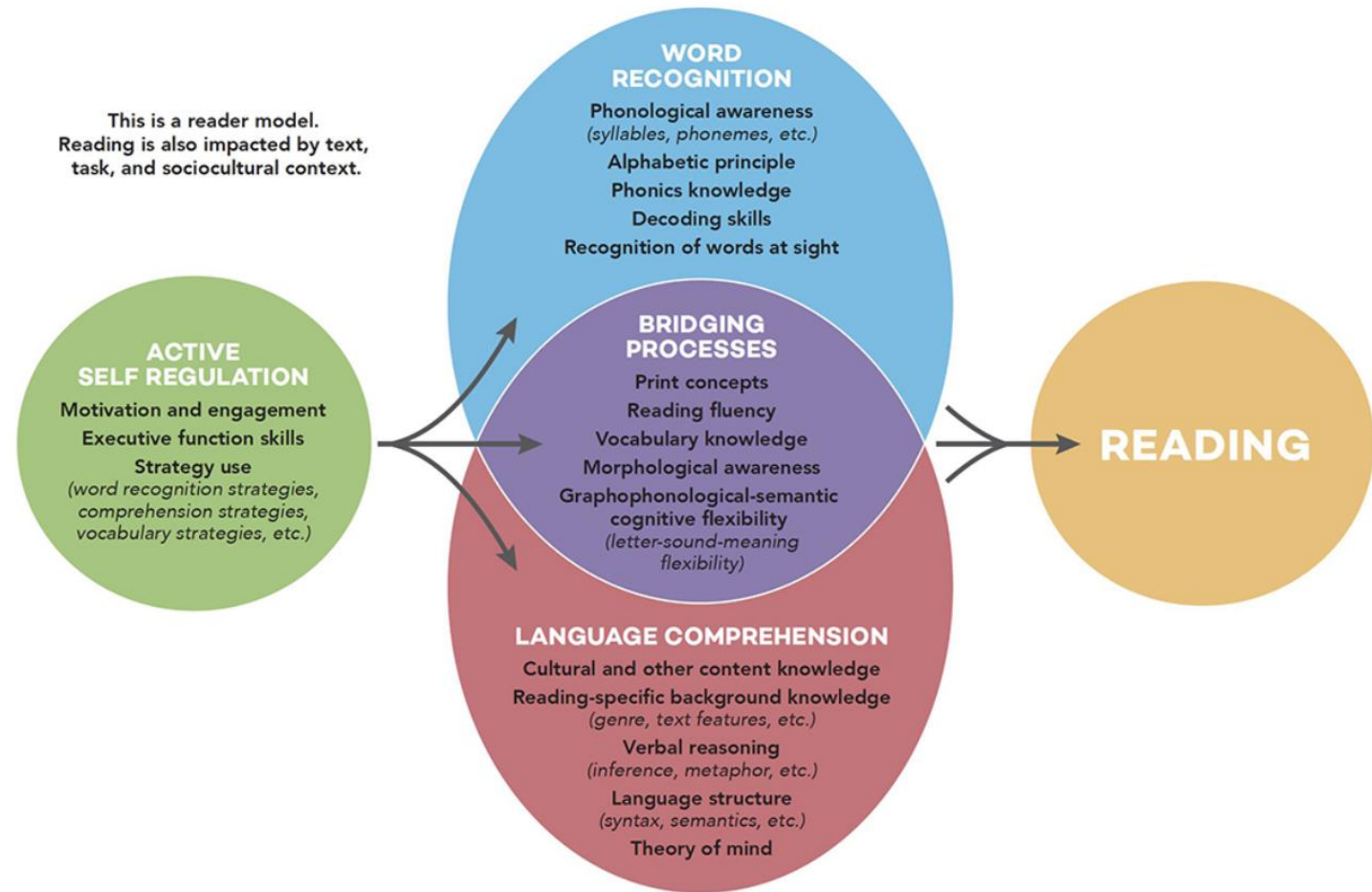
## Word Recognition

- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition



Scarborough, H. 2001. Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. Pp. 97-110 in S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.) *Handbook of Early Literacy*. NY: Guilford Press.

This is a reader model. Reading is also impacted by text, task, and sociocultural context.



What have you noticed in your experience?

Duke and Cartwright, 2021



# What might it look like?







# What might it look like?



## Some consistent features:

- ✓ A prepared environment
- ✓ Provocations and invitations
- ✓ Building the story
- ✓ Sharing the story
- ✓ Reflecting on the story



# Story making is world making

What **three words** do **you** feel are most important when it comes to supporting your students as **story tellers** and **world makers**?

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Equity	Inventiveness	Meaning making	Creativity
Voice	Innovation	Emotional literacy	Generosity
Agency	Problem solving	Compassion	Hope
Empathy	Leadership	Humour	Care
Collaboration	Engagement	Interdependence	Power
Listening	Vision	Perspective taking	Uncertainty
Imagination	Trust	Community	Reading
Inquiry	Play	Connection	Writing
Curiosity	Art	Flexibility	Self-efficacy

---

What questions do these words inspire you to ask?

