Supporting Problems in Reading Comprehension: The Role of the SLP

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Session outline:

- Discuss reading comprehension and the challenges children face in understanding what they read
- Review particular difficulties in reading comprehension for children with LLD
- Discuss the role of the SLP in supporting reading comprehension
- Review evidence-based strategies for developing better comprehension skills
- Compare strategies and content approach for supporting comprehension difficulties
What is reading comprehension?

- Ultimate goal of reading
- “meaning presides in the intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed”
- Is purposeful and active (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995)
Reading comprehension

- Create a mental representation of what is read – comprehension processes (Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978)
- Representations are stored in memory
Why is reading comprehension hard to teach?

- Complex skill relying on variety of linguistic and nonlinguistic skills
- Not teachable in the same way as other reading-related skills
- Involves less well-defined skills: “thinking” “interpreting” “predicting” “reasoning”
- Interplay between strategy instruction and content approach
Overlap with linguistic comprehension

- Listening and reading comprehension
  - Once words are decoded or heard, individuals use similar processes to comprehend
  - Oral language skills foundational to reading comprehension
  - Higher level syntax and vocabulary skills particularly important
Additional skills generally support comprehension

- World/background knowledge
- Topic familiarity and processing demands:
  - High familiarity = lower demands
  - Low familiarity = high demands on attention, motivation
- Conceptual knowledge
- Metacognition
- Attention/memory
Important differences may exist

- Written language often more complex, decontextualized, less redundant
- Reading an individual activity without supports inherent in oral/social language
- Script and schema knowledge support comprehension
- Mastery motivation, engagement
- Persistence
Decoding/Reading Fluency

- Word recognition and comprehension separate skills, but...
  - Poor word recognition/fluency will impact comprehension-resource allocation
  - Reading fluency may predict comprehension
  - However...a fluent reader is not always a “good reader”
    - Role of language disorder
Children with LD/LLD

- Very high risk
- If difficulty with oral language comprehension, at least as much difficulty with reading comprehension
- Third grade: understanding of written text affects acquisition of knowledge across topics
- Lack of exposure to written text affects oral language
Specific Behaviors

• Pervasive-problems in most situations/academic subjects

• Influence of language disorder
  ◦ struggle with complex vocabulary and syntax, comprehension of larger units of language
  ◦ Unfamiliar vocabulary
  ◦ Figurative language
  ◦ Abstract, technical ideas

• Schema/text structure knowledge
  ◦ Lack of awareness of narrative or expository text structure
Motivation, engagement

- Reading not fun or rewarding
- Struggle to find appropriate texts

Meta skills

- Relating info in text to real life or previous knowledge (and may not have adequate content/world knowledge in the first place...)
- Monitoring comprehension
- Inferencing
- Use of strategies (summarizing, rereading, searching the text...)
SLPs and Reading Comprehension

- ASHA (2001) indicated literacy is within SLP scope of practice
- SLPs have relevant skills and knowledge across modalities
  - Understanding of language disorders
  - Subsystems of language
    - Syntax, semantics, morphology, pragmatics
  - Language development across the lifespan
• SLPs understand how language demands of textbooks or complex narratives are problematic for kids with LLD/LD

• Consideration of skills at word, sentence, discourse levels

• Extensive knowledge of how to provide effective intervention-individualize, scaffold, ongoing assessment...
• SLPs often “first on the scene”
  ◦ Important role in identification, prevention, family education
• Help teachers and parents understand why reading comprehension is difficult, appropriate supports and accommodations
• Can play variety of roles in supporting reading comprehension
Strategies to Support Reading Comprehension
What is a strategy?

• A plan for gaining meaning from text
• Sequence of steps used for understanding text
• Deliberate effort by a child to better understand and/or remember what was read by using an explicit procedure (Harris & Hodges, 1995; Pearson, Roehler, Dole, & Duffy, 1992; Shanahan et al., 2010)
• Requires knowledge and self regulation
  ◦ Knowledge of useful strategies and know when/why to apply them.
  ◦ Self regulation- knowing when comprehension fails and implementation of steps to correct failures (Carlisle & Rice, 2002).
How do strategies differ from skills?

