TEXT-DRIVEN COMPREHENSION INSTRUCTION

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Session Goals

- Contrast a strategy approach with a text-driven approach to teaching comprehension
- Review purpose of the LETRS Comprehension Planning Guide (Moats & Hennessy, Module 6)
- Identify challenging language in text selections
- Summarize: How text-driven instruction unfolds before, during, and after reading.

Do You Remember Strategy Workbooks? Raise your hand.

Finding The Main Idea

Using The Context

Drawing Inferences

Making a Summary

Drawing Conclusions

Constructing Mental Images

Asking And Answering Questions

Examples of Strategy-focused Instruction

- Palinscar & Brown's Reciprocal Teaching Method (1980's)
- Pressley's Transactional Strategies Instruction (1990's)
- Duffy & Roehler's Informed Strategies Instruction (1990's)

- National Reading Panel (2000) meta-analysis supported:
  - Instruction in comprehension monitoring
  - guided visualization
  - cooperative learning (Collaborative Strategic Reading)
  - using graphic and semantic organizers
  - answering and asking questions
  - deliberate use of story structure elements
  - summarization

Willingham's Analysis of the NRP

- Strategy instruction can be effective.

- Strategies that have not been studied thoroughly may still be of some benefit … results are inconclusive.

- Brief instruction may be sufficient; amount of practice needed will vary.

- Instruction in strategies is most effective for grades 3 or 4 and beyond.

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(Willingham, 2006–07)

Let's Compare Two Approaches

Strategy-Focused

Text-Driven

- Aims to directly teach specific strategies (summarizing, questioning, visualizing, etc.)
- Practice texts are constructed for that purpose
- Generalization to "real reading" is expected; may or may not be coached in "authentic" texts

In Contrast: A Text-driven Approach

Texts are selected within a **theme** or **content** area…

- censorship
- civil rights
- climate change
- mental illness
- overcoming poverty or disadvantage
- Greek mythology

Texts are:

- "worth rereading"
- have "enduring value"
- have complex ideas
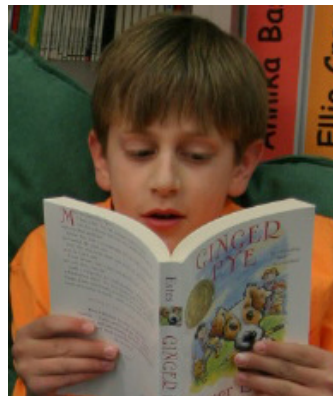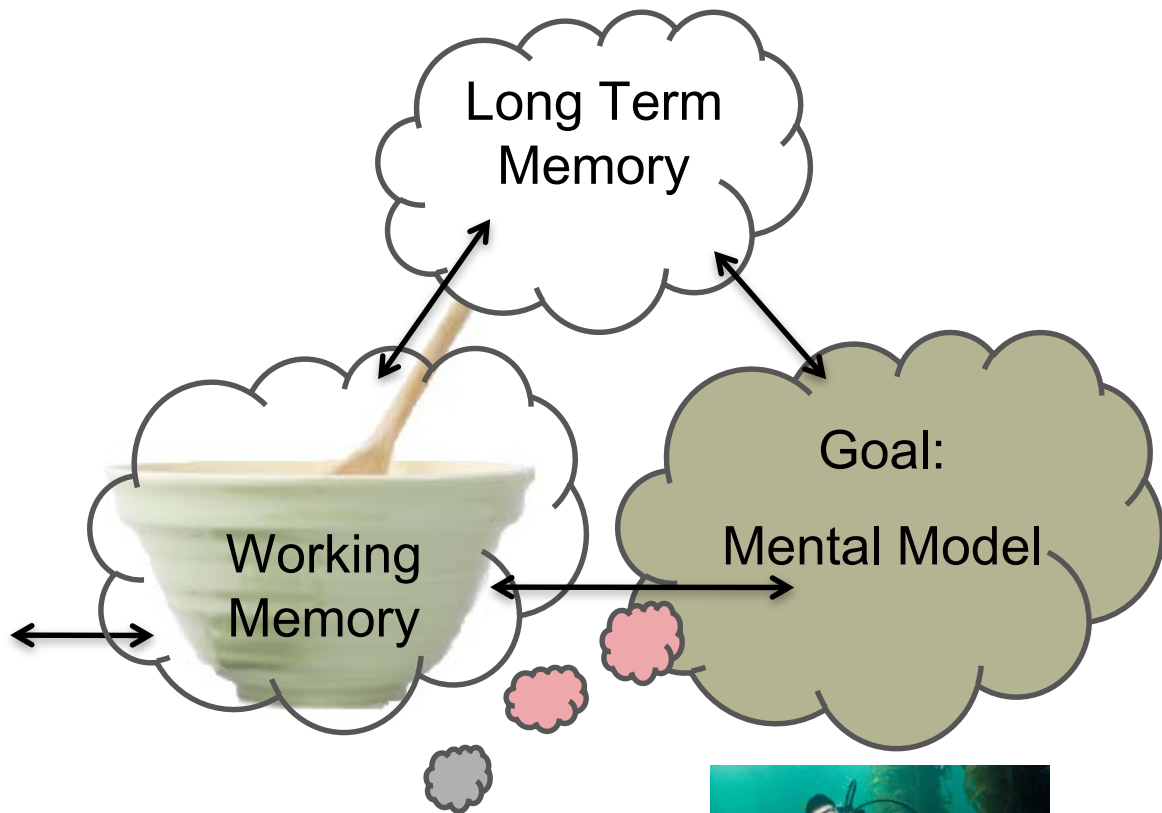- support substantive discussion