Discuss & share your three words with your table group





# Play Affordances







# What do you need?



- ✓ High and low affordance  
loose parts
- ✓ Play mats
- ✓ Provocation or Invitations  
for play
- ✓ Time, space & freedom to  
play



# Getting started



Photo credit: Megan Zeni



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# Loose parts as provocations



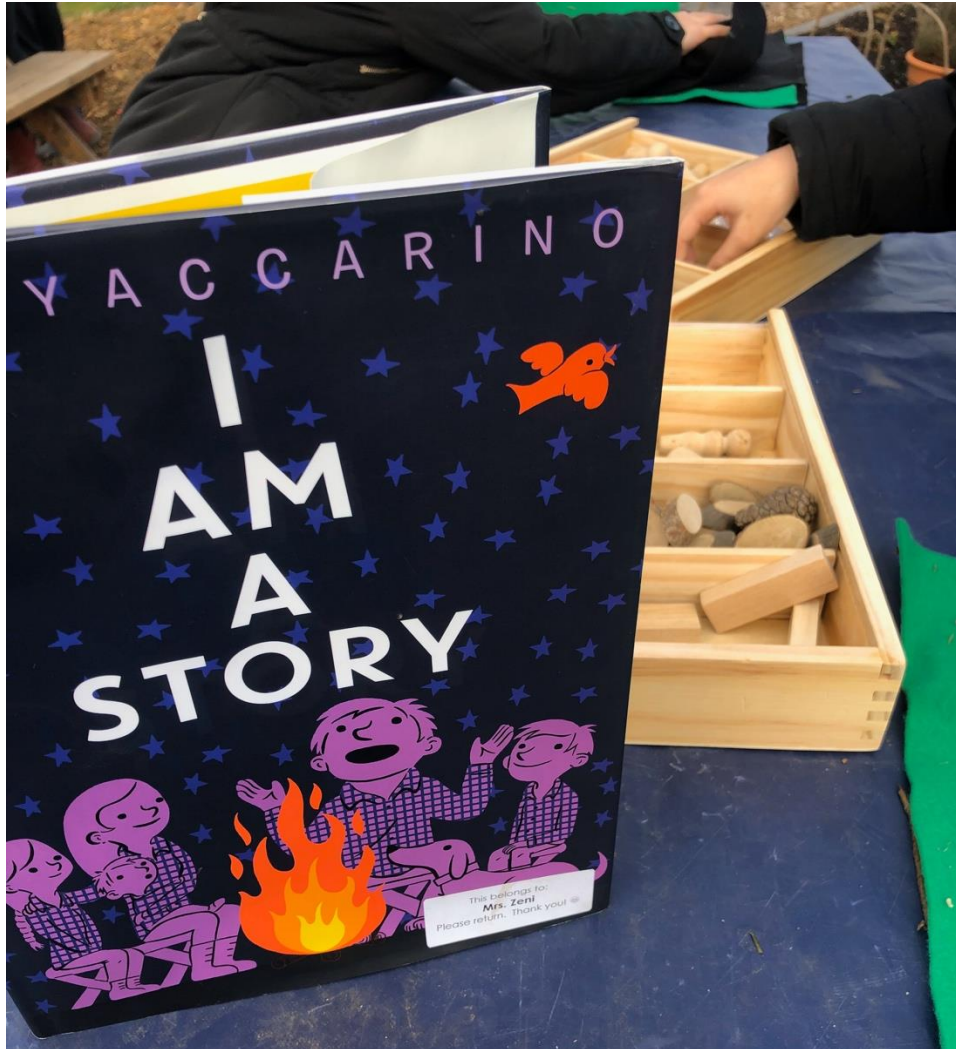
When children interact with loose parts, they enter a world of “what if” that promotes the type of thinking that leads to problem solving and theoretical reasoning. Loose parts enhance children’s ability to think imaginatively and see solutions, and they bring a sense of adventure and excitement to children’s play.

–Daly & Beloglovsky in  
Loose Parts: Inspiring Play in Young Children





# How story workshop unfolds





# Story Grammar Marker (SGM)™



Each of the symbols in the visual represent a story grammar element.

The **Character** icon represents a person, animal, or other being.

The **Star** was chosen as the icon for the **Setting**. The star is a good center for a semantic map or web.

The **Shoe** represents the **Initiating Event** because it is the “kick-off” of the story.

The **Heart** represents the “**Feelings**” a Character has in response to the initiating event.

The **Plan** is represented by a **Hand**.

