DOMAIN I. LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY

COMPETENCY 1.0 UNDERSTAND WORD ANALYSIS STRATEGIES AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT AND HOW TO USE EFFECTIVE, DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE APPROACHES TO PROMOTE STUDENTS' WORD ANALYSIS AND VOCABULARY SKILLS

Skill 1.1 Demonstrate knowledge of phonics and its role in decoding; of ways to assess students' phonic skills; and of effective instructional strategies, activities, and materials for promoting students' phonetic analysis skills

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness means the ability of the reader to recognize the sound of spoken language. This recognition includes how these sounds can be blended together, segmented (divided up), and manipulated (switched around). This awareness then leads to phonics, a method for teaching children to read. It helps them "sound out words."

Development of phonological skills may begin during pre-K years. Indeed by the age of five, a child who has been exposed to rhyme 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. I surprised my mother by filling in missing rhymes in a familiar nursery rhyme book at the age of four. She was trying to rush ahead to complete the book, but I wouldn't be cheated of even one rhyme!! Little did I know that I was phonologically aware at four!!

You teach children phonological awareness when you teach them the sounds made by the letters, the sounds made by various combinations of letters, and to recognize individual sounds in words.

Phonological Awareness Skills include:

1. Rhyming and syllabification
2. Blending sounds into words—such as pic-tur-bo-k
3. Identifying the beginning or starting sounds of words and the ending or closing sounds of words
4. Breaking words down into sounds—also called "segmenting" words
5. Recognizing other smaller words in the big word by removing starting sounds, such as "hear" to ear

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the idea that words are comprised of sounds. To be phonemically aware means that the reader and listener can recognize and manipulate specific sounds in spoken words.

Phonemic awareness deals with sounds in words that are spoken. The majority of phonemic awareness tasks, activities, and exercises are ORAL.

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 an experiential 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 a blade of grass, a garden, and a rose—which 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 children would be asked as a group to count 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.

Since the ability to distinguish between individual sounds, or phonemes, within words is a prerequisite to 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 to spelling and relationship to printed materials) to be effective. Instructional methods that may be effective for teaching phonemic awareness can include:

- Clapping syllables in words
- Distinguishing between a word and a sound
- Using visual cues and movements to help children understand when the speaker goes from one sound to another
- Incorporating oral segmentation activities which focus on easily distinguished syllables rather than sounds
- Singing familiar songs (e.g., Happy Birthday, Knick Knack Paddy Wack) and replacing key words in it with words with a different ending or middle sound (oral segmentation)

- 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 second sound

Skill 1.2 Demonstrate knowledge of word analysis strategies, including syllabication, morphology (e.g., use of affixes and roots), and context clues; of ways to assess students' use of word analysis strategies; and of effective instructional strategies, activities, and materials for promoting students' word analysis and contextual analysis skills

The Structure of Language

Morphology is the study of word structure. When readers develop morphemic skills, they are developing an understanding of patterns they see in words. For example, English speakers realize that cat, cats, and caterpillar share some similarities in structure. This understanding helps readers to recognize words at a faster and easier rate, since each word doesn't need individual decoding.

Syntax refers to the rules or patterned relationships that correctly create phrases and sentences from words. When readers develop an understanding of syntax, they begin to understand the structure of how sentences are built, and eventually the beginning of grammar.

Example:

"I am going to the movies."

This statement is syntactically and grammatically correct.

Example:

"They am going to the movies."

This statement is syntactically correct since all the words are in their correct place, but it is grammatically incorrect with the use of the word "they" rather than "I."

Semantics refers to the meaning expressed when words are arranged in a specific way. This is where connotation and denotation of words eventually will have a role with readers.

All of these skill sets are important to eventually developing effective word recognition skills, which help emerging readers develop fluency.

Phonics

As opposed to phonemic awareness, the study of phonics must be done with the eyes open. It is the connection between the sounds and letters on a page. In other words, students learning phonics might see the word "bad" and sound each letter out slowly until they recognize that they just said the word.

