



Building Academic Literacy
in
Secondary Classrooms
Part 2: Text Comprehension
*“It’s A Demanding World:
Improving Academic Literacy for
Adolescents”*

March 23, 2011

A way with words...
A taste of their test.



- And the last one is....

- HICCOUGH 

Goals for today's session

To understand the need to strengthen literacy skills of secondary school students

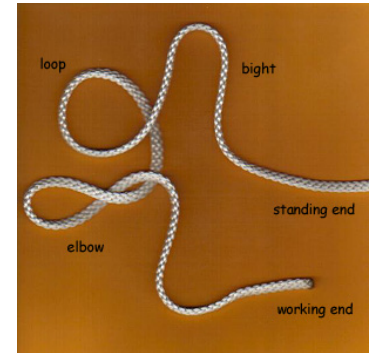
To understand how to support the literacy skills of all students by incorporating literacy practices and strategies into content-focused instruction

To build and expand participants' knowledge of comprehension instructional strategies for content area learning

Activity: Comprehending text

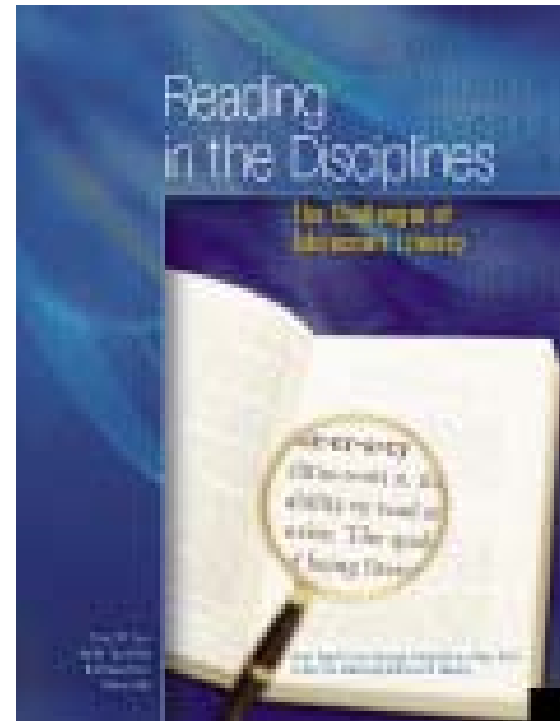
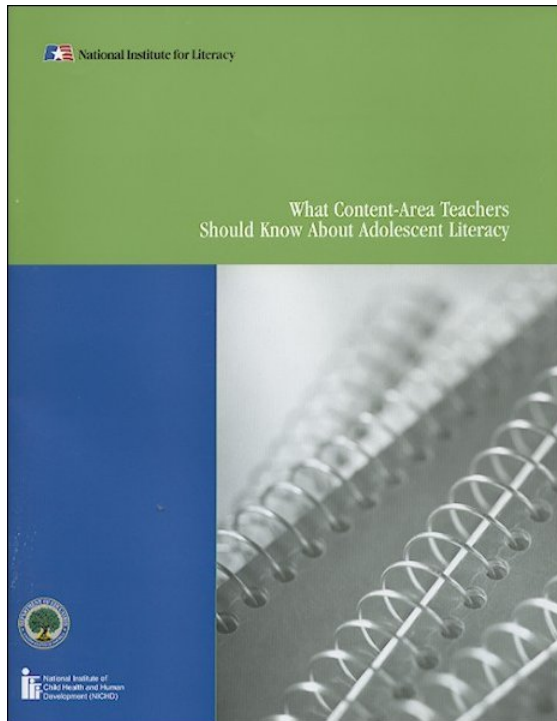
Tying a Bowline Knot, part 1

- Read the text
- Complete the task



A glossary, *Knot Terminology*, is on each table to help your comprehension.

Foundational documents



Comprehension: a general definition

The process of *extracting or constructing meaning* (building new meanings and integrating new with old information) from words once they have been identified.

What Content-Area Teachers Should Know About Adolescent Literacy, p. 18

Reflective reading

Excellent comprehenders overview text and scan it. They relate their prior knowledge to ideas in the text. They notice when they are confused or need to reread and do so. They construct images in their mind's eye reflecting the content of the text. Good readers summarize, and they interpret, often with intense feeling, rejecting or embracing the ideas of an author. Such reflective reading, actually, can be pretty slow. Speed in reading and accurate word reading are not the goals. Understanding, appreciating, and thinking about the ideas in text . . .