- Strategies are used intentionally (Maria, 1990)
- Skills: applied in same way every time without conscious thought (Duffy & Roehler, 1985)
- Strategies: Reasonable plans applied consciously and adapted to particular situations
What do good readers do?

1. Select information – paying attention to text and focus attention on information relevant to goal

2. Organize- arrange units of information into a coherent mental structure and logical relationships between ideas

3. Integrate- connect information to existing cognitive structures; link information to external information
Poor comprehenders...

- Are not aware of their lack of understanding
- When aware, do not know what strategies are available
- When aware of strategies, do not know how to use them correctly

“This didn’t tell me anything about how to deal with parents.”
When teaching reading comprehension strategies...

- Explicitly teach children a variety of strategies they can use
- Teach WHY we use comprehension strategies
- Teach them WHEN we use comprehension strategies
- Help them to select and apply a strategy
Evidence-based strategies

- Active prior/background knowledge
- Questioning answering
- Question generating
- Comprehension monitoring
- Graphic and semantic organizers
- Summarization
- Story/text structure
- Cooperative learning
- Multiple strategy use

Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; NICHD, 2000; Shanahan et al., 2010
Alaska is the largest state in the United States. Its land makes up almost one-fifth of the whole country. However, its population is relatively small. In 2000, the population was fewer than 630,000 people.

Most Alaskans live in towns and cities in the southern part of the state. Just like many Americans in other states, they live in modern homes, drive cars, watch television, and shop in supermarkets. However, some people live in the remote northern part of Alaska. This is near the North Pole, and it is extremely cold. Life is different for people who live in the Far North. Their food and supplies are delivered by airplane. They use snowmobiles or dogsleds for transportation.
In northern Alaska, the sun sets in the middle of November and does not rise for two months. This is because the North Pole faces away from the sun during winter. People spend most of the winter in darkness. In southern Alaska, the sun does rise, but it is only light outside for about six hours a day.

Even though it can be very cold, many Alaskans love to be outdoors. Common activities include ice skating, and skiing. People also do something called mushing which means dogsledding. This is Alaska's state sport. When people go outside, they have to wear very warm clothes. Special mittens and boots help prevent frostbite.

Because the roads are so icy, school buses and cars need snow tires to prevent skidding. It is so cold that oil can freeze in car engines overnight. People plug their cars into special electric heaters so their oil doesn’t freeze.

There aren’t many animals in Alaska during winter time. Most go south to warmer places. Some, such as grizzly bears, hibernate until spring.

Alaska isn’t always so icy cold. In summertime, warmer temperatures melt the ice and snow. Because the North Pole faces the sun in summer, the sun doesn’t set in northern Alaska from May until the beginning of August.
Activating Background Knowledge

- Comprehension is result of integration of new knowledge with prior knowledge (schema theory)
- Must activate what is known to use it during reading
- When expectations are created, helps children
  - key in on relevant parts
  - make inferences and elaborate
  - fill in missing information
  - add to existing mental structures
- Poor comprehenders relate prior knowledge that is not relevant to most important ideas
- Research completed across grade levels (1st on) with success

(Langer, 1982; NRP, 2000; Neuman, 2006)
Strategies for activating background knowledge

- Pre read or preview the story
- Consider key concepts

- Teach relevant knowledge PRIOR to new content
  - Advanced organizer (Jerrold, 1985)
  - Semantic mapping
  - Previews (Graves & Prenn, 1984)

- Encourage children to:
  - think about own life experiences
  - make predictions based on knowledge
  - make connections of what they know and want to know
### K-W-L

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic:</th>
<th>K (What I know or think I know)</th>
<th>W (What I want to know)</th>
<th>L (What I learned)</th>
</tr>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th><strong>K</strong> (What I know or think I know)</th>
<th><strong>W</strong> (What I want to know)</th>
<th><strong>L</strong> (What I learned)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>astronauts have a high death rate. You have to be fit but not physique. NASA got fired by the president so no more astronauts. Astronauts have a scientific background.</td>
<td>how do they make the zero gravity chamber? will it make you throw up your lunch? How long is the training? How are astronauts chosen?</td>
<td>I did not know that they train by then serves then get into teams.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREP (Langer, 1982)

