Scaffolding Reading Comprehension in the Elementary Grades

A presentation by Dr. Anita Archer,
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Systematic, Explicit instruction

- Active participation
- Total student involvement
- Explicit instructional routines
  - Perceived probability of success
- Consistent perky pace
- Elimination of “voids”
What is EXPLICIT Instruction?

Instruction usually precedes construction...

Dr. Anita Archer

“ I do it (modeling our thinking too)

We do it together

Y’all do it (peer support)

You do it on your own”
Before Reading Practices
Before Reading strategies

• Teach the pronunciation of difficult to read words
• Teach the meaning of critical, unknown vocabulary words
• Teach or activate any necessary background knowledge
• Preview the story or article
Teach the pronunciation of difficult to read words

BIG IDEA: If students can read the words in a passage accurately and fluently, their reading comprehension will be enhanced
Video - Decoding Instruction
(Segment 4: Primary Decoding Instruction)

As you watch this short video, note any good instructional practices.
Teach the meaning of critical, unknown vocabulary words. How

“Until schools are prepared to emphasize vocabulary acquisition, especially in the primary grades, less advantaged children will continue to be handicapped even if they master reading written words.”

(Biemiller & Boote, 2006)
Teach the meaning of critical, unknown vocabulary words. Why

Up to 5\textsuperscript{th} grade, 80\% of the words students add to their lexicon are words that are explicitly taught to them.

After 5\textsuperscript{th} grade, students add words to their lexicon through their reading.
Teach the meaning of critical, unknown vocabulary words.

The brain retrieves words by the pronunciation of the word. If a student has trouble saying the word, they will have trouble remembering the word.
Teach the pronunciation of difficult to read words.

Selection of words

Divide the difficult to pronounce words into two categories for instructional purposes:

**Tell Words** (irregular words, words containing untaught elements, and foreign words)

**Strategy Words** (words that can be decoded when minimal assistance is provided)
Teach the meaning of critical, unknown vocabulary words. Preparation - Selection of words.

- Also, teach idioms (A phrase or expression in which the entire meaning is different from the usual meaning of the individual words.)

“The car rolling down the hill caught my eye.”
“Soon we were in stitches.”
“The painting cost me an arm and a leg.”
“The teacher was under the weather.”
Example #1
Passage: My Summer Vacation

Tell
Wallace
wrangler
clothes

Strategy
summer
relax
capture
discover
fantasy
cowboys
westbound
roping
riding
Teach the pronunciation of difficult to read words.

Tell Words

This word is ___________.
What word? ________________________
Spell and read the word.
______________________________

there  along  upon woman
**Teach the pronunciation of difficult to read words.** Teaching the pronunciation of words.

**Strategy Words - Multisyllabic**

Segment the word into decodable parts. Indicate parts with loops under the word.

Guide students in reading each part of the word. (Move your finger under each part of the word.)

What part? _____________________________
What part? _____________________________
What part? _____________________________
What part? _____________________________
What word? _____________________________

condensation         atmosphere           evaporation

**Notes:** If any element is unknown, simply tell students the pronunciation of the element.
Teach the pronunciation of difficult to read words.  Teaching the pronunciation of words.

Strategy Words - Single syllable words

**Precorrect** the difficult part of the word.

*Look at the underlined letters.*
*What sound?*

*Sound out the word.*  *(Pause)*
*What word?*

- **rain**
- **boat**
- **seed**
What instructional steps were used to introduce each of the words?
Video - Vocabulary Instruction

Did the teacher:
1. Introduce the word?
2. Present a student-friendly explanation?
3. Illustrate the word with examples?
4. Check students’ understanding?
5. Review the words?
Teach or activate necessary background knowledge.

Big Idea: If students have the background knowledge required by a passage, their comprehension will be enhanced.
Teach or activate necessary background knowledge. How

Activate background knowledge using a research-validated strategy.

Strategy #1
- Ask students questions and engage them in a discussion to activate their background knowledge.

Strategy #2
- Activate prior knowledge using KWL strategy.
- To increase student success, “front load” before having students respond to KWL chart. If this is done, students will “know” something and will have a basis for formulating questions about they want to find out.

