



TEACHING DECISIONS THAT BRING THE CONDITIONS OF LEARNING TO LIFE

By Debra Crouch and Dr. Brian Cambourne

Introduction

Teachers are in the business of learning. We set up our classrooms, assess our students, and create our lessons. We select books, form reading groups, and teach students in those groups regularly. We create complex daily schedules packed with readers' (and writers') workshops, guided reading blocks, and independent reading time. We think aloud, make sure to cover all the comprehension strategies, and use sentence stems to get kids talking. We ask higher-level questions, use turn-and-talk strategies, and make sure every student can write a response to a text. And yet, we still grapple with instructional dilemmas that include these familiar questions:

- "Some of my kids just can't seem to settle on a book to read during independent reading. I'm not sure they're really reading. How can I make them more accountable?"
- "How many times should I meet with each of my guided reading groups in a week? How long should I spend on a book? And how long should the lessons be?"
- "My kids just aren't talking deeply about books. I ask higher-level comprehension questions, but nothing works. How can I make them think more deeply?"
- "I've taught comprehension strategies, but my kids don't apply them in independent reading. How can I make them use those strategies to become more independent?"
- "What does it look like when kids are actively participating? How should I hold them accountable for contributing to discussions and talking with their partners? How do I know whether they're progressing?"

And, confronted by so many questions, we begin to wonder as teachers: "Why is this so hard? What does my principal want me to do? What's wrong with my kids? What's wrong with *me*?"

We face many challenges when teaching readers, and the literature about teaching that is supposed to help us deal with those challenges is plentiful. Indeed, we're all but bombarded with the most current tips, ideas, and photos that reveal what teachers can do to make everything work smoothly while also meeting every standard in the process—no wonder we sometimes feel overwhelmed! But maybe we have enough ideas about how to teach. And maybe it's time to solidify what we know and want for our learners—and to revisit the basis for the kind of teaching we strive for in our classrooms.

The questions we have and the challenges we face when teaching readers stem from a philosophical root cause: We have mapped a belief system about learning and teaching onto instructional strategies and methods that evolved from a very different belief system.

A common perspective of learning posits that it starts with *teaching*, an effort that is applied to a learner. In this belief system, an adult teacher passes on ideas and information to a less experienced student. The learner is considered a passive recipient of these ideas and information. Students are asked to restate the ideas and information the teacher presented as proof of learning. In this model of learning, the thinking is that teachers must "cover" every comprehension strategy and individual reading skill so that children can succeed; without that instruction, students won't be successful readers. Within this system, we assess children to find out what they don't know and what they didn't absorb from instruction. The resulting teaching experiences are an ongoing effort to fill in the gaps. This belief system considers the *teaching* stance first. The primary question a teacher asks is: "What do I do to teach the learner to read?"

A DIFFERENT VIEWPOINT

Like other teachers, Dr. Brian Cambourne is in the business of learning. But he views learning, and learners, as being quite different from the process detailed in the aforementioned mode. Although his perspective is complex, the basic premise is simple: All learners have the potential to learn. Indeed, children demonstrate this by the time they start formal schooling—they have already accomplished “a stunning intellectual achievement” by learning a language.

Most recently, Cambourne has focused on literacy learning as a result of biological and cultural forces; the convergence ensures that learning to make meaning from abstract symbols is as fail-safe as possible. He believes that eliminating complications and barriers is key—and that once learned, literacy should be durable.

Cambourne posits that literacy should culminate in “the active, critical, productive thinking and problem solving ... which makes it possible for us to successfully negotiate both our school (academic) world and the world outside school” (1988). This language, recognizing the co-construction of knowledge and understanding, aligns directly with what we encounter in our current standards, which envision students prepared for college and career as well as the world outside the classroom and workplace (Common Core State Standards, 2010).

In his book *The Whole Story: Natural Learning and the Acquisition of Literacy in the Classroom* (1988), Cambourne began to articulate this different view of learners and how learning occurs, especially literacy learning. His research into the conditions in which we successfully learn to talk—coupled with the notion that oral and written forms of language are “parallel manifestations of the mind’s effort to create meaning”—led him to detail a powerful view of literacy learning that has come to be known as the Conditions of Learning. Cambourne’s beliefs about learning, and the resulting teaching decisions, offer a constructivist view of learning in which learning is viewed as

“the process of continually constructing, de-constructing, and re-constructing meanings while interacting and communicating with others (and with oneself) ... using a range of symbols and symbol systems” (IRA talk, 2013). The ability to construct and communicate abstract meaning through symbols accounts for the success of humans as a species, as well as the key trait that ultimately makes humans . . . well, *human*.

A DIFFERENT PEDAGOGY

In his talk on the state of current educational research at the 2013 International Reading Association Conference in San Antonio, TX, Cambourne asked us to consider whether nature has already developed a pedagogy for learning to read. He stated that if we apply the ecological, social, physical, and emotional conditions that support learning to talk, we can create, or mimic, a natural setting for other literacy learning. In effect, over years of attempting to do this, as teachers we have ended up with a set of intentional instructional approaches that U.S. educators refer to as balanced literacy.

“The learner is viewed truly as a learner . . . who comes to us with a uniquely human ability to use abstract symbols.”