- Consider what is important to know for understanding text
- Ask specific questions and model responses

1. Make an initial association with the topic
   “What do you think of when I say ____________________________”

2. Reflections on initial associations
   - After responses are finished, ask
     “What made you think of ____________________________”

3. After all the child(ren) has responded, ask questions based on discussion.
   “Do you have any new ideas about ____________________________”
Generating + Answering Questions

- History strong evidence supporting use of questions (NLP, 2000)
- Helps motivate children based on own interests in text
- Encourages active involvement with text
Strategies for generating and answering questions

- Encourage children to ask questions about text prior
  - What is this about?
  - What do I know about this topic?
  - What is the author’s purpose?

- Encourage use of **why** questions (Pressley et al, 1992)
  - Children taught to ask themselves why each fact made sense
    - *Why do people in Alaska use snowmobiles or dogsleds for transportation?*
    - *Why do people have to wear very warm clothes in Alaska?*
Question Answer Relationship (Raphael, 1986: Simmonds, 1992)

Right there – answer is located in the text within a single sentence; easy to find

Putting it Together/Think and Search- answer is located in text within two or more sentences; information is found directly in text

Author and You- answer is implied but not explicitly stated. Students need to think about what they already know and what author provided

On Your Own- answer comes from reader’s background knowledge
Questions:
1. What is the population of Alaska?
2. Why is life different for people in Alaska?
3. Do you think people like living in Alaska?
4. How do people in Alaska feel when
QUESTIONING THE TEXT

What is the text structure (e.g., narrative, expository)? What clues help me know this?

What questions will this text answer?

What questions do I have for this text?

What clues does the cover (title, cover art, author) offer? What does the contents page tell me?

What do the physical aspects (size, length, print size) of the book tell me?

Is the author familiar? What do I know about the author? What connections can I make?

Is the topic familiar? What do I know about the topic? What connections can I make?

What clues do the genre and writing style provide for me?

Is there a summary? What does it help me know?

What does the information on the book jacket tell me?

Summary of what I now know about the text:
Comprehension Monitoring

- Goal is for students to become aware of whether they are/are not understanding text and making adjustments as needed (NRP, 2000)
- Interventions focus on teaching awareness of when information is not understood, and implementing “fix up” strategies
- Much research with children 3rd grade and above
- Expository text more likely area of
Strategies for Comprehension Monitoring  (Bossert & Schwantes, 1995)

- Model process for children and practice
- Look back in text
- Re-read
- Read ahead
- Question answering
- Look up words
- Use think a louds to model strategy
Mental imagery/Visualization

- Construction of visual images to represent text
  - Objects, people, places, events
  - Sentences, paragraphs
  - Illustration of relationship between ideas and concepts
- Creating image requires interpretation of text
  - Concern about what children visualize if they did NOT understand
- Serves as memory representation
- Assists with engagement, constructing inferences, making predictions, and remembering (Gambrell & Jaywitz, 1993)
Strategies for teaching visual imagery

- Child is cued to create a visual image that represents content
- Use of keywords sometimes added
- Studies teach 4th grade children to both attend to text illustrations AND to induce mental imagery show high success (Gambrell & Jawitz, 1993)
- Imagery better success than drawing (Leutner et al., 2009)
Visualizing and Verbalizing (Bell, 2007)
Teach text structure

- Expository and narrative differ
- Success in teaching children to recognize framework of expository texts (Bakken, Mastropieri, & Scruggs, 1997; Smith & Friend, 1986; Williams, Stafford, Lauer, & Hall, 2009)
  - Time-order
  - Problem solution
  - Comparison
  - Description
  - Cause-effect
- Improvements for expository + narrative
Expository text structures:

- Enumeration (list of facts)
- Sequence (series of events that occur over time)
- Compare-contrast (focus on similarities and differences)
- Classification – information organized according to categories
- Problems solving
- Procedural descriptions - steps used carry out a task
Strategies for teaching text structure

- Help children key in on the language of different text structures
- Use of graphic organization that demonstrate relationships among events/objects, etc. (e.g. semantic maps, expository maps, story maps, story schema, graphic metaphors, frames) (DiCecco & Gleason, 2002; Ehren, 2010; Williams et al., 2009)
- Use questions that key in on specific structural parts
Key words to identify types

Sequence procedure
- first, next, after, initially,
- finally, then

Describing
- looks like, belongs, appears to be

Compare/contrast
- compared with, like, different
- from, as

Problem solution
- as a result, is caused by, leads to,
- because, consequently

Persuasive
- based on, the data shows, must,
- should, it would be best if

Classification
- one type, the other type, in
- this
- group
Life in Alaska

- **Just like** many Americans in other states, they live in modern homes, drive cars, watch TV and shop in supermarkets.

- **However**, some people live in the remote northern part of Alaska.
- **Life is different** for people who live in the Far North. Their food and supplies are delivered by airplane.
**Compare and Contrast Chart Graphic Organizer**

**Item #1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alikes</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

**Item #2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
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</table>

**How are they alike?**

- Candy in the snow
  - Snow globes
  - Modern homes
  - Ice skates (skating)

**How are they different?**

- Dog(s)
  - Snowmobiles
  - Walk/Run with
  - Warm clothing

- Cat(s)
  - Dishes
  - During night
  - Table
  - Feed them light

**read-write-think**
Teaching Narrative Structure

- Teach story structure to support narrative texts
  - More significant outcomes for less able readers
  - Assists with writing as well
- Children can be taught narrative structure/story grammar to aid in narrative comprehension (Schneider, 1996; Williams, 2005)
  - Setting, characters, problem, resolution, conclusion
Teach children to use questions to guide narrative understanding (Notle & Singer, 1985):

• 1. Who is the leading character?
• 2. What action does the character initiate?
• 3. What did you learn about this character from this action?
Appendix

**Characters:**
Who was the main character?
Can you describe him/her?
Any other important people? Who?

**Time:**
When did it happen?

**Place:**
Where did it happen?

**The Goal:**
What was the story about?
What did the main character want?

**The Problem:**
What was the central problem?
What difficulty did the main character meet?

**Event:**
How did the main character try to solve the problem?
What were the consequences?
How did other characters react?
What did they say or do?

**Event:**
What did the main character do next?
What happened next?
Did the main character meet new problems!

**Event:**
Then what happened?
What did the main character do?

**Outcome:**
How did the story end?
Did the main character solve the problem?
Was it a happy ending?
Was the ending a surprise?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Wodney Camilla's Doorknob Was Mean</th>
<th>Camilla didn't understand Wodney so she went &quot;West&quot; instead of taking a rest.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td>She</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STORY

Characters: [Images of characters]

Setting: [Images of a house and mountain]

What happened: [Images of a question mark and an okay symbol]

Was it OK? [Images of an okay symbol]

The End [Images of a house]

Beginning | Middle | END
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Was it fixed?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bug</td>
<td>Inside</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ants</td>
<td>Outside</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Beginning**: A bug is inside.
- **Middle**: An ant falls on a stub, and others look for a bandage.
- **End**: The ant plays in the grass after getting help.

**Characters**: Ants, Bug, Man;
**Setting**: Inside, Outside;
**Problem**: Stab on stub;
**Ending**: Fixed with a bandage.
Use Graphic Organizers

- External means of representing meaning of relationships in a text
- Helps focus on concept and relation relate to other concepts
- Focus attention, as well as tool to look back at and facilitate writing of summaries
- Research evidence across grades (4th grade up predominantly)
Use of graphic organizers

Frames (Armbruster, Anderson, & Meyer, 1991)

Title

1 → 2 → 3 → 4 → 5 → 6
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Chapter:</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Event 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Event 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event 3</td>
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<td>Event 4</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Event 5</td>
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<tr>
<th>Solution</th>
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</table>

| Theme         |         |
### Graphic organizers

#### Cause and Effect Graphic Organizer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
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</table>

#### Problems (fill in as many as applicable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Problems</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Where:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Effects

### Possible Solutions

### Possible Outcomes
### POSSIBLE CAUSE
Animals responded to the weak primary wave, which came before the larger secondary wave.

