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Interacting through Reading No 8: Hello!



Lesson Sequence Overview

This series of lessons can be adapted for a range of ages and used to get to know students initially but also at any point throughout the school year. It explicitly focuses on the language and vocabulary choices used by composers to construct texts which communicate and value the identities of students. Students will ultimately produce their own identity texts. The term identity texts is used 'to draw attention to essential aspects of the link between identity affirmation, societal power relations, and literacy engagement' (Cummins, Hu, Markus. & Montero, 2015).

The teaching and learning sequence is based on [Hello!](#), published and commissioned by the National Library of Australia and illustrated by Tony Flowers (2016). It introduces 12 child characters representing languages spoken most frequently in Australian homes, and includes three Indigenous languages. Each child tells about their language and cultural practices including ways to say hello, count to ten, names of foods, games, hobbies and other practices which are written in both English and their home language. Each cultural group represented in the book was reviewed by cultural advisors. [Hello!](#) was a [Notable Book for the 2017 CBCA Eve Pownall Award for Information Books](#). As with all National Library publications, a resource section at the back of the book features images from the library archives related to each culture as well as pronunciation guides for each language.

Throughout the sequence, students will be encouraged to use all their language resources in both oral and written form in sharing aspects of their own identity, language and culture with others. Students are supported through carefully designed tasks before, during and after reading the text. Through the strategies and interactions learning has been designed to link reading and writing with use of the teaching and learning cycle (Derewianka & Jones, 2016 and Rossbridge & Rushton, 2015). The move to writing is supported by participating in a range of speaking and listening tasks (Gibbons, 2015 and Rossbridge, 2020) with the purpose of tapping into background knowledge and experience, as well as developing required language structures and vocabulary. Appreciation of different viewpoints, understanding themselves and others as well as validation of identities through sharing languages also gives the opportunity for others to learn about other languages and cultures.

It is necessary to read the book several times before implementing the sequence. The following table summarises strategies designed for interacting with the book.

Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading	Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting cultural and linguistic backgrounds to texts • Floorstorm • Inner/outer circle • Take home survey • Saying hello! • Enquiry and elimination • Tap in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading without interruption • Reread with think alouds • Reread whole text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral language games • Draw and describe • Text comparison • Critical thinking about audience 	Purpose: to describe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelling / text deconstruction • Joint construction • Independent construction

Before Reading

Connecting cultural and linguistic backgrounds to texts

Throughout this sequence of lessons, read a range of texts showing cultural and linguistic diversity ([See Lists of books/texts: Pictures books on cultural diversity](#)). Also look for suggestions in the [State Library of NSW diverse picture book collection](#) and [The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Cultural Diversity Database and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resource](#). Adam (p131, 2021) explains:

It is essential to provide multiple windows and mirrors for all children. Every child has the right to see themselves, their families and their communities reflected authentically in multiple books, and will benefit from this. And, importantly, all children also benefit from seeing those who are different to themselves reflected authentically and in multiple books.

When reading, encourage students to make personal connections to cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences of characters. Ask students to share countries where they or family members have connections as well as languages spoken. Pin country names onto the class world map. Note that students may identify with several countries based on family background and/or Australia.

Floorstorm

A floorstorm is like brainstorming with pictures. Groups of students can be provided with a range of images related to the book [Hello!](#) It is a way to tap into existing knowledge and language on a topic. They can either discuss the images or record what they see on post it notes. If recording on post its, the images can be removed and students can then classifying their vocabulary, eg. food, games, activities, languages etc. Students should be encouraged to speak and record in their home language/s as well as English.



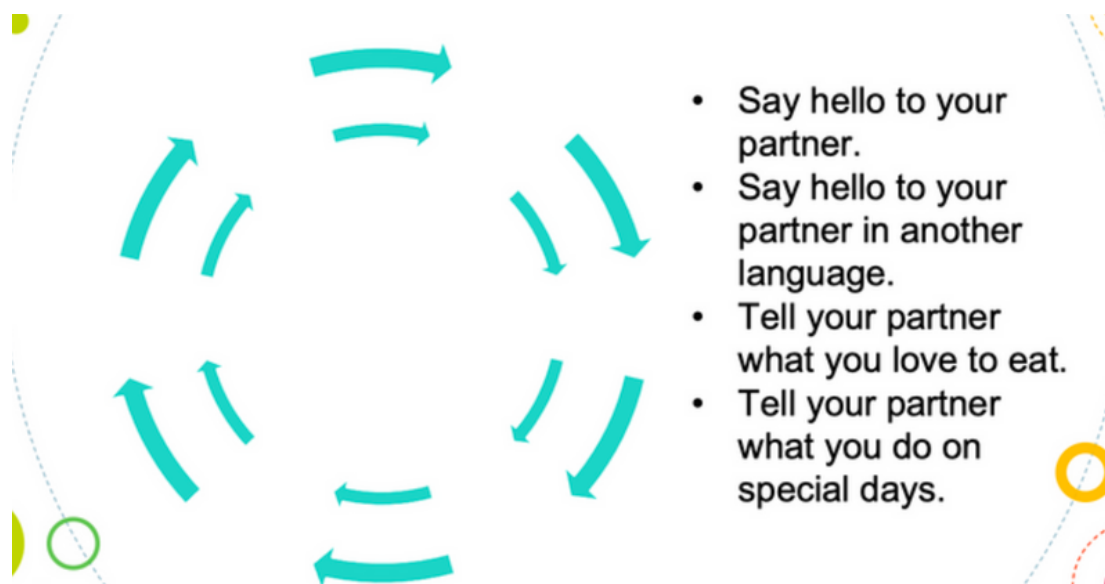
Inner/Outer Circle

Arranging students in two concentric circles with each facing a partner, provides an audience and the ability to change the audience while practicing speaking and listening skills. The teacher poses questions for students to ask their partner or models constructing 'Tell me ...' statements. For example,

