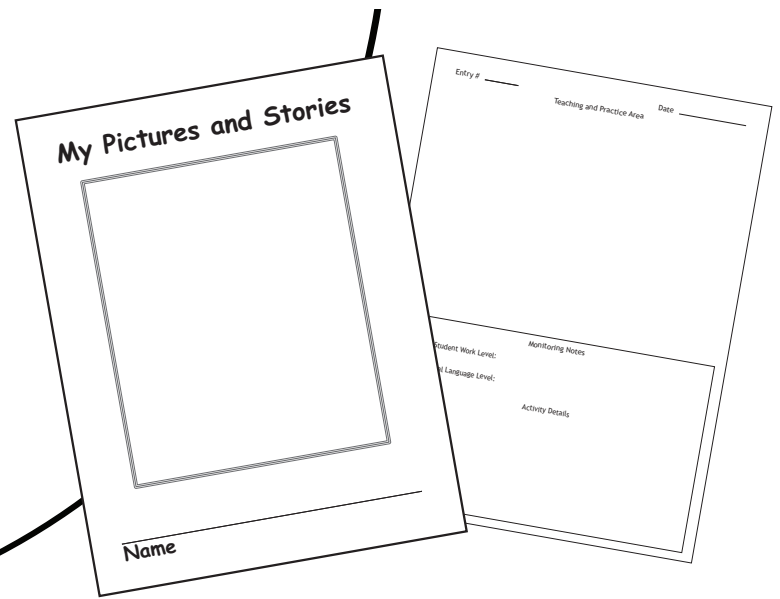


MY PICTURES AND STORIES

Teacher's Guide

David M. Matteson



My Pictures and Stories is a 48-page book designed to help prekindergarten and early primary students develop a range of literacy skills. This book provides 24 two-page entries that consist of a right-hand page for students' drawings and dictation or writing, plus a left-hand page with a teaching and practice area as well as a section for the teacher's monitoring notes.

PURPOSE AND BENEFITS

My Pictures and Stories is a convenient tool to help teachers organize their literacy instruction in developmentally appropriate ways. The core objectives of *My Pictures and Stories* are to develop the student's ability to draw a detailed picture and to tell a well-developed story. As students make entries in their books, the teachers move students, over time, through increasingly sophisticated levels of oral language and visual or picture detail. Ultimately, this movement leads students to develop a basis of understanding for how **books** work (print concepts) and how **stories** work (narrative elements). *My Pictures and Stories* books draw upon and increase the strengths young children bring to school—their imaginations, their ability to talk, and their ability to draw. This focus of instruction is based on the belief that early literacy instruction starts with building on students' strengths and that instruction begins with larger chunks of information—knowing how books work and knowing how stories work. It will be through working with these larger chunks of language (books and stories) that smaller units of language (letters, sounds, words, and sentences) can be developed.

My Pictures and Stories is designed to be used weekly with individuals or small groups of children. It is during these weekly conferences with students that teachers can develop skills associated with book handling or understandings about print concepts. As children draw pictures in their *My Pictures and Stories* book and tell their stories, teachers have opportunities to teach or reinforce these basic skills and concepts. These skills and concepts include but are not limited to:

- reading left page before right
- reading page top to bottom
- developing concepts of first and last
- differentiating picture and print
- differentiating letter and word
- writing/identifying known words (student's name, Mom, Dad, sibling's name, high-frequency words)
- identifying basic punctuation.

In addition to developing these foundational reading and writing skills, teachers who use *My Pictures and Stories* are actively working on teaching students how stories work. Stories have certain structures. These structures are made up of narrative elements and include, but are not limited to:

- beginning/middle/end
- characters
- setting
- theme (underlying message)
- action or significant event
- description (adverbs and adjectives)
- dialogue (speech or thought bubbles)
- sensory detail (description that helps us see, feel, or hear).

