

## DOMAIN I READING

### COMPETENCY 1.0 UNDERSTAND THE NATURE, DEVELOPMENT, AND IMPORTANCE OF READING IN ALL CONTENT AREAS

#### **Skill 1.1 Recognize that literacy is a lifelong activity that promotes personal fulfillment and successful functioning in society, including participation as a citizen.**

Reading for enjoyment makes it possible to go to places in the world we will never be able to visit, or perhaps when we learn about the enchantments of a particular place, we will set a goal of going there someday. When *Under the Tuscan Sun* by Frances Mayes was published, it became a best seller. It also increased tourism to Italy. Many of the readers of that book visited Italy for the first time in their lives.

In fiction, we can live through experiences that we will never encounter. We delve into feelings that are similar to our own or are so far removed from our own that we are filled with wonder and curiosity. In fact, we read because we're curious—curious to visit, experience, and know new and different things. The reader lives with a crowd of people and a vast landscape. Life is constantly being enriched by the reading, and the mind is constantly being expanded. To read is to grow. Sometimes the experience of reading a particular book or story is so delicious that we go back and read it again and again, such as the works of Jane Austen. We keep track of what is truly happening in the world when we read current best-sellers because they not only reflect what everyone else is interested in right now, they can influence trends. We can know in-depth what television news cannot cram in by reading publications like *Time* and *Newsweek*.

How do we model this wonderful gift for our students? We can bring those interesting stories into our classrooms and share the excitement we feel when we discover them. We can relate things that make us laugh so students may see the humor and laugh with us. We can vary the established curriculum to include something we are reading that we want to share. The tendency of students nowadays is to receive all of their information from television or the internet. It's important for the teacher to help students understand that television and the internet are not substitutes for reading. They should be an accessory, an extension, a springboard for reading.

Another thing teachers can do to inspire students to become readers is to assign a book that you have never read before and read along with them, chapter by chapter. Run a contest and the winner gets to pick a book that you and they will read chapter by chapter. If you are excited about it and are experiencing satisfaction from the reading, that excitement will be contagious.

Be sure that the discussion sessions allow for students to relate what they are thinking and feeling about what they are reading. Lively discussions and the opportunity to express their own feelings will lead to more spontaneous reading.

You can also hand out a reading list of your favorite books and spend some time telling the students what you liked about each. Make sure the list is diverse. It's good to include nonfiction along with fiction. Don't forget that a good biography or autobiography may encourage students to read beyond thrillers and detective stories.

When the class is discussing the latest movie, whether formally as a part of the curriculum or informally and incidentally, if the movie is based on a book, this is a good opportunity to demonstrate how much more can be derived from the reading than from the watching. Or how the two combined make the experience more satisfying and worthwhile.

Share with your students the excitement you have for reading. Successful writers are usually good readers. The two go hand-in-hand.

**Skill 1.2 Recognize reading as a process of constructing meaning through the interaction of the reader's existing knowledge and experiences, the information suggested by the written language, and the context of the reading situation.**

Children who learn to read on schedule and who are avid readers have been seen to have superior vocabularies compared to other children their age. The reason for this is that in order to understand what they read, they often must determine the meaning for a word based on its context. Children who constantly turn to a dictionary for the meaning of a word they don't know will not have this advantage.

This is an important clue for providing students the kinds of exercises and helps they need in order to develop their vocabularies. Learning vocabulary lists is useful, of course, but much less efficient than exercises in determining meaning on the basis of context. It requires an entirely different kind of thinking and learning. Poetry is also useful for developing vocabulary exercises for children, especially rhymed poetry, where the pronunciation of a term may be deduced by what the poet intended for it to rhyme with. In some poets of earlier periods, the teacher may need to intervene because some of the words that would have rhymed when the poem was written do not rhyme in today's English. Even so, this is a good opportunity to help children understand some of the important principles about their constantly-changing language.

Another good exercise for developing vocabulary is the crossword puzzle. A child's ability to think in terms of analogy is a step upward toward mature language understanding and use.

The teacher may construct crossword puzzles using items from the class such as students' names or the terms from their literature or language lessons.

### **Skill 1.3 Recognize language development, cognition, and learning as applied to reading development.**

Language, though an innate human ability, must be learned. Thus, the acquisition and use of language is subject to many influences on the learner. Linguists agree that language is first a vocal system of word symbols that enable a human to communicate his feelings, thoughts, and desires to other human beings. Language was instrumental in the development of all cultures and is influenced by the changes in these societies.

