

# 100 Days of Reading

**Teacher:** Shari Frost

**Years Teaching:** 20

**School:** Norwood Park Elementary School, Chicago, Illinois

**Grade:** First and Second

**Class Size:** 23 students

**Lesson Dates:** February 14 and 15

“Life in school reflects what happens in the world. When something is going on in the world it creeps into your classroom. I use every event that happens in life to enhance the curriculum... Everyone in the world is talking about it and they want to participate, they want to be involved.” —Shari Frost

# Overview

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## Video Summary

In Shari Frost’s multi-grade classroom, literacy activities have a real-world emphasis. Students read, write, and do math while celebrating Valentine’s Day and the 100th Day of School. Ms. Frost’s literacy instruction connects what’s going on inside the classroom to what’s going on outside the classroom—at home and in the world—while following the required district curriculum. She challenges each student to advance as a literacy learner, and promotes higher-order thinking, whether in a book comparison group activity or in an individual lesson about the Internet.

Ms. Frost’s literacy lessons demonstrate the following:

- Authentic reasons for reading and writing
- Connections between the language arts—reading, writing, speaking, and listening
- Literacy skills used as a foundation for learning in all content areas, including math
- Teaching that encourages independence but provides support when needed
- Validation of and responsiveness to students’ suggestions and interests
- Multi-level activities that challenge students and meet individual needs

“Everything I teach goes back to reading and writing. I think literacy is the foundation for everything. Children who are not literate can’t do a good job of science, social studies, technology, or math.”

### **Literacy Teaching Practices**

Guided Reading

Independent Reading

Interactive Writing

Independent Writing

# Putting It in Context

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## The Teacher and the Class

Shari Frost teaches a multi-age class (first and second grade) at the Norwood Park School in Chicago. The school serves students from surrounding neighborhoods as well as those bused from other areas of the city. Dr. Frost's fully inclusive classroom supports a range of learners, including one special needs student who requires a full-time aide.

Dr. Frost studies early literacy with the same dedication that marks her teaching. Driven by a curiosity about how children learn to read, she has earned a master's degree and a doctorate. Still, she remains committed to teaching at the primary level. "Lots of people say to me, now that you've had this education, what are you going to do? And I always say ... this is where I need to be; this is where I want to be. We need really knowledgeable people teaching the primary grades." In addition to teaching young children, Dr. Frost teaches at the graduate level, and makes it a priority to mentor a student teacher each year.

Believing that the "home-school connection is critical," Dr. Frost communicates with parents through a monthly newsletter, reporting on important events and student accomplishments. Homework folders, which students bring home every day, carry information to and from parents. "I've told parents that the homework folder is our lifeline. This is the way we keep in touch with each other." Parents also contact Dr. Frost through e-mail.

### Day at a Glance\*

8:30	Arrival
8:40	Conferences/Independent Reading or Writing
8:50	Classroom Routines/Morning Meeting
9:10	Interactive Writing
9:40	Guided Reading
10:00	Book Comparison
10:30	Readers' Theater
11:00	Word Study Activity
11:30	Lunch
12:00	Integrated Language Arts
1:00	Other Content Areas
2:15	Read-Aloud
2:30	Dismissal

\*In the video, you see excerpts from Dr. Frost's class on February 14 and 15. On a typical day, other content areas are also included in the schedule.

# Analyzing the Video

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## Before Viewing

The following activities prepare you to observe this classroom video, whether alone or with a group.

### Prepare To Record Your Observations

Make a copy of the Observational Checklist (found in the Appendix) to record your observations, reactions, and further questions that come up throughout your viewing. Copy the KWL Chart (also in the Appendix) and record what you already know and what you would like to learn about using a thematic approach in order to connect language arts with other content areas. Groups can use the KWL chart to generate discussion and questions to consider while viewing.

### Consider Key Questions

Consider these questions as you view the video:

- How does the classroom environment encourage students to gain independence as readers and writers?
- How are the diverse needs of learners (language in particular) met in this classroom?
- What forms of assessment are apparent in this classroom, and how does assessment guide instruction?
- How are reading and writing connected in this classroom?

