

**Lessons in Comprehension:
Explicit Instruction in the Reading Workshop
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We need to Expand Our Definition of Reading Comprehension Beyond the Recall of Literal Details to Include **Interpretation**

We Demonstrate what it Means to Read Proficiently through the **Expectations** we set and the **Instructional Practices** enacted in our classrooms.

Behaviorist / Performance Models

Reading as Oral Performance

Reading as Decoding / Literal Recall

Reading as a Process of Constructing Meaning *with* Text

Challenges With Oral Performance, Decoding, Literal Recall

Focuses on correctness and accuracy, rather than thinking and interpretation.

Assumes a single, stable, universal meaning is found in the text.

Creates readers that can say words aloud, but may not comprehend.

Critical Dispositions

Readers understand that reading is a process of making meaning with texts.

Readers assume responsibility for understanding what they are reading.

Readers develop an awareness of their thinking when reading.

Readers are willing and able to recognize confusion.

Readers are willing and able to acknowledge confusion.

Effective Lessons in Comprehension

Retain an Expanded Definition of What it Means to Comprehend

Are Focused Demonstrations of Literate Behaviors

Build upon the Knowledge and Prior Experiences of readers

Call Conscious Attention What Successful Readers Do

Are Based on a Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

Gradual Release of Responsibility / Emerging Expertise Model

Clarify Expectations (Full Disclosure)

Describe Reading Practice (Explicitness)

Demonstrate the Reading Practice (Making It Visible)

Provide Guidance with the Practice (Scaffolding)

Provide Opportunities for Student Application (Independent Reading)

Provide Opportunities for Reflection (Literary Share Circles)

Comprehension Lessons in Action: Understanding Reading Strategies

Choose appropriate text
Select words to conceal
Have students generate possibilities
Ask Two Questions: Sense & Syntax
Discuss how they figured out missing words
Make list of strategies used for student bookmarks

Comprehension Lessons in Action: Approaching a Fictional Text

Help Students Attend to Extra-Textual Resources (Inside & Outside the text)
Set Expectations for Reading / Activate Relevant Prior Knowledge
Attend to Visual and Textual Cues / Determining Significance

Literary Demonstrations: Thinking Aloud

Explain what Approaching Means
Share Ideas as YOU approach the text
Use Language that Students are familiar with
Allow opportunities for student questions and reactions
Keep it authentic and in context

The Lesson Continues ...

In pairs approach the texts provided in the same manner as was demonstrated.
Keep track of what you do, what works, and what challenges arise.
Be ready to report to the group about what you did.
Make Visual Display of Ideas

Instructional Trajectory

How the lesson will affect reading in the future in the classroom?
Look for indicators of use in reader response notebooks
Purposefulness / Relevance of strategy
Demonstrate continued strategy use during read alouds

Comprehension Lessons in Action: Reader Response Notebooks

Designed to get readers to share their ideas and reactions
Can become glorified book reports
Need continued response from peers and teacher
Not a writing assessment
Used with Homework Reading

Reader Response Notebooks 1

Title-Author-Date-Genre
Retell What Happened 25% / React to What Happened 75%

Reader Response Notebooks 2

Title / Author / Date / Genre

Noticings / Connections / Wonderings / Additional Thoughts

Assessing Reading Response Notebooks

Engagement

Able to describe visual images

Follows along with, puts self in place of the characters

Anticipates events in story

Recalls specific events, language and story details

Offers immediate reactions (laughs, worries, etc)

Able to enter the secondary world of the story

Interpretation

Connects story to other texts, one's experiences, and the world

Seeks meaning beyond the literal level of the text

Understands characters challenges as connected to real world challenges

Inquires about particular motifs, symbols, and events and their meanings

Develops themes and connections to larger ideas and theories

Critique

Generalizes from literary experiences to world experiences

Evaluates characters motives

Infers author's intentions / histories / perspectives

Evaluates "quality" of the story

Understands relationship between parts of a story and the whole

Analyzes own responses to stories

Re-examines own worldview

Lessons in Comprehension: Deconstructing the News

All Reports are based on a perspective

How are images used?

What language is used to describe events?

What are commonalities across reports?

What are the differences across reports?

Can differences be explained?

Headlines

Peaceful Iraq protests spark clashes: 50 reported dead

Iraqi security forces clash with Shiite militias

Iraq forces battle Basra militias

Iraqi security forces launch crackdown in Basra

Iraqi and U. S. forces battle Shiite militia

Lessons in Comprehension: Reading Historical Fiction

- Historians and Novice Readers have a different “Epistemology of Text”
 - Novice: Text as Collection of Facts
 - Expert: Text as One (Biased) Perspective on Events
- Not Teaching an Interpretation, but an Interpretive Process
- Just adding Historical Fiction to the Curriculum will not change traditional pedagogy unless we also change how we teach readers to interpret and interrogate text and images

Some Final Considerations for Historical Fiction

- Perception begins the processes of interpretation and interrogation.
- We notice what we understand and learn to attend to.
- Each analytical dimension brings a different perspective and focuses on different aspects of historical fiction.
- Consider:
 - How much history and how much fiction is included, and where does each come from?
 - What stories get told, and who gets to tell them?
 - What stories don't get told, and why not?

Lessons in Comprehension: Evaluating Credibility

Publication Date

Credentials of Authors

Acknowledging Expertise

Providing References

Admitting Limitations

Personal Experience

Multiple Sources

Lessons in Comprehension: Approaching an Expository Text

Understand purpose for reading

Look at Paratextual resources; cover / title / front matter / Table of Contents /

Index

Look for Reading Guides, if any

Pay Attention to headings, sections, summaries

What Visual and design elements, and Text Structures are used?

Approaching a Text: Guided Practice

Provide books for students to try strategy in small groups

Follow guidelines presented during the think aloud

Have groups report how strategy worked

Discuss challenges & successes

Chart ideas for strategy use

Lessons in Comprehension: Reading Graphic Elements

What is the subject of the image?

Why is this image included in this section?

How is the information presented?

Are there any challenges or confusions in your mind about this image?

What have you learned about the subject by viewing the image?

For Consideration

Young readers are often less familiar with informational texts in school settings than fiction.

Requisite background knowledge and ability to relate information to one's life is essential to informational reading.

Promoting a sense of curiosity and wonder is our goal.

Information is constructed, not discovered, by readers based on their purposes for reading and the texts they encounter.

Rachel Carson

If I had influence over the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life.