

The background is a light beige or cream color with numerous black ink splatters and dots of varying sizes scattered across it, particularly concentrated on the left side.

What's Essential in Literacy Teaching and Learning?

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Our Goals

- What characterizes the best of the best literacy instruction?
- Imagine a great Reader's/Writer's Workshop for your students!
- Delve deeply into your own reading – compare your experience to what we know about student's needs.
- Discover what's essential. What matters most to kids in reading, writing, speaking and listening?
- Explore comprehension strategy instruction – a new language of thought for you and your students.
- See some kids in action!

Think back to your literacy education

- Were there memorable teachers?
- If so, what made them so?
- What personal and professional characteristics do you recall?
- How did they approach literacy instruction (or instruction in any other content area)?
- Share your insights with a partner.

The Most Effective Literacy Teachers

- Focus on a few key concepts;
- Of great import;
- That are taught in great depth;
- Over a long period of time;
- And applied in a variety of texts and contexts.

The Most Effective Literacy Teachers

- Raise expectations for children's learning by exploring where comprehension strategies *lead* with their students and colleagues – recognize and explore the dimensions and outcomes of understanding with their students;
- Focus deep structure (comprehension) instruction on strategies known to be used by proficient readers, thinking aloud to reveal their own thinking, then gradually release responsibility to students to use the strategies independently;
- Focus surface structure instruction on the skills known to be essential for children's fluency word learning;

The Most Effective Literacy Teachers

- Use a wide variety of texts including leveled texts to develop fluency (word learning) and texts rich in ideas to develop comprehension;
- Teach text elements and text structures to help children navigate different genres;
- Create a Literacy Studio (workshop setting) that allows daily time to for teachers to confer with individuals and meet with invitational groups (small, needs-based);

The Most Effective Literacy Teachers

- Create a classroom environment conducive to scholarly oral interactions, intimate conversation focused on deeper comprehension and growing independence for students;
- Are themselves readers and avid learners, constantly scrutinizing their own reading and understanding processes in order to provide the most precise and responsive instruction;
- Provide lengthy periods of time for students to read and write independently every day.

The Most Effective Literacy Teachers

- Talk to a partner:
 - What pieces of this discussion most confirm your beliefs about children and learning?
 - Which challenge your beliefs?
 - What are your two or three biggest priorities for the coming year?

What's Essential?

Focusing on the most important content K - 8

Let's Delve into our own Reading

- Listen as I read A Year and A Day by Edwidge Danticat.
- Re-read the piece annotating places where you are most aware of your own thinking.
- Share your thinking about the piece with a partner.
- What do you notice about what supports YOU as a reader?
- What does this say to you about work with students?

A Starting Premise

- People learn (retain and reapply) best when they:
 - Focus on a few concepts,
 - Of great import,
 - Taught in depth,
 - Over a long period of time,
 - Applying them in a variety of texts.
-

How do we know what's essential for children's literacy learning?

- Research has fairly clear answers
 - We understand that effective literacy learning (reading, writing, speaking and listening) is dependent on our use of **3 surface structure systems** and **3 deep structure systems**
 - We need to seek a **balance** between surface and deep structure instruction:
 - 50/50 balance in primary grades
 - 20/80 balance thereafter
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A Closer Look at the Systems

- Surface Structure Systems (word identification, fluency related to the visible, audible aspects of language)
 - Grapho Phonic
 - Letters, sounds, alphabetic principle, phonemic awareness, decoding, encoding - pronouncing words for the first time
 - Lexical
 - Instantaneous word recognition, visual memory for words, spelling - up to 300,000 words in our lexicon - pulling up words in our "mind's eye", teaching students to store words in their lexicon
 - Syntactic
 - Understanding and using language structures at the word, sentence and whole text level - using our "mind's ear" to hear when words, sentences and longer text sound like language
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A Closer Look at the Systems

Deep Structure Systems (creating meaning using the invisible/inaudible aspects of language)

- Semantic
 - Understanding word meanings ~ word usage, building associations and memories related to new words incidental and intentional acquisition of new words
- Schematic
 - Understanding ideas, themes, connecting existing schema to new information, creating schema, writing and speaking meaningfully
- Pragmatic
 - Using what one understands to interact with others and/or deepen understanding, writing and speaking tailored to a particular audience or purpose

Observation #1 – Instruction!!

- Focus on the interaction between teacher and students
– note a gradual release of responsibility from teacher to students.
- Focus on what is taught – the link between the book, the teacher and the students is *thinking*.
- Focus on the text. In what ways does this text invite students to think?
- Take notes related to these three questions.

