

**Hopewell Elementary School
Taunton, Massachusetts**



TRANSCRIPT: “CREATING A CULTURE OF LITERACY”

JANET CARMO, TITLE I READING SPECIALIST: Our main objective with the lesson today was to work on fluency. In first grade, there is a big emphasis on fluency and then it starts to move more into comprehension. So today, four of our selections were from our literacy closet, which basically, a literacy closet is an area that houses a tremendous amount of books and they are leveled readers. We have our children put into different reading groups. Those are fluid reading groups. And we choose selections that go along with the children’s abilities. Our story in our reading book this week had to do with animals on a trip. We tried to choose books that go along with the same theme and we also try to work on different skills, so we also choose books that have words in them that emphasize that skill.

We look to have the children read the book at first as a group. And we work on isolating vocabulary, making sure they’re comfortable with the selection. And then we have the children pair up and do paired reading. And we also have quite a few adults in the room. We have the classroom teacher, at least one Title I teacher, the assistant and often we have either a college or a high school student come in. And today, we had the wonderful luxury of having Ms. Walters in the room to do some Reader’s Theater.

CANDYCE WALTERS, TITLE I READING SPECIALIST: My objective today was to have the children perform the play *Little Red Riding Hood*. They selected their parts. They read through them quietly, by themselves, and then we practiced. We worked on pronunciation, punctuation, enthusiasm. We worked on the narrative elements; they knew to read the part, not to say “narrator” and then read the line. I think we practiced it about five times. Today was the first day that they had seen the play. They were ready to perform and I think they did a pretty good job.

CHILD: Help! It’s a wolf! Grandma ran into the woods. The wolf crept into the house and put on grandma’s nightgown.

Bradley Phonics

JULIA TERZAKIS, 1ST GRADE TEACHER: Dr. Bradley’s big thing is, it needs to be done prime time, so we do it first thing in the morning. The children have their pencils sharpened, we’re like ready to go. We use these flashcards and they learn all the different sounds of the different patterns, the different phonemes, and it’s like fast and furious. We do it, boom, boom, boom. Everything that they do is coded. If we do the vowel **a**, you’ll see them go up with their little fingers and they’ll go “eh, ay, aw, ah.” Those are the four sounds of **a**. We code their

spelling words; we code their reading words, and it's really very helpful to them to be able to break things down. They learn the two sounds **ow** are ow and oh. So, first sound, second sound.

And this is basically a drill that they've been doing September and we just keep adding on cards, and now at this point, we're taking certain cards away. And then they will see words uncoded. This is called directed writing, and I will put key words—there'll be maybe five or six on the board, and now they're seeing the words without codes and I call on them to see if they could read the words. Then I will erase those key words, and I will write a paragraph with those words, and then they have to read it. First they all silent read, and then I will call on somebody and they will read the whole paragraph. Then they will copy it, and then they will illustrate it.

NANCY SYLVESTER, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL AND 1ST GRADE TEACHER: Oh, it's amazing. The difference is amazing between—I mean, I've been first grade for 18 years, and when you take a look at these children that are coming in knowing all their letters, knowing all their sounds—when they come in! It gives us such a strong start. We used to have some evaluations, and you'd be giving them the letters, and they'd be telling you “one, two, three.” And how much time we spent with “A says eh,” versus now it's “eh ay aw ah.” They know all the sounds—a lot of them do. So we're past that; we're into the writing and forming more complex words, breaking things up into phonemes, breaking them up into syllables, and they understand it. They have such a solid foundation in kindergarten, the vast majority of them completely understand it. And again, for those that need more remedial instruction, they're still aware. They can come in and “ah”—it's a comfort level. They come in and say, “Oh, I know this.” So it's the sameness of structure but yet an introduction of more challenging words, digraphs. So when I see them come in with a strong foundation, it enables me to take them even further throughout the year. The vast—I'd say 90%—are reading on grade level by the time they leave—and above.

100% Summer Readers

CANDYCE WALTERS, TITLE I READING SPECIALIST: The summer reading program came about in September. I was doing the DIBELS, and I would ask the children, “What did you read this summer?” “Nothing.” “Did you open a magazine?” “No.” “What did you do?” “Oh, I just played on the computer, or I played—at least if they played outside, that was a good thing. But maybe 20% of the children opened a book during the summer. It was unacceptable.

So I went to Mr. Quigley and I said, “Here are the statistics. We need to do something about this, and I think we need to put books in the hands of the children. And we need to get money from the bank,” so I went to see Janet, and we set aside \$1,000.

VOICE OF JANET CARMO, READING SPECIALIST: And because of that funding we were able to purchase books for our students. So at the very end of the year, in June, before they go home, we actually give each child at least one book. And we put that book right in their hands. So we choose leveled readers on topics that we know they love—animals, animals, more animals—and we also choose different genres. And then we all assemble by classroom in the cafeteria. We ask a representative from the bank to come and we ask the classroom teacher to sit in, and they try to gently steer them towards books that are proper for them.

CANDYCE WALTERS: We had a folder made, which said *Hopewell Summer Reading* and in that folder went the book that they selected from maybe 20 different selections, so they had quite a choice. And they were excited: I've never seen anything like it. Also in that folder went the district-mandated book reports; we put in a fluency calendar, which was a lot of fun, like "read the side of a cereal box, read a comic in the newspaper," thing like that, things you would find around the house, read to Mom and Dad; read to a brother or sister. That's what we were looking for, to get words in front of them, to get books in front of them. The younger children had easier reporting to do, "draw a picture, write a sentence." So we sent it home and kept our fingers crossed. And when they came back in September, we were doing our DIBELS, we had a very simple recording chart. "Did you read this summer?" Yes or no. "Did you visit the Taunton Public Library?" "Did somebody read to you at home?" And from that, we had 100% participation in grades three and four. We had approximately low 90 percentage points in the earlier grades. And I think that's a pretty good result, from 20% or less having read. So that when they came back to school, they knew they were expected to have read, they picked something they enjoyed, they talked to us about it, and I think it made a difference coming back in September. They were ready to start the year.