Helping English Learners in Grades 3-12 Meet Standards for Literacy

How Can We Help ELLs Access and Produce Complex Text?

Rochester Regional Supporting All Students Conference
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Presenter: Lisa Tabaku, Principal Researcher and TA Consultant
Center for English Language Learners at American Institutes for Research

Overview of Presentation

How Can We Help ELLs With Complex Text?

Scaffold close reading by

- Enhancing background
- Helping students acquire vocabulary
- Helping students deconstruct complex text

Center for ELLs at AIR: Core Team for Technical Assistance

Attaining Core Content for English Language Learners (ACCELL): The Model

ACCELL Model: Reading Components
ACCELL Model: Writing Components

Reviewing writing standards and objectives

Preparing to write

Writing

Attaining Core Content for English Language Learners (ACCELL): Research Base

1. Strategically use instructional tools (video clips, visuals, graphic organizers) to anchor instruction and help students make sense of content

2. Explicitly teach the content-specific academic vocabulary as well as the general academic vocabulary that supports it, during content-area instruction

3. Provide daily opportunities for students to talk about content in pairs or small groups

4. Provide writing opportunities to extend student learning and understanding of the content material

Integrate Oral & Written English with Content

Strong Research Base

Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in the Elementary and Middle School. (2014)

Attaining Core Content for English Language Learners (ACCELL): Exemplar Text

The Voice That Challenged a Nation

The Voice That Challenged a Nation

Excerpt from The Voice that Challenged a Nation: Marian Anderson and the Struggle for Equal Rights by Russell Freedman. Copyright © 2004 by Russell Freedman. Reprinted by permission of Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

[1] Despite cold and threatening weather, the crowd began to assemble long before the concert was to begin. People arrived singly and in pairs and in large animated groups. Soon the streets leading to the Mall in Washington, D.C., were jammed with thousands of people heading for the Lincoln Memorial.

[2] The earliest arrivals found places as close as possible to the steps of the great marble monument. As the crowd grew, it spread back along the Mall, stretching around both sides of the long reflecting pool and extending beyond to the base of the Washington Monument, three-quarters of a mile away. Baby carriages were parked among the trees. Folks cradled sleeping infants in their arms and held youngsters by the hand or propped up on their shoulders. Uniformed Boy Scouts moved through the festive holiday throng handing out programs.

[3] Anticipating a huge turnout, the National Park Service had enlisted the help of some five hundred Washington police officers. By five o’clock that afternoon, when the concert was scheduled to start, an estimated 75,000 people had gathered on the Mall. They waited patiently under overcast skies, bundled up against the brisk wind that whipped in from the Potomac River. They had come on this chilly Easter Sunday to hear one of the great voices of the time and to demonstrate their support for racial justice in the nation’s capital.
Marian Anderson had been applauded by many of the crowned heads of Europe. She had been welcomed at the White House, where she sang for the president and first lady, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. She had performed before appreciative audiences in concert halls across the United States. But because she was an African American, she had been denied the right to sing at Constitution Hall, Washington’s largest and finest auditorium. The Daughters of the American Revolution, the patriotic organization that owned Constitution Hall, had ruled several years earlier that black artists would not be permitted to appear there.

News of the DAR’s ban had caused an angry controversy and set the stage for a historic event in the struggle for civil rights. Working behind the scenes, a group of influential political figures had found an appropriate concert space for Anderson. Barred from Constitution Hall, she would give a free open-air concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

Shortly before the concert got under way, the skies above Washington began to clear. Clouds, which had shadowed the monument, skittered away to the north, and the late afternoon sun broke through to bathe the reflecting pool and shine on the gaily dressed Easter crowd. Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes appeared on the speaker’s platform. He introduced Miss Anderson, and she stepped forward to the bank of microphones. The massive figure of Abraham Lincoln gazed down at her as she looked out at the expectant throng. Silencing the ovation with a slight wave of her hand, she paused. A profound hush settled over the crowd. For that moment, Marian Anderson seemed vulnerable and alone. Then she closed her eyes, lifted her head, clasped her hands before her, and began to sing.

Determine the Background Knowledge Required

- Preview the text to determine whether there are areas of background knowledge students may not have.
  - Background knowledge might consist of cultural, historical, chronological, or spatial context for the text.
- Capitalize on students’ prior knowledge.
  - Consider background knowledge students may have that would help them understand the text.
- Recognize that not all texts require the development of background knowledge.

Methods for Developing Background Knowledge

- Draw from a variety of sources—e.g., auxiliary texts, video clips, pictures, field trips, photographs, tables, graphs, and concept maps.
- Create or adapt existing resources, as necessary, to develop materials that build background knowledge.
- Manage the time you devote accordingly.
Before Reading:
Enhance Background Knowledge

Provide Students With a Short, Relevant Text

For the text excerpt from The Voice:
Students will get a better sense of the huge crowd if they can see image/map/video of the area in which people gathered to hear Marian sing.

