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THREE KEY FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE READING COMPREHENSION

A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Education

---

by

Denise Michelle Cates-Darnell

September 2002

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the factors that influence the ways in which intermediate students learn comprehension strategies. A substantial scholarship offers evidence of the success of three factors: the teacher, support structures, and the efficacy of the specific comprehension strategies taught.

First, the teacher is a major factor; the establishment of a warm supportive classroom environment encourages higher levels of student engagement and participation in more extensive reading experiences. This may lead students to become more effective readers and writers.

Second, productive support structures are also vital to increased literacy learning and development. Family involvement, resource personnel and volunteers can increase program effectiveness. Adequate time for learning events is of particular relevance, as is scaffolding. Modeling and frequent feedback are additional important instructional supports.

Third, specific comprehension strategies can exert a positive influence on how students internalize an

instructional approach. Those strategies include: (a) connecting the known to the unknown, (b) determining importance, (c) questioning, (d) visualizing, (e) inferring, and (f) synthesizing. Recent research suggests that the manner in which these strategies are used in the classroom may also have a profound effect on student learning.

When a balance among these three factors is demonstrated, there exists an increased opportunity for students to make meaningful connections with increasingly complex text. When these three factors are integrated in the classroom, students gain the necessary knowledge to help them successfully approach the complexities of written texts.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Society has changed considerably as we have transitioned from the Industrial Age to the Information Age. The literacy demands of the early twentieth century were fairly easy to meet. Most students in Western civilization learned to read so that they could study the Bible or other improving works. When they finished school there were few requirements beyond writing their name, a letter to a friend or a grocery list (Gibbons, 2002).

In sharp contrast, the literacy demands of the twenty-first century require a level of sophistication that very few attained in the past. The permeation of computers in every aspect of our lives has changed the requirements, leaving those without the necessary skills effectively shut out and unable to participate in the knowledge, information and ideas that are shaping our culture (Christie, 1990). Those students who leave school without the requisite level of literacy face a future of competing for a rapidly decreasing bloc of unskilled jobs. That requisite level of literacy continues to rise. Hoffman and Pearson state "it is quite possible that many people regarded as functionally

literate today will live to see themselves become functionally illiterate" (2001, para. 7). Educators cannot afford to allow the link between illiteracy and poverty to be ignored.

To prepare students to be part of this information work force they must be able to read, analyze, draw inferences, synthesize and link information in a variety of contexts, as well as that in which it is presented. Gibbons states that:

> Today's children are entering a world in which they will need to be able to read and think critically, to live and work in intercultural contexts, to solve new kinds of problems, and to be flexible in ever changing work contexts; in short, to make informed decisions about their own lives and their role in a multicultural society. We cannot opt out of the Western print world and remain active participants in society. (2002, p. ?)

Comprehension or information processing is just one of the issues that has focused California's elementary school teachers on the goal of improving the reading achievement of students. In many instances, intermediate teachers have tended to rely on primary teachers to instill the necessary

reading skills sending students on to fourth grade with a developmentally appropriate foundation as readers. Yet, there is a common frustration among intermediate teachers that generally focuses on high numbers of students who enter the intermediate grades sounding like good readers. Sounding good refers to students who are capable of fluent oral reading but are unable to exhibit the ability to make connections and meanings to diverse texts and genres. If these students can merely decode, but not understand what they have read, a serious problem exists. They will have great difficulty articulating or demonstrating comprehension in relationship to progressively diverse and challenging curriculum.

The concept of comprehension has largely been studied from a behavioral/psychological analysis. My interest is to study comprehension with a strong social component. In this paper I will underscore that process. In this study I focus on the three key factors that influence the extent to which comprehension strategies are learned by intermediate (i.e., fourth through eighth) grade students. These factors are the teacher's theoretical stance, the support structures made available to the students, and the specific comprehension strategies that are taught.

Teacher's Theoretical Stance

Teaching reading in a class of diverse learners is a complex activity that requires considerable knowledge and skill. According to Harste and Burke (J. Gray, personal communication, October 18, 1998), research findings have concluded that the single most important element of an effective reading program is the attitudes and beliefs of the regular classroom teacher. George W. Bush stated in the Los Angeles Times his belief that "the effectiveness of all educational reform eventually comes down to a good teacher in a classroom. . . A good teacher can literally make a lifelong difference" (March 3, 2002). Ultimately, it is the teacher's definition of reading and theoretical perspective that can make the biggest difference in the effectiveness of the classroom. These perspectives will be discussed in the following chapter.

Support Structures

The teacher must provide support structures in the classroom for effective learning to take place. Adequate time should be allocated for teacher modeling, guided practice, and independent practice. The teacher bolsters these approaches through giving encouragement, guidance,

and feedback that facilitates learning. In the following chapter I will outline the support structures that lead to maximum student achievement.

Strategies

It is not enough to set up a classroom with a warm nurturing environment. Specific strategies must be explicitly taught. Although each student is unique and there is no blueprint that works for every child, there are certain skills that each child must master to become an effective reader. In the next chapter I will discuss a number of approaches that have received attention in the scholarly literature.

Conclusion

Finally, I will weave my research findings and the scholarly literature in order to demonstrate the relationships among the key factors and the potential to positively effect students' comprehension capabilities.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

To function successfully in modern society, it is crucial that students gain the ability to read and make meaning of all types of text. Many intermediate students lack this essential ability. There are some probable causes as to why low comprehension skills hinder these students. Some causes are a lack of motivation, a lack of activating prior knowledge, poor recognition skills, limited experiences, and a deficiency in understanding and using inferential thinking (Fabrikan, Sickierski, and Williams, 1999). To remedy this many school districts spend a vast amount of money on what seem like promising reading programs that explicitly tell teachers what to do, what to say, and how to teach. These large scale programs are all too often not backed by solid research and evaluation data showing they can raise the academic performance of low achieving students (Gursky, 1998). And often, simply don't work.

Three factors influence how older students learn to make connections and meaning of all types of text. These

factors are teacher characteristics, support structures, and reading strategies that contribute to the development of effective comprehension.

Role of the Teacher

The first key factor in learning comprehension strategies is the teacher. In 1997 the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future stated, "It is recognized that good teachers are the most important element in learning. The single most important strategy for achieving America's education goals is to recruit, prepare and support excellent teachers for every school" (J. J. Pikulski, personal communication, May 2, 2002). Teaching reading in a class of diverse learners requires considerable knowledge and skill. The teacher must be able to tap a considerable personal knowledge base to effectively motivate and guide each student.

According to Spiegel (1995), because of negative school experiences associated with reading, many adults choose not to read books once they leave high school. Therefore, it is imperative that the climate of the classroom encourages students to believe that they can be readers and writers. A friendly and good-natured

atmosphere fosters enjoyment and a sense of accomplishment. As C. M. Charles states, "A good classroom is characterized as warm, supportive, and pleasant" (1989, p. 154).

Along with providing an environment conducive to learning, a teacher that encourages and enjoys the improvements that each child makes is helping children to believe in their own capabilities to succeed (Charles, 1989). These teachers have high expectations for every student. Learners are more likely to engage in a task if (a) they feel capable, (b) they believe the task has potential value, or purpose and use for them, (c) they are free from anxiety, (d) and demonstrations are given by someone they like, trust, respect, admire, and would like to emulate (Cambourne, 1995).

In addition, teachers should endeavor to motivate their students to read more, especially in the area of extensive reading. According to Feuerstein and Schcolnik (1995), extensive reading is reading done for sheer enjoyment, whereby the teacher is not directly involved in the process. The authors state:

> Extensive reading is very important. Some claim that it is the most important activity in the acquisition

> of reading comprehension. One learns reading by reading and, the more one reads the better reader one becomes. Readers who enjoy reading read faster and have fewer problems than those who don't. As a result, they also read more. Since they read more, their comprehension improves and their enjoyment increases. (p. 11)

Among a substantial body of research the ACD Curriculum Handbook (1997) further explains that students tend to become motivated to read and will read for longer amounts of time when they are given opportunities to choose reading materials that reflect their interests and abilities and learning styles.

The Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public School (1999) recommends a large portion of time be spent on instruction that is relevant to literacy:

> At the primary level a minimum of two and one-half hours of instructional time are allocated to language arts instruction daily. This time is given priority and is protected from interruption.
>
> In grades four through eight, two hours of instructional time are allocated to language arts

instruction daily through daily core instructional periods or within a self-contained classroom. (p. 13)

During this allocated time for literacy, Pearson and Johnson (1972) state that teachers may support comprehension learning in:

1. The way they prepare students for reading.
2. The kind of materials they select for classroom instruction.
3. The kind of questions they ask.
4. The kind of modeling behavior they provide.
5. The kind of feedback they give.
6. The kind of incentives and reinforcers they use.
7. The kind of atmosphere they establish for taking risks. (p. 19)

In addition, the teacher should scaffold instruction for students. According to Woolfolk (1995), scaffolding is:

> . . . support for learning and problem solving. The support could be clues, reminders, encouragement, breaking the problem down into steps, providing an example or anything else that allows the student to grow in independence as a learner. (p. 49)

This provides the learner with the opportunity to implement partial strategies on their own, until they are able to fully implement them independently.

Positive feedback is also a productive approach that helps students to identify when and why an error occurred, so they can learn more appropriate strategies (Bangert-Drown, Kulik, Kulik and Morgan, 1991). Rather than struggling, students need help figuring out why their interpretations are incorrect. Furthermore, activities that foster "deep discussions" where the focus is on asking and answering important questions, will expand and deepen students' understanding of texts (Diamond and Mandel, n.d.).

Teacher's Theoretical Stance

Throughout the last century the debate has raged on what is the best way to teach reading. Most philosophies fall in one of two camps as Weaver describes them: the Part-Centered Skills approaches or the Socio-psycholinguistic approaches. Each group has its proponents, research and detractors. Through the last century each has had its heyday when it has been touted as the silver bullet to slay the beast of illiteracy. Yet,

research has been unable to prove the claims of any teaching stance as the best way to teach children to read.