### POSSIBLE CAUSE
Animals noticed something else that we don’t yet know about.

### EFFECT
Animals behaved strangely before an earthquake.

### Process Steps

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
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</table>
## Problem/Solution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Goal(s)</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternatives</th>
<th>Pros (+) and Cons (−)</th>
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<tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Decision(s)</th>
<th>Reason(s)</th>
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</table>
Summarization

- Includes identifying main idea, combine similar ideas (Malone & Mastropieri, 1992; Gajria & Salvia, 1992)
- Leave out irrelevant details, removing redundancy
- Requires generation of multiples main ideas across reading, and combine with support details (Vaughn & Klinger, 2004)
- Helps children integrate ideas and generalize
- Frequently taught using self questioning (Malone & Mastropieri, 1992)
- Improves memory for information
- Preponderance of research is with later elementary or older (4th grade and up)
Strategies for teaching summarization.

Finding the Main Idea (Jitendra, Hoppes, & Xin, 2000)

Does the paragraph tell:

What or who the subject is? Action is?
(Single or group)
(Category)
Why- something happened?
Where- something is or happened?
When- something happened?
How- something looks or is done?

Note: Some paragraphs may contain a sentence or two that don’t tell about the main idea!
Jenkins et al (1996)

- Students taught to compose restatements every time they finish a paragraph
- Put line after every paragraph, and prompted children to write summary statement
  1. WHO
  2. What’s happening?
- If wrong, were asked: *What is the most important thing that happened in this paragraph?*
- Taught to do in fewest words
- Taught to do it on separate piece of paper
Life in Alaska

Who or what the subject is?
- Alaska

Action – population is small

Why

Where - Alaska

When- 2000 – pop 630000

How

Jitendra et al

1. Who
2. What’s happening

Summary sentence:
Alaska has a small population of 630,000 people
Self questioning prompt (Wong et al, 1986):

1. What’s the most important sentence in this paragraph? Let me underline it.
2. Let me summarize the paragraph. To summarize I rewrite the main idea sentence and add important details.
3. Let me review my summary statements for the whole subsection.
4. Do my summary statements link up with one another?
RAP (Schumaker, Denton, & Deshler, 1984)

• R- Read the paragraph
• A- Ask yourself “What is the main idea and details of the paragraph?”
• P- Put main idea and supporting details into own words
TRAVEL (Boyle & Weishaar, 1997)

- T- Topic: write down the topic
- R- Read: Read the paragraph
- A- Ask: Ask what the main idea and three details are and write them down
- V- Verify: Verify the main idea and linking details
- E- Examine: Examine the next paragraph and verify again
- L – Link: When finished, link all of the main ideas
Multiple Strategy Instruction

Reciprocal Teaching (Palinscar & Brown, 1984)

- Question generation, summarization, clarification, prediction of what comes next
- Children taught to work collaboratively, take on different roles, learn to engage with text
- **Well** documented success across age groups
- Recently implemented with Kindergarteners using puppets to each stage (Myers, 2005)
TWA (Mason, 2004)

T: Think before reading
   What is the author’s purpose?
   What do I already know?
   What do I want to learn?

W: While reading
   Reading speed
   Linking knowledge
   Rereading parts

A: After reading
   Main idea: RAP
   Summarizing information
   What you learned
How are strategies best taught?

