

COMPETENCY 1.0

READING PROCESS AND COMPREHENSION

Skill 1.1 Understand the role of phonological and phonemic awareness in the reading process and strategies for developing word identification skills and vocabulary knowledge.

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness means the ability of the reader to recognize the sounds or phonemes of spoken language. This recognition includes how these sounds can be blended together, segmented (divided up), and manipulated (switched around). This awareness eventually leads to phonics, a method for decoding language by unlocking letter-sound or grapheme-phoneme relationships.

Development of phonological skills for most children begins during the pre-K years. Indeed, by the age of 5, a child who has been exposed to fingerplays and poetry can recognize a rhyme. Such a child can demonstrate phonological awareness by filling in the missing rhyming word in a familiar rhyme or rhymed picture book. The procedure of filling in a missing word is called the cloze procedure. It can be used in oral or print literacy activities.

Children can be taught phonological awareness by directly pointing out the sounds made by letters singly (as in /b/) or in combination (as in /bl/) and by being taught to recognize individual sounds in words.

The Role of Phonological Awareness in Reading Development

Instructional methods to teach phonological awareness may include any or all of the following:

1. Auditory games during which children recognize and manipulate the sounds of words, separate or segment the sounds of words, take out sounds, blend sounds, add in new sounds, or take apart sounds to recombine them in new formations.
2. Snap game—the teacher says two words. The children snap their fingers if the two words share a sound, which might be at the beginning or end of the word. Children hear initial phonemes most easily, followed by final ones. Medial or middle sounds are most difficult for young children to discriminate. This can be observed in their oral responses as well as in their invented spelling. Silence occurs if the words share no sounds. Children love this simple game and it also helps with classroom management.
3. Language games model for children identification of rhyming words. These games help inspire children to create their own rhymes.
4. Read books that rhyme such as *Sheep in a Jeep* by Nancy Shaw or *The Fox on a Box* by Barbara Gregorich.
5. Share books that use alliteration (words that begin with the same sound) such as *Avalanche, A to Z*.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is a specific skill within the broader category of phonological awareness. Probably developing fairly late, it is the knowledge that words are comprised of individual phonemes that can be blended. “The two best predictors of early reading success are alphabetic recognition and phonemic awareness” (Marilyn Jaeger Adams).

“In order to benefit from formal reading instruction, children must have a certain level of phonemic awareness. . . . Phonemic awareness is both a prerequisite for and a consequence of learning to read” (Hallie Kay Yopp).

Theorist Marilyn Jager Adams, who researches early reading, has outlined five basic types of phonemic awareness tasks.

Task 1—Ability to hear rhymes and alliteration. For example, the children would listen to a poem, rhyming picture book, or song and identify the rhyming words heard, which the teacher might then record or list on a chart.

Task 2—Ability to do oddity tasks (recognize the member of a set that is different [odd] among the group). For example, the children would look at the pictures of grass, a garden, and a rose, answering this question: Which one starts with a different sound?

Task 3—The ability to orally blend words and split syllables. For example, the children can say the first sound of a word and then the rest of the word and put it together as a single word.

Task 4—The ability to orally segment words. For example, the ability to count sounds. The child would be asked to count or clap the sounds in “hamburger.”

Task 5—The ability to do phonics manipulation tasks. For example, replace the “r” sound in rose with a “p” sound.

The Role of Phonemic Awareness in Reading Development

Children who have problems with phonics generally have not acquired or been exposed to phonemic awareness activities at home or in preschool. This includes extensive songs, rhymes, and read-alouds.

Instructional Methods

Since the ability to distinguish between individual sounds or phonemes within words is a prerequisite to the association of sounds with letters and manipulating sounds to blend words—a fancy way of saying “reading”—the teaching of phonemic awareness is crucial to emergent literacy (early childhood K-2 reading instruction). Children need a strong background in phonemic awareness in order for phonics instruction (sound-spelling relationship to printed materials) to be effective.

Instructional methods that may be effective for teaching phonemic awareness can include

1. clapping syllables in words;
2. distinguishing between a word and a sound;
3. using visual cues and movements to help children understand when the speaker goes from one sound to another;
4. incorporating oral segmentation activities that focus on easily-distinguished syllables rather than sounds;
5. singing familiar songs (e.g. Happy Birthday, Knick Knack Paddy Wack) and replacing key words with those of a different ending; and
6. dealing children a deck of picture cards and having them sound out the words for the pictures on their cards or calling for a picture by asking for its first and last sound.

