

Content Literacy: Comprehension Across the Curriculum



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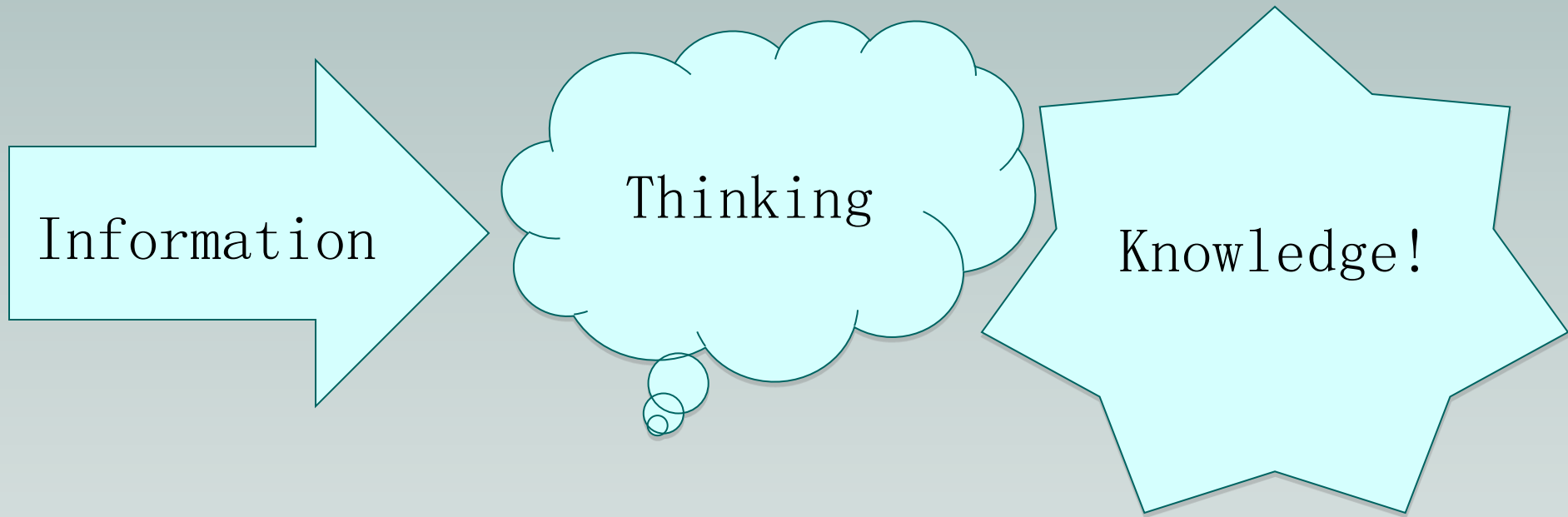
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“ We teach comprehension strategies
so kids can acquire and use knowledge. ”



“ We turn information into knowledge by thinking about it.”

Strategies for Active Reading

Active Readers:

❑ Monitor Comprehension

- listen to their inner voice and follow the inner conversation,
- notice when meaning breaks down and/or mind wanders
- leave tracks of their thinking by jotting thoughts when reading
- stop, think and react to information
- talk about the reading before, during and after reading
- respond to reading in writing
- employ “fix up strategies” ---reread for clarification, read on to construct meaning, use context to break down an unfamiliar word, skip difficult parts and continue on to see if meaning becomes clear, check and recheck answers and thinking, examine evidence

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❑ Activate and Connect to Background Knowledge

- refer to prior personal experience
- activate prior knowledge of the content, style, structure, features and genre
- connect the new to the known- use what they know to understand new information
- merge their thinking with new learning to build knowledge base
- activate their schema to read strategically

❑ Ask Questions

- wonder about the content, concepts, outcomes and genre
- question the author
- question the ideas and the information
- read to discover answers and gain information
- wonder about the text to understand big ideas
- do further research and investigation to gain information

❑ **Infer and Visualize Meaning**

- use context clues to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words
- draw conclusions from text evidence
- predict outcomes, events and characters' actions
- surface underlying themes
- answer questions that are not explicitly answered in the text
- create interpretations based on text evidence
- visualize as well as hear, taste, smell and feel the words and ideas

❑ **Determine Importance**

- sift important ideas from interesting but less important details
- target key information and code the text to hold thinking
- distinguish between what the reader thinks is important and what the author most wants the reader to take away
- construct main ideas from supporting details
- choose what to remember

❑ **Synthesize and Summarize**

- take stock of meaning while reading
- add to knowledge base
- paraphrase information
- move from facts to ideas
- use the parts to see the whole--read for the gist
- rethink misconceptions and tie opinions to the text
- revise thinking during and after reading
- merge what is known with new information to form a new idea, perspective, or insight
- generate knowledge