My Pictures and Stories

It is through these narrative elements that teachers help students add details to their pictures and tell rich stories. From the beginning of the year, students' pictures and oral telling of stories progress from including only a character (most likely themselves) and/or a setting to a very sophisticated story that includes many narrative elements.

In addition to developing students' oral language and understandings about text through detailed pictures and the telling of rich stories, *My Pictures and Stories* can and should be used to focus on smaller chunks of language. Those smaller chunks of language consist of such skills as phonological awareness and alphabetic knowledge. All four areas—comprehension (vocabulary, expressive language, listening comprehension), phonological awareness (rhyming, blending, segmenting), print awareness, and alphabet knowledge—are outlined in many early literacy initiatives, including Early Reading First (www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading). In addition to these four important areas, *My Pictures and Stories* is also an appropriate place to develop beginning phonics instruction as students' pictures and oral language have developed. When a student's picture and oral language have reached a level of detail that supports the telling of a story that includes many narrative elements, phonics instruction is another vehicle that helps students tell their stories.

RESEARCH BASE

My Pictures and Stories was created using the most current research on literacy development for young children. Noted researcher Marie Clay suggests that whether children learn these things at home, in preschool, or in a combination, they will be appropriately prepared to enter primary school if they have:

- developed a good control of oral language
- taken an interest in the visual detail of their environment
- reached the level of experience which enables them to coordinate what they hear in language and what they see in print
- acquired enough movement flexibility, or motor coordination of hand and eye, to learn to control the directional movement pattern required for reading (1991, 41).

The International Reading Association (IRA) recently released a position statement on preschool literacy that stated, "The preschool curriculum . . . should emphasize a wide range of language and literacy experiences including, but not limited to, story reading, dramatic play, story telling, and retelling."

The joint position statement from IRA and the National Association of Educators of Young Children (NAEYC) further describes preschool and kindergarten literacy. Young children need developmentally appropriate experiences and teaching to support literacy learning. These include but are not limited to:

- positive nurturing relationships with adults who engage in responsive conversations with individual children . . .
- print-rich environments that provide opportunities and tools for children to see and use written language . . .
- adults' daily reading of high quality books to individual children or small groups...
- opportunities for children to talk about what is read . . .
- teaching strategies and experiences that develop phonemic awareness . . .
- opportunities to engage in play that incorporates literacy tools . . .
- first hand experiences that expand children's vocabulary . . . (1998, 18)

My Pictures and Stories incorporates many of the aforementioned criteria for successful early literacy experiences. It serves as a "portfolio" of student growth and as a supportive vehicle for discussions during parent conferences and professional discussions with colleagues. Take a look at what teaching looks like through the use of *My Pictures and Stories* and its implications for monitoring student growth in early literacy areas. The teaching episodes that follow demonstrate the use of *My Pictures and Stories* and shows how the quality of information gained can support teachers in numerous ways.

USING MY PICTURES AND STORIES BOOK

My Pictures and Stories is most effective when used with students individually or in small groups. When introducing *My Pictures and Stories*, discuss with the students how they will use their books. Tell them that they will use the book to draw the stories they have in their heads. Show them the page they will use to draw

their pictures and the space underneath where either they or the teacher will write their stories. Show them the page that the teacher will use to help them practice what might be hard and the space where the teacher writes notes about the students' pictures and stories. Tell them that their book is a special book and that they will use it only with the teacher, one page at a time. During this introduction have the students draw themselves on the front cover. Have them write their names on the line underneath the frame as best as they can. This will be your initial assessment of their fine motor control as well as their control of picture and name detail.

During an individual or small group lesson with *My Pictures and Stories*, have the students talk about what they want to draw before they pick up their crayons. If they aren't sure about what they want to draw, talk to them about what they have been doing or like to do. This is also a time for teachers to talk about what they have noticed about their students—it could be something a student said or a bandage someone is wearing. Many times this will get the students talking. Getting the students talking prior to drawing their picture is crucial to creating well-developed stories. Once the teacher feels that each student has a topic to write about, ask the individual children what they are going to put into their pictures. Talking about what they are going to put in their pictures is also crucial to developing good stories. The more detail that students incorporate into their pictures, the better their stories will be and the more they will be able to retell that particular story over time.