Part-Centered Skills Approaches

This philosophical premise focuses on the idea that if children understand the distinct parts that make up the process of reading they will be able to read. These approaches emphasize phonics or learning the letter/sound correspondences to be able to decode the learning and internalizing of regular spelling/sound patterns or word families is emphasized without specific concern for comprehension. Those who share this philosophy and claim a concern for meaning tend to focus on the sight word aspects of this theoretical stance, believing that once individual words are recognized, understanding will be a natural by-product (Weaver, 1994).

Each of these strategies has been used independently or in conjunction with the others. Most traditional basal programs follow this philosophical approach (Weaver, 1994). These approaches follow Edward Thorndike's "Laws of Learning" as stated by Weaver:

> The law of readiness: *Learning is ordered; efficient learning follows one best sequence*. This law

results in readiness materials and the tight sequencing of skills.

The law of exercise: *Practice strengthens the bond between a stimulus and a response.* This law results in drills and exercises through direct instruction, workbooks, skill sheets.

The law of effect: *Rewards influence the stimulus-response connection.* This supports the idea of first learning words and skills and then "rewarding" the learner with the reading of more complete, more meaningful texts.

The law of identical elements: *The learning of a particular stimulus-response connection should be tested separately and under the same conditions in which it was learned.* This law results in the focus on isolated skills in testing, and in the close match between items in the exercises and items in the tests. (1994, p. 54-55)

Teachers who follow this stance carefully control the curriculum and sequence within the classroom. As students progress even comprehension skills such as cause and effect, main idea, recognizing inferences are taught in isolation through worksheets. The emphasis on discrete

skills, in a tight sequence, taught in isolation reflects a "part-to-whole conceptualization of teaching children to read" (Weaver, 1994, p. 57) which defines these approaches.

Socio-Psycholinguistic Approaches

These approaches emphasize the construction of meaning, drawing on what the individual reader brings to the text, their own unique schema, experience and background. These approaches seek to guide the child to discovering aspects of language and reading through experiencing the process of reading and writing. The teacher guides the student through ever increasingly more difficult experiences "supporting students in developing as independent readers, writers, and learners" (Weaver, 1994, p. 59).

These approaches are based on Brian Cambourne's Conditions of Learning (see Table 1). The focus is on process learning done in context through increasingly more complex text defines these approaches.

Table 1.

Cambourne's Conditions of Learning

Conditions	Classroom Manifestations
Immersion-learners need to be immersed in text of all kinds	Print displays around classroom: labels, charts, books, dictated stories: can vary from high to low immersion.
Demonstration-learners need to see how print medium is used. They need many high quality models.	Reading print displays, choral reading, discussion of print and graphophonic conventions in context. Teacher demonstrations of how reading and writing are done. Regular opportunities to use print and see it being used. This condition can vary from many to few, and from functional to non-functional demonstration.
Expectations-learners must know that they are expected to succeed.	Positive/negative expectations which teachers hold and communicate (both implicitly and explicitly) to children and which affect their learning.
Responsibility-learners make their own decisions about when, now and what to learn.	The degree to which the child is permitted to decide what will be written, when it will be written, what will be learned (from model demonstrations) and what will be ignored: e. g. which punctuation conventions will be mastered.
Approximation-learners must be free to experiment and make mistakes for learning to occur.	The degree to which the child is allowed to approximate the adult model; degree to which emphasis is on error avoidance or error reduction.
Practice-learners need opportunity to try out new skills	Many opportunities to engage in writing/learning activities are made available. Learners need

	plenty of opportunity and time to practice new learning in a meaningful situation.
Engagement-learners need to feel some ownership for new learning.	Degree to which the learner engages with print and the demonstrations being offered about how print works. This can vary from high to low, depending on the needs of the learner and the relevance of the print material and demonstrations to the learner.
Response-there must be mutual exchanges experts and learners.	The type of response and the degree to which it is meaning-centered, non-threatening, functional, and relevant to the child's needs. Learners must receive relevant, appropriate, timely, readily available, non-threatening feedback.

Adapted from Coping with Chaos (p. 7), by B. Cambourne & J. Turnbill, 1987, Rozelle, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association.

The Best Approach

Unfortunately, research has thus far, not been able to choose one approach as the best for all students. While proponents of each approach point to their latest research as proof positive that theirs is the most effect means of teaching children, teachers know that "if you select judiciously and avoid interpretations, you can make the research 'prove' almost anything you want it to" (Chall, 1967, p. 87).

Only one thing seems to be clear, if the teacher chooses a philosophy and sticks with it, the students will benefit. The teacher who is consistent in the curriculum and instructional choices that she makes increases the student's chances of success greatly.

Effective teachers, trained in the area of reading acquisition, are aware that the mastery of the processes of language, reading, writing, and spelling will take years and will never reach perfection (Weaver, 1994). These teachers model and encourage risk taking, and view errors as necessary for growth. They present themselves as learners, not authoritarians, while providing students with interesting materials and time for bona fide reading and writing. Ultimately, these teachers never give up. They see the value and potential in every single, unique student.

Support Structures

The second key factor in learning comprehension strategies is the support structures that are put into place. According to Webster's New World Dictionary (1987), support means "to encourage; to help; to uphold; to maintain" (p. 601). The following section will describe

various support structures that benefit both teachers and students.

Literacy teachers can increase effectiveness of classroom instruction by gaining the support and directing the active participation of resource personnel, classroom aides and volunteers. They can take an instrumental role in initiating and supporting the home-school connection through regular communication with parents about classroom activities and their expectations of the students and parents (Allington, 1998).

Scaffolding

Scaffolding refers to the gradual release of control and support as a child gains proficiency with a given task. The teacher divides the task into simple and accessible pieces. The teacher focuses the child's attention on the pertinent features of the new task and offers the student a proficient model. The task is kept at an appropriate level of difficulty so that the child can accomplish it (Moll, 1990).

Scaffolding is based on Vygotsky's theory of the "zone of proximal development" which is defined as:

> The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the

> level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

The teacher must assess what the child is capable of on his own. Then, the teacher must provide tasks and support for those tasks that are just beyond the student's capability to accomplish on his own. The student is not a passive participant. Both teacher and student share knowledge and responsibility for the task. In this way, teacher instruction pulls development along. Through scaffolding the student is able to perform tasks that otherwise would be beyond the zone of proximal development.

Funds of Knowledge

Teachers cannot rely solely on manipulation of the curriculum and classroom resources. To increase student learning, collaboration between teachers and families is necessary. Moll writes about this as tapping into the family "funds of knowledge" to develop novel classroom practices that involve strategic connections between home and school (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). The term "funds of knowledge" refers to the accumulated knowledge and skills that are necessary for the household

or individual to function well. They may include a wide variety of areas from household repair, to herbal medicine, to religious moral and ethical codes (see Table 2).

The multidimensional relationships that develop between each member of the family create an understanding of the student as a whole person instead of the one dimensional, passive learner that the teacher is usually involved with. The child is motivated by his own needs and interests to acquire this knowledge. It is not imposed upon him. This has powerful implications for the classroom. As Boyd-Batstone states:

> Exploring funds of knowledge calls on the teacher to step outside the classroom environment and to look for the knowledge students bring from their homes and other aspects of their lives . . . Bringing the teacher back into the learners' community opens up new possibilities for instruction . . . Then the teacher and student can collaborate in developing instruction that actually draws on prior knowledge and experience, thus creating mediated and literate relationships within the classroom setting. (2001, p. 21)

Table 2.

A Sample of Household Funds of Knowledge

Agriculture and Mining	*Material/Scientific Knowledge*
Ranching and farming Horse riding skills Animal management Soil and irrigation systems Crop planting Hunting, tracking, dressing	Construction Carpentry Roofing Masonry Painting Design and architecture
Mining	*Repair*
Timbering Minerals Blasting Equipment operation and Maintenance	Airplane Automobile Tractor House maintenance
Economics	*Medicine*
Business Market values Appraising Renting and selling Loans Labor laws Building codes Consumer knowledge Accounting Sales	Contemporary medicine Drugs First aid procedures Anatomy Midwifery Folk medicine Herbal knowledge Folk cures Folk veterinary cures
Household Management	*Religion*
Budgets Childcare Cooking Appliance repairs	Catechism Baptisms Bible studies Moral knowledge and ethics

Adapted from "Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative Approach to Connect Homes and Classrooms," by L. C. Moll, C. Amanti, D. Neff, & N. Gonzalez, 1992, Theory Into Practice, 31, p. 133.

The collaboration of family and school shifts the teacher orientation away from the deficit model-what does the student lack, towards looking at a resource model-what does the student have. Parents, teacher and student gain a reciprocal relationship where all are working toward the greater gains of the student (Gonzalez, Moll, Floyd-Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzales & Amanti, 1993).

Comprehension Strategies

The third factor in learning reading comprehension strategies is the strategies that students use while reading. The classroom is a laboratory in which students discover and engage in literacy. But, unlike science, there is no specific protocol for teaching reading to a diverse group of learners. Effective teachers weave together a variety of methods and strategies, providing a balance between skills instruction and authentic learning experiences. Gurksy (1998) states the following:

> Reading instruction doesn't stop with phonics and basal readers. It must include storytelling and writing, a deep exploration of the treasure chest of rich and literacy-related activities that can help

enhance children's love of books and of learning. In short, good reading instruction includes a solid grounding in basic decoding skills, enhanced by rich literature. (p. 12)

Strategy Teaching

Students in the primary grades spend a large portion of their time learning the strategies for sustaining reading. As stated by Fountas and Pinnel (2001), they are solving words, monitoring and correcting, gathering, predicting, maintaining fluency, and adjusting (see Table 3). Learning to skillfully use each of these strategies is a tremendous accomplishment for any child. As Pressley states:

> . . . it is well understood that if a child cannot decode a word, he or she will not comprehend the meaning intended by the word. Indeed, beyond accurate word recognition, if the child cannot decode words fluently, comprehension will be impaired. It is also well understood that comprehension depends on vocabulary, with good readers having more extensive vocabularies than weaker readers. When an elementary-level reader improves her or his vocabulary, reading comprehension improves. (2002, p. 22)

Table 3.

