



Building Comprehension through Strategy Instruction

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Plan for the Presentation

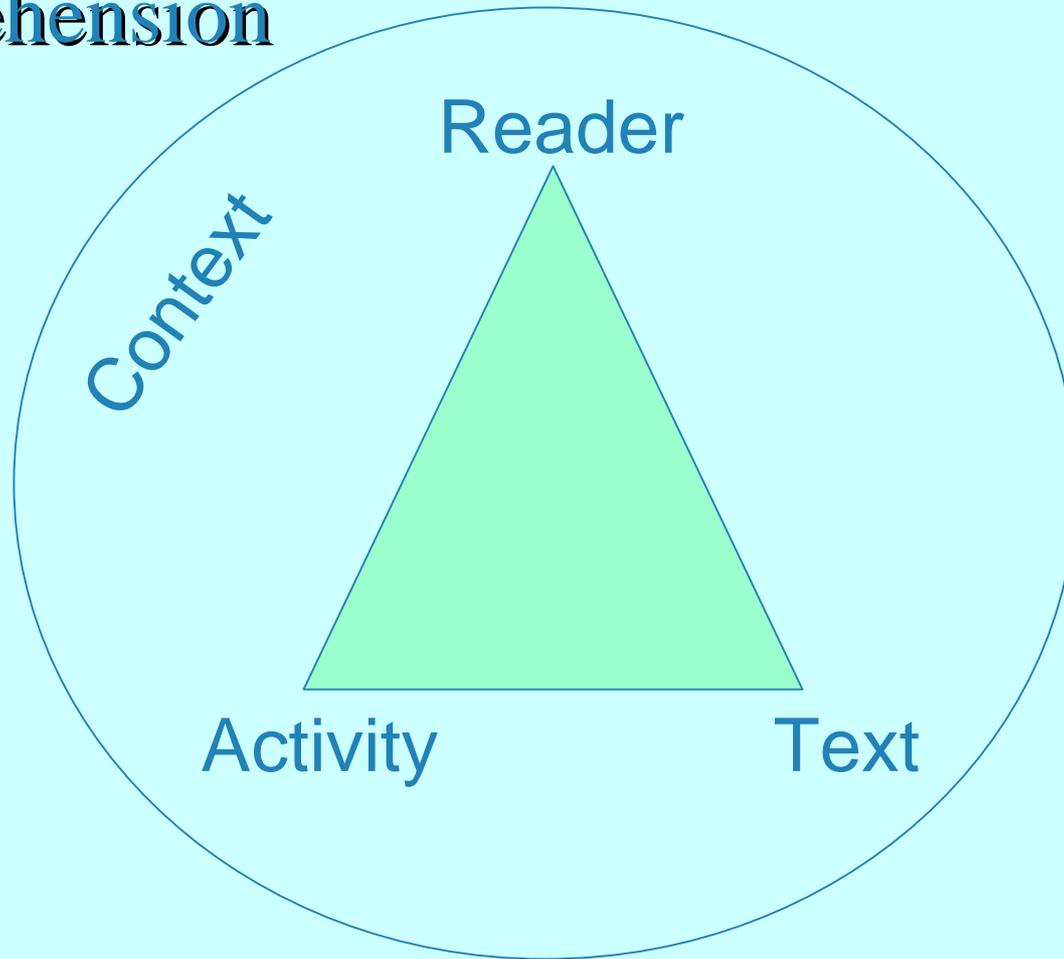
- Some definitions:
 - reading comprehension
 - strategy
- What good readers do when they read
- Single strategy instruction
- Multiple strategy instruction
- Action plans



Reading Comprehension

- “. . . the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002)
- Comprehension is comprised of or influenced by many things, including: word recognition, vocabulary knowledge, world knowledge, text knowledge, strategicness, engagement, context, working memory, cognitive flexibility, and others.
- Involves the reader, the text, and the task, all within a context.

Reading Comprehension



RAND Reading Study Group,
2002



Comprehension Strategies

- “Reading strategies are deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify the reader’s efforts to decode text, understand words, and construct meanings of text” (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008, p. 368).
- These are reader strategies, not teacher/teaching strategies.
- This session focuses on the “construct meanings of text” part.