Assessment of Phonemic Awareness

Throughout the year, teachers can maintain ongoing logs and rubrics for assessment of phonemic awareness for individual children. Such assessments would identify particular stated reading behaviors or performance standards, the date of observation of the child’s behavior (in this context, phonemic activity or exercise), and comments.

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The rubric or legend for assessing these behaviors might include the following descriptors:

1. Demonstrates or exhibits reading behavior consistently.
2. Makes progress/strides toward this reading behavior.
3. Has not yet demonstrated or exhibited this behavior.

Depending on the particular phonemic task the teacher models, the performance task might include:

1. Saying rhyming words in response to an oral prompt.
2. Segmenting a word spoken by the teacher into its beginning, middle, and ending sounds.
3. Counting correctly the number of syllables in a spoken word.

Phonological awareness involves the recognition that spoken words are composed of a set of smaller units such as onsets and rimes, syllables, and sounds. Phonemic awareness is a specific type of phonological awareness that focuses on the ability to distinguish, manipulate, and blend specific sounds or phonemes within an individual word. Think of phonological awareness as an umbrella and phonemic awareness as a specific spoke under this umbrella. Phonics deals with printed words and the learning of sound-spelling correlations, while phonemic awareness activities are oral. In reviewing reading research and theory, new distinctions and definitions appear often. The body of reading knowledge changes over time. The information and definitions in this guide are those accepted in the year of its publication and the time of its authoring and updating. As changes occur in accepted theories, they will be made in the guides and in the certification exams.

“If you believe that you learn to read by reading, you must learn to want to read. Reading to children, therefore, models both the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of reading” (Helen Depree and Sandra Iversen, *Early Literacy in the Classroom*).

“The long talk that parents have put off about the ways of the world might need to be an introduction to the facts about the English alphabet” (Terrence Moore, Ashbrook Center Fellow, and Principal of Ridgeview Classical Schools in Fort Collins, Colorado).

Skill 1.2 Demonstrate knowledge of the skills associated with phonological awareness.

Phonological awareness skills include but are not limited to the following:

1. Rhyming and syllabification.
2. Blending sounds into words—such as pic-tur-bo-k.
3. Identifying beginning or initial phonemes and ending or final phonemes in short, one-syllable words.
4. Breaking words down into sounds, which is also called “segmenting” words.

5. Removing initial sounds and substituting others. An example is /bat/ minus the /b/ with an /m/ substituted becomes /mat/.
6. Distinguishing spoken words and syllables.

Skill 1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of the alphabetic principle.

The alphabetic principle is sometimes called graphophonemic awareness. This term means that written words are composed of letters (graphemes) that represent the sounds (phonemes) of written words.

Development of the Understanding that Print Carries Meaning

This understanding is demonstrated every day in the elementary classroom as the teacher holds up a selected book to read aloud to the class. The teacher explicitly and deliberately talks aloud about how to hold the book, focuses the class on looking at its cover, points to where to start reading, and sweeps her hands in the direction to begin, left to right.

When writing the morning message on the board, the teacher reminds the children that the message begins in the upper left hand corner at the top of the board to be followed by additional activities and a schedule for the rest of the day.

When the teacher invites children to make posters of a single letter such as *b* and list items in the classroom, their home, or outside that start with that letter, the children are concretely demonstrating that print carries meaning.

Strategies for Promoting Awareness of the Relationship Between Spoken and Written Language

1. Writing down or encoding what the children say on a language chart.
2. Highlighting the uses of print products found in the classroom such as labels, yellow sticky-pad notes, labels on shelves and lockers, calendars, signs, and directions.
3. Reading together big-print and oversized books to teach print conventions such as directionality.
4. Practicing how to handle a book: how to turn pages, to find the top and bottom of pages, and how to tell the difference between the front and back covers.
5. Discussing and comparing with children the length, appearance, and boundaries of specific words. For example, children can see that the names of Dan and Dora share certain letters and a similar shape.
6. Having children match oral words to printed words by forming an echo chorus as the teacher reads poetry or rhymes aloud and they echo the reading.
7. Having the children combine, manipulate, switch, and move letters to change words.
8. Working with letter cards to create messages and respond to the messages that they create.

Skill 1.4 Demonstrate knowledge of various word identification strategies.