- What language/s do you speak?
- What do you do on special days?
- What games do you like to play?

- What do you love to eat?
- What do you enjoy doing with your your family?

Prior to each instruction, ask students to move so that they speak to a range of other students with instructions such as, 'If you are in the outer circle move to steps to the left'. This strategy can be repeated after students complete their take home survey (see below).



Take home survey

By designing a survey to take home, students can discuss their schooling at home and bring their own culture and language into the classroom. Before taking the survey home to gather information from family members, the teacher can model and students can practice using the sentence stems (see below) and/or turn them into questions. The statements/questions target the structures and vocabulary needed for additional speaking and listening tasks as well as the structures for writing. On completion, the survey can be shared through a range of strategies, including those in this sequence, in both English and other languages. The survey information can also be used as planning for writing.

My family

My family comes from ...	We speak ...	We say hello by saying ...	We love to eat ...	On special days we ...

Saying Hello!

Show the cover of [Hello!](#) Make predictions about the purpose and content, eg. Will it be informative or imaginative? Will it be a story, a poem, a description etc? Identify the text on the cover showing the children and 'hello' written in multiple languages in speech bubbles. Brainstorm all the ways students know to say hello, either in English or other languages. Also discuss if this changes based on who they are greeting. This can also be repeated for saying 'goodbye'.

[Google Translate](#) or other websites can be used to investigate and listen to the pronunciation of hello in different languages. Other resources such as [Series 1 ABC Education Good Mornings](#) has a range of short videos showing how to say hello in a range of Aboriginal languages from different Indigenous lands.

Students can also [Learn a Dhurga greeting](#) from students in this short video. Also have the [AAITIS map](#) displayed to show the country from which these languages originated and learn greetings in the Indigenous language of the land of the school.



Enquiry and elimination

Display a range of images on the topics from the book for all students to see. Place the same images on cards for a particular student to select one but not show. Students ask questions to guess which picture the student has chosen. For example, 'Is it a dessert?', 'Is it made from rice?', 'Is it eaten during Chinese New Year' etc. Alternatively the student with the card can describe their image while the class guesses. Throughout, the teacher can restate the features to assist with elimination of possibilities.



Tap in

Drama techniques (Dutton et al, 2015) can be used to engage students in sharing their own linguistic and cultural identities. Model first or ask a student to walk around the classroom while others tap them on the shoulder to ask a question about their family, language, culture and identity. Students might ask questions such as, 'What language/s do you speak at home?', 'How do you say hello in your home language?' or 'What do you love to eat or do with your family?'



During Reading

Reading without interruption

Just prior to reading [Hello!](#), read the back cover and ask students to predict how the book may be organised.

To initially become familiar with the structure of the text, the teacher can 'walk through' the text by just pointing to repetitive features for each child introduced, eg. border/background colour, introduction of name and greeting, use of languages in red font with English/the translation in brackets and purple font, numbers and translation across the bottom of pages and illustrations supporting the written text.

Read through the whole text without interruption.

Reread with think alouds

The book is a series of 12 sections with a similar structure, each introducing a new character. Select one section as a focus, eg. Amal. Reread the chosen section across the two double page spreads. Reread again while thinking aloud to focus on the text structure and the repetitive information, for example,

- I notice a new child is introduced.
- I can see the same information for each child.
- I wonder what information will come next.
- When I skim the pages I notice the second page is about food while the next double page is about games, hobbies and other cultural practices.
- I can see a pattern to how English and other languages are used.
- I notice the speech bubbles contain greetings/farewells at the beginning and end.

Reread whole text

Read the whole text again without teacher interruption. Students may wish to add their own responses during this reading. The text and/or sections should be read several additional times throughout the lesson sequence.

After Reading

Oral language games

Add additional ways to say 'hello' and 'goodbye' to the brainstormed list from before reading and any other suggestions by students in English or other languages.

Charts can also be developed of foods, games, hobbies and other cultural practices based on examples in the book and student experiences with the use of English and other languages. These can be further developed with images and photos students can bring from home.

By having these charts displayed in the classroom, students can draw on them to repeat oral language games from before reading such as enquiry and elimination games as well as tapping in, inner and outer circle and survey questions in the role of a character. These activities can be undertaken in English or other languages as students draw on their own language repertoire or decide to practice a new language.