What Good Readers Do When They Read

- Good readers are active readers.
- From the outset they have clear goals in mind for their reading. They constantly evaluate whether the text, and their reading of it, is meeting their goals.
- Good readers typically look over the text before they read, noting such things as the structure of the text and text sections that might be most relevant to their reading goals.
- As they read, good readers frequently make predictions about what is to come.
- They read selectively, continually making decisions about their reading--what to read carefully, what to read quickly, what not to read, what to re-read, and so on.

- Good readers construct, revise, and question the meanings they make as they read.
- They draw upon, compare, and integrate their prior knowledge with material in the text.
- They think about the authors of the text, their style, beliefs, intentions, historical milieu, and so on.
- They monitor their understanding of the text, making adjustments in their reading as necessary.
- Good readers try to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and concepts in the text, and they deal with inconsistencies or gaps as needed.
- They evaluate the text's quality and value, and react to the text in a range of ways, both intellectually and emotionally.

- Good readers read different kinds of text differently. For example:
 - when reading narrative, good readers attend closely to the setting and characters;
 - when reading informational text these readers frequently construct and revise summaries of what they have read.
- For good readers, text processing occurs not only during ‘reading’ as we have traditionally defined it, but also during short breaks taken during reading, even after the ‘reading’ itself has commenced, even after the ‘reading’ has ceased.
- Comprehension is a consuming, continuous, and complex activity, but one that, for good readers, is both satisfying and productive.



What Good Readers Do When They Read

- Children are not born knowing how to do the things good readers do when they read.
- Children cannot, for the most part, “see” good readers doing these things.
- Some children will figure these things out on their own.
- But many children need teachers to let them in on these secrets of good reading.



Comprehension Strategies Worth Teaching

Strategies shown to improve comprehension if taught, even individually:

- Monitoring and adjusting as needed
- Activating and applying relevant prior knowledge (including making predictions)
- Asking oneself questions as one reads (also, answering questions)
- Think aloud (also, teacher think aloud)
- Attending to and uncovering text structure
- Constructing visual representations (imaging and graphic organizers)
- Summarizing

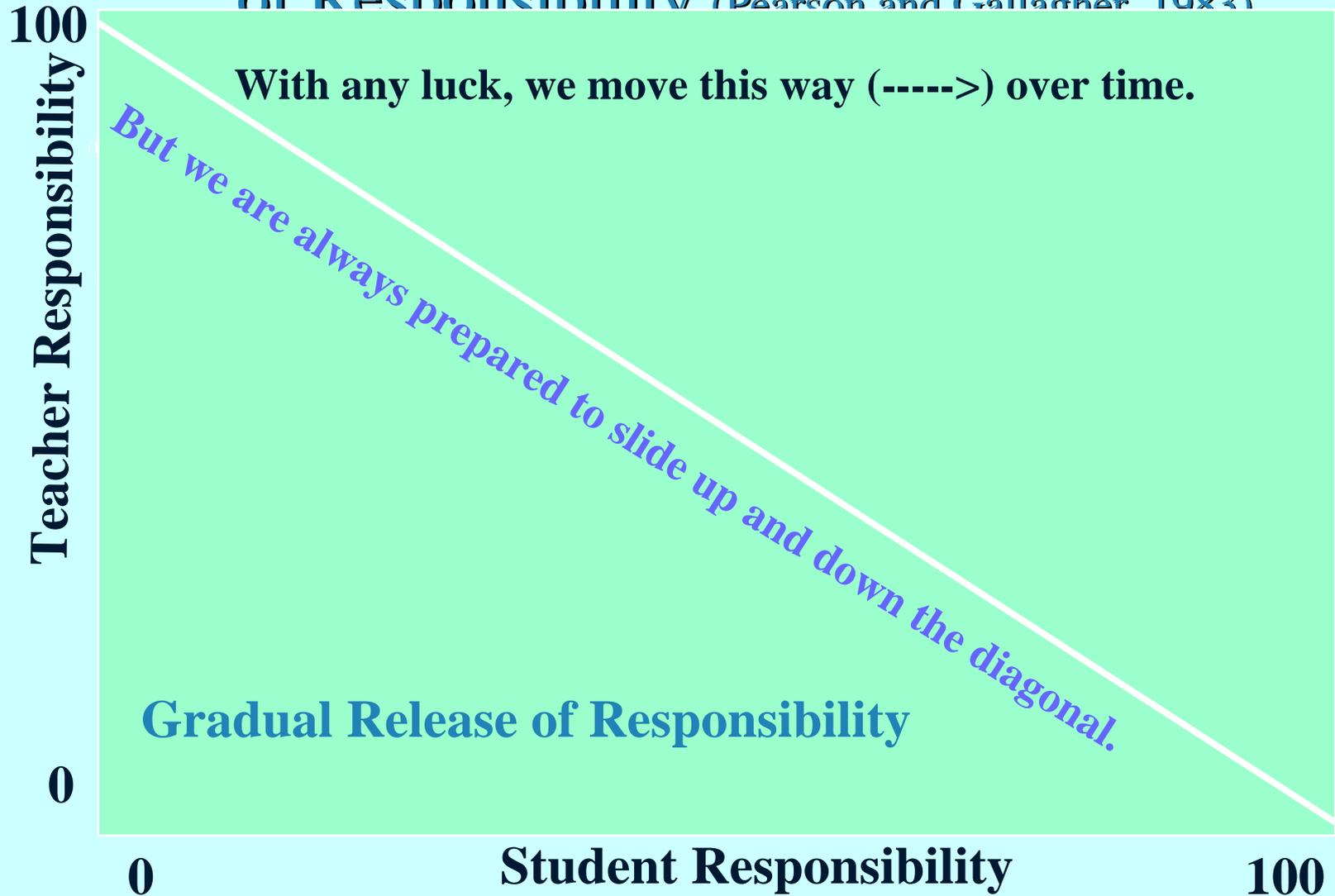
(Duke & Pearson, 2002; National Reading Panel, 2000)