### Review Important Terms

Review the definitions of the following Literacy Teaching Practices (page 4): read-aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, interactive writing, and independent writing.

Review the following definitions of the Essential Components of Literacy Development (page 2): oral language, phonological awareness, word study (vocabulary/concepts and word identification/phonics), comprehension, composition, and fluency and automaticity.

## First Impressions

Use the following activities to reflect on the classroom video.

### Watch the Video

On your first viewing, use the Observational Checklist to note how Shari Frost implements some of the Literacy Teaching Practices. In particular, observe the ways she fosters literacy development for each first and second grader by integrating language arts into classroom routines and literacy activities throughout the day.

### Review What You Saw

After watching the video, review the Observational Checklist and reflect on what you saw. How do the practices you just watched compare to your own? Think about your classroom and the needs of your students. How are they different from or similar to what you saw in the video?

### Relate the Key Questions to Shari Frost's Classroom

*How are reading and writing connected in this classroom?*

Dr. Frost's classroom engages students in authentic, real-world reading and writing tasks. What lessons in the video give students authentic reading and writing tasks? Why are these types of experiences important in a language arts curriculum for young learners?

# Analyzing the Video, cont'd.

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## Looking Closer

Take a second look at Shari Frost's classroom to deepen your understanding of specific literacy teaching strategies. Use the video images below to locate where to begin viewing.

### Oral Language and Morning Meeting: Video Segment

Find this segment 3 minutes and 27 seconds after the beginning of the video. Watch for 1 minute and 43 seconds.

Like many primary-grade teachers, Dr. Frost uses the morning meeting as a community-building experience. Dr. Frost also emphasizes oral language development in the morning meeting.

- What is the benefit to sharing news from home?
- Why does Dr. Frost connect the reading of the poem of the week to the morning meeting?
- How does Dr. Frost use information shared during the morning meeting to inform other aspects of her literacy program? How does she connect the morning meeting and the theme of the day? How does this connection foster oral language? How can Dr. Frost use informal observations about students to provide assessment data?



### Interactive Writing: Video Segment

Find this segment 8 minutes and 10 seconds after the beginning of the video. Watch for 2 minutes and 36 seconds.

When she began the year with her multi-age class, Dr. Frost thought interactive writing might be appropriate for the first-grade students in her class but not for her second-grade students. She came to believe, however, that interactive writing is an important shared literacy practice that provides learning opportunities for everyone.

- How does writing at the front of the group benefit students academically and socially? How does Dr. Frost decide which students to call up to the chart during lessons?
- How does Dr. Frost use students' writing attempts to meet the needs of the student as well as to help the entire group? What other word study skills does Dr. Frost reinforce in this particular interactive writing lesson?



### Comparison of Books: Video Segment

Find this segment 19 minutes and 3 seconds after the beginning of the video. Watch for 4 minutes and 39 seconds.

Dr. Frost plans group activities that bring students at different levels together. In this comprehension activity, she asks students to compare and contrast five different books about "100th day of school" celebrations.

- How does Dr. Frost's comparison chart help the students understand the purpose of comparing books? How does it scaffold and encourage higher-level thinking?
- Dr. Frost uses a student's comment to highlight the difference between descriptive stories and stories that have a conflict or problem. What do you think about this teaching example? How does this activity develop students' reading comprehension skills?
- What other examples in the video demonstrate Dr. Frost's ability to use a student's response to enhance a lesson?
- Why does she ask students to identify their favorite book? What is gained from this exercise?



# Analyzing the Video, cont'd.

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## Summing Up

Wrap up your impressions of the video with a final reflection.

### Reflecting on Your Viewing Experience

Review your completed Observational Checklist and other notes such as your KWL chart.

- What surprised or interested you?
- What did you find that affirmed what you already knew or had been doing?
- What new approaches or ideas will you try?
- What questions do you have?
- After watching the video, do you think differently about your own practices? About the students you teach? About how young students develop literacy?

# Making Connections

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## Apply and Extend

Here are some opportunities to apply and extend what you've seen.

### Read This Article

Compare this article on connecting math and literature with what you saw and heard in the video.

