

PANEL BOOKS

Tools That Enhance the Analysis of Authors' Writing, Textbook Organization,
and the Study and Practice of Various Other Literacy Skills

OVERVIEW

Panel books are tools--formats—that teachers and students can use in teaching, learning, and practicing a wide variety of literacy skills, especially those related to comprehension and writing.

A panel book is simply an entire book, or a section, chapter, or unit of a book whose pages (panels) have been either copied or torn out and taped together in horizontal rows so that the whole text can be seen at once. Many times the taped pages are glued to small or large colored poster boards to make a more permanent and attractive tool that can be used for multiple years.

Note: If pages are torn from books (books that have been approved for this use or have been purchased specifically for creating Panel Books) two duplicate books are needed.

Since a teacher usually makes just a few Panel Books each year, books are chosen to be made into Panel Books because of their effectiveness as supports for teaching and learning various specific literacy skills. If the book chosen for a Panel Book is an excellently written text with attractive pages, it can be used as a resource for teaching many skills and engaging students in making various discoveries about the art and craft of writing.

EXAMPLES

1. A teacher wants her students to understand and analyze how authors use strong macrostructures in various types of expository texts. For the Panel Book she chooses a text with an introduction, an overview, very clear topic sentences, titles, subtitles, illustrations, figures, table of contents, index, and glossary. When the Panel Book is taped to the wall, students can stand back and view the whole text. The teacher can easily physically point out text features and help students analyze how the author organized her/his writing and designed the text for clarity and emphasis---all the above features of the text can be seen in a broad sweep of the eyes, as opposed to a disconnected view when leafing through a bound book.

The teacher uses the same Panel Book to point out specific examples that help students understand authors' rhetorical styles and the use of structures such as *description*, *collection*, *causation*, *problem/solution* and *comparison*.

2. A teacher quickly makes a Panel Book of the chapter of the textbook unit that will be studied. He prepares for his pre-reading vocabulary lessons by carefully going through his Panel Book of the textbook chapter and identifying all the words and phrases and concepts that will form the content of his lessons as he works toward mastery of word meanings prior to reading the text. He knows that the more vocabulary and concept building to high levels that he can do prior to reading the text, the more excellent will be students' understanding of the essential ideas and information presented in that text.

3. Good writing is well organized. The skill to be taught and practiced is helping students organize their writing so that it has a clear beginning, middle, and end. The teacher chooses an excellently written, well formed narrative text. He has students help him create a Panel Book that he then uses to help them see the "big picture"---to physically point out places in the Panel Book and guide them in the analysis of the plot and understanding of story structure/ story grammars as they walk up to and actually touch the various parts of the pages on the wall.

4. Panel Books made from Picture books with no words can be used for many different creative writing exercises.

5. Illustrated science books can be used for learning and practicing summarization. e.g. looking at the text as a whole, students are taught to summarize each section and then summarize the entire text.

6. Panel Books can be used for analyzing whole texts for various elements such as inferences, figurative language, or challenging vocabulary words and phrases.

TEXTS REFERENCED

Teaching with the Brain in Mind by Eric Jensen; The Power of Black Music by Samuel A. Floyd, Jr.; Will the Circle Be Unbroken by Dona Richards (Marimba Ani)
How to Increase Reading Ability: A Guide to Developmental and Remedial Methods by Albert J. Harris and Edward R. Sipay

RELATED LEARNING PRINCIPLES

- Wholes taught before parts are recalled better. Recall is highest with context, a global understanding, and complete pictures.
- The brain continually seeks patterns
- Students who use top-level structure or other structural schemata demonstrate better comprehension and recall than those who cannot or do not.
- "In the cultural memory of African Americans, life is cyclic, as is time, as is their music---and all these elements symbolize the ring and contradict linear progression...It's all a circle." (Floyd)
- Today's brain, mind, and body research established significant links between movement and learning.
- "Overall, you'll want to provide a rich balance of novelty and ritual. Novelty ensures attentional bias, and ritual ensures that there are predictable structures for low stress." (Jensen)

Separate rows of pages taped together--backed or not backed with small sheets of colorful card stock

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
8.	9.					