Text Base
(meaning behind words)

Surface Code
(words, sentences)

Long Term
Memory

Working
Memory

Goal:

Mental Model

A Text-driven Approach

- Focus is on the process of deriving meaning and establishing a coherent mental model of what a text is about

- Focus is on "what readers do with the text information to represent it and integrate it into a coherent whole"

(McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009)

Teacher Mediates Between the Text and the Students

What do we know about this character so far?

What are his choices for solving this problem?

Planning Guide for Comprehension instruction	LETRS	Moats and Hennessy,
Critical understandings of text	What do you want students to know and understand after reading the text?	
Purpose for reading	How will you introduce the text? What will you tell students the purpose for reading is?	
Key vocabulary	Which words will your students need to know? Which ones will you intentionally teach; which words will you incidentally on purpose teach, when, how?	
Language structures (phrases, sentences)	Is there figurative language, difficult sentence structure or unusual language that may be difficult for your students? When and how will you teach students to interpret?	
Background knowledge & text structure	What background knowledge is critical to understanding the text? What strategies/activities will you use to surface, build, connect it to text? How is the text organized? How will you teach students to use the structure to organize and express understanding?	
Text reading	What strategies and activities (questions) will you use to facilitate student construction of different levels of	

Example Text – Perseus and the Gorgon's Head (*L!Live*, Level 1, Unit 12)

Lesson 1 | Reading

The Gorgon's Head

After being set adrift at sea in a box, Perseus and his mother, Danae, had been rescued by a kind fisherman. The fisherman's brother was the evil king of the island of Seriphos. To show his thanks, Perseus
5 accepted a dangerous mission given to him by the king. Hoping that Perseus would never return, the king sent him to kill a monster and return with its head. The story begins as Perseus starts his journey to slay the terrible Gorgon, Medusa.
10 Perseus feared he was more likely to become a stone **image** than to bring back the head of Medusa with its snaky locks. Knowing he had **undertaken** a dangerous task, Perseus left without saying a word to his mother. He took his shield and his sword, and
15 crossed over from the island to the mainland. He sat down to gather his thoughts and heard a voice.
"Perseus," said the voice, "why are you sad?"
He lifted his head from his hands, and there was a stranger. He was a brisk, **intelligent**, and remarkably
20 shrewd-looking young man. He had on a strange-looking cap and shoes with little wings. Perseus wiped his eyes, and quickly answered the stranger.
"I am not so very sad," said he, "only thoughtful about an adventure that I have undertaken."

image
the form or appearance of someone or something

undertake
attempt; to take on a task

intelligent
smart; reflecting good judgment or sound thought

Unit 12 **281**

Photo taken by Louisa Moats at the Fogg Museum. "Perseus Slaying Medusa" by Giovanni Battista Foggini.

