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Sincerely,
Karen Haag

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Sensory Imaging (Visualizing) – 30 minutes

Students need to be taught that engaged readers see pictures in their heads. By teaching children to recognize the pictures in their heads, the teacher stresses comprehension along with decoding. Sometimes children forget that reading is about making meaning --- not just reading words and plowing ahead when the text isn't making sense – but really trying to figure out what's happening in the story.

The first time I introduce visualization, I give very little direction. I want to see what the children do: how much they understand of the task, whether each child even sees pictures as I read, and how they tackle sketching as I read. Some get frustrated and won't risk the work. Others draw information NOT in the book. Someone might segment her paper, draw in sequence, and do a complete retelling when finished. During this initial lesson, I observe. I assess. I debrief with the children so I will know what to do next.

Introduction to Sketching While Listening with The Bear's Toothache

ENGAGE

- Gather the children on the rug and ask them what they know about how to read (to get to know the children and to assess whether they talk about decoding or comprehension or both.)
- Ask the children to turn knee-to-knee and eye-to-eye with partners and tell one another what they know about reading and what they do when reading is confusing. Walk between the partners to see if someone says making pictures or seeing movies.

EXPLAIN LEARNING TARGET

I can draw pictures to match the words in the book.

- Share whole group. If you hear a child talk about making picture or movies, ask that child to share what she said with the class.
- Tell the group that is what we're going to do today. "In order to read better, we are going to practice drawing the picture we see in our heads on paper. The great thing is WE CAN'T BE WRONG!

What one person sees might not be what the next person sees. The way we draw does not matter. Using colors is not important because we're going to sketch as many pictures as we see QUICKLY."

- Demonstrate. (Your teacher) is going to read me a book. I am going to draw what I visualize when she reads. Teacher reads the first 3 pages. (You can also read the book, put it in your lap, and draw what you "see.") Draw what you "see" and talk through what you're doing for the children. The biggest point to make is that what you're drawing comes from the book. The other point to make is that you're not drawing a picture --- you're making quick sketches, as best you can, of what you see in YOUR head.

Materials to Have Ready,

- Whole class
- Place to gather children on the rug and model
- Chart paper and easel, clean whiteboard, SmartBoard or DocCam (I prefer DocCam.)
- Place for each student to sit and draw
- Several sheets of plain, white paper per student
- Pencils available for students
- Text to read aloud. I use A Bear's Toothache.

EXPLORE

- Ready to try? Ask the children to use the white paper and their pencils to draw what they see as you read. Start reading at the beginning of the book again to scaffold the instruction.
- Look around the class as you read mentioning what you're seeing: I see xxx drawing a pillow, I see xxx drawing on the back of the paper, I see xxx thinking, I see xxx has lots of pictures on her page. Encourage behaviors where students are taking risks or drawing what is in the book or making decisions about how they will finish this task. *Try limited encouragement, not to take the focus off the task but to make children feel less anxious.*
- Select students to share their pictures as you observe their work. Choose children who have approached the task differently.

EVALUATE LEARNING TARGET

- Gather back on the rug.
- Highlight different ways of finishing the assignment by asking students you pre-selected to share: using one page, using several pages, segmenting the paper, drawing in sequence ... to reinforce that thinking will be messy and different and no matter what, they all did well.
- Read the book and show how the illustrator visualized the words.

STUDENTS EXPLAIN

- Ask two students to demonstrate how people talk to one another about their pictures.
- Then, ask all the partners to show their pictures to one another and explain what everything is in their drawing. Knee to knee, eye to eye, partners share what they drew.

→ TALKING EXIT SLIP Or, write the answers to these questions in the upper grades.

1. When do you think you will use visualizing? RECORD students' answers.
2. Say something like, "Readers try to see what's happening in the story by listening to the words and making pictures in their heads. Try that again when your parents read to you or when I read to you. We will talk more about visualizing."

EXTEND

1. Ask the children to retell books using their pictures.
2. Ask children to assess if drawing while listening helps them understand the story.
3. Look at the pictures the children drew to see what is the same and what is different. For example, who drew a bear? Who drew the steak? Who drew a pillow? Reinforce that's because those things were in the story and that's what good readers do! (By the way --- the things that are the same are usually the main ideas while the other things are the details individuals noticed.)
4. Photocopy pictures and have the children put them in sequence.
5. Try another story. See if children invent other ways of recording. Share.
6. Let children lay on the floor while you read. Ask the child to go to their place and draw one picture --- the most important thing that happened in the story. Talk about why.
7. After reading, ask the children to draw one picture that happened in the beginning, one in the middle and one at the end of the story to teach sequence.

Other visualizing books I like:

Bedhead Margie Palatini and Jack E. Davis

The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant

Bear's Bicycle by Emilie W Mcleod and David McPhail

The Big Big Sea by Martin Waddell and Jennifer Eachus