



## Improving Reading in the Content Areas

Kansas MTSS Symposium

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## Seven Strategies of Good Readers

- Use existing knowledge to interpret new information
- Ask questions before, during, after reading the text
- Draw inferences from the text
- Monitor their comprehension
- Use “fix-up” strategies when meaning breaks down
- Determine what is important
- Synthesize information to create new meaning.

Pearson (1992) quoted in Tovani, Cris. (2000) I Read It, But I Don't Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Learners. Stenhouse, Portland, ME

## Fix-Up Strategies

How do I know when I'm confused?

- My inner voice isn't interacting with the text – it's just saying the words.
- No visuals.
- My mind is wandering.
- Can't remember what I just read.
- Can't get answers for my questions from the text.
- Can't remember who the characters are when they are re-introduced.

Cris Tovani, I Read It, But I Don't Get It

## Fix-Up Strategies:

- Make a connection between your life or another text
- Make a prediction
- Stop and think about what you just read
- Ask yourself a question and try to answer it
- Reflect in writing on what you just read
- Visualize
- Reread
- Use the print – **bold**, *italics*, CAPS, colors
- Adjust your reading rate – slow down or speed up.

Cris Tovani, I Read It, But I Don't Get It

## What Readers Do:

### Successful

- Read for comprehension
- Fix-it strategies
- Active questioning
- Read and reread
- Running dialogue
- Imagine scenes
- Relate to own experience
- Hypothesize
- Read to understand

### Unsuccessful

- Read to decode
- Blockage with problems
- Passive involvement
- Word-by-word
- Read once
- No visualization
- No relationship
- No anticipation
- To please the teacher

## Content Area Comprehension

- Build background
- Develop vocabulary
- Ask questions
- Monitor own process
- Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)
- Use strategies that are:
  - Visual
  - Interactive
  - Hands-on

## Building Background: Vocabulary and Connection

- Vocabulary knowledge correlates to comprehension.
- It takes 12 *productions* of a word to create mastery.
- Comprehension depends on 90-95% knowledge of words in a text.
- To overcome vocabulary deficit in ELLs, we must explicitly teach it daily.

--Margarita Calderon

## VOCABULARY TIER 1

**Basic words** that students know concept and label in Spanish (L1) and English (e.g. dog, cat, run, song).

**Simple idioms are basic expressions that ELLs are unlikely to know** (e.g. make up your mind; let's hit the books; once upon a time).

## VOCABULARY TIER 2

### •Importance and utility

- characteristic of mature language users
- appear frequently across a variety of domains.

### • Instructional potential

- words that can be worked a variety of ways to build connections to other words and concepts.

### • Conceptual understanding:

- provide precision and specificity in describing the concept.

## VOCABULARY TIER 2

### Polysemous words:

**multiple meanings, multiple contexts**

Example: *trunk*

ELLs typically only know one meaning, and that meaning may not be relevant to the context in which it is found.

*Set, table, push, ring, bad, and slip*

How are they used in two, three or more contexts?

## VOCABULARY TIER 2

### Polysemous words -- How many applications?

PRIME

POWER

RADICAL

IMAGINARY

LEG

RIGHT

TREE

CELL

ROUND

## VOCABULARY TIER 2

### Transition Words

**Cause & Effect** -- because, due to, as a result, since, for this reason, therefore, in order to, so that, thus...

**Contrast** -- or, but, although, however, in contrast, nevertheless, on the other hand, while ...

**Addition or comparison** -- and, also, as well as, in addition, likewise, moreover, by the way ...

**Giving examples** -- for example, for instance, in particular, such as ...

## VOCABULARY TIER 2

**Cognates.** Many cognates are Tier 2 words, such as coincidence (coincidencia), absurd (absurdo), concentrate (concentrate), and fortunate (afortunado).

Literate Spanish speakers have a great advantage over monolingual English speakers here because many cognates are high frequency words in Spanish but low frequency words in English.

In addition some students will need to learn the concept for some cognates: democracy [*democracia*].

## VOCABULARY TIER 2

### FALSE Cognates!!!!

ATTEND -- ATENDER

ASSIST -- ASISTIR

EMBARRASED -- EMBARASADA

## VOCABULARY TIER 3

### Low frequency words in English

Words that are limited to specific domains such as social studies, math, language arts or science.