Decoding, Word Recognition, and Spelling

Word analysis (a.k.a., phonics or decoding) is the process readers use to figure out unfamiliar words based on written patterns. Word recognition is the process of automatically determining the pronunciation and some degree of the meaning of an unknown word. In other words, fluent readers recognize most written words easily and correctly without consciously decoding or breaking them down. The following elements of literacy, decoding and spelling, are skills readers need for word recognition.

To decode means to change communication signals into messages. Reading comprehension requires that the reader learn the code within which a message is written and be able to decode it to get the message. Encoding involves changing a message into symbols. For example, one can encode oral language into writing (spelling), encode an idea into words, or encode a mathematical or physical idea into appropriate mathematical symbols.

Although effective reading comprehension requires identifying words automatically (Adams, l990; Perfetti, l985), 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 (l988) says that children can read a work with a high level of comprehension even if they do not fully know as many as fifteen percent of the words within a given text. Children develop the ability to decode and recognize words automatically. They then can extend their ability to decode to multisyllabic words.

Spelling instruction should include spelling words misspelled in daily writing, generalizing spelling knowledge, and mastering objectives in progressive phases of development. Developmental stages of spelling include the following:

1) *Prephonemic spelling*—Children know that letters stand for a message, but they do not know the relationship between spelling and pronunciation.
2) *Early phonemic spelling*—Children are beginning to understand spelling. They usually write the beginning letter correctly, with the rest consonants or long vowels.
3) *Letter-name spelling*—Some words are consistently spelled correctly. The student is developing a sight vocabulary and a stable understanding of letters as representing sounds. Long vowels are usually used accurately, but silent vowels are omitted. Unknown words are spelled by the child attempting to match the name of the letter to the sound.
4) *Transitional spelling*—This phase is typically entered in late elementary school. Short vowel sounds are mastered and some spelling rules are known. Children are developing a sense of which spellings are correct and which are not.

Derivational spelling—This is usually reached from high school to adulthood. This is the stage where spelling rules are being mastered.

How Words Are Built
Knowledge of how words are built can help students with basic and more advanced decoding. A *root word* is the primary base of a word. A *prefix* is the affix (a morpheme that attaches to a base word) that is placed at the start of a root word, but can't make a word on its own. Examples of prefixes include re-, pre-, and un-. A *suffix* follows the root word to which it attaches and appears at the end of the word. Examples of suffixes include –s, -es, -ed, -ly, and –tion. In the word unlikely, "un" is a prefix, "like" is the root word, and "ly" is a suffix.

Skill 1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of the role of vocabulary development in reading; of ways to assess students' vocabulary development; and of effective instructional strategies, activities, and materials for promoting students' vocabulary development

If there were two words which could be synonymous with reading comprehension as far as the balanced literacy approach is concerned, they would be "Constructing Meaning."

Cooper, Taberski, Strickland, and other key theorists and classroom teachers conceptualize the reader as designating a specific meaning to the text using both clues in the text and his/her own prior knowledge. Comprehension for the balanced literacy theorists is a strategic process.

The reader interacts with the text and brings his/her prior knowledge and experience to it or LACK of prior knowledge and experience to it. Writing is interlaced with reading and is a mutually integrative and supportive parallel process. Hence the division of literacy learning by the balanced literacy folks into reading workshop and writing workshop, with the same anchor readings or books being used for both.

Consider the sentence, "The test booklet was white with black print, but very scary looking."

According to the idea of constructing meaning as the reader reads this sentence, the schemata (generic information stored in the mind) of tests that he or she has personally is activated by the author's ideas that tests are scary. Therefore the ultimate meaning that the reader derives from the page is from the reader's own responses and experiences with the ideas the author presents. The reader constructs a meaning that reflects the author's intent and also the reader's response to that intent.