Preparation for Reading: Critical Understandings
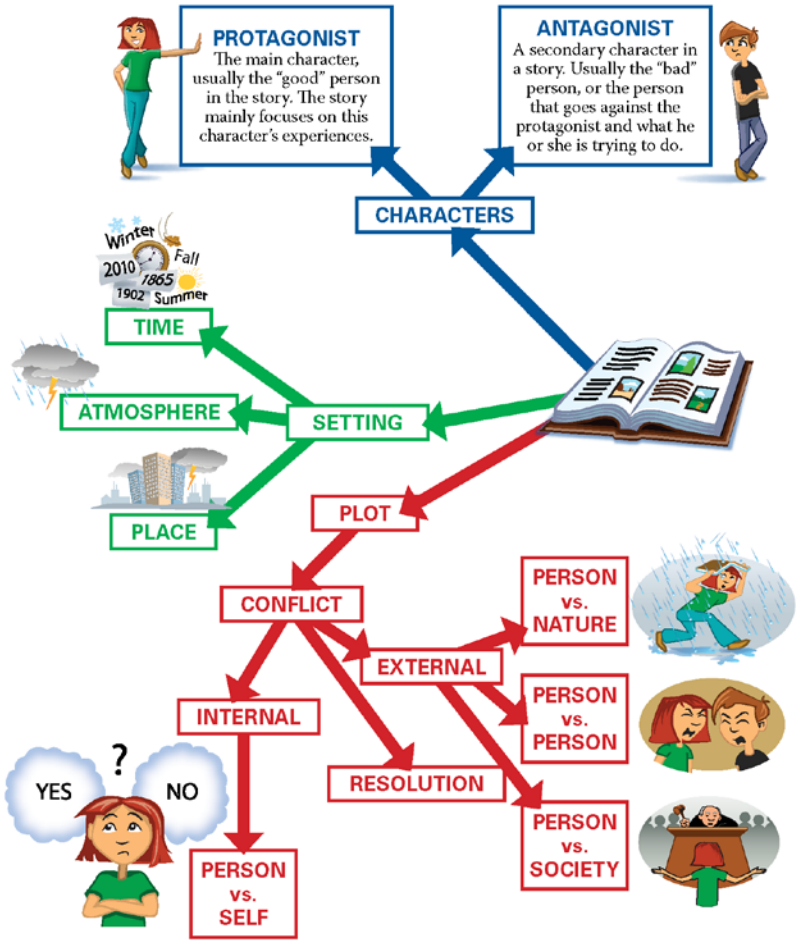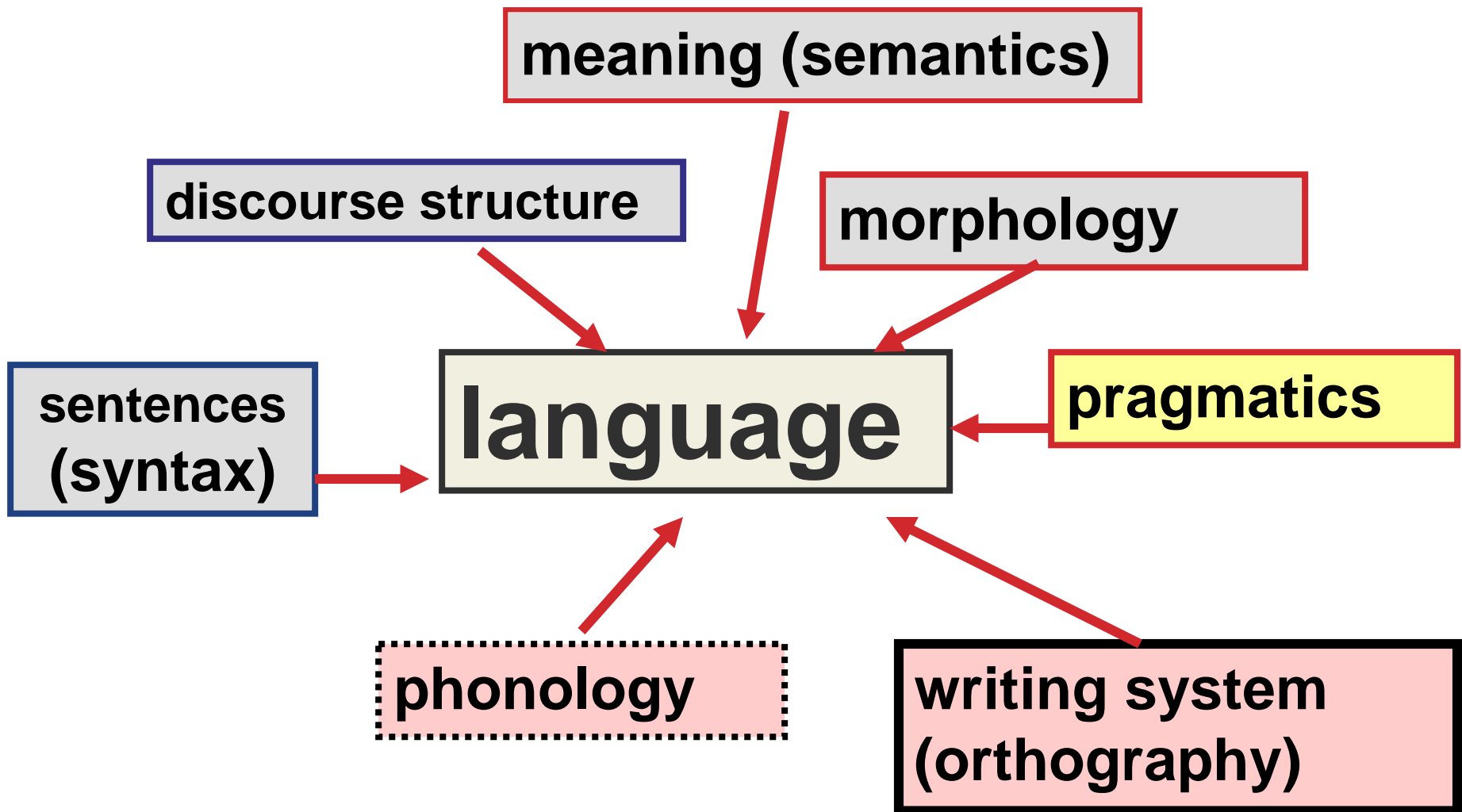