Strategies for Sustaining Reading

Strategies	Manifestations
Solving Words	Using a variety of strategies to decode, and understand the meaning of individual words as they are read.
Monitoring and Correcting	Continually checking to see if it sounds right, looks right, and makes sense.
Gathering	Finding and connecting information from print.
Predicting	Anticipating, from what is already known, or what will happen next.
Maintaining Fluency	Using accurate and expressive reading to enhance meaning.
Adjusting	Reading differently for varied purposes and texts.

Adapted from Mosaic of Thought: Teaching Comprehension in a Reader's Workshop, 1997, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Comprehension involves a number of complex processes. The reader must first have a grasp on the basic work level skills, those that affect the recognition of words, before he or she can move on to the higher level processes, those that affect the understanding of words. It seems evident

to most observers that if a child cannot decode a word he or she will be unable to determine or comprehend the meaning of that word. Indeed, research bears this out (Pressley, 2002).

However, the mere ability to decode is insufficient to ensure comprehension of a passage. The reader must be able to decode fluently. A student that can decode fluently does not sound out unfamiliar words letter by letter. That student is able to use knowledge of how the language is encoded to recognize letter clusters, word chunks, root words, suffixes, and rimes to quickly decode unfamiliar words. When the student struggles to decipher a word, the short-term memory is occupied with decoding. The student who can fluently decode frees the limited capacity of short-term memory to focus on the comprehension of the text rather than the decoding of individual words. Unfortunately, being able to decode and comprehend at a third grade level, though a good start, is not sufficient for continued reading success (Pressley, 2002).

Students must learn a variety of comprehension strategies so they may continue to achieve the high standards now set in place and become life-long learners. Similarly, teachers of the intermediate grades face a

common challenge teaching the strategies students need to become mature readers with multiple and complex texts.

Few students have difficulty answering the literal kinds of questions that have been required of them in the primary years of education. In the intermediate years students need to learn to expand the meaning of their reading. This does not happen simply by reading more and increasingly difficult text. Students must be taught how to comprehend through explicit instruction (Pearson and Johnson, 1972).

Pearson, as cited in Diamond and Mandel(n.d.), describes this explicit instruction as involving four phases:

1. Teacher modeling and explanation.
2. Guided practice during which the teachers "guides" students to assume greater responsibility for task completion.
3. Independent practice accompanied by feedback.
4. Application of the strategies in real reading situations. (n.d., Pearson section, para. 2)

Within those four phases, Pearson and Johnson (1972) state that good comprehension instruction should include:

Ample time for text reading in order to have regular practice, acquire new knowledge and concepts, and build vocabulary.

Teacher-directed instruction in comprehension that includes both modeling and guided practice for such strategies as summarizing, predicting, and using the structural elements of text.

Opportunities for discussing what is read with the teacher and peers to enable students to learn to defend opinions based on their readings, thus deepening their understanding of the texts and their ability to use a whole range of responses from literal to critical and evaluative. (p. 6)

In addition, Pearson emphasizes (as cited in Diamond and Mandel, n.d.), comprehension instruction should be taught using a variety of real-life sources encompassing many subject areas, rather than taught in isolation through the use of workbooks.

Keene and Zimmerman (1997) discuss the specific skills students must learn to juggle, to deepen their understanding of a given text (see table 4). The students must be able to:

Table 4.

Strategies for Comprehension

Strategy	Student Outcome
Connect the known to the new	Students must be able to connect what they already know (schema) to new textual experiences. They are able to do this by making text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections.
Determine Importance	Students must be able to decide what is important at a whole text level, the sentence level, and the word level. They must make judgments and evaluations about what are the crucial parts of the text; what is the information that they must take from it.
Delve deeper with questions	Students must become aware of the questions that they have about the text before, during and after reading. They must use their questions to clarify meaning, spotlight the author's intent, style, or content, and focus attention on the key elements of the text.
Use sensory images	Students must understand that images are created in the mind as they read. The images may change through discussion or in response to shared images. These images are key to a personal comprehension of the text.
Draw inferences in the text	Students must create their own interpretation of text. They must draw on their relevant prior knowledge to draw conclusions, make predictions, and judgments regarding the text.
Synthesize	Students must be able to determine key ideas and themes from a text. They must be able to recall, retell, and recombine these key ideas and themes and relate them to prior knowledge for an ever-changing understanding. They must also be able to share what they have read and learned in a logical and coherent manner.

Adapted from Mosaic of Thought, E. O. Keene & S. Zimmermann, 1997, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Process-Based Instruction

Students must learn more than just a list of strategies. They must learn how to manipulate and

interrelate a variety of strategies. Skilled readers process multiple strategies continuously as they read. Real comprehension is a "seamless, complex interaction of thoughts that good readers use" (Block, Schaller, Joy, & Gaine, 2002, p. 43). Teaching must move beyond merely visualizing, inferring and summarizing. It must instruct students on how to set their own purpose for reading, how main ideas find the reader (connecting the main ideas to an individual's own schema), and how conclusions are drawn as the reader makes connections to various possibilities and the individual's schema)(Block et al., 2002).

Block et al. state that comprehension lessons must be taught in a process-based manner. To most effectively ensure that students will integrate comprehension strategies independently, the instruction should be divided into three strands. When students are taught using these three strands they are able to more fully orchestrate strategy use and increase the depth and breadth of understanding across all text types.

The first strand of lessons focuses on teaching the student how to use two or more comprehension strategies together to eliminate confusions as or before they happen. Students are taught to (1) set their own purpose for

reading (2) sequence facts until the main idea becomes clear to the reader (3) discover themes (4) make multiple connections before, during, and after reading (5) apply what is read to background knowledge (Block et al., 2002).

> These lessons are designed to teach students: How to add depth and breadth to one's knowledge through intertextuality, summarizing, inferring, imagining, interpreting author's intentions, reflecting, paraphrasing, identifying gist, organizing, predicting, and making connections between words, facts, and concepts and the historical and political context in which they are written and read. (Block et al., 2002, p. 45)

In addition students also learn to self-monitor continuously and clarify thinking by using fix-up strategies as well as how to fill in gaps in text. They begin to comprehend on a literal, inferential and application level at the same time. The most important process these lessons emphasize is that using one strategy alone is not enough. The reader must utilize an ever-changing combination of strategies to be a successful reader (Block et al., 2002).

The second strand of lessons assist students to make effective strategy use a permanent part of the reading process. Block states that these lessons provide the means for students to "fall in love with reading" (2002). The roadblocks to understanding are addressed as they occur in the student's own independent reading. Many times this is when students understanding breaks down. The student is unable to choose the appropriate strategy to affect the comprehension obstacle. Instruction of this strand of lessons is most effective when it is individualized (Block et al.,2002).

Opportunities to instruct these lessons can be found during silent sustained reading as well as during small group guided reading. In addition, by allowing students to take over the read-aloud modeling strategy, the teacher can listen, question, and clarify strategy use. The important focus of these lessons is the independent usage and implementation of the strategies by the students.

The third and final strand of lessons is intended to assist struggling readers extend and explore the strategy repertoire. Students assess what strategies they depend on as they read and decide what strategies they would like to learn how to better use. The self-discovery and decision

making of the student is a crucial aspect of these lessons. This must be done individually. At this point students with a similar interest of study can form groups to focus on learning and practicing a specific comprehension strategy (Block et al., 2002).

Suggestions for Instruction

The full implementation and integration of these reading comprehension strategies is no small feat. Although some good readers will discover many of these skills on their own, many will not. Those students will benefit from explicit instruction.

Sinatra, Brown, & Reynolds (2002) suggest that there is more that educators can do to ensure that students learn to be effective readers. It is their premise that students should focus on a few strategies at a time, beginning with those that are most effective. In this way the student can become proficient and comfortable with a strategy before more are introduced.

Second, students need text that call for the use of the strategy that is being taught. For example if the teacher is introducing a strategy for synthesizing it is imperative that the text the student uses clearly requires that for the reader to synthesize. The selection of text is

an extremely important part of teacher planning (Sinatra et al., 2002).

Third, students must be aware that understanding is the goal of strategy use. Just using a particular strategy is not enough. Comprehension strategies are just tools that the reader uses to construct meaning from text. Because strategy instruction is complex and time consuming, the student can get caught up in the strategy as an end in itself. The teacher must always aid the student in understanding how the strategy use helps to make meaning clear (Sinatra et al., 2002).

Finally, as the students becomes proficient in the use of a strategy phase out the concrete evidence of its use. Continuing to require demonstrations of the use of a specific strategy enforces the idea that the strategy is the end and not the means to the end. Continued focus on the strategy may actually inhibit automaticity of the comprehension strategy (Sinatra et al., 2002).

Conclusion

Based on the research reviewed, the preponderance of evidence shows that the three main factors that influence reading comprehension are teacher characteristics, support

structures, and reading strategies. The teacher is undoubtedly the most important factor in the classroom. The teacher sets the tone and expectations for the classroom. It is often one teacher that sets a child on the path to learning success.

The teacher is not enough. Support structures must be in place to scaffold student leaning. Through judicious use of the available resources--materials, instructional assistants, volunteers, methods--the teacher can gently guide each student to greater understanding.

Finally, there are specific strategies, lessons that students must learn to increase their comprehension. Students who have learned these strategies in a classroom setting where all these elements are integrated, are able and likely to become effective readers, writers, and thinkers for the 21st century.

This research would lend itself to additional study. Although there are numerous studies available on the subject of reading comprehension, the problem still exits in intermediate classrooms. To remedy this many school districts spend a vast amount of money on what seem like promising reading programs that explicitly tell teacher what to do, what to say, and how to teach. These large

scale programs are all too often not backed by solid research and evaluation data showing they can raise the academic performance of low achieving students (Gursky, 1998). And often, simply don't work. The research shows that there is a clear path to increasing student comprehension. Duffy states that:

> The bottom line is that there are many effective ways to teach comprehension. Success depends on thoughtfully selecting and then adapting techniques that fit the situation. Sometimes direct explanation is appropriate; sometimes something else is. Consequently, the question is not whether direct explanation is a "best practice." The question is whether we can stop investing ourselves in particular techniques, methods, or approaches as if they are universal panaceas and, instead, invest ourselves in authorizing teachers to make pedagogical choices based on what an instructional situation demands. (2002, p. 38)

We now know what we should be teaching. Yet the question of how to best teach it still remains. Pressley states that he does not think "we have yet created and evaluated the best comprehension instruction possible based

on what is known at the end of the 20th century about how to promote comprehension abilities" (2002, p. 23). It is time to abandon the search for the magic potion that will allay illiteracy. There is no one technique that will work for every child.

