



POPEY

Provincial Outreach Program  
for the Early Years

[www.popey.ca](http://www.popey.ca)

## Fostering Curiosity Through Conversation in Your K–3 Classroom

Presenters:  
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Wednesday, February 22nd

3:15 – 4:15pm

\*Workshop resources available at [padlet.com/POPEY](http://padlet.com/POPEY)

# Today we are exploring...

Strategies, resources, and ideas to incorporate curiosity through intentional conversations and dialogue in K–3 literacy activities



# What role does curiosity play in learning?

The '**wonder**' aspect of curiosity – the why and the how quest for understanding rather than fact finding

A **goal of curiosity** is to prepare the mind for learning. It prepares us to be ready to decide which information we want/need to attend to in situations.



Asking an **engaging question** can create a more long-lasting value (desire) for learning novel information.

*For example – “What do you think happens when...?”*

Children have a natural motivation to explore the world, but we can encourage a more important motivator to explore the mind.

# What role does curiosity play in learning?

The According to cognitive scientist and researcher **Elizabeth Bonawitz**, curiosity is innate in all humans – a sensation much like hunger or thirst. “Curiosity acts as a kind of filter you put over the world to help the mind decide what information to attend to,” she says. “It’s a physiological response that helps drive action and decision-making to support learning.”



Provide opportunities for children to develop **metacognition** through building executive functioning skills alongside opportunities to **explore and ask questions**.

# Creating a dialogic classroom

## *Students notice, name, and nurture...*

- \* how to think together
- \* how having a conversation means building on each other's ideas
- \* how participating in discussions in this way is motivating and empowering
- \* the causal link between the act of listening and a transformation of thinking or understanding

In the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed. ~ Charles Darwin

# The importance of a dialogic classroom

## Dialogic engagement improves students...

- \* ability to see others' perspectives
- \* reasoning ability in math and science
- \* ability to think critically
- \* language comprehension
- \* ability to build arguments
- \* expressive language
- \* creative thinking



It is associated with positive social behaviours and sensitivity to others but also with higher self-esteem and lower anxiety.

# Supporting a Classroom of Talkers AND Listeners

## Our students need...

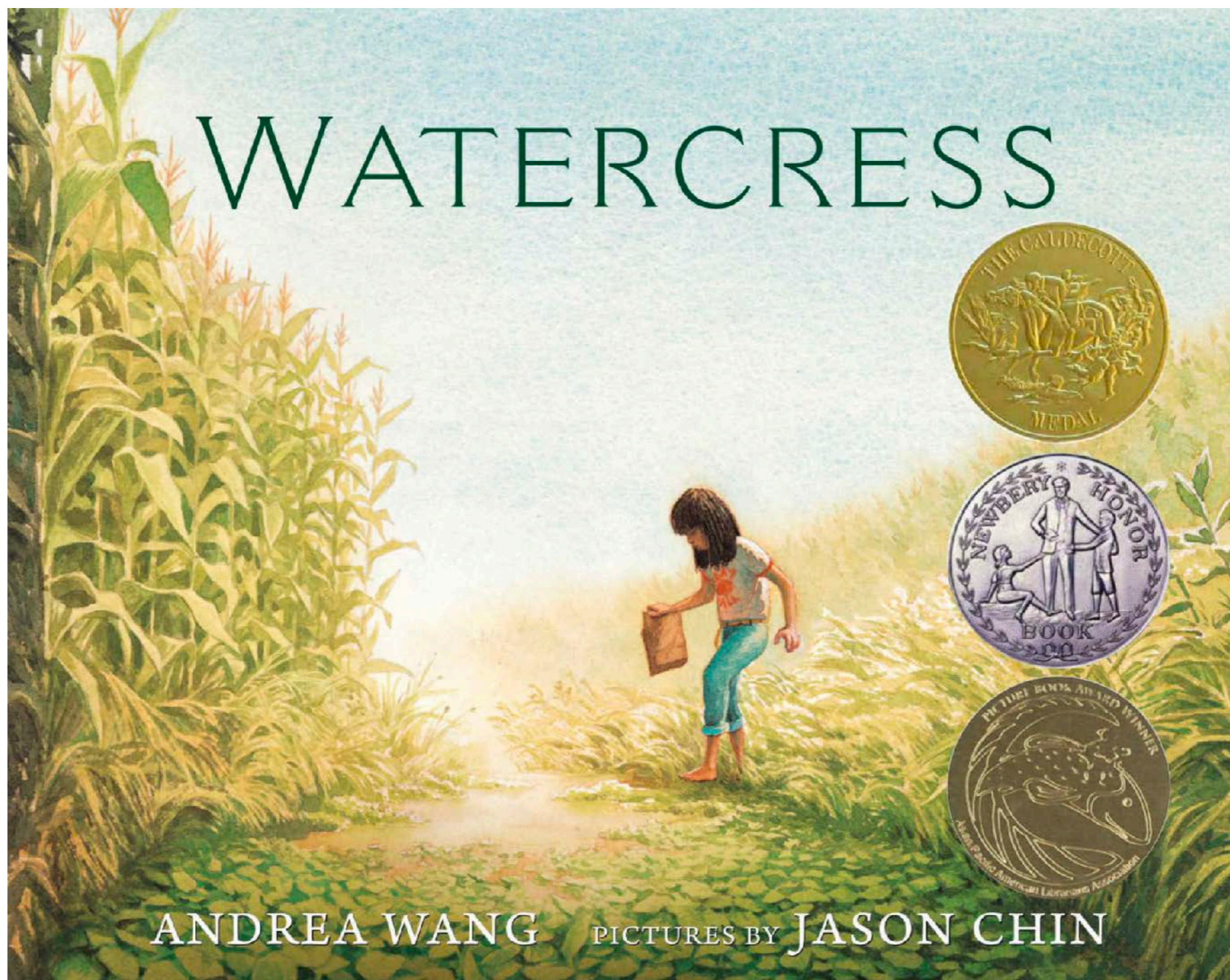
- \* a sense of safety, joy and belonging in the classroom
- \* a classroom culture of appreciation and respect
- \* time to talk (built into their daily schedule)
- \* a balance of partner talk, small group talk, whole class talk
- \* demonstrations of and practice with:
  - ♦ compliments – what they're noticing others do
  - ♦ asking questions and listening to answers
  - ♦ sharing their opinions, with reasons/evidence
  - ♦ oral rehearsal for what they're writing

