



Comprehension

Why we teach kids to read!
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The Researchers

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Activating Your Thinking

Using three different color sticky notes:

- Indicate on one sticky note a brief definition or explanation of comprehension
- Indicate on another sticky note the problems or roadblocks you observe with your students in comprehending text
- Use your third sticky to describe one strategy, technique, or method you currently use to teach reading comprehension

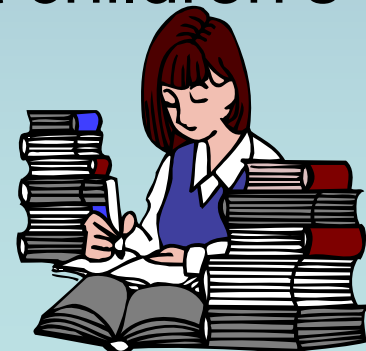


Participant Discussion

- Why do children have trouble with reading comprehension?
 - Word Recognition
 - Less than 95% accuracy
 - Vocabulary
 - Failure to stop and monitor
 - Failure to self-question during reading
 - Lack of connection to the text
 - Fluency

The purpose of this workshop...

- ...is to examine what **research** tells us about factors that affect reading comprehension.
- ...to learn what **instruction** must contain and what it must do to help students become proficient in comprehending text.
- ...to determine the most effective instructional **strategies** to use before, during, and after reading
- ...to plan for comprehension instruction by outlining specific **activities** that will support children's comprehension of the text



Workshop Objectives

- Understand the major factors that influence comprehension
- Understand how the reader, the text, and background experience interact to influence meaning
- Examine the challenges of 'Academic Language' within sentences, phrases, and whole texts and absorb strategies to support students with these challenges
- Determine the most effective instructional strategies to use before, during, and after reading
- Plan for comprehension instruction by outlining specific activities that will support children's comprehension of the text

Significant Statistics

- Recent NAEP results indicate 37% of fourth grade students fall into the “below basic” category, 59% in the “below proficient” category. These percentages rise as the grade levels increase.

Significant Statistics

- Among eighth graders, those who are non-white or who are from low-income families read 3-4 grade levels lower than students who are white or those who are economically more advantaged
- More than 8 million students in grades 4-12 are struggling readers. Each school day, some 3000 students drop out of high school

(Biancarosa and Snow 2004) 8

Research

What the Research Says about Comprehension

- **Time spent reading** is highly correlated with **comprehension**
- Effective instruction using **high-quality curriculum** materials can increase students' comprehension
- **Comprehension instruction** can begin before students read independently through read aloud opportunities.

Comprehension Strategies Supported by Research

Reader Strategies:

- Previewing/Predicting
- Making connections
- Monitoring and Clarifying
- Question generation
- Summarization

Teacher Strategies:

- Question asking/answering
- Cooperative learning
- Graphic/semantic organizers/story maps

National Reading Panel (2000)

Why Teach Comprehension?

- Goal of reading instruction is to ensure students **gain meaning from text**.
- Students need strategies to read and **understand text independently**
- Teachers need processes to help kids **connect to difficult text**
- Kids need to understand the importance of **reading well and reading early**

What is Reading Comprehension?

- Intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between a reader and a text

Durkin 1993

- A multidimensional process that involves factors related to the reader, the text, and the activity of gaining meaning.

What we know about the factors that affect reading comprehension

Proficient comprehension of text is influenced by:

Accurate and fluent word reading skills

Oral language skills (vocabulary, linguistic comprehension)

Extent of conceptual and factual knowledge

Knowledge and skill in use of cognitive strategies to improve comprehension or repair it when it breaks down.

Knowledge of test structure and genre

Reasoning and inferential skills

Motivation to understand and interest in task and materials

Factors Related to the Reader

- Reader Competencies
 - Foundational Skills
 - Higher Order Reading Processes
 - Background knowledge
 - Think about their thinking
 - Social and Cultural Influences

Factors Related to the Text

- Text genre and structure
 - Fiction – Non fiction, Fairy Tales, Plays
 - Chapters, acts, scenes, dialog
- Language features
 - Level of text difficulty
 - Complex sentences
 - Sentences that are wordy, rambling, or ambiguous
 - “Unfriendly” content area text

Two Kinds of Organizational Text Structure:

- Narrative
- Information

Narrative Text Structure

- Story structure underlies the organization of the text (e.g., character clues, plot, setting, conflict, etc.)
- Recounts personal experience based on something which really happened or might have happened
- All details work together in an integrated way to create a complete story with beginning, development, turning point, resolution

Critical Features

- Main Character
 - Something About the Character; Character Clues
- What Happened First
- What Happened Next, Next, etc.
- How Did the Story End?
 - Discuss Change in Character

Information Text Structure

- Many structures (e.g., sequence, compare/contrast, problem/solution).
- Gives information, explains, clarifies, defines.
- Teaches, reveals, informs, or amplifies the reader's understanding.

Explicit Steps and Strategies

Curriculum example: **Setting a Purpose for Reading**

Example: Tell students that it is important to know what kind of book you are reading before you begin. Explain that we read stories differently than we read informational books.

Say: *“We are going to learn to figure out why we are reading a book before we begin to read. For example, if we are reading Wolf, we know from the cover that it is a story about animals that read books. But if we are reading a book about real animals, we would read to learn new ideas about animals who are not like people.”*

Factors Related to the Reading Activity

- Purposes for reading
- Engagement in reading



Critical Question

- How do we use this information to identify the kinds of instruction that will best help students comprehend what they read

Strategies

What are Comprehension Strategies?

- Comprehension strategies are specific cognitive procedures that guide readers to become aware of how well they are comprehending as they attempt to read and write
 - “Strategies Good Readers Use”
 - » Harcourt
- What, Why, When, and How

The Relationship Between Skills and Strategies

STRATEGIES

Preview/Predict

Summarize

Monitor/Clarify

Evaluate

Generate Questions

Skills

Sequence

Drawing
Conclusions

Main Idea

Noting Details

(Chard & Kame'enui, 2003)

The Skill-Strategy Connection

- Strategies are generally more complex than skills because they require the orchestration of several skills.
- Effective instruction links comprehension skills to strategies to promote strategic reading.