Research should be done to discover what are the issues that inhibit the successful implementation of these comprehension instruction factors. Further research needs to be done looking at the specific needs of at-risk students in the regular classroom. Longitudinal studies that that follow these students, from at-risk to adulthood, to determine the effects improved comprehension may have on their future academic or professional career, should be done.

We must also explore the learning of the teacher. Longitudinal studies that track the career-long journey to become a thoughtful, adaptive teacher would be extremely helpful in determining the struggles and decisions to be an effective comprehension teacher.

APPENDIX A

TEACHING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

USING READ-ALOUDS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW TO USE THIS PROJECT

The project is designed for teachers who are interested in increasing the comprehension skills of their students through research-based strategies. This project contains easy to follow lesson plans and activities that will assist the teacher in working with all students and especially those students that struggle with reading for meaning. Although all students will benefit from explicit strategy instruction, it is the struggling readers in particular that will benefit from the strategy study of how and what to think about while reading.

Older readers benefit, just as younger readers do, from multiple readings of the same text. With this in mind, each read-aloud lesson unit takes place across five days. This allows the reader to delve deeply into the text and discover layers of meaning. It also allows the teacher opportunities to show how multiple comprehension strategies work together in a particular text.

The lesson units are developed around two themes. The first five units are based on the theme of courage. The second five units are based on the theme of baseball. The lesson units may be used alone or together. Comprehension strategies are introduced in the first five units and

repeated in the second five units. The read-aloud texts were chosen based on a strong story and the strategies that could be demonstrated through them.

It is my hope that you will enjoy using these lessons and that your students will gain new insights into the purpose and enjoyment of reading. I also hope that it will inspire you, the teacher, to integrate the teaching of comprehension strategies throughout your curriculum. For sources of more ideas check the reference list at the end of the project.

Wilma Unlimited
Kathleen Krull

Day 1: Introduction

Teacher Note: Hang *CASPER poster* prominently in the classroom. Explain that these are the elements of a good story. Today we will be talking about the "C" - Character, the "P" - Problem and the "R" - Resolution.
Cognitive Prompt: As I am reading, I want you to be thinking who is the main character, what is the problem, and what is the resolution.
Read: Read complete text.
Discussion: Students respond to the cognitive prompt.
Journal: Students respond to the cognitive prompt and discussion.

Day 2: Character Analysis

Teacher Note: Refer to CASPER chart. Today we will be focusing on the "A" - Attributes (traits).
Discussion: Model the physical attributes of the teacher. Chart from the following: looks, lives, habits, hobbies, interests. Model some responses. Elicit responses from students. Next teacher gives three character attributes and evidence. Such as, "I am very hard working. I get to work two hours before school starts and I don't go home until midnight. I am competitive. I hate to lose. I am caring. Last week I found a stray kitten. I made posters to see if I could find the owner. I took it home and gave it warm milk and kitty food."
Journal: Students write three personal attributes and evidence in journal. Pair journal entries with a partner.

Day 3: Character Analysis

Model: Read on church page, "Whispers rippled throughout the gathering. . . her smile triumphant." " As I am reading this it makes me think that Wilma is very determined because she walks alone all the way to the front of the church. When I look at the picture she looks very proud." Share any further evidence you

notice in the text. When you give cognitive prompt divide students into groups so that they are listening for evidence of only one attribute.

Cognitive Prompt: As I am reading, listen for evidence that shows that Wilma is determined, competitive, proud, weak, or sad.

Read: Reread complete story.

Discussion: In groups - discuss what evidence you heard for the attribute your group was assigned. Whole class - share evidence of attributes in whole class. List attributes and evidence on chart paper. Save for tomorrow.

Day 4: Character Analysis

Review: Review attribute chart and evidence.

Read: Reread portions of the text as necessary.

Character Analysis: Have students complete the *Attribute Graph* using the class chart from Day 3.

Day 5: Making Connections

Cognitive Prompt: How am I like Wilma? How am I different?

Read: Reread portions of the text as necessary.

Compare and Contrast: Have students complete *Venn Diagram*. Compare/Contrast the character attributes of Wilma vs. Me.

Journal: Connections to Wilma. How am I like Wilma? How am I different?

CASPER Chart

Casper is an easy way for students to chart and remember story grammar. Create a poster with the initials on it. After each initial, discuss and list those aspects of the story. Initially this can be used to find these aspects in a read aloud story. It can also be used as a pre-writing activity for student stories.

C (character)

A (attributes of the character)

S (setting)

P (problem)

E (events-three events leading to the resolution)

1
2
3

R (resolution)

Attribute Graph

Work with students to chose a focus for this activity. The focus could be attributes of a character in the story, the author, a real person, the tension of the story, etc.

Discuss the attributes graph and list the attributes that students select along the left side of the document. Ask students to evaluate each attribute on the scale of 1 through 10, with one being the least and ten being the most.

Attribute Graph

Name: _____

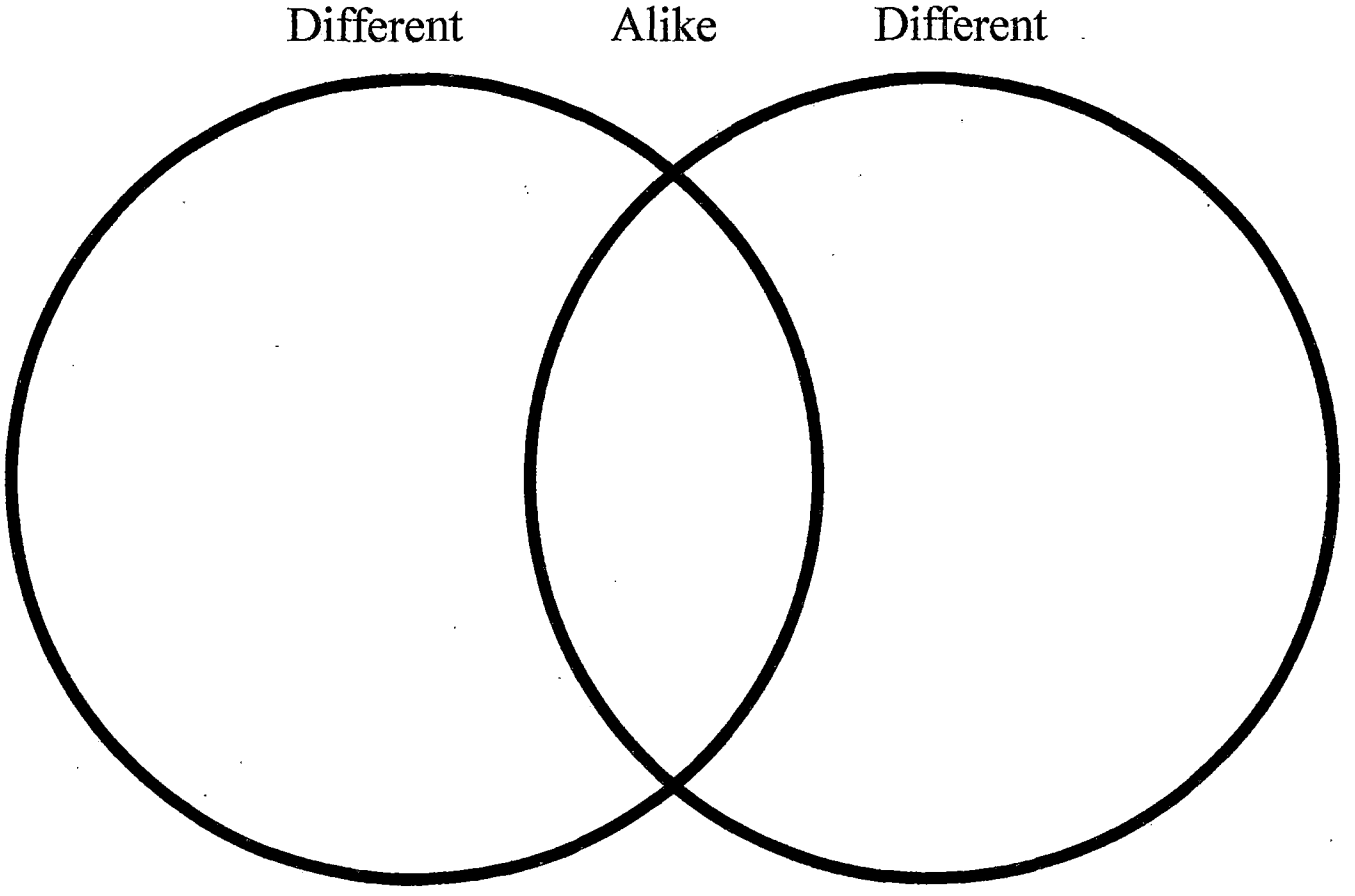
Character: _____ Title: _____

Attributes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Developed by Cates-Darnell (2002)

Venn Diagram

_____ and _____



Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt

Deborah Hopkinson

Day 1: Introduction

Teacher Note: Review parts of CASPER chart previously taught - character, attributes, problem, and resolution. This is a great book for prediction. You can do it throughout.

Read: As you read, stop periodically and make predictions about what will happen next. Have students share their prediction with a partner.

Discussion: Talk about the main character, problem, and resolution.

Journal: Respond to discussion.

Day 2: Setting

Teacher Note: Refer to CASPER chart. "Today we will be focusing on the 'S'. The setting is the where and the when the story happens."

Picture Walk: Rather than reading, we're going to look at the pictures to focus on the setting. Turn to the title page. "As I look at this picture I see a field. I wonder what's growing there? Some people are working in the fields. What could they be doing? I think that it must be a really hot day. They are all wearing hats. Look, there is a wagon being pulled by horses and there is a guy on a horse. That wagon looks like the kind they used long time ago." Use your own observations and language. Continue looking at pictures. Elicit questions and responses from students that focus on setting.

