Terrific Teaching Tips: Affective Reading Empowers Student Response

Laurel Borgia  
*Western Illinois University*

Carol Owles  
*Illinois State University*

Kylee Merendino  
*East Tennessee State University*

Edward J. Dwyer  
*East Tennessee State University*, dwyer@etsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://dc.etsu.edu/etsu-works](https://dc.etsu.edu/etsu-works)

Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](https://dc.etsu.edu/etsu-works), and the [Language and Literacy Education Commons](https://dc.etsu.edu/etsu-works)

Citation Information  
A balanced literacy program consists of five affective and cognitive components: engagement; transmission and transaction; explanations and examples; application, guided practice, and personal response; and respect for a student’s culture and background (Cecil & Gipe, 2009). Affective responses to reading are emotional reactions one experiences when reading that correspond to personal feelings and motives (Cahoy, 2004). Reading is good if it puts people and their ideas and feelings together. However, the affective domain also means students choose to read (Kline, 1994). Affective reading gives students the love of reading so that they choose to read and respond to what they read. We will look at interactive read-alouds in the Pre-K Teaching Tip, series books for enjoyment and motivation in the Primary Teaching Tip, making family history comb-bound books in the Intermediate Teaching Tip, and using a class wiki to link character feelings to personal experiences in the Secondary Teaching Tip.

Pre-K Teaching Tip: Reading Aloud and Involving Young Children in Interactive Stories

Teachers who model their love and enjoyment of reading can be the key to getting young children to love and enjoy reading. Our delight and enthusiasm for a story can be contagious. As young learners actively engage in a story that is read aloud to them, they have emotional reactions that will, hopefully, be enjoyable. Hearing children say, “Read it again!” is one indication that they have had a pleasurable experience with literature and want more.

As we help children develop the affective domain of reading, we want to encourage an enjoyment of reading. We also want our students to develop positive feelings and attitudes about reading and a strong motivation and desire to read and write (Fitzgerald, 1999).

Choosing a fun story that provides enjoyment and delight is important. As teachers, we have many favorite stories and books that fit this criterion. *The Wide-Mouthed Frog* (Faulkner, 1996) is one such book that very young children can have fun with and enjoy. It also provides many opportunities for language play. The repetition of the language, the fun of the pop-up illustrations, and the interactive opportunities for children to shape their mouths the way the
creatures in the story do make it a fun read-aloud. The humorous ending to the story leaves the readers/listeners with a delightful experience and asking for more.

Another fun read-aloud that also provides an opportunity for participation, interaction, and enjoyment is Jules Feiffer's *Bark, George* (1999). Again, language play is part of the dialogue and fun of the story. Children can imitate George by making the animal sounds that the dog does. Puppets and other props can be used for the various animals in the story. Allowing children to hold and manipulate these props will further involve them in the action and dialogue of the story.

As teachers share many of their favorite books with their students, they will encourage a love and enjoyment of reading. When they show their enthusiasm and delight in reading a story, they foster similar feelings and attitudes in the students they teach.

**Primary Teaching Tip: Introducing Series Books to Encourage Enjoyment and the Motivation to Read Independently**

As teachers, we need to think about how we got hooked on reading and what gave us that zest to read more. Oftentimes, it was a favorite series that provided that interest and motivation. Many popular books from one and even two generations ago include *The Hardy Boys* and *Nancy Drew* mysteries, the *Encyclopedia Brown* series (Donald Sobol), and the *Baby-Sitters Club* series (Ann Martin). These collections are ones that many adults still remember as the books that helped them learn to enjoy and want to read as a form of relaxation and recreation. Series books like these “presented predictable characters and absorbing plots that built confidence in oneself both as a reader and as a person” (Hancock, 2008, p. 159).

Krashen (1982) discusses the importance of providing reading materials that foster high motivation, build self-confidence in the reader, help children create a positive self-image, and that are part of a low-anxiety learning environment. Along with this low-stress environment, we need to include the opportunity for children to see how language and literacy function in our world. Some of those functions can be enjoyment, entertainment, and relaxation.