Strategy #3
- Brainstorm the topics/questions that might be covered. This will strengthen or activate schema.
Preview the story or article.

Big Idea: If students preview a passage, their comprehension will be enhanced.
Preview the story or article. Why

• As students preview a selection, they:
  – discover what content will be covered or what the story will be about.
  – learn what information will be emphasized.
  – see how the information is organized.
  – activate background knowledge that will assist in comprehension.
  – become more interested in the passage.
Preview the story or article. How

Narrative Passages.
- Read the title. Predict the content of the story.
- Preview the illustrations/pictures. Predict the content of the passage.

Expository/informational/factual passages
- Read the title. Predict the content of the passage.
- Read the introduction. Ask, “What will we learn in this passage.”
- Read the headings and subheadings. Predict the passage’s content from the headings & subheadings.
- Read the summary.
Preview the story or article. Strategy

Warm-Up
Before you read a chapter or a section of a chapter in your science, social studies or health book, Warm-up. Get an idea of the chapter’s content by previewing these parts.

BEGINNING
- Title
- Introduction

MIDDLE
- Headings
- Subheadings

END
- Summary
- Questions

Curriculum Associates, *Skills for School Success*
Preview the story or article.
During Reading Practices
During Reading Practices

• Utilize passage reading procedures that provide adequate reading practice.

• Ask appropriate questions during passage reading.

• Teach strategies that can be applied to passage reading.

• Use graphic organizers to enhance comprehension.
Utilize passage reading procedures that provide adequate reading practice.

- Choral Reading
- Cloze Reading
- Silent Reading
- Partner Reading
- Echo Reading
Ask appropriate questions during passage reading.

**BIG IDEA:**
Asking students questions during passage reading has proven effectiveness in improving the comprehension of students.

(Morrow & Gambrell, 2001)
Ask appropriate questions during passage reading.  

Guidelines for formulating questions

- Divide the material into appropriate segments at natural junctures.
- Consider
  - the reading skills of the students,
  - the content of the text, and
  - what the student needs to understand.
- Develop questions that will help students construct meaning, focusing on critical understandings. (eliminating the “I don’t know” answer.)
Ask appropriate questions during passage reading.

Types of questions

**Memory Questions** (who, what, when, where)

**Convergent Thinking Questions** (why, how, in what ways)

**Divergent Thinking Questions** (imagine, suppose, predict, if/then)

**Evaluative Thinking Questions** (defend, judge, justify, what do you think)

(Ciardiello, 1998)
Ask appropriate questions during passage reading.

Example Traditional Skill-Based Questions on Story

1. Cause and Effect. Why did Blue Cloud lose interest in her doll?

2. Cause and effect. Why was it so important that Lakota children learn silence?

3. Draw conclusions. Why did Blue Cloud have to pester her mother to let her hold the baby?

4. Draw conclusions. Why did mother finally agree to let Blue Cloud take care of Little Bear?
Ask appropriate questions during passage reading. Traditional Questions: Scaffolding the Answer

Was the baby easy for Blue Cloud to hold? Why or why not?

Why did mother keep Little Bear in a cradleboard on her back?

*Why did Blue Cloud have to pester her mother to let her hold the baby?*
Teach strategies that can be applied to passage reading.

BIG IDEA:
Instruction in specific cognitive strategies can improve reading comprehension for all students and, most particularly, can assist struggling readers.

(RAND Reading Study Group, 2002)
Teach strategies that can be applied to passage reading. Two Approaches

- Competent Reader Strategies
- Text Structure Strategies
Teach strategies that can be applied to passage reading.

Competent Reader Strategies

Comprehension strategies are used:

- “to relate ideas in a text to what they already know;
- to keep track of how well they are understanding what they read;
- when understanding breaks down, to identify what is causing the problem and how to overcome it.”

(Lehr & Osborne, 2006)
Teach strategies that can be applied to passage reading.

Competent Reader Strategies

• Comprehension Monitoring

Monitor how well you understand what you are reading.