For instance: *lathe*, *isotope* [cognate], *peninsula* [cognate]).

## Teaching Tier 1 Words

1. Use ESL strategies for teaching (Vocabulary-on-the-Run) such as:

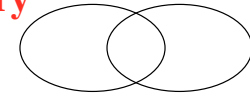
- Pantomime
- Gestures
- Real objects
- Point to pictures
- Quick draws

2. You can also briefly explain the meaning in the context of the sentence.

## For Tier 2 & 3 Vocabulary

- Say the word;
- Give the definition of the word in a kid-friendly way;
- Provide an example or give the teacher sentence as it is written in the example;
- Ask the students to say the word three times with you;
- Engage students in dealing with word meanings through semantic organizers or six-step activities;
- Discuss the difference between the new word and related words or a different meaning for that word in this context.

## For Tier 2 & 3 Vocabulary



### Semantic organizers:

- Select key words to pre-teach.
- Teacher embeds the key word in the organizer.
- Teacher provides brief definition of key word and two examples and two non-examples.  
*Democracy in the US means...Democracy in Iraq means...*
- Students work in pairs to generate a sentence using the key word.
- For ELLs it is important for teacher to scaffold meaning this way.

## Teaching Concept/Vocabulary: 6-Step Oral Practice

1. Teacher selects the word/concept
2. Explains the meaning with student-friendly definition.
3. Provides examples in contexts other than the one in the text.
4. Asks the students to repeat the word 3 times.
5. Engages students in activities to develop word/concept knowledge.
6. Students say the word again.

There are a lot of *cumulus* clouds in the sky today.

A big, white, fluffy cloud, flat on the bottom and rounded on top.

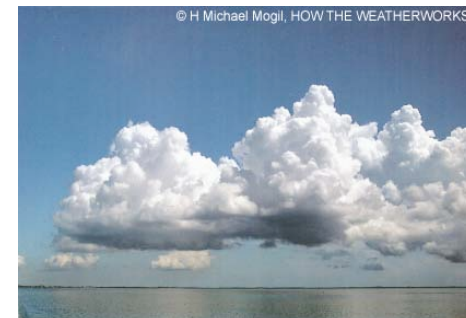
On sunny days, sometimes there are big white fluffy clouds in the sky, like cotton balls.

Cumulus, cumulus, cumulus

Have you ever seen any cumulus clouds that look like animals?

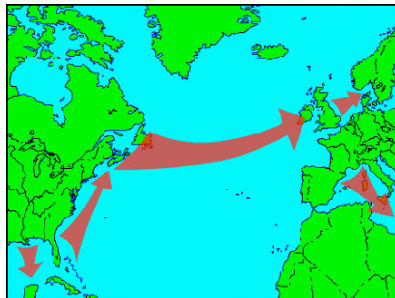
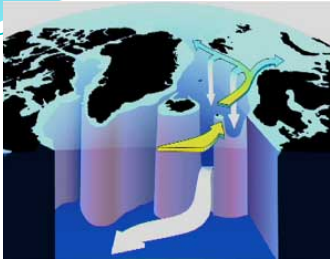
Cumulus

M. Calderón/JHU



## Ocean Currents and Global Climate

- Tier 2
  - current, fluid, instead, mixing, dense
- Tier 3
  - equator, deep ocean current, surface current, mid-latitudes, polar region, equatorial region, light ray

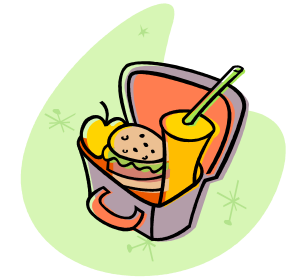


STRONG CURRENT

## TEACHING CONCEPTS/VOCABULARY

1. Teacher selects the word/concept from the text.
  2. Explains meaning with student-friendly definitions or visuals.
  3. Provides examples in contexts other than the one in the text.
  4. Asks students to repeat the word 3 times.
  5. Engages students in activities to develop word/concept knowledge.
  6. Students say the word again.
- Be careful swimming the ocean or you'll be washed away by the *current*.
  - Current means that something is moving in a stream.
  - Strong air current is called wind. Electrical current will shock you. Ocean current flows all around the world.
  - Students to say the word 3 times.
  - Ask students to show each other an example of current, either verbal or drawn.
  - Students say the word again.

