Reader's Handbook

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For the Colorado Department of
Education

1. INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION: TEACHING READING WITH A PURPOSE

Why do we need to teach reading to secondary students? Shouldn't they already know how to read? And how in the world can this apply to content-area teachers, rather than just being the province of English teachers?

> ### Polonius: What do you read my lord?
>
> ### Hamlet: Words, words, words.
>
> **William Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* 1601**

As a secondary English teacher, I observe the decline in adolescent reading, lament literacy and blame the complicated video game systems that my students discuss in increasing technological language. After all, secondary teachers hope that the students "know how to read" before they leave elementary school. What would be left for the secondary teacher to teach about *reading*, especially in the content areas? In researching this handbook, I found the studies that emphasize our responsibility as secondary teachers to take reading comprehension to the next, culturally literate level with our sophisticated content-area instruction.

These lessons about teaching reading in a secondary classroom came at quite a price for me (and for my poor guinea pig students that first year). I transitioned from teaching juniors and seniors at the University of Colorado to teaching sixth and seventh graders at a new charter school in Lafayette. No problem.

Right.

In one of my earliest assignments during my first year of teaching secondary school, I assigned the classic Edgar Allen Poe short story "The Cask of Amontillado." After they read the story, we would further our exploration of literary elements with my wonderful lesson plan exploring how Poe uses setting in this creepy subterranean tale. But the next day, my middle school students stumbled into the classroom (some in tears) completely unprepared for these delightful activities. Several had stopped reading after the first few paragraphs because they didn't know what the word "Amontillado" meant. Others had been completely confused about the relationship between the characters, and one hadn't been able to sleep because she couldn't understand why this guy would "build a wall for the other guy." None of them had focused on visualizing the setting so that we could examine the literary elements. Of course, I had not asked them to visualize anything when I gave them the assignment.

The only directions I gave these students was to "read the story."

How many educators, with a very clear objective in mind, have shared my humbling experience of asking students to complete a reading-based task only to find that students did not even come close to accomplishing this objective because they had no idea how to achieve it? Students assigned to read a chapter miss the main point and come away with one detail that they found particularly compelling. Students read a new mathematical process and don't connect it to the skills they already know, and so experience paralyzing frustration.

"Read" the chapter, "read" the handout, "read" the article, "read" the instructions, "read" the prompt. How often do students get this one word command without any further direction? As secondary school teachers, we might have issues with clarity, form or vocabulary, but the basic literacy has been addressed in elementary school. Our students know how to read! Right?

It depends. Can secondary students usually decode words and process units of meaning into sentences? Yes. Do they know what to do with the instruction "read"? Not most of the time, or at least not to the degree of specificity required by most secondary classroom objectives. This confusion leads to a student's disappointment in not performing well on the assessment, or frustration about the assignment even if they "read the book."

In the above instance, I **did** have an educational purpose for the reading assignment, one clearly tied to my classroom benchmarks about literary elements. What I **did not** do was share this objective with the students or offer them any tools to help them achieve it. My students had no indication as to what to expect from this gothic tale, and I didn't even define "cask" or "Amontillado." Certainly they had no idea that they were supposed to be visualizing the setting, and that Poe's presentation of this wine cellar was the most important element for our class's educational purpose. Even the most dogged students had the experience of reading the "words" without having them cohere purposefully.

With the decline in reading and the need for educational intervention, teachers have the responsibility to take up this task. The available data on adolescent reading provides several steps and strategies to achieve literacy success, but the research emphasizes the team aspect: Teachers must work with each other and with administrators to improve students' reading skills. All teachers rely upon students' reading skills and must apply these skills to their own content-specific standards and benchmarks, but the overall success of an adolescent literacy program in a school depends upon the collaborative effort of all teachers, administrators and governing groups.

Unlike my ill-fated Poe lesson, in this handbook I will establish a clear purpose for my readers.

Purpose

The purpose of this reading handbook is to serve as a resource for busy teachers, regardless of their content areas. The strategies and techniques will help teachers design lessons that enhance student mastery of content area standards and benchmarks, rather than detracting from these class goals.

Recent research overwhelmingly indicates that adolescent literacy improves most dramatically when students practice strategic reading **within content areas**, using **higher level thinking** tasks rather than the "skill and drill" emphasis of remediation.

A recent article in *The New Yorker* lamented the decline of "literary reading" as evidenced in surveys conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts. In these surveys, The National Endowment for the Arts asked American adults and teenagers how much time they spent reading each day (Hill). A steady decline in "literary reading" (i.e. pleasure reading) has been documented since 1982 with the two age demographics most affected being teenagers (13-17) and the elderly (over 75). Additionally, more of those teenagers watched 3+ hours of TV a day, and less of them witnessed any adult reading in their home. Overall, literary reading rates and fluencies decline (and educational and arts agencies investigate the trend), but technological reading (internet sites, email) climbs astronomically (NCTE, 2007; Phelps). Reading is crucial, even as its shape shifts in contemporary culture. As much as the move away from reading may disturb, these studies and others have also clarified the most successful interventions.

Studies focusing just on adolescent literacy emphasize that literacy is not an "elementary" issue. This handbook provides practical strategies for instruction, focusing on how schools might best improve on existing programs for adolescent literacy. Sainted elementary school teachers instruct students on how to read, how to decode, and how to use phonics. Job done? Not quite. These studies conducted by educational institutions, government groups, and concerned scholars all agree that secondary teachers, while having additional responsibilities to advanced subject area content, still must address adolescent literacy in the content area classrooms. The problem in secondary literacy is **not** illiteracy, or not being able to decode the words or phrases, but rather one of comprehension (Biancarosa and Snow, Billig, NIH, Phelps). Adolescents can usually read the words, but figuring out how to fit these words into a cognitive model and employ them becomes the problem.

The National Reading Panel's research studies reveal that actively teaching reading strategies, and modeling them in content area classrooms, lead to measurable gains in comprehension and skill (NIH). Constructing meaning from texts requires the constant adjustment of strategies; no one method solves all. To achieve Colorado's goals of graduating readers fluent enough to engage with the complex texts of the adult world (tax forms, internet sites, job-related information), reading must be approached as a higher level task, a strategic investigation, and place for students to puzzle out problems. This type of reading fluency cannot be taught by "skill and drill" but only through the active investigations of students themselves. This handbook focuses on strategy rather than skill as the basis for school-wide reading, because a "strategy" can be applied in authentic contexts. For a skill to become a strategy, the student has to be able to know when and how to use it without an explicit assignment (Routman). This independent reading is certainly Colorado's goal for its graduates, and independent thinking is every teacher's goal for his/her students.

In Beaverton, Oregon, a school decided to make adolescent literacy a cross-curricular goal for their school. In just one year, Beaverton High School increased their literacy scores on

state tests 12 percent, a statistically significant increase 11 points above that of similar schools in the area (Barton, 2001).   The key to this extraordinary success? Teamwork and consistency. Not only did English teachers ramp up literacy instruction, but all teachers utilized a common vocabulary and placed emphasis on the strategic reading appropriate to classrooms across the curriculum. These teachers of course had full administrative buy-in, and top-notch professional development; no one had to invent the ways to incorporate these strategies into his or her classroom and content area. (No hard-working teacher should!) Being strategic when confronted with the unfamiliar is essential, not just in English classrooms, but across the curriculum.

The National Council of Teachers of English used recent studies of adolescent literacy to shape their "Literacy Call to Action," which provides great information about successful adolescent literacy instruction. These studies demonstrate that adolescent literacy differs from earlier literacies and requires that students receive instruction in how to use the specialized discipline-specific texts of their advancing studies (NCTE, 2004). Rather than practicing phonics or doing decoding drills in separate reading classes, adolescent readers need to understand the relevance and strategies for reading comprehension in texts that require higher level thinking. The most consistently successful literacy programs are multifaceted, incorporating a variety of approaches and strategies to ensure success with adolescents, rather than relying on the age old "skill and drill" (Phelps; NCTE, 2004; NIH).

To improve adolescent literacy requires more than just extra attention in English classes or a couple of committed content area teachers. Schools, states and districts must create a "literacy framework" (Tatum, Biancarosa and Snow) that includes both instructional excellence and the infrastructure provided by professional development, administrative support and leadership. This text puts practicality first, in an attempt to honor teachers' (limited!) time. Rather than focusing on research or theory, this handbook prioritizes that which can be easily used in the classroom. As part of such a literacy framework, funded by the Colorado Department of Education, this handbook is meant to complement the literacy programs already in place in the infrastructure of Colorado secondary schools, and be a resource for its hard-working teachers.

One must be an inventor in order to read well.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Paradoxically, the higher the level thinking educators require of students the more students measurably improve in basic skills and strategies. Commonly, a curricular response to struggling readers was to have them read texts below their grade level, attend remedial sessions instead of content area classes, and perform tasks appropriate to lower grades. Certainly reading problems can hinder a student's classroom performance and mastery of skills, but studies cited in the previous section show that focusing on decoding or basic information does not lead to advances as quickly as asking students to perform higher level thinking tasks *while* improving these basic literacy skills (NWREL, National Reading Panel, Carr, Billig). The Three Levels of Information separate reading and questioning tasks into three categories, to facilitate "taking it to a higher level" in the classroom.