- Explain
- Model
- Guide
- Implement

- Key is teaching children to be strategic: want them to coordinate strategies, efforts as needed
Strategy Approach: Scaffolding

- Explicit description of the strategy
- Teacher modeling
- Collaborative use
- Guided practice
- Independent use

Shanahan et al., 2010
Strategy Approach: Decisions

- Which strategies should I use?
- How should I teach these strategies?
- How should these strategies be used with reading?
Strategy Approach: EBP

- Teach several research-based strategies
- Teach strategies individually or in combination
- Teach strategies using a gradual release of responsibility
- Think about what child is ready for (age/language skills)
- Think about demands/tasks/strategies of classroom

Shanahan et al., 2010
Content Approach

Focus on the substance and intent of the text and relate this information to what has already been read and what one knows about the topic

- SLP: “What’s this all about?”
- Student: “They’re afraid to go outside because the bear is out there. They think that the bear will eat them.” (Allen & Petersen, 2011)

McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009
Content Approaches

- Questioning the Author- general, meaning-based questions about the text (QtA; Beck & McKeown, 2006; Beck, McKeown, Sandora, Kucan, & Worthy, 1996)

- Collaborative discussion- initiate discussion that focuses on a theme
  - Instructional conversations (Saunders & Goldenberg, 1999)
  - Collaborative reasoning (Chinn, Anderson, & Waggoner, 2001)
  - Dialogic instruction (Nystrand, 1997)
  - Junior Great Books (Dennis & Moldof, 1983)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Queries for expository test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiate discussion</td>
<td>What is the author trying to say?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help students focus on author’s message</td>
<td>What is the author’s message?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify difficulties with way the author presented information</td>
<td>What is the author talking about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage students to refer to text because they have misinterpreted a statement or to help them recognize they have made an inference</td>
<td>That’s what the author says, but what does it mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How does that connect (or fit in) with what the author already told us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What information has the author added here that connects to/fits with ___?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does that make sense?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did the author say it in a clear way?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did the author explain that clearly?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Why or hwy not? What’s missing?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do we need to figure out?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Did the author tell us that?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did the author give us the answer to that?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Queries for narrative text</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage student to recognize plot development</td>
<td>What do you think the author is getting at here? What's going on? What's happening? What has the author told us now? So how did the author settle that for us? How did the author work that out for us? How has the author let you know that something has changed in the story? How is the author painting a picture here? How did the author let you see something/feel something/smell something? What has the author told us that the (character name) doesn’t know? What is the author doing here? How did the author crate humor/suspense/sadness? Why do you supposed the author used foreshadowing/flashback How do you things look for character X now? Given what the authors has already told us, how do you think (character X) will handle this situation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate students to consider how problems are addressed or resolved Help students recognize author's techniques</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prompt students to consider characters’ thoughts, or actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prompt students to predict what a character might do</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Content Approach: Implementation

- Determine the major concepts to be understood
  - Narrative
  - Expository
- Predict where breakdowns may occur
- Make some decisions about where to insert a question
  - Does not have to be where a paragraph ends
  - Does not have to be the end of a page

Beck & McKeown, 2006
Content Approach: Major Concepts

- Be explicit regarding the major concepts to be understood
  - Story grammar units
  - Overarching expository structure
  - Vocabulary
  - Concepts/ content

Beck & McKeown, 2006
Content Approach: Predicting Breakdowns

- Abstract language
- Unfamiliar content
- Difficult transitions

Beck & McKeown, 2006
### Initiating
- What is this about?
- What’s the important message in this section?
- Does that fit with what we read earlier?

### Follow-up
- That’s what was said, but what does it mean?
- Can anyone add to that?

**Content Approach: Queries**

Beck & McKeown, 2006; McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009
Content Approach: Narratives
The Raven and the Whale

There was once a raven who by accident flew into the mouth of a big bowheaded whale. He flew right down the throat and ended up in the belly. There he saw a little house built of ribs and soft hides; a shabby little house, just like a human dwelling. Inside this house was a young woman minding a blubber lamp. “You may stay here as long as you like,” she told him, “but you must never touch this lamp.” For the lamp was the whale’s heart.

Beck & McKeown, 2006; p. 66
There was once a raven who by accident flew into the mouth of a big bowheaded whale. He flew right down the throat and ended up in the belly. There he saw a little house built of ribs and soft hides; a shabby little house, just like a human dwelling. Inside this house was a young woman minding a blubber lamp. “You may stay here as long as you like,” she told him, “but you must never touch this lamp.” For the lamp was the whale’s heart.