#### **Historical influences**

English is an Indo-European language that evolved through several periods. The origin of English dates to the settlement of the British Isles in the fifth and sixth centuries by Germanic tribes called the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. The original Britons spoke a Celtic tongue while the Angles spoke a Germanic dialect. Modern English derives from the speech of the Anglo-Saxons who imposed not only their language but also their social customs and laws on their new land. From the fifth to the tenth century, Britain's language was the tongue we now refer to as Old English. During the next four centuries, the many French attempts at English conquest introduced many French words to English. However, the grammar and syntax of the language remained Germanic.

Middle English, most evident in the writings of Geoffrey Chaucer, dates loosely from 1066 to 1509. William Caxton brought the printing press to England in 1474 and increased literacy. Old English words required numerous inflections to indicate noun cases and plurals as well as verb conjugations. Middle English continued the use of many inflections and pronunciations that treated these inflections as separately pronounced syllables. English in 1300 would have been written "Olde Anglishe" with the *e*'s at the ends of the words pronounced as our short *a* vowel. Even adjectives had plural inflections: "long dai" became "longe daies" pronounced "long-a day-as." Spelling was phonetic, thus every vowel had multiple pronunciations, a fact that continues to affect the language.

Modern English dates from the introduction of The Great Vowels Shift because it created guidelines for spelling and pronunciation. Before the printing press, books were copied laboriously by hand; the language was subject to the individual interpretation of the scribes. Printers and subsequently lexicographers like Samuel Johnson and America's Noah Webster influenced the guidelines. As reading matter was mass produced, the reading public was forced to adopt the speech and writing habits developed by those who wrote and printed books.

Despite many students' insistence to the contrary, Shakespeare's writings are in Modern English.

It is important to stress to students that language, like customs, morals, and other social factors, is constantly subject to change. Immigration, inventions, and cataclysmic events change language as much as any other facet of life affected by these changes. The domination of one race or nation over others can change a language significantly. Beginning with the colonization of the New World, English and Spanish became dominant languages in the Western hemisphere. American English today is somewhat different in pronunciation and sometimes vocabulary from British English. The British call a truck a “lorry;” baby carriages a “pram,” short for “perambulator;” and an elevator a “lift.” There are very few syntactical differences, and even the tonal qualities that were once so clearly different are converging.

Though Modern English is less complex than Middle English, having lost many unnecessary inflections, it is still considered difficult to learn because of its many exceptions to the rules. It has, however, become the world’s dominant language by reason of the great political, military, and social power of England from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century and of America in the twentieth century.

Modern inventions - the telephone, phonograph, radio, television, and motion pictures - have especially affected English pronunciation. Regional dialects, once a hindrance to clear understanding, have fewer distinct characteristics. The speakers from different parts of the United States of America can be identified by their accents, but more and more as educators and media personalities stress uniform pronunciations and proper grammar, the differences are diminishing.

The English language has a more extensive vocabulary than any other language. Ours is a language of synonyms, words borrowed from other languages, and coined words - many of them introduced by the rapid expansion of technology.

It is important for students to understand that language is in constant flux. Emphasis should be placed on learning and using language for specific purposes and audiences. Negative criticism of a student’s errors in word choice or sentence structures will inhibit creativity. Positive criticism that suggests ways to enhance communication skills will encourage exploration.

### **Geographical influences**

Dialect differences are basically in pronunciation. Bostonians say “pahty” for party” and Southerners blend words like “you all” into “y’all.” Besides the dialect differences already mentioned, the biggest geographical factors in American English stem from minor word choice variances. Depending on the region where you live, when you order a carbonated, syrupy beverage most generically called a soft drink, you might ask for a “soda” in the South, or a “pop” in the Midwest. If you order a soda in New York, then you will get a scoop of ice cream in your soft drink, while in other areas you would have to ask for a “float.”

### **Social influences**

Social influences are mostly those imposed by family, peer groups, and mass media. The economic and educational levels of families determine the properness of language use. Exposure to adults who encourage and assist children to speak well enhances readiness for other areas of learning and contributes to a child's ability to communicate his needs. Historically, children learned language, speech patterns, and grammar from members of the extended family just as they learned the rules of conduct within their family unit and community. In modern times, the mother in a nuclear family became the dominant force in influencing the child's development. With increasing social changes, many children are not receiving the proper guidance in all areas of development, especially language.