- The Mall/the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. [map]
- Marian Anderson performing at the Lincoln Memorial [short video]

Enhance Background Knowledge: Video Clips

- Look for short clips (less than 10 minutes is recommended) that include
  - Accurate information
  - Comprehensible language and speech
  - Visuals that support comprehension
- If possible, provide subtitles in English, the home language, or both

Enhance Background Knowledge: Home Language Resources

- Search for links, text, or video using the home language term for the concept being taught.
- Ask a native speaker to review materials that will be shared with students to guarantee accuracy of the information and language.

Vocabulary Acquisition Throughout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Routine</th>
<th>Vocabulary Acquisition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhance background knowledge</td>
<td>Teach vocabulary related to background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before reading</td>
<td>Pre-teach a limited number of words and phrases that are central to understanding the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During close reading</td>
<td>Have students use glossaries and other resources to clarify meanings of unknown vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After reading</td>
<td>Have students identify words they still don’t know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach word-learning strategies</td>
<td>Teach vocabulary strategies to help students become independent learners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vocabulary Selection – How do you select vocabulary in preparation for reading?

**Frequency**
- Select frequently encountered words

**Importance to Text**
- Select key words that will be critical for overall understanding

**Conceptual Complexity**
- Select vocabulary in preparation for reading:
  - not easily imageable,
  - that are abstract,
  - and/or that have a high degree of relatedness.

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**Relatedness**
- The degree to which understanding the word requires an understanding of related concepts is relatedness.
- Words that have dense networks of other related concepts have high relatedness.

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**Vocabulary Instruction:**
**Words to Pre-Teach**

**Extended Instruction** More intensive instruction for less imageable, less concrete, and highly related words:
- Use an illustration and synonym to explain a word’s meaning.
- Provide a definition. Make sure it is the one used in the target text.
- Provide the home language definition and cognate status.
- Structure opportunities for students to talk about the word.
- Provide the way the word is used in the text.

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**Vocabulary Instruction:**
**Words to address during reading**

**Embedded Instruction**
Less intensive instruction for highly imageable, concrete, and low relatedness words:
- Define the word in context and at the point of need.
- Give the L1 translation.
- Show a picture of the word.
- Use gestures to demonstrate the word.
- Provide a glossary.
Vocabulary - Embedded Instruction

Teacher embeds instruction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Teaching Technique</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>threatening</td>
<td>define in context: &quot;Threatening weather means it looks like it's going to be bad weather.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assemble</td>
<td>define in context and provide an example: &quot;Assemble means to gather or come together. For example, we assembled in the auditorium yesterday for a concert.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jammed</td>
<td>define in context and show the picture in the book of the crowd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vocabulary Instruction: Word Learning Strategies

- It is not feasible to directly teach students all of the words they need to know to be successful readers.

- It is important to teach students word learning strategies:
  - Context clues
  - How to use reference materials (e.g., glossaries, online dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries)
  - Cognates (for languages that share cognates with English)
  - Morphology (e.g., using roots or base words, prefixes, and suffixes to determine word meanings)

Vocabulary Instruction - Student Self-Directed

Glossary Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Define the Word</th>
<th>Example from Text</th>
<th>Your Sentence</th>
<th>Is it a Cognate?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>animated</td>
<td>animado</td>
<td>full of excitement</td>
<td>People arrived in large animated groups.</td>
<td>I saw many animated fans at the D.C. United game.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anticipating</td>
<td>anticipando</td>
<td>expect and prepare for something</td>
<td>Anticipating a huge turnout, the National Park Service had enlisted the help of five hundred police officers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arrivals</td>
<td>llegadas</td>
<td>person who has come to a place</td>
<td>The earliest arrivals found places close to the steps of the monument.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arrived</td>
<td>llegaron</td>
<td>come to or reach a place</td>
<td>People group singly and in pairs.</td>
<td></td>
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http://www.wordsmyth.net/

Demonstrate and explain:
- Where to enter the word and dictionary levels
- Pronunciation key
- Parts of speech
- Definitions
- Example use
- Synonyms

Word Analyzer Tool

https://vocabularytool.airprojects.org
What is Close Reading?

- Asking students to grapple with complex text that requires multiple readings because meaning can be difficult to understand at a surface level.
- Analysis is needed to uncover deeper meaning.

 Attributes That Make Text Challenging

**Lexical level**
- Unfamiliar vocabulary
- Words with multiple levels of meaning
- Nominalization (e.g., implementation, help)
- Use of archaic language

**Sentence level**
- Figurative language
- Significant use of "nonstandard" dialect
Attributes That Make Text Challenging

**Discourse level**
- Text with multiple levels of meaning
- Distortions in organization of text (e.g., time sequences)
- Specialized content knowledge required
- Limited use of text features and graphics

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Text Complexity

- Give ELLs texts that are closer to their zone of proximal development (i.e., comprehensible but challenging).