Pressley, Gaskins & Fingeret (2006), p. 47

Comprehension process

- Involves strategic action throughout the reading experience:
 - Before reading, students set purposes for reading, make predictions or formulate questions.
 - During reading, predictions may be confirmed and questions answered. Students may also reformulate or add questions and predictions.
 - After reading, students reflect on the reading and summarize or synthesize the new information.
- A “good comprehender” also self-regulates by monitoring for understanding, clarifying confusions, and repairing comprehension
- Knowledge-building, active reading for specific purposes, and applying the new knowledge gained all deepen comprehension.

Blachowicz & Ogle, 2008;
Pressley, et al., 2006;
Snow, 2002;
Paris, Lipson & Wixson, 1983

Confirmed “good reader” strategies

What Content-Area Teachers Should Know About Adolescent Literacy (2007)

- Generate questions
- Answer questions
- Monitor comprehension
- Summarize text
- Use text structure
- Use graphic and semantic organizers

pp. 20-24

Reading in the Disciplines (2010)

- Ask questions
- Make predictions
- Test hypotheses
- Summarize
- Monitor for understanding
- Deploy fix-it strategies as needed

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Comprehending in content areas

The ability to comprehend written text [in content areas] is not a static or fixed ability, but rather one [that] involves a dynamic relationship between the demands of texts and the prior knowledge and goals of readers.

Reading in the Disciplines, p. 3

What Content-Area Teachers Should Know About Adolescent Literacy

- Many struggling adolescent readers have difficulty making sense of the information and ideas conveyed by the text.
- Even proficient readers may have difficulty comprehending particular texts from time to time.

Struggling with text comprehension

Problems with:

- Vocabulary knowledge
- Knowledge of topic(s)
- Knowledge of text structures
- Knowing what to do when comprehension breaks down
- Proficiency in self-monitoring

Reading in the Disciplines, p. 2

Challenges presented by content area learning

- Differences between reading in K-5 and reading in grades 6-12
- Numerous academic concepts
- Various modes of reasoning required by different disciplines

Reading in the Disciplines, p. 2

Activity: Content Area Reading

Modified Jigsaw - Directions

1. Count off – 1, 2, 3, 4
2. Move around so a work group (1,2,3,4) can be together. Some people may need to move to a different table.
3. Silently read assigned section.
4. Share your section's major points with your group.

Modified Jigsaw Activity (continued)

Text Assignments: selections from
Reading in the Disciplines:

1. Reading in Science (pp. 4-6)
2. Reading in History (pp. 6-9)
3. Reading in Literature (pp.9-12)
4. Reading in Mathematics (pp. 12-15)

Sharing what we've learned

Use chart paper and a marker to capture:

Reading in _____

- Challenges posed by text
- Knowledge & support needed

NAEP expectations for literacy achievement

Three different contexts for reading are assessed:	Students are assessed on four different aspects of reading:
<p>Reading for literary experience: Readers explore events, characters, themes, settings, plots, actions, and the language of literary works by reading novels, short stories, poems, plays, legends, biographies, myths, and folktales.</p> <p>Reading for information: Readers gain information to understand the world by reading materials such as magazines, newspapers, textbooks, essays, and speeches.</p> <p>Reading to perform a task: Readers apply what they learn from reading materials such as bus or train schedules, directions for repairs or games, classroom procedures, tax forms (grade 12), maps, and so on.</p>	<p>Forming a general understanding: The reader must consider the text as a whole and provide a global understanding of it.</p> <p>Developing interpretation: The reader must extend initial impressions to develop a more complete understanding of what was read.</p> <p>Making reader/text connections: The reader must connect information in the text with knowledge and experience.</p> <p>Examining content and structure: This requires critically evaluating, comparing and contrasting, and understanding the effect of such features as irony, humor, and organization.</p>

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/whatmeasure.asp>

Importance of literacy instruction

. . . content area literacy instruction must be a cornerstone of any movement to build high-quality secondary schools that young people deserve and on which the nation's social and economic health will depend.