Cambourne’s view of “balanced,” however, doesn’t mean favoring one instructional practice over another. Nor does it advocate making sure our daily schedule includes enough small-group time or that we must incorporate times designated as “I do” or “We do.” Cambourne’s view also doesn’t include a directive to try everything in the educational playbook to achieve a happy medium, with “research-based” being the lone belief system to guide us.

Instead, Cambourne encourages us to create deliberate classroom opportunities that include immersion in and demonstrations of literacy;

extended times for all learners to approximate, use, and take responsibility for their own learning; and times for appropriate responses from the teacher and other students. Expectation, engagement, and collaboration are key ideas for learning. So, “balanced” doesn’t mean making choices among practices or achieving a happy middle ground. “Balanced,” for Cambourne, involves envisioning and implementing intentional and consistent conditions and practices that recognize and honor the human need to learn.

In this model of balanced instruction for reading, sometimes referred to as “reading to, with, and by children” (Mooney, 1990), reading is viewed as the sharing of co-constructed meaning between an author and a reader. Instruction is the interaction between and among readers and texts, scaffolded by a responsive teacher. In this model of learning to read, which parallels a model of learning to write, the “learner” is viewed truly as a *learner*. In other words, the learner is capable and full of potential—someone who comes to the classroom with the uniquely human ability to use abstract symbols to make sense of his or her world.

In sync with this stance, a teacher deliberately orchestrates classroom experiences through which children engage in authentic reading experiences; those, in turn, are reinforced by extended student-centered discussions of the meanings they are constructing. In this model, teachers use the learners’ demonstrations of meaning-making as the basis to determine the next steps needed for the learners to progress as readers. Teachers and children view the tentative understandings of texts that develop more fully over time as both a process of learning and *for* learning, a perspective supported by Carol S. Dweck’s (2006) research on how we develop a growth mindset for learning and articulated by Peter H. Johnston’s (2012) dynamic-learning frame.

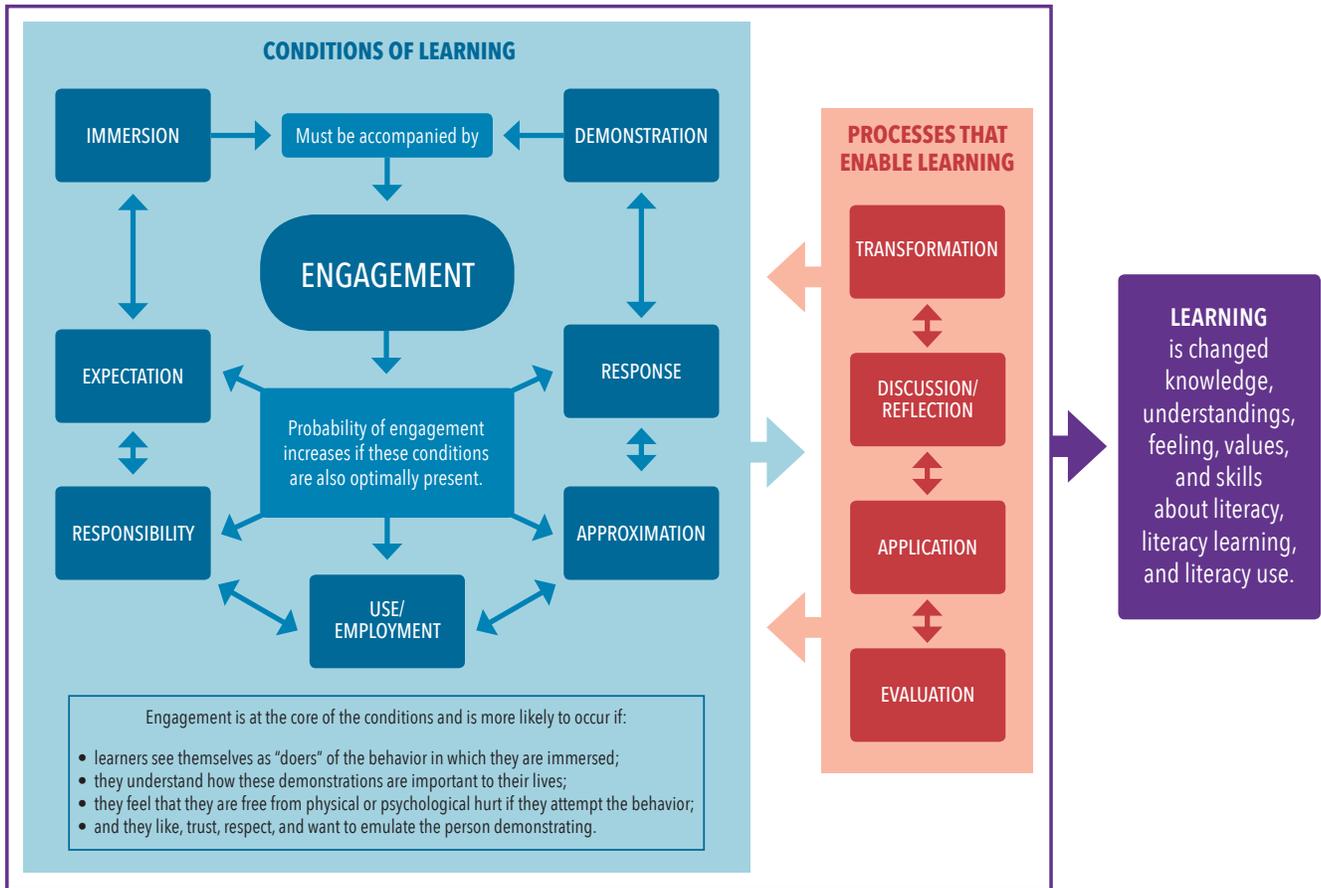
“These deep understandings about learning and the conditions . . . provide the impetus for effective and intentional teaching decisions.”