LEVEL ONE: What does the text say? What do the words mean? This level of processing is the basic comprehension vocabulary and text that precedes higher level thinking (Levels Two and Three). Often reading tasks focus primarily on the Level One information without advancing to more sophistication.

- *How do you conjugate regular verbs in Spanish? What is the order of operations? How many electrons does a hydrogen atom have?*

LEVEL TWO: What does the text mean? What is the author's position? This type of question and information goes beyond what the text says to ask why and how.

- *What were the biggest causes of the stock market crash on Black Tuesday? How does the setting set the tone for the story? Which equation should be used to solve a word problem asking for the volume of a sphere?*

LEVEL THREE: What are the universal implications or themes? How can this text be used in a broader context? This level touches upon universal themes, inspired by the text but not directly in the text. Level Three tasks ask students to use the text, but move beyond it in a creative process, comparative leap or in an evaluative task.

- *Which statistical study is more convincing and why? Does love at first sight exist, as portrayed in this play? How does art respond to the social context in which it was created?*

Learning the three levels of information provides a key tool in reading. Although Level One information provides the basic support, any close-reading or argument must move beyond the literal. Instead of "What does the text state?" Level Two questions ask, "Why and how does the text state this?" The personal and universal Level Three connections move far beyond the "memorization model" into learning that students retain and apply.

Students can use these Three Levels to ask questions of a text, which allows students to begin clarifying the basic information and then move up to higher levels of processing and connecting. The Level Three questions make students connect the information to the larger world and see a context that activates their own opinions and knowledge.

CHECKLIST OF READING STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS:

Putting recursive reading in action

PREREADING

- **Frontload** students with concepts and vocabulary for this text.

- Use an introductory activity to **activate student knowledge** about the topic.

- Introduce the particular reading **form**, demonstrating the features and how to navigate this particular form.

- **Model** any reading strategy you want students to employ.

- Set **purpose** for reading and ensure that students understand the purpose and its connection to the goals of the unit/classroom. Students can use this purpose to establish their own goals for the unit.

- Give students the questions, particular type of note-taking, or a **graphic organizer** to gather and organize ideas from the reading.

- **Begin reading in class** so that students have the support and structure when they begin.

ACTIVE READING

- Help students understand **tone** (i.e. the author's attitude towards the subject) to determine the author's purpose.

- Students ask **questions** of the text, beginning with Level One and progressing through to Level Three.

- Use some form of **writing** (annotating the text, notes, graphic organizers, etc.) to track thinking throughout the reading process.

- Reflection: students need to **self-assess** as they go to determine if they are understanding what they read.

- Ask students to **stop and think** about what they are reading while they are reading it, either in conversation, notes, class questions, etc.

- **Assess** student understanding (formally or informally) during reading whenever possible, to help guide them effectively and clarify any misunderstandings.

POST-READING

- Return to the **essential question/purpose**, and check that this has been answered.

- Find and **use textual evidence** to correct any misunderstandings and to gather evidence for any tasks that remain. Students should **reflect** on the reading and learning experience.

- **Use reading** in class to further the context and skills of class, as tied to benchmarks.

- Students should **evaluate** the text in terms of its merits and persuasion.

- **Assess** student achievement formally or informally, and adjust instruction accordingly.

- Ask students to reflect/chart their own **progress towards goals**.

2. BEFORE READING

PREREADING STRATEGIES

> "Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?" he asked.
>
> "Begin at the beginning," the King said gravely, "and go on till you come to the end."
>
> Lewis Caroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

That's right. To really read effectively, people must perform certain thinking activities before they even start on the text itself. In the adult world the "why" is often self-explanatory. ("I'm reading this guide so that I know how to change the vacuum bag"; "This editorial may change the way I vote – what are the facts?" or "Is this 'special offer' a good deal or does the fine print contradict the seductive pitch?")

Teachers set the pace with reading in the classroom and reading assigned outside the classroom. In my dreadful "The Cask of Amontillado" lesson clarifying my purpose (the importance of setting), teaching essential vocabulary (especially "cask" and "amontillado"), and giving an overview would have potentially allowed students to succeed on this reading assignment.

> ## *Teaching Steps for Prereading Strategies*
>
> 1. Establish **purpose.**
> 2. Teach any **concepts or vocabulary** that would be new and essential to understanding the text.
> 3. **Overview** the text, format, and tools (i.e. note-taking strategies, forms, expectations).

PURPOSE

Why do students need to read this text? What do they need to take away from it? How do they need to use the information that they glean from the text? What kind of reading is it (a letter, a textbook, an article, an autobiography)? How do they need to document their reading?

An established purpose changes the way students should read a text. For example:

- Writing prompt: Use the steps of annotation to make sure that all the tasks are clear.
- Fiction: Read not just for the sequence of events but the themes and moods that the descriptions create.
- Editorials: What are the opinions of the writer? Which parts are opinion and which parts are facts?
- Textbooks: What are your objectives for this section? What are the key pieces of information and what are the supporting details?

- Poetry: How does the form and rhythm of the poetry create the meaning? What kinds of words are used and what is the "shape" of these words?

PRETEACHING and OVERVIEW

If I had only taught my students what the terms "cask" and "Amontillado" meant, my Poe lesson might have had more of a chance. Any key details, dates, contexts, or vocabulary that the students do not already know, should be taught up front. If the purpose is to learn new words in context (in a world language class, for example), then the concept may not be the words themselves but the particular verb form that is the focus. One of the biggest misconceptions with using reading in the classroom is that students must go into the process as blind as a bat and muck around bumping into walls for the experience to be valuable.

- **Ideas for Preteaching:** vocabulary, cultural context, types of visuals and their components (specific graphs, for example), characteristics of this textual form.
- **Ideas for Overview** (overlaps with Preteaching): plot points (especially if the text is dense like Shakespeare and the purpose goes beyond "what happens"), how to use the note-taking strategy, annotation, or graphic organizer, how this text fits into the overall unit of instruction.

Whether concerned with the form (the conventions of a sonnet for example) or of the original context (what a bill of sale is and the source of this particular one), teaching students essential information up front gives them the skill and confidence to succeed when the reading task challenges them. Many educators refer to this process as "frontloading" because it gives the essential skills and information up front rather than forcing students to struggle for it (Buehl). This frontloading keeps the time and focus on the objectives of the class, and keeps the students' reading focused on the purpose.

ACTIVATING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Especially if the students will be making connections, they might know quite a bit about the specific subject, or about larger themes. Even if students have never read Shakespeare and have no idea who Romeo and Juliet are, they certainly might have opinions about forbidden love. Although the cultural celebration of Dios de los Muertos might be brand-new to Spanish students, family celebrations would be a topic of which they have both experience and opinions.

MODEL

Start the assignment in class so that students can have the instructor as a resource for their first foray. Show them how to use this particular strategy or this particular graphic organizer. This can begin with a teacher read-aloud or with the class beginning the task of reading and performing a close-reading annotation together, with the assignment being to finish independently.

Teaching Tools – Prereading

These activities work especially well as anticipatory sets, or as closing activities that set the students up for success with a reading assignment to be completed as homework.

- Have students annotate the purpose for the assignment using close-reading skills and the Three Levels of Information.

- Write the title of the article/section/chapter/novel on the board and have students freewrite/brainstorm connections. This will activate their previous knowledge.

- Show students the cover, a diagram, or an illustration from the reading assignment and have them predict the content.

- Write the theme as a provocative question and have students write about this issue in their own life (identity, environment, voting practices, etc.).

- Give a shortened version of the final task and have them complete it now (a low-key pre-assessment), then compare this version to the one they do after they successfully complete the reading task.

- Review skills from past units/reading that they will need to employ to successfully read the text.

- Teach (or have students teach) the vocabulary specific to this particular reading assignment so they will be ready for it. They can illustrate the terms, use them in free verse poems or in paragraphs before they even open the book, so they are fully prepared to make these words work for them.

- Take the central question of the reading and have students complete a pro/con chart. After the reading they can return to this same chart and see how their opinions have evolved with the new knowledge.

- Combine class brainpower to get a sense for context and culture that produced the text (the Vietnam War, Mardi Gras, the 1920's in America, etc.).

- Present a tantalizing tidbit and have the students predict (in writing or cartoons) what they think will be the result of the experience or the end of the text.

- Have each student write down the alphabet. In two minutes, have them generate as many words relating to the theme, author or purpose (Shakespeare, bones, weather, etc.) of the reading that begins with each letter. Share answers and determine the winner.

SETTING A GOAL-ORIENTED PURPOSE FOR READING

Often the purpose for a particular assignment can be generalized based on the type of reading material, but even within the same text (a science textbook, for example), the particular benchmark or goal for a specific section of the text could change from the previous section based on the progress of the class or the individual needs of the student.

The purpose for a reading assignment should always be tied to the objectives for the assignment, which build fluency, skills and knowledge towards the end of achieving the benchmarks for the class itself.

> The purpose of any reading assignment is the combination of what information students should take away from the reading and what they should be able to do with it. It shapes how they approach the assignment and how they move through the text. For the most effective lesson design, the purpose should be tied to the overall unit objectives, lesson benchmarks and essential questions.

