

Stenhouse Close- **Ups**

Good-Fit Books



GAIL BOUSHEY & JOAN MOSER

WORKSHOP GUIDE

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Good-Fit Books

Workshop Overview

1. Distribute copies of “Good-Fit Books Lesson” (page 4) and I-PICK template (page 7).
2. View the video and discuss.
3. Ask participants to introduce the concept of good-fit books through the shoe modeling lesson and return to a follow-up session to discuss how it went.

Good-Fit Books Lesson

By “*The Sisters*” Gail Boushey and Joan Moser

Reading good-fit books is essential if students are to progress as readers. Children must spend the majority of their independent reading time engaged in books that they can decode and comprehend at very high levels. There are many terms used for good-fit books—from “just right” to “appropriate.” We use the term “good-fit,” because it provides the concrete anchor of using “shoes that fit” to teach the concept of books that are a good fit for the reader.

Given what the research and leaders in our field are saying, we need to teach children to choose books that are a good fit for them: books they enjoy and, as Regie Routman (2003) states, seem “custom-made for the child—that is, the student can confidently read and understand a text he finds interesting, with minimal assistance. These are books that make students stretch—but just a little bit—so that they have the opportunity to apply the strategies we’ve been demonstrating (and they’ve been learning), as well as become familiar with new vocabulary, genres, and writing styles.” (93)

The real challenge is teaching children a simple method for choosing good-fit books, giving them a tool they take with them each time they go to the library, book store, or classroom book area. This simple, yet complex, tool empowers children and their families to tackle that difficult statement: I can’t find a good book.

The lesson on this DVD demonstrates how we launch conversations about good-fit books and discuss them the whole year through.

We help students use five criteria to look for a good-fit book, and these criteria form the acronym I PICK.

I PICK

1. **I** choose a book
2. **P**urpose—Why do I want to read it?
3. **I**nterest—Does it interest me?
4. **C**omprehend—Am I understanding what I am reading?
5. **K**now—I know most of the words

With the current emphasis in professional literature on helping children choose good-fit books, one aspect we so often overlook is that of children’s interest in the books they are reading. The extensive focus on choosing the correct readability level frequently engulfs our thinking and teaching. Often we forget that children, like adults, need to be interested in what they are reading. A high level of interest allows children to engage in reading the volume of material necessary to progress from being a survival reader to that of a lifelong reader.

Questions for Discussion

1. What challenges do you face in helping students pick appropriate books?
2. What is the current system in your classroom that students use to choose books for independent reading?
3. What differences do you see between “just-right” and “good-fit” concepts for book selection?
4. How are you currently addressing the issue of choosing books kids are interested in?
5. As adults, we are often amazed at the amount of time it takes to choose a book when we go to the library or book store. What are some creative ways you and your school can devise to allow time for children to choose books with adults guiding them?
6. Will you try the Good-Fit Books Lesson? Why or why not?

Workshop Suggestions

Ask participants to try the Good-Fit Books Lesson with their own students in the coming week and to develop the I PICK anchor chart as part of the lesson. As students are introduced to the concept of choosing books by purpose, interest, and readability, have teachers note which concepts are most challenging for students to grasp and what strategies they use throughout the week to help individual children with book selection. Schedule a follow-up session in a week or two to talk through the experience of introducing the good-fit concept.

References

Routman, Regie. 2003. *Reading Essentials: The Specifics You Need to Teach Reading Well*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Books and Videos by “The Sisters” Gail Boushey and Joan Moser

The Daily Five: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades. 2006. Stenhouse.

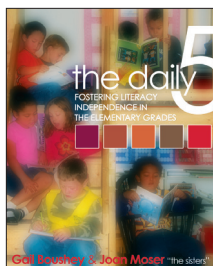
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Books and Videos
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