Once the student knows how *My Pictures and Stories* works, the teacher may not have to be alongside the student as he or she draws. It may still be desirable to check in with the students about their topics before they draw, but many students, at some point, should be able to work independently of the teacher. At another time during the day the teacher can conference with the students about their drawings. When details need to be added, the teacher can either help individual students add detail directly to their pictures or demonstrate the detail by working in the Teaching and Practice Area. After working with a student in the Teaching and Practice Area, that student should incorporate the detail into his or her picture. A benefit of using the Teaching and Practice Area is that the work contained there becomes evidence of the learning that took place during the interaction.

After the picture is complete and both the teacher and student are content, the teacher can record the story under the picture. As the student talked about the picture during the student/teacher interaction, the teacher should have been thinking about the best way to represent the story in words. Although the story should be as close to what the student said as possible, the teacher needs to keep the story short by writing the most interesting part. The story also needs to be written in sequence, if there is a sequence, and grammatically correct. If the student is able to write his or her own story, whether it's random letters or beginning and ending sounds, the teacher should still record the story in the monitoring notes section so it can be recalled later.

After a lesson, the teacher should record notes about his or her interaction with the student in the monitoring notes section. If much of the student/teacher interaction was conversational, the teacher should write notes immediately after the oral interaction so nothing is lost. If the student/teacher interaction resulted in detail being added to the student's work as well as the story being written down, the teacher can record notes at a later point. The monitoring notes should always include what the student said or did originally, the detail the teacher had the student add, and thoughts about what the student needs to do next.

The back cover of *My Pictures and Stories* contains another frame that will be used by the students to draw new self-portraits. It also contains a line for the students to write their names. Both activities are completed once the *My Pictures and Stories* book is completed. This final assessment relates directly to the initial drawing and name on the front cover that was completed by the students at the beginning of the year. The two completed picture frames and name lines will be used as one component in assessing the student's growth in their attention to detail.

A TALE OF TWO TEACHING EPISODES

A week after my students had their introduction to *My Pictures and Stories*, my formal instruction with them began. I started off meeting with just two students. Sitting with them at a table, I passed out their *My Pictures and Stories* books to draw in. I tried to get them to talk about what they wanted to draw because I want them to think about their stories prior to drawing them. However, this was a new experience for them

My Pictures and Stories

and because of their developmental level, they were a bit unsure of what to say or draw. I realized I would just have to let them draw and see what they did. I handed each a container of crayons and asked them to draw something. I observed as the children drew. Colin, a visually impaired student, was the first one done. I was about to ask him about the picture he had drawn when Charlettra informed me that she was finished with her picture too. Because her picture was much more detailed and recognizable, I decided that I would work with her later. I sent Charlettra off to read in the classroom library. Colin's picture was not as developed as Charlettra's, so I began our conversation about his drawing, shown in Figure 1, right away.

Beginning Story Development

I started with, "Wow, Colin. Look at what you drew in your book! Tell me about your picture."

Pointing to a figure-like form, Colin confidently stated, "That's Luke."

"Who's Luke?" I asked.

"Luke Skywalker."

I wrote Luke Skywalker's name next to the figure and asked, "What's he doing?"

Ignoring the question, Colin pointed to some other figures. "These are storm troopers—one, two, three—three storm troopers."

"Oh, your picture is about Luke Skywalker and three storm troopers?" Labeling the storm troopers, I asked, "What are they doing?"

As Colin moved his finger over the paper, he replied, "The storm troopers are in the forest and there's red smoke all over."

