



# GATESOL In Action

ISSN #2331-6845

## Guided reading: A poem

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“I need help reading in English,” a student confided  
The smart ESOL teacher tried reading that’s guided  
The approach is great for students of all ages  
In no time at all they’ll understand pages and pages  
To employ this approach, there are just two things you’ll need  
On-level books and students eager to independently read!

Small groups work best for this type of instruction  
Teacher to student, text to student, and peer to peer are the modes of knowledge  
construction  
In guided reading, students ask if words look and sound right and make sense  
Background knowledge, context clues, self-assessment, and other strategies make reading  
comprehension commence

Teachers should guide students to draw upon existing schema  
For example, ask what students know about Peru when reading a book about Lima  
Then, the teacher guides students through the first viewing of the text  
Students then read independently and discuss any words or concepts that perplex  
Next, students re-read the book on their own or with a buddy  
This time they’re sure to understand concepts originally muddy

Lastly, students respond to the text on their own  
This can be through writing, discussion, or a piece of art to be shown  
As you can see, the teacher serves as a guide  
By teaching these skills and strategies, independent readers will be filled with self-  
efficacious pride  
So, next time you’re unsure of how to help struggling readers  
Try guided reading and you’ll have a group of reading leaders!

As an ESOL teacher it is very important to introduce students to many different modes of literacy. These multiple literacies inform students by presenting the language in the many different forms that students will encounter throughout their school career and outside literacy activities. Teachers can explicitly talk about and present these forms to students, or model different literacy forms for exposure.

This poem demonstrates presenting content area material in poem format. When presented in this format, students are more likely to be engaged with the material than when listening to a short lecture or other common format. I used this poem to present a chapter in a graduate course. Many different groups had presented their chapters before mine, and I knew that my presentation needed to be somewhat different to hold my classmates' attention.

I wrote this poem using Dr. Seuss poems as my inspiration. While it will certainly not be winning the Pulitzer Prize for distinguished poetry, the poem captured and held my classmates' interest and they understood the material that I was presenting. In an ESOL classroom, I would give every student a copy of the poem and present the poem several times so that students have the opportunity to process both the language and the content.

Taking the time to compose this poem not only gave me the opportunity to process the material myself, but I also began to explore many different creative possibilities for presenting the material. It is very easy to get stuck in the routine of presenting main points in PowerPoint or handouts, but taking time to engage in creative literacies breaks the routine and opens new possibilities.

In my own personal experiences, it has been the poems, songs, and rhymes that have cemented important concepts in my mind. To this day, I still sing my multiplication tables in my

head and recall a rhyme when differentiating *affect* and *effect*. These seemingly cheesy literacies can make a big difference in students' education.

As an ESOL professional I must constantly push myself to try new things in the classroom and put the extra effort forward to lead students to mastery of both content areas and language. It is both fun and helpful for myself and my students to explore new literacies and engage in creative means of presentation. By modeling these new literacies and the creative process for students, they will feel more confident and empowered to use the language in new ways.