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Resources for Finding Leveled Texts

- Smartphone apps
  - Level It Books (iPhone; developer KTL Apps) for $3.99
  - Level Finder (iPhone; developer Brandie Collins) for $1.99
- Subscription databases (search for articles by Lexile level)
  - EBSCO
  - ProQuest
  - Gale
  - World Book

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Resources for Finding Leveled Texts

- Newsela.com
  - Provides real world news for students at 5 different Lexile levels.
  - Free for students; teacher can subscribe to Newsela Pro, which includes additional resources.

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Chunking Text and Engaging in Multiple Readings

**Engage Students in Multiple Readings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading for Key Ideas and Details</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Read Aloud:</strong> The teacher reads the text aloud to demonstrate reading fluency.</td>
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<td><strong>First Read:</strong> Students read the text in pairs or groups and answer questions focused on key ideas and details and vocabulary.</td>
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<td><strong>Third Read:</strong> Students read the text in pairs or groups and answer questions focused on craft and structure or integration of knowledge and ideas.</td>
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**Chunking Text**

**Present Text in Smaller Sections**

To help ELLs engage deeply with text, present it in small, coherent sections.
- Each chunk of text should represent one key idea.
- The chunk should have (e.g., by events, ideas, descriptions).
- The number of chunks per lesson may depend on the level of difficulty of the text for a particular group of students.

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Model: Reading for Key Ideas and Details
Chunking Text

For example, this is how we chunked the initial paragraphs of “The Voice”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHUNKED Paragraph Number</th>
<th>Main Idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1-3</td>
<td>A large crowd was gathered on the Mall despite the threatening weather. They had come to hear a great voice and support racial justice.</td>
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Example: Reading for Key Ideas and Details

What paragraph(s) would you chunk next in “The Voice?”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Paragraph Numbers</th>
<th>Main Idea</th>
<th>Guiding Question(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>#4 and 5</td>
<td>The great voice was Marian Anderson, a Black woman, who was not allowed to sing at DAR Constitution Hall. Instead, she sang at the Lincoln Memorial.</td>
<td>Why were so many people gathered on the Mall when the weather was so bad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6 and 7</td>
<td>The weather improved and Marian Anderson sang in front of the statue of Abraham Lincoln.</td>
<td>Why was the weather improved?</td>
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Model: Reading for Key Ideas

Asking Guiding Questions

Example

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Reading for Key Ideas and Details

Ask Guiding Questions

- Now we ask guiding questions to help students understand the key idea.
- The guiding questions require students to express the key idea.
- Text-Dependent Questions cannot be answered without referring to the text.

Reading for Key Ideas

Asking Guiding Questions – You Try It

What guiding question(s) would you ask to help students find the key ideas?

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**Asking Guiding Questions**

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<td># 4 and 5</td>
<td>The great voice was Marian Anderson, a Black woman, who was not allowed to sing at DAR Constitution Hall. Instead, she sang at the Lincoln Memorial.</td>
<td>Who was the great voice the people had come to hear? Why was she singing at the Lincoln Memorial?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># 6 and 7</td>
<td>The weather improved and Marian Anderson sang in front of the statue of Abraham Lincoln.</td>
<td>What happened to the weather just before the concert began? Where did Marian Anderson stand to sing?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reading for Key Ideas and Details**

**Ask Supplementary Questions**

- Students often need additional, supplementary questions to help them understand details.
- Teacher poses questions.
- Questions delivered sequentially, in the order in which information appears in the chunk.

**Example: Reading for Key Ideas and Details**

**Ask Guiding Questions**

Marian Anderson had been applauded by many of the crowned heads of Europe. She had been welcomed at the White House, where she sang for the president and first lady, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. She had performed before appreciative audiences in concert halls across the United States.

**Text Focus?**

**Guiding Question**

- Who was Marian Anderson? What were her accomplishments?
- Who did Marian Anderson sing for in the White House?
- What kinds of audiences did she sing in front of?

**Text-Dependent Questions**

- Who was Marian Anderson? What were her accomplishments?
- Who did Marian Anderson sing for in the White House?
- What kinds of audiences did she sing in front of?

**Non-Text-Dependent Questions**

- What is it like to go to an open-air concert?
- Who is Russell Freedman? Why did he write this book?
- Describe different types of concerts people go to.

**MODEL: Reading for Key Ideas and Details**

**Ask Supplementary Questions**

- Defining key words prior to asking the question or asking questions about word meanings.
- Restating phrases or sentences that will help students answer the question.