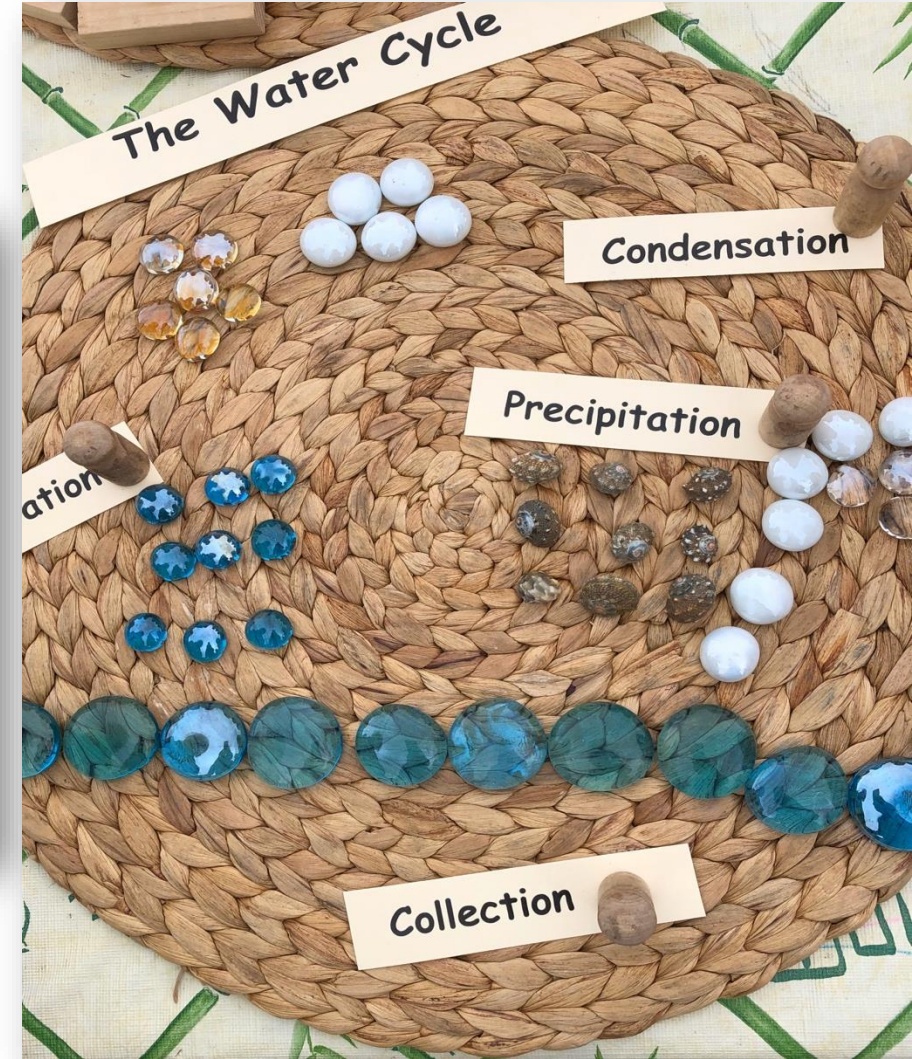
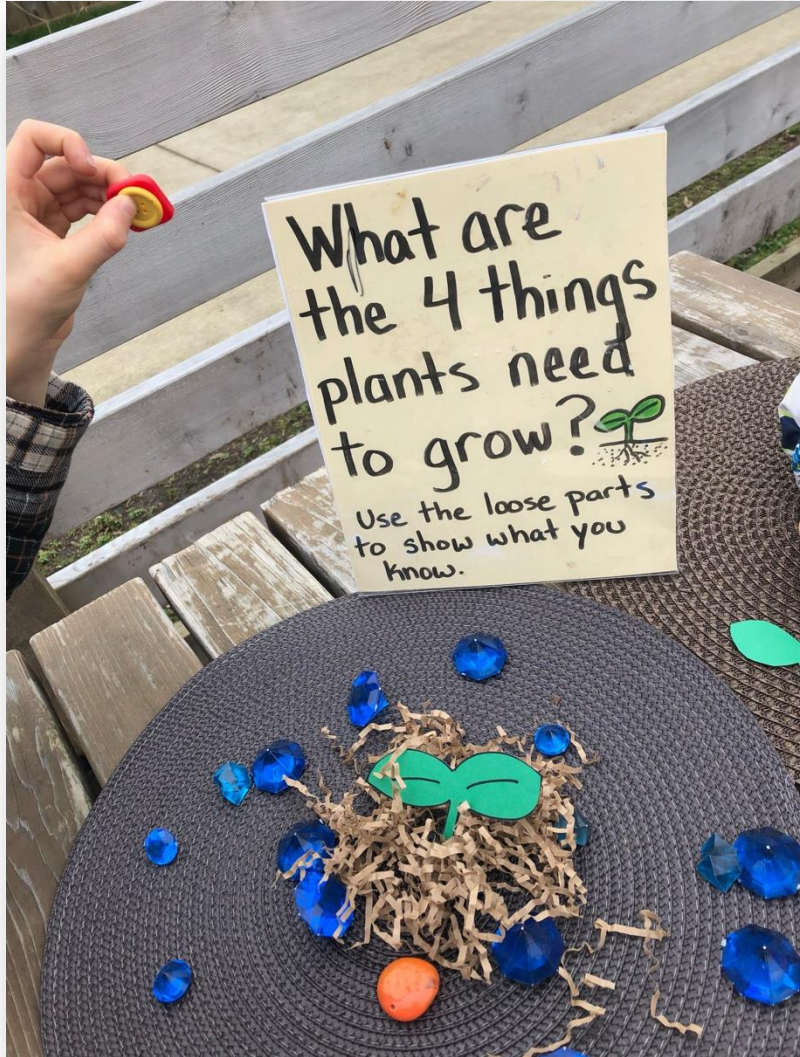
Each of the beads represents a sequence or lists of **actions**.

The **direct consequence** of the story is represented by a **bow** because it ties the story together.

The **Resolution** of the story is how the character feels about the Direct Consequence. It may include a moral or a lesson learned. It is represented by three small hearts.