In a classroom based on balanced instruction in reading, teachers keep some key ideas in mind at all times: how readers and thinking develop over time, the purposes of texts and how they are created to convey meaning, and effective lesson design to engage readers. The teacher holds these understandings alongside standards and other school and district expectations. This teacher is observant of what children are doing, or attempting to do, rather than focusing on their deficits. The teacher assumes responsibility for establishing an intentional learning space; the goal is for learning and learners to flourish in that space, which is grounded in a strong belief system that centers on learning, as well as teaching.

Community assumes equal importance alongside academic pursuits in a balanced literacy classroom, and it involves much more than classroom organization and the rules taught each September. Classroom community provides the context for bringing the Conditions of Learning to life. These deep understandings about learning and the conditions that support (or hinder) it provide the impetus for effective and intentional teaching decisions. In turn, these decisions support the conditions needed to nourish learners throughout the entire school year.

In this model of balanced literacy instruction, the teacher asks: “How are the teaching decisions I’m making affecting the quality of each and every condition of learning?” By making these considered decisions along the way, we become precisely what we strive to be: the teachers of learners.

Cambourne's Model of Literacy Learning



The following pages discuss eight Conditions of Learning and four Processes That Enable Learning identified by Cambourne in his research. Each is discussed separately. The Conditions and Processes, however, are interrelated and function holistically. They are synergistic in nature, meaning that when they are considered together, the total effect is greater than the sum of the individual parts. These conditions and processes are inherent in classrooms in which learners are encouraged to use reading, writing, speaking, and listening to explore and make sense of their world.

CAMBOURNE'S CONDITIONS OF LEARNING

Engagement—This condition is at the center of all learning. For learning to occur, a learner must actively engage with any demonstrations in which they are immersed. Without engagement, even strong demonstrations aren't likely to result in learning. Engagement is more likely to occur if: learners see themselves as "doers" of the behavior in which they are immersed; they understand how these demonstrations are important to their lives; they believe they aren't risking physical or psy-

chological harm by attempting the behavior; and they like, trust, respect, and want to emulate the person demonstrating.

As children are learning a language, they are immersed in demonstrations by significant others, seeing the purposes and effects of the language. They interact with and respond to these demonstrations and are positively rewarded for their attempts to develop and use language. This engagement with language and those demon-

strating language is crucial as children construct the language they have to learn.

In the classroom, engagement is affected greatly by the relationships that are nurtured through the classroom community. The way children are treated by their teachers and other students strongly affects how they view themselves as learners. Engagement is more likely to occur when children believe they are readers and writers (or believe they are capable of becoming readers and writers); value reading and writing, and regard both as enjoyable experiences; and trust they can make attempts, even those that are incomplete or imperfect, without being penalized in some way. Students also benefit from a positive and trusting relationship with the teacher. Students who are truly engaged (not just being compliant) are more likely to learn from our demonstrations—how we say what we say matters! Without engagement, even the strongest demonstrations by effective teachers may not positively affect a student’s learning.

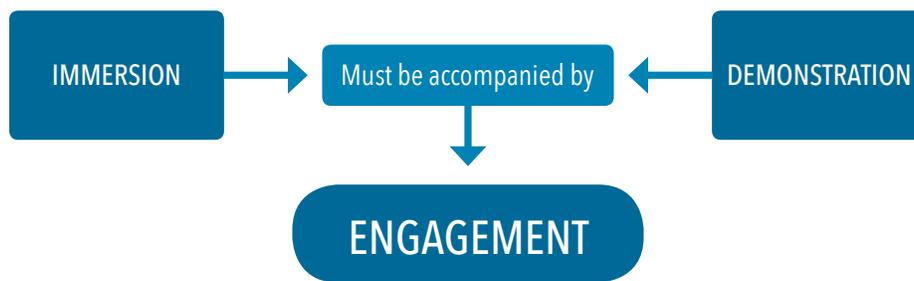
Immersion—When learning a language, children are surrounded by whole, meaningful examples of the language; in a sense, they are saturated by language. They hear not only words but also the sounds, rhythms, and cadences of the language they are learning. The meaning provided by these

models is built through the context in which the language is produced. Because this language is contextualized, it makes sense.

Children experience examples of reading and writing in the context of meaning-making in the classroom. Children hear texts read aloud to them, produce and see writing (their own and written by others), and share reading and writing daily to communicate messages. This saturation of written language reinforces the knowledge and skills to be learned over time and establishes the purpose of written language.