Comprehension Continuum

Answers Literal Questions	Retells	Merges Thinking with Content	Acquires Knowledge	Actively Uses Knowledge
<p>Answering literal questions shows that learners can skim and scan for answers, pick one out that matches the question, and have short-term recall.</p> <p>Only demonstrates surface understanding.</p>	<p>Retelling shows that learners can organize thoughts sequentially and put them into their own words. Shows short-term recall of events in a narrative and bits of information in nonfiction.</p> <p>Does not, in and of itself, demonstrate understanding.</p>	<p>Real understanding takes root when learners merge their thinking with the content by connecting, inferring, questioning, determining importance, synthesizing, and reacting to information.</p> <p>Understanding begins here.</p>	<p>Once learners have merged their thinking with the content, they can begin to acquire knowledge and insight. They can learn, understand, and remember.</p> <p>Shows more robust understanding.</p>	<p>With new insights and understandings, learners can actively use knowledge and apply what they have learned to the experiences, situations, and circumstances at hand to expand understanding and even take action.</p> <p>Understanding used for problem solving and acting.</p>
<p>Teacher Language</p> <p>What is...? Where did...? Who was...? How did...? How many...?</p>	<p>Teacher Language</p> <p>Tell me what happened. Tell me what this was about. Retell what you read. What comes first, second, third? When did...?</p>	<p>Teacher Language</p> <p>What do you think? What did you learn? What does this remind you of? What do you wonder? What do you visualize? What do you infer? What is this mostly about? What makes you say/think that? How did you come up with that? What, if anything, confuses you?</p>	<p>Teacher Language</p> <p>What did you learn that you think is important to remember? Why does it matter? What do you think the author most wants you to get out of this? What evidence can you cite to make your claim? What do you think are some big ideas here? What difference does it make? Say more about that.</p>	<p>Teacher Language</p> <p>What do you want to do about this? Why do you want to take action? Is there a way you can get involved? How do you think you can help? How would you convince others of your point of view? What is your plan? How might you engage the help of others?</p>

“Reading and writing are always better when they are tools not goals.”

If we don't realign the current curricular imbalances, science and social studies may suffer, but ultimately reading and writing will suffer.

Reading and writing are not about reading and writing in general. They are about reading and writing particular texts that are grounded in particular experiences.

PD Pearson



Principles & Practices of Content Literacy Teaching and Learning

Use comprehension strategies flexibly to turn information into knowledge and actively use it.

Live a life full of wonder and curiosity.

Interact with text, resources, teacher and each other.

Merge thinking with new learning to learn, understand and remember it.

View nonfiction as compelling and accessible.

Make thinking audible and visible.

Bathe content learning in rich talk and discussion.

Build interest and intrigue through visuals, artifacts & interviews as well as text.

Grasp the big ideas and essential questions they encounter as they read research.

Content Literacy Lessons

- Stop, think and react to new information STR: Annotate text with information and thinking.
- Use parallel annotation: Record text information on the left and thinking on the right
- Distinguish between what the text is about and what it makes you think about.
- View and read informational text features
- Interpret and infer from infographics
- Crack open features: Infer the meaning of titles and subheads
- Teach signal words & phrases and their purposes
- Distinguish your thinking from the author's
- Ask questions and read and view to answer them
- Ask questions to read critically: Use the Definition / Consequence/Action framework
- Form an educated opinion: Distinguish between an opinion and an informed opinion
- Debate an issue: Use evidence to support your claim

Signal Words and Phrases

Signal words cue readers to pay attention to what's coming up. They signal a change in thinking, a contrast or a similar relationship between ideas, a conclusion etc. As kids read informational text, they will encounter a wide variety of signal words and phrases. Co-Construct an anchor chart of signal words for display in the classroom. And have kids be on the lookout for signal words in their own reading and have them note the purpose. Paying attention to signal words and phrases is a necessary skill for strategic readers as they read nonfiction in their daily lives and when they encounter nonfiction on the test!

Signal Word

Purpose

Surprisingly	Be prepared to expect the unexpected
Importantly	Signals importance! Stop and pay attention
But	Signals a change to come
However	Prepare to change your thinking
Likewise	Cues a similarity
Consequently,	Signals a result/cause and effect
Before, After, Next, Finally, Then, Now	All show sequence

Signal Phrase

Purpose

In conclusion	Wraps up and synthesizes the information
In Sum	Wraps up and synthesizes
There are several factors	Signals an answer to a big question or idea
There are several reasons	Same as above
There are several purposes	Same as above
As opposed to	Signals a contrast
On the other hand	Signals a change to come
In addition to	Adds another factor
Because of	Cause and effect