

ISACS - Louisville

Reading and Writing With Power

November 8, 2019

What is Reading Reconsidered?

- Close-reading of rigorous text (gist versus meaning-making)
- Nonfiction reading
- Writing in response to reading
- Vocabulary development

Why Reading Reconsidered?

- All other subjects rely on reading
- Getting the gist is not enough
- Close reading takes a considerable amount of practice
- Students need to read complex sentences to write complex sentences.
- Students need to write complex sentences to read complex sentences.
- An extensive vocabulary is a factor in effective reading comprehension.
- Our kids will have to read large quantities of predominantly nonfiction texts that are rigorous and challenging in college.

What does rigor look like?

Rigor from our students' perspective:

- Students doing cognitive work (writing, reading, problem solving) for at least half of the lesson.
- Students processing academic ideas in writing that requires complete sentences.
- Students reading challenging text and answering text-dependent questions about it.
- Students consistently giving evidence for their answers.

Rigor from the teacher's perspective:

- The teacher asks why and how questions.
- The teacher requires students to use technical vocabulary when discussing their ideas.
- The teacher consistently asks students to improve and develop their own and their classmates' initial answers.

5 Plagues of Reading Rigorous Texts

1. Archaic Text
2. Nonlinear Time Sequence
3. Complexity of Narrator
4. Complexity of Story (Plot/Symbolism)
5. Intentionally Resistant Texts

The 5 Plagues of Rigorous Reading

Archaic Text

People wrote and spoke differently in the past. Gradual but systematic exposure is needed to allow students to read foundational texts written prior to 1900.

Fiction Example

Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures; she hath urged her height,
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevailed with him.
A Midsummer Night's Dream 3.2.305-308

Nonfiction Example

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed...
The Declaration of Independence

Fiction texts that will introduce archaic text to students:

The Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter

The Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Williams

Little House on the Prairie by Laura Ingalls Wilder

A Bear Called Paddington by Michael Bond

Mary Poppins by P.L. Travers

Black Beauty by Anna Sewall

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz by Frank L. Baum

The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood by Howard Pyle

The Magician's Nephew by C.S. Lewis

The 5 Plagues of Rigorous Reading

Nonlinear Time Sequence

Frequent use of flashbacks, flashforwards, memory moments and other manipulations of time and sequence.

Fiction Example

“So mom got the postcard **today**. It says Congratulations in big curly letters...after three years of trying, she has actually made it. She’s going to be a contestant on The 20,000 Pyramid...And then there’s the date she’s supposed to show up, scrawled in blue pen on a line at the bottom of the card: April 27, 1979. Just like you **said**” (1).

When You Reach Me by Rebecca Stead

Fiction Example - Lower School

“Did you see her? Did you see Bigmama?”
We called our Grandma Bigmama. Not that she was big, but she was Mama’s, Mama.
Every summer we went to see her - Mama, my sisters, my brother, and me. **Daddy had to work. He’d come later. It took three days and two nights on the train. Now** we were nearly there.
“Cottondale. Cottondale. Next station stop, Cottondale,” yelled the conductor to the nearly empty train. “Don’t leave no babies on this train.” He made the same jokes **year after year.**

Bigmama by Donald Crews

Fiction texts that will introduce nonlinear time to students:

One Candle by Eve Bunting

The Barn by Avi

Holes by Sachar Lewis

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

Walk Two Moons by Sharon Creech

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

The Time Travelers Wife by Audrey Niffenegger

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

The 5 Plagues of Rigorous Reading

Complexity of Narrator

Fiction texts can have “unreliable narrators” whose depiction of events is deliberately or accidentally inaccurate. They can have multiple narrators, nonhuman narrators, or satiric narration. **Nonfiction** texts are subject to bias, and the author’s purpose must be considered.

Fiction Example

“The fact that her allowance was so small that it took her more than three weeks of skipping hot fudge sundaes to save enough for train fare was another example of injustice (Since you always drive to the city, Saxonberg, you probably don’t know the cost of train fare. I’ll tell you. Full fare one way costs one dollar and sixty cents...)” (6-7).

