

Pre-K Essential 3, Bullet 1 Leading Children in Higher-order Discussion Sample Video

MAISA Literacy Essentials

<https://youtu.be/pPj2qNBStR4>

Narrator: Interactive read alouds with a comprehension and vocabulary focus, support children's literacy development. In this classroom, the teacher engages children in higher order discussion. After reading two books about butterflies.

Teacher: Today, we read these books within the classroom in a couple of different ways. The traveling butterflies, we actually read as a large group book reading and all talked about the books and the butterflies traveling together. The Caterpillar to butterfly book we used a little bit more in a small group setting.

It sounds like Mila, you have something to add to that? What would you like to add?

Student: There was a big, that's a big butterfly. When the trees turn orange.

Teacher: When the trees turn orange, it's an adult butterfly. Is that what you're saying?

Student: No, it's not. It's just like a big butterfly.

Teacher: So, another way to say a big or full grown butterfly is to say the word adult like I'm an adult or I'm a big or full grown. I used to be a child.

Student: That's a big girl butterfly.

Teacher: It sure is. We actually have several children who are very interested in insects and bugs. We have some children who are quite interested in even saving bugs if we have them in the classroom. And really helping to other children to learn about bugs and which animals will harm them, which animals are safe for them. We've got now hissing cockroaches as part of a classroom pet based on that interest. And a family brought them in.

Before the butterfly was a butterfly. What were some of the other things that-- worm, so you're thinking it was a worm and Gavin's

Student: Actually a caterpillar.

Teacher: A caterpillar is different than a worm. So at the beginning it was a caterpillar. What was it before it was even a caterpillar.

Student: It was egg. It was an egg.

Teacher: It was an egg. So why is it important for the egg to be on the leaf when it's

Student: So they don't fall off and get eaten?

Teacher: You think it might be so that they can attach and not fall off. Jess, it looks like you have some

Student: Will roll off.

Teacher: You think it might roll off. So I wonder how the egg sticks. That could maybe be something that we, maybe there's,

Student: There's glue on it that sticks on and then when they hatch it, the glue goes, it dries up and then they fall apart.

Teacher: So you think there might be something sticky on the egg that helps stick to the leaf?

Student: Like glue. Glue

Teacher: Like some kind of adhesive or glue that helps them stick. How could we figure?

Student: If we take them off, it'll stick.

Teacher: You think that if we took it off it might stick to us?

Student: Maybe you put tape on it.

Teacher: You think maybe a butterfly uses tape when it lays an egg. How could we find out? How could we find out how the egg sticks to the leaf?

Student: Maybe we can make eggs for small group tables so then we can figure out how we could keep it on the weave if there are leaves in the baskets.

Teacher: So what I think I heard you saying Charlotte, is that you have an idea to make an experiment where we could test to see what made an egg stick to a leaf. So you have an idea about maybe making some experiments to see how eggs stick.

One of the other things that we do during discussions of books or book reading is I'll reflect what children say to make sure that I'm communicating what they're trying to say. That way it gives other children a chance to hear it again as well as validates the child's response or gives them a chance to correct. It also allows me to extend and make other connections and then I do try to have the children build off of each other or contribute to each other's discussion and make those kinds of connections in the hopes that they'll be able to build those discussion skills, whether it be about books or other topics in the future as well.

So it sounds like we have a question to discover. How do butterfly eggs stick to leaves? And that's something that we could learn about, explore and then even do some experiments to see if we could make some fake eggs that we had stick onto some leaves. You have an idea and we could do all of that.

My original question, I want you to think about this for a second. My original question was, why do the eggs get, why does a butterfly lay her eggs on a leaf? Why is that important?

We were talking about eggs and it was actually a little bit surprising to me. That was not what I anticipated that they would come up with. So I was actually very excited to hear some of their connections that they had made and some of the thoughts that they had that I hadn't thought about, which is some of the beauty of the open-ended questions as well.

It says a mother butterfly lays many eggs, so not just one or two many eggs on a leaf or branch. Each egg is close to food. Why would an egg that a butterfly laid need to be close to food? Gavin, I want to hear your idea. Why do you think a butterfly wants its egg close to food?

Student: Because the babies might be hungry.

Teacher: The babies are hungry. We read a whole bunch of stories when one was even called the very hungry caterpillar. And what did that caterpillar do?

Student: The babies eat so much food. They'll have a bellyache.

Teacher: Oh, in that story they had a bellyache.

When I read books with young children, I do try to play off of some of their interests. I try to answer questions that they've had maybe about topics that we've started with and give them more information about that topic so that they are getting their questions answered and their needs met as well through books.