Demonstration—When immersed in language, learners experience clear demonstrations of language use. These verbal demonstrations are often combined with a physical demonstration of what that language can accomplish. For example, a request to “pass the salt” is accompanied by someone actually passing the salt shaker to the person requesting it. Without demonstrations such as this, learning is not likely to occur.

As a young child interacts with a parent, the parent may ask the child, “Would you like your toy?” while handing the toy to the child. The parent provides a model and demonstration of the function or purpose of the language (i.e., to inquire or suggest), an action to accompany the language (i.e., providing a play item), and an example of a



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language structure (i.e., wording or expression adjusted for complexity based on the learner). This “thinking aloud” about what is in the mind of the person speaking, along with a physical demonstration, provides an effective model of language.

For readers, explicit demonstrations of what reading and writing are used for—and how they are used—create the basis of modeling. Demonstrations must occur multiple times, and in multiple modes, because learners engage with different features or characteristics of our demonstrations. As they demonstrate, teachers include an explicit discussion and description of decisions they are making—the how, when, and why of reading and writing (sometimes thought of as “thinking aloud”). For example, while writing in front of students, a teacher might discuss two or three alternative ways to express a particular idea; considering the students engaged in the demonstration, the teacher (possibly with input from the students) can then decide on the best way to express the idea before actually writing the message.

Expectation—Expectation involves both how learners view themselves and how they are viewed by significant others. As described in the section on engagement, learners must see themselves as being capable of learning. Often, this belief, or sense of self, is signaled through the messages and language significant others use when communicating with learners. When parents are asked if they think their child will learn to speak their language, the response is unequivocal: “Of course.” Learners achieve what they expect to achieve (Cambourne, 2001) and what others expect of them.

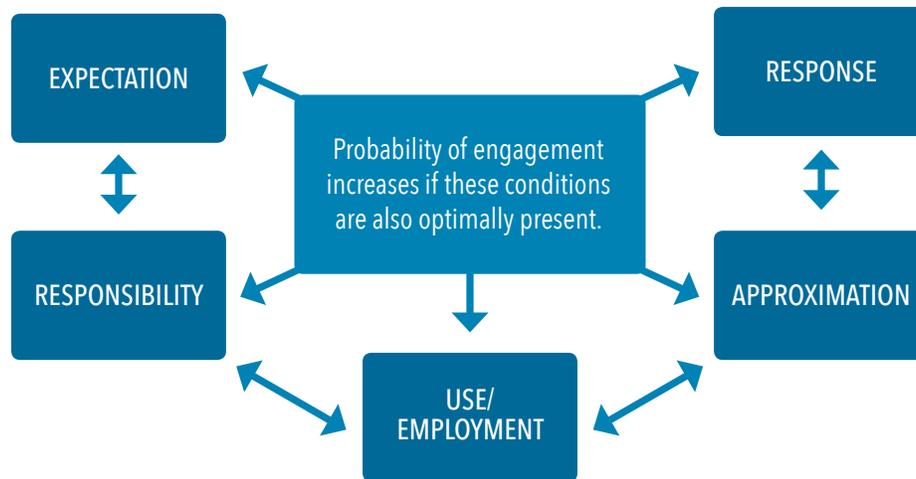
In a classroom, students who experience success and view mistakes and errors as part of learning come to see themselves as learners. Messages, often subtle, are conveyed through how the classroom is structured and the language used to mediate learning situations. Do we think our students are “going to be readers and writers”—or do we see them as “readers and writers already”? Do we think or speak of the “low readers” and “high readers”? Do we allow learners to

choose texts for independent reading based only on “level” or do we trust they (with our help) can monitor and understand what makes sense as they read? Our attitudes, perceptions, and actions—and the way we communicate—affect our learners, whether inspiring or discouraging them.

Responsibility—While learning to talk, learners decide what part or parts of a demonstration they attend to and when they attend to a particular language task. For example, consider a language demonstration in the form of a command: “Please put on your shoes.” The learner may be noticing the idea of “shoes” and what they are, or the way to include the word *Please* when making a request. Alternatively, the learner may be considering the context of the message, as in: “When I put on my shoes, it’s time to go outside.” Ultimately, children themselves are responsible for learning to talk—and for applying the most useful understandings from demonstrations in sync with their own development.

Classroom teachers help students develop responsibility by assuming they are attending to explicit demonstrations. We are attuned to student needs based on timely and relevant assessments, and so our demonstrations are also timely and relevant. Teachers structure classroom experiences to provide opportunities for students to engage in decision-making as learners of oral and written language. Throughout the day, teachers have the power to support students or deny them the experiences necessary for them to become responsible for their own learning. Encouraging students to choose writing topics (instead of specifying topics), helping them choose their own independent reading texts (instead of deciding what they must read), and providing constructive feedback—each of these helps a teacher develop responsible learners.

While supporting their students’ developing sense of responsibility, teachers must ensure the students have the time needed to work through problems for themselves. This basic requirement can test our patience in the classroom. As teachers, our impatience stems from many sources:



packed schedules, overcrowded classrooms, never-ending testing! Yet affording learners time to think and process is key to developing self-regulated and responsible learners.