From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler
by E.L. Konigsburg

Nonfiction Example

In regards to the numbers of Jews shot by the *Einsatzgruppen*:

“I don't trust the statistics they contain', he said. 'Soldiers who are out in the field doing a job, they don't have time to count.' Each leader, he suggested, submitted reports whose aim was to 'show he's doing a jolly good job', and by inference, therefore, seriously exaggerated or even invented the numbers killed. 'Statistics like this are meaningless', Irving said. 'I'm suggesting', he continued, 'it is possible that at the time some overzealous SS officer decided to put in a fictitious figure in order to do Heinrich Himmler a favour.’”
David Irving, author

Fiction texts that will introduce complex narrators to students:

And the Dish Ran Away with the Spoon by Janet Stevens

The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by Jon Scieszka

Wonder by R.J. Palacio (multiple narrators)

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time by Mark Haddon

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak (narrated by Death)

Black Beauty by Anna Sewall (non-human narrator)

A Series of Unfortunate Events by Lemony Snicket

The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison

As I Lay Dying by William Faulkner (multiple narrators)

The Tell-Tale Heart by Edgar Allen Poe

The 5 Plagues of Rigorous Reading

Complexity of Story

Tracking and following texts that tell a hidden story is a distinct skill that requires practice.

Fiction Example

“And all that the Lorax left here in this mess was a small pile of rocks, with the one word...UNLESS. Whatever *that* meant, well, I just couldn’t guess... ‘But now,’ says the Once-ler, ‘Now that you’re here, the word of the Lorax seems perfectly clear. UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.’”
The Lorax by Dr. Seuss

Another fiction Example

“That is my message for you, comrades: Rebellion!...And among us animals let there be perfect unity, perfect comradeship, in the struggle. All men are enemies. All animals are comrades.”
Animal Farm by George Orwell

Fiction texts that will introduce complex plot and symbolism to students:

Where the Mountain Meets the Moon by Grace Lin (weaves fairy tales into the plot - texts within texts)

Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan

The Dreamer by Pam Munoz Ryan

House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros

A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare

Animal Farm by George Orwell

Lord of the Flies by William Golding

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis

“Harrison Bergeron” by Kurt Vonnegut

The 5 Plagues of Rigorous Reading

Resistant Text

Texts that deliberately resist easy meaning making. They often contain one or more of the other Plagues.

Fiction Example

“If you want to find Cherry-Tree Lane, all you have to do is ask the policeman at the cross-roads. He will push his helmet slightly to one side, scratch his head thoughtfully, and then he will point his huge white-gloved finger and say: “First to your right, second to your left, sharp right again and you’re there. Good-morning.”

And sure enough if you follow his directions exactly you will be there....

Mary Poppins by P.L. Travers

Nonfiction Example

“Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their “thus saith the Lord” far beyond the boundaries of their hometowns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco-Roman world, so am I compelled . . .”

“Letter from Birmingham Jail”

Fiction texts that will introduce resistant text to students:

Poetry

Mary Poppins by P.L. Travers

“Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce

The Sound and the Fury by William Faulkner

The Things They Carried by Tim O’Brien

Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut

Vocabulary

Rationale for Robust Vocabulary Instruction

- Students need to learn 43,000 words to be on track to graduate from college.
- Depth of word knowledge is a greater indicator of long-term success than breadth.
- First grade vocabulary predicted students' reading achievement in their junior year in high school.
- High knowledge third graders had vocabularies about equal to lowest-performing 12th graders.
- Once established, differences in vocabulary knowledge remain.
- Vocabulary is tightly related to reading comprehension across the age span.

Students cannot learn new words effectively or efficiently from context.