Type of Reading	Potential Purposes for a Reading Assignment
Math Textbook	• To perform a sequence of steps to solve a problem. • To apply one problem-solving strategy versus another.
Science Textbook	• To understand how a process creates chemical change. • To envision and name the parts of a biological structure.
History Textbook	• To list five causes of a particular historical event. • To contrast two positions on a political topic.
Primary Document	• To compare to a contemporary perspective on the same issue. • To determine bias in the language and stance.
Writing Prompt or "How-To" Article	• To complete all tasks that the prompt requires.

Word Problem	• To diagnose the variable ("what needs to be solved") and solve!
Fiction	• To characterize the author's style and tone. • To frame a discussion of the character's choices.
Poetry	• To emulate the poetic devices in another poem. • To analyze how the form shapes the content.
Newspaper Article	• To apply information to the class topics. • To analyze slant and position of author.

The Colorado Department of Education encourages standards-based education, tying instruction to clear, assessable standards that track student learning. These standards should be the starting point for reading purposes since so many standards are based in different areas of literacy and fluency.

PURPOSE WORDS – APPROPRIATE GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS AND NOTE STRATEGIES

Once students understand the purpose of a reading assignment, they need to **use writing to achieve this purpose** and track their progress. Employing graphic organizers, answering questions and taking notes all demonstrably improve retention of read material, but even better, these techniques shape the reading process towards achieving a particular reading purpose (Burke, NWREL, Phelps). Graphic organizers, particular note-taking instructions, or directed questions help students understand how to shape their strategic reading towards that goal. Especially in younger grades or earlier in the academic year, teachers must model the use of an appropriate active reading technique before making it a requirement. A quick assessment of students' close-reading annotation, Cornell notes, or completed graphic organizer is a great reading check.

In the "Great Online Resources for Teachers" section of the Appendix, teachers can download all graphic organizers and note-taking strategies mentioned in this handbook, and many more!

Tailoring Notes/Annotation to the Reading Purpose: Examples

Purpose	Suggested Type of Notes/Annotation
To *gain fluency* in seasonal vocabulary	List of new French vocabulary words in a section with definitions. Adding illustrations to the list or web helps retention.
To *determine author's purpose* in a letter to the editor	SOAPSTone analysis to clearly differentiate between the subject and the author's attitude towards subject.
To *scan* texts to determine which supports global warming thesis	"X marks the spot" helps students quickly scan a text and mark the key information (or main idea).
To *write* about how a poem makes meaning	Close-reading annotation with attention to labeling (Level One) literary devices and analyzing (Level Two) their effect.
To *understand* Cubism and to *recognize* its art, terms and artists as articulated in the Art History textbook	Cornell Notes (examples in Appendix) are perfect for intensive study of a textbook, with space for distilling main ideas and vocabulary.
To *trace* the character development and changes in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*	A dialectical notebook allows students to track their own thinking and reflect on it, with this two-column recursive note-taking.

Purpose	Suggested Type of Graphic Organizer
To *interpret* a French article about development of the Eiffel Tower in order to write a new English version of it	5 W's and H organizer (separating out the Who, When, Where, What, Why and How).
To *analyze* how cell division works	Cause/Effect organizers show the relationships between steps in a complicated process.
To *gather* textual evidence for a debate about the pros and cons of this particular controversial issue	Evaluation collection grids or Pro/Con charts can help collect and evaluate textual evidence for later use in writing or debating.
To *enumerate* the origins of the Industrial Revolution in Europe	An annotated timeline allows students to organize key facts chronologically.
To *apply* the distributive property, when appropriate, in complicated math problems in accordance with the rules set out in a chapter of the textbook	A flow chart helps organize information such that students can clearly chart the sequence of operations and how they should choose among them.

The above purpose words connect to the **Three Levels of Information** and help students understand expectations. Although all three levels come into play at all stages in the reading process, as a quick rule, they progress in order. Before larger contexts and judgments can be explored within a text, the vocabulary and basic structure must make sense.   Understanding these levels of reading help instructors guide students through the reading process. If a student skips all the vocabulary in the Level One comprehension, that will severely undermine their ability to synthesize the information for a Level Three task. The Three Levels of Information correspond to the NWREL's 6 Traits of Reading and Bloom's Taxonomy, as well as further articulating clear reading purposes. NWREL traits are in bold below.

- **Conventions and Comprehension -** Level One Understanding

Note any new vocabulary defined in the text, any literary techniques, and look up any unknown words. Reading for Level One information requires the careful observation of the text in order to decode blocks of information. This is the stage just to notice the information presented, understand vocabulary in context and comprehend the literal meaning of a text.

Level One Purpose Word from Bloom's: arrange, define, classify, comprehend, order, recall, identify, describe, indicate, list, report, memorize, restate, translate.

- **Context and Interpretations –** Level Two Analysis

Analyze the usage, figurative language, the Level One observations, and begin to form opinions about what's going on within the text (how it creates relationships within itself). The point

of view of the text, the cultural background, the perspective that shapes it, the tone, period, and purpose of the piece of writing help a reader understand how it makes meaning.

Level Two Purpose Words from Bloom's: analyze, interpret, compare/contrast, question, solve, use, employ, illustrate, examine, calculate, appraise, differentiate, illustrate.

- **Synthesis and Evaluation** – Level Three Applications

   Use the text to make judgments about how convincing it is; bias, distortion, accuracy, etc. Make connections to the world outside of the text to larger themes and issues that the text relates to but does not directly address. This is where students take the material to a higher level of Bloom's taxonomy.

Level Three Purpose Words from Bloom's: synthesize, evaluate, apply, judge, defend, predict, assess, design, develop, propose, construct, formulate

TEACHING AND MODELING READING STRATEGIES

Like any other skill active reading cannot be assumed or assigned without modeling it first. To maximize school-wide literacy gains, each content area should focus on the reading strategies that work most effectively for their discipline (Torgesen, et al.). For example, science teachers find prediction not only a great reading strategy but one that sets students up for the scientific method and labs. Below find some activities that help teachers and students model reading strategies in content area classrooms.

- **Teacher read-aloud**

Reading aloud may seem silly or elementary, but it can yield huge results. As an introductory activity, I read the first two pages of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* to my (reluctant) British Literature students. This activity models fluency with the stanzas; stopping the process to muse and ask questions models active reading. Students may draw the visuals inspired by the story, either during or in the minutes set aside right afterwards. Then, they freewrite predictions for the end of this medieval tale based on their knowledge of the period, and their understanding of what I've read to them. Teacher read-alouds can build confidence. The same seemingly impenetrable technical science vocabulary, or the nonsensical-looking Shakespearean lines, can take on their first layer of meaning just with the fluency of intonation.

- **Practice with something simple**

The first time the students apply a strategy use a simple or even semi-comic text, such as a copy of the school announcements. Have them use this text to determine the SOAPSTone categories, or use "X marks the spot" on a copy of the school dress code. Teach reading visuals with a cartoon or a satirical graph from *The Onion.*

- **Reading circle**

In this structure, a complex text serves as the center of a classroom engagement. Students sit in a circle, and each student has the opportunity to do one of three things at his/her turn: 1) Ask a question, 2) Answer a question or make an observation or 3) Read aloud. With this structure students cannot wander too far off task because they must listen to previous readings and questions. They don't have to read out loud if doing so creates discomfort or insecurity. Following this structure with a provocative question that the students answer with individual writing responses works particularly well.

- **Student as teacher**

Give each student a passage, a character, a concept or a new type of vocabulary to teach the class. This structure also works well with teacher-chosen groups if the students need extra support to speak in front of the class. The demonstration of expertise can be as simple as asking the questions during class discussion or preparing a game/activity/Powerpoint for the class.

- **Class close-reading annotations**

These can happen on the board (see Annotating the Text) or on individual sheets of paper. First, the teacher models the type of observations, then students annotate on their own, and finally, the class shares to produce one "master" close-reading that incorporates everyone's ideas. The teacher gives explicit instructions, such as to highlight (give each student two highlighter colors) particular aspects of text ("Use yellow to mark all the angry words and blue to mark all the loving words") or content ("Blue is evidence for cloning and yellow is evidence against").

Teaching Tools – Vocabulary

Recent studies reinforce that the key to effective vocabulary instruction is using words rather than just "studying" them (Burke, 2001). Instead of just memorizing definitions, students need to make the vocabulary words work for them in writing, speaking, arguing and of course, reading.

- As a fun anticipatory set or closing activity, play a lightning round of **charades** or a version of **Pictionary** using new vocabulary words. Students have a blast, but will never forget "cell division" after seeing a classmate act it out.

- Require a short thought-provoking writing assignment (another one that's great as an anticipatory set or closing activity), related to the content, in which students must use a specified number of words from this unit. Opinion pieces related to the content are great for these types of **embedded-vocabulary assignments.**

- Have them create **illustrations** for each word, then share the illustrations with the class.

- Make a **word-web** (see Appendix for all the free ones available online) or **free-write** out of a particularly important term having students share their associations, discussing roots, homonyms, origins, etc.