Approximation—As children learn to talk, they approximate when using language, and we respond to the meaning of their words. Responding to the intentions behind their messages honors their approximations as true and meaningful communication. Parents respond to a child who utters “Ba-ba” by saying, “Oh, you want your bottle.” They don’t wait for the child to articulate each sound in the word *bottle* before getting the bottle! In other words, there is no expectation for children to produce fully articulated responses and attempts before we respond to their talk. We also don’t expect that approximations, such as baby talk, will be permanent.

Teachers respond to meaning as students approximate reading and writing. Responding to the intentions behind their approximations honors students’ abilities to use written language and supports the young readers’ and writers’ beliefs in themselves as learners. As teachers, we recognize the importance of risk taking as students attempt to learning something new. When teachers honor students’ approximations as they tackle an unfamiliar task, students are freer to explore new ideas and strategies; that exploration helps them continue to develop confidence in their own abilities. By using broad questions, such

as “What are you thinking?,” teachers can determine the meanings students are making—as well as what demonstrations or more detailed questions are needed to extend students’ abilities even further. This approach differs greatly from posing questions with “right” answers, even if those questions are open-ended or text dependent.

Use/Practice/Employment—Children learning to talk require time and opportunity to practice their evolving language. As young learners seem to know intuitively, this practice or employment of language needs to occur both with others and by themselves. Parents of young children recognize that their talk is ongoing. Even when others aren’t around or necessarily attending to the talk, children are employing language. Using their developing language skills allows children to apply and practice what they are learning about how language works; this helps them progress toward fluency.

Teachers create opportunities in their classrooms that encourage students to engage in genuine reading and writing experiences on a daily basis—this is the point of independent reading and writing times. These instructional practices afford students the time and opportunity to approximate reading and writing, to use and employ their ever-evolving skills and knowledge, to solidify successful attempts, and to continue refining their problem-solving abilities while immersed in extended texts.

Response—In learning to talk, children receive information from a more knowledgeable other, typically a parent, as they produce language. For example, as in the earlier discussion of approximations, when a child asks for a “Ba-ba,” the parent’s response (“Oh, you want your bottle.”) gives the child immediate feedback that the message was communicated and understood. Communication between the learner and the significant other is honest and positive, with no hidden agenda. And, importantly, the adult does not expect that the child will immediately reproduce the exact response that was given by the adult, whether in that moment or in future exchanges.

As teachers, our response, sometimes referred to as feedback, must be positive and honest, related to meaning, and without a hidden agenda. And while our feedback to students may be explicit, this information provided by a teacher does not necessarily mean the learner will immediately incorporate our feedback—the next attempts may also be imperfect. Incorporating new learning takes time, approximation, and practice—and patience, for both the learner and the teacher!

Feedback often comes from other students, as well as teachers. When students talk to each other during reading and writing times, they give and receive feedback (“I like your drawing.” “How do you spell *Mom*?”). Conversations between adults and children, such as in a reading conference or a guided reading lesson, provide necessary feedback to learners (“The way you checked the picture and the first letter of the word helped you know for sure the word was *cat*.”)

There are likely to be times, after periods of response and demonstrations, when we recognize a child doesn’t appear to be attending to the new learning. This is a signal the child needs more explicit and direct feedback from an adult. Cambourne refers to this as “upping the ante,” when we realize a child isn’t learning as expected. If a child isn’t attending to the demonstrations, a parent may decide a more direct response is warranted. One strategy for addressing this issue is to state the child must use a more correct term

rather than an approximation of the appropriate language. When a two-year-old child uses “wa-wa” for *water*, a parent might respond with a smile and a language demonstration: “Oh, you want some water.” After multiple demonstrations and ample time has passed, however, a parent may directly tell the child to use the more age-appropriate term (“Big girls and boys say *water*, not *wa-wa*”). The exact timing of when this more explicit request is made often depends on cultural conventions and information received from the parent’s knowledge source (i.e., one’s mother, mother-in-law, the latest child development best seller).

Effective teachers “up the ante” and give this kind of explicit feedback to students regularly and systematically. When beginning readers continue, for example—even after multiple demonstrations—to look at the pictures in a book and mostly ignore the words on the page, a teacher will prompt them to check the meaning gained from pictures against the words they see on the page. Deciding when to provide this more directed feedback may be determined by the teacher’s professional knowledge sources (i.e., more experienced teachers, professional books, websites). Determining when to “up the ante” and expect more from a student often challenges even the most experienced teacher, and applying this approach may require him or her to consult multiple sources.

CAMBOURNE'S PROCESSES THAT ENABLE LEARNING

Cambourne’s eight Conditions of Learning are complemented by four Processes That Enable Learning. In his ongoing research into classrooms where the Conditions are intentionally applied, teachers’ discourse with learners enables a series of learning processes to develop. These processes are necessary to support the Conditions of Learning. They coexist seamlessly in classrooms and are difficult to separate. These are the four processes identified so far in Cambourne’s research.