It is also to be remembered that generally readings are fairly lengthy passages, comprised of paragraphs which, in turn, are comprised of more than one sentence. With each successive sentence, and in every new paragraph, the

reader refocuses. The schemata are reconsidered, and a new meaning is constructed.

The purpose of reading is to convert visual images (the letters and words) into a message. Pronouncing the words is not enough; the reader must be able to extract the meaning of the text. When people read, they utilize four sources of background information to comprehend the meaning behind the literal text (Reid, pp.166-171).

1. *Word Knowledge:* Information about words and letters. One's knowledge about word meanings is lexical knowledge—a sort of dictionary. Knowledge about spelling patterns and pronunciations is orthographic knowledge. Poor readers do not develop the level of spontaneity in using orthographic knowledge to identify words and decode unfamiliar words.
2. *Syntax and Contextual Information:* When children encounter unknown words in a sentence, they rely on their background knowledge to choose a word that makes sense. Errors of younger children therefore are often substitutions of words in the same syntactic class. Poor readers often fail to make use of contextual clues to help them identify words or activate the background knowledge that would help them with comprehension. Poor readers also process sentences word by word, instead of "chunking" phrases and clauses, resulting in a slow pace that focuses on the decoding rather than comprehension. They also have problems answering wh- (who, what, where, when, why) questions as a result of these problems with syntax.
3. *Semantic Knowledge:* This includes the reader's background knowledge about a topic, which is combined with the text information as the reader tries to comprehend the material. New information is compared to the background information and incorporated into the reader's schema. Poor readers have problems with using their background knowledge, especially with passages that require inference or cause-and-effect.
4. *Text Organization:* Good readers are able to differentiate types of text structure, e.g., story narrative, exposition, compare-contrast, or time sequence. They use knowledge of text to build expectations and construct a framework of ideas on which to build meaning. Poor readers may not be able to differentiate types of text and miss important ideas. They may also miss important ideas and details by concentrating on lesser or irrelevant details.

Research on reading development has yielded information on the behaviors and habits of good readers vs. poor readers. Some of the characteristics of good readers are:

- They think about the information that they will read in the text, formulate questions that they predict will be answered in the text, and confirm those predictions from the information in the text.
- When faced with unfamiliar words, they attempt to pronounce them using analogies to familiar words.
- Before reading, good readers establish a purpose for reading, select possible text structure, choose a reading strategy, and make predictions about what will be in the reading.
- As they read, good readers continually test and confirm their predictions, go back when something does not make sense, and make new predictions.

COMPETENCY 2.0 UNDERSTAND STRATEGIES FOR READING FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES AND CONSTRUCTING MEANING FROM A VARIETY OF READING MATERIALS

Skill 2.1 Demonstrate knowledge of various reading comprehension strategies and study skills (e.g., previewing, rereading) for different purposes (e.g., to review facts for a test, to analyze literature, to conduct research, to respond to social or business correspondence)

The point of comprehension instruction is not necessarily to focus just on the text(s) students are using at the very moment of instruction, but rather to help them learn the strategies that they can use independently with any text.

Some of the most common methods of teaching instruction are as follows:

- Summarization: This is where, either in writing or verbally, students go over the main point of the text, along with strategically chosen details that highlight the main point. This is not the same as paraphrasing, which is saying the same thing in different words. Teaching students how to summarize is very important, as it will help them look for the most critical areas in a text and in nonfiction. For example, it will help them distinguish between main arguments and examples. In fiction, it helps students to learn how to focus on the main characters and events and distinguish those from the lesser characters and events.

- Question answering: While this tends to be overused in many classrooms, it is still a valid method of teaching students to comprehend. As the name implies, students answer questions regarding a text, either out loud, in small groups, or individually on paper. The best questions are those that require students to think about the text (rather than just find an answer within the text).