Five Components of Teaching Comprehension Strategies

- (1) An explicit description of the strategy and when and how it should be used.
- (2) Teacher and/or student modeling of the strategy in action
- (3) Collaborative use of the strategy in action.
- (4) Guided practice using the strategy with gradual release of responsibility.
- (5) Independent use of the strategy.

A Key Instructional Construct: Gradual Release of Responsibility (Pearson and Gallagher, 1983)*





Five Components of Teaching Comprehension Strategies

(A fictional narrative text example with prediction strategy)

(1) An explicit description of the strategy and when and how it should be used.

E.g., “Predicting is making guesses about what will come next in the text you are reading. You should make predictions a lot when you read. For now, you should stop every two pages that you read and make some predictions.”

(2) Teacher and/or student modeling of the strategy in action.

E.g., “I am going to make predictions while I read this book. I’ll start with just the cover here. Hmm . . . I see a picture of an owl. It looks like he--I think it’s a he--is wearing pajamas, and he’s carrying a candle. I *predict* that this is going to be a make believe story because owls don’t really wear pajamas and carry candles. I predict it is going to be about this owl, and it is going to take place at nighttime. . . .”

(3) Collaborative use of the strategy in action.

E.g., “I’ve made some good predictions so far in the book. From this part on I want you to make predictions with me. Each of us should stop and think about what might happen next. . . . Okay, now let’s hear what you think and why. . . .”

(4) Guided practice using the strategy with gradual release of responsibility.

E.g., Early on . . .

“I’ve called the three of you together to work on making predictions while you read this and other books. After every few pages I will ask each of you to stop and make a prediction. We will talk about your predictions and then read on to see if they come true.