– Does this make sense?

If it doesn’t make sense, use a fix-up strategy

– Reread.
– Look back.
– Read ahead.
– Restate in your own words.
Teach strategies that can be applied to passage reading. Competent Reader Strategies

- **Retelling** - Telling the events in a story.
- **Predicting** - Making informed predictions.
- **Questioning** - Asking yourself questions as you read.
- **Visualizing** - Making mental pictures.
- **Summarizing** - Pulling together the most important information.

(The number of strategies should be limited so that students will be more successful in remembering and applying the strategies.)
Teach strategies that can be applied to passage reading. Strategies based on Text Structure

The Big Idea:
The ability to identify and take advantage of text organization can contribute to students’ comprehension.

(Dickson, Simmons, & Kameenui, 1998)
Teach strategies that can be applied to passage reading. Strategies based on Text Structure

- **Narrative Structure** (Story Grammar)
- **Expository** (Informational) Structure
Teach strategies that can be applied to passage reading. Strategies based on Text Structure

**Narrative Structure** -
When students were explicitly taught how to identify *story grammar* elements, it
- Improved students ability to retell and summarize stories.
- Transferred to other stories.

(Morrow, 1985)
Teach strategies that can be applied to passage reading.

Strategies based on Text Structure
Story Grammar - Retell

Retell the story.

- What is the **setting** of the story?
- Who is the **main character** of the story?
- What is the **character’s problem**?
- What did the **character** do to try to resolve the problem?
- What happened in the **end**?
Teach strategies that can be applied to passage reading. Strategies based on Text Structure

Expository Strategies

• Teach students strategies that focus on the pattern of expository materials.
  – Each paragraph represents a “body of knowledge”.
  – Determine the topic of the paragraph.
  – Determine the critical details that support the topic.
Teach strategies that can be applied to passage reading. Expository Strategies - Paragraph Shrinking

Paragraph Shrinking

1. Name the who or what.
   (The main person, animal, or thing.)

2. Tell the most important thing about the who or what.

3. Say the main idea in 10 words or less.

(From the PALS program by Fuchs, Mathes, and Fuchs)
Teach strategies that can be applied to passage reading. Expository Strategies - Mapping

When mapping, students create a visual representation of material.

1. Write down headings and subheadings. Draw a shape around each heading and subheading.
2. Read a paragraph.
3. Write down the topic of the paragraph and put a shape around it.
4. Below the shape, write the most important details.
Canoes

Description:
- long
- narrow
- people face forward
- paddles

Native American:
- birch bark
- dugout logs

Dugout Canoers:
- long, thick log
- burned hole
- scraped out

Birch Bark Canoers:
- sewed strips of birch bark
- covered wooden frame

Today:
- fun
- recreation
- machine-made
Video - Modeling Retell (Segment 7: Modeling Retell - lst)

- List any good practices that you observed.
Use graphic organizers to enhance comprehension.

Big Idea:
The main effect of graphic organizers appears to be on the improvement of the reader’s memory for the content that has been read.

(Harris & Hodges, 1995)
Use graphic organizers to enhance comprehension. Why

Graphic organizers:

– Help students represent content graphically.
– Organize ideas to show the relationship between ideas.
– Support students’ memory of the content that they have read.
Use graphic organizers to enhance comprehension.

Example Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers for:

- **Narrative Text** *(referred to as Story Maps)*
- Expository Text
After Passage Reading Practices
After Reading Practices

- Provide intentional fluency building practice.
- Engage students in a discussion.
- Have students answer written questions.
- Provide engaging vocabulary practice.
- Have students write summaries of what they have read.
Provide intentional fluency building practice.

BIG IDEA:

Fluency is related to reading comprehension.

(Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Fuchs, Fuchs, & Maxwell, 1988; Jenkins, Fuchs, Espin, van den Broek, & Deno, 2000)
Provide intentional fluency building practice.

Why

When students read fluently, decoding requires less attention. Attention can be given to comprehension.
(Samuels, Schermer, & Reinking, 1992)

An accurate, fluent reader will read more.
(Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Stanovich, 1993)

What are the benefits of reading more?
Provide intentional fluency building practice.