For primary-age students, there are many series available that can be introduced by the teacher during a read-aloud time in the literacy classroom. Once children have this initial introduction to the characters, the predictable plot, and easy-to-access writing style, they become favorite books for young readers. They provide what Nodelman (1992) refers to as “comfort in their confirmation of previous expectations and the security of knowing that the story goes on even as the final page is turned” (in Hancock, 2008, p. 159). Some popular series for primary grade children are Paula Danziger's *Amber Brown* series, Megan McDonald's *Judy Moody* and the *Stink* series, and Lois Lowry's *Anastasia* series.

When children enjoy reading and feel successful with books, they are more likely to read for pleasure, relaxation, enjoyment, and information. We are helping them develop that affective domain of reading as well as a love for good literature that is appropriate to their interests and abilities. We help them learn that reading can fulfill many such functions. Reading becomes a most worthy pastime in which they do choose to participate!

**Intermediate Teaching Tip: Making Family History Comb-Bound Books**

Events linked with emotion are easily recalled in our memory (Sousa, 2005). All of us love to talk about our favorite subject, our own life. This teaching tip links a student's personal experiences and family history with the experiences and family history of Elijah in the novel, *Elijah of Buxton* (Curtis, 2007). Family experiences that trigger emotional responses of both the students and those of Elijah will be combined into a comb-bound book that encourages affective reading.
In the novel, Elijah, the son of runaway slaves living in Canada, goes to America in pursuit of a lying man nicknamed “Preacher,” who has stolen money from his friend, Mr. Leroy. When in America, Elijah discovers some of the horrors of slavery from which his parents escaped. These horrors trigger strong emotions in Elijah as he links his parents’ history to himself.

As the student reads the novel, have him list in a chart format what Elijah sees and feels regarding slavery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Elijah Sees</th>
<th>What Elijah Feels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five runaway slaves and a baby chained together with hand and ankles shackled</td>
<td>Elijah’s legs felt unsolid and rickety. Elijah felt sick to his stomach over this injustice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preacher hung by his neck to a beam in a barn</td>
<td>Elijah’s heart sank because he knew Mr. Leroy’s money was gone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student will then describe how Elijah freed the slaves by bringing them into Canada, and will write how Elijah’s family history helps shape his thinking and actions when he is in America. The student will place these pages in the front of his or her comb-bound book on family history.

Next, encourage your students to think about their own family history. Instruct students to write a story about a family experience that made them feel strong emotions. After the story is written, the students will create a chart with the headings “What I Saw” and “What I Felt.” The students will write about how their own family histories helped shape their thinking and actions. The students will add these pages to their personal book on family history.

In the following sections, the guest authors, Kylee Merendino, a recent graduate with a master’s degree in Teaching, and Edward J. Dwyer, professor of Curriculum and Instruction at East Tennessee State University, share directions on how to make comb-bound books. They first discuss preparing the materials necessary to make the books, and then provide procedures for book construction.

### Preparation of Materials for Books

1. **A comb-binding machine such as the Ibico Kombo is used to bind the books.** Many schools have a binding machine of this type. Comb-binding machines are available at all office supply stores such as Office Max and Office Depot. When purchasing a comb-binder, we recommend getting a sturdy machine capable of easily punching through mat board. Keep the machine on a rolling cart for ease of transport since many of them are fairly heavy.

2. **Plastic combs used for binding are also available at all office supply stores.** There are often large supplies of them in school storage closets! Cut the 11” combs into sections of six comb rings for the project described herein. The ½” ring comb size works well. The standard size combs contain 19 binding rings; however, be sure to see that the combs are compatible with your comb-binding machine.

3. **Make pages for the books from 110 lb. or 67 lb. cardstock.** Regular weight copy paper (24 lb.) is too flimsy for making a durable book. A variety of colors is available. Start by cutting one inch off the top with a paper cutter, making the paper 10” × 8.5”. Next, cut the pages into fourths (4.25” × 5”) using a paper cutter. This will give you four pages per sheet. Now, line up the pages on the comb-binding machine so that you can punch six holes as nearly equidistant from the top and bottom as possible. There are guide marks on the comb-machine to designate where to punch or you can add your own with a sticker. Some “trial and error” will be necessary.

