

Making Sense of Reading Instruction: Grades 4 to 6 Special Feature Webcast – January 2007

Viewing and Discussion Guide

Overview

This webcast explores the classroom as a literate culture within which effective reading instruction takes place and supports students as they develop into proficient communicators. This viewer's guide was created to encourage dialogue within Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as well as individual reflection while watching the webcast. The webcast has been divided into segments for ease of use. This guide contains graphic organizers designed to support the questions asked, stretch thinking, and promote sharing and remembering – just as they can be used in the classroom. A general chart for viewing notes and a chart for jotting down significant terminology from the webcast have been included at the back of this guide.

Note to Facilitators

The goal of this viewing and discussion guide is to stretch thinking within PLCs and bring about reflection and action, with a focus on student achievement and data. While watching the segments and using the guide, we encourage you to:

- Relate the topics and discussion to your own situation.
- Determine which strategies/initiatives you already have in place.
- Establish which strategies/initiatives you would like to put into practice.
- Decide which strategies/initiatives can actually be put in place.
- Question what you will do in response to what you have watched.
- Investigate which resources you will use.
- Discuss how you will know that what you have implemented has worked.

Activating Prior Knowledge

1. Before watching the webcast, predict what it is about or write down a question that you hope the webcast will answer for you.
2. Answer the following questions and compare your responses with what you see in the webcast:
 - What do you think an inclusive learning environment looks like?
 - What structures do you have in your school/board to support you?
 - Brainstorm what a positive learning environment looks like in your classroom and/or school.
 - What does “talk” look like?
 - How do you know what learning needs your students have?
 - What is authentic learning?

Segments

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Structuring the Learning Environment](#)
3. [Classroom Norms and Routines](#)
4. [Student-Teacher Conference](#)
5. [Positive Literacy Environment](#)
6. [Active Engagement](#)
7. [Importance of Art](#)
8. [Questioning](#)
9. [Literacy Resources for Junior Programs](#)
10. [Graphic Novels](#)
11. [Authentic Learning](#)
12. [Conclusion](#)

Handouts

- [Web: Characteristics of a Learning Environment](#)
- [Chart: Creating a Literacy-Rich Environment](#)
- [Venn Diagram: Student-Teacher Conference Benefits](#)
- [But/So Chart: Integrating the Arts](#)
- [PMI Chart: Literacy Learning Through the Arts](#)
- [T-Chart: Integrating Authentic Learning Opportunities](#)
- [General Viewing Notes Chart](#)
- [Significant Terminology Chart](#)

1. Introduction (00:00 – 02:36)

Synopsis:

Ruth Mattingley introduces the webcast, and David Booth outlines the topics that will be addressed during this webcast.

After viewing Segment 1:

- As you watched David Booth’s segment, what were the key messages that resonated with you?
- Which ideas will you take back to your workplace to implement?
- What supports do you have in your school/board office to help with implementation?

2. Structuring the Learning Environment (02:37 – 04:11)

Synopsis:

Bev Strachan describes a learning environment that is conducive to learning for all students. She notes the importance of giving students in junior classrooms the opportunity to dialogue with their peers. Setting up routines and classroom norms are also a priority in junior classrooms.

After viewing Segment 2:

- Brainstorm the characteristics of a learning environment that are conducive to learning for all students, and state what each looks like and sounds like in a classroom.
- Select one attribute of your classroom that you would like change. What actions will you take?
- Fill in the empty circles in the web on the following page with an example of what each characteristic would look and sound like in a classroom.