(Chard & Kame'enui, 2003)

Skills-Strategy Example

To **SUMMARIZE** involves:

- Sequencing of events
- Making judgments
- Noting details
- Making generalizations
- Using story structure or text organization

(Chard & Kame'enuei, 2003)

What Strategies Should be Taught?

- Comprehension Monitoring
- Summarization
- Using the structure of stories
- Answering questions
 - Literal/Inference
- Generating questions
- Using Graphic and Semantic organizers
 - Pre/Post



Participant Discussion

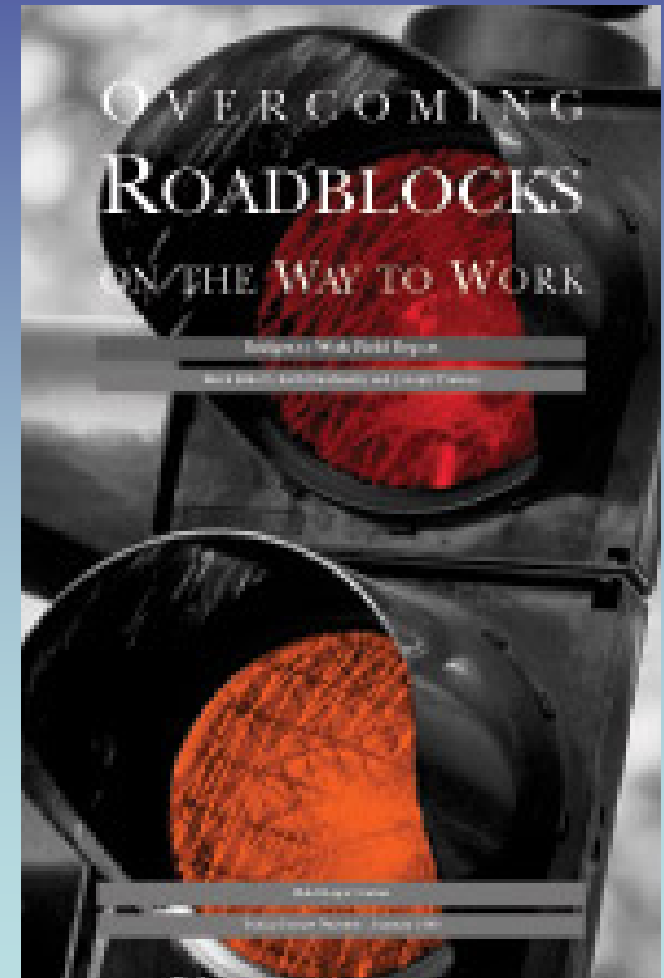
- Which strategies might you use with students as you preview a selection?
- Which strategies would be helpful to students when they encounter unfamiliar words?
- Which strategies might you use with students if they don't understand something they have read?
- After reading, which strategies would help students check their understanding of what they have read?

Comprehension Monitoring

Effective readers monitor their comprehension by thinking about their thinking. They are aware of what they understand and are able to identify breakdowns in their comprehension. They use “fix up” strategies when they run into problems.

Steps Readers Take to Monitor Comprehension

- Identifying where in the text the difficulty occurs
- Restating a difficult sentence or passage in one's own words
- Looking back through text to clarify thinking
- varying reading rate
- rereading
- reading ahead



Curriculum Example

- Teacher “think alouds” are used to model self-monitoring. *The Popcorn Dragon*

Written by Jane Thayer

“We just read that the other animals were envious. I’m not sure what *envious* means. Let’s re-read this page to see if we can figure out what *envious* means.”

Strategies to Support Comprehension Monitoring

Think Aloud
Using Read Alouds!!

- Use short passages or read-alouds provided with the core materials to initiate modeling of the target strategies.
- Most core programs start with teachers eliciting information or background knowledge. A powerful guidance strategy should include initial modeling and presentation.

Connecting Text

- Using prior knowledge
- Establishes quicker understanding
- Motivates engagement in reading
- Helps in determining vocabulary use (definition) through context
- May increase comprehension monitoring

Text to Self – Text to Text – Text to Life

Your turn

Build on prior knowledge

Discuss with your partner some questions you might use with you students.

It was Sam's first day at his new school and he missed his old friends. He felt all alone as he watched other boys play at recess. He ...

Model Multiple Examples

- Curriculum example: **Making Connections**

“ It was in the summer of the year when the relatives came.”

When The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant

Example: Model how to predict what is going to happen based on the title or section of text.

- Say: *“When I read (listen) to this it makes me think of when relatives come to visit my family, there is lots of hugging, eating and laughing. Do you think those things will happen in this story too.?”*

Model: Making Connections

“The relatives weren’t particular about beds, which was good since there weren’t any extras, so a few squeezed in with us and the rest slept on the floor...”

When The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant

Example: Provide subsequent models of making connections.

Say: “This family needed to share their beds with their relatives. When I read (listen) to this it makes me think of other things we share when relatives come to visit.”

Model: Making Connections (text to text)

“Little Pig, Little Pig, are you in?”