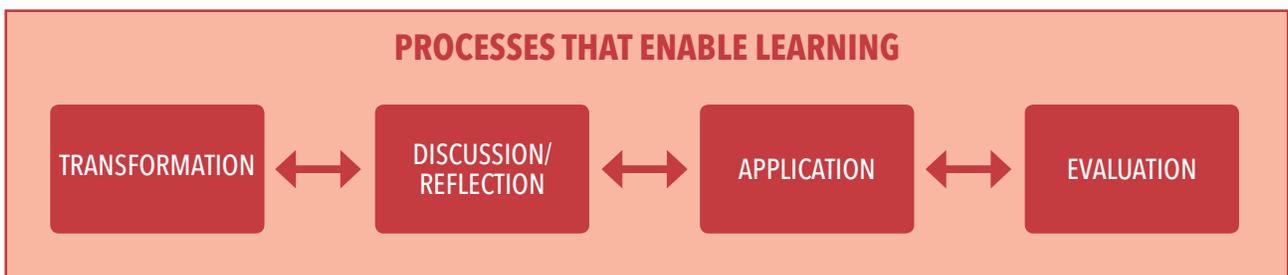
Transformation—This process enables learners to make their own meaning from demonstrations. “Owning the learning,” or “making the learning their own,” is sometimes referred to as transfer and is at the core of the transformation process. This process is enhanced through discussions about the concepts and knowledge involved in demonstrations. The approximations made by learners and the decisions made by students assuming responsibility for learning are inherent in transformations. The opportunities teachers create for students to talk about their learning support transformation, leading to deeper meanings that transcend the immediate learning situation.

Discussion/Reflection—We learn best when we talk with others about our understandings. Talk with others (or, as is the case with reflection, talk with ourselves) about our thinking allows us to construct, clarify, interpret, adjust, and expand our understandings. The turn-and-talk times, the whole-class discussions, and the small-group work inherent in collaboration lead to understandings that can't be constructed independently. Discussion allows us to gauge our own thinking

in relation to the thoughts of others—and to engage in a recursive applying-discussing-transforming-evaluating cycle of learning.

Application—Inherent in the condition of Use/Practice/Employment, the application of what is being learned is enhanced by collaboration. Having students talk about their reading with partners during independent time is an example of collaboration. When people collaborate, application, discussion, and transformation occur, resulting in a multilayered experience that leads to greater understandings. Through this joint construction, and the reflection on this joint construction, the new learning is further transformed.

Evaluation—While response from others is a condition of learning, self-evaluation of our own learning (what we learn) and learning process (how we learned) is also important. As we apply, discuss, and transform our learning, each of us evaluates our own performance by asking: “How am I doing?” Building reflection time into our teaching experiences supports this self-evaluation.



“The way we learn has nothing to do with being kept quiet.”—Ralph Peterson

Some Teaching Decisions and the Effect on the Conditions of Learning

The following section discusses possible teaching decisions during four commonly used instructional approaches: Read-Aloud, Shared Reading, Guided Reading, and Independent Reading. Definitions of these approaches are intentionally not included in this paper; many beliefs about these instructional practices, however, are implied in the decisions discussed below. The ideas suggested may be applied to the series of questions that began this paper. They are not meant to be prescriptive in nature; rather, they describe some instructional possibilities through the lens of the Conditions of Learning. As with all responsive teaching, *everything* depends on the learners.

