

WHAT'S ESSENTIAL? UNDERSTANDING LITERACY CONTENT K - 12

WHAT SHOULD BE TAUGHT?

SURFACE STRUCTURE SYSTEMS

GOAL-- Independent word use in which children use print knowledge to identify and write words, read and write fluently, orally and silently.

Grapho-Phonic (K - 2)

Teachers model and think aloud to show:

letters and features of letters

letters in upper and lower case

all sounds associated with each letter

the alphabetic principle - the principle that there is a consistent relationship between letters and corresponding sounds

pronunciation of specific sounds within words and to show how identifying those

patterns in words -- spelling patterns or word families

the process of pronouncing unknown words using the grapho-phonetic system

the use of the grapho-phonetic system to make early attempts at writing words

Lexical (K - 12)

Teachers model and think aloud to show that:

all words can be recognized by sight (without sounding out)

words are the same despite graphic differences in different contexts (i.e.

FROG, frog, *Frog*)

words have particular features(i.e. vowels in each syllable)

words should be formed consistently in different contexts

instantly recognized words must also be written and spelled conventionally through all writing experiences

readers build a large and growing bank of instantly recognized words through in visual exposure to words in the environment, the content areas and through all reading experiences

readers store all newly learned words in visual memory so they can be read fluently when next encountered

readers and writers use the lexical system to identify words and write words rapidly and fluently

Syntactic (K - 12)

Teachers model and think aloud to show that:

readers recognize (hear) when language is constructed in a grammatically correct manner when spoken or written at the word, sentence, paragraph and whole text level

certain words carry the weight of the meaning when spoken or written in a particular context

readers and writers recognize and write increasingly complex word, sentence, paragraph, and text structures in reading and writing

readers use knowledge of text structure and conventions of language to read and write fluently and comprehensibly

What do children need to know and be able to do in order to show us they can use each surface structure system independently?

Grapho-Phonic (K - 2)

recognize spelling patterns and word families --- generate new words from patterns already known

point and slide -- gradually reveal the letters in a word, pronouncing each sound or phoneme until the child correctly pronounces the word

use invented spelling during daily writing

isolate sounds from within words and pronounce the sounds correctly

pronounce sounds based on recognition of letters and blends out of context

identify grapho-phonically similar words in context

substitute a likely word, when unsure how to pronounce a word in or out of context -- monitor attempt for graphic and/or phonic accuracy

search for words within words that are familiar; use them to pronounce unknown words and to write them

represent all syllables when attempting to pronounce or write an unknown word

Lexical

demonstrate (write or show) various graphic representations of a word, knowing that they are the same word

use words he/she recognizes visually in daily writing, gradually build a large bank of conventionally spelled words, use them predictably in daily writing

demonstrate how to purposefully remember what a word looks like (closing eyes and picturing a word), consistently read known words accurately

mark and collect frequently used words (sight words and words associated with content being studied)

practice increasingly fluent reading both orally and silently in increasingly difficult text

read with reasonable speed given the demands of the text

Syntactic

become familiar with and discuss the "architecture" of language and discover the syntactic system as the structure and predictability of language

recognize (hear) increasingly subtle examples and non-examples of syntax

predict accurately and/or substitute a grammatically correct form when unsure about a word (i.e. substitute a noun for a noun, a verb for a verb)

predict based on text features and text structures (beginning, middle, end, chronological, etc.)

use increasingly complex sentence and text structure forms in writing

practice fluent oral reading, account for varying punctuation

recognize author style in relation to flexible use of syntax

use word analysis strategies -- look for recognized words within words, root words, compound words, prefixes and suffixes

experiment with syntactical forms for various stylistic effects in writing

understand various text and paragraph structures from the word (root words, prefixes and suffixes) to text level in narrative (character, setting, conflict, sequence of events, resolution) and expository (cause and effect, compare/contrast, chronological, enumerative, descriptive and problem/solution) text

WHAT SHOULD BE TAUGHT?