Discussion: Chart the settings under the following headings:

The Quilt

1. **Plantation**
   - **The fields**
   - **The big house**
   - **The cabin**
2. **The Trail to freedom**

Day 3: Setting

Teacher Note: Divide class into four groups: the fields, the big house, the freedom trail, and the

cabin. Each group will be responsible for illustrating one setting on a piece of butcher paper.
Read: If necessary reread part or all of the text. Refer to the chart generated on day 2 and the illustrations in the book.
Visualize: In small groups students will illustrate their assigned setting on a piece of butcher paper. Use any medium available.

Day 4: Character in the Setting

Read: Reread the text.
Cognitive Prompt: Review the characters in the story. As I read, listen for the characters in your setting.
Discussion: In small groups, students will discuss characters and what they did within their group setting. (Begin thinking about how you will retell your part of the story tomorrow).
Journal: Write who the characters are in your setting. Tell what they did in that setting.

Day 5: Retell

Discussion: Meet in small groups. Plan your portion of the retell. All students are encouraged to participate in the retelling.
Retell: Each group will retell their portion of the story to the rest of the class.
Journal: Did you like this story? Why or why not. Include specific reasons from the text.

When Jessie Came Across the Sea

Amy Hest

Day 1: Introduction

Teacher Note: Review all parts of CASPER chart previously taught - character, attributes, setting, problem, events, and resolution. This week we'll talk about the "E" on the chart. The "E" stands for the events that happen after the problem leading to the resolution.

Cognitive Prompt: Listen for the CASPER elements in the story.

Read: Read complete text.

Discussion: Students respond to the cognitive prompt. Chart the CASPER elements of the story.

Day 2: Character Analysis

Teacher Note*: The journal exercises may be written in a comp book or you may create a separate journal for students to use.

Cognitive Prompt: Listen carefully to the events leading up to Jessie getting on the ship.

Read: Reread from beginning of story until Jessie leaves on the boat ending with: "It slid down the back of her collar."

Discussion: Respond to cognitive prompt.

Journal*: Pretend that you are Jessie. You have been chosen from your village to go to America. How do you feel?

Day 3: Synthesis

Cognitive Prompt: Listen carefully to the description of life on the ship.

Read: Reread text beginning (where you left off yesterday) with: "Later, she sat on her trunk and cried." Continue reading until she arrives in New York Harbor, ending with: "If only you could see what I see now!"

Discussion: Respond to cognitive prompt.

Journal*: Pretend that you are Jessie. Describe what it is like on the ship. What do you see, think, feel, hear, and touch?

Day 4: Synthesis

Cognitive Prompt: Listen carefully to Jessie's life in America.

Read: Reread text beginning (where you left off yesterday) with:
"The ship docked at Ellis Island." Finish story.

Discussion: Respond to cognitive prompt.

Journal*: Pretend that you are Jessie. How has your life changed since you have come to America? How do you feel about those changes?

Day 5: Synthesis

Discussion: Talk about beginning, middle, and end of story.

Synthesis: In small groups complete *Descriptive Story Grammar*.

Journal*: Pretend that you are Jessie. What is your life like after Grandmother comes to live in America?

Title _____ Name _____

Author _____ Date _____

Characters	Descriptive Words	Settings	Descriptive Words

Beginning	Middle	End

Developed by Cates-Darnell (2002)

The Rag Coat
Lauren Mills

Day 1: Introduction

Cognitive Prompt: Listen closely to how the story develops because I'm going to stop and we're going to make predictions on what will happen next.
Read: Read the first third of the selection stopping and predicting as you go. Stop at page 9, ending with " . . .had mentioned it."
Prediction: *Reading Metacognition* ("Predictions" & "Questions")

Day 2: Confirming

Cognitive Prompt: Listen to see if you predicted accurately.
Read: Revisit the predictions made on Day 1 and complete the "Summary or Retelling" section of *Reading Metacognition*.

Day 3: Summarizing

Discussion: Refer to CASPER chart. Identify the elements in the story.
Summarize: Complete *Story Grammar* in small groups or whole class.

Day 4: Inferring

Teacher Note*: Have students work with a partner.
Cognitive Prompt: Choose a character from the story (Minna, Papa, Mama, Quilting Mothers, Schoolmates). With your partner, listen for the character attributes and evidence from the text.
Read: Reread the text.
Character Analysis: In pairs complete the *Character Analysis Map*.
Discussion: Share *Character Analysis Maps*.

Day 5: Synthesis

Discussion: Discuss Minna and Jessie. How are they alike? How are they different? Use examples from the text.

Compare/Contrast: Students complete *Character Compare/Contrast*.

Date: _____ Name: _____

Settings (where, when)	Characters

Title
Author

Problem/Events (3)	Resolution

Reading Metacognition

Name: _____ Title: _____

Character: _____ Author: _____

Summary:

Predictions:

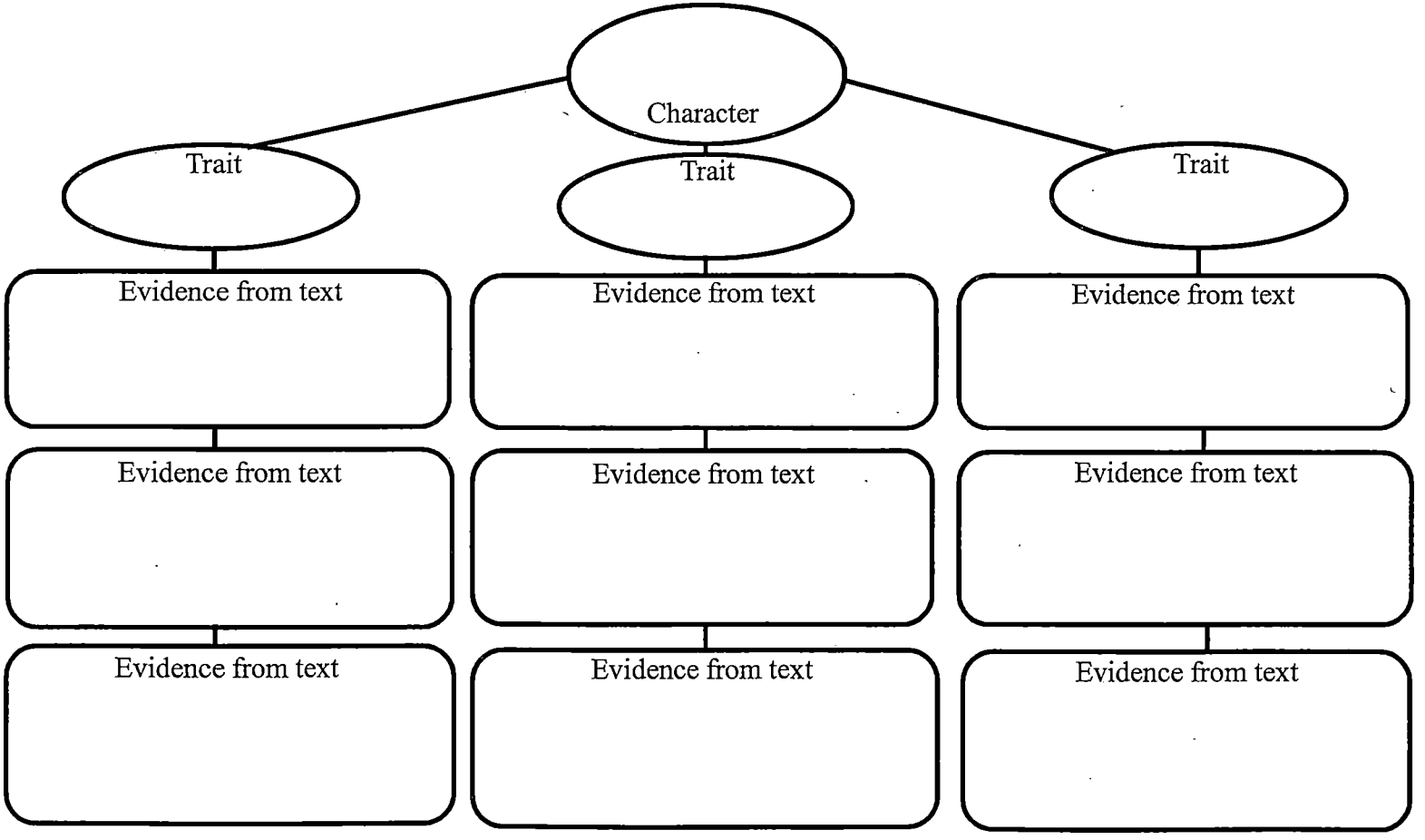
Questions:

Developed by Cates-Darnell (2002)