To decode means to change communication signals into messages. Reading comprehension requires that the reader learn the code the message is written in and decode it to get the message.

Although effective reading comprehension requires identifying words automatically (Adams, 1990, Perfetti, 1985), children do not have to be able to identify every single word or know the exact meaning of every word in a text to understand it. Indeed, Nagy (1988) says that children can read a work with a high level of comprehension even if they do not fully know as many as 15 percent of the words within a given text. Children develop the ability to automatically decode and recognize words. They then can extend their ability to decode to multi-syllabic words.

J. David Cooper (2004) and other advocates of the Balanced Literacy Approach feel that children become literate, effective communicators and able to comprehend by learning phonics and other aspects of word identification through the use of engaging reading texts. Engaging text, as defined by the Balanced Literacy group, are those texts that contain highly predictable elements of rhyme, sound patterns, and plot. Researchers such as Jeanne Chall (1983) and Rudolf Flesch (1981) support a phonics-centered foundation before the use of engaging reading texts. This is at the crux of the phonics versus whole-language/balanced-literacy/integrated-language-arts teaching-of-reading controversy.

It is important for the new teacher to be informed about both sides of this controversy as well as the work of theorists who attempt to reconcile these two perspectives, such as Kenneth Goodman (1994). There are powerful arguments on both sides of this controversy, and each approach works well with some students and does not succeed with others.

As far as the examinations go, all that is asked of you is the ability to demonstrate that you are familiar with these varied perspectives. If asked on a constructed response question, you need to be able to show that you can talk about teaching some aspect of reading using strategies from one or the other or a combination of approaches. This guide is designed to provide you with numerous strategies representing both approaches.

The working teacher can, depending on the perspective of his /her school administration and the needs of the particular children he or she serves, choose from the strategies and approaches ones that work best for the children concerned.

Blending Letter Sounds

Prompts for graphophonic cues:

You said (the child's incorrect attempt). Does that match the letters you see?

If it were the word you just said, (the child's incorrect attempt), what would it have to start with?

If it were the word you just said (the child's incorrect attempt), what would it have to end with?

Look at the first letter/s . . . look at the middle letter/s

. . . the last letter. . What could it be?

If you were writing (the child's incorrect attempt) what letter would you write first?

What letters would go in the middle?

What letters would go last?

A good strategy to use in working with individual children is to have them explain how they finally correctly identified a word that was troubling them. If prompted and habituated through one-on-one teacher/tutoring conversations, they can be quite clear about what they did to "get" the word.

If the children are already writing their own stories, the teacher might say to them: "You know when you write your own stories, you would never write any story that did not make sense. You wouldn't and probably this writer didn't either. If you read something that does make sense, but doesn't match the letters, then it's probably not what the author wrote. This is the author's story, not yours, right now, so go back to the word and see if you can find out the author's story. Later on, you might write your own story."

Letter/Sound Correspondence and Beginning Decoding

Use this procedure for letter-sound investigations that support beginning decoding. First, focus on a particular letter/s which you want the child to investigate. It is good to choose one from a shared text that the children are familiar with. Make certain that the teacher's directions to the children are clear and either focuses them on looking for a specific letter or listening for sounds.

Next, begin a list of words that matches the task given to the children. Use chart paper to list the words that the children identify. This list can be continued into the next week as long as the children's focus is maintained on the list. This can be easily done by challenging the children with identifying a specific number of letters or sounds and "daring" them as a class team to go beyond those words or sounds.

Third, continue to add to the list. Focus the children at the beginning of the day on the goal of their individually adding to the list. Give them an adhesive note (sticky pad sheet) on which they can individually write down the words they find. Then they can attach their newly found words with their names on them to the chart. This provides the children with a sense of ownership and pride in their letter-sounding abilities. During shared reading, discuss the children's proposed additions and have the group decide if these fit in the directed category. If all the children agree that they do, include the words on the chart.

Fourth, do a word sort from all the words generated and have the children put the words into categories that demonstrate similarities and differences. They can be prompted to see if the letter appeared at the beginning of the word or at the end of the word. They might also be prompted to see that one sound could have two different letter representations. The children can then “box” the word differences and similarities by drawing colors established in a chart key.

Finally, before the children go off to read, ask them to look for new words in the texts that they can now recognize because of the letter/sound relationships on their chart. During shared reading, make certain that they have time to share these words they were able to decode because of their explorations.

