

Video Clip 7

Book Buddies

Length:	18:55
School:	The Center for Inquiry
Location:	Columbia, South Carolina
No. of Students in School:	132
Teacher:	Tim O'Keefe
No. of Years Teaching:	22
Grade:	Third
No. of Students in the Classroom:	22

About This Video Clip

“The whole purpose of Book Buddies is the interaction among the kids and for them to help each other learn to read better and learn to look more deeply into literature.”

—Tim O’Keefe, *Third-Grade Teacher, The Center for Inquiry, Columbia, South Carolina*

Exciting things often happen when two teachers merge their classes for literature discussion. In this video, you will see how Tim O’Keefe and his third graders meet with his colleague Julie Waugh and her fifth graders for Book Buddies—paired discussions about a book they have read together. The book they have chosen, *Chicken Sunday* by Patricia Polacco, is one that many of the students are already familiar with. The older students read a number of Polacco books when they were in third grade, and, as Mr. O’Keefe reminds his class, this is a book he read aloud to them earlier in the school year. The purpose of this encounter is to offer both groups of students an opportunity to experience rich, authentic literary discussions.

Thoughtful logistical planning is central to the success of this shared activity. Mr. O’Keefe and Ms. Waugh were careful to choose a book that is accessible to students with a range of reading abilities. At the same time they looked for a book with interesting events and universal themes to stimulate rich discussion. Mr. O’Keefe notes that he and Ms. Waugh anticipated intense interactions about the book and so divided their reading over two days. Each day the Book Buddies read and discussed the assigned section of the book together and chose a response mode from a suggested list. Finally, both classes met together in one classroom to discuss their reading and their responses.

Providing students with multiple opportunities to experience envisionment building is a central aspect of effective literature classrooms. Book Buddy meetings offer students authentic occasions to do just that.

Visit the *Engaging With Literature: A Video Library, Grades 3–5* Web site at www.learner.org/envisioningliterature to access the lesson plan Mr. O’Keefe used to organize this classroom experience, as well as other related resources.

Featured Text

Chicken Sunday by Patricia Polacco

Drawing on her childhood, Polacco tells the story of how she and her two best friends buy a special Easter hat that Stewart and Winston’s grandma Eula Mae Walker has admired in a shop window. They plan to approach the haberdasher, Mr. Kodinski, and offer to work to help pay for the hat. They arrive at his shop just as a group of neighborhood boys is running away. Seeing the three outside, Mr. Kodinski unjustly accuses them of splattering his shop with eggs. They return with a basket of Pysanky eggs to protest their innocence, and Mr. Kodinski invites them in for tea. When he learns of their wish to earn money, he suggests they sell their Pysanky eggs in his shop. At the end of the day, Mr. Kodinski refuses their money and gives them the hat for Miss Eula.

Visit the *Engaging With Literature: A Video Library, Grades 3–5* Web site at www.learner.org/envisioningliterature for Web sites related to the featured text. Go to Additional Resources for this program.

Learning Objectives

If you are a teacher watching this video for professional development, you will be able to:

- List at least two benefits of having multiage students share and discuss the same text.
- Explain the importance of text selection by teachers in coordination with students for activities such as this one, and describe at least three criteria for that selection.
- Explain how you might use or adapt a Book Buddies activity in your own classroom.
- Suggest other activities in which multiage students might participate to increase their personal engagement with a text.

Viewing Suggestions

Who Should Watch This Video

Teachers and teacher educators can use it as a professional or preservice education tool to illustrate how two teachers use collaborative activities to help students develop their enjoyment of literature while developing their thinking skills and deepening their understandings of a particular text. Viewers might be especially interested to note how the students move from sharing their thinking with a single partner, to small groups, to the larger forum of the combined third- and fifth-grade classes.

Curriculum planners can use this video to generate discussion about what helps students enjoy literature and respond to it in thoughtful ways. What kinds of experiences help students deepen their thinking about literature? What kinds of responses enable them to develop fresh perspectives on their reading? How might these be taught?

Administrators can use this video to demonstrate one way in which different grade levels might work together to the enrichment of both. Additionally, they might use it to create a vision of the thoughtful levels of literary engagement possible for young students.

Before Watching

Before viewing this program, consider the following:

- What helps readers enjoy literature?
- How might teachers prepare students to participate in Book Buddy discussions?
- What experiences help students respond to literary texts in thoughtful and useful ways?

Discussion Questions

Teachers involved in professional development and preservice education may want to discuss:

- What are the benefits of Book Buddy interactions such as those presented on the video?
- What are the potential shortcomings of such discussions? How might they be overcome?
- How would your students be likely to respond to Book Buddy discussions?
- What ideas from the video would you like to try in your own classroom?
- What questions do you have about Mr. O’Keefe’s instructional practices?

Teachers holding PTA meetings and back-to-school events might use these questions to start group discussion:

- What was your response to the Book Buddy discussions on this video? Explain.
- What do you think of multiage instructional experiences such as the Book Buddy activity shown on this video? Why?
- How would your child respond to a Book Buddy experience?
- Was there anything about the Book Buddy activity that surprised or intrigued you? Explain.
- How can discussions such as these help students learn?