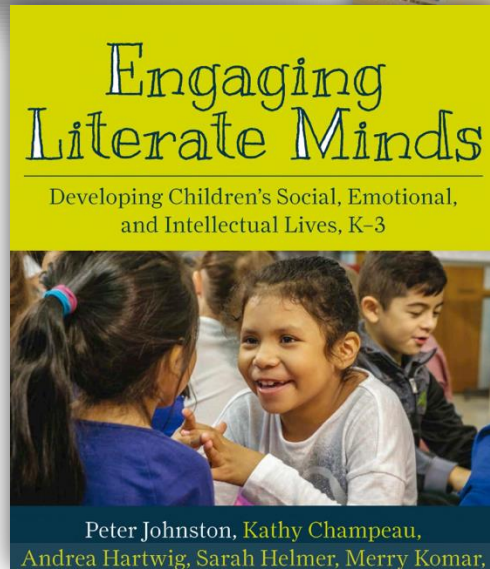
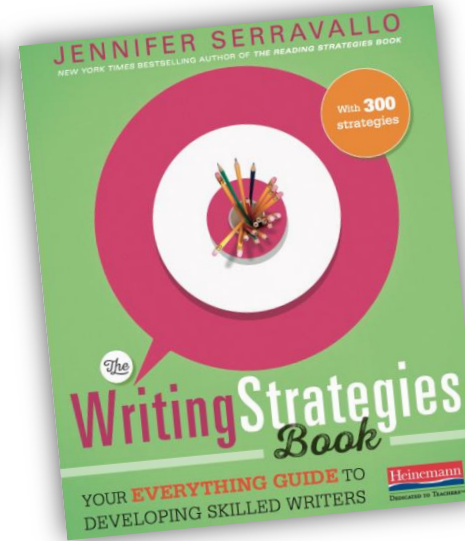
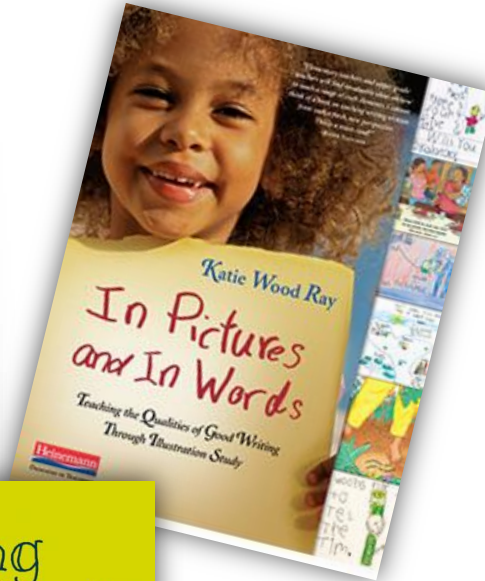
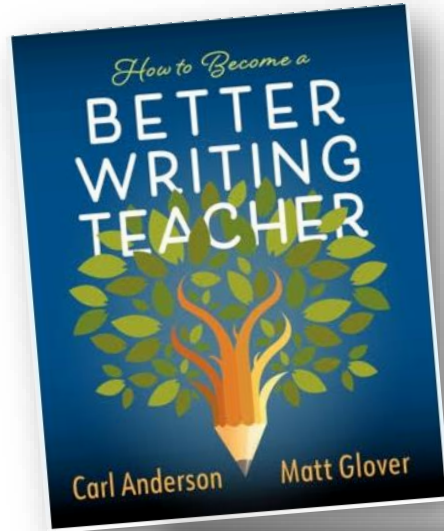
# Curriculum Connections







# Bookmaking!



**Beware of deferring opportunities for working with complexity until later.**  
Marie Clay



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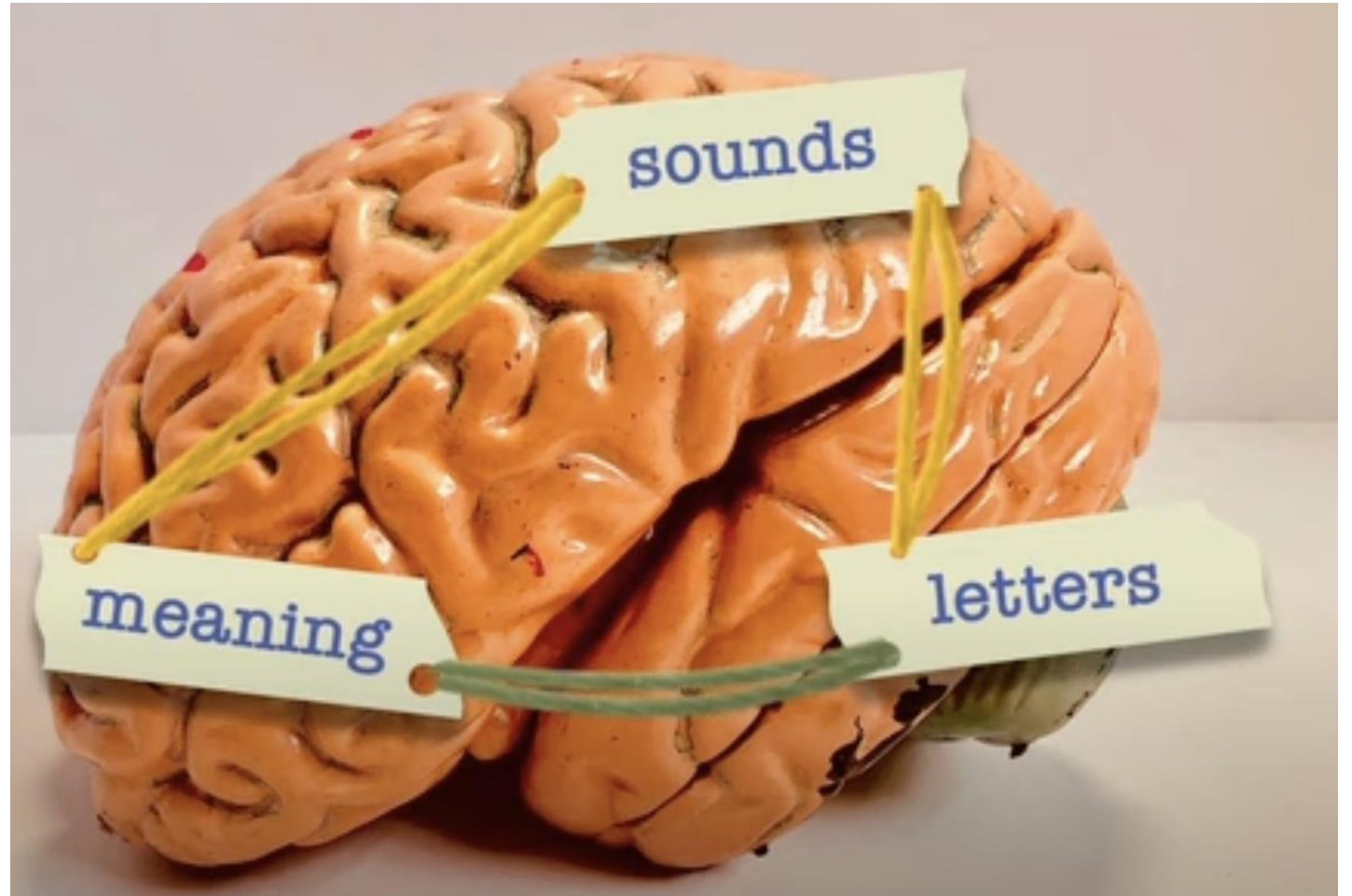
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# Why Bookmaking?

