

Taming Butterflies – Teacher's Notes

By Sue Whiting

Author Bio

Sue Whiting lives with her husband and two children in a small coastal village, south of Sydney. A primary school teacher for over twenty years, Sue presently divides her time between teaching children with learning disabilities, writing stories for young people and working as a children's book editor. Sue's first book, *Mistie's Magic*, was published in 2000. She now has nearly fifty books published, for the education, trade and novelty markets, with many more in the pipeline. A number of Sue's novelty titles have been very successful in the USA, with *Flying High*, *The Great Race*, *Bugs at Play* and *My Place* all attaining number one position on BookScan USA.

The Story Behind the Story

The idea for *Taming Butterflies* struck during a Reading Recovery lesson. The student I was teaching was so filled with nerves, it was almost impossible to teach her. That's when we started talking about taming butterflies. And that's how the story was born ...

Taming Butterflies is an empowering tale about coping with anxiety. We all experience "butterflies" sometimes. It is a normal human emotion. How we deal with feeling nervous and anxious is, however, very different. Some anxious souls are indeed trapped by their butterflies and their nervousness permeates their whole life. *Taming Butterflies* aims to show through the power of story that we can, to some extent, have control over our "butterflies" and not let them rule.

Taming Butterflies – an integrated literacy unit for stage 1

Linked to NSW English Syllabus Outcomes

Talking and Listening	Reading	Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to listening to <i>Taming Butterflies</i>, examine the cover and title. What do you think the book is about and why? [TS1.1 + RS1.6] • Children listen to story <i>Taming Butterflies</i> read by teacher. [TS 1.1] • Class discussion: Does Tilly really have butterflies in her tummy? What does the author mean? Have you ever felt this way? Why do you think we call this feeling having butterflies? How have you coped with feeling this way? [TS1.1+RS1.5] • Group discussion: In small groups children give personal accounts of times when they have had “butterflies”. [TS1.1] • Children explain how Tilly tames her butterflies. [TS 1.1] • Children retell narrative around circle, contributing one sentence each. [TS 1.3 + RS1.6] • Children view illustrations, then role-play the situations where Tilly felt nervous. [TS 1.4 + RS 1.5] 	<p><u>Reading Skills & Strategies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify high frequency words: Eg: they, her, out, was, how, were, made, sometimes, the, you, came, said, that, from, etc [RS1.6] • Children clap when they hear pairs of rhyming words from the text. Eg: swirl/twirl, bed/said etc [RS1.6] • Create a word bank of rhyming words eg: bed, said, head / Tilly, silly, Billy, hilly [RS1.6+WS1.11] <p><u>Reading Response:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find words in the text that show how butterflies move. Record them inside a butterfly shape. [RS1.6] • What do we know about Tilly? What do we know about Marjory–Anne? List character traits. [RS1.5 + RS1.7] • Paste sentences about events in story in correct sequence. [RS1.7] • List situations where you might have “butterflies”. [RS1.5 +RS1.7] <p><u>Context and Text:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read other literary and factual texts about butterflies. Compare content, text features and purpose. [RS1.5 +RS 1.7 + 1.8] • List facts about butterflies found in factual texts about butterflies [RS1.6] 	<p><u>Recount:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children write a recount about their own experiences of feeling anxious [WS 1.9 + 1.10] <p><u>Procedure:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher models writing a simple procedure of how to perform a classroom task. Class identify the steps Tilly takes to tame her butterflies then write a simple procedure “How to Tame Butterflies” [WS 1.9 +1.10, RS 1.5] <p><u>Information Report:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher and children explore structure of several information reports. Using facts listed about butterflies, complete a “joint construction” information report about butterflies. [WS 1.9 +1.10] <p><u>Grammar:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children create a word bank of other words for “scared” [WS 1.14] <p><u>Spelling:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children find words in text that start with “sw” eg swirl, swish; “fl” flit, flutter; “sh” shake, shiver. Build word families of words that begin the same way. [WS1. 11]

Integration with other Key Learning Areas

PD / Health / PD	Visual Arts / Craft	Music / Dance / Drama
<p>Content links:</p> <p>Interpersonal Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising needs • Expressing needs, wants & feelings • Self control • Positive self talk • Seeking help <p>Growth & Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings • Ranges of emotions • Attributes of self <p>Possible Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore Tilly’s feelings. Why did she feel this way? Have you felt this way? What did you do? What makes you feel this way? Is it possible to control or “tame” your feelings? Does everyone have butterflies? • Conduct a survey of parents, siblings etc to investigate whether or not they have ever “had butterflies” and what made them feel anxious. • Role-play various situations where you might feel scared or anxious. Eg At night, being alone, trying something new etc • Make badges or book marks with empowering slogans such as “I’m a butterfly tamer!”, “Buzz off butterflies!” etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the artwork by Mini Goss. Discuss colours, techniques etc used. Using brightly coloured paint and toothbrushes, try to recreate the splattering effect on a large sheet of art paper. Draw / paint / cut out many butterflies. Fold the splattered paper in half. On one half paste the butterflies swooping and fluttering out of control; on the other half paste butterflies “flying in formation”. • Blob printing to create butterfly shapes • Using coloured paper shapes, decorate a butterfly outline with beautiful patterns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform a dramatization of <i>Taming Butterflies</i>. • Loud and soft: Accompany dramatisation with appropriate percussion instruments. Eg loud frant beating of a drum when Tilly is anxious; soft tinkling of bells or triangles when her butterflies are calm and quiet. • Movement: Children pretend to be Tilly’s butterflies. Accompany dramatisation with movement that matches Tilly’s feelings. (Soaring swooping, fluttering, still, asleep, flitting, diving, swirling etc)
	Mathematics	Science and Technology
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symmetry – investigate symmetrical nature of butterfly wings and patterns. Provide children with a butterfly picture with one side missing. Complete picture by making an exact symmetrical copy. • Patterns / shapes – Investigate shapes and patterns in butterflies drawn in <i>Taming Butterflies</i>. Following teachers instructions cover butterfly outline with a repeated pattern of regular 2D shapes 	<p>Content Strand: Living Things</p> <p>Related Units</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What’s Alive? • Life Cycles • Growing Up • Mini Beasts <p>Possible activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the life cycle of butterfly • Draw a diagram of life cycle • Investigate how our fears change as we grow up. Discuss how children felt on their first day of school; compare with how they feel now.