A strategy I frequently use in my daily instruction is book introduction. The book introduction gives the teacher and student an interest point with which to begin the story.

I usually use a puppet or a prop of some type to spark interest in my kindergarten class. For example, in the last few weeks we have been focusing on fairy tales I used finger puppets on a mitt to introduce The Three Little Pigs to my class; and the students loved it. I then allowed them to come forward and help tell various fairy tale stories using the finger puppets and mitt. After the introduction, the children were very attentive during the reading of the story. They were also able to join in and help tell parts of the stories as I pointed to them.

I also frequently use a stuffed animal or hand puppet to introduce a book. I used a puppet this week to introduce the Hop On Pop book. The children really love stuffed animals. I bought this one and others like it on sale last year at Kohl’s department store. They had several of the Dr. Seuss books and coordinating puppets last year during the Read Across America event. These books went really fast and some were gone by the time I heard about it. However, Borders, Barnes Noble and even stores like Target and Blockbuster have several of the puppets and stuffed animals to accessorize a new book or movie being released. I leave several of these in my book area and often after I introduce a book I will often find the children taking the puppet or stuffed animal and retelling the story in their own words to each other. I love to watch this! It makes all my planning worthwhile.

Another book introduction strategy I use is a picture walk. I start out with showing the children a picture or the book cover and pose a question such as: What is happening in this picture? or, Can you tell me by looking at this picture or cover what this story might be about? This is often a good way to introduce a story because it also sparks discussion about the story and gives the opportunity for many types of shared writing.

Some types of shared writing I use frequently are sentences with fill in the blanks, story webs, KWL Charts and various other types of graphic organizers. We then go on to look at the rest of the pictures in the story to gain an understanding of the basic idea, pattern or language used in a particular story. This is a very effective way of introducing a book during guided reading, individual running records or when giving the DRA test. Also, word study is not only a way to introduce a book; it is also a good way to extend a story or lesson. The children really become more involved when you hang up the things you do in shared writing as anchor charts in the room. Anchor charts give you and the children a reference point when remembering or referring to a story that you have had in your classroom. You also are creating a print-rich and literature-rich classroom for your students which will inevitably increase their vocabulary.

Classrooms that are print-rich and full of shared writing make the students feel confident, and gives meaning to the writing, drawing and pictures hung on the wall instead of posters or store bought reference charts.

Lastly, I use a book talk as a way to introduce a story or idea to my class. A book talk which is basically a short summary of what a book is about is a great way to spark interest in and get a discussion going which again leads to shared writing and individual journaling. I have used all of these ideas that I have learned over the years and talked about today.

Many of the ideas that I have listed here come from the professional development I have had as a teacher over the years and also from book studies we have done in our staff meetings and various publications which I have either acquired as a part of our curriculum or purchased on my own. I have listed several of these books as references for this paper.

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