Debrief --

- What did you notice about the interaction between teacher and students? Was there a clear gradual release of responsibility from teacher to students?
- What did you notice about the content taught? How was this lesson about thinking?
- What did you notice about the text choice? In what ways does this text invite students to think?
- What surprised you? What might you try in your classroom?

Our Goals

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Welcome back!

- Talk with a partner about the insights and questions you have related to the six systems
 - Grapho-phonetic
 - Lexical
 - Syntactic
 - Semantic
 - Schematic
 - Pragmatic

Comprehension Strategy Instruction in your Classroom

Conditions for Understanding

We learn (retain and reapply) best when they:

- Focus on a few concepts,
- Of great import,
- Taught in depth,
- Over a long period of time,
- Applying them in a variety of texts and contexts.

A Bit of Background

- Comprehension strategy instruction is supported by decades of research
- Children should be involved in strategy learning from the earliest grades through high school
- Strategies are the “means to the end”, not the standard, the outcome or the objective. Strategies are tools to deepen understanding
- Students learn thinking strategies through the gradual release of responsibility model

The Comprehension Strategies

- Monitor for Meaning
- Use Schema
- Infer
- Ask Questions
- Determine Importance
- Synthesize

Comprehension Strategies: A process to use with students

- Let's return to our own reading of A Year and a Day by Edwidge Danticat
- Re-read the piece focusing on the strategies you use the most - annotate
- Talk to a partner - what did you notice on this reading of the piece with respect to the comprehension strategies?

Best approaches to comprehension instruction

- Thinking aloud and modeling are the tools of the trade – and they're different!
- Great comprehension instruction is based on the Gradual Release of Responsibility model (Pearson/Gallagher)
- Let's try it!
- I'll think aloud and model using A Year and a Day –
- Work with a partner to do the same – see if you can use thinking aloud and modeling

Living in a Literacy Studio

The Literacy Studio

- Crafting
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Deep and Surface Structure Systems
- Composing
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Deep and Surface Structure Systems
- Invitational Groups
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Deep and Surface Structure Systems
- Reflecting

Crafting

- Large group, heterogeneous instruction focused on some surface structure systems, all deep structure systems (syntactic, semantic, schematic)
- Three to five days a week
- Thinking aloud/modeling/demonstration key teaching strategies

Crafting

Goals for Crafting Sessions include:

- Intellectual engagement
- Probing ideas
- Focusing intently on a comprehension strategy
- Content that is critical **beyond** the current context, assignment or text
- Understanding the world of readers and writers

Crafting: Your turn

- Talk to a partner about how this fits into your existing plans about how to structure your workshop.
- What is new?
- What elements do you hope to incorporate in your workshop in the coming year?

Composing

- Extended, daily opportunity for children to read and write (independent reading/writing time, 75 – 90 minutes 3 – 5, 20 – 30 minutes, 6 - 8)
- An opportunity to apply the surface and deep structure strategies recently taught
- Time for the teacher to confer with individuals and/or meet with small groups
- Time for children to discuss books and share writing for particular purposes

Composing: your turn

- Talk to a partner about how this fits into your existing plans about how to structure your workshop.
- What is new?
- What elements do you hope to incorporate in your workshop in the coming year?

Invitational Groups

- Small group meetings in which the teacher works with a group of invited children
- Invitational Groups meet for a purpose and then disband
- To introduce a skill others already apply i.e., surface structures, particularly the grapho-
phonic and syntactic
- To provide more in-depth instruction for students who aren't yet applying a skill or strategy already taught, particularly the schematic

Invitational Groups: Your turn

- Talk to a partner about how this fits into your existing plans about how to structure your workshop.
- What is new?
- What elements do you hope to incorporate in your workshop in the coming year?

Reflecting

- An opportunity for students to teach others to be as skillful and strategic as they are
- An opportunity to develop oral language (surface and deep)
- Application of the pragmatic system

Reflecting: your turn

- Talk to a partner about how this fits into your existing plans about how to structure your workshop.
- What is new?
- What elements do you hope to incorporate in your workshop in the coming year?

Planning for your year...

- Work with a partner (near your grade level or specialty) to create a plan for the second or third two weeks of your work with children. This can be two individual plans or one you'll work on at the same time.
- Create at least four Crafting Sessions for Reading and/or Writing
 - What content focus will be appropriate for the whole class i.e
 - What are some of the texts and materials you wish to use?
 - Lay out some ideas for your think alouds in Crafting Sessions
 - Check the Comprehension Key Ideas document

Planning for your year

- What are your specific plans for identifying children's strengths and needs according to all six systems?
- What are your plans for establishing the routines, rituals, and environment?

Reflecting on our goals

- What stands out as most essential for you in the last two days?
- What will you work to implement immediately?
- What do you still have questions about?
- How can we help?