Those who are fortunate to be in educational day care programs like Head Start or in certified preschools develop better language skills than those whose care is entrusted to untrained care providers. Once a child enters elementary school, he is also greatly influenced by peer language. This peer influence becomes significant in adolescence as the use of teen jargon gives teenagers a sense of identity within his chosen group(s) and independence from the influence of adults. In some lower socio-economic groups, children use Standard English in school and street language outside the school. Some children of immigrant families become bilingual by necessity if no English is spoken in the home.

Research has shown a strong correlation between socio-economic characteristics and all areas of intellectual development. Traditional paper measurement instruments rely on verbal ability to establish intelligence. Research findings and test scores reflect that children, reared in nuclear families who provide cultural experiences and individual attention, become more language proficient than those who are denied that security and stimulation.

### **Personal influences**

The rate of physical development and identifiable language disabilities also influence language development. Nutritional deficiencies, poor eyesight, and conditions such as stuttering or dyslexia can inhibit a child's ability to master language. Unless diagnosed early they can hamper communication into adulthood. These conditions also stymie the development of self-confidence and, therefore, the willingness to learn or to overcome the handicap. Children should receive proper diagnosis and positive corrective instruction.

In adolescence, the child's choice of role models and his decision about his future determine the growth of identity. Rapid physical and emotional changes and the stress of coping with the pressure of sexual awareness make concentration on any educational pursuits difficult. The easier the transition from childhood to adulthood, the better the competence will be in all learning areas.

Middle school and junior high school teachers are confronted by a student body ranging from fifth graders who are still childish to eighth or ninth graders who, if not in fact at least in their minds, are young adults. Teachers must approach language instruction as a social development tool with more emphasis on vocabulary acquisition, reading improvement, and speaking/writing skills. High school teachers can deal with the more formalized instruction of grammar, usage, and literature for older adolescents whose social development allows them to pay more attention to studies that will improve their chances for a better adult life.

As a tool, language must have relevance to the student's real environment. Many high schools have developed practical English classes for business/ vocational students whose specific needs are determined by their desire to enter the workforce upon graduation. More emphasis is placed upon accuracy of mechanics and understanding verbal and written directions because these are skills desired by employers. Writing résumés, completing forms, reading policy and operations manuals, and generating reports are some of the desired skills. Emphasis is placed on higher level thinking skills, including inferential thinking and literary interpretation, in literature classes for college-bound students.

### **Learning approach**

Early theories of language development were formulated from learning theory research. The assumption was that language development evolved from learning the rules of language structures and applying them through imitation and reinforcement. This approach also assumed that language, cognitive, and social developments were independent of each other. Thus, children were expected to learn language from patterning after adults who spoke and wrote Standard English. No allowance was made for communication through child jargon, idiomatic expressions, or grammatical and mechanical errors resulting from too strict adherence to the rules of inflection (*childs* instead of *children*) or conjugation (*runned* instead of *ran*). No association was made between physical and operational development and language mastery.

### **Linguistic approach**

Studies spearheaded by Noam Chomsky in the 1950s formulated the theory that language ability is innate and develops through natural human maturation as environmental stimuli trigger acquisition of syntactical structures appropriate to each exposure level. The assumption of a hierarchy of syntax downplayed the significance of semantics. Because of the complexity of syntax and the relative speed with which children acquire language, linguists attributed language development to biological rather than cognitive or social influences.

## **Cognitive approach**

Researchers in the 1970s proposed that language knowledge derives from both syntactic and semantic structures. Drawing on the studies of Piaget and other cognitive learning theorists, supporters of the cognitive approach maintained that children acquire knowledge of linguistic structures after they have acquired the cognitive structures necessary to process language. For example, joining words for specific meaning necessitates sensory motor intelligence. The child must be able to coordinate movement and recognize objects before she can identify words to name the objects or word groups to describe the actions performed with those objects.

Adolescents must have developed the mental abilities for organizing concepts as well as concrete operations, predicting outcomes, and theorizing before they can assimilate and verbalize complex sentence structures, choose vocabulary for particular nuances of meaning, and examine semantic structures for tone and manipulative effect.