Thatcher, D. H. "Reading in the Math Class: Selecting and Using Picture Books for Math Investigations." *Young Children* 56, no. 4 (2001): 20–26.

This reading is available as a downloadable PDF file on the *Teaching Reading* Web site: Go to [www.learner.org/channel/libraries/readingk2/](http://www.learner.org/channel/libraries/readingk2/).

After reading the article, think about ways you can connect literature and mathematics in your own classroom. Are there books that your students are familiar with that lend themselves to developing mathematical concepts?

### Watch This Video

View the first-grade video in the *Teaching Reading* library, "Assessment-Driven Instruction." Compare what you see with the use of the computer in Dr. Frost's classroom. Reflect on how Dr. Frost taught a student to use the computer to do an Internet search to determine the feasibility of his mathematics project. What prerequisite literacy skills do you think a primary-grade student should demonstrate in order to do research like the student in the video?

For more information on this video, see the chapter on "Assessment-Driven Instruction" in this guide.

### Take It Back to the Classroom

Identify one element or strategy from Dr. Frost's classroom that you would like to try in your classroom. List any supports or resources you would need to implement it. Use the Classroom Strategy Planner (found in the Appendix). If you are participating in a study group, share what happened when you tried out the new strategy. Or keep a reflective journal of your experience focusing on the benefits for you and for your students.

# Selected Resources

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## Resources Used by Dr. Frost

Brabham, E. D., and S. K. Villaume. "Questions and Answers: Building Walls of Words." *The Reading Teacher* 54, no. 7 (2001): 700–702.

Cunningham, P. *Phonics They Use: Words for Reading and Writing*. 2d ed. New York, N.Y.: HarperCollins College Publishing, 1995.

Cunningham, P., and D. Hall. *Making Words*. Torrance, Calif.: Good Apple Publishers, 1994.

Pinnell, G. S., and I. C. Fountas. *Leveled Books for Readers, Grades 3–6: A Companion Volume to Guiding Readers and Writers*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2001.

Rule, A. C. "Teaching Ideas: Alphabetizing with Environmental Print." *The Reading Teacher* 54, no. 6 (2001): 558–562.

Wylie, R. E., and D. D. Durrell. "Teaching Vowels Through Phonograms." *Elementary English* 47 (1970): 787–791.

## Books for Students in Dr. Frost's Classroom

Brown, Marc T. *Arthur's Valentine*. Boston, Mass.: Little Brown & Co., 1980.

Cuyler, Margery. *100th Day Worries (Jessica Worries)*. New York, N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

MacKain, Bonnie. *One Hundred Hungry Ants*. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1999.

Medearis, Angela S., and Joan Holub. *The 100th Day of School—Hello Reader, Level 2*. New York, N.Y.: Scholastic/Cartwheel Books, 1996.

Minarik, Else H. *A Kiss for Little Bear*. New York, N.Y.: HarperCollins Juvenile Books, 1968.

Slate, Joseph. *Miss Bindergarten Celebrates the 100th Day of Kindergarten*. New York, N.Y.: Dutton Books, 1998.

Wells, Rosemary. *Emily's First 100 Days of School*. Concord, N.H.: Hyperion Press, 2000.

## Additional Resources

### Books and Articles

Bamford, R. A., J. V. Kristo, and A. Lyon. "Facing Facts: Nonfiction in the Primary Classroom." *New England Reading Association Journal* 38, no. 2 (2002): 8–15.

Griffiths, R., and M. Clyne. *Books You Can Count On: Linking Mathematics and Literature*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1991.

Pressley, M., et al. *Learning to Read: Lessons From Exemplary First-Grade Classrooms*. New York, N.Y.: Guilford Press, 2001.

Staab, C. "Classroom Organization: Thematic Centers Revisited." *Language Arts* 68, no. 6 (1991): 108–113.

Thatcher, D. H. "Reading in the Math Class: Selecting and Using Picture Books for Math Investigations." *Young Children* 56, no. 4 (2001): 20–26.

Thompson, G. *Teaching Through Themes*. New York, N.Y.: Scholastic Professional Books, 1991.

For more resources on literacy, see the General Resources section of the Appendix.