

Using Pictures to Promote Conversation — Pre-Kindergarten

Ohio Standards Connections

Communications: Oral and Visual

Benchmark A

Use active listening strategies to identify the main idea and to gain information from oral presentations.

(Grades Pre-Kindergarten - 2)

Indicator 1

Attend to speakers, stories, poems and songs.

(Grade Pre-Kindergarten)

Benchmark B

Connect prior experiences, insights and ideas to those of a speaker.

(Grades Pre-Kindergarten - 2)

Indicator 2

Connect information and events to personal experiences by sharing or commenting.

(Grade Pre-Kindergarten)

Benchmark D

Speak clearly and at an appropriate pace and volume.

(Grades Pre-Kindergarten - 2)

Indicator 4

Speak clearly and understandably to express ideas, feelings and needs.

(Grade Pre-Kindergarten)

Indicator 5

Initiate and sustain a conversation through turn taking.

(Grade Pre-Kindergarten)

Lesson Summary:

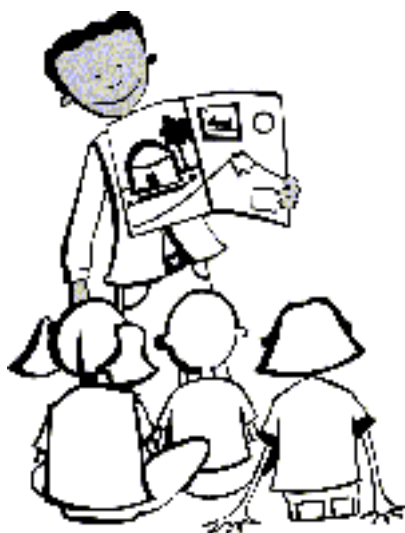
Students will initiate and sustain a conversation of three or more exchanges on a topic while exploring a collection of large photographs pertaining to that topic. The teacher will create a comfortable setting and provide a variety of books and/or a collection of mounted photographs to enjoy and talk about in a climate of verbal explorations.

Estimated Duration: *Dependent on children's interests, the estimated time for this lesson is 15-30 minutes.*

Commentary:

Rich, complex experiences within the context of daily routines, activities and play provide opportunities for promoting conversations with and among young children. Conversational turns and exchanges for preschool children are highly dependent upon the interest of the child, the quality of the experience and the degree to which the teacher understands dialogue and questioning techniques. This lesson uses pictures as a stimulus to assist children as they convey, share and discuss information. In turn, it provides students with opportunities to take turns and engage in a conversational setting.

The Ohio teachers who used this lesson with children reported that it served as a reminder of how they influence children's listening and speaking skills through modeling. They noted how teachers can react to pictures with their children and, consequently, enable the children to listen to the ways adults make connections between their own experiences and the photograph or picture.



During the lesson, teachers can validate a child's responses and support new understandings and questions. This helps legitimize what children say and creates a risk free setting for sharing ideas or feelings. It places the teacher in a position where he or she is not doing all the talking and encourages him or her to use more open-ended questions with children. As a teacher and the children examine a picture in greater depth, the children's vocabulary may expand. As the teacher or the children notice familiar things in the picture or hear familiar

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Other Related Ohio Standards

Acquisition of Vocabulary

Benchmark A

Use context clues to determine the meaning of new vocabulary.

(Grades Pre-Kindergarten - 3)

Indicator 1

Understand the meaning of new words from the context of conversations, the use of pictures that accompany text or the use of concrete objects.

(Grade Pre-Kindergarten)

Reading Applications: Informational, Technical and Persuasive Text

Benchmark A

Use text features and structures to organize content, draw conclusions and build text knowledge.

(Grades Pre-Kindergarten - 3)

Indicator 1

Use pictures and illustrations to aid comprehension.

(Grade Pre-Kindergarten)

Benchmark D

Use visual aids as sources to gain additional information from text.

(Grades Pre-Kindergarten - 3)

Indicator 4

Gain text information from pictures, photos, simple charts and labels.

(Grade Pre-Kindergarten)

experiences or concepts expressed during the discussion, they encounter new words.

Teachers also found the lesson's success was dependent on a collection of rich and stimulating pictures. Children respond well to visual stimuli but the capacity of the image to generate a lively and enduring conversation hinges on the images (picture books or photographs) with child-oriented themes, exciting colors and "lots going on." In addition, teachers found that the closer the children were to the picture, even to the extent that they could hold the picture, raised the level of the children's engagement. The structure of the group and the group dynamics were of particular interest to the teachers using this lesson as well. They concluded that the group's size is best kept to three to five children, making "taking turns" more manageable. They similarly found the groups worked best when they were mixed – the outspoken child and the reserved child were in the same group – demonstrating listening skills and staying with and supporting the topic.

Pre-Assessment:

Systematically and intentionally observe children engaged in talk with adults and/or peers within the context of daily routines and play. Make note of the interactions of each child, observing (1) turn-taking, (2) number of exchanges and (3) focus on topic. Documentation may be either an audio or video tape recording, script or an anecdotal description of the interactions supported with a checklist.