## The Reading Brain

Children need multiple opportunities to establish the neuropathways that connect the parts of the brain,  
and **form new pathways, or shortcuts, with consolidation.**







This is where phonemic awareness, your phonics program and your writing instruction marry up and hit the road!

## About Conventions:

**“Nobody said ‘Wow, I loved that book—it had great conventions! But they are more likely to love the book because it has conventions.’”**

Matt Glover



# Why Bookmaking?

## Bookmaking can:

- ❖ build resilience
  - ❖ overcoming fear of the blank page
  - ❖ build stamina
  - ❖ process over product
- ❖ build identity
  - ❖ My voice
  - ❖ My passions
  - ❖ My thinking



# What we know about writing development

## Kids need:

- **Explicit and sequenced instruction** that helps them progress along a learning continuum
- **Critical feedback** that guides them towards next steps
- **Extensive opportunities** to write on topics they **care** about





# Why this model?

## Ideas that resonate....

Children have stories to tell

It's important to build on children's compositional thinking

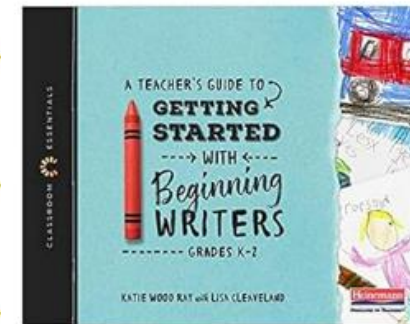
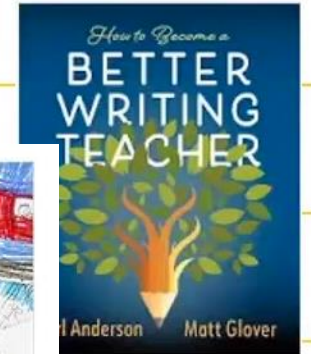
Children need to be taught to read like a writer

Importance of nudges vs. pushes

There's a difference between teaching and correcting and teaching and immersing

The importance of choice

Honoring approximations







# Guiding Principles

**Relationships:** *knowing students as people, and knowing them as writers*

**Engagement:** *choice and engagement, authentic audiences*

**Authenticity:** *doers of the “whole” behaviour*

**Knowledge Base:** *teachers need to have extensive knowledge about writing*

**Curricular Decision-making:** *teachers know their students best*

**Mentor Authors:** *study what experienced writers do*

**Differentiated Instruction:** *using conferences to consider varied needs*

**Starting with Strengths:** *determining what they can already do*

**Nudging:** *zone of proximal development*

**Explicit Teaching:** *a writing teachers responsibility is to teach*

**Independence:** *helping students learn to write without the teacher*



A black and white portrait of Bell Hooks, a Black woman with her hair pulled back, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark jacket and a patterned scarf. Her arms are crossed, and she is wearing a silver bracelet on her left wrist. The background is a solid blue color.

“

**AS A CLASSROOM COMMUNITY,**  
our capacity to generate  
excitement is deeply affected by  
our interest in one another, in  
hearing one another's voices,  
in recognizing one  
another's presence.