DEEP STRUCTURE SYSTEMS

GOAL Independent construction of meaning and interpretation during reading and independent construction of meaning during writing

Semantic

Teachers think aloud and model to show:

that a large and growing vocabulary is essential to comprehending text and writing well

that readers develop knowledge not only of literal word meanings, but of associated words and phrases, advancing to more subtle meanings associated with words

relative meanings to a word (this is what this word always means, may mean, will never mean)

how readers build an understanding of concepts that relate to words and phrases

how readers generate a wide variety of associations (personal and from background knowledge) for word meanings

connections and relationships among many words

how writers select the word with the closest gradation of meaning given purpose/audience, showing nuanced understanding of the potency of particular words in particular contexts

Schematic

Teachers think aloud and model to show that:

readers know when they understand, when they don't, what they need to understand and what they might do to repair comprehension when it breaks down

readers use personal experiences that relate to the text to enhance understanding

readers use world knowledge that relates to the text to enhance understanding

readers know how to create background knowledge when lacking in order to understand more challenging material

readers use knowledge of text types, elements, structures, genres and formats to enhance understanding

readers use knowledge about the author's style to better understand text

readers use knowledge of related texts to better understand a given text

readers ask questions to clarify and probe meaning more deeply

readers create detailed images from all 5 senses and emotions in order to understand more deeply

readers change their minds, incorporating new information during reading, and create a cogent synthesis incorporating information from other sources as well as values, beliefs and opinions after reading

readers understand the whole text, draw conclusions about it that may include inferences, opinions and judgments

readers understand key themes and ideas in a text

readers make decisions about what is important to remember

readers build a greater background knowledge than is actually used when writing fiction, non-fiction or poetry

Pragmatic

Teachers think aloud, model and demonstrate to show how:

readers interact with others or use writing to better understand the ideas in a given text

readers and writers set and/or use a particular purpose for reading and writing

writers adapt written form and content for an audience

readers and writers understand the social mores associated with building and creating meaning through written and spoken language

readers enhance comprehension because of and in conjunction with the interpretations of others

writers use others' opinions and recommendations to revise one's writing

readers assume a stance or bias with respect to the author, the text, other readers

readers create models (oral, written, artistic and dramatic) to show thinking about text

recall and reapply concepts in new texts and contexts

What do children need to know and be able to do in order to show us they can use each deep structure system independently?

USE COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES (to support the semantic, schematic and pragmatic systems)

Children think aloud to show that they can:
Determine Importance

Infer

Ask Questions

Activate and create schema

Use sensory and emotional images

Monitor for meaning

Synthesize

UNDERSTAND KEY DIFFERENCES IN NARRATIVE AND EXPOSITORY TEXT GENRES, STRUCTURES AND FEATURES (to support the syntactic and schematic systems)

Children can identify, discuss, model and write to show that they can:

recognize and use key types of expository paragraph structures (chronological, cause and effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution, enumerative, descriptive)

recognize and overcome hurdles faced in expository text (anaphora, vocabulary load, inefficient predicting, insufficient background knowledge for text content and/or format, naïve conceptions)

recognize and use key features of expository text (bold print, captions, heading, italicized print, graphs, figures, photographs and charts)

recognize and use a variety of narrative text structures (leads, endings, character, setting, conflict, sequence of events, building action, creating suspense)

recognize and use exposition, action and dialogue in narrative text to develop character and plot

recognize and use key features and structures of other types of text such as poetry, persuasive text, journalism, opinion/editorial, biography, etc.

understand the differing demands for comprehending a wide range of text types - use different text management strategies depending on the demands of the text (re-reading, writing about text, note-taking, adjusting the pace of reading)

write persuasively and meaningfully in a wide range of genres

recognize and use characteristics and qualities of a wide variety of genres

LIVE A LITERATE LIFE (to support the semantic and pragmatic system)

Children:

use the rituals and routines that characterize a serious reader's and writer's life,

know how a reader selects material to read, choosing to challenge him/herself in increasingly more difficult texts and writing tasks

use a variety of approaches to select writing topics wisely and write for a particular audience and purpose write

seek others' opinions and feedback; use that feedback to shape one's own opinions or modify their writing and their interpretations of text

understand that readers and writers are changed because of what they read and write - articulate those changes in themselves

engage fervently in reading and writing every day

dwell and focus on certain ideas in order to understand and/or articulate them with more depth and insight

are willing to struggle and persevere in order to understand a concept or to articulate it in writing

manipulate their own thinking (use comprehension strategies) during a particular reading in order to understand more effectively

create oral, written, artistic and/or dramatic models of their thinking about a text

build an increasing stamina for reading and writing

engage in rigorous discourse about text and other's writing

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