The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs! *As told to Jon Scieszka*

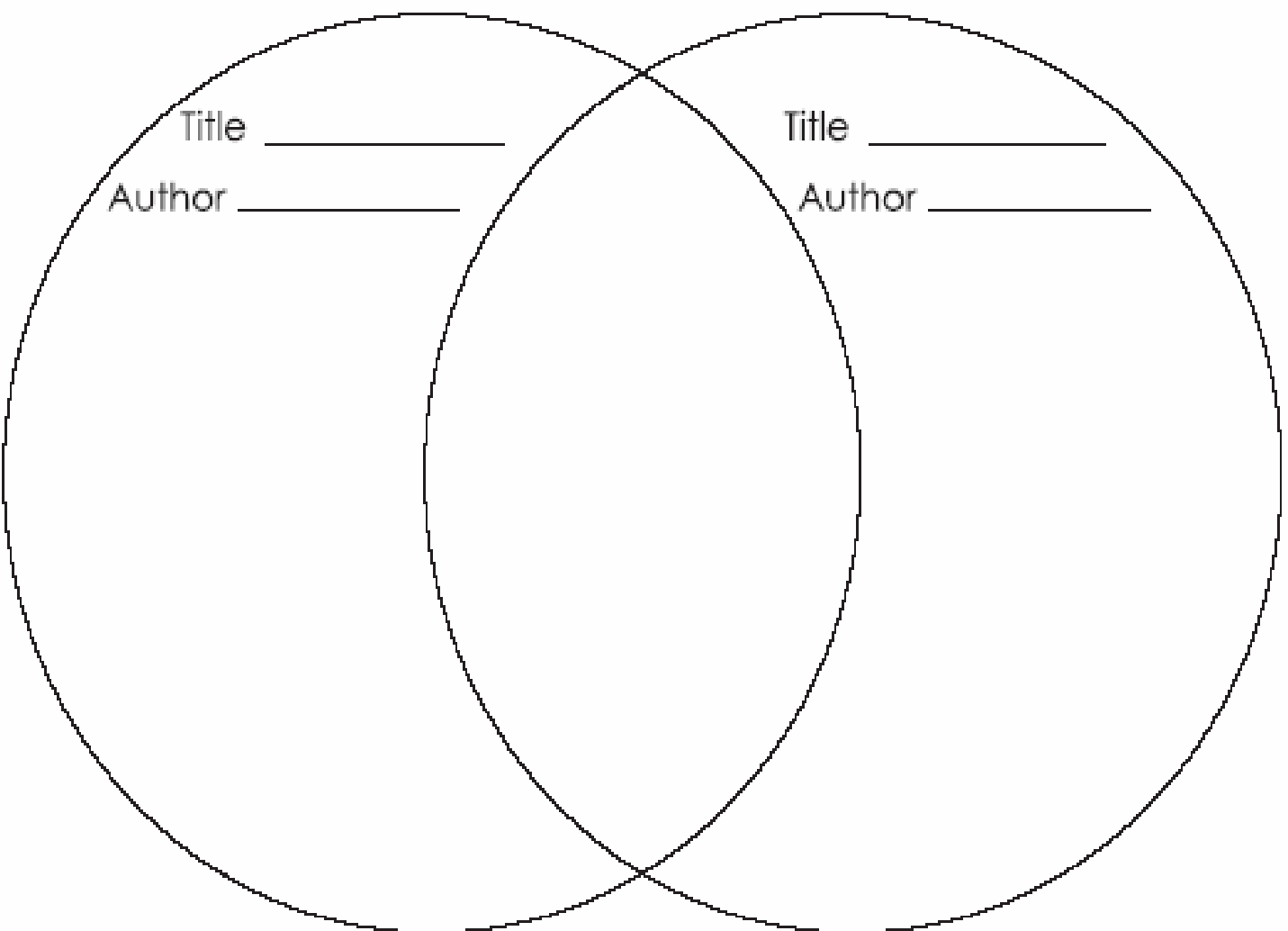
Example: Provide subsequent models of making connections.

Say: “When I read (listen) to these words, it makes me think of another story I read. The words remind me of what the wolf says in the story “The Three Little Pigs”.

Name _____

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Hoop-A-Story Venn Diagram



Strategies to Support Comprehension Monitoring

Think, Pair, Share
Paraphrasing

- Provide students many opportunities to stop and **paraphrase or rephrase** big ideas in the text. They should stop and THINK, then PAIR, then SHARE with a partner.
- Partner or table group sharing with incremental **CHUNKS** of texts will enable students to hold onto big ideas and connect background experience.
 - Points to ask questions
 - Vocabulary review
 - Identification of text structure elements
 - Summarize the main ideas in the passage

Your turn

- Read this passage. Come up with a question the whole class can chorally answer and one more complex question to answer as partners.

Sam and his friend went camping this summer. They went with Sam's parents. His mother had been a Girl Scout, so she know all about camping. She knew how to set up camp, how to build a campfire and how to blaze a trail.

Retelling

- Requires attention to main idea (theme), details and sequence
- Telling in own words
- Chunk text

“Tell me what you read. Who...? What happened? What happened next?”

Curriculum Example

- Teacher retellings

“I’m going to retell the story *The Three Little Pigs*. [Teacher models retell] Did I include all the story information in my retell?”

Student Retellings with Partners

Say:

“Listeners, think about whether your partner said everything he or she was supposed to. If they told:

- Everything important that happened in the story
- In a way that makes sense
- Without telling too much

tell them they did a good job. If your partner didn't say one or more of those things, you need to tell him or her what they left out.”

Strategies to Support Comprehension Monitoring

Text Coding or Text Marking

- Give students a strategy to hold onto the big ideas in text as they read independently or through focused guided reading.
- Use small sticky notes, highlighting tape, or bookmarks to mark pages and ideas according to coded targets.