**QUESTION:** *What helps us to think and talk together?*

To: **Everyone** ▾

|Type message here...

# *Read Aloud to promote dialogue*



*What other books promote dialogue in your classrooms?*



# Conversation Stations

## *Bringing in purposeful dialogue*

- \* students actively listen to each other
- \* interactions are driven by students
- \* educators have the opportunity to develop and expand students' language
- \* can have theme-based picture cards or photos that spark opinions or thoughts
- \* establishing rules about talking and listening can be discussed and developed with the whole class



It is also a beneficial classroom routine – save it for your time at the conversation station!

## *Preparation for whole class discussion*

- \* Students have the time to process, try-out, and strength their thinking
- \* Can be pre-planned when you have a pre-determined question to ask the class that may require time to process a response
- \* Can be Spontaneous when too many voices are silent OR when too many voices are clamouring to be heard at once

Requires all children to get their thinking out, as they have an immediate responsibility to their partner.

# Hands Down Conversations

- \* A short history of hand raising (IRE):
  - ♦ Initiate (Teacher)
  - ♦ Respond (Student)
  - ♦ Evaluate (Teacher) right or wrong



*Socioeconomic level and achievement level is predictive of participation in classroom conversation*

**QUESTION:** *How can we ensure students feel free to join conversations?*


# Hands Down Conversations

## \* What is it?


1. No hand raising. Listen for a place to slide your voice into the conversation.
2. One voice at a time (more or less)
3. Listen closely to the person speaking



