Evidence-Based Instruction in Content Area Reading: What Do We Know?

How should research-based evidence guide us?

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What Have We Learned About the Characteristics of Effective Instruction?

Studies* indicate three areas of importance in effective instruction

- Classroom talk
- Curriculum materials
- Organization of instruction

(*References attached. Note, in particular, Allington, R. L., & Johnston, P. H. (2002). Reading to learn: Lessons from fourth-grade exemplary classrooms. NY: Guilford Press. These 3 categories are drawn from that work.)

Classroom Talk*

- Teachers expect, model, and teach respectful, supportive, and productive talk
- Teachers encourage students to engage each other’s ideas
- Discussion is common, including “tentative” talk
- Teachers place emphasis on process, and encourage further thinking and reflection, even about “correct” answers

Curriculum Materials*

- Instruction is multisourced
- Materials are multilevel
- Relevance and meaning are important aspects of curriculum materials
- Language, itself, is treated as a curriculum material


The Organization of Instruction*

- Curriculum is integrated across subjects, topics, and time.
- Collaborative, meaningful problem-solving is common.
- Students spend time in multiple and flexible groups, including whole class, small group, and individual activities.
- Teachers utilized managed choice—they strategically arrange for students to have choices and to make them productively.


What Have We Learned about Reading Comprehension?*

- Reading accuracy and fluency lays a foundation for gains in reading comprehension.
- Instruction in metacognitive strategies can improve comprehension.
- Strategy instruction embedded within the learning of content disciplines fosters comprehension development.
- Giving students choices, challenging tasks, and collaborative learning opportunities increases motivation to read and comprehend.
- Typical classroom teachers do not devote adequate time to the instruction of comprehension.


Effective instruction emphasizes essential comprehension routines.

- Focusing attention and setting purpose
- Organizing information during and after reading
- Elaborating on ideas and clarifying information
- Summarizing
- Self-monitoring and self-correcting
EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION scaffolds learning by gradually releasing responsibility from the teacher to children.

- Demonstration
- Guided Practice
- Independent Practice

STRATEGIC INSTRUCTION prepares the child to perform independently.

- Explains what to do
- Shows how to do it
- Explains when and why the strategy is useful

Teachers need to consider types, contexts, and purposes for response to texts.

- Types of response
  - Journal writing
  - Book talks
- Contexts for response
  - Collaborative
  - Individual
- Purposes of response
  - Aesthetic
  - Efferent

Effective teachers consider frequency, context, and types of self-assessment opportunities.

- Frequency
  - End of task
  - End of day
  - End of "unit"
- Context
  - Individual
  - Group
- Type
  - Oral
  - Written
A Classroom Portrait

A Typical Day in a Flexible & Multi-Grouped Classroom

- Community (Shared) Reading
  - Time each day when children read (or re-read) grade-appropriate text
- Just Right Reading
  - Time each day when children receive instruction in text that will support the development of particular word level and comprehension strategies
- On Your Own Reading
  - Time each day when children read anything of their own choosing

Texts for Community Reading

- Promote acquisition of grade-appropriate vocabulary, concepts, and language structures
  - Basal Anthology
  - Tradebooks
  - Content Area Textbooks
  - Newspapers
  - Magazines

Differentiating Instruction During Community Reading

- Story Introduction (Whole Class)
  - Preview text, develop background knowledge, make predictions
- Reading the Selection (Needs-Based Groups)
  - No Help
  - Silent reading
  - Partner rereading
  - Partner response
  - Individual response
  - With Help (Teacher-led Group)
  - Read aloud by teacher
  - Rereading with teacher or partner
  - Group Response (oral)
  - Individual Response (Written)
- Responding to the Selection (Small Groups)
  - e.g., Book Club (Raphael & McMahon, 1997)
Instructional Interventions that Make Difficult Text Accessible

- Preteaching Vocabulary
  - To introduce words that are essential to understanding
- Read Alouds & Choral Readings
  - To familiarize children with writer’s style and with specific vocabulary
- Assisted Reading
  - To “fill in” unknown words as necessary

Community Reading

Begin with semantic map—use to develop interest, motivation, knowledge.

Read p. 624 aloud to the group. Discuss the question posed at the end.

Set Purpose: As you read, think about major reasons why World War II began and ended as it did.

No Help
- Read The United States, pp. 624-627 silently.
- With a peer, discuss and list the reasons why the war began and ended as it did.
- In your journal, summarize the reasons the war began and ended as it did.
- Learning Center Activities
  - Learn more about the clean bombs and atomic energy
  - Visit website: www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/three/sfeature/index.html

With Help
- Read The United States, pp. 624-627 aloud.
- Re-read chapter with a partner
- With group, discuss and list reasons why the war began and ended as it did.
- Have students summarize reasons the war began and ended as it did in individual journal entries.

Semantic Map

World Leaders
- Mussolini
- Hitler
- Stalin
- Roosevelt

Places
- Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
- Normandy, France
- Hiroshima, Japan

Ways People Were Imprisoned
- concentration camps

Weapons of War
- Atomic bomb
- Holocaust
Strategy Lesson - Cause and Effect

- Explain---
  - a cause is why something happens; an effect is what happens
- Demonstrate---
  - Reread pages 626-627. Outline for students causes and effects. Begin by modeling and thinking aloud...
- Guide
  - Complete the cause-effect chart together, decreasing teacher support as student expertise increases
- Apply
  - Ask students to consider cause and effects as they read in small groups

Causes and Effects

- Japanese planes bombed US navy ships anchored at Pearl Harbor
- Germany & Italy declared war on the US
- Government increased spending on things they needed in the war.
- Men went to war.
- Patriotism was strong and so was fear of the enemy.
- Japanese Americans soon faced more mistreatment.
- Congress declared war on Japan
- The US joined the other allies
- More jobs were created.
- Women took the jobs in the factories.
- Large numbers of Germans, Italians, and Japanese living in the US were arrested on suspicion of working against the US.
- Many were forced to spend the rest of the war at relocation camps.

Just Right Groups

- Have students investigate the causes and effects of World War II. Create 3 needs-based reading groups allowing selection from the following texts:
  - My Hiroshima, by Junko Morimoto
  - Hiroshima, No Pika, by Toshi Maruki
  - Faithful Elephants, by Yukio Tsuchiya
  - Sadako and The Thousand Paper Cranes, by Eleanor Coerr
  - Number the Stars, by Lois Lowry
- As they read, have each group create a cause-effect chart. After the reading, have students display the chart and teach what they learned.
- Create a class chart combining causes and effects each group learned about.
- Discuss — How are the events of WWII similar to the events of today?

Effective Instructional Practices

- There are established and evident classroom routines that govern students' behavior, student movement, and instructional lessons.
- Teachers utilize diverse instructional groupings, and especially emphasize small group and individual work.
- Teachers provide students with ample opportunities for reading and writing.
- Teachers integrate reading, writing, and content areas.
- Teachers provide instruction that supports self-regulation and independence.
- Teachers challenge and involve all students.
- Teachers listen and observe to adapt instruction.
- Teachers provide explicit instruction.
- Teachers emphasize strategic and critical thinking.
- Teachers value and facilitate discussion