V to highlight new or unusual vocabulary

! to indicate important ideas

? to indicate question or confusion

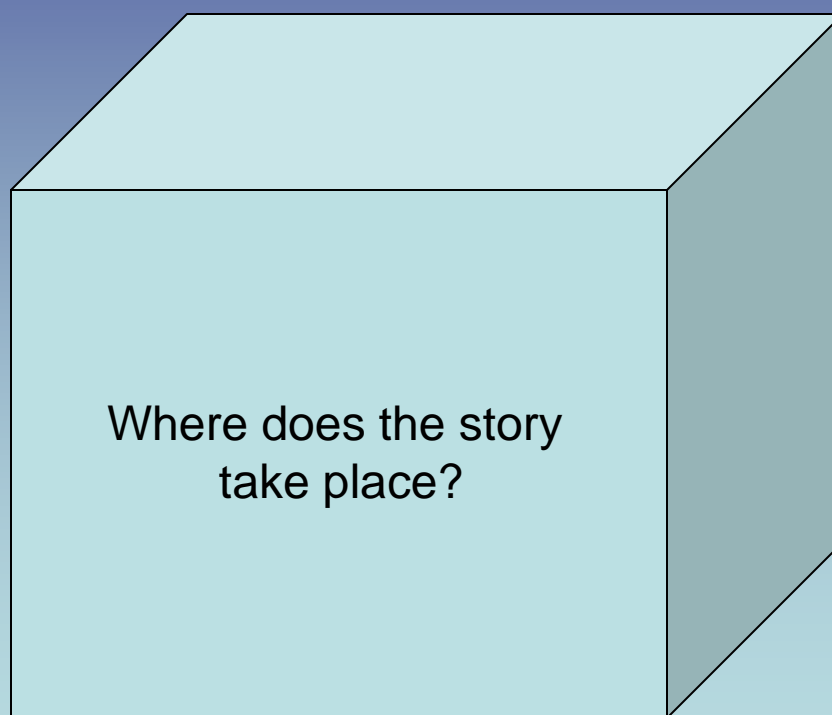
Comprehension

Story Question Cube

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	What happens in the story (beginning, middle, end)?	
When does the story take place (time)?	How was the problem solved?	Where does the story take place?
	Who are the characters?	
glue	Why did the problem happen?	glue
	glue	

- Roll cube, read question and answer



Summarizing

- Summarizing is “expressing in a brief form the central idea or ideas of a text.”
- Effective readers summarize during reading and after reading using a combination of skills.

Summarization

- Summarization requires students to determine what is important in what they are reading, to condense this information, and to put it into their own words
- Increases student awareness of how a text is organized and how its ideas are related
- Helps students make connections amongst the main ideas of a text

- Summarizing involves identifying the 'who' or 'what' and the action. Eliminating adverbs and adjectives to give just the gist.
- To summarize at the sentence level we can ask Who (or What?) happened?

Example: *The brown spotted cat ran down the street.*

Summary: A cat ran.

Summarizing Tips

- Summarize small chunks of information-often!
- Teach summarizing at the sentence level and paragraph level, before asking students to summarize whole passages
- Use sticky notes to make brief summaries and combine to create whole text summaries

Recognizing Story Structure

- Refers to the way content and events are **organized into a plot**
- Students who can recognize story structure have better appreciation, understanding, and memory for text
- Helps students identify story content-initiating events, internal reactions, goals, attempts, and outcomes-and how this content is organized to make up a coherent plot
- Can also help students to understand cause and effect, compare and contrast, problem solution and other relationships among parts of text

Recognizing Story Structure

Students learn

- to identify story content
- to understand who, what, where, when, why, and how
- to recognize how the content is organized into a plot
- to infer causal and other relationships

Recognizing Story Structure

Students learn to recognize story structure through

- explicit instruction
- answering and asking questions
- constructing story maps

SOMEBODY

WANTED

BUT...

SO...

Questions Students Learn to Ask and Answer Include

- Who is the main character?
- What does the main character do and why?
- Where and when does the story take place?
- How does the main character feel?
- How does the story end?

Story Maps

- Story maps can be a timeline or sequence chart that shows the sequence of events in a story.
- Other story maps show how events or concepts in a story are related
- More complex story maps may show rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution

Story Map

- Students draw or write what they know

Character	What happened?
How is this connected to You?	End



Participant Activity

- Analyze the text example in your packet, from your text or a read aloud.
- Identify a story map that would make the text accessible for students
- Create a story map to share with the group

Using Graphic and Semantic Organizers

- Helps students form a memory for concepts and ideas
- Can be used as a prereading, during reading, or post reading support structure

Semantic Feature map

- Great for compare-contrast

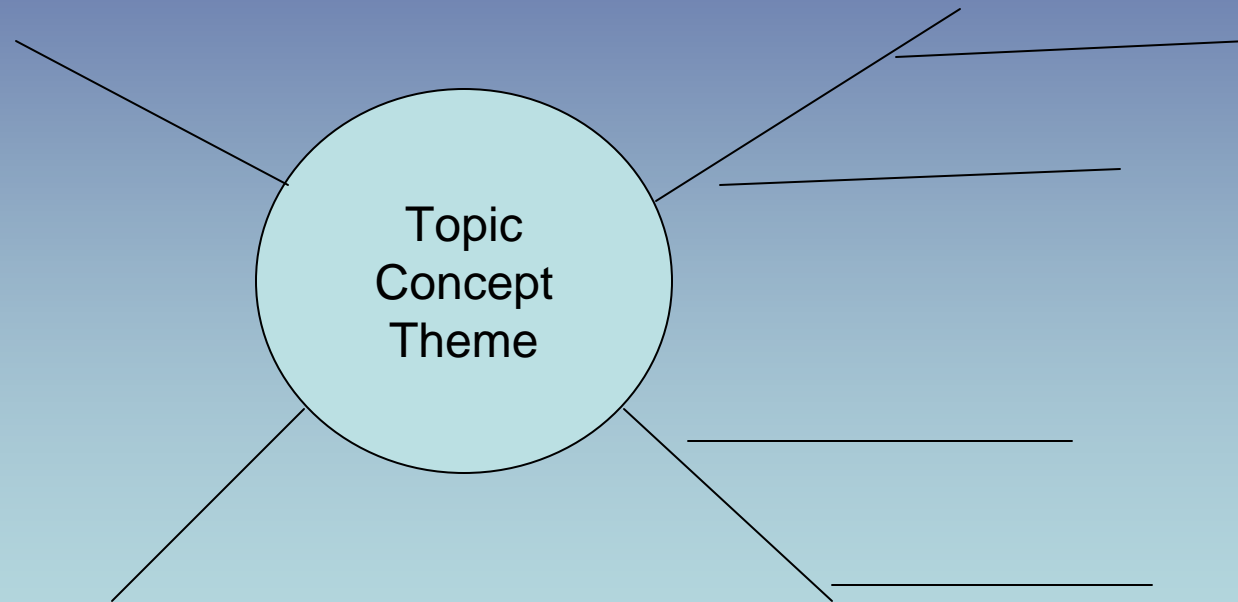
Feature	Cup	Glass	Mug
For hot liquids			
For cold liquids			
Made from glass			