INSTRUCTIONAL READING APPROACHES WITHIN A BALANCED LITERACY MODEL OF LEARNING

READ ALOUD

SHARED
READING

GUIDED READING

INDEPENDENT
READING



<p style="text-align: center;">Some Teaching Decisions within a READ ALOUD Approach</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">How Conditions of Learning Are Affected by These Teaching Decisions</p>
<p>In the first reading of a read-aloud text, the lesson focus is broad, with emphasis on understanding the story or information (cognition) rather than a very specific task, such as “ask and answer questions” or “inferring” (metacognition). To set a purpose for reading, we might say something like: “Our work today is to figure out the story in this narrative. In stories, we understand our characters from what they say and do and think. Let’s get going.”</p>	<p>This kind of demonstration immerses readers in an authentic, meaning-making experience as they make sense of a text. As readers experience a text fully, grappling with “figuring it out,” they see themselves as readers, a necessary belief for engagement. Our expectations are also clear—we see them as capable of learning. The purpose of reading is kept whole as we immerse readers in text and expect them to use the entirety of their abilities as readers to make meaning.</p>
<p>Throughout every reading and rereading of a text, the teacher has students talk periodically about the meanings they are constructing, talking sometimes with partners, sometimes with the whole group. Students initially talk with partners about broad questions like “What are you thinking?” before exploring more specific, text-dependent questions. As they share their thinking with the whole group, the teacher follows up on a response from a student with probing questions or comments, such as “What makes you think that?” or “Say more about that.” These probes necessitate students expanding on their thinking. A teacher may follow up with more specific questions as well, such as, after reading Kevin Henkes’ <i>Chrysanthemum</i>, “Why do you think Chrysanthemum began to dislike school?” or “What can you infer about Chrysanthemum from what she does?”</p>	<p>By using turn-and-talk partnerships, asking broad questions initially and probing student responses, teachers support students to practice and approximate meaning-making. Through discussion, students demonstrate thinking possibilities for each other rather than simply answering a question. They develop responsibility as they construct meaning with partners and the group. As they use thinking from others, their ideas are transformed from their original approximations, which leads to broader applications. As teachers follow up by asking students to expand on their thinking, students make attempts free from the fear of being wrong, a critical factor for engagement. These experiences allow teachers to assess authentically and to provide appropriate responses and feedback to learners.</p>
<p>The teacher closes the lesson by talking about the processing work students did. A statement about process might sound something like: “Today as you thought about the story, you noticed the things our characters were saying and doing. You began to consider not only what the characters were saying and doing but also <i>why</i> they were saying and doing those things. Thinking in this way—making inferences about characters and trying to figure out their motivations and reasons for their actions—helps us understand a story deeply.”</p>	<p>Response to students about a process they used supports them to understand how they made meaning and why doing so is important for readers. This conveys that students have taken responsibility for learning and have met expectations we have for them as learners. Engagement increases as readers see themselves as capable and have a clear understanding of how our demonstrations relate to meaning-making.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Some Teaching Decisions within a SHARED READING Approach</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">How Conditions of Learning Are Affected by These Teaching Decisions</p>
<p>In initial readings of a shared text, the teacher reads the text aloud while students follow along on an enlarged text. Students think and engage to make meaning of the text but don't necessarily join in reading aloud on the first readings.</p> <p>For emergent and early readers, teachers choose not to track print on an enlarged text (in a big book or on a chart) on a first read because the focus is on meaning; for more fluent readers on longer texts, the teacher may track down the left side of a projected text to support readers to locate and follow along the line being read. These readers will not attempt reading aloud, however, choosing to focus on meaning rather than reading orally.</p>	<p>Just as in read-aloud sessions, students are expected to make sense of a text and to engage in experiencing the text using the entirety of their problem-solving and meaning-making abilities. Because these texts are beyond what students could read on their own, teachers take more responsibility to read the text initially rather than asking students to attempt to read challenging texts aloud.</p> <p>By using enlarged texts and focusing first on understanding the bigger messages communicated by the text, the teacher prepares for upcoming demonstrations that will illustrate how print functions and how readers navigate the print. Because the text exposure begins as one enlarged text, rather than individual copies provided to each student, the children can engage with the demonstration in a responsible, yet supported, way.</p> <p>By being intentional in how and when to interact with print, a teacher demonstrates that meaning is the goal of reading and the written portions are in the service of meaning. Immersion into a text in this way during initial readings provides a model of reading based on big ideas and meaning.</p>
<p>In subsequent readings that help a text become more and more familiar—as students begin to know the text, or portions of it—they may join in reading the text aloud. They may also continue to read silently. For texts written with repetitive phrases or sentences, teachers invite students to join in on repetitive refrains; teachers often withhold their voices so students can complete a line or phrase for themselves. When reading with older students on longer texts, teachers may have students follow along without having them read aloud—the sharing centers on thinking processes and the meaning being made, not necessarily the voice.</p> <p>The teacher tracks the print with a pointer on these subsequent reads, choosing an appropriate manner of tracking relative to the readers (for example, word-by-word tracking for emergent readers developing one-to-one match; for early readers, a sweeping motion to support more phrasing).</p>	<p>Teachers expect students will be able to read the text more independently with each rereading. Students are responsible for making decisions on when and where they join in. As students take on more reading aloud, they approximate the manner in which the text is read. By adjusting a demonstration to the readers in the group, the teacher is offering various entry points in navigating print as students approximate skills and strategy use. Revisiting known texts helps students use and practice the language of texts.</p>
<p>Each subsequent revisit to the text offers teachers opportunity to demonstrate various skills and strategies in the context of a known text. Because students aren't working to make text-level meanings now, they can focus on the details that helped them make meaning, learning to navigate print. Teachers notice and name how each revisit helps students learn more about how texts and print work and what they can do as readers to help themselves make meaning.</p>	<p>As teachers use a known text and reread it multiple times, teachers support learners to begin focusing on how they have made meaning rather than just the meaning they have made. The demonstrations show children how to navigate across print and help them become responsible for knowing how, when, and why to use skills and strategies. This kind of teaching focuses on what children can do to help themselves as readers, increasing engagement because it signals a positive, confident, and authentic message about our students' ever-developing abilities.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Some Teaching Decisions within a GUIDED READING Approach</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">How Conditions of Learning Are Affected by These Teaching Decisions</p>
<p>A guided reading text requires an introduction from a teacher; what happens in this introduction may vary, depending on the learners and the text under consideration. For emergent readers, an introduction may include a book walk through most of the text, to highlight story ideas, vocabulary, and sentence structure. For early readers, teachers may talk across a few pages before reading those pages for discussion. Fluent readers may read the first page or two in a chapter book to determine the characters or the style of the narrative, or peruse a nonfiction text to engage with it, as well as determine topic, and/or organization of the information, with discussion following.</p>	<p>Though how a teacher introduces a text to readers may vary, students at all reading stages are expected to read and construct meaning. They are responsible for reading the text, even as they approximate in some situations. Teachers respond to all attempts at meaning, not just successful attempts. Because readers integrate strategies to make sense of the text, the teacher's response is to support students to understand how and when they have used strategies to make meaning. Over time, students begin to use the same strategy talk to explain how they made meaning, but they do so only after they have made meaning—strategy talk devoid of meaning is nonsensical and can cause students to disengage because they lose their sense of the purpose of reading.</p>
<p>While our early emergent readers may read aloud during the reading of the text, students past these very beginning stages read the text silently. This allows them to problem-solve privately, making reasonable and expected errors in the privacy of their own heads, and to work at their own pace as they make meaning of this new text. After indicating to the teacher they have completed the reading, they begin to prepare for discussion by considering the ideas they have about the text, things they've wondered about, and what they might say about their thinking. During the reading, teachers observe the faces and body language of students for indicators of their thinking.</p>	<p>The responsibility for reading and our beliefs in readers' abilities are made clear when we expect students to read silently. Students are more engaged in meaning-making as they are given opportunities to problem-solve in their heads, using whatever means they have to make sense of text. By asking students to prepare to discuss their thinking, we support them to be responsible group members. And by valuing confusions and misunderstandings, as well as the nonverbal signals of meaning or confusion, we demonstrate the value of approximations in learning.</p>
<p>The discussion in guided reading is determined by student thinking. The teacher uses broad questions, such as "What are you thinking?" and "What did you find out?" to launch discussion. Students grow ideas as they listen to others' thoughts and adjust their thinking as they read and think across the text. Discussion in all lessons for all stages of readers includes thinking at all levels of understanding (literal, interpretive/inferential, and analytical/critical), regardless of the lesson focus.</p>	<p>Engagement increases as students trust their teachers do want to hear what they're thinking. The responsibility for making meaning belongs to each student. Broad questions demonstrate that we expect them to make meaning. Responses from group members are important as feedback on meaning-making and support students to engage in productive ways. By asking students to think at all levels of understanding, we are continuing to immerse them in complete reading experiences.</p>