(Note that supplementary questions are text dependent!)
Scaffolding Questions

Scaffold Questions for Different Levels of Proficiency
- The level of scaffolding is adjusted depending on the student’s level of proficiency.
- Emergent level proficiency: Sentence frames and word banks
- Intermediate level proficiency: Sentence starters (word banks)
- Advanced level proficiency: Questions only (word banks)

MODEL: Scaffolding Questions

MODEL: Scaffolding Questions

MODEL: Scaffolding Questions

Annotating the Text for Key Ideas and Details
Engage Students in Multiple Readings

Reading for Key Ideas and Details
- *Teacher Read-Aloud*: The teacher reads the text aloud to demonstrate reading fluency.
- *First Read*: Students read the text in pairs or groups and answer questions focused on key ideas and details and vocabulary.

Annotating for Key Ideas and Details
- *Second Read*: Students reread the text and note vocabulary and details that they do not yet understand.

Revisiting for Craft and Structure or Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- *Third Read*: Students read the text in pairs or groups and answer questions focused on craft and structure or integration of knowledge and ideas.
Annotating the Text for Key Ideas and Details (optional)

- Students to annotate the text after they have already participated in reading and answering questions about the text for key ideas and details.
- Students annotate the text to
  - Identify vocabulary they still don’t know.
  - Identify portions of the text they don’t understand.
  - Develop questions related to portions they don’t understand.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS:
Now reread the passage once more. Star up to five words you don’t understand and write them in the spaces below. Underline sections of the text that still confuse you and prepare questions about these sections.

1) Write up to five words or phrases you don’t know:
   - ___________________________
   - ___________________________
   - ___________________________
   - ___________________________
   - ___________________________

2) Write questions for the parts of the text you don’t understand.
   - ______________________________________________________________________
   - ______________________________________________________________________
   - ______________________________________________________________________
   - ______________________________________________________________________
   - ______________________________________________________________________

Revisiting Text for Craft and Structure or Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Engage Students in Multiple Readings

Reading for Key Ideas and Details

- Teacher Read-Aloud: The teacher reads the text aloud to demonstrate reading fluency.
- First Close Read: Students read the text in pairs or groups and answer questions focused on key ideas and details and vocabulary.

Annotating for Key Ideas and Details

- Annotation: Students reread the text and note vocabulary and details that they do not yet understand.

Revisiting for Craft and Structure or Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Second Close Read: Students read the text in pairs or groups and answer questions focused on craft and structure or integration of knowledge and ideas.

Once students comprehend the text at a surface level,

- Revisit it to help students understand Craft and Structure questions and integrate Knowledge and Ideas.
- Model the skills required by the standards.
- Ask text-dependent questions related to these skills.
- Scaffold questions and answers as needed.

Ask Questions About Craft and Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Sample Standard</th>
<th>Generic Stem</th>
<th>The Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Craft and Structure</td>
<td>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.</td>
<td>What does the word/phrase ______ mean in this text? For example, What does the phrase “crowned heads” mean? Use the context of the fourth paragraph to explain what the phrase “crowned heads” means.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Ask Questions About Craft and Structure

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<tr>
<td>Craft and Structure</td>
<td>Analyze the structure of the excerpt to show how the structure helps define the key ideas.</td>
<td>Next to each paragraph, write whether it is written in the past or past perfect? Why are some paragraphs in the past and others in the past perfect? How does this add meaning to the text?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ask Questions to Integrate Knowledge and Ideas

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</td>
<td>Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.</td>
<td>What are the advantages and disadvantages of presenting a subject or concept through a particular medium (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia)?</td>
<td>What are the advantages of watching a video clip of this event instead of reading about it? What are the disadvantages of watching a video clip of this event instead of reading it?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ask Questions Aligned With Integration of Knowledge and Ideas Standards

<table>
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<th>The Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</td>
<td>Outline and evaluate the claims the author is making in support of his/her argument.</td>
<td>Freedman claims the DAR’s ban had “set the stage for a historic event in the struggle for civil rights.” Outline the evidence Freedman provides for this claim.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scaffold Questions Aligned With Craft and Structure or Integration of Knowledge and Ideas Standards

Provide the same types of differentiated scaffolding used for guiding questions focused on key ideas and details standards.

- Supplementary questions
- Sentence starters or frames
- Word banks

Differentiating Close Reading

Teacher prepares guiding and supplementary questions in written form.

- Some students work independently to answer the questions.
- Other students work in pairs to answer the questions.
- At the same time, the teacher works with a small group that needs more support to answer the questions.

Ideally, the text is glossed.
How Can We Help ELLs Access and Produce Complex Text?

1. What will I do to enhance background?
2. How will I help students acquire vocabulary?
3. How will I use shared interactive reading to help students understand complex text at multiple levels of meaning?