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READING COMPREHENSION FOR BEGINNING READERS

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Reading has three components:

- Decoding
- Fluency
- Comprehension

The more automatic decoding and fluency are the more the brain can pay attention to comprehension.

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Vocabulary may be considered a fourth component or it may be considered a factor in each of the other components.

Vocabulary is more than simply knowing the dictionary definition of a word... It is knowing the concepts conveyed by that word. It requires multiple interactions with the word in meaningful ways.

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Comprehension:

Goal is to have learners more deeply engage with the texts. Not just to understand the literal story but to use that text to help them think more deeply about what the author is saying. To build a deeper and richer understanding of the world.

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When thinking about comprehension instruction it is necessary to consider:

Pre Reading

setting purpose, activating background knowledge

During Reading

making predictions and self-monitoring for understanding

Post Reading

make further connections between themselves and the text, further analyze.

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Good readers monitor their own comprehension. They are aware when meaning breaks down and employ different types of strategies to regain understanding.

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DR-TA

(Directed Reading - Thinking Activity)

- Especially useful for teaching prediction, close reading and self-monitoring.
- Equally useful as a listening activity known as DL-TA (This is good for ESL)
- Really important to ask neutral questions and to ask readers to refer back to the text.

What's going to happen? How do you know?

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Questioning:

- Asking questions that require deeper thinking and analyzing is at the heart of comprehension instruction. We want learners to internalize this type of response to reading.
- There are a variety of questioning strategies to bolster deeper thinking. (see handout "Questioning Techniques")

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There are three types of questions, all are important but often we over focus on one at the expense of another.

Right There - these are literal, factual questions which verify a learners understanding of the action.

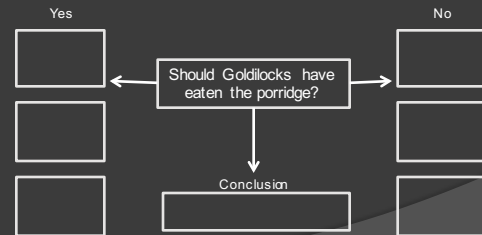
Between the Lines - these are questions which require making inferences and interpretations.

Beyond the Lines – these require learners to use the text to express opinions and form new ideas.

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The Discussion Web Strategy:

Use a version of the graphic below. Place a controversial, but neutrally worded, question from the story in the central box. Have learners list as many positive as negative reasons. The goal is to have the learners really think about both sides of an issue and then come to a conclusion. This works well for small groups but it can be used with individuals as well. (Vacca, Vacca & Mraz, 2011)



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Thank You!

If you have questions or comments I can be reached at

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