## Good Lunches



## Horrible Lunch!



## Questions, Reasons, Examples

Body language and tone of voice

- If you are walking in a dark room, you need to do it *cautiously*. Why? What are some other things that need to be done *cautiously*?
- Which of these things might be *extraordinary*? Why or why not?
  - a shirt that was comfortable, or a shirt that washed itself.
  - a plane landing on the school yard, or a plane landing at the airport?
  - a person who has a library card or a person who has read all the books in the library?

## Making Choices

Physical demonstration

- If any of the things I say might make someone look *radiant*, say “You look *radiant*!” If not, don’t say anything.
  - winning a million dollars
  - getting a root canal
  - getting a hug from my favorite movie star
  - a day at the beach
  - cleaning your room.
- Applaud if you’d like to be described by the word: frank, impish, vain, stern. And, tell why you feel that way.

## One Context for All the Words

More physical demonstration

- What would an *immense* plate of spaghetti look like?
- Why might you feel *miserable* after eating all that spaghetti?
- What would it look like to eat spaghetti in a *leisurely* way?
- What would make you *cautious* about eating that plate of spaghetti?

## Same Format

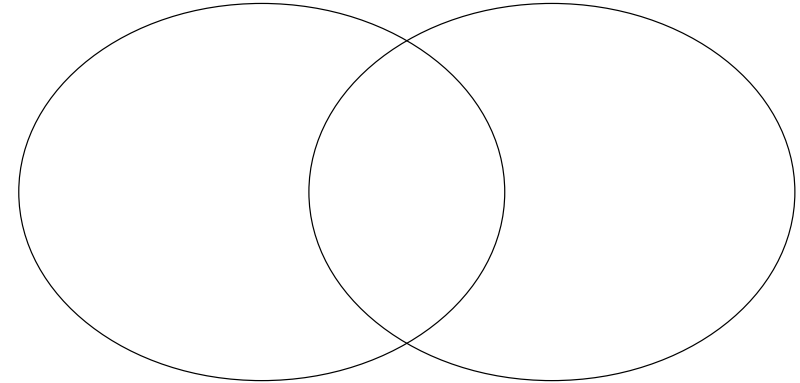
Talk to a partner

- If a dog was acting *menacing*, would you want to pet it or move away? Why?
- If you wanted to see something *exquisite*, would you go to a museum or a grocery store? Why?
- Is *snarl* something a fish might do or a lion might do? Why?

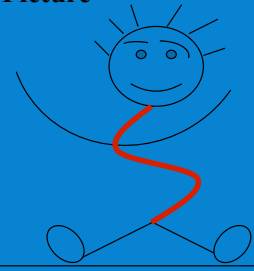
Place these words and add mini definition:  
sum some; pi pie; plane plain; complement compliment; others?

Mathematics

English



## Vocabulary Cards

<b>Word</b> scoliosis	<b>Picture</b> 
<b>Definition</b> Curvature of the spine	
<b>Sentence</b> Scoliosis can be corrected if caught early.	

## Cognitive Strategies

- Partner Reading
- Question Answer Response (QAR)
- Teach the Text Backward
- Survey Question Predict Read Respond Summarize (SQP2RS) *(not SQ3R)*
- Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)
- Marking Text

## Partner Reading for Everyone

- For literature or content area text
- Each partner takes a turn
- Practice active listening
- Talk and encourage each other
- Teacher reads and models each strategy

## Partner Reading Method 1

- Partner A reads first sentence. Partner B helps.
- Partner B reads second sentence. Partner A helps.
- Continue to end of selection
- Whole group reads selection in unison.
- Teacher leads short discussion to check comprehension.

M. Calderón/JHU

## Partner Reading Method 2

- Partner A reads a paragraph. Partner B helps.
- Partner A retells what happened in the paragraph. Partner B adds details.
- Change roles for the next paragraph.
- Teacher leads discussion to check comprehension.

## Partner Reading Method 3

- Partner A reads a paragraph.
  - Partner B listens and thinks of a question the teacher might ask.
  - Partner A answers.
- Switch roles.
- Teacher leads discussion to check comprehension. Students share questions with whole group.