Use the chat box.

- Why should students today read about or study Greek mythology?

- Why were myths created?

What Kind of Text are We Reading?

Where are the linguistic challenges in the text?

meaning (semantics)

discourse structure

morphology

sentences (syntax)

language

pragmatics

phonology

writing system (orthography)

Perseus and the Gorgon's Head

Use the chat box. The meaning of what word in the first sentence may be miscomprehended by poor readers?

Perseus feared he was more likely to become a stone image than to bring back the head of Medusa with its snaky locks. Knowing he had undertaken a dangerous task, Perseus left without saying a word to his mother. He took his shield and his sword, and crossed over from the island to the mainland. He sat down to gather his thoughts and heard a voice.

"Perseus," said the voice, "why are you sad?"

Interpretation of Literary Language

Use the chat box. Find an example of "literary" language.

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"I am not so very sad," said he, "only thoughtful about an adventure that I have undertaken."

Interpreting Difficult Verb Tenses

Use the chat box. Cite examples of conditional tense.

Luckily for Perseus, their faces were completely hidden from him. Had he but looked one instant at them, he would have fallen heavily out of the air, his image in senseless stone.

"Now," whispered Hermes, as he hovered by the side of Perseus, "now is your time to do the deed! Be quick; for, if one of the Gorgons should awake, you are too late!"

"Which one is Medusa?" asked Perseus.

Pragmatics – "Hearing" Tone of Dialogue

"Here!" cried Hermes, at last, "take you the staff, for you need it a great deal more than I. Are there no better walkers than you in the island of Seriphos?"

"I could walk pretty well," said Perseus, glancing slyly at his companion's feet, "if only I had a pair of winged shoes."