Character Analysis

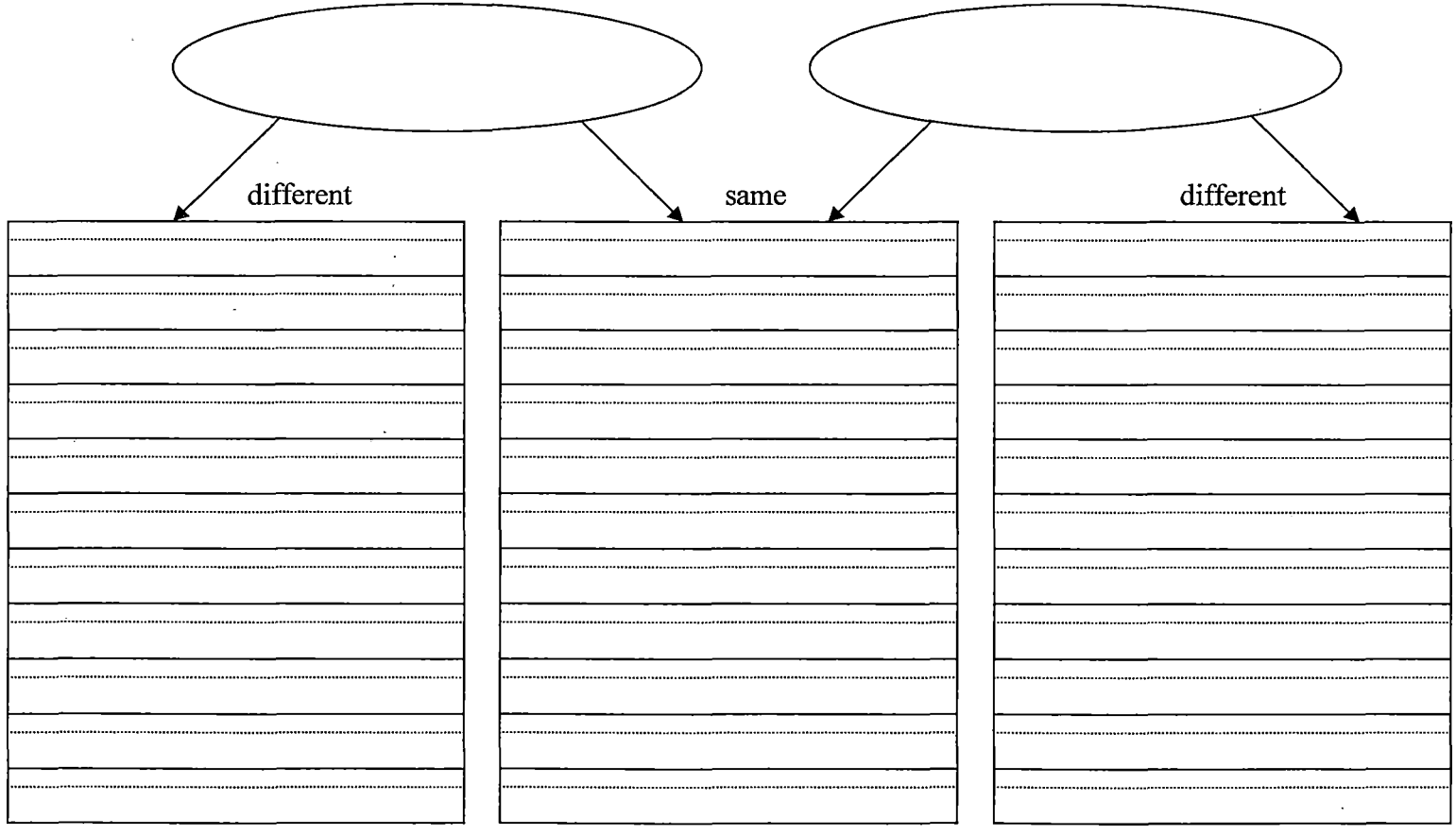
Name _____ Title _____

Character _____ Author _____



Compare/Contrast

Date: _____ Title: _____ Name: _____



Flight

Robert Burleigh

Day 1: Introduction

Background: Provide some background knowledge. NetSite:http://www.nationalaviation.com
Cognitive Prompt: What was the author's intent in writing the book?
Read: Read the text.
Discussion: Students respond to the cognitive prompt.

Day 2: Clarification

Cognitive Prompt: What questions do you have as I read the story?
Read: Read the entire text with emphasis on clarification of concepts and vocabulary.
Background Knowledge: Focus on flight course.
Map: Chart the flight course on a world map (New York, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Ireland, England, Paris).

Day 3: Character Analysis

Cognitive Prompt: As I am reading, listen for evidence that shows that Lindy is determined, daring, or confident. (There are additional attributes that you may with to have students listen for as well).
Read: Reread the text.
Discussion: Chart character attributes and evidence.

Day 4: Character Analysis

Read: Reread portions of the text if needed.
Character Analysis: *Literature Report Card* (Subject: confident. . . determined. . .daring. . .etc.) using attributes and evidence from chart (see day 3). Comments should tell why Lindy deserves the grade.

Day 5: Responding

Read: Reread any portions of the text you choose.
Journal: Students respond to the journal entries made by Charles Lindbergh in the *Flight Journal.*

Character Report Card _____

In:

Teacher (your name):

Subject	Grade	Comments

Developed by Cates-Darnell (2002)

Developed by Cates-Darnell (2002)

Flight Journal

*Pilot*_____

"White pyramids . . . White patches on a blackened sea; sentries of the Arctic."

"Now I must cross not one, but two oceans: one of night and one of water."

The clouds change color "from green to gray, and from gray to red and gold."

People surround the plane, cheering. I feel as if I were "drowning in a great sea."

I must concentrate on just one thing now: "the sod coming up to meet me."

"There's no alternative but death and failure."

I long for a word, a wave . . . "a warmer welcome back to the fellowship of men."

"Paris! I am here, I am here."

I must concentrate on just one thing now: "the sod coming up to meet me."

"There's no alternative but death and failure."

Dirt on Their Skirts

Doreen Rappoport and Lyndall Callan

Day 1: Introduction

Background: Activate prior knowledge by having students participate in creating a *KWL*. This piece is intended for use through this entire unit. Continue adding to KWL each week.

Cognitive Prompt: What was the author's intent in writing this book?

Read: Read the entire text.

Discussion: Students respond to the cognitive prompt.

Journal: Students respond to the discussion and the cognitive prompt.

Day 2: Visualizing

Cognitive Prompt: As I share the pictures that I am making about the text think about the "Mind Movies" you are making as you listen to the story.

Read: Reread complete text.

Model: Self-talk through scenes described in the text. Ex. "You have to be tough to play baseball in a skirt . . . after a game." Say something like, "Hmmm, I remember playing softball. My elbow and knees were all skinned. I remember how sore I felt when I slid into home one time. I was all covered in dirt. I got up and brushed off the dirt. I knew my mom was going to be mad because I was so dirty." Continue reading and model visualizing through out the entire text.

Journal: Write or draw about your "Mind Movies." What did you see?

Day 3: Visualizing

Visualize: "Sketch to Stretch." Students fold a paper into four parts. As the teacher reads aloud, students draw the movie in their mind, a different frame in each quadrant.

Read: Reread the following portions of text as the kids sketch.

1. "With the fat end of her bat . . .Sophie let it pass without swinging."
2. "Margaret saw Millie wipe the sweat . . .charged toward first base."

3. "The catcher yanked off her mask . . . "Safe!" yelled the umpire."
4. "The air exploded . . .she hugged them back."

Respond: Students share their images. As a class note the similarities and differences.

Day 4: Setting

Read: Read Authors' Note.

Sequence: Create a timeline for the Women's Professional League. Include 1939-1988. You may even have additional more recent info to include.

Day 5: Compare and Contrast

Cognitive Prompt: As you watch the film clip think about how your "mind movies" are the same or different from what you see on the screen.

View: Watch film clip from "A League of Their Own." Choose the scene where the girls are playing a montage of baseball games.

Compare and Contrast: *Venn Diagram* - Compare and contrast your mind movies with the film.

Journal: *If I were to talk about this book with a friend, I would be sure to point out . . .*

KWL CHART

Materials: Chart paper
Markers

Procedure: Prepare a KWL grid on chart paper.

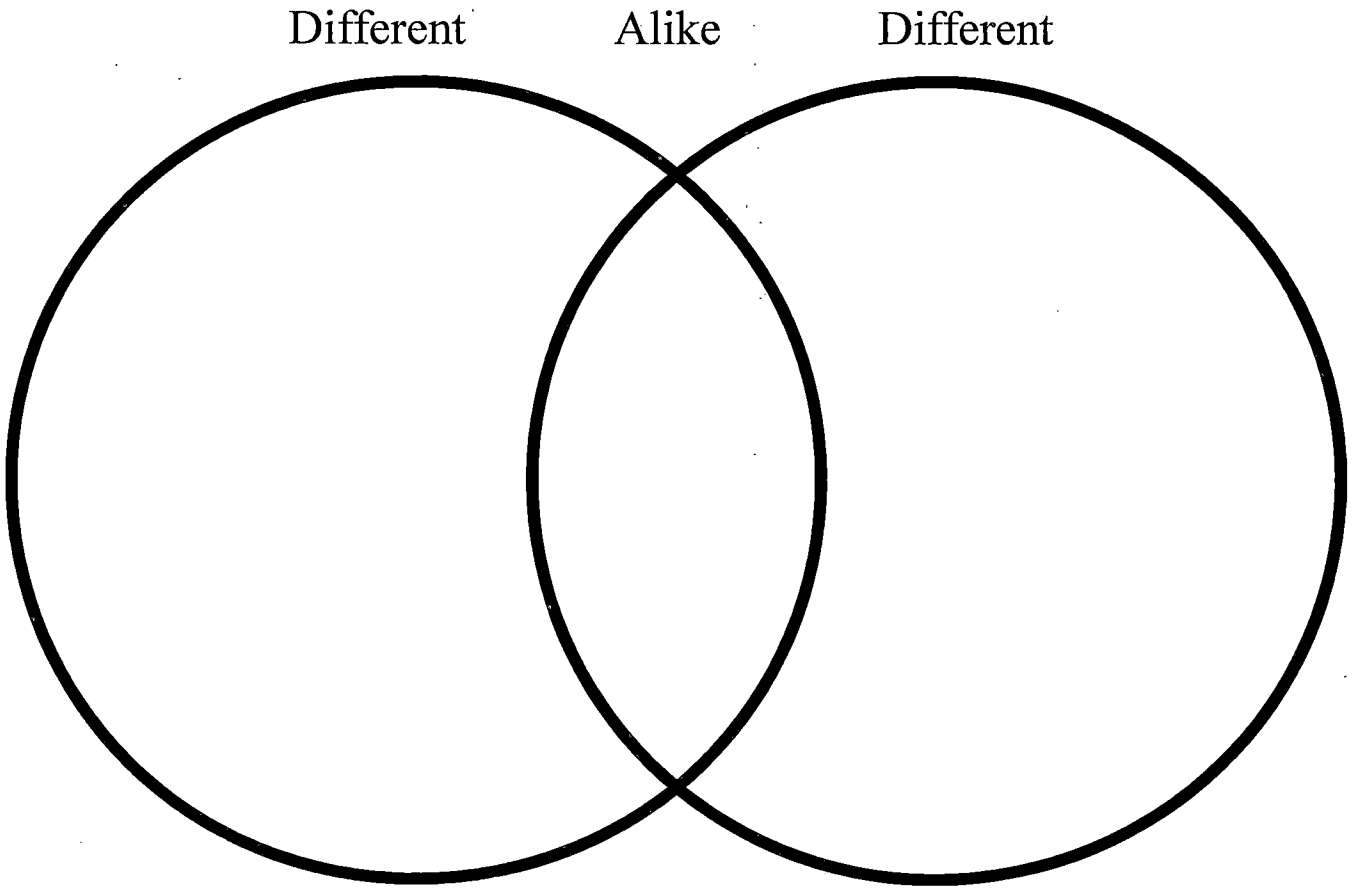
K What We Think We Know	W What We Want to Learn	L What We Learned

List the topic "Baseball" at the top of the grid. Model and guide students on how to add information that they know about the subject. Add student responses to the "What We Think We Know" portion of the grid. (Make sure that what you include is factual.) *You may want to have students brainstorm on their own before you add to the class grid. Guide students in generating questions about aspects of the subject they would like to know more about. Add these questions to the "What We Want to Learn" section.