- Give a quick **pre-assessment vocabulary quiz** encouraging students to guess, using their past knowledge, root words, prefixes, suffixes, etc., to attempt to determine the meaning of these new terms. Whenever a student guesses correctly, have that student share the thinking/decoding/connecting process that led him/her to the right answer.

- When a chapter or unit has many vocabulary words that students need to know to successfully read to use the information in the chapter, **make each student responsible for one word**. Each student must teach the word to the class, along with a mnemonic device (a song, an image, a joke, etc.), and be responsible for using this word in class (relevantly, of course) at least three times a week.

- Assign students to **write a poem** on an *unrelated* topic ("the weather" for instance) that must incorporate a number of the unit's vocabulary words. The creative ways to incorporate "tort reform" into a description of leaves falling will amuse and energize students.

- **Require the use of certain vocabulary words in the assessments** clearly making the words part of the rubric for a test, lab report or formal paper. Using these words does not mean just spitting back definitions, but employing them correctly in an academic context.

3. DURING READING

Active Reading

READING A BOOK IS LIKE REWRITING IT FOR YOURSELF…YOU BRING TO…ANYTHING YOU READ, ALL YOUR EXPERIENCE OF THE WORLD.

Angela Carter

During the reading process an active reader performs so many thinking tasks that they can be hard to articulate. Just like a driver who knows his/her destination, an active reader notices signs, maps a route and works towards a destination, making corrections when the road turns. Passive readers process the words and progress through sentences sequentially, but they *don't make decisions* during the reading process. The decision-making inherent in active reading (i.e. deciding what to highlight, what's important, what this has to do with the unit of study, what kind of character this is, etc.) comes naturally to sophisticated readers but it can be modeled, taught to those who struggle, and refined for those who already have strategies in place!

Successful Strategies Employed by Active Readers that CAN BE TAUGHT

Based on National Reading Panel research results (NIH, 2000).

- **Know purpose**, and use it to map a path through text.
- **Double-check understanding**, correcting misconceptions.
- **Active prior knowledge** before and during the reading process.
- **Document** thinking during reading process using notes and graphic organizers.
- **Work cooperatively** with other students to employ reading strategies.
- **Ask questions** of the text and **answer questions** about text.
- **Make connections** to other texts and concepts.
- Notice and **analyze the structure** of the text and how that shapes meaning.
- **Summarize main idea** and generalize from text.
- **Apply knowledge** gleaned from text.

The above strategies gain maximum effectiveness when *combined* into a complex, recursive reading process with lots of classroom support. These strategies fit together beautifully; students will have an easier time using notes or graphic organizers to document their thinking if they have a clear purpose for reading. Cooperative classroom work can help students make connections that don't seem obvious at first. Allow them to help each other correct misconceptions, and encourage them to refine strategies as they see other students asking/answering questions in class discussions. These teachable strategies above shape the reading experience by clarifying expectations of what a student should take away from the text and by providing the tools to ensure that they can do it.

ANNOTATING THE TEXT: CLOSE-READING SKILLS

Reading actively makes the reading process a thinking process. Writing is key, especially when students can make marks directly on the text (on handouts or when they own the textbook/novel). **The key to highlighting, annotating, or taking notes is that students must make decisions: they must never write down or highlight everything!** Telling students to "mark up the text," "take notes" or "use a highlighter" usually will result in confusion, if the students haven't been taught how to use annotation or what to prioritize in their reading. When I arrived at college without any note-taking or textbook skills, I used my highlighter to brighten just about every sentence in my Biology textbook. Needless to say, the ubiquitous bright yellow sections weren't especially helpful when I needed to study the essential information to apply in labs or use on the exams. Close-reading annotation does more than just highlight key sentences: It requires students to track their thinking process through an important text.

Eventually, classes become so familiar with close-reading annotation that they don't need much instruction beyond always setting a high number as a goal ("Make 27 close-reading observations on the text"). But initially, lead students through one level at a time to show them the sophisticated thinking process that is so often invisible in the reading process. Begin by having students do a timed writing in which they write down everything that they could possibly notice in a close-reading (for example, word choice, characterization, cause and effect, strange punctuation, tone, etc.). Combine class answers and post so the student who doesn't know "what to notice" can be inspired by the 35 things tacked up on the classroom wall.

The first time that you assign close-reading annotation, go by the numbers. Tell students exactly **how many** observations to make and on which Level of Information. A student making only Level One observations will never move into analysis and won't make any personal connections to the text. More sophisticated learning, while certainly needing these facts and figures, must move to higher levels so that the student can **apply** knowledge and **use** it in new contexts. Conversely, a student who makes all Level Three observations may float off into tangents without engaging in the specifics of this text.

- Sample Assignment: *Read this letter written by Benjamin Franklin in order to determine his opinion about the tax. Make 7 Level One observations, 10 Level Two observations, and 3 Level Three observations (make connections to contemporary politics if possible).*

Teaching students how to write on a reading assignment means modeling annotation, performing the task as a class (on a short projected text or visual), then requiring it. **This skill sets students up for success in using the text later, to write a paper, perform an experiment, or synthesize with other material.** They will have a record of their thinking, their vocabulary, the important sections, and questions that they had while reading.

DETERMINING TONE, BIAS AND PURPOSE USING SOAPSTONE

Tone is the speaker or author's **attitude** toward the subject. *To miss the tone is often to miss the meaning of a work.* A dog owner who scratches her pet's ears and affectionately says, "You are the ugliest beast on the planet" does not actually intend insult to her dear dog. Students interpret tone in speech consistently (and somehow can interpret it in text messages!), yet struggle with the satirical or the strident in print. Teaching them how to determine tone in text is a skill that will increase reading fluency, especially with fiction and opinion pieces. Teenagers walk into the secondary classrooms with impressive fluencies, from the creating of tone using the sophisticated abbreviations of text messaging, to the linguistically-linked architecture of internet sites, to the subtle intricacies of social cues. Subtlety, tone, purpose, and other qualities of "advanced readers" come naturally in these contexts, but the connections between their everyday fluencies and the seemingly-distant classroom texts must be forged.

Tone Vocabulary: a resource to help students specify tone

angry	dramatic	objective	contemptuous
sharp	restrained	conniving	apologetic
upset	formal	frivolous	humorous
silly	polite	audacious	questioning
boring	sad	provocative	horrific
afraid	cold	somber	sarcastic
happy	urgent	giddy	nostalgic
hollow	joking	peaceful	zealous
joyful	poignant	sentimental	irreverent
sweet	detached	forlorn	benevolent
vexed	aloof	mournful	seductive
bitter	confused	complimentary	malicious
tired	loving	condescending	candid
dreamy	childish	sympathetic	pitiful
proud	mocking	comforting	didactic

(Letter, used with permission)

Key tone indicators: adverbs describing how something was said, opinion words, punctuation (especially exclamation points!), any naming of an emotional state, totalizing words such as "always" and "none."

Tone Exercises:

- To have students test-drive tone, have them say the exact same sentence ("I like your hat" will work) with different tones from the tone vocabulary. How does the tone change what this sentence means and how it sounds?

- Contrast two pieces with the same subject (a local news article and a piece from the satirical paper *The Onion,* for example) and disparate tones helps students understand the importance.

- Practice using SOAPSTone textual analysis to help students build tone fluency.

Standardized tests love asking students to determine the main idea of an unfamiliar text! Separating the main idea from supporting detail is the key to being able to scan material and vary reading rate (if evaluating texts for a research project, for example). Yet often students struggle with this task. Here's how to help.

- **KEY CLUES TO THE MAIN IDEA IN A TEXT:**

The title, section headings, words in BOLD or *italics,* objectives at the beginnings of chapters, topic sentences at the beginnings of paragraphs, the axes of a graph, newspaper headlines or taglines, repetition of terms or themes, illustrations or charts articulating and reinforcing a concept.

Great Activities to Help Students Determine the Main Idea

- **"X marks the spot"**: Students read quickly and put an X next to the passage that seems most important to the text as a whole. They can then underline the most important sentence and circle the most important word. This starts a great discussion.

- Using highlighters, mark **"word families"** or related words in a shorter piece (especially useful with poetry and opinion pieces). This sets up discussion beautifully when students notice a "family" of war words in a poem about love, or a "family" of patriotic words in a piece about health insurance.

- Make **predictions** based on the title of sections in a textbook, or of the piece itself. This activity can also be combined with activated previous knowledge, to help students situate the piece.

- Give students directed **questions to answer** as they read that require them to focus on the most essential issues.

- Use the **one-sentence summary**: Ask students to summarize a chapter, a website, a poem into just one sentence that captures the "essence" of the entire text.

A main idea differs from a topic in that a topic is a one-word, Level One answer about the focus of the writing (in other words, the text is *about* what subject?). The main idea is a Level Two concept that combines the topic with the author's purpose in this piece of writing (in other words, the text presents *what perspective* on the subject?). Usually, the organization of the piece prioritizes certain ideas, and students should begin with the organization to find the main idea which tends to be repeated, illustrated, and showcased at the beginning and end of sections of text. Not every title encapsulates the main idea, and not every illustration in a textbook shows a visual of what's most important in that chapter, but these are great places to begin. Scanning a text before beginning to read can give great clues to the organizational pattern, and of course, the main idea.