Heller & Greenleaf (2007), p. 1

Recommendations for improving literacy-related instruction

- Provide explicit instruction and support supportive practice in the use of effective comprehension strategies
- Increase the amount and quality of open, sustained discussion of reading content
- Set and maintain high standards for text, conversation, questions, and vocabulary

Recommendations (continued)

- Increase student motivation and engagement with reading
- Teach essential content knowledge so that all students master critical concepts

Torgesen, et al. (2007)

Reading strategies – a more complete list

Generic Reading Strategies

- Monitor comprehension
- Pre-read
- Set goals
- Think about what one already knows
- Ask questions
- Make predictions
- Test predictions against the text
- Re-read
- Summarize

Discipline Specific Reading Strategies

- Build prior knowledge
- Build specialized vocabulary
- Learn to deconstruct complex sentences
- Use knowledge of text structures and genres to predict main and subordinate ideas
- Map graphic (and mathematical) representations against explanations in the text
- Pose discipline relevant questions
- Compare claims and propositions across texts
- Use norms for reasoning within the discipline (i.e. what counts as evidence) to evaluate claims

Comprehensive Strategy Instruction

Phase 1: Explicit training & teacher modeling
teacher talk as discussion (or lecture)

1. Name the strategy
2. Explain how to use the strategy
3. Explicitly model the use of the strategy
4. Provide examples of when to use the strategy
5. Make possible adjustments for different reading tasks
6. Explain the usefulness of the strategy

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Comprehensive Strategy Instruction

Phase 2: Guided practice

Students practice with the support from the teacher and other students

- Break the strategy into simplified steps
- Use cue cards or checklist for strategy steps
- Review explicit instruction and modeling (when needed by specific students)
- Allowing students to work in small groups to practice together

What Content-Area Teachers Should Know About Adolescent Literacy, p. 25

Comprehensive Strategy Instruction

Phase 3: Independent practice & debriefing

- Provide opportunities for students to practice independently
- Debrief with students by asking
 - About the strategies used
 - How specific strategies were used
 - How well the strategies worked

What Content-Area Teachers Should Know About Adolescent Literacy, p. 26

Multiple strategies use

- Students need to learn and practice individual strategies
- Good readers use strategies in clusters
- Students need to learn how to use strategies as a cluster
- Students need to practice using a cluster of strategies

What Content-Area Teachers Should Know About Adolescent Literacy, p. 26

Confirmed Instructional Practices

<i>What Content Area Teachers Should Know About Adolescent Literacy</i>	<i>Reading in the Disciplines</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Think Alouds● Graphic & semantic organizers● Anticipation/Reaction Guides and Inquiry Charts● Reciprocal Teaching● Plan & Write● Summarization Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reciprocal Teaching● Double entry journals● K-W-L● Graphic organizers that use text structures● Anticipation guides

Activity:

Using confirmed practices

- Choose a selection of content area texts:
 - Science: Heat of Vaporization and SAT preparation for Chemistry
 - Math: Algebra2 textbook page and Geometry of Solids homework sheet
 - English: opening scene from *Othello* and *Women Who Came Before Us* (poem)

Activity:

Using confirmed practices (continued)

- Work with people who have selected the same text
- Discuss:
 - the content and challenges the selection presents for secondary students
 - the instructional strategies you would use to help students comprehend the text and complete any tasks listed

Debriefing

- Share your discussion's major points



In review . . .

Apply both generic and discipline focused strategies and knowledge to the comprehension and evaluation of:

- Textbooks
- Full length books
- Book chapters
- Journal and magazine articles
- Historically-situated primary documents
- Multimedia and digital texts

- Reinforce conceptions of reading as a meaning making process
- Provide guided support for making sense while students are engaged in acts of reading
- Shift responsibility for thinking and making sense of texts to students themselves through guided supports in both small and whole group work

- Sequence discipline specific inquiry tasks and the reading a range of discipline focused texts in ways that build knowledge and dispositions over time
- Focus classroom talk on how students make sense of text and how they use what they learn from texts to carry out discipline specific thinking tasks

- Provide consistent supports so students experience success and develop (or reinforce) their sense of efficacy as readers

Reading in the Disciplines, pp. 16-17

What can we take back to our schools?

Given our topics today...

- The challenges of content area learning
- The importance of direct, explicit strategy instruction
- Instructional strategies that support content area learning

Questions to consider

- What resources or supports will you need to do this? How can you get the support you need?
- What one action step will you take to bring this information to others in your school?
- Are you willing to document and share the results with us at the next session?

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Hope to see you on February 4, 2010