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ED345199

"The Cut-Apart: A Strategy that Enables Children
to construct meaning as readers
of Multicultural Literature"

AND

"Bibliographies of Multicultural Books"

Related to the Symposium on
Addressing Pupil Linguistic and Communicative Diversity
Through the Reality-focused Reading and Writing
of Multicultural Literature

Thirty-seventh Annual Convention
International Reading Association
Orlando, Florida
May 3-7, 1992

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THE CUT APART

What? A cut apart is a story that has been cut apart in enough sections so that every person in the class has a part to read.

Why? There are several reasons why you might want to use a cut apart. These include:

1. Enables all students in the class to read successfully.
2. Builds fluency through repeated reading.
3. Enhances listening comprehension.

How? Here are some guidelines for constructing a cut apart:

1. Count how many students are in your class.
2. Choose a story that looks long enough to give each student a short part. One paragraph may be sufficient. I have also found that cut aparts work well with narrative rather than expository text.
3. Xerox the story.
4. Read the story.
5. Reread the story looking for logical stopping points. Place some kind of mark to indicate these stopping points to yourself.
5. Look back through the story and count how many parts you have marked. Remember that you want to have a section for each student in your class and for yourself. You also want to keep in mind those students who appear to struggle with reading. You will probably want to give these students a part that is fairly easy to read to start. You will "up the ante" over time.
6. Once you have determined that there is one part for each person in your class, number the parts beginning with the first page of the story.
7. Once each part is numbered, cut the story apart.
8. Mount each part on some type of heavy paper. All cards should be the same size.
9. Number the part in the upper right hand corner, using a dark marker.
10. Mount the title, author, and illustrator on a card, too. This card can be used to begin the story.

When? To begin, use cut aparts as a follow up to silent reading. Once students are on to the idea, cut aparts can be used in a variety of ways - See page three of this handout.

USING THE CUT APART WITH STUDENTS

There are a variety of ways cut aparts can be used. As with any new activity, you will want to prepare yourself and your cherubs for success by clueing them in on what's happening. The following is an explanation I have found successful:

Today we are going to read a story in a different way. See these cards? (Hold up the cards.) A part of the story we will be reading is on each card. The number on the card tells you which part of the story it is. I have a card for each one of us and here's how this is going to work:

1. I will pass out the cards.
2. Once you get your card, you need to practice reading it silently.
3. I want you to keep reading your card silently until you hear me say, "Time's up!". You want to read your card as many times as you can. This is your rehearsal time. When it's your turn, you want to be able to read it with ease.
4. While you are reading, I will walk around the room and help you if you need it.
5. Once I have called time, I will give an introduction to the story and the person with the number one on their card will read his/her card for us loudly.
6. Number two, you come in right after number one is finished. We will continue this way until the story is finished. See if you can read your part without having to be reminded that it is your time to read. We'll continue until all of you have read.
7. When you are not reading, I expect you to have your card down and to listen to the person who is reading. Remember that you want to be able to discuss the story when we are finished reading it.
8. When you have finished reading your card, please put your card down on your desk.
9. Now, before we begin, I need someone to tell me how we're going to do this. (Have students repeat the directions to make sure they understand what it is you expect.)
10. Let's give it a try. (Pass out the cards. After students have had the chance to prepare, demonstrate the read aloud technique by going through the first three or so cards.)
11. OK! Let's try the whole story now!

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO USE CUT APARTS

1. Pass out the cards in a scattered manner. Have students stay at their desks and read when it is their turn.
2. After passing out the cards and students have had the time to prepare, have them sit in a circle in numerical order. They read when it is their turn.
3. Use this as a follow up oral reading activity after the students have had the chance to read the story silently the day before.
4. Use a cut apart as a way to read the story for the first time.
5. A variation would be to put students into groups and have them choral read their part. The class then chimes in as a whole for the refrain. This works well for narrative poems.
6. If this is the first time the students will have heard the story, you might want to let them preview the story as a whole. Let them look at the pictures if you want.
7. You might want to spend some time introducing the story. If you feel the need to introduce vocabulary to the entire class before beginning, do so! Likewise, you may feel the need to spend some time building background knowledge before beginning. Great! Do it!
8. You might want to read the story to the class while they follow along as a first exposure to the story. In this case, you would use the cut apart as a follow up.
9. Divide students into groups. Give each group a story that has been cut into sections, enough so that each group member has a section. Have each read their section silently, then orally to the group. Next, instruct each group to put their story together using each section.

REMINDER: Remember that any new activity takes time to develop and become a part of your teaching repertoire. Celebrate what went right and give it another try! Persist!

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compiled by

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