Strategies for Helping Students Decode Single-Syllable Words that Follow Common Patterns and Multi-syllable Words

(This activity is presented in detail so it can actually be implemented with children in an intermediate classroom and also to provide detail for a potential constructed-response question on a certification examination.)

The CVC phonics card game developed by Jackie Montierth, a computer teacher in South San Diego for use with 5th and 6th grade students, is a good one to adapt to the needs of any group with appropriate modifications for age, grade level, and language needs.

The children use the vehicle of the card game to practice and enhance their use of consonants and vowels. Their fluency in this will increase their ability to decode words. Potential uses beyond whole-classroom instruction include use as part of the small-group word-work component of the reading workshop and as part of cooperative team learning. This particular strategy also is particularly helpful for grade four and beyond English Language learners who are in a regular English Language classroom setting.

The card game works well because the practice of the content is implicit for transfer as the children continue to improve their reading skills. In addition, the card game format allows “instructional punctuation” using a student-centered high-interest exploration.

Card Design: The teacher can use the computer or use 5”x 8” index cards or actual card-deck sized oaktag cards to create a deck. For repeated use and durability, it is recommended that the deck be laminated.

The deck should consist of the following:

1. 44 consonant cards (including the blends)
2. 15 vowel cards (including 3 of each vowel)
3. 5 wild cards (which can be used as any vowel)
4. 6 final e cards

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The design of this project can also focus on particular CVC words that are part of a particular book, topic, or genre format. In advance of playing the game, children can also be directed to review the words on the word wall or other words on a word map.

Procedure: The game is best introduced first as part of a mini lesson with the teacher reading the rules and a pair of children demonstrating step by step when the game is played before the class for the first time. Have the children divide into pairs or small groups of no more than 4 per group. Each group needs one deck of CVC cards. Have each group choose a dealer. The dealer shuffles the cards and deals five cards to each player. The remaining cards are placed face down for drawing during the play. One card is turned over to form the discard pile. Players may not show their cards to the other players. The first player to the left of the dealer looks at his/her cards and, if possible, puts down three cards that make a consonant-vowel-consonant word. For more points, four cards forming a consonant-vowel-consonant word can be placed down. The player must then say the word and draw the number of cards he or she laid down. If he or she is unable to form a word, he/she draws either a card from either the draw or discard pile. The player then discards one card. All players must have five cards at all times. Play moves to the left. The game continues until one or more of the following happens:

- There are no more cards in the draw pile.
- All players run out of cards.
- No player can form a word.

The winner is the player who has laid down the most cards during the game. Players may only lay down words at the beginning of their turn. Proper names may not be counted as words.

Other ways the game may be played:

- The game can be played with teams of individuals in a small group of four or fewer competing against one another (excellent for special-needs or resource-room students).
- It can also be done as a whole class activity where all the students are divided into cooperative teams or small groups who compete against one another. This second approach will work well with a heterogeneous classroom that includes special needs and/or ELL children.
- Teachers of ELL learners can do this game in the native language first and then transition it into English, facilitating native-language reading skills and second-language acquisition. They can develop their own appropriate decks to meet the vocabulary needs of their children and to complement the curricula.

Using Phonics to Decode Words in Connected Text.

Identifying New Words

Some strategies to share with children during conferences or as part of shared reading include the following prompts:

- Look at the beginning letter/s. What sound do you hear?
- Stop to think about the text or story. What word with this beginning letter would make sense here?
- Look at the book's illustrations. Do they provide you with help in figuring out the new word?
- Think of what word would make sense, sound right, and match the letters that you see. Start the sentence over, making your mouth ready to say that word.
- Skip the word, read to the end of the sentence, and then come back to the word. How does what you've read help you with the word?
- Listen to whether what you are reading makes sense and matches the letters (asking the child to self-monitor). If it doesn't make sense, see if you can correct it on your own.
- Look for spelling patterns you know from the spelling pattern wall.
- Look for smaller words you might know within the larger word.
- Read on a little, and then return to the part that confused you.

Use of Semantic and Syntactic Cues to Help Decode Words

Semantic Cues

Students will need to use their base knowledge of word meanings, semantics, to help them decipher unknown words or text as well as to clarify reading when it does not seem to make sense. Some prompts the teacher can use that will alert the children to semantic cues include:

- Does that sentence make sense?
- Which word in that sentence does not seem to fit?
- Why doesn't it fit?
- What word might make sense in that sentence?