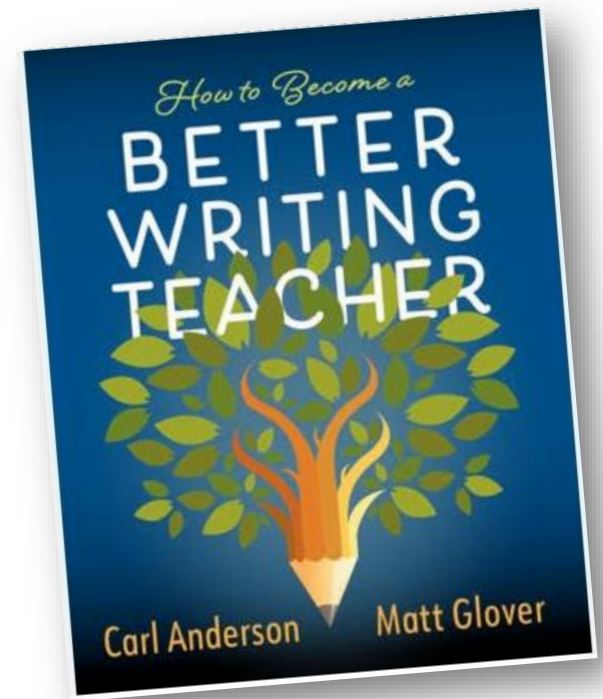
**—BELL HOOKS**





# Pause & Reflect

Alignment diagnostic:  
*time to do some thinking.....*



## 1.1 Alignment Diagnostic

Principle	Diagnostic Questions	I've got this already.	I need to work on this.
Students learn about writing best when they feel known by their teachers and feel connected to them. (Chapter 2)	Do you know about each of your students' multiple identities and interests?		
	Do you know all of your students, the more social ones <i>and</i> the ones who are quieter?		
	Can you talk <i>specifically</i> about each of your students as writers?		
	Are you able to consistently see your students' strengths as writers, instead of focusing on what they can't do?		





## A possible progression:

**Session 1:** samples of genre: memoir, number books, information books, wordless books, teacher writing, etc. (*Immersion*)

- Choice of genre, choice of paper
- What will you be doing? Co-create criteria
- Reflection and share: what is your book about? What might you add/change next time?

**Session 2:** author moves: details and elaborations (*reading like a writer*)

- What do mentor authors do? Teacher samples and picture books
- Think about your book: how could you use some of these moves?
- Co-create criteria for books.
- Reflection: what did you change, add? How is it going?







# Getting Started: Early Primary

## **Session 3:** mentor texts and conventions: particular conventions

- High frequency words and letters/sounds (*this is what phonics is for!*)
- Punctuation
- Reflection: what did you do to make your writing/book better today?

## **Session 4:** revisit criteria for books: features of books (*writing like a reader*)

- How do you know your book is finished?
- Conventions: check your words...what do you know about sounds/letters? What could help you in the classroom?
- Reflection: who helped you or what did you do to make your writing better today?



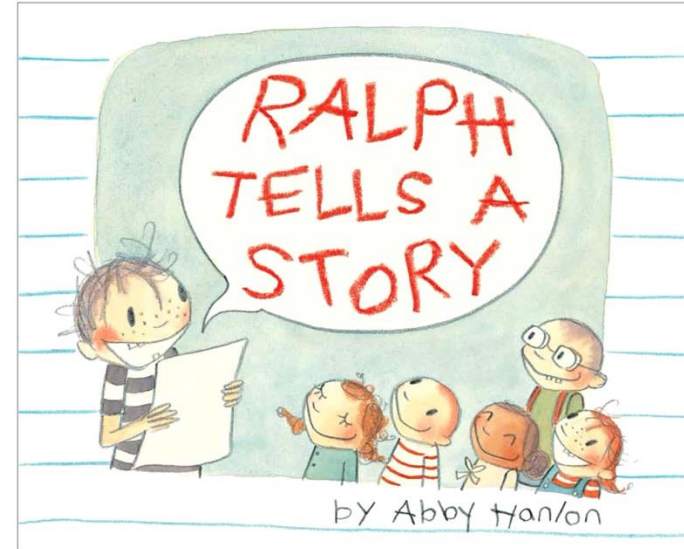


# Getting Started: Early Primary

**Session 5:** what will you do next? Brainstorming new ideas

- Could introduce a new genre?

**Session 6:** Ralph Tells a Story; Now that you know about making books, what advice would you give kids just starting? How many different titles do we have in the class? Celebration!!







# Getting Started: Late Primary

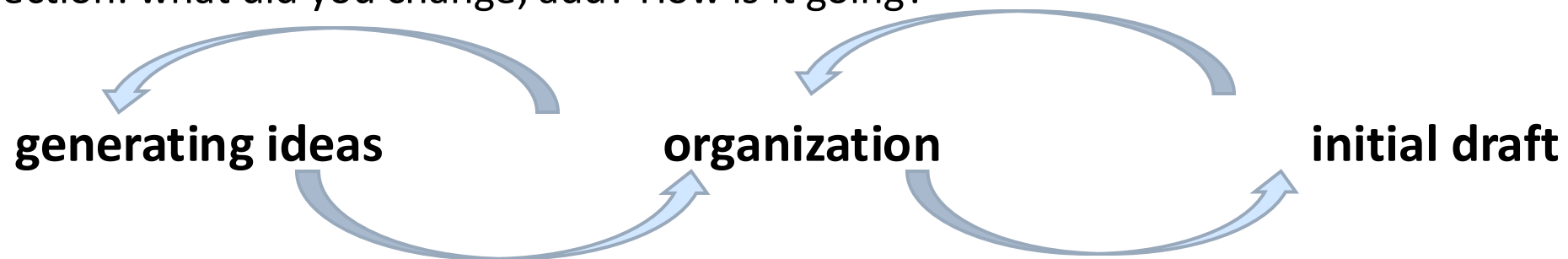
## *a sample progression*

**Week 1:** samples of genre: memoir, information books, teacher writing, etc. (*Immersion*)

- Choice of genre, choice of paper: **purpose, audience, passions**
- What will you be doing? Co-create criteria
- Reflection and share: what is your book about? **What genre did you choose and why?**

**Week 2:** author moves: details and elaborations (*reading like a writer*)

- what do mentor authors do? Teacher samples and picture books. How could you use some of these moves?
- **Co-create criteria for books. Introduce graphic organizers.**
- Reflection: what did you change, add? How is it going?