Draw and describe

On a mini whiteboard students draw a cultural practice such as something they and/or a character from the book eats, something special they do with their family or something they do as a hobby etc. After drawing, students describe their drawing to a partner who draws their picture on another mini whiteboard. The other student may ask questions to clarify. After completing, students share their drawings and make comparisons. This is a barrier game so students need to be positioned so that they can't see the whiteboard of their partner. This could involve placing a barrier between students or students sitting back to back.

Draw and describe

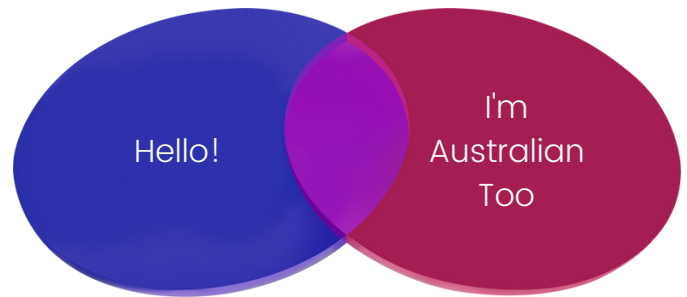
- ⦿ Draw something special you like to
 - ⦿ eat
 - ⦿ do with your family
 - ⦿ do in your spare time
 - ⦿ learn.
- ⦿ Describe your drawing to a friend.
- ⦿ Get your friend to listen and draw your picture without showing them your picture.



Text comparison

Read [I'm Australian Too](#) by Mem Fox and Ronojoy Ghosh (2017, Scholastic). Provide a Venn diagram, either as a whole class or in small groups and ask students to identify differences and similarities when compared with [Hello!](#) Guide students to

compare features such as purpose, structure, characters, illustrations, language use, research on language and culture and feelings about inclusion and so on. The information on each text could be the basis of writing a review of each book.



Critical thinking about audience

Encourage students to think critically about representation in [Hello!](#) Walk through the text and ask students to share aspects they can connect to as a reader. This can also be applied to [I'm Australian Too](#). The purpose is to support students to have open discussions about inclusion and exclusion in classroom texts.

As a whole class or in small groups students complete the following statements

- The use of English and other languages may make readers feel ...
- The images in cartoon style may make readers feel ...
- The information at the back of the book may make readers feel ...
- The choice of language and cultural groups may make readers feel ...

Students may need guidance if not used to thinking critically about how a range of readers may respond to a text.

Writing

Modelling / text deconstruction

Tell students that they are going to share their own backgrounds and identities by using the structure of [Hello!](#) to write their own class book.

Reread [Hello!](#) and revisit the author's purpose, ie. to describe, and the response from the reader. Focus on the text and images in one example, eg. Piliñh. Model identifying the text stages and phases and record on a table (see below). Look at some other sections and point out that the phases may differ as the information will reflect the differences between each child.

In relation to each stage and across several sections of the book, identify the verb choices and record and categorise on the table beside relevant stages. Tell students that the verbs are at the heart of each message/clause in the stages. They take on different functions (see Humphrey, Droga and Feez, 2012). This depends on whether something is being named or described with the use of relating verbs or actions like wear, perform, play. Saying verbs like speak relate to languages use and sensing verbs help to describe sensing and thinking of characters. All have an important role in putting together information for each stage of the description.

After identifying verbs from a range of sections, discuss why there is a greater range used across the cultural practices stage and what they tell about the experiences and feelings of each child. Focus on how this shows difference and the identity of each child.

Stages	Phases	Verb choices			
		Relating	Action	Saying	Sensing
Description of child's background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> name, family's country/location of origin language 	- is	- come	- speak	
Speech bubble	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> greeting 				
Description of personal and cultural practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> foods games hobbies sports family activities special occasions 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - love eating - collect - cook -perform 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - see - am learning
Speech bubble	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> farewell 				

Joint construction

Tell students that together they will decide on someone's family member from the take home survey to provide information for the description of their background and identity. Ask the person for permission prior to writing. Alternatively, the joint construction could be about the teacher or another teacher who has been interviewed in the school.

Display a photo or image of the person with two speech bubbles. Add a greeting and farewell in both their home language and/or English.

Use think, pair, share to ask students what information will go in the first stage of the description (name, country of origin, language). Also ask what types of verbs are likely to occur in the first stage of the description. Refer to charts around the room that provide support.

Jointly construct the text, using mini whiteboards or share the pen when needing a verb. Encourage students to talk about the type and function of each verb. Discuss the importance of referring to the verb chart while working through the stages and phases. Also draw on the relevant language of the person being described.

After writing reread to check the text structure, verb choices and where the speech bubbles might be placed as well as how the description conveys not only information but the identity of the subject. After writing share the description with the subject and ask them if they are happy with how they have been described. Make any changes based on feedback.

Independent construction

Remind students of the purpose for writing, emphasising the need to provide description conveying their own uniqueness and identity.

Also remind students of the text structure by jointly constructing criteria. Whilst writing encourage students to draw upon charts and resources around the room. After writing, students share their writing in small groups and provide feedback based on criteria.

Students can publish their texts but would benefit from jointly constructing a published version to focus on structure and formatting and the role of images. Published versions can then be compiled into a class book.



References

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