After reading, revisit the chart. Have any of the questions been answered? Place the answer in the "What We Learned" column.

Venn Diagram

_____ and _____



Baseball Saved Us

Ken Mochizuki

Day 1: Introduction

Background: Add to *KWL*

Read: Read first three pages only through "Babies cried at night and kept us up."

Background: Use Manzanar material to build background knowledge.

Net site: NPS.GOV/MANZ

Click on "Learn more about the History of the Park" on left side. You'll arrive at Confinement and Ethnicity.

On left toolbar click on "Manzanar". Additional material and pictures available.

Infer: Create a feelings chart for the three characters mentioned in the book - Shorty (main character), Teddy, and parents.

Sample Questions:

How does _____ feel about being placed in the camp?

How does _____ feel about losing their home and belongings?

How does the father feel that baseball will help them?

How would you feel if this happened to you?

Day 2: Clarification

Cognitive Prompt: Review the feelings chart. Direct students,

"As I read, listen for what other feelings the characters are experiencing in the story."

Read: Read entire story.

Infer: Add additional feeling to the chart.

Day 3: Making Connections

Model: Reread page 4 beginning with "Back home. . . ending with "that way before." Model finding evidence in the text that supports the feelings chart. Ex. "Get it yourself," Teddy said. Teddy kicked the crate and walked away. This shows that he was feeling angry. Write on a sticky note and place on the feelings chart near the word "angry" under "Teddy".

Cognitive Prompt: As I read the story listen for evidence that supports how the characters feel." On a sticky note have students jot down text or a few words of evidence.
Read: Continue reading the rest of the story.
Make Connections: Share evidence. Place sticky notes on chart.

Day 4: Responding to Text

Model: Responding in a personal way to a piece of the text.
"*This Camp wasn't anything like home. It was so hot in the daytime and so cold at night. Dust storms came and got sand in everything, and nobody could see a thing. We sometimes got caught outside, standing in line to eat or to go to the bathroom. We had to use the bathroom with everybody else, instead of one at a time like at home.*"
Read this text aloud to the students. Respond aloud and in writing. Reflect on your own feelings and connections to the text. "The camp is nothing like my home either. It makes me think of when we went camping and everything got so dirty just being outside. Sometimes I've gone to the fair and had to stand in line to get food or go to the bathroom. I remember one time when . . . I can't imagine doing it every time."
Respond: Have students choose 2 of the *four prompts* and respond.

Day 5: Making Connections

Discussion: Brainstorm a list of themes related to the text. "This book is about more than just a young boy playing baseball. What are some of the big ideas besides baseball that this book is about?"

Ex. Racism
Acceptance
Overcoming obstacles
Belonging
Dealing with unfairness
Facing fears

Respond: Have students choose one theme and respond. "Why do you feel that Baseball Saved Us is really about . . ."
Make Connections: Revisit KWL chart. What else do we want to add now? Code the chart with where (which book) the new information came from.

Responding to Text - Baseball Saved Us

How do you feel about this passage? Have you ever felt this way? Have you had a friend that something like this happened to? How would you feel if something like this happened to you?

" Back in school, before Camp, I was shorter and smaller than the rest of the kids. I was always the last to be picked for any team when we played games. Then, a few months ago, it got even worse. The kids started to call me names and nobody talked to me, even though I didn't do anything bad."

Responding to Text - Baseball Saved Us

How do you feel about this passage? Have you ever felt this way? Have you had a friend that something like this happened to? How would you feel if something like this happened to you?

"I played second base because my team said that was the easiest. Whenever I was at bat, the infield of the other team started joking around and moved in real close. The catcher behind me and the crowd for the other team would say, "Easy out.""

Responding to Text - Baseball Saved Us

Respond to this passage by drawing what you think the guard in the tower looks like.

"I glanced at the guardhouse behind the left field foul line and saw the man in the tower, leaning on the rail with the blinding sun glinting off his sunglasses. He was always watching, always staring."

Responding to Text - Baseball Saved Us

How does this passage make you feel? Has anyone ever called you an unkind name? How did it make you feel? Have you ever called someone else an unkind name? How do you think it made them feel? Did anybody try to stick up for you? Did it help?

"Then it was my turn at bat. The crowd was screaming. "The Jap's no good!" "Easy out!" I heard laughing. I swung twice and missed. The crowd roared each time I missed, drowning out my teammates, who were saying, "C'mon, Shorty, you can do it!" I stepped back to catch my breath."

Teammates

Peter Golenbock

Day 1: Introduction

Teacher Prep: Read this text through several times prior to this lesson. Think about what questions you have as you are reading. What questions might a student have? Pay close attention to the illustrations as well as the text. If you feel awkward with a "think aloud," practice before you read with the class. Make a three-section chart labeled **Questions -** Before Reading, During Reading, and After Reading.

Cognitive Prompt: Today I'm going to share with you the questions that come into my mind when I am reading. I want you to listen and think about what questions you have as I share the story.

Read: Read first half of book until J. Robinson comes to spring training ending with, "If he succeeded, they knew, others would follow."

Question: Use chart to record questions. Look at front and back cover. As a "Think-Aloud" share your questions about the book. "I wonder what this book it about? The title is Teammates. I wonder if these two guys are on a team together? They have the same uniform. What team do they play on? I wonder if they play on the Dodgers? Why is the number 42 on the uniform?" Write questions on the chart paper. As you read text continue to model asking the questions you think of. Use the text and illustrations. Don't write your questions on the chart paper during the story. You can do this at the end.

Discussion: Write questions that you had while reading on the chart under During Reading. "What are laws against segregation?" "Why didn't hotels rent rooms to black people?" " Why were the white players paid better than the Negro League players?" "What does 'apathetic about racial problems' mean? What does that look like?" Ask students what questions they had. Don't spend time answering questions today. This will be addressed later in the week. Encourage deeper questions than just recall.

Day 2: Questioning

Review: Story and questions thus far.
Cognitive Prompt: Think about questions you still have when I finish reading the story.
Read: Complete text
Discussion: Record student questions under During Reading. Model questions that you still have after finishing the book? "How long was it before there were more black players in baseball? Did Pee Wee and Jackie become good friends?" Write these questions under the After Reading section. Illicit student questions. Record questions.

Day 3: Questioning

Cognitive Prompt: Some of the questions we have are answered right in the text. Some of them are not. As I read I want you to listen for the questions that are answered right there.
Read: Reread text.
Discussion: Look at chart. Determine which questions were answered directly in the text. Code questions.
RT - Right There. These are the questions that are answered explicitly in the text.
Look at the rest of the questions. They should fit into either of the following categories. Explain and code.
C - Clarify. These are questions that are about concepts in the text such as segregation or apathy about racial problems.
BK - Background Knowledge. These are questions that can be answered by using personal knowledge and experience.

Day 4: Clarifying

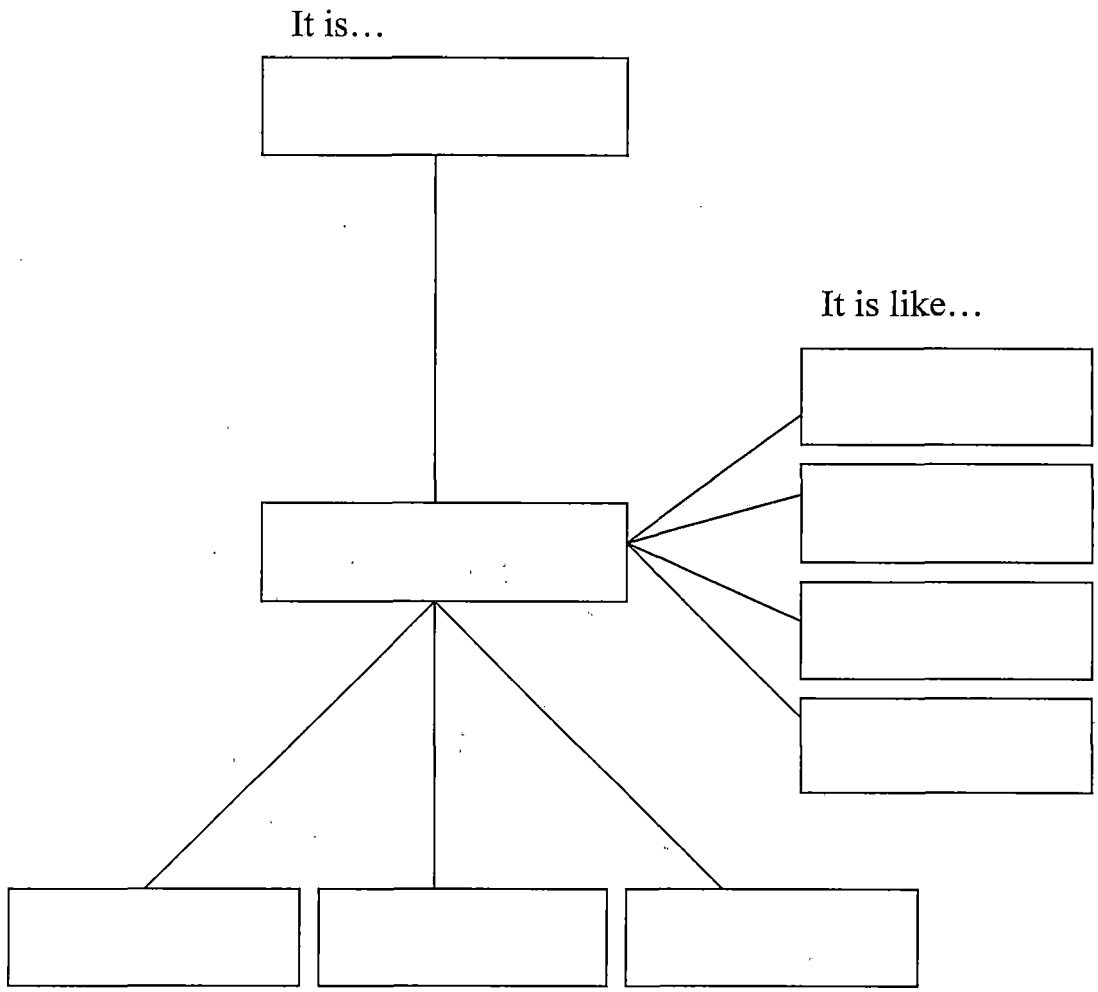
Read: Reread portions of the text that deal with racial prejudice.
Clarify: *Concept Definition* - Using 'Prejudice' as the concept complete with whole class.