Visualization and Reading Images

Students can have different learning styles, but incorporating visualization into the classroom as a teaching tool and reading strategy benefits more than just the "visual learners." Studies show that the graphic organization of material can help students understand a cycle or a process and also prove that a non-linguistic association with a new vocabulary word helps students learn that word more effectively. Teaching techniques incorporating imagery with new vocabulary words led to achievement gains that were 21 percentile points higher than more traditional techniques that just asked students to use the new words in a sentence (Marzano). All kinds of visual images can enhance classroom practice, and understanding visuals requires – believe it or not – using and reinforcing literacy strategies.

These images *can be* the classroom text, provided by the instructor via art prints, political cartoons, graphics, charts or PowerPoint presentations, or provided by student work such as cartooning plot, sketching definitions, or collaging relationships. Visuals can also be produced by students working together to create tableaus or skits illustrating concepts, skills, themes, or key points from a text.

The Three Levels of information and questioning apply to visuals as well as text. A photograph or pie chart must be interpreted using previous knowledge, analysis, connections and other strategies. To discuss a news reel or film clip in class, students must close-read as many elements (including new ones like sound, lighting, and visual perspective) as they would in a text. In several note-taking strategies, students can sketch to illustrate their understanding of what's read. To get students to the point where they select the important details and information for their end of chapter illustrations, teachers must encourage students TO TURN TEXT INTO AN IMAGE in their head. Like any other active reading strategy, teachers should model how this process works. To understand Modernism and the issues with a rapidly changing industrial world, "The Second Coming" uses powerful images and sensory details. Students who sit down to read this poem can be frustrated by the dense language and obscure meaning. But if the teacher reads the poem to the students several times as they sketch, modeling the first few lines so that they know what a "gyre" and the relationship between a falcon and a falconer are, then the class can go further with their sketches.

A wonderful closing activity for class is to ask students to "sketch what you learned in class today." A teacher wandering around the room as students complete this task will have an effective means to assess student learning for the day, and unbeknownst to them, students will be reinforcing the information as they process it visually. Flow charts, architectural drawings, even geometric sketches are visuals that help students process reading and retain information.

Teaching Tools – Using Visuals in the Classroom

A graph, chart, photograph, painting, cartoon, line drawing (and so on!), makes a wonderful switch from the "text and talk" classroom model that often fails to stimulate more visual learners. These activities apply reading strategies to the visuals appropriate for many different classrooms and work especially well as anticipatory sets or as closing activities.

- Do a class close-reading of a visual with clear separation between the three levels of information (different colored markers help even more).

- Have students freewrite about the visual with no text, labels, title or background. Slowly reveal more ('This graph charts population growth,' or 'This photograph was taken during the Dust Bowl'). Have students incorporate the new information into their freewrite, then share thoughts with the class.

- Show students the cover, a diagram or an illustration from the reading assignment and have them predict the content.

- Have students use description and knowledge with visuals. Pair them up and have them sit back to back. One of each pair has a simple image/drawing/graph that he/she must describe to his/her partner. The partner must attempt to recreate this visual with the description.

- Put up a visual that has no obvious connection with the explicit content of the classroom, and tell students that they have 5 minutes to generate as many connections with the classroom content as possible. They can even vote on the "best connection" for a prize. Their creativity will astonish!

- Use an image that corresponds to or illustrates the concept that they read about the night before or that you just reviewed in class. Each student has to make some connection to their reading/learning using as much content specific vocabulary as possible. Every other student must write down the observations made by classmates.

- Ask the students to turn the theme/chapter/scientific process into a tableau, skit or game show. In the process of creation, they will not only have a blast, they will create lasting images for everyone in the class.

- Present an image that corresponds to the next unit/reading/content and have students use prediction based on the image you have provided (for example, a photograph of the historical event or an unlabeled illustration of the scientific process or a tantalizing tidbit). Have the students predict (in writing or cartoons) what they think will be the result of the experience or the end of the text.

- Have students create visual collages based on the pre-teaching and overview (i.e. the vocabulary, context, etc.) that you provide for a given text. They should share their visuals, and then return to them after everyone has read the text to see how their visuals relate to the actual content.

4. AFTER READING

POST-READING STRATEGIES

"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body."

If reading is a tool for mastery, then its value goes far beyond the act. If students have a clear goal in reading a text, then often the pursuit of that goal goes far beyond the completion of the reading assignment.

AFTER READING STUDENTS SHOULD

- Return to the purpose of the assignment, to check that this purpose has been achieved.
- Reread as necessary.
- Put knowledge gained from reading into context (larger context of unit, class, previous knowledge, etc.).
- Reflect on progress towards goals.
- Use it!

Return to purpose

If the purpose for the assignment sets clear and specific goals, then students can clearly assess whether or not they have achieved their goal. The more precise the purpose, the more readily students can self-assess. Often, the purpose builds towards the final "use it" step of reading and will require students to take their notes, skills and/or knowledge and apply them to a more sophisticated writing, discussing, thinking or creating task.

Reread as necessary

After the initial reading, predictions must be adjusted and evidence needs to be obtained, depending on the purpose of the assignment. Cornell notes can provide a way to return to the subject matter of the text without rereading the text itself, but often if students write papers or formulate evaluations, they need textual evidence to support the hypotheses they generate.

This rereading necessitates a different kind of reading skill, one that needs scaffolding just like other reading strategies. Students then would set their own purpose (to gather a particular kind of evidence or to find a particular passage), and skim the familiar text until they find necessary textual evidence.

Reread as necessary

Reading is a recursive process, necessitating a return to glean further information, find textual evidence, or clarify issues that may be muddied. Using particular forms to help students gather information pertinent to a specific purpose speeds this process. Have they answered all the guiding questions? Do they need to reexamine the section about Ulysses S. Grant? Recording progress, especially in an instructor-suggested format, will direct the rereading.

Use the reading

This amplifies the purpose and moves towards the larger goals and benchmarks of the class. How will students take this knowledge/skill/information and put it to use? The traditional "reading quiz" remains a popular assessment, but higher level demonstrations may be even more purposeful in your classroom. Will students debate using the two positions set out in the two editorials? Will they write a paper incorporating textual evidence to support their specific arguments? Will they apply the skills to a brand-new problem, showing that they can demonstrate mastery of these skills in a new context? Will they evaluate the reading and compare it to other sources?

The way that students use the reading should be clear in the essential question for the task, and tied to the purpose that shaped their reading strategies. Knowing that they will be debating the pros and cons of using this particular scientific method gives extra motivation to students filling out pro/con graphic organizer and reading the selection.

Put into context

This is where the class takes one piece and puts it into the larger picture. This "context" can work both forwards (into the next unit) and backwards (focusing on the relationship with previously covered material and skill). Students can draw connections between four major texts as a web, have a Socratic Seminar on the relationship between historical periods, or complete a writing assignment predicting how a shift in environment might reshape the factors that they just studied.

Reflect on progress

The National Reading Panel terms it "comprehension monitoring" but teachers tend to call it "assessment." The students need to monitor their comprehension throughout the reading process, but after completing a text they need to assess their overall understanding in light of the reading purpose and essential questions for the unit. They can do this informally in a sketch or freewrite, a bit more formally in a letter to the teacher, or in a more formal context where they set their own goals and score themselves on progress and mastery.

Post-Reading strategies can be collaborative or individual, depending on the purpose established by the teacher. Students can share their responses on a class close-reading (with text projected by an overhead, Smartboard or a Powerpoint), or they can post responses online. With permission from parents, teachers can create a weblog or a website where students can respond not only to the text but to each other (Peyton). Megan Freeman runs a poetry club where students post their own poems, responding to prompts, and other students comment. She makes all students use pseudonyms (or "slam names" as she calls them, much to the students' delight) so that no one can glean any personal information from the postings. In addition to the thrill of publication, students read carefully in order to respond to classmates.

When students research a topic, they must use higher level reading skills to evaluate the usefulness of a particular text. To research effectively, students must be able to judge the relative merit of information as it applies to a specific topic. The more specific the research task, the easier the process by which a student uses or rejects a source.

Research as a teaching tool allows for differentiation in topic, as students explore interests specific to choices within a certain discipline. It also requires students to apply reading strategies of skimming and overviews, using them to evaluate whether or not a resource contains germane information.

Teachers must teach and model the process by which various resources are evaluated, in terms of their application to the project at hand.

First, students have to know where and how to begin. A quick reminder for secondary students is how to utilize the library, the databases, and the Internet as research tools (librarians are a wonderful source for this instruction and guidance).

Key information about research resources:

- **The Internet** contains so much information, but has no obvious filter to separate the legitimate from the questionable.
- **Encyclopedias** focus on the basic information, providing great overviews and starting places but very few details.
- **Biographical resources** – details about the lives of key figures.
- **Newspapers** – topical information related to a specific time and place, but less detail (or objectivity, sometimes) about a particular or complex issue.
- **Scientific reference books** provide the facts and figures.
- **Atlases** contain maps, locations and figures but very few detailed explanations.
- **Libraries and their card catalogs** contain a wealth of resources but students must understand the various sections. I've had students say, "I looked up 'Gender in Elizabethan England' and found nothing so I gave up." With questions as to how to focus their inquiry, this group realized that they could begin with the historical references to the time period and look for gender issues within these books.
- **Guidebooks** – overview, focused on the practical navigation of the place or task.
- **Periodicals** – must be evaluated by type and time period for maximum relevance. The purpose and target audience of a periodical determine the slant and focus of articles that may have the exact same titles.
- **Primary sources** include any first-hand accounts, live interviews, etc.