- Where would you direct students toward the meaning?
- How would you prompt the discussion?

Beck & McKeown, 2006, p. 66
The Raven and the Whale: Major Concept

- The raven is a character that only cares about himself
  - Problem: The character of the raven is never explicitly stated nor is his character ever explicitly assessed
  - Solution: Identify key text phrases that allow readers to build understanding

  - “The woman was very pleasant company. Likewise she did all the work.”

  Beck & McKeown, 2006; p. 66
The Raven and the Whale: Predicting Breakdowns

There was once a raven who by accident flew into the mouth of a big bowheaded whale. He flew right down the throat and ended up in the belly. There he saw a little house built of ribs and soft hides; a shabby little house, just like a human dwelling (1). Inside this house was a young woman minding a blubber lamp. “You may stay here as long as you like,” she told him, “but you must never touch this lamp.” For the lamp was the whale’s heart. (2)

Beek & McKeown, 2006; p. 67
The Raven and the Whale: Queries

1. How has the author started this off for us?

2. What about this lamp?

Beck & McKeown, 2006; p. 67
Content Approach: Measurement

- Quality of the discussion
- Comprehension of a story
- Improvement on other measures of achievement

McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009
Content Approach: Expository
### Comparison of Strategy and Content Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarity</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Goal: create active student engagement with reading</td>
<td>• The mental processes that are engaged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009
Example

- Students read the story *Off and Running* by Gary Soto
- This story is about “a girl running for class president against the class clown. In her struggle to win, she seeks advice from a female relative who was formerly mayor of a city in Mexico.”

McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009; p. 249
### Strategy
- SLP: “Let’s think back about the important parts of what we just read, and ask a question that will make us think more about those parts. Ask a question like a teacher would ask on a test. Remember we should be able to answer these questions from the text we just read.”

### Content
- SLP: “What’s this all about?”

---

**Comparison of Approaches**

McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009; p. 250
Investigation of the Approaches

- 119 5\textsuperscript{th} graders within six classrooms
- Three treatment conditions
  - **Strategy**- summarizing, predicting, drawing inferences, question generations, comprehension monitoring
  - **Content**- discussion connecting an idea to what they already know
  - **Basal**- embedded questions based on those presented in the teacher’s manual

McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009
Investigation of the Approaches

Lesson-Level Measures
- Sentence Verification Technique
- Narrative Retell

Beyond-Lesson Measures
- Comprehension monitoring
- Strategy knowledge

McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Differences</th>
<th>No Significant Differences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>◦ Oral retell- significant differences between the groups</td>
<td>◦ Sentence verification task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ <strong>Length of retell</strong>-content &amp; basal significantly longer than the strategies</td>
<td>◦ Comprehension monitoring task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ <strong>Quality of retell</strong>-content significantly better than the strategies</td>
<td>◦ Strategy knowledge task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Investigation of the Approaches**

McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009
Investigation of the Approaches

- Transcribe the discourse for two lessons
- Determine the proportion of talk that directly reflected text ideas
- Content & Basal had significantly higher proportion of student and teacher text-based comments than Strategies

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>S</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student %</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher %</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009
Summary of Findings

- All comprehension approach groups equally understood the narrative texts.
- The Content group produced significantly longer and better quality oral retells than the Strategies group.
Clinical Implications

- If you provide explicit, high quality reading comprehension, then students will likely comprehend the major points of the text.
- Instruction should include discussions interspersed during the reading.
- Focus should be on content and making connections between ideas.
- Do not abandon strategies - they promote independence.  Allen & Petersen, 2011
Take Away Message

- SLPs have considerable knowledge about language and language intervention

- Proposal for a hybrid approach for comprehension/language instruction
  - Content approach
  - Strategy approach

Allen & Petersen, 2011
What Will You Do with Comprehension Instruction?

- Direct intervention?
- Collaboration?
- Consultation?
- None?
Thank You!!

Questions?
References