Understanding that Colin's vision issues included some degree of color blindness, I handed him a red crayon and said, "Why don't you put some red in your picture to show the red smoke?" Colin readily took the red crayon and scribbled some red on top of the black crayon he used to draw the smoke. Feeling comfortable that Colin was at ease with adding detail to his picture, I continued, "What's Luke doing?"

"He's got a light saber."

Looking closely at the picture, I pointed at an object and asked, "Is this the light saber?"

"Yup," Colin stated.

"Let's make it a bit bigger—more like a light saber."

I picked up a blue marker and handed it to Colin. Thinking about the picture and possible fine motor issues, I was thinking that Colin might need help making straight lines, so I said, "Let me help you." I took his hand and helped him form a long rectangle directly over the small scribble that he had identified as the light saber. "There—how's that?"

Smiling, Colin said, "Good!"



Figure 1: Colin's Drawing with Teacher's Labels

Entry # 1Date Sept 16

Monitoring Notes	
Current Student Work Level:	<i>scribbles</i>
Current Oral Language Level:	<i>short phrases; doesn't hold story over time</i>
Activity Details	
Student:	<i>Quickly scribbled with black marker. Has an awkward pencil grasp—fine motor? Told story (short phrases) about Star Wars</i>
Teacher:	<i>Labeled his picture; Suggested he use red for the smoke. Helped him draw a rectangle for the light-saber</i>
Next Steps:	<i>Talk about what he wants to draw beforehand; Offer him the colors would go with the story; Help him form basic shapes</i>

Figure 2: My Monitoring Notes on Colin's Work

As I labeled the light saber, I commented, "All right. Good job, Colin. Did you like drawing in your book today?"

Colin responded enthusiastically, "Yeah. Can we do it again?"

"Soon." As Colin walked off, I jotted down a few monitoring notes in his *My Pictures and Stories* book, shown in Figure 2.

Story Development and Phonics Instruction

A bit later in the day, as Charlettra played during free time, I called her up to work with the picture she had drawn earlier in her *My Pictures and Stories* book, shown in Figure 3. "Tell me about the picture you drew this morning," I said.

Looking at me with her eyes wide open, she said, "I dreamed about a monster."

"Oh, my goodness! That sounds like a bad dream. Can you tell me about it?"

"A monster tried to take me away, but he didn't."

"A monster tried to take you away? That must have been scary! Is this the monster?" I asked, pointing to the large figure in the middle of the page.

Nodding her head, she pointed to a smaller figure to the left of the monster and said, "And this is me."

"What did you do when the monster tried to take you?"

"I yelled for my dad."

"Did he come to your rescue?"

"Yes, he called the police and the police took him away," she said proudly

"Oh, good—a happy ending! Is this your dad down here?" I asked, pointing to a person at the bottom of the picture.

"Yes."

"So your story is about a monster that tries to steal you but doesn't because your dad called the police and they took him away? Where are the police? Can you draw them?" Charlettra picked up a marker and drew what looked like a car with a red and blue square on top of it.



Figure 3: Charlettra's Drawing

My Pictures and Stories

“Is that a police car?” Charlettra nodded her head. “It looks just like one. Good work! Do you remember me making a speech bubble in my drawing the other day? What if you make a speech bubble in your picture to show that you were yelling for your dad? Let me show you how to make one.” I moved over to the Teaching and Practice Area of Charlettra’s book and drew a speech bubble (see Figure 4).

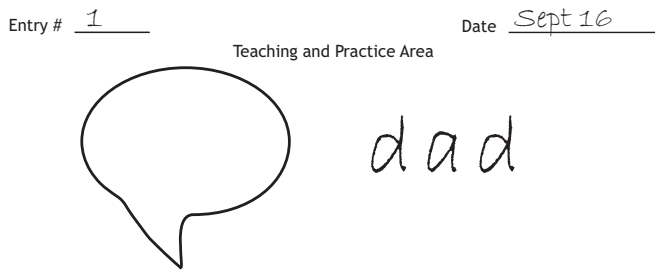


Figure 4: Teaching and Practice for Charlettra

Charlettra watched closely. “Now you make one in your picture. Where are you going to put it?”