- Question generating: This is the opposite of question answering, although students can then be asked to answer their own questions or the questions of their classmates. In general, we want students to constantly question texts as they read. This is important because it causes students to become more critical readers. To teach students to generate questions helps them to learn the types of questions they can ask, and it gets them thinking about the best way to be critical of texts.

- Graphic organizers: Graphic organizers are graphical representations of content within a text. For example, Venn diagrams can be used to highlight the difference between two characters in a novel or two similar political concepts in a social studies textbook. Or, a teacher can use flow-charts with students to talk about the steps in a process (for example, the steps of setting up a science experiment or the chronological events of a story). Semantic organizers are similar in that they graphically display information. The difference, usually, is that semantic organizers focus on words or concepts. For example, a word web can help students make sense of a word by mapping from the central word all the similar and related concepts to that word.

- Text structure: Often in nonfiction, particularly in textbooks and sometimes in fiction, text structures will give important clues to readers about what to look for. Often, students do not know how to make sense of all the types of headings in a textbook and do not realize that, for example, the sidebar story about a character in history is not the main text on a particular page in the history textbook. Teaching students how to interpret text structures gives them tools in which to tackle other similar texts.

- Monitoring comprehension: Students need to be aware of their comprehension, or lack of it, in particular texts. It is important to teach students what to do when text suddenly stops making sense. For example, students can go back and reread the description of a character. Or, they can go back to the table of contents or the first paragraph of a chapter to see where they are headed.

- Textual marking: This is where students interact with the text as they read. For example, armed with Post-it notes, students can insert questions or comments regarding specific sentences or paragraphs within the text. This helps students focus on the importance of the small things, particularly when they are reading larger works (such as novels in high school). It also gives students a reference point on which to go back into the text when they need to review something.

- Discussion: Small group or whole class discussion stimulates thoughts about texts and gives students a larger picture of the impact of those texts. For example, teachers can strategically encourage students to discuss concepts related to the text. This helps students learn to consider texts within larger societal and social concepts, or teachers can encourage students to provide personal opinions in discussion. By listening to various students' opinions, this will help all students in a class to see the wide range of possible interpretations and thoughts regarding one text.

Many people mistakenly believe that the terms “research-based” or “research-validated” or “evidence-based” relate mainly to specific programs, such as early reading textbook programs. While research does validate that some of these programs are effective, much research has been conducted regarding the effectiveness of particular instructional strategies. In reading, many of these strategies have been documented in the report from the National Reading Panel (2000).

However, just because a strategy has not been validated as effective by research does not necessarily mean that it is not effective with certain students in certain situations. The number of strategies out there far outweighs researchers’ ability to test their effectiveness. Some of the strategies listed above have been validated by rigorous research, while others have been shown consistently to help improve students’ reading abilities in localized situations. There simply is not enough space to list all the strategies out there that have been proven effective; just know that the above strategies are very commonly cited ones that work in a variety of situations.

Skill 2.2 Apply knowledge of strategies for promoting the reading comprehension skills of students who are at different stages of reading and for facilitating comprehension before, during, and after reading (e.g., prompting students to make predictions)

Making Predictions

One theory or approach to the teaching of reading that gained currency in the late sixties and the early seventies was the importance of asking inferential and critical thinking questions of the reader, which would challenge the children and engage them in the text. This approach to reading went beyond the literal level of what was stated in the text to an inferential level of using text clues to make predictions and to a critical level of involving the child in evaluating the text. While asking engaging and thought-provoking questions is still viewed as part of the teaching of reading, it is viewed currently only as a component of the teaching of reading.

Prior Knowledge

Prior knowledge can be defined as all of an individual’s prior experiences, learning, and development which precede his/her entering a specific learning situation or attempting to comprehend a specific text. Sometimes prior knowledge can be erroneous or incomplete. Obviously, if there are misconceptions in a child’s prior knowledge, these must be corrected so that the child’s overall comprehension skills can continue to progress. Prior knowledge of even kindergarteners includes their accumulated positive and negative experiences both in and out of school.