



# Classbooks and Documentation for SLP's and Preschool Teachers

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“Words, once they are printed, have a life of their own”

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## What are classbooks?

- Booklets, assemblages of children’s work or photos that are stapled, bound or glued together as a group or individual project
- The classbook instructional technique goes beyond scrapbooking and group art activity.

## What are classbooks about?

- Books, art projects, field trips, classroom visitors, science activities, amazing events

## Benefits: Why classbooks?

- A well executed classbook: is much more than a scrapbook:
- Grounds and documents children’s experiences
- Automatically helps document language, vocabulary, concepts, and preliteracy skills
- They are a snapshot of students’ progress, individual and group contributions.
- They capture enrichment vocabulary, story narratives, pre-writing development.
- They make language, stories, and activities relevant to students...transferring knowledge to their own background experience.

## Leap’s experiences are:

- Increased teacher buy-in for language strategies
- Children understand the idea of books
- Children begin to make their own books
- Children have a greater interest in being read to
- Children increase participation in phonemic awareness and preliteracy activities
- Parent involvement increases; parents have a greater appreciation of group and individual progress

## Two major types of classbooks:

- **Teacher driven** – teachers choose and assemble pictures and materials to support a theme or to document an activity. **Advantages:** may be more curriculum directed
- **Child driven** – children assemble the classbook with help from the teacher **Advantages:** sheds greater light on individual children’s skills and literacy awareness

## Do I have to be an artist?

**No!** Help children categorize concepts, provide a variety of interesting materials to promote visual and spoken expression. React positively to children’s narrative as they describe or dictate to you about their contribution.

## Do classbooks have to be ‘artistic’?

**No!** Some of your best projects will be those that looked less finished but express concepts and the process of children learning beautifully.

## Aren’t classbooks time consuming and expensive?

**Time consuming?** The time spent is relevant to the gain: remembered experiences, children’s accomplishment, intensifying concepts and vocabulary.

**Expensive?** The best classbooks arise from easily available materials: ranging from laminates to hole-punched constrictor paper.



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## Benefits: Classbooks in teaching

- Post them prominently and encourage re-reading
- Direct parents’ attention to the classbook at drop-off or pick-up times; ask them to sit down and leaf through
- Allow children to take the classbook home if you have a lending library.
- If parents have the computer capacity and are interested, e-mail their child’s portion of the classbook to them.
- Periodically ‘read’ the classbook, recreating the field trip, activity, or classroom event recorded there
- Encourage students to make up a new story, re-telling their memory or recasting the book into an imaginative story

## Benefits: Finding data in classbooks

- Let children ‘read’ a classbook to you; tally vocabulary and narrative of the event
- Allow children to take classbooks home; note what the parent related about what their child told them
- Compare classbooks from early in the year to later in the year; note growth in fine motor, pre-writing, vocabulary and dictation skills
- Analyze dictations for length, concepts, complexity and creativity

## Benefits: Spread the word!

- Involve your administrator or principal
- Provide the principal with copies of classbooks to use during meetings with parents or administrators.
- Discuss classroom objectives in terms of children’s product.
- Provide copies of data tallies you have taken-children’s responses, vocabulary words, speech that is increasingly complex, how children are meeting standards for entry into kindergarten.



**References:** Lybolt, J., Techmanski, K., Armstrong, J., and Gottfred, K. (2007) *Building Language throughout the Year*. Paul H. Brookes, Pub. Baltimore