When students research, they need to know what kind of information to provide in the card catalog or search engine, and what information to prioritize when it's returned.

To evaluate a source and its legitimacy the students need to ask questions of the text, the publisher and the author. This goes against the passive academic policy where students accept

everything that they are told in an academic setting as true and useful. Instead, they must judge the information.

Research SOAPSTone questions

These questions, based on the SOAPSTone reading strategy, can help students evaluate a potential research source for authenticity and usefulness.

SPEAKER   = **Author**

        Whether or not the author has authority in his/her field determines whether or not a student should be skeptical.

OCCASION = **Date of source**

        Especially in science, the age of information is key!

        Origin of source

        Does it come from an entertainment magazine? An elementary school website? A government study?

AUDIENCE = Who was the **intended recipient** of this information?

        The origin will help determine what kind of reader this writer intended. Is the audience general (as in a popular magazine) or scholarly?

PURPOSE = **Author's intended result**

        What does the author want to achieve with this writing? What reaction is he/she hoping to inspire in his/her intended audience?

SUBJECT   = **Focus of information**

        Does the particular focus match the student's purpose for this research? Does the text provide facts and evidence to support the author's viewpoint on the subject?

TONE   = **Author's attitude**

        What is the author's attitude towards this subject? How is the piece biased?

INTERNET RESEARCH

The Internet is its own bundle of contradictions. Students love it, use it constantly, and can be inspired to new heights by its multi-modal possibilities. Or, they can be sucked into its various murky depths to emerge with nothing but some undocumented rehash.

> **Doing research on the Web is like using a library assembled piecemeal by packrats and vandalized nightly.**
>
> **Roger Ebert**

Knowing the institution that supports a website can inform a reader as to the legitimacy of the content. Institutions of higher learning and government study groups fact check their information and have high standards for the authenticity of materials printed on these sites. Students should be familiar with the following two web domains:

.edu

.gov

These domain names tend to add legitimacy to the material printed therein. The SOAPSTone source test still stands because an educational website could have an intended audience of fourth graders, thus its content would not contain the sophistication necessary for a research done by a high school senior. A great example of the shade of difference between legitimacy and parody via the net are these two websites:

www.whitehouse.gov

www.whitehouse.net

Teaching Tools – Using the Internet

School librarians can be such valuable resources for helping students select and use information from the internet (the invaluable Pam Force has helped my teaching of the Internet immeasurably).

- Use a projector and talk students through your own selection process, as you evaluate websites for usefulness and authenticity.

- Model search engine refinements. Show students the difference in results between a very broad topic ("statistics" for example) and one that has been specified ("population statistics" + "Bolivia" + "change over time").

- Direct students to a false website and challenge students to discover and articulate what about this website would not be convincing. Pam Force has gathered many examples– one of the most compelling is the Dog Island site at: http://www.thedogisland.com/index.html.

  This website details a (fake) island where dogs can live alone, and certainly *looks* real!

- Find two websites on the same topic with different biases and have students split into two groups. Each groups uses just one of the websites, but then they compile and compare information in class.

- Project a page from a relevant website and have students close-read it on the board. They should make marks and connections on graphics, links, headings, and other "buried" information as well as comment on the main text.

- Create a scavenger hunt using websites that you have already collected relevant to the topic at hand (so that students are not having to evaluate the usefulness of the websites, but rather are using them to search for information). Whatever topic you need them to research, you include a list of questions that can be answered using the graphics, links and information on these websites.

- Have the students do a "non-paper" research paper, where instead of writing down their own assessment, they choose what they judge to be the very best website on a topic. The student will be the "guide" leading the class through this website as a resource.

- Use or create an instructor-monitored blog for students to share ideas and/or creative works. This makes use of the connectivity aspect of the internet. (Obtain parent permission and don't have students use their full names or post any identifying information).

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT MASTERY

Authentic assessment of reading must reflect the purpose for the reading assignment. Tying assessment to the purpose, which is tied to benchmarks, which are tied to the standards for the class, ensures that the grades reflect progress towards mastery.

> Don't wait until the very end of a unit to assess student mastery! Measure progress as you go (formally or informally) and adjust instruction as needed.

Informal assessment

Not all assessment needs to be a high stakes test. The most prevalent informal assessment would be the energetic classroom discussion, where students take the information from reading and use it to ask questions, challenge assumptions and make connections. Other informal assessments include index cards collected at the end of class, anticipatory sets completed soon after the reading assignment, or pair and share conversations in class.

Traditional assessment

Students apply knowledge in this model. But rather than being quizzed on Level One information from the text that they did not know to prioritize, these assessments should test students on the application of skills articulated in the purpose.

Creative assessment

In this model, students still put the skill and information to use but they demonstrate the mastery in creative venues that can be either student-selected or instructor-chosen. The essence of this assignment is in the clarity of the rubric so students can prioritize. Is the emphasis on the use of color? Or is the emphasis on the display of characterization? Creative assignments tend to be student favorites, especially when a celebration or display of projects is the final step.

Rubrics

These are one of the most useful tools available to instructors, and yet the creation of rubrics can be intimidating. For a traditional assessment the rubric can be built into the structure of the questions, with the short answer instructions and question clarity serving as the rubric. For creative projects, rubrics must reflect the degree of specificity that the students must demonstrate. Rubrics can build in the students' self-assessment to help them master these expectations and reflect on their own work.

Student choice

By allowing students to choose how to demonstrate knowledge differentiation happens naturally, focusing on student strengths. The key to a successful student-choice assessment is the clarity of the rubric. That way, even if students are making movies or writing business letters, they know what elements they need to incorporate to demonstrate mastery of the skills set forth by the teacher. A text can become the catalyst (and the text could be a photo, a graph, an article, etc.) for a project wherein the process is the demonstration of strategy and the product showcases mastery (Heacox). For example, in response to a website (catalyst) students can write, draw, evaluate or model a set of skills in a variety of products (advertisements, editorials, guidebook, picture book, etc.).

Teaching Tools – Creative Assessments

In order to demonstrate that students have synthesized and understood a reading assignment, many engaging options move far beyond the "information only" quiz. These tasks will ensure full engagement and full reading comprehension.

Ask students to:

- Cartoon the main idea.

- Create an interpretive dance/movement about a sequence of events or processes (the Krebs cycle, for example).

- Write a dialogue between two people arguing over the issue.

- Form small groups and create skits based on their own versions of the text with updated dialogue. This works especially well with reading materials that do not apply to the contemporary secondary school very well.

- Script monologues from a perspective not articulated in the text, whether it be the mitochondria, the sine function, or the pawnbroker from *Crime and Punishment*.

- Select a theme song for a particular aspect/character/conclusion in the text, play part of the song for class, then justify why this is the perfect theme song.

- Parody the text at hand. An effective parody demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the original, so this task which students adore also has sound educational value.

- Express opinion and relevance to contemporary issues by having students write a business letter about the topic that they send to a relevant community member.

- Work together to create "Round Robin Writing" where one student begins to answer an opinion question about the text, passes that paper to the right and the next student must work to support the first student's writing. Keep passing, with different instructions ("Now incorporate a piece of textual evidence"), until each paper has been written by at least four students.

- Map the process/plot/character development with clear, sequential steps laid out spatially with relevant illustrations.

- Research "the most interesting aspect" based on student interest and taught to the class by each smaller group.

- Time travel: show how each line or step in a process connects to a previous event, step or theme. Students can make links or connections to show how everything he/she says brings back something that happened before.

- Write a play in which actors can only speak lines from the text at hand. Even if the play does not have anything specific to do with the global warming article, for example, students will engage with the words, images and rhetoric in this text. They can repeat or change the connotation, but they cannot add any new words.

5. SPECIFICS

DIFFERENTIATING READING INSTRUCTION

The most important item supported by research is that to take the "struggling" reader out of sophisticated inquiries and focus on basics does not achieve the desired results and, in fact, can even perpetrate the "struggling reader" label (NCTE).   For English Language Learners, they need to begin from a basis of comprehensible input, then have increased interaction (not less, as often happens when less fluent students are removed from higher level tasks).   The active involvement in reading tasks and strategy deployment offers the most rapid literacy gains for struggling students (Herrell and Jordon). In all scenarios, students need a chance to relate to the subject matter and feel successful; employing these strategies for reading reduces anxiety and student choice builds confidence. Still, not all students will be ready for the post-reading, higher level tasks even with modeling and scaffolding of strategies.

Then the problem arises – what about all the different levels of fluency in the classroom? Some students will naturally self-check and use context to further comprehension. Some students make Level Three connections without any prompting, while other students still struggle to decode the basic information. When the research consistently says that the answer is not to remove less proficient readers to have them perform more simple tasks, the question becomes how to activate strategic reading while addressing different issues for different students.