## **Sociocognitive approach**

Other theorists in the 1970s proposed that language development results from sociolinguistic competence. Language, cognitive, and social knowledge are interactive elements of total human development. Emphasis on verbal communication as the medium for language expression resulted in the inclusion of speech activities in most language arts curricula.

Unlike previous approaches, the sociocognitive allowed that determining the appropriateness of language in given situations for specific listeners is as important as understanding semantic and syntactic structures. By engaging in conversation, children at all stages of development have opportunities to test their language skills, receive feedback, and make modifications. As a social activity, conversation is as structured by social order as grammar is structured by the rules of syntax. Conversation satisfies the learner's need to be heard and understood and to influence others. Thus, his choices of vocabulary, tone, and content are dictated by his ability to assess the language knowledge of his listeners. He is constantly applying his cognitive skills to using language in a social interaction. If the capacity to acquire language is inborn, without an environment in which to practice language, a child would not pass beyond grunts and gestures as did primitive man.

Of course, the varying degrees of environmental stimuli to which children are exposed at all age levels creates a slower or faster development of language.

Some children are prepared to articulate concepts and recognize symbolism by the time they enter fifth grade because they have been exposed to challenging reading and conversations with well-spoken adults at home or in their social groups. Others are still trying to master the sight recognition skills and are not yet ready to combine words in complex patterns.

### **Concerns for the teacher**

Because teachers must, by virtue of tradition and the dictates of the curriculum, teach grammar, usage, and writing as well as reading and later literature, the problem becomes when to teach what to whom. The profusion of approaches to teaching grammar alone is mind-boggling. In the universities, we learn about transformational grammar, stratificational grammar, sectoral grammar, etc. But in practice, most teachers, supported by presentations in textbooks and by the methods they learned themselves, keep coming back to the same traditional prescriptive approach - read and imitate - or structural approach - learn the parts of speech, the parts of sentence, punctuation rules, sentence patterns. After enough of the terminology and rules are stored in the brain, then we learn to write and speak. For some educators, the best solution is the worst - don't teach grammar at all.

The same problems occur in teaching usage. How much can we demand students communicate in only Standard English? Different schools of thought suggest that a study of dialect and idiom and recognition of various jargons is a vital part of language development. Social pressures, especially on students in middle and junior high schools, to be accepted within their peer groups and to speak the non-standard language spoken outside the school make adolescents resistant to the corrective, remedial approach. In many communities where the immigrant populations are high, new words are entering English from other languages even as words and expressions that were common when we were children have become rare or obsolete.

Regardless of differences of opinion concerning language development, it is safe to say that a language arts teacher will be most effective using the styles and approaches with which she is most comfortable. And, if she subscribes to a student-centered approach, she may find that the students have a lot to teach her and each other. Moffett and Wagner in the Fourth Edition of *Student-centered Language Arts K-12* stress the three I's: individualization, interaction, and integration. Essentially, they are supporting the socio-cognitive approach to language development. By providing an opportunity for the student to select his own activities and resources, his instruction is individualized. By centering on and teaching each other, students are interactive. Finally, by allowing students to synthesize a variety of knowledge structures, they integrate them. The teacher's role becomes that of a facilitator.

## **Benefits of the socio-cognitive approach**

This approach has tended to guide the whole language movement, currently in fashion. Most basal readers utilize an integrated, cross-curricular approach to successful grammar, language, and usage. Reinforcement becomes an intradepartmental responsibility. Language incorporates diction and terminology across the curriculum. Standard usage is encouraged and supported by both the core classroom textbooks and current software for technology. Teachers need to acquaint themselves with the computer capabilities in their school district and at their individual school sites. Advances in new technologies require the teacher to familiarize herself with programs that would serve her students' needs. Students respond enthusiastically to technology. Several highly effective programs are available in various formats to assist students with initial instruction or remediation. Grammar texts, such as the Warriner's series, employ various methods to reach individual learning styles. The school library media center should become a focal point for individual exploration.

### **Skill 1.4 Recognize the roles of motivation and interest in reading.**

George G. Spache; H. Alan Robinson; Edward B. Fry; Richard T. Vacca; Strang, McCullough, and Traxlor; and Delores Durkin are a select group of authors who provide the classroom teacher with concrete examples of "how to" provide insight into a student's reading style, skill development, interest, and other pertinent information regarding the individual student's needs. All this information will serve the classroom teacher in providing a challenging reading program for all.