Web: Characteristics of a Learning Environment

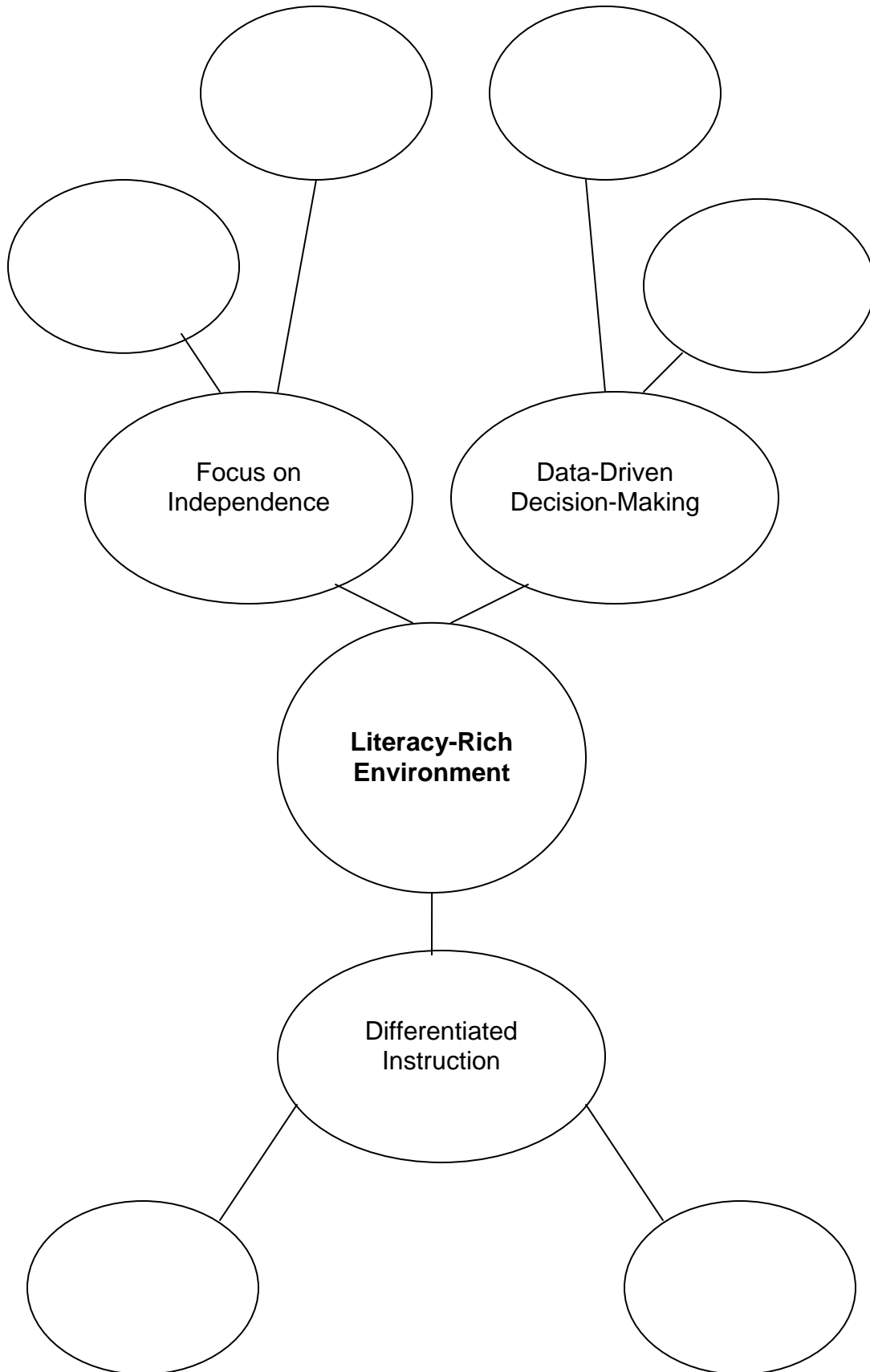


Chart: Creating a Literacy-Rich Environment (LRE)

Which elements of an LRE do you have in place? What elements would you like to put into place? What obstacles might interfere with creating such an environment? How might you address these obstacles? Please use the chart below.

Which elements of an LRE do you have in place?	What elements would you like to put into place?	Obstacles	How to address the obstacle

3. Classroom Norms and Routines (04:12 – 17:07)

Synopsis:

Devika William-Yu, a Grade 4 teacher, and Paul Offor, a Grade 6 teacher, share and demonstrate several effective norms and routines that they have successfully established in their classrooms.

After viewing Segment 3:

- What do you notice about the students' and teachers' behaviour that might have an impact on student learning?
- What teaching, learning, and routines will have had to occur before students are able to benefit from sharing, debriefing, and reflection sessions? What pieces do you already have in place to support this model?
- What obstacles might stand in the way of collaboratively establishing this sort of classroom culture? What strategies would be useful in overcoming these obstacles?