- Research states that if students encounter 100 new words in context, they will learn 5-15 of them.
- If students are to learn from reading, they must
 - Read enough to encounter lots of words
 - Read difficult enough texts to encounter unfamiliar words
 - Be able to decode adequately
 - Be able to recognize that the word is unknown
 - Be able to infer word meaning from the context

Examples of Context

General context - context that seems to provide enough information for the reader to place the word in a general category.

“Joe and Stan arrived at the party at 7 o’clock. By 9:30, the evening seemed to drag for Stan. But Joe really seemed to be having a good time at the party. ‘I wish I could be as **gregarious** as he is,’ thought Stan.”

It is easy to infer that **gregarious** describes someone who enjoys parties - the passage provides clues to that meaning. However, the specific characteristics of the word (that Joe is sociable and enjoys people) remain unclear.

Examples of Context

Nondirective contexts - the context is not helpful in directing the reader towards meaning.

“Dan heard the door open and wondered who had arrived. He couldn’t make out the voices. Then he recognized the **lumbering** footsteps on the stairs and knew it was Aunt Grace.”

Lumbering could mean **light, lively, familiar, or heavy** - each word would make sense but would all create a different meaning.

Students cannot learn new words by looking them up in the dictionary.

- Research shows that when students are asked to look up a definition in a dictionary and then write a sentence using the word:
 - 63% of students' sentences were judged to be "odd."
 - 60% of responses were unacceptable
 - Students frequently interpreted one or two words from a definition as the entire meaning.

Steps for Robust Vocabulary Instruction

1. Word Selection - Choose the right vocabulary words (approximately 10).
2. Develop accurate and student-friendly definitions.
3. Active Practice to Master Meaning - Allow for multiple encounters with the word (10) before the assessment.
4. Allow for continued interaction with the words across the school year.

Choosing the Right Words

	Explanation	Examples
Tier 1	Basic words that children are orally exposed to at a young age - don't teach these!	Walk, smile, under, over, break, hear...
Tier 2	Highly useful words found across a variety of subject areas and domains that are found often in written text, but not often in conversation, so they are not learned orally.	contradict, precede, circumstance, emerging, predict, elaborate, categorize, technique
Tier 3	Limited to specific topics and domains (filibuster, epidermis) - best learned when a specific need arises.	Chromosomes, reincarnation, perimeter, factorization,

Create Student Friendly Definitions

Explain the meaning in everyday language

- Must be easily understood by all students
- Student friendly definitions are sometimes longer than dictionary definitions.

Use words like *something*, *someone*, or *describes* to anchor the definition for students

- This is very difficult to do off the top of your head - prepare!

Resources:

- [Learners Dictionary](#)
- [Collins Dictionary](#)
- [Longman Dictionary](#)

Stereotype	Describes an often unfair and untrue belief that many people have about all people or things with a particular characteristic Ana <u>stereotypes</u> Kim as a Chinese girl who is up to no good in the vacant lot.
Suspiciously	Describes having or showing a feeling that something is wrong or that someone is behaving wrongly Ana watched Kim <u>suspiciously</u> through her binoculars.
Vacant	Something not filled, used, or lived in "I walked half a block, then crossed the street and reached the <u>vacant</u> lot."
Immigrate	Describes when someone comes to a new country to live permanently The members of the garden <u>immigrated</u> to the United States from many places.
Thrive	Describes when something or someone grows and develops successfully. Kim wants her bean plants to <u>thrive</u> .
Domestic	Describes something relating to or involving someone's home or family The garden had many <u>domestic</u> touches.
Decline	Describes when something becomes lower in amount or less in number <u>OR</u> to become worse in condition or quality The amount of trees in the rainforest is <u>declining</u> rapidly. My grandfather's health <u>declined</u> so he is in the hospital.
Oblige	Describes when someone or something is required to do something because of a law or rule or because it is necessary Mr. Myles wanted to stop at the garden and I <u>obliged</u> him at once.
Solitary	Describes being without anyone or anything else - alone Our <u>solitary</u> status in the garden ended when others arrived.
Foe	Describes an enemy Voldemort is Harry Potter's <u>foe</u> . Harry Potter defeats his <u>foe</u> , Voldemort, with his wand.