These texts will assist the teacher with the following:

- Provide appropriate material to meet the need of the student for instruction, enrichment, or remediation
- Provide student-directed or teacher-directed activities in reading literature and content area curriculum texts
- Provide resources and lessons that can provide a challenging opportunity for students to seek information from a wide variety of sources, such as television and computers
- Provide suggestions and make recommendations that will foster a lifetime habit of seeking pleasure and knowledge from the printed word into the student
- Provide the teacher an avenue of referral for students who are experiencing reading/learning disabilities and cannot have their needs met in the regular classroom setting.

- The inclusion of guidance counselors, speech pathologists, and school psychologists in a team approach are available in almost every school

**Skill 1.5 Recognize the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity and their relationships to reading development.**

Young children tend to rely heavily on an either “that is me” or a “that is not me” mentality when evaluating literature. A modern, diverse classroom has the potential to break down those rigid barriers and open students’ minds to redefine “what COULD be me” or “what I’d LIKE to learn more about.” Differences should be seen as valuable assets to the classroom, as well as the world around them.

The teacher should be careful though, when selecting material that emphasizes diversity, not to pick works that perpetuate stereotypes. The following books are great resources for enhancing diversity in the classroom:

- *Indian Winter* by Russell Freeman, illustrated by Karl Bodmer (Holiday House, 1992). In 1833, German Prince Alexander Philipp Maximilian and Karl Bodmer, a Swiss painter, journeyed up the Missouri River and spent the winter among the Mandan Indians. Russell Freeman draws upon the prince's diary and Bodmer's detailed paintings to create an incredible account of their adventure.
- *¡Viva México!: The Story of Benito Juárez and Cinco de Mayo* by Argentina Palacios (Steck-Vaughn, 1993). Inspire kids to have faith against all odds with the story of Zapotec Indian Benito Juárez, who became president of Mexico. The author provides information on Cinco de Mayo, a major holiday celebrated by Mexicans and Mexican-Americans.
- *Alvin Ailey* by Andrea Davis Pinkney, illustrated by Brian Pinkney (Hyperion, 1993). This insightful biography about dancer/choreographer Ailey provides children with a model of an important 20th-century African-American.
- *The Devil's Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen (Viking, 1988). In this compelling novel, a young girl is mystically transported from present-day New York to Poland during World War II, where she goes into a gas chamber to save the life of another.
- *Older Brother, Younger Brother* retold by Nina Jaffe, illustrated by Wenhai Ma (Viking, 1995). This traditional Korean folktale explores the universal theme that if good is returned for ill treatment, good will triumph over evil.

Holidays are also a great way to explore diversity. They provide a fun and interesting outlet to learn about other cultures. Choose books that explore Kwanza, Chinese New Year, Cinco de Mayo, or Ramadan. Focusing on how other cultures have fun is more likely to foster future interest in them.

**Skill 1.6 Recognize the roles that various language components play in reading development, including knowing about the phonemic (sounds of language), morphemic (words and meaningful parts of language), semantic (meaning), syntactic (sentence structure), and pragmatic (how language works in a social context) components of language.**

### **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 students to read. It helps them “sound out words.”

Instructional methods to teach phonological awareness may include any or all of the following: Auditory games and drills during which students 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 sound to recombine them in new formations are good way to foster phonological awareness.

### **Syntax**

#### **Sentence completeness**

Avoid fragments and run-on sentences. Recognition of sentence elements necessary to make a complete thought, proper use of independent and dependent clauses (see *Use correct coordination and subordination*), and proper punctuation will correct such errors.

#### **Sentence structure**

Recognize simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. Use dependent (subordinate) and independent clauses correctly to create these sentence structures.

<b>Simple</b>	Joyce wrote a letter.
<b>Compound</b>	Joyce wrote a letter, and Dot drew a picture.
<b>Complex</b>	While Joyce wrote a letter, Dot drew a picture.
<b>Compound/Complex</b>	When Mother asked the girls to demonstrate their new-found skills, Joyce wrote a letter, and Dot drew a picture.

**Note:** Do **not** confuse compound sentence elements with compound sentences.

Simple sentence with compound subject

Joyce and Dot wrote letters.

The girl in row three and the boy next to her were passing notes across the aisle.

Simple sentence with compound predicate

Joyce wrote letters and drew pictures.

The captain of the high school debate team graduated with honors and studied broadcast journalism in college.

