DIFFERENTIATED STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT DEEP COMPREHENSION IN THE CLASSROOM

ADAPTED FROM GUIDING READERS

LORI JAMISON ROG, 2012
Word Solving

Helps readers learn how to:

- Use letter/sound relationship to take words apart while thinking about meaning
- Attempt to decode unfamiliar words
- Use context to monitor reading
- Notice word parts (morphology- how parts are related to meaning of individual words
- Predict word meaning in context
- Think of the meaning of the text in relationship to the word meaning
Word Solving

Prompts related to comprehension:

- Think about what would make sense
- Think about what would sound right
Helps readers learn how to:

- Notice when something doesn't make sense
- Notice when something doesn't sound right in terms of language structure
- Try another word that makes sense or sounds right and check the letters
- Reread or read on to clarify meaning
- Make multiple attempts at words that fit meaning
Monitoring Comprehension

Prompts related to comprehension:

- Does that make sense?
- Does it sound right?
- Does that make sense in the context of this story?
Finding Information

Helps readers learn how to:

- Notice important information while reading
- Reread to search for and use information
- Use text meaning and structure to decode new words
- Relate information in one part of the text to information in other parts
- Search for and find specific facts and information in the text
- Use graphics and details to build meaning from text
Finding Information

Prompts related to comprehension:

- Reread and check for understanding
- Try looking back for information you need
- Think about who is talking in the story
- Think about what you expect to learn in the story
- What were some of the important facts?
Summarization

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Summarization

- Relate information in one part of the text to information in other parts
- Search for and find specific facts and information in the text
- Use graphics and details to build meaning from text
Predicting

Helps readers learn how to:

- Discuss prior experiences based on story content to build expectations
- Capture important information at the beginning of the text and use this information to stimulate predictions
- Use previous information throughout the reading to build anticipation
- Make predictions based on knowledge of characters or story genre
- Predict what characters might do based on specific traits
- Predict solutions to problems in the story
Prompts related to comprehension:

- What do you think will happen?
- Based on what you know about the story, are you wondering what will happen?
- Think about what you know. What do you think will happen next?
Making Connections

Helps readers learn how to:

- Think about the text content relates to your own life
- Relate background knowledge to reading
Making Connections

Helps readers learn how to:

- Think about how text content relates to what is known about the world
- Think about how the text content is like other books
- Think about how the text is similar or different from other books (fiction/nonfiction, plot, genre, writing style)
Making Connections

Prompts related to comprehension:

- What does this remind you of?

- What do you know about that that helps you think about ________?

- Do you know a place like this?

- Do you know anyone who is like a character in this book?

- What do you think the writer will teach you about ______________?

- Have you read about other characters like this?
Synthesizing

Helps readers learn how to:

- Use information from the text to create new understandings
- Identify new learning
- Compare previous understandings to new learning
- Express different ideas after reading a text
- Relate background knowledge to reading
Prompts related to comprehension:

- What was the writer teaching you about ____________?

- Think about what you learned that was new, interesting, and/or surprising.

- How is what you learned different from what you knew before?

- How did your thinking change?
Inferring

Helps readers learn how to:

- Think about what is not written in text but is implied
- Use background information to interpret the actions in a text
- Infer the big ideas or messages of a text
- Show evidence in print or illustrations to support inference
Inferring

- Notice how characters change and make hypotheses as to why
- Interpret illustrations
- Identify character's feelings, motivations, actions, attributes
- Identify what the author thinks is important
- Identify the author's message
Inferring

Prompts related to comprehension:

- That’s what the author said. What do you think he means?
- That’s what the character said. What did she mean?
- What was the writer trying to say?
- What makes you think that?
- You can think about what the character says and what that makes you think about him (looks, thinks, what others say about him)
Analyzing

Helps readers learn how to:

- Notice how writer uses dialogue to add to meaning
- Understand the structure of the story
- Understand categories and subcategories in informational texts
- Notice how headings reveal categories of information
- Notice the patterns in exposition (compare/contrast, sequence, description)
Helps readers learn how to:

- Recognize the differences between fiction and nonfiction
- Understand the relationship between setting and plot
- Notice how setting is important to a story
- Notice and interpret figurative language
Helps readers learn how to:

- Understand how the text is constructed or “how the book works”
- Notice how the writer uses language to construct meaning
- Notice the writer’s style
- Notice how ideas are related to each other
- Identify and appreciate humour
Analyzing

Prompts related to comprehension:

- What did you notice about the writer’s language?
- What did the writer do to make the story funny?
- What was the writer’s purpose in writing this book?
- Who are the characters?
- What is the problem?
Analyzing

Prompts related to comprehension:

- How was the problem solved?
- Who were the important characters in the story?
- What kind of book is this? (Fiction, realistic, fantasy)
- Look at this section. What kind of information will you find here? How can you tell?
Analyzing

Prompts related to comprehension:

- How did the writer start the story? What do you think about that?
- What did the writer tell about first? Why did the author choose this idea first?
- Where did the writer tell something in just the right order? Why?
Critiquing/Evaluation

Helps readers learn how to:

- Agree or disagree with ideas from the text
- Hypothesize how characters might have behaved differently to make the text better, more interesting, more real
- Evaluate whether the text sounds “true” or not
- Evaluate the illustrations and whether they are interesting or provide good information
Critiquing/Evaluation

Helps readers learn how to:

- Evaluate the text based on personal knowledge
- Provide evidence for evaluative comments
- Form opinions about the book or illustrations
- Describe the text and support with evidence
Critiquing/Evaluation

**Prompts related to comprehension:**

- What are you thinking about this book?