Ways Authors Organize Text

- Cyclical Organizers
- Hierarchical Organizers
- Sequential Organizers
- Conceptual Organizers

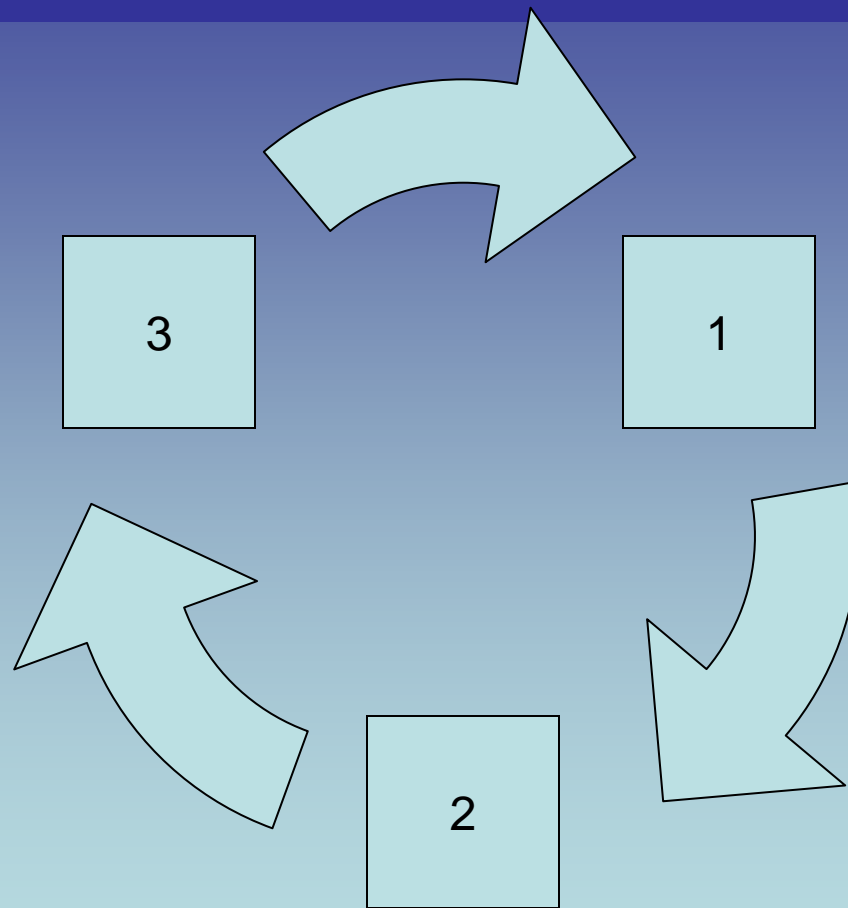
Sample Generic Organizer

Spider map

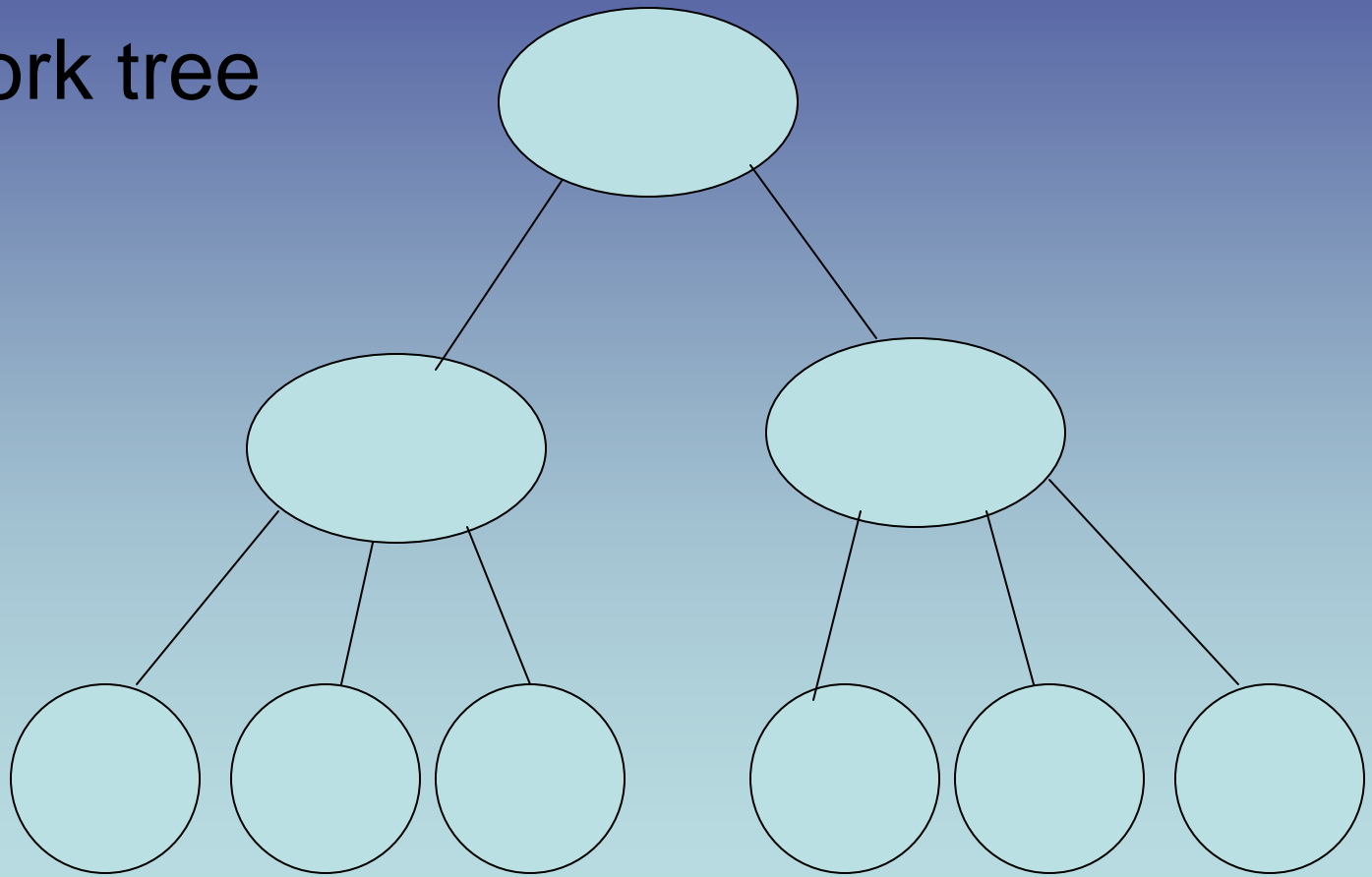


Example Cyclical Organizer

- Cyclical organizer

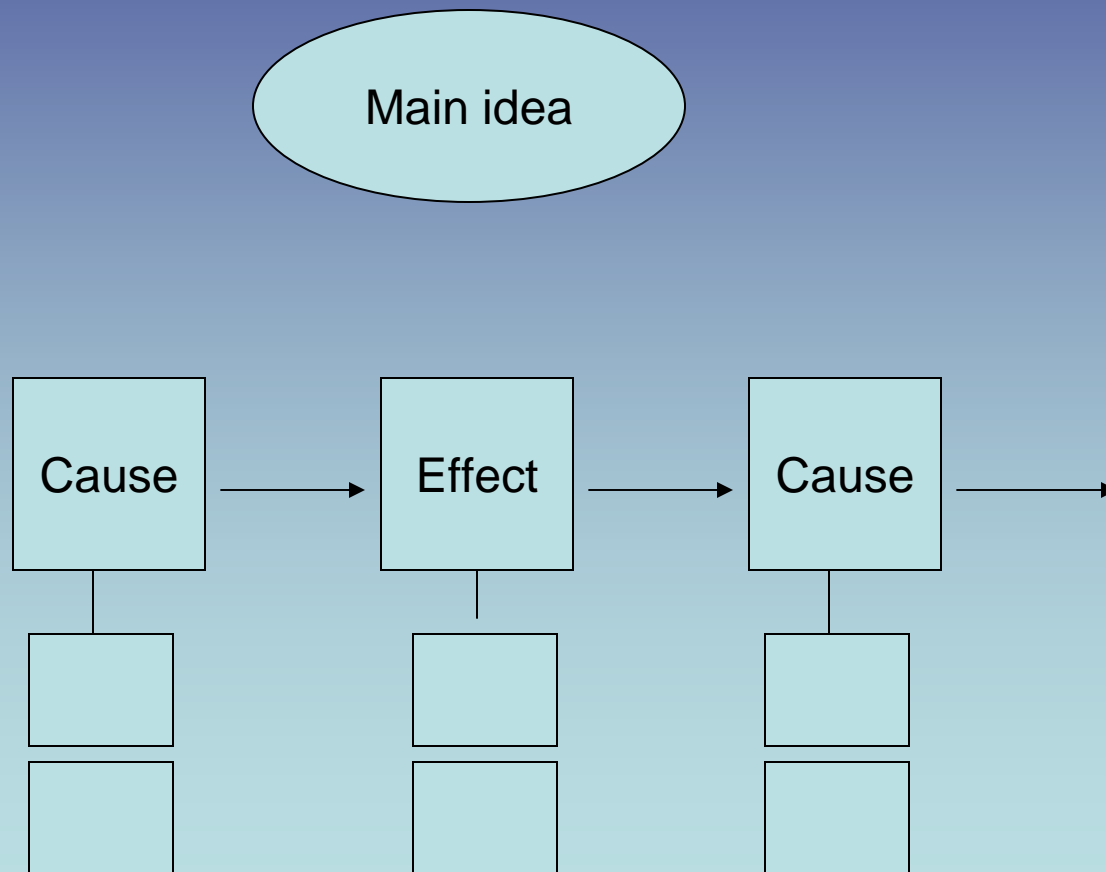


- Network tree



Sample Sequential Organizer

- Cause/effect



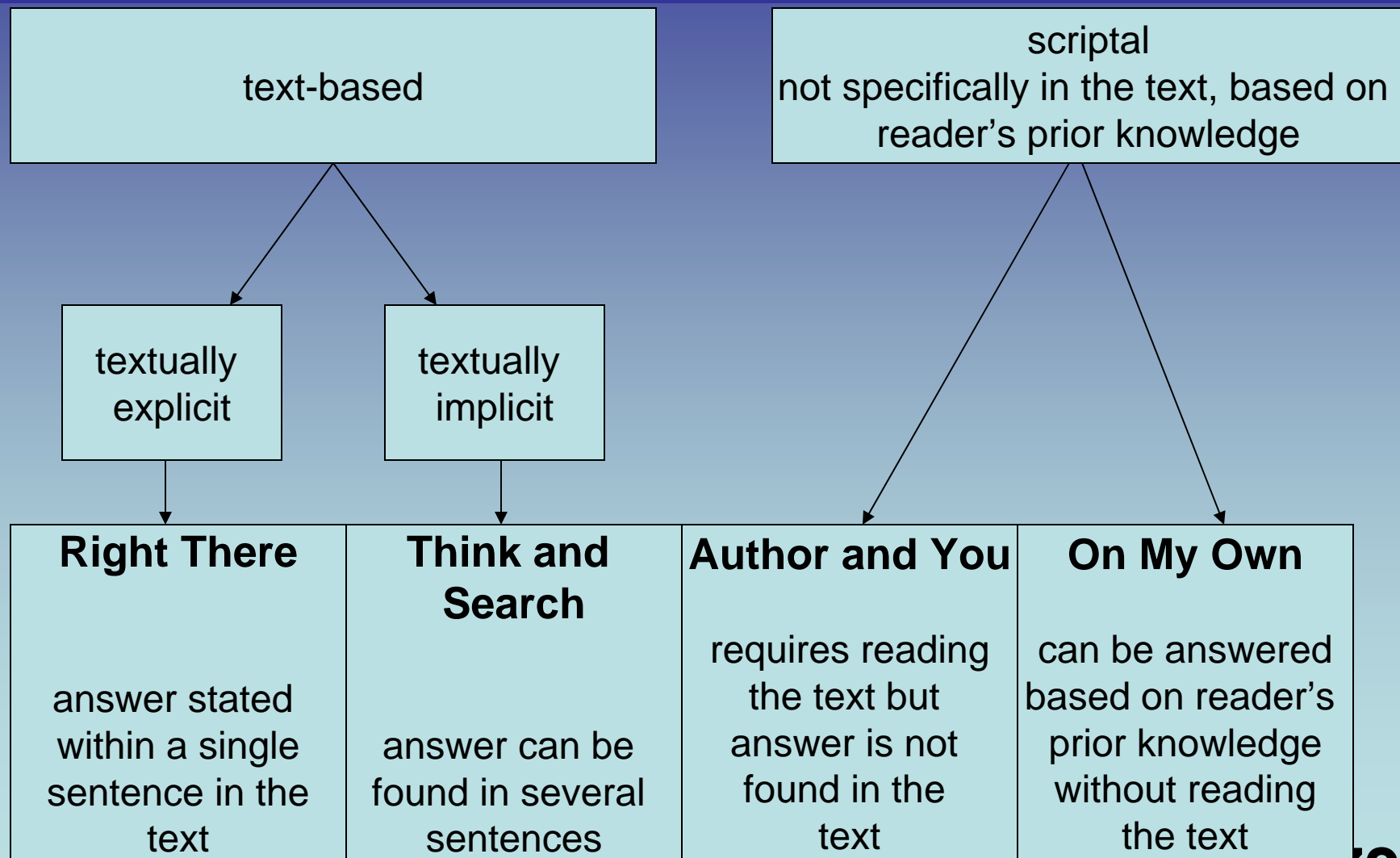
Question Answering

- Question answering INSTRUCTION can help students get more from their reading by showing them how to find and use information from the text to answer different types of questions.
- QAR (Question Answer Relationship) has been shown to increase students' ability to interact with text

Question Generation

- Focuses on helping students learn to ask themselves questions about what they read
- Teaching students to ask themselves questions improves their active processing of text and so improves comprehension
- By generating questions students become aware of whether they can answer their own questions, and thus, whether they can understand what they are reading

Question-Answer Relationships QAR



Right There

The text states:

George Washington was the first president of the United States.

The question asks:

Who was the first President of the United States?

Right There

The text states:

The night was rainy, windy, and cold. The trees were bending in the wind. The windows in my house were shaking in the storm.