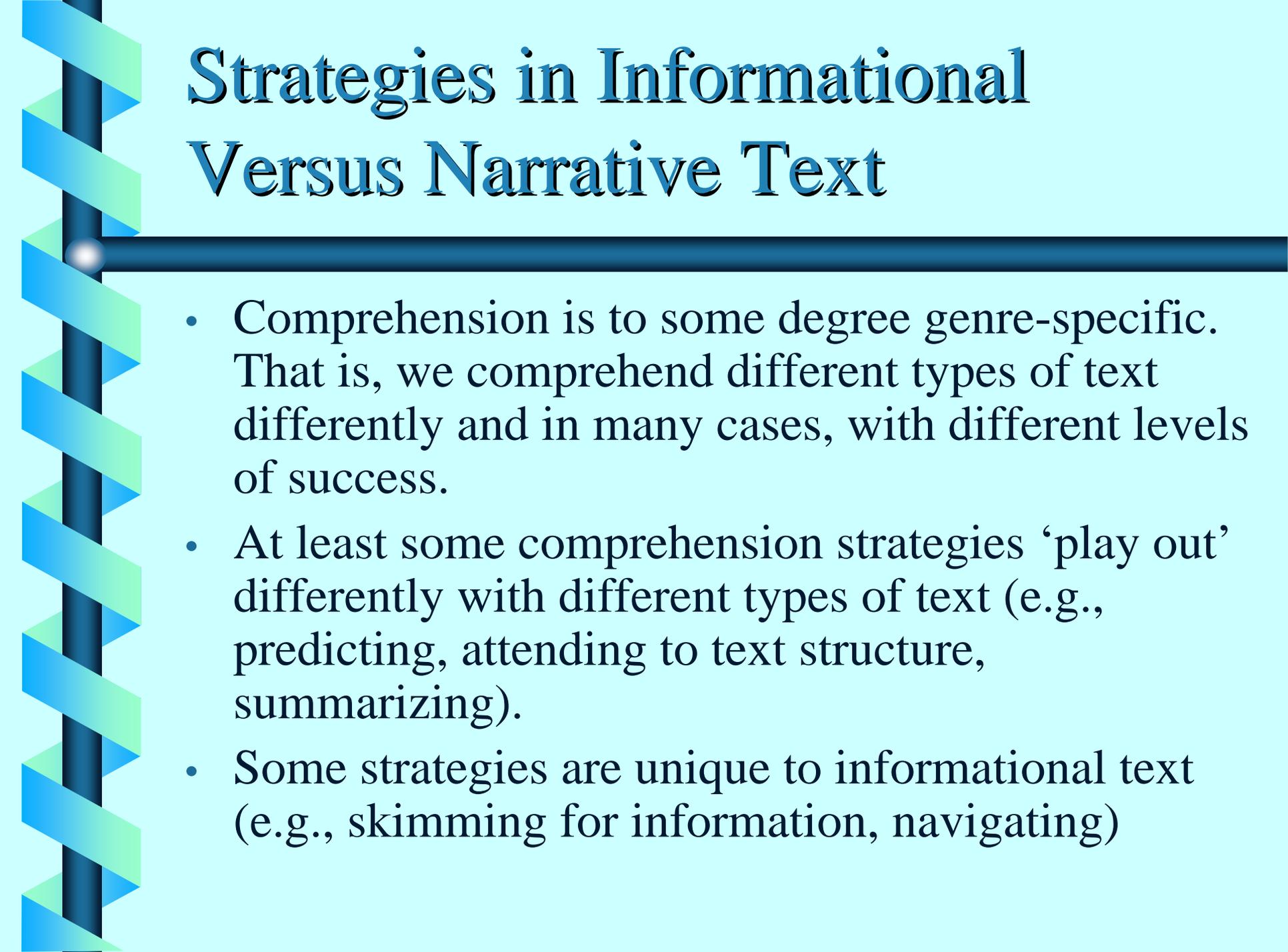
Later on . . .

“Each of you has a chart that lists different pages in your book. When you finish reading a page on the list, stop and make a prediction. Write the prediction in the column that says “Prediction.” When you get to the next page on the list, check off whether your prediction “Happened,” “Will not happen,” or “Still might happen.” Then make another prediction and write it down.”

(Based on the Reading Forecaster Technique from Mason and Au (1986) described and cited in Lipson & Wixson (1991)).

(5) Independent use of the strategy.

E.g., “As you read today, remember what we’ve been working on--making predictions while we read. Be sure to make predictions every two or three pages. Ask yourself why you made the prediction you did--what made you think that. Check as you read to see whether or not your prediction came true. Jamal is passing out “Predictions!” bookmarks to remind you.”