4. **Cut mat board 5.5” × 4.5” using a sturdy paper cutter.** Colorful scrap mat board can be found in frame shops. It is easy to make front and back matching covers. Punch six holes in the mat board. The placement of the mat board on the comb-binding machine will be slightly different from placement for the pages because the mat board is a little larger.
This adjustment can easily be made. Punch one cover with the colorful side up, and the other with the colorful side down so the front and back covers will align perfectly.

5. You can make name plates for your students using impressive-looking bond paper. Each name plate contains the title of the book, a by-line, and the name of the student. Make one set of name plates (1.5” × 2.0” when cut out) that can easily be modified for many different titles. You can use the “Replace” option on Microsoft Edit to make a new set of name plates very efficiently. The professional looking name plate is quite impressive, easy to create, and encourages students to treasure books they make even more than they ordinarily would. Make colorful frames for the name plates (2” × 3”) from construction paper. Use clear plastic adhesive such as ConTact (3.5” × 2.5”) to provide a protective cover for the name plate and frames and to firmly affix them to the covers. It is helpful to tack the name plate and frame to the book cover with a glue stick to ensure that they are centered. Otherwise, static electricity might throw them off center when you are affixing the clear adhesive plastic covering.

6. Drawings or pictures from a variety of sources can be added to the pages.

**Procedures**

1. Pass out materials for each participant: two mat board covers, one six-loop plastic comb, 10 pre-punched pages, glue stick, scissors, name plate with frame, and clear plastic adhesive. The mat board covers, pages, and comb can be placed ahead of time in a plastic sandwich bag to facilitate distribution.

2. Show a model book to the participants.

3. The participants place the book pages in order and use the comb-binding machine to put the book together.

4. Participants can change the number of pages in the book by simply opening the comb on the binding machine. This can be done by hand, but the plastic combs can be bent out of shape when twisted.

Creating student comb-bound books encourages affective reading, and the final product may become a family keepsake. Students will enjoy reading personal stories about themselves and those of their classmates.

**Secondary Teaching Tip: A Class Wiki to Link Characters to Student Experiences**

Using the novel *The Schwa Was Here* (Shusterman, 2004), students will link the Schwa’s feelings to their own experiences in short class postings on a class wiki. Wikis are a collaborative web space where written content can be added. Students can respond to each other’s postings, and the wiki allows interaction between teachers and students (Richardson, 2006).

In this novel, two eighth-grade boys, Anthony Bonano and Calvin Schwa, become friends despite very different backgrounds. Calvin Schwa seems to have a knack for being invisible to those around him, and Anthony befriends him. Anthony learns a lesson about accepting others and forgetting his own needs in this entertaining novel. The teacher will write a short scenario from the novel emphasizing how the Schwa felt and asking students to tie in a personal experience that made him or her feel the same way and place it on the class wiki site. Students may also find a scenario from the novel and post the first comment for fellow students to respond to the wiki. Using a wiki encourages all students to interact as each can share stories and feelings in a more anonymous format than face to face. As we become connected to a character by shared experiences, more affective reading occurs.

As students are reading the novel, expect them to respond to ten separate teacher postings on the wiki site and to post at least one comment for fellow classmates to respond to using scenarios from the novel.
Some example teacher posts might look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you ever been somewhere and were not noticed as if you were invisible? Describe your experience and how it felt. Relate this to an experience of Calvin Schwa.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Bonano, nicknamed &quot;Antsy,&quot; said &quot;Life is like a bad haircut...&quot; Read the whole quote from the novel before you respond. Describe a personal experience when you felt this was true. Then, relate this quote to an experience of a character from the novel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relate Antsy's thinking about bamboo to his friends, Ira and Howie. Have you had the same feeling about a friend? Tell why you have felt that way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the Schwa offered Antsy any paper clip in his collection, which one would you have chosen and why? Describe a collection you own and why it is important to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexis said about her grandfather, &quot;Sometimes I think my grandfather died long before I was born.&quot; Yet her grandfather was not dead. How was Lexis trying to change him? Have you ever wanted to change someone in your family? Who? Why would you want them to change?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some websites offer wikis that a teacher can use with his or her class. Directions follow on how to use a free wiki website, My PBwiki, where an academic wiki is available to teachers. This site lets the teacher restrict users of the wiki to his or her class only. Though a wiki allows students to edit each other's postings, the teacher as the administrator of the wiki can view any changes that have been made to original posts.