The question asks:

What kind of night was it?

What happened to the trees?

Think and Search

The text states in one place:

The windows in my house were shaking during the storm.

Elsewhere, it states:

The night was rainy, windy, and cold. The trees were bending in the wind.

The question asks:

Tell me about what wind can do to things.

How is what the wind does to the trees and what it does to the windows the same? How is it different?

Think and Search

The text states in one place

The desert climate is hot and dry.

Elsewhere, it states:

In the rain forest, the climate is moist and hot.

The questions ask:

How are the climates of the desert and rain forest similar? How are they different?

You and the Author

- What other things might be happening because of the storm?

On Your Own

- How do you feel during a stormy night?



Participant Activity

- Using the text provided, create a question for each of the types:
 - Right There
 - Think and Search
 - Author and You
 - On My Own

Compare and Share with a partner.

How Should Strategies be Taught?

Strategy instruction is most effective when teachers use a

Model, Teach, Practice/scaffold, and Apply approach.

Model for Instruction

- Select the text
- Select the strategy
- Give a clear explanation
- Model the strategy
- Support student practice
- Have students apply the strategy

The Four Peas



- Provide opportunities for reading wide and reading volume with accountability.
- Pre-teach meaningful words and phrases.
- Preview the text with the students. Build background knowledge and motivation them to want to read.
- Process during the reading, after the reading and extend the reading with re-telling strategies.

Putting It All Together

General Framework for Teaching Comprehension

Before Reading



During Reading



After Reading

- Set objectives for instruction
- Identify and preteach difficult to read words
- Prime students' background knowledge
- Chunk text

- Stop periodically to ask students questions
- Map text structure
- Model ongoing comprehension monitoring

- Strategic integration of comprehension instruction
- Planned review
- Assessment of students' understanding

Before Reading

- Identifying the purpose for reading
 - Informational text or story
- Previewing
 - title, author, illustrator
- Strategic predicting/priming background knowledge
- Defining critical vocabulary

Connecting Text to Life

- Using prior knowledge
- Establishes quicker understanding
- Motivates engagement in reading
- Helps in determining vocabulary use (definition) through context
- May increase comprehension monitoring

Predict/Preview

Answering questions

- Looks for
 - Title
 - Pictures
 - Links to other related stories
- Scan story
- Create “What do you predict will happen?” questions. “Was your prediction accurate?”
“How would you change your prediction?”

