

Table of Contents

Preface	5
Introduction	7
Chapter One	9
Look Who’s Talking	
Lesson One	11
<i>A Bridge to Wiseman’s Cove</i> : relationships, growing up	
Lesson Two	16
Poetry Selections: encouraging thinking	
Lesson Three	21
<i>Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl</i> : values, relationship	
Lesson Four	24
<i>Slow Burn</i> responsibility, the environment	
Lesson Five	31
<i>The Haunted Station</i> : suspense	
Chapter Two	37
Games and Simulations	
Lesson One	38
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> : relationships	
Lesson Two	46
<i>The Pied Piper of Hamelin</i> : justice	
Lesson Three	55
<i>Harp in the South</i> : values, relationships	
Lesson Four	67
<i>Letters from the Inside</i> : conflict, self-esteem	
Chapter Three	75
People and personalities	
Lesson One	76
<i>The Monkey’s Paw</i> : suspense, relationships, greed	

Contents *(cont.)*

Lesson Two .....	.83
<i>Looking for Alibrandi: differences</i>	
Lesson Three .....	.93
<i>Of Mice and Men: injustice, prejudice</i>	
Lesson Four .....	.100
Bush stories of Australia: customs, values	
Chapter Four .....	.107
Research and Reports	
Lesson One .....	.108
Book Reports	
Lesson Two .....	.113
Library/Assignments/Individual	
Lesson Three .....	.117
Short Library Reports/Groups	
Lesson Four .....	.119
Research Reports/Individual	
Lesson Five .....	.125
Research Reports/Groups	
Appendix .....	.131
Bibliography .....	.135

Chapter One

Look Who's Taking

The great aim of education is not knowledge but action.
Herbert Spencer

The importance of speaking and listening in our classrooms has been highlighted through their inclusion in the English Frameworks and Profiles statements. Students are encouraged to become active listeners through developing an awareness of verbal and non-verbal cues provided by speakers; through being able to explain how speakers influence people; through evaluation of the spoken word and through understanding the range of factors which influence an individual's understanding of the written and spoken word.

Speaking and listening are not just components of the English Profiles documents but they are also natural human activities. Just stop for a moment and think how your life and daily routines would be impeded if you no longer possessed the ability to talk or were gagged indiscriminately whenever you tried to present an idea or opinion.

Consider the last large gathering you attended. A focussed observer would notice a range of scenes occurring. There would be some individuals who were standing alone either enjoying a moment of quiet contemplation or eyeing off proceedings, keen to become involved in one of the group's discussions.

Once accepted into the conversation group, varying degrees of involvement can occur.

- There will be some who are content to listen passively, indicating their involvement in the discussion through appropriate body language, such as nodding in agreement, grimacing or joining in laughter.
- Conversation will overlap when some group members have a desire to discuss a point that may be tangential to the main discussion.
- Some individuals, keen to have input, may interrupt and gain the 'floor'.
- Some people may dominate the conversation or remain relatively quiet, depending on their degree of interest in the topic.
- Information possessors tend to be those who are listened to -as long as their presentation of the information is interesting.
- The conversation is not controlled overtly by an appointed overseer. Dips and lulls in conversation, movement in and out of topics, dominance and the sharing of ideas, passion and disdain can all be components of every day talking.

How does this reflect what happens in our classrooms? A brief meander through most school corridors will generally see the teacher standing at the front of the room orchestrating proceedings. One student at a time is allowed to speak. If too many students are engaged in conversation at the same time, teachers fear the suspicion of the administration could be aroused. 'What is going on in there? Why can't that teacher control the class?' they may be asking. We all know that traditionally, a quiet classroom is considered to be a controlled and working classroom.

Chapter One

We need though, to advocate and actively promote the idea that classroom noise does not indicate lack of control. On the contrary, engagement with the topic, a desire to know more and a keenness to listen to the views of others as well as to promote one's own opinions are all indicators of a healthy, well-functioning classroom environment where everyone's views are listened to and respected.

Still there does need to be a basic set of rules put into place and these can be decided on at the beginning of the year or unit, whichever is the most appropriate and then refined as the year progresses.

The range of activities suggested has been designed to encourage the promotion of speaking and listening in the classroom, in a variety of situations and for a variety of purposes. Activities have been designed to cater to all ability levels and a range of interests. Debate and discussion are encouraged through 'real world' applications. It is rare that total agreement occurs amongst groups and individuals within our society - in fact it is healthy to engage in spirited discussion and debate, and it will be rare that total agreement occurs in your classroom.