Syntactic Cues

The first strategy good readers use from their own knowledge base to help determine misreading is syntactic cues. Syntactic cues use the order of words and the student's knowledge of the oral English language to help determine if what was read could be accurate. Some prompts the teacher can use to encourage and develop syntactic cues in reading include:

- You read (child's incorrect attempt). Does that sound right?
- You read (child's incorrect attempt). When we talk, do we talk that way?
- How would we say it?

- Recheck that sentence. Does it sound right the way you read it?

Specific Terminology Associated With Phonics

It is important to have a clear understanding of the terms associated with phonics. Here are some definitions that are helpful for a clear understanding of phonic development in children.

Phoneme. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in the English language. In print, phonemes are represented by the letter and slashes. So /b/ represents the sound the letter b would make.

Morpheme. A morpheme is the smallest unit of grammar in the English language. In other words, it is the smallest unit of meaning, not just sounds.

Consonant Digraph. A consonant digraph are two consonants of the English language that when placed together in a word make a unique sound—a sound neither makes when alone. Examples: ch, th, sh, and wh.

Consonant Blend. A consonant blend is when two consonants are put together, but each retains its individual sound. The two sounds go together in a seamless manner to produce a blended sound. Examples: st, br, cl, etc.

Schwa sound. The schwa sound is a vowel sound that is neutral. It typically occurs in the unaccented syllable of a word. An example would be the sound of the /ə/ at the end of the word sofa. It is represented in print by an upside down e.

Development of Phonics Skills with Individual Students

In *On Solid Ground* (2000), researcher and educator Sharon Taberski writes that it is much harder for children from ELL backgrounds and children from homes where other English dialects are spoken to use syntactic cues to attempt to self-correct. These children, through no fault of their own, do not have sufficient experience hearing Standard English spoken to use this cueing system as they read. The teacher should sensitively guide them through by modeling the use of syntactic and semantic cues.

Highly proficient readers can be paired as buddy tutors for ELL or special-needs classroom members or to assist the resource-room teacher during reading time. They can use the CVC Game developed by Jacki Montrieth to support their peers and can even modify the game to meet the needs of classroom peers. Of course, this also offers the highly proficient reader the opportunity to do a service-learning project while still in elementary school. It also introduces the learner to another dimension of reading, the role of the reader as trainer and recruiter of other peers into the circle of readers and writers!

If the highly proficient readers are so motivated or if their teachers so desire, the peer tutors can also maintain an ongoing reading progress journal for their tutees. This will be a wonderful way to realize the goals of the reading and writing workshop. There are many different strategies to help children who are struggling with their phonics skill development. A beginning step is to identify the area of difficulty within phonics. A simple assessment to help determine the exact area of difficulty is the

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CORE Phonics Survey, which can be downloaded free. Once the area of deficit has been identified, small group instruction can be developed around these areas to increase specific skills.

When working on specific phonics skills, it is important to utilize decodable texts. There are numerous publishers who have available a variety of resources for different skills and texts for use within the classroom. If students continue to struggle, it may be necessary to utilize a more specific systematic and explicit phonics program. Some examples of these include: Wilson Reading, Early Intervention Reading, and Open Court.

“It is the good reader that makes the good book” (Ralph Waldo Emerson).

Skill 1.5 Demonstrate knowledge of the relationships between words such as homonyms, synonyms, and antonyms and the complexities related to word selection.

Students frequently encounter problems with homonyms—words that are spelled and pronounced the same as another but that have different meanings. Examples are *mean*, a verb, “to intend”; *mean*, an adjective, “unkind”; and *mean*, a noun or adjective, “average.” These words are actually both homonyms and homographs (written the same way).

A similar phenomenon that causes trouble is heteronyms (also sometimes called heterophones), words that are spelled the same but have different pronunciations and meanings (in other words, they are homographs that differ in pronunciation or, technically, homographs that are not homophones). For example, the homographs *desert* (abandon) and *desert* (arid region) are heteronyms (pronounced differently); but *mean* (intend) and *mean* (average) are not. They are pronounced the same, or are homonyms.

Another similar occurrence in English is the capitonym, a word that is spelled the same but has different meanings when it is capitalized and may or may not have different pronunciations. Example: *polish* (to make shiny) and *Polish* (from Poland).