Simple sentence with compound object of preposition

Coleen graded the students' essays for style and mechanical accuracy.

**Skill 1.7 Recognize the relationships of reading to writing, listening, and speaking and know strategies for integrating these through instruction.**

The last twenty years have seen great change in instruction in the English classroom. Gone are the days when literature is taught on Monday, Wednesday is grammar day and Friday you assign writing. Integrating reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing allow students to make connections between each aspect of language development during each class.

Suggestions for Integrating Language Arts

- Use pre-reading activities such as discussion, writing, research, and journals. Use writing to tap into prior knowledge before students read; engage students in class discussions about themes, issues, and ideas explored in journals, predicting the outcome and exploring related information.
- Use prewriting activities such as reading model essays, researching, interviewing others, combining sentences and other prewriting activities. Remember that developing language proficiency is a recursive process and involves practice in reading, writing, thinking, speaking, listening and viewing.
- Create writing activities that are relevant to students by having them write and share with real audiences.
- Connect correctness - including developing skills of conventional usage, spelling, grammar, and punctuation - to the revision and editing stage of writing. Review of mechanics and punctuation can be done with mini-lessons that use sentences from student papers, sentence combining strategies, and modeling passages of skilled writers.
- Connect reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing by using literature read as a springboard for a variety of activities.

In middle and secondary schools, the emphasis of reading instruction spans the range of comprehension skills - literal, inferential, and critical.

Most instruction in grades five and six is based on the skills delineated in basal readers adopted for those grade levels. Reading instruction in grades seven through nine is usually part of the general language arts class instead of being a distinct subject in the curriculum, unless the instruction is remedial. Reading in tenth through twelfth grades is part of the literature curriculum - World, American, and British.

### **Reading emphasis in middle school**

Reading for comprehension of factual material - content area textbooks, reference books, and newspapers - is closely related to study strategies in the middle/junior high. Organized study models, such as the SQ3R method, a technique that makes it possible and feasible to learn the content of even large amounts of text (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review Studying), teach students to locate main ideas and supporting details, to recognize sequential order, to distinguish fact from opinion, and to determine cause/effect relationships.

### **Strategies**

1. Teacher-guided activities that require students to organize and to summarize information based on the author's explicit intent are pertinent strategies in middle grades. Evaluation techniques include oral and written responses to standardized or teacher-made worksheets.
2. Reading of fiction introduces and reinforces skills in inferring meaning from narration and description. Teaching-guided activities in the process of reading for meaning should be followed by cooperative planning of the skills to be studied and of the selection of reading resources. Many printed reading for comprehension instruments as well as individualized computer software programs exist to monitor the progress of acquiring comprehension skills.
3. Older middle school students should be given opportunities for more student-centered activities - individual and collaborative selection of reading choices based on student interest, small group discussions of selected works, and greater written expression. Evaluation techniques include teacher monitoring and observation of discussions and written work samples.

4. Certain students may begin some fundamental critical interpretation - recognizing fallacious reasoning in news media, examining the accuracy of news reports and advertising, explaining their reasons for preferring one author's writing to another's. Development of these skills may require a more learning-centered approach in which the teacher identifies a number of objectives and suggested resources from which the student may choose his course of study. Self-evaluation through a reading diary should be stressed. Teacher and peer evaluation of creative projects resulting from such study is encouraged.

5. Reading aloud before the entire class as a formal means of teacher evaluation should be phased out in favor of one-to-one tutoring or peer-assisted reading. Occasional sharing of favored selections by both teacher and willing students is a good oral interpretation basic.

### **Reading emphasis in high school**

Students in high school literature classes should focus on interpretive and critical reading. Teachers should guide the study of the elements of inferential (interpretive) reading - drawing conclusions, predicting outcomes, and recognizing examples of specific genre characteristics, for example - and critical reading to judge the quality of the writer's work against recognized standards. At this level students should understand the skills of language and reading that they are expected to master and be able to evaluate their own progress.

### **Strategies**

1. The teacher becomes more facilitator than instructor - helping the student to make a diagnosis of his own strengths and weaknesses, keeping a record of progress, and interacting with other students and the teacher in practicing skills.

2. Despite the requisites and prerequisites of most literature courses, students should be encouraged to pursue independent study and enrichment reading.