Charlettra went back to her picture and pointed to the white space over the picture. I moved her finger closer to the figure that she had identified as herself and indicated, “Right here.”

She carefully drew the speech bubble and looked up with a big smile.

“Good job! Let’s write what you yelled—what was it you yelled?”

“I yelled for my dad.”

“Oh, that’s right. Let’s practice writing *dad* over here.”

Turning back to the Teaching and Practice Area, I said “Dad” slowly, focusing on the first sound. “/d/—/d/—what letter is that?”

Charlettra sat very quietly. I could tell that she wasn’t sure. I said, “*Dad* starts just like Devon’s name. It starts with a *d*. Let me write *dad* here. *Dad—d*,” I said, and then began to form a lowercase *d*. As I wrote, I articulated how I make a lowercase *d*. “I start with a line and then add a circle to the bottom. The next letter is *a*.” I wrote it quickly. I didn’t want to spend much time on the *a* because I wanted Charlettra to focus on learning just the letter *d*. Quickly, I said “Dad” one more time. “I hear another *d*. Watch me as I write another *d* for the end of *dad*—a straight line and a circle at the bottom. There—*dad*, *d-a-d*. You write *dad* in your speech bubble, but first let’s spell it together.”

Together we spelled *dad*, “*d-a-d*, *dad*.”

Carefully Charlettra wrote *dad* in her speech bubble.

“Can you spell *dad* one more time?”

Thinking hard, Charlettra spelled, “*d-a-d*.”

“You’ve worked hard today, but you’ve got a great story to tell the class. Look at your picture. What are you going to say when you tell the kids about your dream?”

“I’m going to tell them that a monster tried to take me away, but my dad saved me.”

“Don’t forget to tell the ending of your story,” I reminded her. “Look over here,” I said as I pointed to the police car.

“Oh, I forgot. The policeman took him away,” she said. “Wonderful! Could you write the story here?” I suggested as I pointed underneath the line on the right-hand page. Charlettra wasn’t too sure. I continued. “Write some letters down here and that will finish up your story about your dream.”

When she finished, Charlettra went back to her friends at the dramatic play center. I put her *My Pictures and Stories* book away and decided to write my monitoring notes after the students left for the day. Between her picture and the Teaching and Practice Area I had enough to remind me about my interaction with Charlettra and what I wanted record about it.

TEACHING AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

In both of these teaching excerpts, I wanted to help these students draw more detailed pictures and tell more developed stories that they would be able to remember over time. Colin’s goal was to move from scribbles to drawing something a bit more recognizable. Charlettra’s goal was to incorporate the critical story detail into her pictures. Both of these interactions will help cement the stories they have to tell solidly within their minds. As stated previously, the primary instruction in *My Pictures and Stories* is centered on comprehension. Because Charlettra was further on in her ability to draw and tell a story, I could introduce phonics. I start with using phonics as a detail in pictures through labeling the characters or through speech bubbles, but eventually the phonics instruction will lead to developing writing underneath the picture.

Although it may take some time to develop their pictures and stories, I understand that I need to keep all students moving along a continuum that supports

Current Level of Picture Drawing	Possible Teaching Points	Possible Narrative Focus
Scribbles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using shapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character Setting
Somewhat recognizable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using shapes Adding picture detail (hair, eyes, hands, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character Setting Action/Plot Beginning/End
Good picture detail; Missing critical story detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adding missing detail in story Adding on to picture Using speech bubbles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character Setting Action/Plot Beginning/End Description Dialogue
Good picture detail; Contains critical story detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adding missing detail in story Adding on to picture Using speech bubbles Writing letters and words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character Setting Action/Plot Beginning/Middle/End Description Dialogue Writing
Good picture detail; Contains critical story detail; Contains writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adding on to picture Speech bubbles Writing letters and words Hearing sounds in words Creating opportunities for student work beyond the notebook—constructions at different areas in the room (constructions in modeling clay, block area, housekeeping area, and so on) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character Setting Action/Plot Beginning/Middle/End Description Dialogue Writing