"We must see about getting you a pair," answered Hermes.

The staff helped Perseus tremendously. In fact, the stick seemed to be alive in his hand, and to lend some of its life to Perseus.

Recognizing Subordinating Conjunctions

Use the chat box. What subordinating conjunction is important for interpreting the passage?

They walked and talked until twilight. Suddenly Hermes whispered, "This is just the time and place to meet the Three Gray Women. Be careful that they do not see you before you see them. Though they have but a single eye among the three, it is as sharp-sighted as a half dozen common eyes."

"But what must I do," asked Perseus, "when we meet them?"

Interpreting Unusual Word Uses

"Take it, one of you," she cried, "and quit this foolish quarreling. For my part, I shall be glad of a little thick darkness. Take it quickly, or I will clap it into my own head again!"

Finding that there was no other way of recovering their eye, at last they told Perseus what he wanted to know. No sooner had they done so, than he immediately, and with the utmost respect, clapped it into the vacant socket in one of their foreheads. He thanked them for their kindness, and bade them farewell.

Mediating Inference-Making

Perseus persuaded the king to invite all of his subjects to see the terrible head of Medusa.

"Show us the head! Show us the head of Medusa with the snaky locks!" shouted the people.

A feeling of sorrow and pity came over the youthful Perseus. "O King Polydectes," cried he, "and ye many people, I am loath to show you the Gorgon's head!"

"Show me the Gorgon's head, or I will cut off your own!" proclaimed the king.

Perseus sighed and cried out in a voice like a trumpet, "Behold it then!"

Scaffolded Reading of Challenging Text

- 1st read – purpose, author's intent, preview using text features, read aloud, peer to peer statement of one thing learned from each paragraph

- 2nd read – students use question types and question words to formulate questions for one another

- 3rd read – guided highlighting, focus on details, context, and text evidence

"Close Reading" (Guided Highlighting)

- Second or third read-through.
- Examine segments of the text to identify specific linguistic constructions.
- Notice examples of linguistic concepts previously taught.

Anticipate What Might Be Challenging

- Pronoun references
- Word meanings and substitutions
- Logic conveyed by conjunctions
- Figurative language (metaphors, similes, idioms)
- Deeply embedded, dense, or unusual sentence structures
- Structure and purpose of text

Teach Language Explicitly, in Parallel with Text Reading!

- Personal pronouns

- Possessive plural forms (students')

- Comparative and superlative adjectives

- Royal order of adjectives

- Figurative language: Idioms, metaphors, similes

- proverbs

- Modal verbs would, could, should and conditional verb tense (if…, then…)

- Word analogies

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- Aims to directly teach specific strategies (summarizing, questioning, visualizing, etc.)
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Text-Driven

- Texts chosen by quality and relevance to a theme or topic
- Focuses on keeping students' attention on understanding text content
- Teacher is mediator; guides with questioning and discussion aimed at interpreting, building the mental model

Summary: The Whole Shebang

Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
Identify purpose for reading	Identify how words within sentences and sentences within paragraphs work together to convey ideas	Clarify, use repair strategy if main ideas are not making sense
Surface or learn new background knowledge	Use background knowledge to fill in gaps and make inferences	Connect new learning to existing knowledge base
Consider text structure	Use text structure to organize thinking	Summarize enduring understandings
Formulate questions and prompts	Seek answers to questions and prompts; formulate new Q's	Answer questions with evidence
Make predictions	Verify predictions; make new ones	Discuss and evaluate predictions
		Written response

References

- **Moats, Dakin, & Joshi (Eds.) (2012)** *Expert perspectives on interventions for reading: A collection of best-practice articles from the International Dyslexia Association. Chapters:*

Cain, K., Making sense of text: Skills that support text comprehension and its development; **McNamara**, D.S., The importance of teaching reading strategies; **McKeown, Beck, & Blake**, Reading comprehension instruction: Focus on content or strategies?; **McKeown & Beck**, Designing questions toward thinking and understanding rather than answers; **Troia**, G. A., Tactics to help students use writing to express their comprehension of content area texts.

That's All Folks!

Questions, comments, or reflections?

Use the chat box!

THANK YOU!

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