Literature offers a myriad of opportunities for activities that reflect the need for talk in the real world. A quick flick through the daily media will present ideas galore and parallels for your classroom reading. There will be court room trials, public forums, rallies, TV interviews, radio interviews, advertisements, investigations and report presentations. These are often and quickly adapted for a classroom based literature activity - just ensure that your book contains a conflict (which is really an essential element of all literature) enough evidence to support a number of viewpoints and the capacity to promote healthy debate.

Lesson One

Literature	<i>A Bridge to Wiseman's Cove</i> by James Maloney (Winner of the 1997 Book of the Year: Older Readers)
Theme	Relationships/Growing Up
Activity	Making predictions
Timeline	2-3 lessons
Materials needed	Poster paper Prediction Palm Assessment Criteria
Learning Focus	Students will be encouraged to a) understand the various viewpoints of characters in a book b) predict outcomes based on evidence c) and learn to use email, or write postcards. Students will also d) understand the 'caring male' perspective that is presented in this book.
Learning Outcomes	Texts, Level 6: S + L; R
Lesson Summary	Working in teams, students discuss likely outcomes at various stages in the novel. These predictions which are charted on each group's Prediction Palm should be fully justified. The idea of a discussion box is introduced and included in the lesson's outline.

Background Information

The Literature

The novel *A Bridge to Wiseman's Cove*, tells the story of Carl Matt, a young man abandoned firstly by his mother and then by his teenage sister Sarah, who finds the long-term responsibility of caring for her younger brothers to be a very daunting prospect. Unlike the mother, Kerry, Sarah plans carefully for her departure, selling the sparse furnishings and arranging for her brothers, Carl and Harley, to spend the remainder of the summer holidays with her mother's sister, Beryl. Beryl is an extremely reluctant caregiver and the boys arrive to find the house empty.

Days and weeks slip by, and the boys, though clinging to the belief that their mother will arrive and claim them, become resigned to the idea of a lengthy stay. School begins and with that comes the problem of acceptance and survival in a community where the surname Matt is an anathema.

The story provides a timely entree into discussion about the struggle faced by young men as they endeavour to find their place in the world. Carl Matt is not the stereotypical teenager as he takes on responsibility for his brother's financial and personal wellbeing. It is worthwhile considering this book for a 'beginning of the year' read, for a number of reasons. The story itself is set in the transition time between summer holidays and the new school year. General discussion about the problems confronted by a student new to a neighbourhood and the school can easily be dovetailed into a specific discussion about the potential problems confronting 'new' students in your own classroom—particularly if there are any who are 'different'. Students could develop their own transition program, designed to ease the move into a new school environment.

(This has not been covered as part of this lesson but aspects such as school tours, peer support and peer counsellors could be discussed and refined.)

The Activity

Making predictions, or suggesting a variety of possible outcomes is an excellent way of ensuring that students are engaged in their reading and that they are thinking about characters as multi-dimensional figures subject to the same feelings, emotions and problems as their peers and family members.

Considering and assessing options available, or likely to occur, can provoke lively classroom discussion and debate, as students strive to justify their assessment of a situation. Conversion to a real-life event can be a natural extrapolation of a discussion. Students can formulate their ideas on a topic that can be dangerously close to home for some, but their thoughts and ideas are protected by the umbrella of fiction. Students can assess their attitudes about others, particularly those new to the school or the class. Ask students to consider how those students might be feeling and what could be done to make them feel more welcome. Justifying decisions as well as dealing with the decisions and behaviour of a fictional character allows students to explore their ability to explain themselves and to refute rationally the beliefs of others.

If you are concerned about the involvement of the quieter students, a discussion box can be used so that their opinions are dealt with.

Lesson Outline

1. In order to effectively carry out this activity, it will be necessary to read this book with the class. Before beginning the reading, you should decide at which point the predictions will be made.
2. The end of the Prelude provides an ideal spot for introducing the students to this activity. Some further reading and scene analysis needs to be done though if students are to provide a considered opinion so early in the story.
3. Ask the students to draw up their own list of questions they would need to ask if they were to have more information about what was going on after the Prelude. Students' questions will range from *Who is this woman? Where is she? Where is she going? to Why is she sneaking around? and Why is she not paying for her journey?*

Allow the students to share their questions and to pose some answers without being required to justify their view.

5. Organise the students into prediction groups.(Some suggested methods of organising groups have been included in the appendix.) Give each group an A3 copy of the Prediction Palm template.
6. After the initial discussion, tell the students it is time to give a considered, justified prediction about who this woman might be and the purpose for her journey.
7. Using a large piece of poster paper and the Prediction Palm as a layout guide, have students record their group's predictions for the first prediction point.
8. Students are allowed two predictions at each point and their predictions must be based on documented facts from the story. It is possible to have as many, or as few prediction points as you wish during the reading of the story.
9. Allow time for discussion about the plausibility of the predictions after they have been made.