Classroom Models for Differentiation

Flexible grouping

In this differentiation strategy, students are grouped according to a pre-assessment so that they work with students on a similar step for the task. This kind of grouping must switch with each new skill to be assessed and must tie to consistent assessment. The benefits are that the tasks can be tailored to each group, allowing them to practice the strategies that they need most.

Tiered tasks

These are great for longer segments of time, especially classes on the block schedule. In this model, students have a list of tasks that build off of each other, starting with the most essential and moving into more creative demonstrations. There must be motivation for students to move forward in the tiers to avoid the whole "if you show what you know you have to do more work" problem. The essentials must come first, because students who need more help employing strategies will take much longer at the first tasks and will not complete as many tasks as students who work more quickly.   Have the students turn in what they complete, but grade on a differentiated scale: Everyone who worked diligently to increase fluency and complete thinking tasks receives full credit even if some students finished seven and others only two.   Because these tasks are individual, students will not compare as much.

Stations

Students complete different tasks at each "station" in a set order for a set amount of time. The stations allow students to complete a variety of tasks throughout the class, each for a set amount of time. The groups can be random or flexible based on the goals for the assignments. Each station can engage a different strategy and a different kind of intelligence. For example, in one station students could produce a group timeline based on the text, and at the next station

they must individually write an editorial expressing how the text shaped their own personal opinion.

Creative assessment

When students have a menu of choices they can use to demonstrate mastery, their investment in the project becomes much greater. If the end result of the creative assessment is published or shared, then the internal motivation becomes stronger. A student who posed a consistent discipline problem in my British Literature classroom, often because reading frustrated him and he considered himself a poor student, found his motivation shifting when he chose to turn six speeches from *Twelfth Night* into rap songs. He not only mesmerized the class, he demonstrated a perfect understanding of the complicated tone and dynamics of the text in his hip-hop "translation."

Student-set goals and assessments

If students recognize their own areas that need strategic intervention and track them, the individual gain will be so much more dramatic than if the entire class has one inflexible goal.

One-on-one conferencing

In a classroom that activates student strategies rather than relying on teacher-delivery of information, teachers have the freedom to float and meet with students while students engage in groups or individually with text. That way, each student can conference with the teacher on his or her individual issues with implementing reading strategies.

> Cooperative learning does not mean taking more fluent students and having them "tutor" those who struggle. True cooperative learning allows students to work together in order to complete much larger tasks.

Presenting instructions in a variety of methods allows students who struggle with the listening to use the written instructions as clarification and vice versa.   Knowing the students as individuals can help teachers anticipate potential problem areas. For example, students with Asperger's Syndrome or Autism may have trouble with empathy, analyzing emotional impact/motivation, or Level Three connections. An English Language Learner may be completely fluent in higher level or emotional connections but struggle with vocabulary or syntactic structures. Students with Attention Deficit Disorder may need help employing strategies to stay on task during longer reading assignments; active reading helps, as does being able to doodle during discussions or squeeze a ball during reading tasks.

- The Differentiation Toolbox cited in the "Great Online Resources for Teachers" (Appendix) offers ready-made differentiated lesson plans and great advice for differentiating in content area classrooms.

TEACHING AND USING POETRY IN CONTENT AREA CLASSROOMS

Although poetry can seem like the least useful form of reading available to students, especially in classrooms other than English Literature, its unique presentation of information

allows students to process information in creative ways that can lead to classroom revelations. Poems written by Phyllis Wheatley, for example, illuminate a contradiction in the slave-holding world, and the cultural significance of poetry from other cultures helps students connect to the people of these cultures. The meter and rhythm of poetry is mathematical expression, used also in music to create the particular balance. Writing poetry, even about the process of oxidation, allows students to process a reading topic creatively and leads to retention of the information.

Poems can clarify what takes prose much longer, through a glimpse, rather than through an extended study. Students can respond passionately to poetry, but they also can be completely intimidated by the strangeness of the lines of words without the comforting structure of grammatical straightforwardness. But the strange shape of poetry is exactly the point.

Teaching Example: Ezra Pound

Just as tone, purpose and organization make meaning in other forms, poetry uses these with the addition of form. The form of poems shapes their content and always has a purpose. For his short piece "In a Station of the Metro," Ezra Pound initially wrote a much longer poem, and then in 1945 he scrapped the longer version and created this:

In a Station of the Metro
The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

Here reading all the words takes on a whole new importance. Without the title, the connection between the human images in the first line and the natural ones in the second would not have an obvious connection. I tell the students that they need to read the poem in order to "picture it" to take the imagery and understand what vision Pound creates for his reader. I then ask them to draw before we close-read the poem as a class. I tell the students that we will make at least 17 close-reading annotations on this poem. Initially, they scoff. "But it's only two lines long!" Students can draw this imagery and discuss the contrast between the metro and the natural world used to illustrate the vision. Which parts are literal and which are figurative based on the title? The key question to the students, once all words have been defined and imagery discussed: Why is this poem so short? Ezra Pound wrote a much longer poem first, but then decided that this one captured the essence.

Students who initially breeze through these words find themselves struggling, then reading deeply. The scene he describes is short, temporary and as abstract as petals falling onto a wet branch. As a historical perspective on a modernizing, increasingly industrial world, and as a response, poems can move beyond the Level One information and vocabulary and add to the richness of student creativity. Great activities for new vocabulary include taking the words and using them to write poems, expressing complex sequences in a well-organized poem, and using more humorous mnemonic poetry to help students memorize longer sequences of terms. In World Language classes, reading poetry activates a higher level thinking about the verb tenses and vocabulary choices, while student-created poetry allows students to utilize the skills and vocabulary for their own expressive purpose. This way poetry becomes a mode of reciprocal expression, used to reflect higher level thinking about text and used to retain that knowledge.

Writing and reading poetry allows students a less linear way of processing language and reading meaning. When students read the words but not the form, poetry forces them to consider how the words are put together and what their rhythms are. No one can adequately analyze "In a Station at the Metro" without referencing its brevity, a flash of words that represents a flash of time. In history classes the way primary source documents are put together, or the diction of an

editorial about a controversial scientific discovery, can be the key to comprehending these texts. Students think poetry allows them out of the box, but really poetry asks students to consider the architecture of the box. In looking at not just what the words say but how they are put together, they gain a deeper understanding and more fluency, not just with poetry, but with any text.

Teaching Example: Sylvia Plath

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
Whatever I see, I swallow immediately.
Just as it is, unmitigated by love or dislike
I am not cruel, only truthful –
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me.
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

Have students describe the narrator of this poem. In a science class students could analyze which scientific process the poem seems to describe. After they attempt to describe how this narrative is characterized, add another layer of meaning: the title.

This poem is entitled, "The Mirror," which explains so much of its imagery. If students don't read the title, they miss so much depth.

TEACHING THE ANATOMY OF A TEXTBOOK

How many times have teachers fielded questions from students about "Where does chapter four start?" or "What's the definition of an 'ion'?" Ensuring that students know how to navigate the resources within a textbook not only eliminates these (annoying) persistent questions, it also gives students a great resource for high school and college. A textbook is not a linear reading experience or necessarily an intuitive one, but instead a resource to be used for many different purposes and one that needs to be navigated. Whether a classroom uses an AP Bio textbook or a collection of short stories, students need help making the most of it. Students in middle school classes don't know how to find a particular chapter, and high school students often skip "the picture" even though it may illustrate essential math or science concepts.

But how to teach it?

Just as the best anatomy courses rely not on a series of definitions but on dissection, a great introduction to the anatomy of a textbook requires students to dive in and see how it is put together (without a scalpel, of course). The same active investigations that enliven a science lab make a textbook a tool rather than a passive pattern to be followed (Barton and Jordan). Despite the various resources embedded within a textbook (headings, glossaries, visuals) many students have no idea how to differentiate between types of information, or how to apply critical thinking skills to this information.

Model the navigation of an unfamiliar chapter. Read the title out loud and brainstorm with students how this connects to previous units and existing knowledge. Use essential questions (found at the beginning of chapters in many textbooks) or review questions (at the end of a chapter) to get an overview of the material. Ask students what they notice about how this book presents information. They should notice the illustrations, the captions, the headings, the way it's divided, the use of bold, the use of italics, the information set off in the margins, etc. For each item they notice, write it on the board and then ask them to return to the chapter and write WHY the textbook uses each of these modes of presenting information. For example, often **boldface** is used to highlight new vocabulary, the kind that students need to make sure they have in their notes.

Students must recognize organizational patterns and the reasons for the patterns. Does the textbook present works of literature chronologically? Do the scientific explorations start with systems and work their way down to the individual components? Do the mathematical skills build sequentially?

Textbook Tip

Use a scavenger hunt or a similar activity where students have to use the various parts of the textbook to answer various questions. Working in groups or individually, they must figure out how to search, define, generalize and get specific information using this resource. Making it a game makes it fun.

Example RUBRIC assessing students' close-reading and understanding of a text (student chosen poem, in this case). This poetry project includes a written illustration of the poem, a close-reading annotation, a creative emulation, then a written response explaining how the poet uses poetic techniques in order to make meaning.