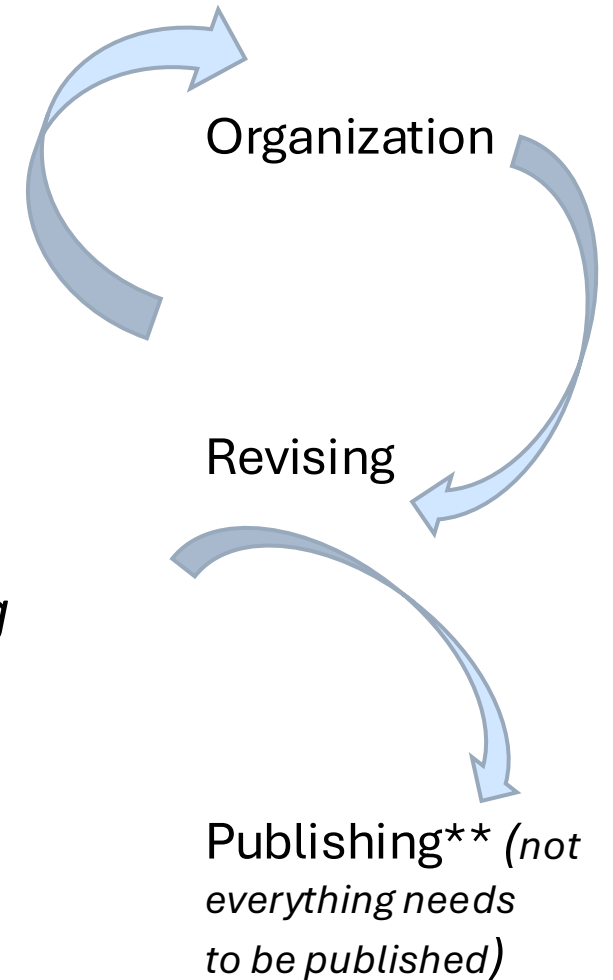
# Getting Started: Late Primary

## Session 3: mentor texts and conventions

- Particular conventions your students need:
  - High frequency words and content vocabulary
  - Punctuation
  - Reflection: what did you do to make your writing/book better today?

## Session 4: revisit criteria for books: features of books (*writing like a reader*)

- How do you know your book is finished?
- Reflection: who helped you or what did you do to make your writing better today?