1. Go to the following URL: https://my.pbwiki.com to create an account so you may log in to the site. You can then create a wiki page for your class.
2. Enter your registration information. The site will ask you what you want to call your wiki. Name your wiki, and it will be created.
3. You can now edit the front page of the wiki and make your first post to ask students to respond. Add users to your wiki by clicking on user setting in the lower right-hand corner of your front page. You may create user accounts, and the wiki will provide student names and passwords so your students may respond to your posts. You may also enter your students' names, and then the site will provide passwords. These will be given to you as the administrator, and you will distribute them to the students in your class. As students interact with the wiki, they are learning about writing and publishing and linking personal experiences with a novel character for more affective reading.

These teachers' tips will promote a love of reading in any classroom. Activities that encourage readers to reconstruct text to a more evaluative and emotional approach stimulate readers to become engaged in reading. That is what good readers need and what motivates all readers (Janssen, Braaksma, & Rijlaarsdam, 2006).

References


**About the Authors**

Laurel Borgia is an associate professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Western Illinois University where she teaches undergraduate and gradu-

are courses in reading and language arts and supervises field experiences.

Carol Owles is an assistant professor of language and literacy at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in reading. She can be reached at csowles@ilstu.edu.

Guest authors Kylee Merendino is a recent graduate with a master’s degree in Teaching, and Edward J. Dwyer is a professor of Curriculum and Instruction at East Tennessee State University.

The authors encourage *IRCJ* readers to submit teaching tips for this column. Write in care of the Editor of the *IRCJ* or e-mail Dr. Borgia at LG-Borgia@wiu.edu.

---

**Cover Artwork Needed for IRCJ**

For each issue of the Illinois Reading Council Journal, we compile a collage of student artwork. The artwork should relate to some aspect of reading and/or to children's or adolescent literature. Artwork that is full color and shows time and effort is preferred. Children whose work is featured in the *IRCJ* will receive a letter, a certificate of appreciation, a copy of the cover photo suitable for framing, and a copy of the journal. The names of the students and teachers, as well as the schools, appear inside the journal in a special note about the cover.

Artwork should be submitted in a reproducible format accompanied by a signed parental permission form (see below). Please do not fold or staple the artwork. If possible, please send artwork electronically, preferably in 300 dpi (or greater) TIFF color format. On the back of each piece submitted, write (1) the name of the student; (2) the name of the teacher; (3) the grade; (4) the school; and (5) full contact information, including telephone number and e-mail address for the teacher and contact information for the parents. Mail all submissions to Dr. Kathy Barclay, Editor, *IRCJ*, Western Illinois University, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455-1390. Those students whose artwork is accepted will be notified; the remaining artwork will be kept on file for possible use at a future time.

We eagerly anticipate appropriate submissions from your students!

---

**Student Artwork Release Form**

As parent/guardian of ____________________________, I hereby grant permission (Name of Student) for my child's artwork to appear in the *Illinois Reading Council Journal*, to which copyright will be held by the Illinois Reading Council. This copyright includes any and all rights to include the artwork in any future publications of the IRC and to grant permission for its reproduction in outside publications.

---

**The Publications**

The Illinois Reading Council publishes professional books and resources for educators at all levels. IRC publications are intended to advance the research and knowledge of reading instruction and provide opportunities for professional development to IRC members and others.

**The Council**

The Illinois Reading Council is a nonprofit educational association with headquarters in Normal, Illinois. It seeks to improve the quality of reading instruction through the study of the reading process and teaching techniques; to serve as a clearinghouse for the dissemination of reading research through conferences and publications; and to encourage a lifetime habit of reading.

---

**TERRIFIC TEACHING TIPS** 49