

DIRECTED LISTENING/THINKING ACTIVITY DLTA

We know that students are active processors of information. We also know that students will comprehend more and better if "new" information is related to "known" information. The Directed Listening-Thinking Activity builds on what students already know and shows them how to apply this prior knowledge to new situations. The DLTA is very similar to the DRTA except the teacher reads aloud at the highest level students can understand. This is an important difference because we know that students' reading levels lag several years behind listening comprehension; thus a DLTA can involve all students in a critical thinking, content rich, whole group lesson.

While the DLTA is an effective technique for activating prior knowledge and engaging the whole class, it is not meant to supplant instruction where students are reading on their appropriate level.

Step 1: Introducing the Story and Predicting

Teachers can introduce a story like *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* by showing students the cover of the book and reading the title. After discussing the title, the cover, and some of the pictures, the teacher may ask students to make a prediction about the story. This is usually accomplished by asking a series of questions such as:

What do you think this story may be about?
What do you think might happen in this story?
Do the pictures give you any clues about what might happen?

Sometimes the teacher may read the first few paragraphs of the story to provide students with enough information to make reasonable predictions. Following an initial discussion, students decide which of the predictions they wish to accept. This process can be also facilitated by asking questions such as:

Which of the ideas about how the story will turn out do you think is most likely correct?
Have you ever wished that you could live somewhere else?
Have you ever thought some of your friends have a better life than you do?

Relating questions to the real-life experiences of the children helps them make vital connections with their background knowledge and experience to guide their predictions.

Step 2: Listening, Thinking, and Predicting

Once students commit to a prediction, they have in effect set their own purpose for listening as the teacher reads the story aloud. As the story unfolds during the reading, students begin to confirm, reject, or modify their predictions. The teacher usually stops at key points in the story and asks students more questions. These questions are meant to involve children in confirming, rejecting, or modifying their predictions using the new information they have heard. Teachers may ask questions such as:

Have you changed your original predictions about how the story will turn out?
What do you think will happen next?
If ... happens, how will that change your ideas?

The teacher continues to read the story aloud, stopping at key points in the story to repeat this procedure until the end of the story is reached.

Step 3: Supporting with Evidence

During the final part of the DLTA, the teacher asks students to remember information from the story to support their predictions. She may also ask students to recall which information in the story caused students to change their predictions. Again, the teacher uses questioning to invite students to respond to the story. Examples of such questions follow:

Can you remember how many times your predictions changed?
What happened in the story that caused you to change your predictions?

The DLTA provides teachers with a structure for introducing and discussing stories read aloud to children while supplying the children with a generalizable framework for listening to these stories. Research has shown that using a DLTA significantly increases children's listening comprehension of a story (Morrow, 1984). With frequent use, young children can internalize the DLTA and transfer its use to new stories read aloud (R.C. Anderson, Mason, & Shirey, 1984).

Source: Reutzel, Ray D. and Robert B. Cooter, Jr., Teaching Children to Read: From Basals to Books New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1992.

Videos available from Language Arts Supervisor.