4. Student-Teacher Conference (17:08 – 22:10)

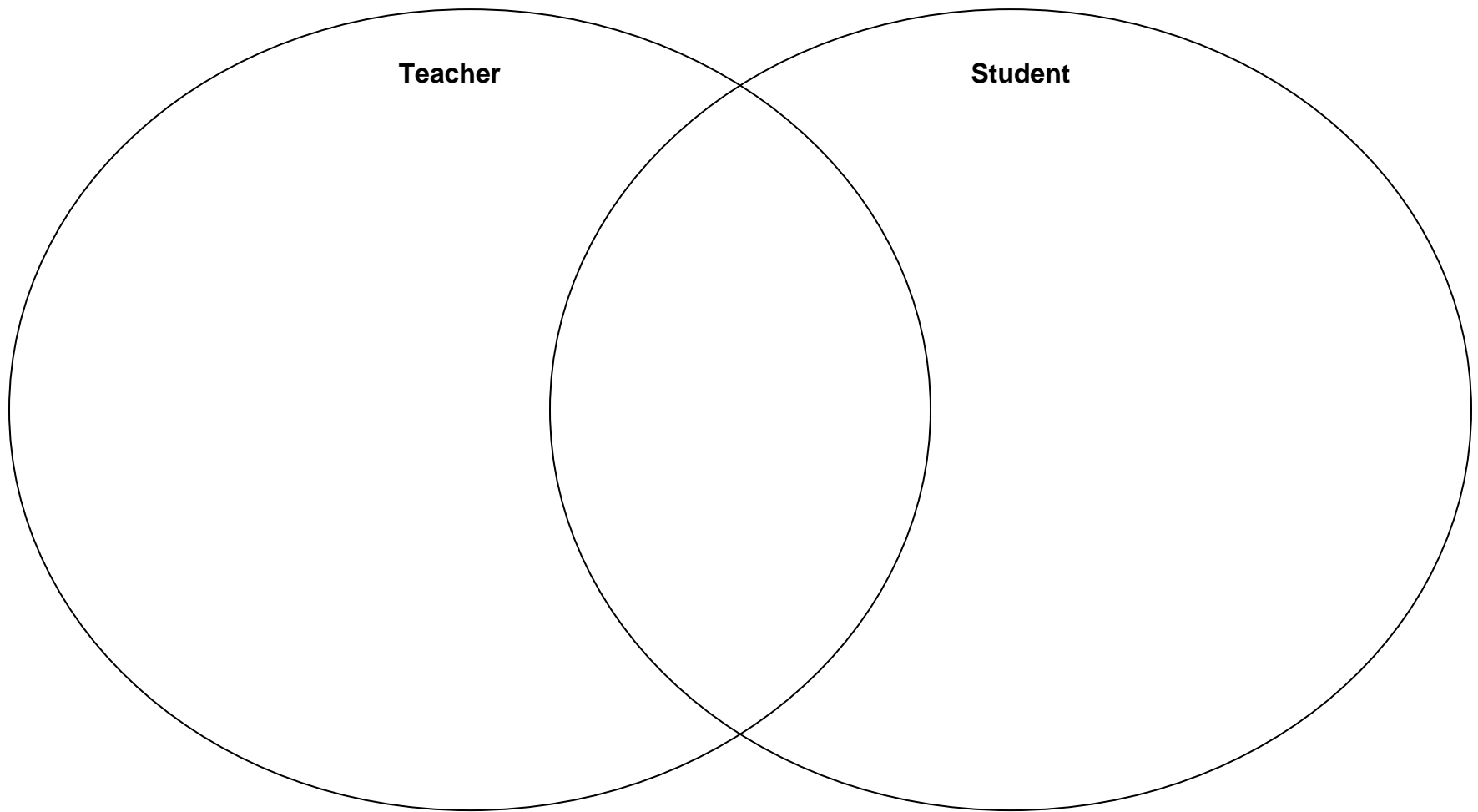
Synopsis:

Devika William-Yu demonstrates the process of a student-teacher conference with her students.

After viewing Segment 4:

- What do you notice during the conference?
- How have you built, or how do you build student conferencing into a regular routine in your classroom? Is it effective? How do you know?
- Using the Venn diagram on the following page, outline the benefits of this form of assessment to both the teacher and student.

Venn Diagram: Student-Teacher Conference Benefits



5. Positive Literacy Environment (22:11 – 24:52)

Synopsis:

Jim Carson, a principal in the Toronto District School Board, describes what a positive literacy environment looks like to him. He also discusses the importance of creating an atmosphere that promotes leadership among the staff.

After viewing Segment 5:

- What role did the principal play in creating a literacy-rich environment?
- What strategies work in supporting PLCs in their literacy learning?
- What idea resonated most with you? What action will you take to put this idea into practice in your work place?