Strategy #1: Yay or Nay

Yay or Nay

Sort the words based on whether you feel they have a positive or negative connotation - be prepared to defend your ideas.

YAY

NAY

Strategy #2: Word Associations

Which word goes with *Rosa Parks*?

Which word goes with *a pet guinea pig*?

Strategy #3: Sentence Stems

The amount of time I have for homework **declined** because . . .

The teacher thought the students were acting **suspiciously** when...

Strategy #4: Word Relationships

Use these words in a sentence...

1. Would you rather be *obliged* to work in a group or complete a *solitary* project? Why? Answer in one sentence.
2. Would you rather live across from a vacant lot or a vacant house? Why? Answer in one sentence.

Use these words in a sentence . . .

Write one sentence using *immigrate* and *thrive*.

Art of the Sentence

Rationale for Art of a Sentence

When you assign writing you can find comprehension gaps.

When students write complex sentences, they are better able to read them, and vice versa.

As students write complex sentences, their speaking becomes more sophisticated.

Writing requires students to organize ideas and sequence information - it teaches them how to think.

Sentences are the building blocks to all writing - if they cannot write a decent sentence, how can we ask them to write a decent paragraph or a decent essay?

Writing one sentence forces students to make choices - there is power in scarcity

Art of a Sentence in Practice

If we want students to be great writers, we need to be willing to teach writing intentionally.

Instruction needs to be:

- Deliberate (not just repetition)
- Specific
- Focused on a goal

This does not just benefit the kids who struggle - all kids can benefit.

Single sentences do not take long to write - they are easy to incorporate as exit tickets, do nows, etc.

Why Sentence Starters and Templates?

Just the three words “At first glance” forced you to find a dichotomy.

Ideas become more complex

How you start a sentence can change how you think and what syntactical structures you use.

Starting a sentence for students can also get the “slow starters” off the ground and running

Strategy #1 Because, But, So

Requires specific and focused thinking

Because explains why something is true

But indicates a change in direction and forces students to consider opposing ideas

So leads to cause/effect conclusions

The content of the stem drives the rigor.

Make sure students have enough content knowledge to complete the stems.

Bonus: You can use the stems to embed vocabulary words.

In Math

Fractions are like decimals...

Fractions are like decimals **because** they are all parts of wholes.

Fractions are like decimals, **but** they are written differently.

Fractions are like decimals, **so** they can be used interchangeably.

In History

Andrew Jackson was a popular president...

Andrew Jackson was a popular president **because** he was a champion of the common people.

Andrew Jackson was a popular president, **but** there were many critics of his “kitchen cabinet” and the “spoils system.”

Andrew Jackson was a popular president, so he won the election of 1832 easily.

Strategy #2: Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating Conjunctions:

- Promote the use of complex sentences
- Improve reading comprehension
- Enable students to vary sentence types
- Boost vocabulary development
- Encourage close reading and references to text
- Provide a good option for topic and concluding sentences

Examples of Subordinating Conjunctions

Time	Contrast	Cause/Result	Concession	Contingency
before when while until since after	whereas while rather than	because since due to the fact that In order that so that	although even though though despite the fact that	if once provided that unless as long as otherwise

Strategy #3: Appositives

Strategy #3: Appositives

A second noun, or a phrase or clause equivalent to a noun, that is placed beside another noun to explain it more fully.

Example:

New York City, *the largest city in the United States*, is a major tourist attraction.

Strategy #3: Appositives

Appositives . . .

- Provide an effective strategy for creating topic and concluding sentences
- Enable students to vary sentence structure
- Enable students to include more information in a sentence and add complexity
- Improve reading comprehension
- Enable teachers to check for comprehension
- Encourage close reading
- Familiarize students with a form that is often seen in text and rarely heard in spoken language

Strategy #4: Kernel Expansion

Enables students to anticipate what a reader needs to know and to provide that information.