Some of the most troubling homonyms are those that are spelled differently but sound the same. Examples: *its* (3d person singular neuter pronoun) and *it’s* (“it is”); *there* (an adverb), *their* (3d person plural pronoun) and *they’re* (“they are”).

Others: *to*, *too*, *two*;

Some homonyms/homographs are particularly complicated and troubling. Fluke, for instance is a fish, a flatworm, the end parts of an anchor, the fins on a whale’s tail, and a stroke of luck.

Common homonyms that are troubling to student writers:

accept: tolerate; *except*: everything but.
add: put together with; *ad*: short for advertisement.
allowed: permitted; *aloud*: audibly.
allot: to distribute, allocate; *a lot* (often "*alot*"): much, many (a lot of).
allusion: indirect reference; *illusion*: a distortion of sensory perception.
bare: naked, exposed or very little (bare necessities); *bear*: as a noun, a large mammal and as a verb, to carry.
boy: a male adolescent or child; *buoy*: (noun) a floating marker in the sea.
bridal: pertaining to a bride (bridal gown, bridal suite); *bridle*: (noun) part of a horse's tack.
capital: punishable by death, with an upper-case letter, principal town or city, or wealth and money; *Capitol*: the home of the Congress of the United States and some other legislatures.
chord: group of musical notes; *cord*: rope, long electrical line.
compliment: a praising or flattering remark; *complement*: something that completes.
discreet: tactful or diplomatic; *discrete*: separate or distinct.
dyeing: artificially coloring; *dying*: passing away.
effect: outcome; *affect*: have an effect on.
gorilla: the largest of the great apes; *guerrilla*: a small combat group.
hair: an outgrowth of the epidermis in mammals; *hare*: rabbit.
hoard: to accumulate and store up; *horde*: large group of warriors, mob.
lam: US slang, "on the lam" means "on the run"; *lamb*: a young sheep.
lead: pronounced to rhyme with "seed", to guide or serve as the head of; *lead*: pronounced to rhyme with "head," a heavy metal; *led*: the past tense of "lead."
medal: an award to be strung around the neck; *meddle*: stick one's nose into others' affairs; *metal*: shiny, malleable element or alloy like silver or gold; *mettle*: toughness, guts.
morning: the time between midnight and midday; *mourning*: period of grieving after a death.
past: time before now (past, present and future); *passed*: past tense of "to pass."
piece: portion; *peace*: opposite of war.
peak: tip, height, to reach its highest point; *peek*: to take a brief look; *pique*: fit of anger; to incite (pique one's interest).

Strategies to help students conquer these demons: Practice using them in sentences. Context is useful in understanding the difference. Drill is necessary to overcome the misuses.

Following are various ways words are sometimes used to show relationships that can be puzzling to students.

Denotation: What a word literally means, as opposed to its connotative meaning.

For example, “Good night, sweet prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest” refers to sleep.

Connotation: The ripple effect surrounding the implications and associations of a given word, distinct from the denotative, or literal meaning. For example, “Good night, sweet prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest,” refers to a burial.

Simile: Direct comparison between two things. “My love is like a red-red rose.”

Metaphor: Indirect comparison between two things. The use of a word or phrase denoting one kind of object or action in place of another to suggest a comparison between them. While poets use them extensively, they are also integral to everyday speech. For example, chairs are said to have “legs” and “arms” although we know that it’s humans and other animals that have these appendages.

Personification: Human characteristics are attributed to an inanimate object, an abstract quality, or animal. Examples: John Bunyan wrote characters named Death, Knowledge, Giant Despair, Sloth, and Piety in his *Pilgrim’s Progress*. The metaphor of an arm of a chair is a form of personification.

Irony: Expressing something other than and particularly opposite the literal meaning such as words of praise when blame is intended. In poetry, it is often used as a sophisticated or resigned awareness of contrast between what is and what ought to be and expresses a controlled pathos without sentimentality. It is a form of indirection that avoids overt praise or censure. An early example: the Greek comic character Eiron, a clever underdog who by his wit repeatedly triumphs over the boastful character Alazon.

Skill 1.6 Apply strategies for building and extending readers' vocabulary knowledge.

The Relationship between Oral and Written Vocabulary Development and Reading Comprehension

Biemiller’s (2003) research documents that those children entering 4th grade with significant vocabulary deficits demonstrate increasing reading comprehension problems. Evidence shows that these children do not catch up, but rather continue to fall behind.