<p align="center">Some Teaching Decisions within an INDEPENDENT READING Approach</p>	<p align="center">How Conditions of Learning Are Affected by These Teaching Decisions</p>
<p>Accessible classroom libraries are organized more similarly to bookstores than libraries—by topics, genres, and authors. Because students are selecting reading material based on interest, not reading level, teachers support students to understand how to determine whether they understand a text. This comparative thinking requires students to know what making sense of a text feels like in their brains so they can know when they <i>don't</i> understand. Assessing one's understanding involves ongoing discussions with readers, and teachers integrate these discussions periodically into whole- and small-group reading opportunities, as well as in debriefs at the end of independent reading time. Students' abilities to be self-reflective increase over time.</p>	<p>The most obvious condition created through independent reading is use. Students have time to apply, orchestrate, and practice everything we've taught, what others have taught, and what students have figured out for themselves. As they engage in the reading act, they develop responsibility to make sense of texts and expect what they read to make sense. Our expectations and beliefs in their abilities signal our trust in them as learners, causing engagement to increase. Organizing our libraries to make them accessible allows students to be responsible. As teachers, we understand that approximations of readerly behavior are normal. By ensuring our demonstrations focus on meaning as the goal of reading and including reflection as part of lesson closure, we encourage students to be responsible.</p>
<p>Responding to texts offers students an opportunity to look further into a text; to refine initial understandings; increase their awareness of how authors use words, language, text organization and features, and other writerly techniques; to think even more critically about the meanings they have constructed; and may function to extend discussions (<i>Reading for Life</i>, 1997). This is the intent of responding to texts—to think and feel more deeply about the text. Teachers who understand the purpose of responding to texts offer students choice in demonstrating their thoughts and understandings through a variety of responses—written, artistic, dramatic, graphic, through calls to action, and analysis of our world (to name a few). Each type of response requires a teacher to consider how to assess understandings demonstrated by students in these varied ways. And, because all texts don't require this level of introspection, supporting students to consider whether they respond to a text at all is another option.</p>	<p>Authenticity in response is essential for engagement to occur in independent reading. If students are required to write about everything they read, they very soon disengage. Demonstrations and discussions about the ways texts move readers to think and feel support authentic immersion and are essential parts of whole-class lessons that support engagement during independent reading. And by allowing choice in responding to texts, teachers encourage students to develop responsibility for their own thinking.</p>
<p>Independent reading offers students time to engage with texts in meaningful ways and to orchestrate and apply the instruction they have received. This includes using talking and discussion as a tool for constructing and expanding meaning. Independent reading isn't just quiet reading time. Readers may read a variety of texts during independent time, whether chosen for themselves or introduced by the teacher: fiction, nonfiction, online content, illustrated texts. They may read in a variety of modes—alone, with partners, in discussion groups—and may read the same or different texts. "One child, one book, quietly reading" does not allow for processes that engage and encourage most learners.</p>	<p>Again, the most obvious condition created through independent reading is use. Instructional processes of transformation, discussion and reflection, and application are also inherent as students read within a thinking and talking community. Choosing what, how, and with whom one thinks and reads is the most meaningful responsibility a reader can have. Living a readerly life is the epitome of immersion and is the strongest expression of engagement. Ultimately, "The way we learn has nothing to do with being kept quiet" (Peterson, 1992).</p>

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