Day 5: Clarifying

Read: Reread last three pages.
Clarify: *Concept Definition* - Using 'Teammates' as a concept, review and brainstorm as a whole class. Complete in small groups.

Make Connections: Revisit *KWL* chart. What else do we want to add now? Code the chart with where (which book) the new information came from.

Concept Definition Map



Developed by Cates-Darnell (2002); Adapted from Schwartz & Raphael (1985)

Home Run
Robert Burleigh

Day 1: Attributes of Narrative Text

Discussion: Display a copy of each narrative text that you have read in class so far including, Dirt of Their Skirts, Teammates, and Baseball Saved Us. Brainstorm a list of attributes of narrative text. Write on chart paper. You may include: **purpose:** to entertain, teach or inform, etc., **types:** fairy tales, adventures, science fiction, historical, etc., **organization:** characters, setting, problem, resolution, beginning, middle, end, paragraphs, themes, illustrations (typically artists rendering as opposed to photographs), **language features:** action verbs, sequencing, dialogue, descriptive language, etc.
Read: Read only narrative portion of text. **Do not** read baseball cards.
Cognitive Prompt: As I read, listen for the attributes of narrative text in the story.
Discussion: What attributes did you find?

Day 2: Figurative Language

Read: Reread narrative portion of text only.
Cognitive Prompt: Today I want you to take out your journals. As I read I want you to listen for language that the author uses that helps you "experience" the story. It gives you a feeling in your stomach, or a picture in your head, or you just like the way the words sound. Some words from the story that I really like are, "the bat go swish" and "He is theirs. They are his." As I am reading write down a few words that you really like.
Discussion: List words and phrases. Tell why they liked it.
Figurative Language: *Found Poem* - Using words and phrases from the chart create a poem.

Day 3: Attributes of Expository Text

Prior Knowledge: From guided reading boxes gather a selection of nonfiction text. Divide students into small groups. At each group place a selection of texts. Give students an opportunity to peruse texts

looking for specific text features. "What is the purpose for this kind of text? How is it organized? What kind of language do they use? What do you see in the book besides pictures that help you to understand the information?"

Discussion: Create a chart for Attributes of Expository Text. You may include **purpose:** to relate factual information **organization:** topic, facts, diagrams, photos, illustrations, labels, captions, bold print, headings, subheadings, etc.

Day 4: Topic with supporting details

Model: Make an overhead of the baseball card titled "How Babe Got His Name." Using overhead, model finding the topic and the supporting details. Use two colored pens to highlight the information, one color for the topic, another for the supporting details.

Topic Search: Divide students into groups of four. Give each group copies of a "baseball card." Using their cards the students will find the topic and supporting details. Color code text using crayons.

Discussion: Each group share their topic and supporting details.

Day 5: Comparison of Narrative and Expository Text

Review: Review charts of narrative and expository attributes.

Discussion: Compare Home Run to the charts. Which features of each text type does it include? (Students can use their copies of baseball cards as well).

Journal: Is there one type of text that you prefer? Why?

Make Connections: Revisit *KWL* chart. What else do we want to add now? Code the chart with where (which book) the new information came from.

Found Poem

Coleridge calls poetry the best words in the best order. Many pieces of good prose are really poems just waiting for someone to discover them.

Ask students to:
Underline the words and images that are the most powerful to you. These are the words that express the feeling in a passage. These are your "poetic words."

Play with those "poetic words" until you find an order that you like.

Example of Found Poem from The Old Man and the Sea

. . .of the boats were silent except for the dip of the oars. They spread apart after they were out of the mouth of the harbor and each one headed for the part of the ocean where he hoped to find fish. The old man knew he was going far out and he left the smell of the land behind and rowed out into the clean early morning smell of the ocean. He saw the phosphorescence of the Gulf weed in the water as he rowed over the part of the ocean that the fisherman called the great well because there was a sudden deep of seven hundred fathoms where all sorts of fish congregated because of the swirl of the current made against the steep walls of the floor of the ocean. Here there were concentrations of shrimp and bait and sometimes schools of squid in the deepest holes and these rose close to the surface at night where all the wandering fish fed on them.

The silent boats,
the dip of the oars
into the clean,
early morning smell of the
ocean

Currents swirl,
wandering fish feed,
the sea kind and beautiful.

Casey at the Bat

Ernest Lawrence Thayer
Illustrated by Christopher Bing

Day 1: Introduction

Cognitive Prompt: As I read, listen carefully to the descriptive language. Use it to make "mind movies." When I finish the story I want you to draw one of the pictures you created in your mind.
Read: Read text without showing the illustrations.
Cognitive Prompt: As I reread the story, write down key words or phrases that made the picture come alive in your head.
Read: Reread text without showing the illustrations.
Share: Share the illustrations and key phrases (whole groups, small group).

Day 2: Illustrator's Purpose

Cognitive Prompt: Yesterday we used figurative language from the story to make pictures. Our purpose was to illustrate that language in pictures. Today as we look at the artist's illustrations I want you to think about his purpose.
Read: Reread text sharing and discussing illustrations on each page. Note how the illustrations support and add to the text (Read through the illustration pages before you attempt this with the class. Pay special attention to the title page. Note how the inset articles create an historical setting for the text.).
Discussion: What is the illustrator's purpose? Why does he choose this type of illustration? Make some comparisons between the purpose and finished products of the illustrator and the class.

Day 3: Character Analysis

Discussion: Model physical attributes of the teacher. Describe and chart descriptive words about the physical appearance of the teacher or a volunteer. Use words such as: tall, brown hair, smiles a lot, man, wears glasses, etc. Teacher then gives three examples of character attributes and evidence for example: I am very caring. I found a lost kitten and

I put up signs around my neighborhood and kept it until the owner was able to come and get it.
Journal: Students write three of their own character attributes and give evidence in journal. Pair share.

Day 4: Character Analysis/Inferring

Read: Give each student a copy of the text from Casey at the Bat.
Model: Use overhead of the text from Casey at the Bat. Read from beginning of text. Starting at "They thought if only Casey could but get a whack at that . . ." ask, what does this tell us about what kind of person Casey is? (i.e. Reliable). Underline the words that show (imply) Casey's character attributes. Write the attribute above the underlined text. Guide students to underline and write on their text copy as modeled. As a whole group continue to find and document character attributes and evidence on each subsequent line.
Discussion: Chart Casey's character traits. Think about traits that might be inferred in the text such as: condescending, reliable, humble. Save chart and student text copies for tomorrow.

Day 5: Character Analysis

Review: Review character attributes from chart.
Character Analysis: In small groups, work together using text copies and chart to create a *Literary Report Card* for Casey.

Character Report Card _____

In:

Teacher (your name):

Subject	Grade	Comments

Developed by Cates-Darnell (2002)

APPENDIX B

ADDITIONAL HELPS

Asking Questions Through the Reading Process

After modeling questions you have while reading, help students to monitor their own questions. Use this guide to help students to contain and document the questions they have before, during, and after reading. Students may highlight, write in margins, or use sticky notes to write their questions "in the moment" (as they read). Then they may transfer those questions to the guide. This process may take more than one day.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Asking Questions Throughout the Reading Process

Readers ask questions before, during, and after reading.

Questions Before Reading

Look at the cover and read the title, record any questions you might have before you start to read.

Questions During Reading

While reading, highlight or mark a part of the text or picture where you have a questions and write your question below.

Questions After Reading

When you finish reading, write down any other questions.

Developed by Cates-Darnell (2002); Adapted from Harvey & Goudvis

Change Frame

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to help students look at different perspectives. The student must look at the events of the story through the eyes of various characters.

Activity: Choose two or more characters or groups that represent opposing viewpoints in the story. Complete the questions from the perspective of each character.

Example: The Three Little Pigs

Who? *Pig 1 and 2*	Who? *Pig* 3	Who? *Wolf*
What problems did they face? *They needed to build a home and find protection from the wolf.*	What problems did they face? *He needed to build a home and protect himself and his brothers from the wolf.*	What problems did they face? *He needed to find something to eat.*

Change Frame Graphic Organizer

Who?	Who?	Who?
What problems did they face?	What problems did they face?	What problems did they face?
What caused these problems?	What caused these problems?	What caused these problems?
How did they solve the problems?	How did they solve the problems?	How did they solve the problems?

Developed by Cates-Darnell (2002); Adapted from Buehl

Thought Bubbles

Some students need multiple ways of exploring their thinking. Invite students to show what they are thinking about the text using thought bubbles. In the corner of a blank piece of paper the student may draw a picture of a reader with a thought large thought bubble. The student will draw or write something that they are thinking of at various points as they read the text.

QAR

As students become more adept at asking questions as they read, extend the strategy by organizing questions into four groups.

Right-there questions: These are questions for which the answer can be found directly stated in the text.

Think/Search questions: These are questions for which the reader must infer the answer from the text. The reader may have to piece together details of use information from various portions of the text to construct an answer.

Author and Me questions: These are questions that require the reader to make connections between the text and their own lives and experience.

On your own questions: These are big picture questions. They usually have to do with the theme of the text. They may have to do with the readers own values and beliefs. They relate to the world not just the text.

APPENDIX C

RESOURCES

RESOURCES

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