



Session 7:
**Building Reading Comprehension
through Writing**
*MS/HS Literacy Teacher Professional
Development Series*

Recap

In our last session, we spent time...

- applying the process of writing summaries in the classroom to support reading comprehension.

Today's Objective

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ★ implement writing activities in class to promote reading comprehension

Reading Comprehension

- Text comprehension is a dynamic and interactive process involving several sources of information and knowledge.
- “Successful comprehension of written text enables the reader to acquire and apply new knowledge, to experience other (fictional) worlds, to communicate successfully, and to attain academic success.”

Source: Cain, 2007



SCARBOROUGH'S READING ROPE (2001)

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

VERBAL REASONING
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

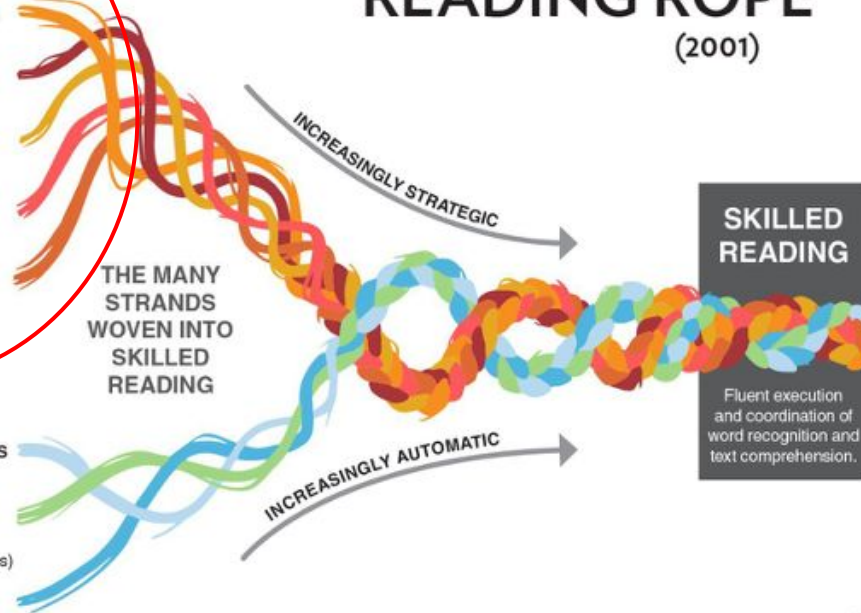
LITERACY KNOWLEDGE
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

WORD RECOGNITION

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

DECODING
(alphabetic principle,
spelling-sound correspondences)

SIGHT RECOGNITION
(of familiar words)



THE MANY
STRANDS
WOVEN INTO
SKILLED
READING

**SKILLED
READING**

Fluent execution
and coordination of
word recognition and
text comprehension.



Building Strong Comprehenders

- Summarizing what has been read
- Generating questions to monitor comprehension (done by students)
- Using context clues to make inferences
- **Combination of lexical inference and question generation**
- Offering several opportunities to communicate to build background knowledge or oral comprehension
- There is no one “magical” strategy



SOURCE: Cain, 2009

Impact of Writing on Reading Comprehension

- Students who have additional opportunities to write “evidence a 14 percentile-point jump on measures of reading comprehension.”
- “...when elementary-grade students are directed to write about material they are reading (versus students who mainly read and reread or study this material), their comprehension of the text read jumps by 24 percentile points, whereas writing about content material presented in class results in a 9 percentile-point jump on measures of learning.”
- “Its permanence (writing) makes it possible for children to review, reexamine, critique, and even construct new understandings of these ideas. When students put these ideas into their own written words, it can help them think more carefully about what the ideas mean.”

SOURCE: *Graham and Harris, 2016*

Steps in Supporting Reading Comprehension

1. Select carefully the text to use when first beginning to teach a given strategy.
2. Show students how to apply the strategies they are learning to different texts, not just to one text.
3. Ensure that the text is appropriate for the reading level of students.
4. Use direct and explicit instruction for teaching students how to use comprehension strategies.
5. Provide the appropriate amount of guided practice depending on the difficulty level of the strategies that the students are learning.
6. When teaching comprehension strategies, make sure students understand that the goal is to understand the content of the text.

SOURCE: [Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices](#)

Direct and Explicit Instruction of the Strategy

- inform students of what strategy they will learn
- explain why it is important to learn
- model use of strategy with think-aloud while interacting with the text
- provide guided practice with feedback
- provide independent practice with different types of text

SOURCE: [Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices](#)

Writing to Read

- When students write about what they read, they are improving their comprehension in the areas of Science, Social Studies and Language Arts. Specific ideas for writing to improve comprehension include:
 - respond to a text in writing (writing personal reactions, analyzing and interpreting the text)
 - write summaries of a text
 - write notes about a text
 - answer questions about a text in writing

SOURCE: [Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading](#)

Teaching Students Writing Skills and Processes

- When students understand the process of writing and structure of texts, they can anticipate what comes next or the flow of the text and create meaning from that. Specific ideas include:
 - the process of writing
 - text structures for writing
 - paragraph construction
 - sentence construction skills

SOURCE: [Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading](#)

Increasing Opportunities to Write

- Research shows there is a 14 percentile jump in reading comprehension for students who had more opportunities to write
- Consult the curriculum to determine what opportunities there are to write.
- Consult rubrics for your content area that can help you pinpoint certain areas to focus on.
- Writing should always be purposeful.
 - Develop certain skills of writing.
 - Demonstrate mastery of the material read.
- Direct and explicit instruction should always be a part of instruction when first introducing a part of writing or when working in small groups.

