

Targeting Language Growth Through Literature

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Learning Objectives

- Explain characteristics of high quality children's literature to aid in selecting instructional materials
- Identify a hierarchy of questioning and ways to scaffold instruction for learners
- Describe different types of questions that can be used to teach vocabulary and comprehension

Why Literature?

- Highly engaged
- Encourages generalization
- Allows for demonstrating skills in context
- Support classroom skills
- Strong readers ask themselves questions as they read. Using literature allows students to practice this skill.

When selecting literature....

- Look at the complexity of the text
- Look at the content... is there not enough information? Is there too much information? Can the book be read in a single session?
- Look at the amount of text per page and the length of the book
- Look at character development. Are the characters stereotypical presentations or one dimensional? Does the book have several characters that are well developed?
- Consider if the language is engaging enough or too advanced.
- Look for illustrations that have enough visual interest

When selecting literature....

- Check to see if the text provides opportunities for connections, both between the real world and other books that you've previously used
- Consider the multicultural representation of characters
- Examine the theme of the book. Is there a clear theme/message?
- Interest in the topic. Is this a new take on a topic? Will it hold students' attention?

List adapted from That's a Great Answer by Nancy Boyles

Activity

- Working in groups of 2-3, select a book and work through the criteria above.
- What are the book's strengths? In what areas is it lacking?

Categories of Questions

- **Literal** questions have responses that are directly stated in the text.
- **Inferential** questions have responses that are indirectly stated, induced, or require other information.
- **Evaluative** questions require the reader to formulate a response based on their opinion.

Source: http://reading.uoregon.edu/big_ideas/comp/comp_dir_1.php?ref=gc&dti=40203553241241

Literal Questions

- Begin by asking a question directly from the text.
- Ask questions immediately after reading the content.
- If student gets answer wrong:
 - Give the answer
 - Ask the question again
- To increase complexity
 - Gradually increase the time between exposure to content and questioning
 - Ask questions that are derived from the text but not taken directly from it.
- Also called "on the surface", "from the book", or "right there" questions

Examples of Literal Questions

- What is the main characters name?
- Where are they going?
- What color is their car?

Activity

- Using the text on the screen, work in small groups and brainstorm 2-3 literal questions.

Inferential Questions

- Cannot be answered directly from the text, requires rewording of an answer
- Answer is generally in the text but implied, not directly stated
- Require students to pull knowledge from outside sources
- Require students to connect different parts of the text to answer the question
- Also called "between the lines", "From the book and my head", or "think and search", "author & you" questions

Examples of Inferential Questions

- Why did the character...?
- What would happen if....
- What do you think will happen next?
- How does the character feel?
- How can you tell....?

Activity

- Using the text on the screen, work in small groups and brainstorm 2-3 inferential questions.

Evaluative Questions

- Design questions that require students to state an opinion
- Requires students to use background knowledge or prior knowledge to answer the questions
- Design questions that require students to compare/contrast different characters or stories
- Also called "from your head" or "on my own" questions

Examples of Evaluative Questions

- Would you....
- Why do you think they....

Activity

- Using the text on the screen, work in small groups and brainstorm 2-3 evaluative questions.

Keeping Them Engaged

- Talk about the cover of the book.
- Make observations.
- Model sentence starts that you want them to use
 - I see...
 - I think that
 - That reminds me...
- Read with enthusiasm!
- Ask questions or make statements with the same level of enthusiasm!

Keeping Them Engaged

- PEER (dialogic reading) gives children the opportunity to be actively engaged in reading:
 - P = Prompt the child to say something about the book
 - E = Evaluate the child's response
 - E = Expand the child's response by rephrasing or adding to it.
 - R = Repeat the prompt to make sure the child has learned the expansion

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/dialogic-reading-effective-way-read-preschoolers>

Keeping them Engaged

- 5 Different Prompt Types in PEER = CROWD
 - C = Completion Prompt
 - R = Recall Prompt
 - O = Open-ended Prompt
 - W = Wh Prompt
 - D = Distancing Prompt (connecting them to their world)

Activity

- Let's put this all together! In small groups, find a book and discuss:
 - Characteristics of high quality children's literature
 - A variety of prompts you could use to involve the child
 - What category of questions the prompts fall under

Resources

- <https://www.readworks.org/>
- <https://newsela.com/>
- <https://www.getepic.com/>
- <https://www.tweentribune.com/>
- <https://www.newsomatic.org/> (first month free)
- <http://www.storylineonline.net/>
- <http://www.k12reader.com/>
- Magic of Stories by Carol Strong
- That's a Great Answer by Nancy Boyles