Checks comprehension

Teaches note-taking strategies (key words and phrases, abbreviations, and symbols)

Develops students' ability to summarize

Strategy #4: Kernel Expansion

Give students a simple, active, declarative sentence with only one verb, along with question words to help them expand it.

Kernel: *She planted them.*

Who:

What:

Where:

When:

How/Why:

Expanded Sentence: Start with your WHEN

Strategy #5: Sentence Parameters

Sentence parameters overlap sentence starters but gives students more autonomy.

Specific words, phrases, or structures you give to students to use anywhere in the sentence.

Your choice of parameters depends on your goals for students reading and/or discussion and what you want them to practice.

Allows reinforcement of vocabulary words or grammatical structures (“Use the word *decline* in your answer.”)

Allows you to help them be more concise (“In 12 words or less, explain...”)

Sample Non-denominational Prompts

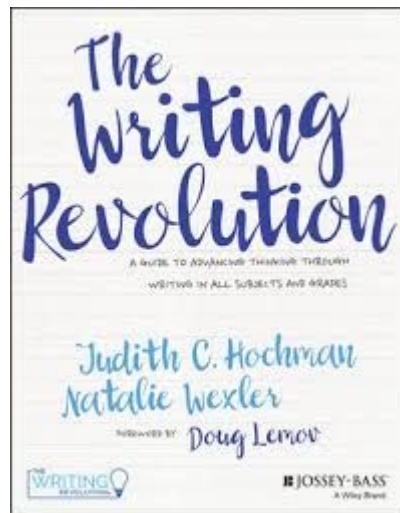
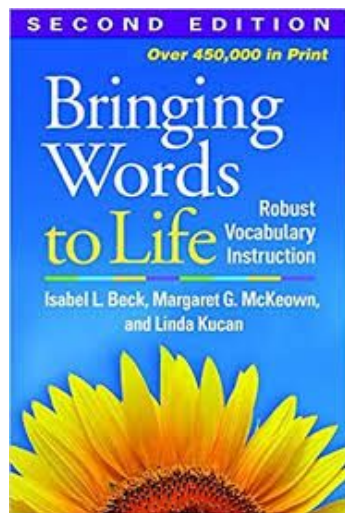
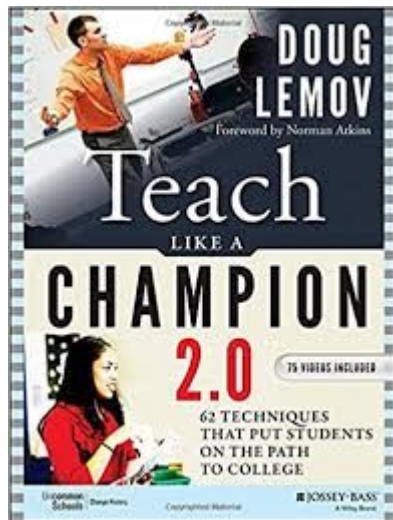
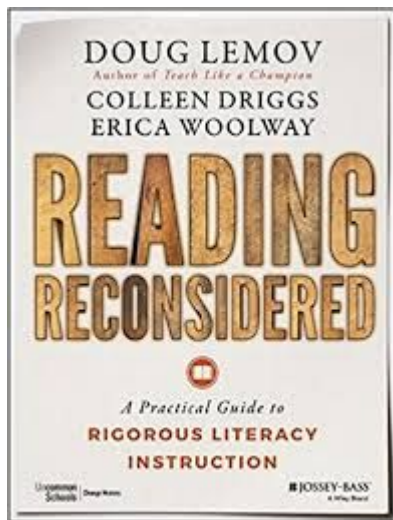
Write one carefully crafted sentence summarizing the key discussion points on today's discussion about...

On the basis of today's reading, describe the impact of _____ in a single well-written sentence.

In one carefully crafted sentence, describe a central theme of this short story.

In a single beautifully written sentence, explain the contrast between...

Resources



[Teach Like A Champion Blog](#)

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