

Creating Mental Representations

**Lesson Study in a
Primary Classroom**

**Lesson Plan
Trial 1**

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Lesson Rationale

This lesson focuses on improving reading comprehension in a Year 3 class. Reading comprehension skills are fundamental in language development and in developing independent learners. Reading comprehension is a complex process where the reader uses a variety of cognitive processes to create meaning. There are various strategies for reading comprehension as described amongst others by Dole et al. (Dole, 2002).

Identifying existing prior knowledge, predicting and inferencing, visualising, summarising, generating rich questions, monitoring comprehension, and repairing comprehension breakdowns. A reader will use different comprehension strategies in a flexible way while reading, therefore, all need to be developed and experienced continuously as the reader meets with increasingly complex texts. For our lesson study, we select one strategy to focus on as a starting point: visualising. The development of comprehension strategies will eventually lead to more active, strategic and independent readers and learners.

Pupils' Prior Learning

Through this lesson, pupils will learn how to use prior knowledge to connect to the text by creating mental pictures as they read. This could aid their understanding of text as they become more active readers and learners. The children will use skills they already have such as reading skills, e.g. translating and decoding; using the five senses; language skills; and imagination amongst others in developing this new strategy. The exercise is based on small visualisation tasks that have been scaffolded to first elicit prior knowledge from and engage the pupils, then to model the strategy to them, and then to actively engage the pupils in using the strategy themselves. Each step helps the pupils develop strategies to improve their visualisation and apply it in new ways.

Why Visualisation is important

Visualisation as a comprehension strategy means creating mental pictures based on cues from the text you are reading. The idea is to move from using actual images to interpret meaning, to using the same skills to generate meanings from words. Before a child can read words, pictures are the child's initial source of meaning. Therefore, it is important to continue to use imagery to comprehend text, as this is a skill they already possess to some extent. The next step now is to aid children from relying on actual images to creating mental images based on cues from the text and using these to construct meaning as they read. It involves using all of their senses and seeing how the text triggers their senses, emotions, imagination and prior knowledge to create mental images. This will help immerse them in the text thus giving it deeper and richer meaning. Over time, this will become an automatic strategy that can be used with others for more active learning.

Allowing opportunities for pupils to share their images with the teacher and other pupils is vital. Offering them help in describing their images is also an important part to the development of the strategy. As mental images are visual representations of thoughts, it is often a good idea to allow pupils the opportunity to draw and illustrate their own mental pictures of the stories they read or that are read to them. Sharing these and comparing them will allow for greater understanding and comprehension of the text.

(Draper, 2010).

Therefore, this is an important element to consider when teaching visualisation. Visualisation does not only increase reading comprehension, but can also be used in other learning areas such as Mathematics, the Arts and Sciences to increase understanding, recall, creativity and higher-order thinking. Being able to illicit meaning through visualisation is a skill that can be applied in other areas of learning to increase understanding. Thus, this lesson has the potential to illicit valuable basic knowledge that can be applied in other areas of learning and in everyday life.

Lesson Plan: Trial 1

Lesson Title	Visualising: Where the Wild Things Are
Subject	English Reading Comprehension
Teacher	Ms Michelle Buhagiar
Year Group	3
Date	17 th January 2019
Time & Duration	1 lesson - 50min
Lesson Purposes	<p>Pupils will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve reading comprehension - equip themselves with one of various strategies, i.e. visualisation, that can be used to aid their comprehension of a text. - use visualisation to make informed assumptions, read between the lines and gain better understanding of a text
Objectives Addressed	<p>R 5.5: I can use a range of strategies to improve my comprehension and find the required information in the text.</p> <p>R 5.7: I can make informed assumptions about a book from its title and introductory material.</p> <p>LS 5.8: I can communicate my own experiences, likes and dislikes fluently and accurately with some allowance to self-correct in the process</p>
Lesson Overview	<p>This lesson raises awareness of the already existing skill of visualisation within us and takes it the next step as a reading comprehension strategy. The scaffolded exercises in this lesson aim at aiding children to move from relying on actual images, to creating mental images based on cues from the text and using these to construct meaning as they read. This includes the process of changing this image as they read along and the cues from the text change. It involves using all of our senses and seeing how the text triggers these senses and prior knowledge to create mental images. As reading skills develop the focus turns to text, and so it is now important that children are enabled with the skill to create mental images inspired by these words</p>
This lesson within a unit	<p>This lesson can be taught as part of a unit that covers various reading comprehension strategies. Also, similar exercises in visualisation need to be repeated regularly so that the strategy of visualisation while reading becomes an automatic one.</p>

Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● whiteboard/flip chart ● interactive board ● sound clip of ocean waves ● Visualising chart ● 'The Sea Creature from the Deep' text to display on interactive board ● plain paper for pupils to draw visualisation 1 on
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 'Where the Wild Things Are' by Maurice Sendak ● text of 'Where the Wild Thing Are' to display on interactive board ● independent practice worksheet: Where the Wild Things Are
Classroom Organisation	<p>Parts 1 & 2: whole class discussion - pupils can be seated in a group Part 3: pupils will share in pairs</p> <p>Parts 4 to 6: pupils will work independently as well as participate in whole class discussions. Ideally, for storytelling, pupils would be seated comfortably for example on cushions. However, due to limited space, this was not possible.</p>
Part 1 Lesson Introduction (5 mins)	<p>Call pupils together as a group and ask them to think about their last birthday or a birthday party they have attended.</p> <p>After giving pupils a moment to think about this, ask them to close their eyes. While their eyes are closed, tell them to think about what they saw at their birthday. Ask pupils to think about what they felt, smelled, heard, and tasted at their birthday party. Also ask them what emotions they feel when they think about their birthday.</p> <p>Have pupils open their eyes and share with the group some of the things they saw, smelled, heard, felt, and tasted in their minds.</p> <p>Explain that today, they will practice visualising as they read.</p> <p>Explain that this is something they already know how to do since they just did it. Today, they will learn to apply this skill to reading. Good readers use the strategy of visualisation to help them make pictures in their minds and think about what they read.</p>

<p>Part 2 Modelling the strategy of Visualisation (7 mins)</p>	<p>Explain to the pupils that the word "visualisation" means to use all of our senses to help us imagine or picture something in our minds, kind of like having a TV in your head that you can see pictures on when you close your eyes and imagine.</p> <p>Briefly review with pupils the five senses. When we use our imagination, we are visualising.</p> <p>Explain to pupils that to practice visualisation, we will be using all of our senses, our imagination and our emotions.</p> <p>Explain that you will play a sound and then share with them what you visualise through a 'think aloud' – where you explain what you are doing, thinking etc., while actually doing it.</p> <p>Play sound clips, e.g. the sound of waves crashing on a beach. Model closing your eyes and listening. When the sound clip is over, explain to pupils that when you heard this sound, you pictured seeing the ocean, hearing the waves, feeling the sand between your toes, and feeling the heat of the sun on your skin. Explain that you felt the cool spray of the sea on your face and could taste its salty taste and smell the smell of the ocean. Explain that you also imagined eating an ice-cream and how it tasted in your mouth. Explain that you feel calm and happy. It is helpful to also draw your visualization on the board as you describe it to the pupils.</p> <p>Explain to the pupils that you took the sound and made pictures or a mini movie of it in your mind.</p>
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	<p>Connect the idea that when the pupils read, the author is using words to tell them what to visualize. It is their job as the readers to form the pictures in their mind. Ask the pupils what you used to create the picture in your head (i.e. the senses, emotions and imagination).</p>
<p>Part 3 Guided Practice (10 mins)</p>	<p>Read aloud 'The Sea Creature from the Deep'. Ask the pupils to close their eyes while you read and visualise - paint the pictures/make the movie to go with the words in their head. Ask the pupils 'What do you see? What do you hear? What can you smell? Can you taste anything? Can you feel anything? How does it make you feel (emotions)?' to guide their visualisation. Ask the pupils to draw a quick sketch of what they saw. Emphasise that it needs to be a quick sketch, not an elaborate drawing. Just something to show what you saw in your head. The pupils can share their work in pairs.</p>
<p>Part 4 Story Telling (5 mins)</p>	<p>Here the teacher will read the story 'Where the Wild Things Are' to the class. The children will only hear the story, no pictures will be shown, so that later when they come to visualise, they do so based only on the text. The text will be projected on the interactive board to make it easier for the pupils to follow the story and also to discuss any difficult words as well as highlight any important words they can use to help them visualise.</p>

<p>Part 5 Independent Practice (10 mins)</p>	<p>Give each student a 'Where the Wild Things Are' worksheet. Read the instructions aloud with the pupils. Have them complete the visualisation exercises independently. They can circle or underline any words that help them visualise. They can also note things that trigger their senses for reference if they like.</p>
<p>Part 6 Neriage and Assessment of children's work (10 min)</p>	<p>Circulate and question pupils' justifications for their drawings.</p> <p>Gather the pupils and ask them to describe how they created their visualisations. Here the teacher facilitates a discussion where they share and discuss their ideas, the value of their ideas, how they went about it, what they included, how/if it helped them understand the text better, etc.</p> <p>Show texts on interactive board. Ask pupils to describe what words in the texts helped them visualise various parts of their drawings and highlight them.</p> <p>Collect pupils' drawings and check for accuracy.</p>
<p>Part 7 Teacher summary of main points as conclusion (3 min)</p>	<p>The teacher will ask the pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have just talked about the pictures you created in your mind while I read. Do those pictures help you to understand the text better? • How do images help you understand more about what you read? • What would you tell another reader about how to create images to better understand a text?
<p>Differentiation</p>	<p>Enrichment: Have pupils draw visualisations based on their independent reading books or other books that have been read in class.</p> <p>Support: For pupils having difficulty, they can be given a worksheet with sections to facilitate the use of the five senses. As the paragraph is read, the student lists or draws a picture for each sense mentioned. Have the pupils use this information to create their visualisation picture.</p>