Writing Frames

- Writing frames can be extremely beneficial for students who need more support with the writing process.

Compare-Contrast Frame:

_____ are different from _____ in several ways. First, _____
while _____. Additionally, _____, whereas
_____. They are alike in that _____ and
_____. So, it is evident that _____.

Chronological Sequence Frame:

At the end of _____, what happened was that _____
_____. Prior to this, _____. Before
that, however, _____.
This whole sequence of events began when _____. The most important event to occur
was _____, because _____.

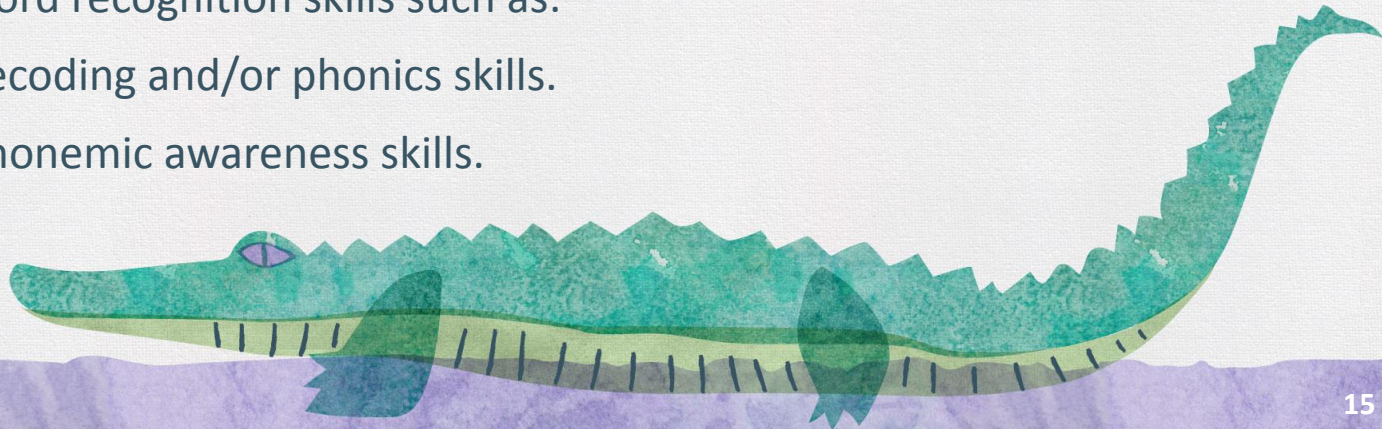
SOURCE: Tactics to help students use writing to express their comprehension of content area texts, Troia

Writing Frame Resources

- [Text Structure Frames](#)
- [Teaching and Assessing Understanding of Text Structures across Grades](#)
- [Scaffolds to Support English Language Learners in Writing and Discussion](#)
- [Sentence Stems-Implementation](#)

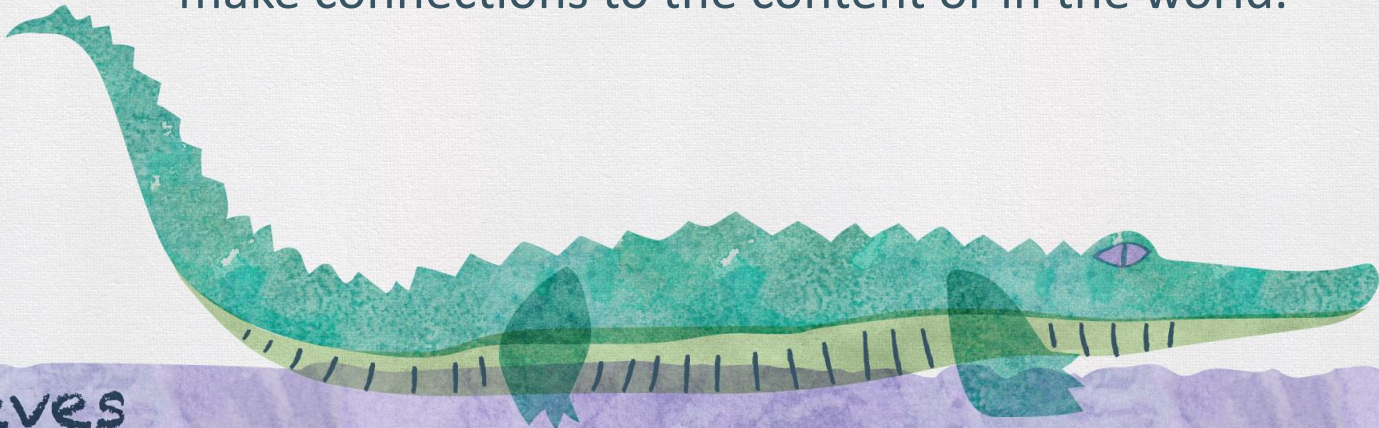
Next Steps if Not Progressing

- If students are still not progressing with the small group instruction for reading comprehension, then they may need to be referred to the school's administration or SBLC team for next steps.
- Very little or no progress could indicate that student needs help with word recognition skills such as:
 - decoding and/or phonics skills.
 - phonemic awareness skills.



Final Thoughts

- Writing is a great way for students to build their reading comprehension.
- Writing about what they have read allows students to determine what was most important in the text, as well as make connections to the content or in the world.



Engage



- Consider what ideas or topics are important in an upcoming unit.
 - What text will be used in the curriculum to help students develop their understanding of that topic?
 - What opportunities can you highlight in the curriculum for them to write?
 - What opportunities to write can you add to what is already existing?
 - What scaffolds may be needed for students who need more support?

Question or Suggestions?

Contact Us:

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