# How to Ask Good Questions

## Structure of Knowledge (*Bloom's Taxonomy*)

- KNOWLEDGE
  - I can repeat it. *What does it say?*
- COMPREHENSION
  - I can explain it. *What does it mean?*
- APPLICATION
  - I can use it. *How can I use it?*
- ANALYSIS
  - I can take it apart and see how it is put together. *What are it's parts and how do they work together?*
- SYNTHESIS
  - I can put it together in a new way. *How can I modify or improve it?*
- EVALUATION
  - I can decide what is good or bad, true or false, strong or weak, useful or useless. *What value does it have? What are it's good and bad qualities and how do I judge them?*

## Do:

- Read sample text using Method 2:
  - Partner A reads a paragraph. Partner B helps.
  - Partner A retells what happened in the paragraph. Partner B adds details.
  - Change roles for the next paragraph.
  - Teacher leads discussion to check comprehension.

## Question Answer Response QAR

### Right There

The answer is in the text. The words used in the question and the words used in the answer can usually be found in the same sentences.



### Think and Search

The answer is in the text, but the words used in the question and the answer are not in the same sentence. You need to think about different parts of text and how ideas can be put together to form an answer.

### On Your Own

The answer is inside your head. The author can't help you much. Think about it and use what you already know about the question.



## Do:

- Partner Read sample text using Method 3
- Determine which questions are Right There (RT), Think & Search (TS) and On Your Own (OYO)
- Develop 2 additional questions for each type.



## Material in this presentation draws on the work of

- Calderon & Rowe, "Project ExC-ELL: Expediting Comprehension for English Language Learners in Secondary Schools" training, Johns Hopkins University, 2005.
- Echevarria, Vogt & Short, Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The SIOP Model, 2nd Edition, Pearson, 2004.
- Gibbons, Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning: Teaching Second Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom, Heinemann, 2002.
- Tovani, I Read It But I Don't Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers, Stenhouse, 2000.
- Vacca & Vacca, Content Area Reading: Literacy and Learning Across the Curriculum, 6th Edition, Longman, 1999.

# PHASES OF INSTRUCTION FOR CONTENT AREA SUPPORT

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	CRITICAL ELEMENTS	CRITICAL QUESTIONS
PRETEACH	The teacher introduces the topic and prepares students for the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building on prior knowledge by providing or eliciting background information on the topic</li> <li>• Preparing for the topic by outlining, mapping, or summarizing the big ideas in the text.</li> <li>• Providing explicit vocabulary instruction</li> <li>• Motivating students to engage with the text.</li> <li>• Setting a purpose for reading the text.</li> <li>• Teaching essential decoding skills and strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is already known? What info or experience needs to be provided to understand the ‘Big Ideas’?</li> <li>• What information needs to be presented in graphic or outline form to help students grasp the main ideas?</li> <li>• What are the important, high utility words I need to preteach? How will I teach those words? What will I do to link instruction to the text?</li> <li>• What can I do to get the students interested in the text?</li> <li>• How will I help <b>students</b> set purpose for reading and interaction with the text?</li> </ul>
MODEL/ TEACH	Teacher provides an explicit model and gives a direct explanation of the strategy or learning task.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selecting and modeling of reading strategies</li> <li>• Scaffolding student learning.</li> <li>• Monitoring student understanding and engagement.</li> <li>• Providing multiple modeling opportunities and examples.</li> <li>• Providing explicit explanations.</li> <li>• Using classroom routines to support positive behavior/interactions.</li> <li>• Ensuring student accountability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of strategies will the students need to support their comprehension?</li> <li>• What type of scaffolding will students need to understand the text?</li> <li>• What types of opportunities for interaction exist to reinforce learning?</li> <li>• How many models or examples are required?</li> <li>• What mechanisms have I included to ensure student accountability?</li> </ul>
PRACTICE/ APPLY	Teacher provides opportunities for authentic application and practice of strategies and learning tasks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing multiple opportunities to practice the taught strategy before assessment occurs</li> <li>• Opportunities to reflect and refine tasks exist.</li> <li>• Opportunities for feedback and intervention are planned.</li> <li>• Peer discussion and reflection occur.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What practice opportunities occur before assessing student mastery? Are there sufficient opportunities?</li> <li>• What types of activities, beyond teacher questioning, will I use to check for understanding?</li> <li>• How will I, or peers, provide feedback? Is peer feedback appropriate for this concept?</li> </ul>
ASSESS/ EXTEND	The teacher formally checks for understanding and provides activities that challenge students to apply information in a new way or to a new situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal and informal assessment occurs to check for benchmark understanding</li> <li>• Helping students make links between previous knowledge and new knowledge.</li> <li>• Applying learning to new situations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What assessment processes are most appropriate to assess student learning?</li> <li>• Have I built in formal and informal processes?</li> <li>• How will I connect standards application to the assessment process?</li> <li>• How will I ensure student accountability?</li> </ul>