Predict and Prove Activity

Prediction	Prove

K-W-L

What You
Think You
Know

What You
Want to
Know

What You
Learned

Format of Intervention: Expository Text

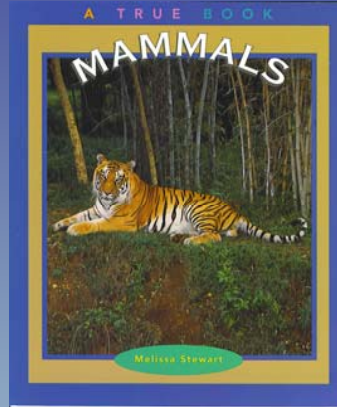


Figure 2. Know-Want to Know-Learn (KWL) Chart for Crocodiles

<i>What do we know?</i>	<i>What you want to know?</i>	<i>What did we learn?</i>
<i>Reptiles</i> <i>Cold blooded</i> <i>Vertebrates</i> <i>Scales</i> <i>Short legs</i> <i>Hatch from eggs</i> <i>Carnivores</i>	<i>* How do crocodiles cool off?</i> <i>* How long are crocodiles?</i> <i>* How often do crocodiles eat?</i> <i>* Where do crocodiles lay their eggs?</i>	<i>* They go to the river, open their mouths, or sit underneath a tree.</i> <i>* About 20 feet.</i> <i>* About once a week.</i> <i>* They did a big hole in the sand close to a river.</i>

Scaffolding

- Begin with passages that are read aloud by the teacher accompanied by pictures to help students preview the passage.
- Once children are reading independently, use passages with pictures closely related to the content and progress to passages that have fewer pictures.
- Once students learn to preview and predict, use passages with content that is familiar to students and progress to more complex and unfamiliar content.

During Reading

- Using consistent framework (e.g., story elements, info. headings, info. text focus questions)
- Question-asking strategies
 - Literal
 - Organizational
 - Inferential
- Making connections (Text to text, text to self, text to world)
- Active Thinking (Predict-Proof)
- Self-monitoring (What do you do when you don't understand something?)
- Vocabulary

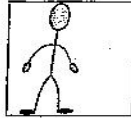
Format of Intervention: Narrative Text



Figure 1. Story Grammar Framework Chart for Bear Snores On

Who are the main characters in the story?	What happened first in the story?	What happened next in the story?	How did the story end?
<i>Bear</i> <i>Badger</i> <i>Crow</i> <i>Rabbit</i>	The animals see a cave and decide to come in and get away from the snow.	The animals get hungry and they decide to make a fire to cook some soup. They also sing and dance.	Bear wakes up and startles the other animals. The other animals decide to include Bear in the fun.

Name _____



Who (Main Characters)



What Happened—First

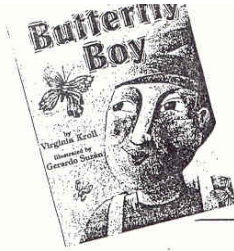


What Happened—Next



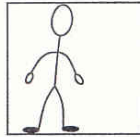
What Happened—End

I   this story.

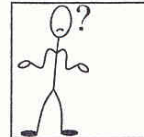


Kelsey

Story Retell



Who



Problem

was The dad
↓ painting
the godge
white.



Solution

The dad
saw the
outterfly.



End

The dad
panted
the godge
white.

Scaffolding

- Teach simple text structures (beginning, middle, end) in K. Move to more complex text structures (main idea, character, setting, problem, solution) in Grades 1-3
- Once students demonstrate understanding of narrative text, introduce simple expository text structures.
- Use text structure maps to assist students in mapping the critical elements of narrative and

After Reading

- Structured Retelling (Fuchs et al., 1994)
 - Retell of ***storybooks***
 - Retell of ***information text*** (review with KWL chart and tell with information retell sheet)
- Summarizing
- Vocabulary Review and Extension Activities
- Vocabulary Introduction and Preview
- Question - Answer

Scaffolding

- Begin with literal questions that are directly stated in the passage
- Ask the question immediately after the information is given
- Design questions directly stated but not verbatim
- Increase interval between where the information is given and when the question is asked (end of paragraph, end of story)

Scaffolding cont.

- Design inferential questions directly stated in the passage
- Design inferential questions that can be answered from relationship not stated in the passage
- Design questions requiring outside knowledge

Scaffold Your Teaching

- **Model**
- **Lead/Guide**
 - Work collaboratively with students and the strategy, giving and taking as much as necessary to create meaning
 - Eventually, students take on more and more responsibility
- Students use strategies **independently**

(Pardo, 2004)

AND...

- Instruction should progress from easy skills to difficult skills (e.g., narrative to expository, literal to inferential questions, simple to complex story maps)
- Strategies should be introduced and practiced one at a time
- Graphic organizers can support student understanding
- For students with low decoding skills, comprehension strategies can be taught through oral language activities (e.g., read alouds)



1. Review Card #15- Procedure for Strategy Instruction
2. Choose a comprehension strategy from your TE that you and your triad members would like to practice.
3. Work with a group of three to practice the procedure for strategy instruction. One person should act as the teacher, one as a student, and one as a coach. Take turns performing each role.

Direct Definition

- Explain to students what the strategy is and its purpose.

Teach/Model

- Demonstrate the strategy for students using a think aloud while interacting with the text.
- Clarify for students that you are thinking aloud. Use a transition statement that tells students you have left the text of the story to provide the think aloud.
- Don't ask students questions about strategy use during the modeling step.
- Provide additional models for students as needed during reading of selection.

Guided Practice

- Work together with students to help them learn how and when to use the strategy.
- Use the strategy name while guiding students.
- Prompt students to use multiple strategies when appropriate.
- Provide opportunities for active participation for all students.
- Provide many opportunities for guided practice, and remember to prompt students to use strategies every time they read.

Apply/Feedback

- As students participate in guided practice, provide feedback regarding correct and incorrect usage of the strategy (praise students for strategy steps they used and remind them of steps they left out).

Extend

- Remind students to use the strategy while they continue to read the current text and while they read other texts.

What Strategies Should be Taught?

- Comprehension Monitoring
- Summarization
- Using the structure of stories
- Answering questions
- Generating questions
- Using Graphic and Semantic organizers