Viewing Suggestions, cont'd.

Curriculum planners can discuss:

- What texts that are part of your curriculum would be especially appropriate for Book Buddy discussions? Why?
- What support would the students you service need in order to have successful Book Buddy experiences? How might you provide that support?

Administrators can discuss:

- Do teachers have sufficient flexibility to allow them to plan and execute collaborative activities such as the one seen on this video?
- What physical issues (classroom size and configuration, teacher/student ratio, external distractions, etc.) might help or hinder teachers in your building from organizing such collaborative activities? Is there anything you might do to ease existing restrictions?

Suggested Activities

For teachers involved in professional development and preservice education:

- Make a list of strategies you might teach students to help them have successful Book Buddy discussions.
- What kinds of response to literature have you found helpful for students? Share them with your colleagues.

For teachers reaching out to families:

- Make a list of ways you can help families support their child's daily reading and their experiences with literature. Consider using brief notes, email, a newsletter, or a Web site to keep families informed about texts and activities their children will experience in your class.
- Invite family members into your classroom to observe, and perhaps even participate as Book Buddies.
- Videotape your students during Book Buddy discussions and use the video to center discussion at parent meetings.

For administrators:

- Share this video with the language arts teachers in your school. Discuss the value of multiage instruction and of paired reading. Ask teachers to consider ways this lesson succeeds and to suggest ways in which it might be strengthened. Provide time for teachers to share their logistical concerns and suggestions.

Additional Resources

The classroom lesson plan, student activity sheets, teacher tools, and links to related resources are accessible at the *Engaging With Literature: A Video Library, Grades 3–5* Web site at www.learner.org/envisioningliterature.

You may also be interested in the following texts:

Berghoff, Beth, Kathryn A. Egawa, Jerome C. Harste, and Barry T. Hoonan. *Beyond Reading and Writing: Inquiry, Curriculum, and Multiple Ways of Knowing*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2000. ISBN 0-8141-2341-4.

Benedict, Susan and Lenore Carlisle. *Beyond Words: Picture Books for Older Readers and Writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1992. ISBN 0-435-08710-X.

Buehl, Doug. *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2001. ISBN 0-87207-284-3.

Graves, Donald H. *Build a Literate Classroom: The Reading/Writing Teacher's Companion*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991. ISBN 0-435-08488-7.

Jennings, Louise B. with Tim O'Keefe. "Parents and Children Inquiring Together: Written Conversations About Social Justice." *Language Arts*. (May 2002): 404–414.

Langer, Judith A. "Discussion as Exploration: Literature and the Horizon of Possibilities." *Exploring Texts: The Role of Discussion and Writing in the Teaching and Learning of Literature*. Ed. George E. Newell and Russel K. Durst. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, 1993. 23–43. ISBN 0-926842-24-2

Langer, Judith A. *Envisioning Literature*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1995. ISBN 0-8077-3463-0.

Langer, Judith A., ed. *Literature Instruction: A Focus on Student Response*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1992.

Lewis, Valerie V. and Walter M. Mayes. *Valerie and Walter's Best Books for Children: A Lively and Opinionated Guide*. New York: Avon, 1998. ISBN 03-807943-81.

Mills, Heidi and Amy Donnelly. *From the Ground Up: Creating a Culture of Inquiry*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001. ISBN 0-325-0026-73.

Mills, Heidi, and Jean Anne Clyde, eds. *Portraits of Whole Language Classrooms: Learning for All Ages*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1990. ISBN 0-435-0851-07.

O'Keefe, Timothy. "A Day With Dinosaurs." Heidi Mills and Jean Anne Clyde, eds. *Portraits of Whole Language Classrooms: Learning for All Ages*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1990. 65–92. ISBN 0-435-0851-07.

O'Keefe, Timothy. "Giving Children Voice: Daily Rituals That Support Learning Through Conversations." Ed. Heidi Mills and Amy Donnelly. *From the Ground Up: Creating a Culture of Inquiry*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001. 78–103. ISBN 0-325-0026-73.

Peterson, Ralph and Maryann Eeds. *Grand Conversations (Grades 2–6)*. New York: Scholastic, 1999. ISBN 05-907342-29.

Rhodes, Immacula A. *Teaching With Favorite Patricia Polacco Books*. New York: Scholastic, 2002. ISBN 04-392-7166-5.

Short, Kathy G. and Jerome C. Harste with Carolyn Burke. *Creating Classrooms for Authors and Inquirers*. 2nd ed. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996. ISBN 0-435-08850-5.

Short, Kathy G. and Kathryn Mitchell Pierce, eds. *Talking About Books: Literature Discussion Groups in K–8 Classrooms*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1990. ISBN 0-325-00073-5.

Whitin, Phyllis. *Sketching Stories, Stretching Minds: Responding Visually to Literature*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996. ISBN 0-435-08879-X.

Yokota, Junko, ed. *Kaleidoscope: A Multicultural Booklist for Grades K–8*. 3rd ed. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2001. ISBN 0-8141-2540-9.

Notes