Figure 5: Teaching Points Based on Detail in Drawing

an ever-more detailed picture and story. The tables in Figures 5 and 6 suggest possible teaching points for both pictures and oral language in order to move students along this learning continuum. When these teaching points are used to develop the elements of a story or a narrative, the students’ ability to tell a more developed story improves greatly.

CONCLUSION

To gain more information about developmentally appropriate literacy activities and teaching in primary classrooms, read *Assessing and Teaching Beginning Writers: Every Picture Tells a Story* (Matteson and Freeman 2005). This book contains detailed vignettes, similar to Colin’s and Charlettra’s teaching episodes, that outline a more formal structure to developing picture detail

and oral language. *Assessing and Teaching Beginning Writers* supplies teachers with a formal continuum that supports teachers in the assessing and teaching of young children. In doing so, the book also supports teachers in developing teaching objectives as well as organizing the assessment information for use with parents, colleagues, and school administrators.

Assessing and Teaching Beginning Readers: A Picture Is Worth 1000 Words (Matteson and Freeman in press) is a companion book that looks at the role of picture detail and oral language in early experiences with reading. *Assessing and Teaching Beginning Readers* helps give a balanced picture to literacy, and like *Assessing and Teaching Beginning Writers* it gives teachers a structure for assessing and teaching.

Current Level of Oral Language	Possible Teaching Points	Possible Narrative Focus
Will not converse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and labeling details in pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character Setting
Gives one word or short phrase; Seems unsure of story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and labeling details in pictures Developing main idea in picture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character Setting Action/Plot Beginning/End
Gives one word or short phrase; Seems sure of story; Can remember story over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and labeling details in pictures Developing main idea in picture Developing more sophisticated vocabulary Using different sentence structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character Setting Action/Plot Beginning/End Theme Description Dialogue
Can tell a simple story with support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and labeling details in pictures Developing main idea in picture Developing more sophisticated vocabulary Using different sentence structures Hearing sounds in words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character Setting Action/Plot Beginning/Middle/End Theme Description Dialogue Writing
Can tell a story with little or no support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and labeling details in pictures Developing main idea in picture Developing more sophisticated vocabulary Using different sentence structures Hearing sounds in words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character Setting Action/Plot Beginning/Middle/End Theme Description Dialogue Writing

Figure 6: Teaching Points Based on Oral Language Development

References

Clay, Marie. 1991. *Becoming Literate: The Construction of Inner Control*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Clay, Marie M. 1993. *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Early Reading First. www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading.

IRA. 2005. *Literacy Development in the Preschool Years*.

IRA and NAEYC. 1998. *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children*.

Matteson, David M. and Deborah K. Freeman. 2005. *Assessing and Teaching Beginning Writers: Every Picture Tells a Story*. Katonah, NY: Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc.

Matteson, David M. and Deborah K. Freeman. In press. *Assessing and Teaching Beginning Readers: A Picture Is Worth 1000 Words*. Katonah, NY: Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc.

Mooney, Margaret E. 2001. *Text Forms and Features: A Resource for Intentional Teaching*. Katonah, NY: Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc.

Teacher Guide © 2005 by David M. Matteson. Photocopying of this teacher's guide is permitted by purchasers of *My Pictures and Stories*.



Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc.
 PO Box 585
 Katonah, New York 10536
www.RCOWen.com
 Orders: 1-800-336-5588

My Pictures and Stories
 2005 paperback 48 pages
 item #8004A \$1.00 per copy

Assessing and Teaching Beginning Writers
 by D. M. Matteson and D. K. Freeman
 2005 paperback 128 pages
 item #543 \$18.95