Why

- Fluent readers complete assignments with more ease.
- Fluent readers will also perform better on reading tests.
- Attention to fluency is often neglected in reading instruction.
Engage students in a discussion.

**BIG IDEA:**
Engaging students in a discussion can increase their depth of text processing and subsequent comprehension.
Engage students in a discussion.

- Teach students the behaviors of discussion.
- Utilize partners to maximize participation.
- Ask engaging questions.
  - What was your favorite part of the story?
  - What surprised you in the story?
  - What did the author want us to feel about _________________?
  - How is this story similar to ________________?
  - What is another way the story could have ended?
Engage students in a discussion. **Discussion Behaviors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Looks Like</th>
<th>Sounds Like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Facing peers</td>
<td>• Using a pleasant, easy to hear voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Making eye contact</td>
<td>• Sharing opinions and supporting facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participating</td>
<td>• Sharing positive comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Listening</td>
<td>• <strong>Staying on topic</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Have students answer written questions.

BIG IDEA:
When answering written questions, students will deeply process the information, enhancing their reading comprehension.
Have students answer written questions.  How

- Teach students to change the question into part of the answer and write the partial answer down.

- For each written question, have students determine if the answer is:
  - In the book OR
  - In my head

- Guide students in applying the QAR strategy.

(Raphael, 1986)  See examples.
Provide engaging vocabulary practice.

BIG IDEAS:

• If students understand the meaning of critical vocabulary in the passage, their comprehension will be enhanced.

• Students need multiple exposures to obtain a deeper understanding of the word.
Provide engaging vocabulary practice.

Practice activities should:

- Be **engaging**.
- Provide **multiple exposures** to the words. (Stahl, 1986)
- Encourage **deep processing** of the word’s meaning. (Beck, Mc Keown, & Kucan, 2002)
- When possible, connect the word’s meaning to **prior knowledge**.

Provide practice over time.
Have students write summaries of what they have read.

BIG IDEAS:

- Writing about what you have read can improve your comprehension.
- Expressing ideas in writing helps the reader organize ideas.
List any good practices that you observe during this video segment.
Have students write summaries of what they have read.  

Writing Strategy

Write down the topic of the summary.

**List** - Make a list of important details.

**Cross-out** - Cross out any unnecessary or weak details.

**Connect** - Connect ideas that could go together in one sentence.

**Number** - Number the details in the order that they will appear in the paragraph.
Finally

- Students have
  - Read,
  - Read
  - Read
  - Read
  - And read some more
## Literacy Acceleration “Game Plan”
Tiered Support for Older Struggling Readers

- Adapted from Drs. Anita Archer & Mary Gleason

### Level 1

0-3. Reading Intensive Care

- √ Intense Word Recognition
  - sound/symbol/PA
  - decoding regular words
  - irregular words
- √ Fluency Building
- √ Spelling & Word Study
- √ Listening Comp Strategies
- √ Independent reading
- √ Read Aloud - Vocab stretch

### Level 2

3.0-5.0 Reading Booster

- √ Strategies for decoding longer polysyllabic words
  - affixes
  - complex vowel patterns
  - decodable chunks
- √ Passage Reading/Fluency
- √ Academic writing
- √ Basic Content Read Strat.
- √ Read Aloud - vocab stretch
- √ Indepen. reading & Comp.

### Level 3

5-7.0 Reading Tune UP

- √ Passage Reading Strategies
- * Prepared Participation
- √ Content Reading Strat.
- - text structure
- - summarizing
- - note taking
- - preteach vocabulary
- √ Study Strategies
- √ Academic Writing
- √ Independent reading

### English Language Development as needed

* content/intensity of support must match assessed student needs - not “one size fits all” intervention!
Online resources

• http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/reading/projects/garf/AnitaArcher.htm
• http://www.ldoceonline.com/
• http://www.wiki-teacher.com/resources_videos.php?section=ela
• http://www.linkslearning.org/Teachers/2_Reading/2_Reading_LINKS/2.html