

Case study 3: *Haere Atu!* – Building a community of readers

Why shared reading? (0:00-2:00)

I have a year 1 and 2 class, and we are a “community of readers”. My students are heading off in all sorts of directions with their reading, and shared reading is a big part of making that happen. I like the idea of guided reading and shared reading being two different ways children can develop independence in reading. Shared reading exposes children to books that they would never try on their own and shows them what they are capable of. It gets them actively participating, not just following along with the words, but thinking about the unfolding story, predicting, inferring, and enjoying – especially the humour. And, they get to grapple with interesting ideas and think critically. Even with seemingly simple texts such as *Bubbles* and *Greedy Cat*, there are so many aspects students can think about.

Shared reading is also a way of introducing or reinforcing what children will come across in guided reading. For example, it's quite a big idea to realise that a sentence can sound like it's finished but it actually carries on to the next line, so children need to learn to “read to the full stop”. But if they're used to reading sentences that run across several lines in shared reading, they don't get fazed when they come across this sort of thing in a guided text. It's the same with having multiple lines of text on a page – they realise they can manage it.

But shared reading is so much more than that. It's about the children being engaged with the story (or poem, or play, or non-fiction book) and with the language. It's about the joy of reading together (and independently) and sharing ideas and responses in a safe and supportive environment. It's about building their understanding of how stories work, getting to know particular authors and illustrators, having fun with language and ideas, and doing all the things that good readers do.

Using *Haere Atu!* (2:01-3:23)

I find that *Haere Atu!* is a great text to use with students who are gaining control over the reading process. Most children have been around sandflies or mosquitoes, so they can make connections to their experiences, and they love to share their ideas about what happens when you get bitten!

Haere Atu! is very engaging because it has a repeated refrain that the children really love to join in with, often from the first reading, “Haere Atu, go away! I am not your lunch today”. I've found that my English language learners can pick this up quite quickly, even if they don't initially understand what it means. It contains lots of humour and this, with the rhyme and rhythm of the story, makes it a really fun read, reinforcing that sense of loving reading. Students feel success as they are able to access the text quickly, and it's a reading experience everyone can enjoy together. The story also introduces te reo Māori in a really supportive way.

Another thing I really like about this text is that I can use it to explore the way authors have fun with language. The children become really good at finding the interesting language on a page, like “saggy baggy board shorts”, and I like to help them make connections between this and the language choices they make in their own writing.

Becoming readers (3:24-5:19)

One of the great things about *Haere Atu!* is that you can use it to talk about the features of fiction texts and how authors make stories sound interesting and exciting. Because of the lively language like “zoomed” and “slapped and flapped”, it's easy to practise reading expressively, and the children have fun reading phrases like “Kia tere! Quick!” in an interesting way. It's also a good time to talk about concepts about print, such as different types of punctuation and how these can help us read with expression.

Haere Atu! has a strong narrative structure, so it's easy to use to identify the beginning, middle, and end, especially with the repeated incidents in the middle of the story. It's also good for thinking about how the author lets us know that something is going to change – how they know that “the woman with the lumpy bumpy beach bag” is going to do something different.

A main focus for me when doing shared reading is on the students' comprehension. I find *Haere Atu!* really supports the children to summarise information, so I will ask questions like “What happened at the beginning of the story?”, “What was the problem?” This is where I'll often use texts like *Haere Atu!* with a small group, so I can really focus on developing comprehension with them, often as a link to what we're doing in guided reading.

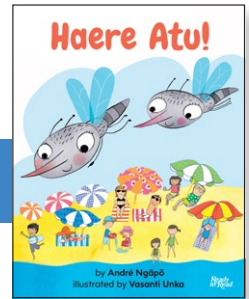
One of the things the children enjoy is working out what the Māori phrases mean, like “Haere atu”. One of the children said “I think it means fly away”, so we went back in the text and looked at whether that would work. We also made connections to other places we use the word “haere”. The children realised that the text told us that it meant “go away”, and we checked it made sense. So that was a really great discussion.

Meeting many needs (5:20-6:27)

I usually have a good idea of what I want to achieve with a text, but I also have a look at the teacher support materials online for ideas. I plan to use the text over a number of days, and the first reading is always about the students' engagement and making connections to things they know. I note in my planning which ideas I want to focus on.

While we are reading the text, I look to see which children are reading along with me because I want everyone joining in, even if it's just with the repeated refrain. Something else I look for is which children are following the storyline and thinking about what's happening (or what's going to happen). It's usually quite easy to tell from their reactions, but I might also ask questions to check.

Having the audio and small books available for children to read along with really helps them to build their confidence, and if they choose to read the big book themselves during reading time, then I know they are ready to have a go at reading the small books independently.



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Observations and reflections (6:28-7:32)

Although I plan the first few shared reading sessions, I often find that I need to change my plan in response to what I've noticed during a lesson. For example, if some children are finding it challenging to identify the middle of the story, I work with them in a small group in the following session, with this as our purpose.

There are so many ways of building on children's learning with *Haere Atu!* One way I find really successful is to encourage them to create their own sentences based on the rhyming adjectives in the story. Together, we experiment with the rhymes, trying out different initial letters to make new rhyming words. For their sentences, some children will use the adjectives straight from the book, "I am wearing a spotty dotty T-shirt", but others will create a new phrase "I am wearing a bouncy flouncy sunhat". I often take photos of their work to keep in my modelling book, which we can refer to later on.