It says the caterpillar grows and grows. It gets too big for its skin and it sheds its old skin just like a snake. So, it eats and eats and it gets bigger and bigger and it sheds its skin four or even five times. And then they used the word chrysalis, it formed into a chrysalis and then Anusha, what happened after 10 to 14 days? What happened to the chrysalis?

Student: To open the butterfly together?

Teacher: It opens?

Student: A butterfly

Teacher: And the butterfly came out. That's right. It says the chrysalis moves, it splits open, the butterfly wiggles out and its wings are wet and crumpled.

So I think that young children really want to talk about books and they want to talk about learning and they're very interested in learning and knowing more information. I think sometimes the challenge is that they want to talk and other children want to talk. So the difficult part hasn't been getting the children to converse, it's just how to support the conversation so that everyone has an opportunity to learn and share what they're learning. And we do that by turn taking. We do that by providing other opportunities besides large group to have that opportunity to talk about books. We do that by just setting up the structure where a specific child has a turn and then someone else goes. So waiting sometimes, which can be difficult.

Jax, what happened on this page? Do you remember?

Student: If they fly out, their wings won't. If they splash in water, they won't be able to fly.

Teacher: So what I think you're saying is that the butterflies were hiding under the leaves

Student: Leaves

Teacher: Yeah, they were hiding under the leaves so that they could stay dry. You were thinking that when the butterflies got wet they wouldn't be able to fly. And this is sort of saying that the butterflies couldn't fly when their wings were wet either. So that sort of matches what you were thinking about. Butterflies having wet wings. This is saying that butterfly eggs come in different shapes and sizes. So these are different types of butterfly eggs and they don't all look the same. Some of them look different.

Student: And some are long and stick together.

Teacher: Oh, so you're noticing that these are kind of elongated and kind of stuck to each other. So you're noticing some differences there.

Student: And the top ones stick to the leaf.

Teacher: The top is stuck to the leaf. So this one, they're not stuck on the other leaf. They're kind of stuck too. It looks like they've got kind of a little stem there. So it may be that different butterflies have different shaped eggs, and they attach to leaves or branches in different ways. It looks like you noticed that, Jack.

Student: That's a spiky one.

Teacher: So we might discover that there's more than one way for a butterfly to attach its egg to its leaf. Just like sometimes we might attach something using glue and sometimes we might attach something using tape, like you said, for the eggs.

Student: Magnet.

Teacher: Sometimes we even use the magnet to attach something.

In general, I use as many open-ended questions as I can for discussions about books. I don't know what they've experienced at home to be able to bring and enrich the classroom environment and making those connections to books and their home life or even other activities that we've done. Sometimes I will scaffold that if it's an activity that I know we've done. So tell me, you had a lot of interesting conversations about the butterflies and caterpillars. I want you to think about something that you learned from these books. What were some things that you learned? Mila, how about you? What did you learn?

Student: I learned about chrysalis and the chrysalis is so pretty.

Teacher: So you like the way that chrysalis looks and you've learned kind of how they were made and what they look like?

Student: No. And this one.

Teacher: Oh, you liked the photographs of the chrysalis. So that was something that you enjoyed and learned about and that was a new word for you?

Student: Yeah, I like that one.

Teacher: You like that one where you can kind of see the butterfly inside the photograph of the butterfly inside. What's something you learned?

Student: All I saw at my home was the butterfly.

Teacher: So you're thinking about a time that you saw a butterfly at home. What was similar about the butterfly at home and the butterflies in one of our books?

Student: It's kind of white, a butterfly.

Teacher: So you're noticing that there's lots of different types of butterflies and you have different butterflies at home in this book. I remember reading that there were over 17,000 kinds of butterflies. That's a lot of different butterflies. And Jax, you noticed that you saw a different kind of butterfly at home. Anusha, what did you learn?

Student: A butterfly.

Teacher: What did you learn about butterflies? What's new? What did you discover?

Student: It looks like a snake.

Teacher: It takes its skin off just like a snake. Not just once, but four or five times as it gets bigger. I didn't know that caterpillars did that four or five times. That's a lot of times to grow.

I think it's just really powerful when you're able to use children's ideas and give them some control over the classroom and what they're learning is and it makes them more passionate about the topic. And we will definitely do some research and follow up on how they connect eggs to leaves and do some adhesive experiments and see what happens there. And I think that will be very exciting for the children. They'll be highly engaged.

Narrator: Learn more at literacyessentials.org.