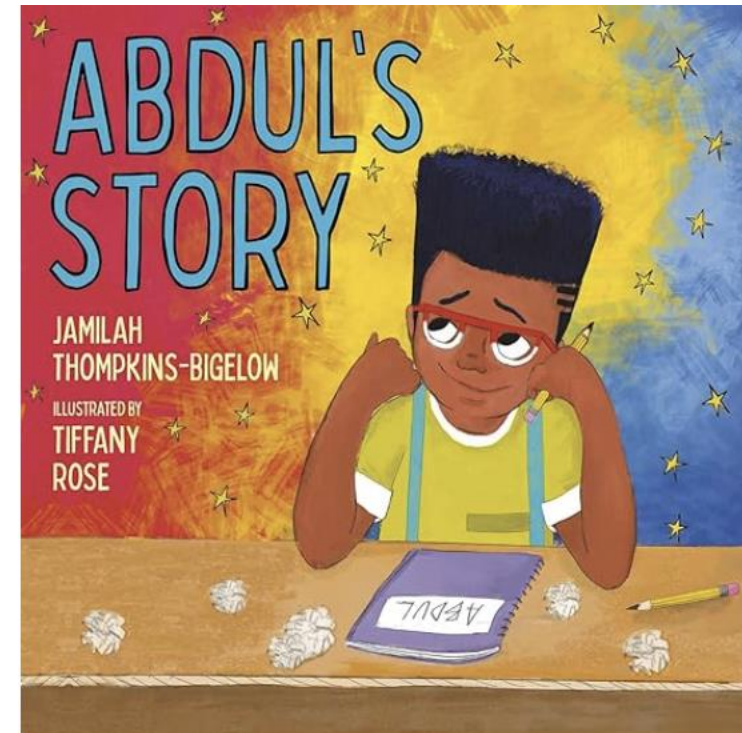






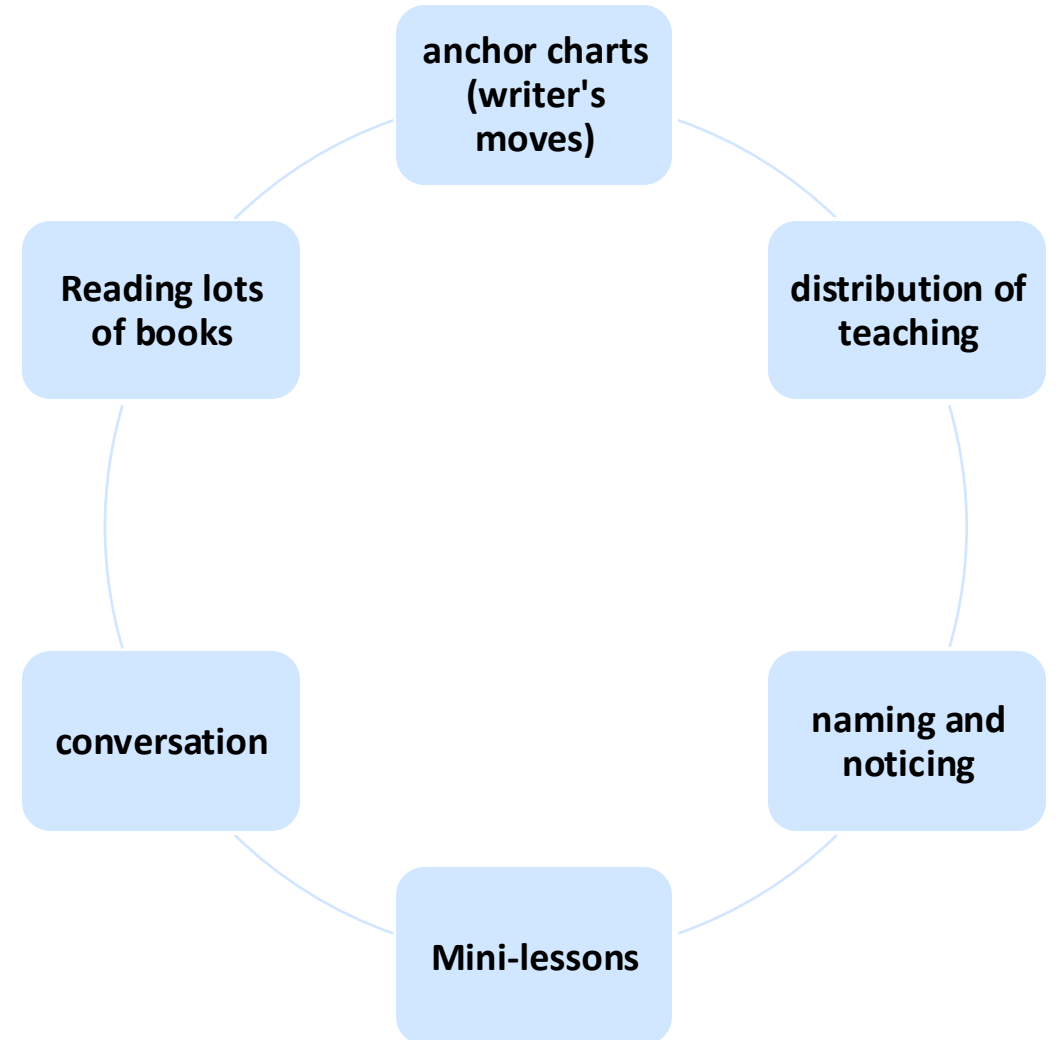
# Getting Started: Late Primary

- Session 5: what will you do next?  
Brainstorming new ideas
  - Could introduce a new genre?
- Session 6: Abdul's Story; Now that you know about making books, what advice would you give kids just starting? How many different titles do we have in the class? Celebration!!



## A community of writers share ‘Writer Moves’

- ✓ Reading books; creating a library of friends
- ✓ Knit together the literacy program of ‘this classroom’
- ✓ Conversation: noticing and naming
- ✓ Mini lessons: AFL
  - ✓ Teacher pivots as children make discoveries
- ✓ Anchor charts: created organically
  - ✓ Community specific
- ✓ “The whole game”





# Extra Notes

- Not everything needs to be published
- Mini-lessons: teacher leads
- Writing continuum
- Immersion, immersion, immersion:
  - learning from mentors
  - Noticing and naming
- Conferencing—responsive to student (principles of writing instruction)
  - How? When? What?
- Peer feedback—community of writers

“Getting to know your students as writers and as people is one of the most important things you can do as a writing teacher.”

Matt Glover

**How can you see this pedagogy crossing curriculum lines?**





## Online resources

- [Teaching Preschool Parnters: Getting Started with Story Workshop](#)
- [Models of Reading](#)
- [Story Grammar Marker](#)
- [Project Zero: Thinking With Materials](#)
- [Learning in the Primary Years](#)
- [A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction](#)
- [Thinking With Materials Resources SD23 \(Central Okanagan\)](#)
- [Teaching Elementary Students to Be Effective Writers](#)

## Videos

- [Kindergarten Story Workshop](#)
- [Learn71](#)
- [The Reading Brain: How We Learn to Read](#)

## Books

- **Becoming a Better Writing Teacher**; Carl Anderson & Matt Glover
- **The Culture of Education**, Jerome Bruner
- **Loose Parts: Inspiring Play in Young Children**, Daly & Beloglovsky,
- **StoryMaking**, Michelle Kay Compton & Robin Chappelle Thompson,
- **Ralph Tells a Story**, Abby Hanlon,
- **Engaging Literate Minds: Developing Children's Social, Emotional and Intellectual Lives, K-3**, Peter Johnston, Kathy Champeau, Andrea Hartwig, Sarah Helmer, Merry Komar Tara Krueger, Laurie McCarthy;
- **Story Workshop: New Possibilities for Young Writers**, Susan Harris MacKay,
- **Power of Inquiry**, Kath Murdoch,
- **What's Next for This Beginning Writer?**, Janine Reid, Betty Schultze, Ulla Petersen;
- **Abdul's Story**, Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow
- **Embers: One Ojibway's Meditations**, Richard Wagamese,
- **In Pictures and In Words**, Katie Wood Ray
- **The Writing Book**; The Literacy Place





Thank you from the POPEY team!

