
Big Books: One Way

Authentic, student-generated literacy can be created in multiple ways with students and families. No ONE perfect way exists; rather there are many meaningful ways. We chose to use the words, BIG BOOKS, because in our own experience, the books that teachers, students, and families create together often are written and illustrated on large pieces of paper. Of course, they can also be small books, which will be demonstrated in a later chapter.

If you would like to do this in your own context, we offer first the most basic, generic, simplified instructions we can articulate. We have reduced, what can be a very complex process, to the following simple process. If you have never done this, you might want to copy this page, highlight the four processes, and stick them in your book bag for later use in your own class. Later, we will add more details and steps to the process.

First, teacher and students find something interesting to discuss. This can be based on a story; on anything interesting which happens in class or in the world; on a question planned by the teacher; or, by a spontaneous question that suddenly emerges in class and captures the students.

Second, teachers write the language of the students on the chalkboard.

Third, they transfer this story to a large piece of paper so that all students in the room can see the book.

Fourth, teachers ask students to copy the story from the chalkboard to their own paper so they can read at home with their families.

Adapted from:

Wink, J., & Putney, L. (2000). Turning transformative principles into practice: Strategies for English dominant teachers in a multilingual context. In R. DeVillar & J. Tinajero, (eds.), The Power of Two Languages 2000: Effective Dual Language Use Across the Curriculum for Academic Success Millenium ed., pp. 175-186). NY: McGraw-Hill.