

Amharclann an Léitheora

(Reader's Theatre)

Background

This Example is from a multi-grade third and fourth class in a rural, English-medium school. There are fourteen children in the class and all of the children are learning Irish as their second language. This video showcases **The Reader's Theatre** in use in an Irish lesson. Reader's Theatre is an **effective, researched-based approach** to **improve reading fluency** in terms of **accuracy, reading rate and prosody** (expression when reading) and can form **part** of a **comprehensive reading instruction programme for Gaeilge**.

The teacher in this video used **well-known fairytales with simple scripts as Gaeilge**. Where needed, the teacher **adapted these scripts to suit her class and their level of reading**. The Reader's Theatre intervention lasted for six weeks, with a different script used each week.

Múineadh trí Mheán na Gaeilge

Note how the teacher uses **Gaeilge amháin** in the video. This is a **key principle** of successful second and additional language teaching and learning. It not only ensures **increased exposure** to the language, but also enables the teacher to **model accurate, creative and fluent Gaeilge**.

Reader's Theatre

In Reader's Theatre, **repeated reading** of the same text occurs across a number of days. This repeated reading takes different forms, with children engaged in a different type of reading each day (modelled reading, echo reading, choral reading, independent reading). This is then followed by a performance of the text on the final day. This approach ensures that children have the opportunity to **read and re-read the same words and phrases** until they can **read them with accuracy and fluency**. The approach also **scaffolds** children's reading, with more assistance in earlier lessons in preparation for independent reading in later lessons.

Modelled reading

(léitheoireacht mhúnlaith)

The teacher reads the script aloud line by line, referring to pictures of the story to help the children understand the story.

Echo reading

(léitheoireacht mhacallach)

Again, the teacher reads the script out line by line, but this time, the children read every line aloud after her, just like an echo.

Choral reading

(léitheoireacht chórúil)

Every child is given a character/ part from the story. The children with the same part read the relevant lines together. At this stage, the teacher can begin to place more emphasis on accuracy and prosody (expression when reading).

Independent reading

(léitheoireacht neamhspleách)

Groups are formed, with each group comprised of one of each character/ part. Each group reads their script, with each child reading their relevant part independently. The teacher circulates between the groups checking for accuracy and prosody.

Performance (*léiriú*)

On the last day, each group performs their script for the class. At this point, children should be reading with good accuracy, fluency and prosody. In order to ensure Reader's Theatre maintains its simplicity (and therefore its appeal), this performance need not involve any elaborate props, costumes or sets.



Preparation for Teaching and Learning

When preparing for teaching and learning, the teacher draws on her **knowledge of the children** (e.g. the next steps in their learning), **knowledge of the curriculum** (selecting *Torthaí Foghlama*, see below) and **knowledge of pedagogy** (i.e. scaffolding learning, Reader's Theatre). Her **invisible preparation** includes her moment-to-moment interactions with and observations of the children as well as the conversations she has with the Special Education teacher, all of which inform future learning. Her **visible preparation** includes the resources she has gathered to enhance the learning. For her **recorded preparation**, the teacher focuses on the Learning Outcomes in conjunction with the Progression Continua. The Learning Outcomes selected below all come from the *Léitheoireacht* strand.

Torthaí Foghlama	Fócas na foghlama nua
LO 1: Rannpháirtíocht	Glacfaidh na páistí páirt i ngníomhaíochtaí éagsúla léitheoireachta
TF 6: Stór focal	Sealbhóidh na páistí roinnt frásaí agus foclóir nua ón téacs
TF 3. Gnásanna Cló agus struchtúr abairte	Aithneoidh agus úsáidfídh na páistí réimse gnásanna cló i gcomhthéacs (lena n-áirítear lánstad, comhartha uaillbhreasa, comhartha ceiste srl.)
TF 10. Líofacht agus féin cheartú	Léifídh na páistí an téacs ag an luas ceart agus le tuiscint, agus déanfaidh siad féin-cheartú nuair is cuí

Learning Experience 1

The teacher spends the first part of the lesson **revising previously-taught words and phrases from the script and introducing the new words/phrases**. These are taught using direct-teaching and various activities follow to enable children to practise these words/ phrases. **Repetition, actions** and **visual supports** are all important tools the teacher uses. The teacher then spends time working **a particular sound** ('ch'), and children are introduced to **grammar rules informally** (*an + 'h' do na focail bhaininsneacha, sa + 'h'*).

The words/phrases from each day are displayed in the classroom and **referred to throughout the week informally** to ensure familiarity and to offer further practice opportunities.



Learning Experience 2

Next, we see the children engage in a **variety of different repeated reading activities**. A selection of these different reading set-ups is shown to offer viewers a taste of the each of them. In one single lesson, however, the teacher should only use **one of the repeated-reading activities** (modelled reading, echo reading, choral reading, independent reading or performance). These are described in turn in the 'Reader's Theatre' section on page 1 of this Support Information document.

Demonstration of Learning

The teacher engages in **observation** when children are reading. When appropriate, she **re-teaches** mispronounced words or **models prosody and fluency**. When the repeated reading activity concludes, the teacher focuses on commonly-mispronounced words/sounds from the script and **re-teaching and practice activities** follow.

Reflective Questions

1. As already noted, Reader's Theatre can form **part** of an effective reading programme for *Gaeilge*. What other instructional practices should supplement this approach?
2. Reader's Theatre develops reader fluency in terms of accuracy, reading rate and prosody. What other benefits do you think it offers specifically in terms of teaching *Gaeilge* as a T2 (pupil motivation, confidence, improvements in other strands etc.)
3. How might diverse linguistic backgrounds and children's home languages be incorporated into a Reader's Theatre intervention *as Gaeilge*?

[To view the video related to this Support Information document, click here](#)