3. Ample opportunities should be provided for oral interpretation of literature, special projects in creative dramatics, writing for publication in school literary magazines or newspapers, and speech/debate activities. A student portfolio provides for teacher and peer evaluation.

## **Skill 1.8 Recognize the strategies for using reading in all content areas.**

Content areas such as science, mathematics, history and social studies rely on textbooks and other printed materials that use primarily expository text to introduce, explain, and illustrate new subject matter. From a reading perspective, students face several challenges when approaching these texts, such as deciphering unfamiliar vocabulary, and adapting to new structures of content organization, that directly impact their ability to understand, synthesize, and apply the information contained therein.

Students lacking a solid foundation of reading strategies will likely experience difficulties in developing the competencies needed to master a subject area's academic requirements. At the secondary level, reading and understanding is only the beginning. Students are expected to absorb, evaluate, and form opinions and theories about topics within the subject matter, and then discuss, write about, and apply what they've learned on high level.

Metacognitive reading development strategies can help students engage effectively with their reading materials across the curriculum. The sample strategies below can be employed through structured activities that occur before reading, during reading, and after reading.

### **Before reading**

- Incorporate prior knowledge: Draw a connection between students' previous experiences – both personal and educational – and the topic at hand. A student who has helped out in the family garden, for example, will have a visual and basic vocabulary starting point for the study of plant physiology.
- Make predictions about what will be learned: Encourage students to identify what they think they will learn from the text, based on cues in the material (e.g., book titles, chapter headings, pictures, etc.)
- Prepare questions: Write specific questions to be answered during reading.

### **During reading:**

- Use context cues: Utilize other words and concepts in same the sentence or paragraph to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word.
- Reread challenging text: Practice rereading a selection of text to check for understanding.
- Use visualizing techniques: Mental pictures formed during the reading of text can aid in comprehension and retention of information. Read alouds, followed by a discussion of how these mental pictures factually reflect the text, provide opportunity for practicing and reinforcing this technique at all grade levels.

- Make inferences: Much of human communication relies on our ability to “read between the lines” of explicit statements and make logical guesses that fill in the blanks of information not provided. Similarly, for textbooks, making inferences means making connections to information extending beyond the text and subject matter at hand. For example, a geography book making the simple declaration that Brazil has a tropical climate can allow the student to deduce a wealth of information not stated in the text (e.g., tropical climates have warm year-round temperatures and high precipitation levels, therefore certain crops will grow quite successfully and can positively impact the local economy, etc.)
- Check the predictions made before reading: Use the text to confirm earlier predictions about content, and answer the questions posed prior to reading.

**After reading:**

- Summarize information: Students who understand the information they have read should be able to restate what they have learned in an organized manner. This activity can be practiced in both written and oral forms.
- Make critical evaluations: Encourage students to respond to the text with the ideas and opinions they’ve formed during reading. Facilitate discussions by devising questions that lead students to make qualitative and evaluative judgments about the content they’ve read.

**Skill 1.9 Recognize the home and school experiences that impact literacy development.**

Parents who are readers and a family that values books generally produce children who read early and well. This is enhanced if the child is read to by parents and others even before he/she is able to read alone. In a home where learning and books are treated with respect, children go off to school much better prepared than children from homes where the opposite is true. There’s no doubt that physical activity, sports, and outdoor experiences contribute to the healthy development of a child, but so do reading and appreciation of books.

There is considerable controversy over how schools should teach reading, so much so that Congress appointed fourteen researchers, educators, and parents to a National Reading Panel to examine the research on the teaching of reading. Its report is an interpretation of “research-based instruction.” The Panel’s findings are now a cornerstone of U.S. Federal reading education policy.

The Panel found many things that schools could do to teach reading better. They recommend that a small amount of instructional time be devoted to teaching young children to hear the sounds in words (phonemic awareness) and to teaching phonics during the early elementary grades.

Also, certain kinds of oral reading practice improves reading ability markedly as does work on word meanings and instruction in how to understand, figure out, and remember what is read. High-quality professional development opportunities for teachers were also found to have a positive impact on children's learning. The main point the panel makes is that teaching matters. Children can figure out a lot of things on their own and practice is helpful, but the greatest success comes about when teachers offer explicit instruction and guidance in reading skills and strategies. The report reminds teachers, parents, and policymakers that sound reading instruction helps children to figure out the words (pronunciations and meanings), to read fluently, and to think effectively about what they read.