# Research-based Instructional Techniques That Work

## *Learning with a purpose*

## *Engaged Learning/Response Routines*

## *Learning at the Appropriate Level (ZPD)*

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☒ Use organizational structures such as comparison/contrast, cause/effect, Venn Diagrams etc. to help students organize information in reading and writing.</li> <li>☒ Teach effective strategies for taking notes, creating outlines, and writing summaries. Demonstrate using effective models for students to emulate.</li> <li>☒ Provide study guides.</li> <li>☒ Ensure that all students are very clear on the learning goals.</li> <li>☒ Reinforce the What, Why, When and How of strategy use for independent application.</li> <li>☒ Do ‘think aloud’ reading to provide modeling of cognitive processes.</li> <li>☒ Provide students with plenty of time to practice and get feedback on clear learning targets with models and examples of proficiency.</li> <li>☒ Allow opportunities for repeated readings of the same passage to build fluency, word recognition, text chunking, and vocabulary.</li> <li>☒ Provide daily work on vocabulary regardless of what content is being taught. Focus on words that are generative and connected to learning goals.</li> <li>☒ Post new essential vocabulary in a prominent place.</li> <li>☒ Use word banks grouped conceptually.</li> <li>☒ Reinforce effort and provide recognition for incremental accomplishments.</li> <li>☒ Making connections across curricular areas. Provide explicit strategy instruction that is connected to learning goals.</li> <li>☒ Build background connecting student experience.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☒ Provide short periods of direct instruction followed by immediate response by all students, with accountability for response</li> <li>☒ Use whole group response strategies. For example, use small whiteboards (or pieces of white paper) to hold up answers to a question about the learning. Teacher checks to see how well the class is attending and “getting it.”</li> <li>☒ In early learning of a new skill/concept, this same process can be done in a small group, so students can confer on the answer; they hold up one paper per group. Use small groups for preteaching and reteaching of learning goals.</li> <li>☒ There are only two circumstances for independent seatwork: guided practice, which requires that the teacher be monitoring carefully to ensure that each student is doing (whatever) correctly OR assessment of independent learning, which only comes after a <i>ton</i> of practice with feedback.</li> <li>☒ Group oral recitation: Key ideas, skills should be “rehearsed” orally to help build oral academic language and to build to automaticity.</li> <li>☒ If oral reading is used to process text, allow students time to preread small sections before whole group read aloud.</li> <li>☒ Use of graphic organizers to create visual categories of abstract concepts/ideas.</li> <li>☒ Provide opportunities to construct/view visual representations of text in the form of drawings, photos,</li> <li>☒ Use of wait time and ensuring that all students are called on randomly: When posing a question to the whole class say “Raise your hand when you think you know the answer” and wait until many hands are raised.</li> <li>☒ Be sure students are “set” to learn; stimulate interest in a topic and/or connect the topic to previous learning.</li> <li>☒ Get students physically involved with the text using highlighters, sticky notes, etc.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☒ Provide reading practice at the independent level</li> <li>☒ Adjust learning goals so knowledge building completed in incremental steps.</li> <li>☒ Provide strategies and opportunities for activation of prior knowledge.</li> <li>☒ Provide teacher time for reading aloud at high reading levels.</li> <li>☒ Use higher level questioning consistently.</li> <li>☒ Teach students to make connections between concrete and abstract concepts.</li> <li>☒ Allow students to ‘alert’ you to potential areas of difficulty.</li> <li>☒ Know the taxonomy and how to get your questioning and the students’ thinking at the higher levels.</li> <li>☒ Summarize and synthesize information in incremental steps.</li> <li>☒ Assign small amounts of text at a time and alternate between oral, paired, and silent reading.</li> <li>☒ Provide opportunities for a quick text preview or ‘text tour’ focusing attention on illustrative chapter title and subtopics, bold faced words, italicized text, etc.</li> <li>☒ Introduce a new strategy using previously read text until concept is mastered. Then apply to new text.</li> </ul> |
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