*Snakes are dangerous*



Disagree      Neutral      Agree



*Video games are bad for kids*

*Kristy*

*Sean*

*Maddie*

*Video games are good for kids*

*Lynn*

*Bren*

# Hands Down Conversation

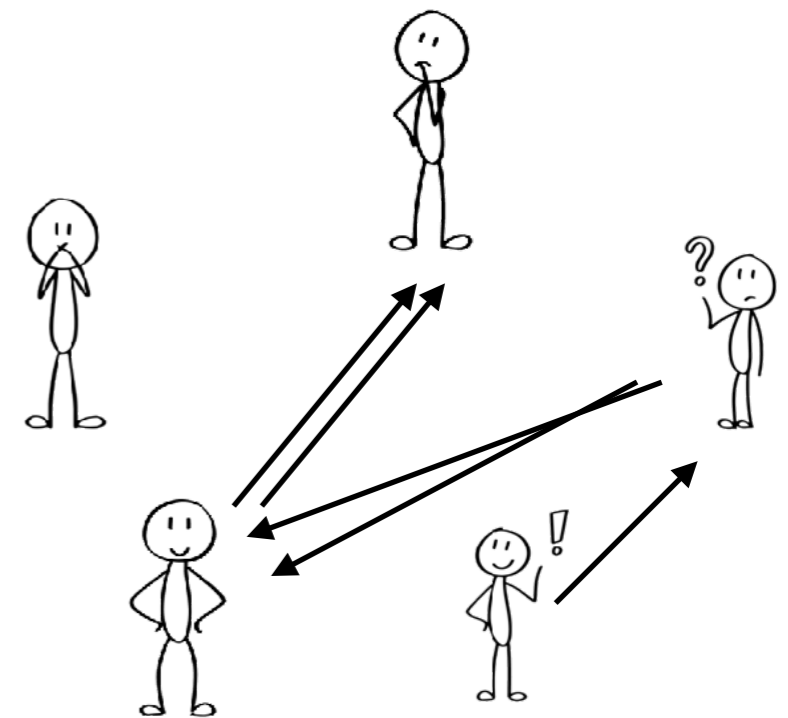
Teacher takes the position to the side of the students or as part of the circle (not leading, but sometimes guiding)

- \* Make space for social conversation

(Sadie is trying to get her voice in. Someone can invite her in by asking her what she thinks.)