Post-Assessment:

- Systematically and intentionally invite individual or small groups of children to engage in talk. Make note of the interactions of each child, observing (1) turn-taking, (2) number of exchanges and (3) focus on topic. Documentation may be either an audio or video tape recording, script or an anecdotal description of the interactions supported with a checklist.
- Compare the increase in quality and quantity of conversational exchanges from prior documentation to determine child progress or the evaluation of the activity, the lesson or the teacher's strategies.

Instructional Procedures:

1. Pre-select large pictures based on their appeal and high interest to both teacher and children. For example, a sports photo-essay book or collection of mounted pictures for sports-minded children; pictures from an oversize informational text on bridge construction for children interested in construction or a book of animal photos or collection of photographs from the class's recent field trip to the zoo.
2. Invite a child or gather a small group of children to a comfortable area around a small table or on the floor.
3. If using an oversized book of photographs, show children that because of the size of the book it needs to lie flat so all may see. Begin the conversation

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with an open-ended prompt about the cover. For instance, point to the cover and say, "When you look at this picture, what do you think this book will be about?"

4. Open to pre-selected pictures or photos and pause for children's reactions.
5. Support their comments with new vocabulary enhancement and new concepts in a conversational manner. (For instance, a child might say, "That's a big bird." The teacher might reply, "What makes it big? That bird is called a flamingo. Look at the bird's legs. What do you notice about his legs? What do you notice about his color...his beak...his wings?")
6. Move to the next pre-selected picture, bridging the student's observations and informing their own language and knowledge with relevant terms or ideas. Respond to questions and let children take the conversational lead. Provide ample time and opportunity for child engagement, supporting attempts at turn-taking and conversational exchanges. Assist children in sustaining the conversation, maintaining the topic and expanding upon their language with appropriate comments and questioning techniques.
7. End with the direction that this book or collection of pictures will be available daily to look at and talk about with either classmates or the teacher.

Differentiated Instructional Support:

Instruction is differentiated according to learner needs, to help all learners either meet the intent of the specified indicator(s) or, if the indicator is already met, to advance beyond the specified indicator(s)

- Target any nonverbal children or ESL children and provide interaction around pointing and naming or labeling.
- Target any low verbal children by expanding their labeling, using adjectives or explanatory statements.
- Expand the topic into observation of real-life applications, such as bird watching and charting and other books on the same topic that compare and extend information.

Extensions:

These are ideas for all children to continue learning on this topic – in class or outside of class.

- Arrange a field trip to a pet store, zoo or farm to observe or experience a topic – providing common experiences for further conversations.
- Engage children in a project involving photographing a topic.
- Read and share books with children, pausing at appropriate times to "talk about" the pictures and to share prior experiences, ideas and to express feelings.

Homework Options and Home Connections:

- Ask children's parents or guardians to go to the library and find a book on a topic of interest to the family that relates to the theme. Encourage parents to have a conversation with their child about the library book.
- Send pictures of the field trip home and encourage the family to write a story.

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Interdisciplinary Connections:

Depending on the topic of the book, pictures or photographs, there may be numerous connections to science, social studies and/or the arts.

Materials/Resources Needed:

For the teacher: A collection of large photographs from oversized books and/or individually mounted photographs that pertain to a specific topic and contain little or no text. (The selection of books and pictures that have special appeal to very young children is especially important.)

For the students: None

General Tips:

1. Sources for large picture books are: the public library and bookstores which often have this type of publication in the reduced price section.
2. Remember to keep the interaction student-centered and focused on supporting and building upon each student's words and observations.
3. **Practices to Enhance Language Development in Preschool are:**

Language Goals

- Encouraging complex verbal reasoning
- Increasing the use of decontextualized language
- Developing personal narrative skills
- Facilitating interaction among children
- Teaching new vocabulary
- Supporting second language acquisition

Strategies

structuring activities for problem solving; providing opportunities for story telling and pretend play; and engaging children in conversations beyond the here and now

structuring activities and the teacher's comments and questions to encourage peer interaction

use the correct word for an object or words for events in the immediate environment; use words to express important concepts; define words verbally ("joyful means feeling happy"); give examples of words ("green like grass"); repeat unfamiliar words often during an activity; demonstrate concepts with appropriate actions and/or props

using slow, simple statements with gestures to encourage comprehension; provide opportunities for children to use English

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From *Enhancing Children's Language Development in Preschool Classes* by M.J. Wilcox, K.M. Murphy, C.K. Bacon, and S. Thomas. Infant Child Research Programs, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, 2000.

<http://icrp.asu.edu/Research/selfasses.pdf>

Research Connection:

In the commentary that preceded this lesson, teachers are urged to model listening and speaking skills for and moderate the discussion of preschool age children. This was deliberate because researchers have observed very young children are largely unaware of the actions and words of their classmates. Social awareness and parallel play are learned. As children are shown how to listen to others as well as to themselves, they begin to discuss with others what they see in pictures and hear from the spoken word.