Strategies in Informational Versus Narrative Text

- Comprehension is to some degree genre-specific. That is, we comprehend different types of text differently and in many cases, with different levels of success.
- At least some comprehension strategies ‘play out’ differently with different types of text (e.g., predicting, attending to text structure, summarizing).
- Some strategies are unique to informational text (e.g., skimming for information, navigating)



Teaching Multiple Comprehension Strategies

- Strategies can also be taught in clusters, quickly used as sets rather than individually.
- This appears to be more effective (e.g., Reutzel, Smith, & Fawson, 2005).
- There are many research-tested approaches to this. We focus on three:
 - Transactional Strategies Instruction
 - Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction
 - Collaborative Strategic Reading



Transactional Strategies Instruction Approaches

- Occurs during whole group (with explanation, modeling, posting) and small group (with practice and coaching) instruction; is reinforced during independent reading.
 - Uses cognitive and interpretive strategies. Cognitive strategies include:
 - Thinking aloud
 - Constructing images
 - Summarizing
 - Predicting & prior knowledge activation
 - Questioning
 - Clarifying
 - Text structure analysis
- (Brown, Pressley, Van Meter, & Schuder, 1996; Pressley, El-Dinary, Gaskins, Schuder, Bergman, Almasi, & Brown, 1992)



Transactional Strategies Instruction Approaches

- Interpretive strategies include:
 - Character development
 - Imagining how a character might feel
 - Creating themes
 - Reading for multiple meanings
 - Creating literal/figurative distinctions
 - Looking for a consistent point of view
 - Relating text to personal experience
 - Relating one text to another (intertextuality)
 - Responding to certain text features, such as point of view, tone, or mood



Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI; cori.umd.edu)

- Centers on a conceptual theme in life science
- Engages students in real-world interactions and reading of texts (informational, narrative, and poetry)
- Includes oral reading fluency practice, guided reading, writing, and independent reading
- Teaches the following comprehension strategies:
 - understanding the main idea
 - making inferences
 - monitoring comprehension
 - using fix-up strategies (reread, chunk, discuss, question, visualize, connect, look-up, read ahead, read aloud, use knowledge)

(Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perceovich, 2004)



Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI)

- Students develop portfolios and write theme-related books drawing from them
- Involves motivational support, including relevance, choice, collaboration, self-efficacy support, mastery goals

(Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perceovich, 2004)



Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI)

One component of CORI -- Idea Circles

- Groups of 3 - 6 students meet for in-depth discussion of a text or texts
- Teacher modeling early in the year, increasingly peer-led
- Focus on a concept; read a variety of texts related to that concept
- Have a open-ended, self-determined goals clear to all group members
- Can be organized in a jigsaw (Aronson, 1978) format

See Guthrie & McCann, 1996; see also Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003.



Collaborative Strategic Reading

Has elements of reciprocal teaching and cooperative learning.

- Students work in small, cooperative groups
- Students apply four comprehension strategies:
 - Preview (think about what they already know, predict what the passage might be about)
 - “Click and clunk” (monitor comprehension, use fix-up strategies as needed)
 - Get the gist (glean and restate the most important idea)
 - Wrap up (summarize, ask questions)

(Klingner & Vaughn, 1999; see also Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003)



Collaborative Strategic Reading

- Students have specific roles: leader, clunk expert, gist expert, announcer, encourager
- Cue cards may be used to support students in small, cooperative groups
 - E.g., a clunk card that says: “Reread the sentences before and after the clunk looking for cues.”
 - E.g., a student leader cue card that says: “Did everyone understand what we read? If you did not, write your clunks in your learning log.”



Collaborative Strategic Reading

- Students complete learning logs before and after reading
 - Before reading: preview
 - What I already know about the topic.
 - What I predict I will learn.
 - During reading
 - Clunks
 - After reading wrap-up
 - Questions about the important ideas in the passage.
 - What I learned from the text.



Some Cautions Regarding Comprehension Strategy Instruction

- Strategies taught need to be appropriate for that text and context
- Texts need to be sufficiently difficult (in terms of comprehension) for strategies to be helpful
- No strategies just for strategies' sake
- Texts need to be worth comprehending
- Create situations in which students really want or need to comprehend text
- Comprehending takes time
- It takes time to become a good teacher of comprehension strategies



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