- \* Listen with intention and curiosity

Conversation mapping



**QUESTION:** *How can we create opportunities for authentic conversations?*

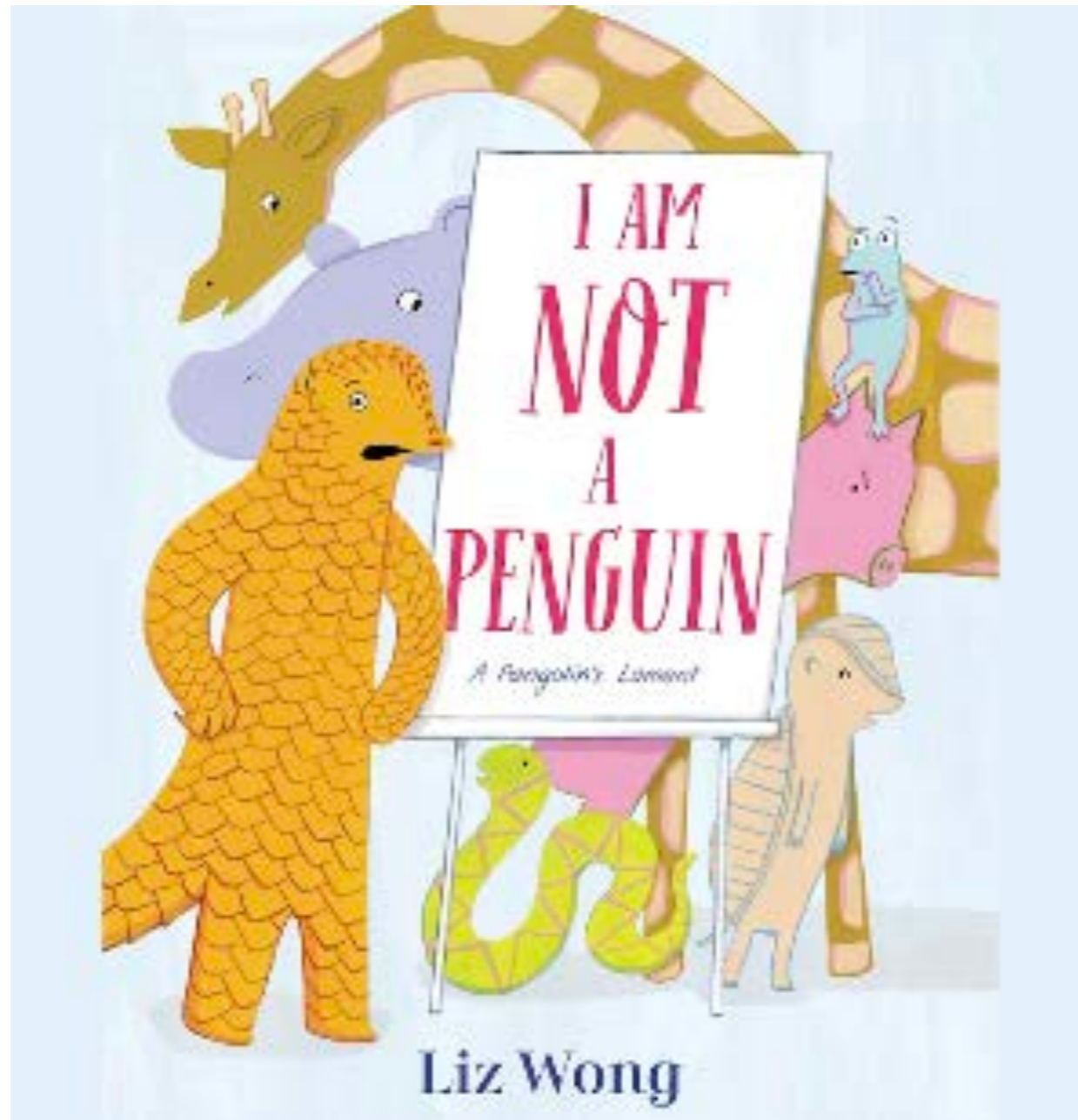
# Texts Sets

Text sets are built around a particular topic or theme and represent a range of text complexity.

- \* Multiple entry points
- \* Expand vocabulary around key topic
- \* Share knowledge among many different sources of information
- \* Multiple sources to look for answers to questions
- \* Students understand that there are multiple angles to consider
- \* Conversation creates a community of curious learners

Students engage in co-construction of new knowledge about a topic.

# Read Aloud about Pangolins



Write your new understandings about pangolins in the chat box.

# Non-Fiction book about Pangolins



## Asian Animals: Pangolin

Read about where pangolins can be found on a map, what they look like, what they eat, and a little about their young.

Favorite

Assign

### About This Book

By: [Grace Hansen](#)

4-8

Age Range

L

F&P Level

-

Quiz

# Pangolin

by Grace Hansen



Abdo Kids Jurebo is an imprint of Abdo Kids.  
abdobooks.com

Write your new understandings about pangolins in the chat box.



# Creating a dialogic classroom

## Possible argumentation strategies...

- \* I think (position), because (reason).
- \* In the story, it says (evidence).
- \* If (action), then (consequence).
- \* What if (scenario)?
- \* But (counter-argument).

“Learning together doesn’t just impact achievement in a subject area. Rather, it affects the whole child and his relationships to himself and others.” ~ Peter Johnston



According to the OECD's study on early learning and children's well-being, curiosity is strongly linked to emergent literacy and mental flexibility.

# Reflections & Next Steps

Reflect on the activities & resources shared today:

- Research on Curiosity and Learning
- Creating a Dialogic Classroom
- Different ways to promote dialogue:
  - \* Read Alouds
  - \* Conversation Stations
  - \* Wonder Window
  - \* Turn and Talk
  - \* Hands Down Conversations
  - \* Text Sets

Choose **ONE** thing you 're most likely to try in your classroom or role. **Share** it in the ChatBox...

To: Everyone ▾

|Type message here...

## Info Links

more info links are available on our [website](#)

[Balanced Lit Diet](#)

[Diagram of Pangolin](#)

[A Curious Mind](#) – Boudreau

[Epic](#)

[Discussion-based Approaches to Developing Understanding](#), Applebee

[Something To Talk About](#), Stenhouse podcast

## Videos

more videos are available on our [YouTube channel](#)

[Pangolins](#)

[Hands Down Conversation](#)

[Circle of Kindness – YouTube](#)

## Books

Comprehension Through Conversation – Nichols

Opening Minds – Johnston

Motivating a Love of Learning presentation – Bonawitz

Engaging Literate Minds – Johnston et al.

Shifting the Balance – Burkins & Yates,

Story Workshop: New Possibilities for Young Writers – MacKay

Accelerating language development through picture book reading – Whitehurst et al.

A Teacher's Guide to Development Across the Day – Wright

Hands Down Speak Out – Wedekind & Thompson



We hope to see you again soon for our Spring Series...

Tell us what you want to learn about!



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