Strategy One: Word Map Strategy

This strategy is useful for children grades 3-6 and beyond. The target group of children for this strategy includes those who need to improve their independent vocabulary acquisition abilities. Essentially teacher-directed learning, children are “walked through” the process. They are helped by the teacher to identify the type of information that makes a definition. They are also assisted in using context clues and background understanding to construct meaning

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The word-map graphic organizer is the tool teachers use to complete this strategy with children. Word-map templates are available online from the Houghton Mifflin web site and from READWRITETHINK, the web site of the NCTE. The word map helps the children to visually represent the elements of a given concept.

The children's literal articulation of the concept can be prompted by three key questions: What is it? What is it like? What are some examples?

For instance, the word "oatmeal" might yield a word map with "What?" and in a rectangular box a hot cereal you eat in the morning, "What is it like?": hot, mushy, salty. "What are some examples?": instant oatmeal you make in a minute, apple-flavor oatmeal, Irish Oatmeal.

The procedure to be used in sharing this strategy with children is to select three concepts the children are familiar with. Then show them the template of a word map. Tell them that the three questions asked on the map and the boxes to fill in beneath them helps readers and writers to see what they need to know about a word. Next, help the children to complete at least two word maps for two of the three concepts that were pre-selected. Then have the children select a concept of their own to map either independently or in a small group. As the final task for this first part of the strategy, have the children, in teams or individually, write a definition for at least one of the concepts using the key things about it listed on the map. Have the children share these definitions aloud and talk about how they used the word maps to help them with the definitions.

For the next part of this strategy, the teacher should pick up an expository text or a textbook the children are already using to study mathematics, science, or social studies. The teacher should either locate a short excerpt where a particular concept is defined or use the content to write model passages of definition on his/her own. After the passages are selected or authored, the teacher should duplicate them. Then they should be distributed to the children along with blank word map templates. The children should be asked to read each passage and then to complete the word map for the concept in each passage. Finally, have the children share the word maps they have developed for each passage. Give them a chance to explain how they used the word in the passage to help them fill out their word map. End by telling them that the three components of the concept-class, description, and example are just three of the many components for any given concept.

This strategy has assessment potential because the teacher can literally see how the students understand specific concepts by looking at their maps and hearing their explanations. The maps the students develop on their own demonstrate whether they have really understood the concepts in the passages. This strategy serves to ready students for inferring word meanings on their own. By using the word-map strategy, children develop concepts of what they need to know to begin to figure out an unknown word on their own. It assists the children in grades 3 and beyond to connect prior knowledge with new knowledge.

This word map strategy can be adapted by the teacher to suit the specific needs and goals of instruction. Illustrations of the concept and the comparisons to other concepts can be included in the word mapping for children grades 5 and beyond. This particular strategy is also one that can be used with a research theme in other content areas.

Strategy Two: Preview in Context

This is a direct-teaching strategy that allows the teacher to guide the students as they examine words in context prior to reading a passage. Before beginning the strategy, the teacher selects only two or three key concept words. Then the teacher reads carefully to identify passages within the text that evidence strong context clues for the word.

Then the teacher presents the word and the context to the children. As the teacher reads aloud, the children follow along. Once the teacher has finished the read-aloud, the children re-read the material silently. After the silent re-reading, the children will be coached by the teacher to a definition of one of the key words selected for study. This is done through a child-centered discussion. As part of the discussion, the teacher asks questions that get the children to activate their prior knowledge and to use the contextual clues to figure out the correct meaning of the selected key words. Make certain that the definition of the key concept word is finally made by the children.

Next, help the children to begin to expand the word's meaning by having them consider the following for the given key concept word: synonyms, antonyms, other contexts or other kinds of stories/texts where the word might appear. This is the time to have the children check their responses to the challenge of identifying word synonyms and antonyms by having them go to the thesaurus or the dictionary to confirm their responses. In addition, have the children place the synonyms or antonyms they find in their word boxes or word journals. The recording of their findings will guarantee them ownership of the words and deepen their capacity to use contextual clues.

The main point to remember in using this strategy is that it should only be used when the context is strong. It will not work with struggling readers who have less prior knowledge. Through listening to the children's responses as the teacher helps them to define the word and its potential synonyms and antonyms, the teacher can assess their ability to successfully use context clues. The key to this simple strategy is that it allows the teacher to draw the child out and to grasp through the child's responses the individual child's thinking process. The more talk from the child the better.