



Digging Deeper & Reading Comprehension

Book Clubs and Discussion

August 2003 Adapted from Debbie Miller's *Reading With Meaning*

January

Students are ready to listen actively and respond thoughtfully to others in order to understand another's point of view and/or inform one's own.

A perfect way to get started is to ask the children to choose a burning question from a chart the class has created together, or pose an open-ended question yourself and work with them to infer meaning.



The strategies of questioning and inferring are particularly helpful in teaching children how to take conversation deeper.

Children need to observe adults in a book club discussion and observe the following:

- 1) Working together to figure out answers to questions
- 2) Taking turns talking
- 3) Asking questions
- 4) Laughing
- 5) Rereading parts of the book
- 6) Making connections from the book to our lives and other books
- 7) Inferring
- 8) Working together to understand

Debbie Miller's students sit in a bigger circle around the adult circle, and pass around a snack as they watch the adults discuss a book.

Am I Ready for Real Book Conversation?

- Does what I have to say connect to the question or topic?
- Can I connect what I have to say to what someone else has said?
- Can I support what I have to say? What evidence or personal experiences do I have to make my point?
- Has someone else already said what I am about to say?
- If I am speaking to disagree, can I state what I heard the other person say and explain how and why my thinking is different in a nice way?
- Does what I want to say enrich the conversation?

And also think about this:

- Am I ready to act like the adults who modeled book discussions for the class?

First book club for children:

Children choose books from those they have already read aloud and discussed previously.

Knowing how to read the book is not a requirement.

The book must be sophisticated enough to warrant thoughtful conversation.

A question serves to focus the dialogue; showing children how to collaborate to infer answers, solve problems and construct meaning comes next.

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