SESSION 5: REFLECTION — QUESTIONING, WRITING, AND DISCUSSING

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Introduction

Reading furnishes the mind only with materials for knowledge; it is thinking that makes what we read ours.

— John Locke

Overview

In the last session, you explored different strategies for reading to learn narrative and informational texts. In this session, you will explore different strategies that will assist students in becoming effective readers by taking the time to reflect on what they are learning, both during and after the reading process. You will choose two strategies from this session to complete your Reading to Learn Strategies Chart.

Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Discuss opportunities for modeling strategies and ways you incorporate reflection in your reading instruction.
- Reflect on the advantages of using reflection strategies in your reading instruction.
- Make a plan for how you will include reflection strategies in your curriculum and how you will overcome implementation barriers.
- Write a plan for how you will implement two reflection strategies in your classroom instruction in the Reading-to-Learn Strategies Chart.

To keep track of your assignments for this session, print the Assignment Checklist.
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Reflection Strategies

In addition to being strategic in their reading processes, ideal readers are reflective and demonstrate the following behaviors:

- Mull over the text ideas both as they read and after they finish reading.
- Weigh the information in light of their reading purpose.
- Analyze how the material aligns with their prior knowledge and experience: measuring it against what they believe, what they know, and what they have experienced.
- Make inferences and draw conclusions about what they read.
- Revise their schema as needed, incorporating new learning into their knowledge base.
- Continually extend and refine what they have learned after reading, deepening their understanding of the material.

Explore Reflection Strategies

The following strategies will assist students in becoming effective readers by taking the time to reflect on what they are learning, both during and after the reading process.

1. A Learning Log is one of the most effective means of writing-to-learn. Learning logs foster reflection on either text content or on the reading and learning processes. Learning logs differ from journals in that they focus on content covered in class, not students’ personal and private feelings. Students may reflect on how they feel, but it is always in relation to what is being studied in class.

2. Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) (Raphael, 1982; 1986) is a strategy that is "designed to demystify the questioning process, providing teachers and students with a common vocabulary to discuss different types of questions and sources of information for answering these questions" (Anthony & Raphael 319). There are four levels of questions: "right there," "think and search," "author and you," and "on my own." Anthony and Raphael assert that QAR can also facilitate the transfer of control of the questioning process from teacher to learner. That is, when students become skilled at QAR, they need to rely less on their teacher because they are able to generate different levels of questions themselves during independent reading.

3. The Role/Audience/Format/Topic (RAFT) strategy (Santa, 1988) employs writing-to-learn activities to enhance understanding of informational text. Instead of writing a traditional essay that explains a concept learned, students demonstrate their understanding in a nontraditional format. This technique encourages creative thinking and motivates students to reflect in unusual ways about concepts they have read. The RAFT strategy forces students to process information, rather than merely write out answers to questions. Students are more motivated to undertake the writing assignment because it involves them personally and allows for more creative responses to learning the material.

4. Writing-to-Learn is a method that should be incorporated across the curriculum. This approach helps students personalize learning so that they understand their course work better and retain what they have learned longer. According to Sebranek, Meyer
& Kemper (44), it also encourages high-level thinking skills. Writing-to-Learn activities can be used to help students reflect on and explore ideas and concepts they read about in class, thereby helping students to construct meaning.

5. The Creative Debate strategy promotes debate, creative thinking, and thinking from different perspectives. Students debate a topic from a character's point of view.

6. The Discussion Web gives all students, not just the verbally talented students, an opportunity to assume responsibility and share their own ideas in discussion. It is tailored after McTighe and Lyman’s (1988) think-pair-share discussion cycle. In the discussion web, all students think individually about the items they want to share in the discussion and then share their ideas with a partner. This private "think time" promotes total class involvement and honors the wait time necessary for developing insightful thoughts to share. Student accountability is also included by having students share their thinking with each other. The discussion web incorporates all four areas of language arts: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It can be used any time during the learning process-as a pre-reading activity, a pre-writing activity, a post-reading strategy, or to help students organize their ideas while reading a selection.

7. Scored Discussion gives students the opportunity to practice and to evaluate discussion skills. A small group of students carry on a content-related discussion after they have read a selection. The teacher and the rest of the class observe and score individual contributions based on predetermined criteria. Students are awarded points for contributing relevant information, using evidence, asking clarifying questions, creating analogies, and encouraging other group members to participate. Negative points are assigned for interruptions, irrelevant comments, and personal attacks. Following the discussion, the teacher and observers provide feedback to the discussion members. See an example of a Scored Discussion Sheet (PDF).

**Modeling Informational Text Strategies**

Watch the "Question-Answer Relationship (QAR)" video of a teacher using the QAR strategy. Pay attention to how the teacher prompts students to create and answer each type of question. Notice how the students respond with varying levels of understanding when faced with the different types of questions.

Open the discussion forum for Session 5 and engage in an online discussion by responding to the following:

The teacher in the video modeled the QAR strategy. What other opportunities are there in an elementary, middle, or high school classroom for modeling and incorporating reflection strategies?

As you complete the rest of the readings and assignments for this session, you should go to the discussion forum at least two or three times to continue the discussion. You may refer to the discussion forum rubric to review the expectations for participating in online discussions in this course.
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Implementing Strategies

The Needs of Diverse Students

Read the PBS TeacherSource articles: "High Standards Necessary to Raise Literacy Levels of All Students" and "When Students Can't Read by Age 9" to learn more about how you can meet the needs of all the students in your classroom. Remember, you will have to provide suggestions and ideas for how you will modify the strategies in the Reading-to-Learn Strategies Chart. As you read, think about the reflection strategies you explored in this session and how you may use them with individual students.

In your online journal, respond to the following questions:

What are the advantages of using reflection strategies in your reading instruction?

How can you plan to include reflection strategies in your curriculum? Make a plan for how you will overcome some of the barriers to implementing reading instruction (time, students’ different needs, resistance to reading, etc.).

Reading-to-Learn Strategies Chart Assignment (Sessions 3-5)

Finish completing the Reading-to-Learn Strategies Chart that you used in Sessions 3 and 4. At this time, you need to select two reflection strategies from Session 5 to add to your chart. You may use our template or create your own chart in a word processing document. You may refer to the Reading-to-Learn Strategies Chart rubric to review the expectations for completing this assignment.

Submit your completed Reading-to-Learn Strategies Chart to your facilitator by the end of this session.

Final Project Part I: Reading-to-Learn Activity Plan

You should complete Part I of the final project during this session.
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Look Ahead

In Session 6, you will use your Reading-to-Learn Strategies Chart to complete your final project. You will also have an opportunity to reflect on your acquired knowledge and professional goals and expectations. Remember the final project requires you work with students. If you are not currently in the classroom, organize a way to work with a group of students at this time. Remember to get permission from the students’ guardians before you begin.

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