- What makes this a good ________? (biography, fantasy, etc.)

- What did the writer say to make you think that?

- How else might _____ have behaved?
Critiquing/Evaluation

Prompts related to comprehension:

- What else might ______ have done?
- Do you think this book sounds real? Or true? What makes you think this?
- What do you think about the illustrations?
Questioning for comprehension serves two purposes:

1. To test
2. To prompt construction
We need to engage students in dialogue that stimulates discussion and prompts construction of new knowledge.

Discussions should reveal evidence of thinking processes, perspective, information, preferences, emotion, text features that engage or confuse them.

WE NEED TO ENCOURAGE WONDER!
Purposeful use of Comprehension Strategies

HOW DO WE MAKE THESE COGNITIVE STRATEGIES “STICK?”
How do we teach children these skills?

- Metacognition?
- Locating specific information in text?
- Supporting inferences in reading?
- Creating mental images during reading?
How do we teach children these skills?

- Identifying and using different text features to locate and retrieve information during reading?

- Adjusting and confirming predictions throughout reading?

- Identifying transition words that signal sequence in text

- Knowing the difference between information that is directly stated and information that must be inferred?
In this strategy, students search a text for specific information or details. Students will use the text to find answers in the text to specific questions.

Prepare some *How do you Know?* questions directly answered in the text (literal). Students search for answers and highlight them in the text using strips of removable highlighting tape.

Once comfortable finding literal answers, extend the activity to more inferential questions. Ask the students to be “reading detectives” and look for clues to the answers.
In this strategy, students learn about good readers asking questions when they read. Good readers wonder things all the time.

Students will practice asking questions and determining how the answer is found (literally or inferentially) from clues in the text.

Have students read a section of text and tab 2-3 wonderings. At the end of the reading, record all the wonderings on a chart. Students determine whether they found answers to their questions.

In the book questions will be answered with “I know” and In my head questions will be answered with “I think”.

Students will be able to self-question as they read and determine answers through literal or inferential understanding.
STRATEGY: Traffic-Light Transition Words

- Transition words like *first, next, finally* give the reader clues about the timing, sequence, or order of events in the story occur. Students will use this strategy to help retell the story.

- Choose a text that has 5-6 transition words (how-to text) and have students search for words that give clues to the sequence of events. Talk about how these words help us understand what we read.

- Create a chart of *green-light* words that indicate beginning, *yellow-light* words that indicate middle, and *red-light* words that indicate ending.

- Retell the story in four parts, choosing one *green-light* word, two *yellow-light* words, and one *red-light* word.
Students must use their background knowledge to understand text. Background knowledge sometimes comes from experiences, or from other books we have read.

Have students make connections between two texts that are variations of the same tale (e.g. Cinderella); two books from the same series; two books from the same author; two books on the same topic or theme.

Create a comparison chart that includes similarities and unique features of each text.
STRATEGY:
Click- Take a Picture

Students will be able to create mental images from printed text.

- This strategy helps develop mental images while reading to support comprehension by helping readers to organize, remember, and retrieve information they have read.

- This strategy focuses on visualization (creating a movie inside the brain) and asks students to pause at specific points in the story and “Click” (gesture taking a photo) and tell a partner about what pictures they have in their minds.

- Have students generate visuals to represent specific details in the story.
STRATEGY: What a Character!

Students will be able to analyze a character from what is stated directly and indirectly in the text.

- This strategy helps to distinguish among character traits. Sometimes information about a character is directly stated but often the author requires us to make inferences about the character from his words or actions.

- Students must learn to analyze character traits.

- Vocabulary to describe character traits.

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STRATEGY: What a Character!

Students will be able to analyze a character from what is stated directly and indirectly in the text.

- Have students revisit a familiar text, looking for clues or evidence that supports specific traits.
- Have students compare two characters.
- Create a character report card in which students evaluate a character based on attributes.
- Create a character chart that includes clues from the text that explain that describe the character.
STRATEGY: Word-Solving Strategies

Students will be able to understand the meaning of specific text by deriving meaning from the words they read, building vocabulary, and decoding by letter sounds and chunking.

- Chunk the word into syllables and blend the syllables together. Does it sound right? Does it make sense in the sentence?
- If not, try another way to say it. Try flipping the vowel sound.
- Look for word parts you do know.
- If you’re not sure what the word means, try reading around the word for clues to its meaning.
- If all else fails, look up the word in a dictionary or ask for help.
This strategy guides readers to learn new words on their own. Students will identify challenging vocabulary and use word-solving strategies to read and understand them.

After reading, have students revisit the text to highlight three tricky words in their reading. Make a list of the words that students identify.

Use context clues, background knowledge, and connections to other words to collaboratively figure out what the words mean.

Students will be able to analyze challenging vocabulary to develop comprehension.

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STRATEGY: Vocabulary Highlights

Students will be able to analyze challenging vocabulary to develop comprehension.

- Have students articulate the strategies they used to solve the meanings of the words.
- Have students create vocabulary squares to help develop a rich vocabulary, and to build comprehension.
- The squares should include a sentence that includes the word, a definition of the word, a personal connection that helps remember the word, and a picture or symbol that helps remember the word.