6. Active Engagement (24:53 – 40:54)

Synopsis:

Kathleen Gould Lundy discusses the six “E’s” of effective teaching that she has developed. She models the six “E’s” with her teacher candidates and with a Grade 5 classroom.

After viewing Segment 6:

- What are the benefits of *role on the wall* and *reader’s theatre*?
- Recall the six “E’s” of effective teaching. Of the six “E’s”, which one will you focus on in your classroom? What do you already have in place that you can build on?
- The arts are powerful inclusive vehicles for literacy learning. Using the But/So Chart on the following page, describe:
 - The goals of using the arts in the classroom.
 - Obstacles that may prevent a teacher from integrating arts and literacy learning.
 - Strategies that might be useful in dealing with these obstacles.

7. Importance of Art (40:55 – 43:55)

Synopsis:

Deborah Smith, a principal in the York Region District School Board, explains the importance of using art in the classroom. Maira Herenberg, a Grade 4 teacher, gives specific examples of how she includes art in her lessons.

After viewing Segment 7:

- Maira integrates the arts in a purposeful way to support her students in developing their communication skills. She indicated that this was a way of making her teaching more inclusive. How might you use the arts as a vehicle for developing students' literacy skills?
- How might you use this lesson to also incorporate character development?
- Using the PMI chart on the following page, fill in the pluses, minuses, and interesting facts relating to integrating the arts in your classroom.

8. Questioning (43:56 – 58:09)

Synopsis:

Larry Swartz describes the use of talk and questioning with students. Araceli Garcia, a Grade 6 teacher, and Michelle Butters, a Grade 5 teacher, model the ways in which they use talk in their classrooms.

After viewing Segment 8:

- What needs to be taught in order to effectively infuse “talk” into your classroom program?
- Larry spoke of the importance of developing questioning skills in the teacher and students. What is important for the teacher to think about when formulating questions?
- In relation to developing critical literacy and character development, what should students be thinking about when formulating questions during “reading”?

9. Literacy Resources for Junior Programs (58:10 – 01:13:29)

Synopsis:

David Booth explains the importance of having a vast array of resources available for junior grades, including different genres, graphic novels, and even technology. Teachers, vice-principals, and principals discuss and show the programs that are in place in their schools.

After viewing Segment 9:

- How do these varied resources support literacy development for all students? Do you have the resources to support teaching to students’ needs?
- Providing real choice is a factor that increases student engagement and motivation. What might prevent a teacher from offering choices? How might one deal with obstacles relating to offering choices to students?

What will you introduce to expand the resources available in the junior grades, based on what the data about your students tells you?

10. Graphic Novels (01:13:30 - 1:21:02)

Synopsis:

David Booth sits down with a group of five readers who are all interested in graphic novels. He asks them what they like about graphic novels, and whether teachers should allow such books in the classroom.

After viewing Segment 10:

- How might you introduce graphic novels in your classroom?
- How might graphic novels enhance your literacy program?

11. Authentic Learning (01:21:03 – 01:32:20)

Synopsis:

Bev Strachan, teachers, and principals from across Ontario describe the importance of creating an environment that allows for authentic learning that connects students to their school, home, community, and world.

After viewing Segment 11:

- What are the benefits of authentic learning for all students?
- Describe how your school encourages authentic learning that has an impact on your local and global community.
- Brainstorm ways that you might integrate authentic learning opportunities in your school, and write down these ideas in the “Give One” column on the T-Chart on the following page. Share your “Give One” ideas with others, and place other persons’ ideas under “Get One.”

T-Chart: Integrating Authentic Learning Opportunities

Give One	Get One
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

12. Conclusion (01:32:21 – 01:34:00)

Synopsis:

David Booth and Ruth Mattingley conclude the webcast.

After viewing Segment 12:

- How have your ideas about reading instruction changed?
 - What new idea(s) will you implement in your classroom/school to enhance reading instruction?
 - Which part of the webcast had the strongest effect on your understanding of effective instruction in reading? Why?
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Follow-Up

After viewing the entire webcast, examine the following questions:

- What assessments are you using in your classroom to better understand the learning needs of your students?
- Are you using data walls to chart how your students are doing in relation to the language expectations?

Significant Terminology Chart

Term	Meaning	Significance to Student Achievement
Metacognition		
Self-assessment		
Independence		
Questioning		
The learning environment		
Structuring the learning		
The principal's role		
Authentic learning		
The reading-writing connection		
Active engagement		
Multiliteracies		
Gradual release of responsibility		
Accountable talk		