PEER EVALUATION AND GRADING RUBRIC

Name: **Peer Responder Name:**

	PEER RESPONDER	SELF-EVAL.	INSTRUCTOR
ORGANIZATION			
Does the paper have an engaging title?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Exciting, compelling grabber?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Paragraph one ends with thesis?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Thesis provides specific information?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Topic sentences supports thesis?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Conc. begins with specific wrap-up?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Conc. provides further information?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Paper ends with broader implications?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
IDEAS AND CONTENT			
Writer engages deeply with poem?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Writer uses poem's words/images?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Paragraph one ends with thesis?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Writer proves thesis?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Writer understands text clearly?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
All paragraphs stay on topic?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
CONVENTIONS			
All sentences are grammatically correct?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
VOICE			
Writer has clear, strong opinion?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Writer uses 3rd person academic voice?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
WORD CHOICE			
Writer employs a variety of words?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Writer names specific literary techniques?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
EMULATION			
Emulation shows knowledge of original?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Emulation emulates without being a copy?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
ILLUSTRATION			
Illustration is thoughtful and well-done?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Illustration addresses poem?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
CLOSE-READING			
Includes SOAPSTone?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Has 15+ observations?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

Example PROMPT for a student-choice project requires close-reading of a text (in this case, a Shakespearean speech). The prompt requires all students to complete the same written portion, then students may select a presentation style to teach classmates.

CLOSE-READING PROJECT

YOUR NAME:

YOUR PASSAGE (ACT, SCENE, LINE):

YOUR IDEA FOR A TEACHING TOOL:

Essential Question: How can you close-read a Shakespearean speech, incorporate your vast knowledge accrued over the course of the year, and use both to educate others?

Prompt For Written Section: First Part of Project

Choose a speech of at least 10 lines. First, you need to close-read your speech making at least 17 observations on all Three Levels of Information. Be sure to look up every word that you don't know because you will be defining them all for the class. Then, you need to sketch the visuals that the speech inspires for you. Next, you will translate the speech into your own words so that you really know what is being said. Then, you will write a critical paragraph (which includes textual evidence – words and phrases from the speech) explaining why this speech is important to the play as a whole. Consider characterization, irony, plot, and overall tone for the play when you analyze why the speech is important to the play as a whole.

Prompt for Teaching Tool: Second Part of Project

The final (and most wonderful) part of this project is you will **teach your classmates!** You will present this text and your findings as to its importance to the play as a whole, but you need to decide how best to present the information. You can be creative and decide to:

- Memorize the speech and perform it.

- Film a version of the speech, with choices of setting, sound and light to enhance meaning.

- Project the speech and close-read it for the class.

- Devise a game to help classmates understand the speech and character.

- Create a work of art that captures the deeper meaning of the speech.

You are brilliant, amazing and are at the point where you should teach others. Become an expert and teach us!

Use your talents! Create a movie, interactive website, diorama with worksheet, PowerPoint presentation, illustrated Choose-Your-Own-Adventure "book," board game, etc.

Example SCAVENGER HUNT for an exploration of the Internet requires students to navigate and use teacher-selected internet sites, using reading strategies to answer the questions posed. In this task, students will work both individually and in small groups in order to differentiate for reading skill.

MEDIEVAL ENGLAND SCAVENGER HUNT

Directions: Visit each website in order to explore individually and as a group (follow instructions). Record all your answers on individual sheets, but record the names of the groupmates that helped you find the Group Task answers. Remember: The answers for each question can be found on the website *above* the question. Search strategically!

Individual Task
Go to http://www.cmi-lmi.com/kingdom.html.
1. Each person must find out what his/her profession would have been in Medieval England. Describe the profession and write one sentence explaining why you would like or dislike this profession.

Group Tasks – Answer the following questions.
Go to: http://www.wsu.edu:8001/~dee/MA/ENGLAND.HTM.
2. What governmental system did the Norman kings import?
3. What powers did the Magna Carta take from the king?

Go to: http://library.thinkquest.org/04oct/01895/.
4. Draw a pyramid of the social hierarchy of medieval England (most powerful on top). Be detailed.

Go to: http://www.luminarium.org/medlit/chaucer.htm.
5. Name at least three jobs Geoffrey Chaucer had in his life, not including writer.
6. What are two other works Chaucer wrote?

Go to: http://www.librarius.com/.
7. What type of story is *The Canterbury Tales*?
   A: Chronological   B: Frame   C: Narrative   D: Way too long

Go to http://www.pbs.org/mythsandheroes/myths_four_arthur.html.
8. Name four archetypes found in the King Arthur stories.

Go to http://www.camelotintl.com/village/street.html.
9. How could a woman own property in Medieval England?

Individual Task
Go to http://www.csis.pace.edu/grendel/projs2c/ch1.html.
10. Read about the life of Geoffrey Chaucer until you feel confident enough to make a cartoon strip (at least six boxes) showing Chaucer at his most heroic (you may use a bit of poetic license here, but also showcase your knowledge). Each person in your group makes his or her own cartoon.

APPENDIX

EXAMPLE RUBRICS AND PROMPT FOR CLASSROOM READING INSTRUCTION

Example TEACHING RUBRIC to help teachers evaluate the way they use reading in their own classrooms, and to help administrators improve reading instruction schoolwide.

Rubric for Evaluation of Reading Instruction

1. Prereading

Rating of Performance

4	3	2	1
Exemplary level of development and implementation	Fully functioning and operational level of development and implementation	Limited development or partial implementation	Little or no development and implementation
Reading purpose is clear and accessible with expectations of furthering learning goals.	Reading purpose is established before reading begins.	Reading purpose has been suggested but is not clearly identified for students.	Reading assignment begins without a student understanding of ultimate learning goal.
Reading purpose aligns with essential learning targets/questions and the content standards.	Reading purpose fits with essential learning targets/questions and the content standards.	Reading purpose fits somewhat with essential learning targets/questions and the content standards.	Reading purpose has no clear relationship to essential learning targets/questions and/or content standards.
Vocabulary, necessary skills and concepts have been pre-taught, practiced and assessed (usually informally) to help students with reading text.	Vocabulary, necessary skills and concepts have been pre-taught.	Some but not all vocabulary, necessary skills and concepts have been pre-taught.	Vocabulary, necessary skills and concepts have not been addressed at all.
Reading strategies that students will employ have been taught, modeled and practiced.	Reading strategies that students will employ have been taught and modeled.	Reading strategies are suggested but not clearly taught or modeled.	No reading strategies have been taught, modeled or practiced for this task.
Question types, note form or graphic organizer has been provided and modeled for students to use tracking thinking.	Question types, note form or graphic organizer has been provided for students to use tracking thinking.	Question types, note form or graphic organizer has been suggested but not clearly taught or modeled.	No question types, note form or graphic organizer has been provided and modeled for students to use to track thinking.
Pre-existing student knowledge of text and concepts has been activated with classroom activities and clearly connected to reading task.	Pre-existing student knowledge of text and concepts has been activated with classroom activities.	Some pre-existing student knowledge of text and concepts has been activated with classroom activities.	Students do not know how their pre-existing knowledge of text and concepts relates to the reading task at all.

2. Active Reading

Rating of Performance

4 Exemplary level of development and implementation	3 Fully functioning and operational level of development and implementation	2 Limited development or partial implementation	1 Little or no development and implementation
Students consistently refer to reading purpose throughout reading and use to adjust/measure progress.	Students refer to reading purpose throughout reading and may use to adjust/measure progress.	Students occasionally refer to reading purpose.	Students do not refer to (or in some cases do not know) reading purpose.
Students successfully use writing (graphic organizers, notes, annotation, written questions, creative reflection) to track thinking process through text to help them achieve reading purpose, and use this writing in post-reading tasks.	Students successfully use writing (graphic organizers, notes, annotation, written questions, creative reflection) to track thinking process through text and to help them achieve reading purpose.	Students inconsistently use writing (graphic organizers, notes, annotation, written questions, creative reflection) to track thinking process through text and to help them achieve reading purpose.	Students read without tracking their thinking process or doing any writing to help them achieve reading purpose.
Students consistently use writing, classroom activities, and reading purpose to self-assess and correct misconceptions about the text.	Students use writing, classroom activities, and reading purpose to self-assess and correct misconceptions about the text.	Students occasionally use writing, classroom activities, and reading purpose to self-assess and correct misconceptions about the text.	If students have misconceptions about the text, they do not have the skills or opportunities to correct them.
Required reading strategies ensure that students understand the tone and author's purpose in a text, as assessed by teacher.	Required reading strategies ensure that students understand the tone and author's purpose in a text.	Suggested reading strategies may help students understand the tone and author's purpose in a text.	No reading strategies are employed.
Students ask and answer all Three Levels of questions of the text.	Students ask or answer all Three Levels of questions of the text.	Students answer questions, but on just one or two of the Three Levels.	Students do not ask or answer questions in relation to the text.
Student thinking and understanding are assessed during the reading process and instruction/strategies are adjusted accordingly with attention to the individual needs.	Student thinking and understanding are assessed during the reading process and instruction/strategies are adjusted accordingly for the class.	Some aspects of student thinking and understanding are assessed during the reading process.	The only assessment comes long after the task is complete and penalizes students who may have struggled.

3. Post-Reading Activities

Rating of Performance

4 Exemplary level of development and implementation	3 Fully functioning and operational level of development and implementation	2 Limited development or partial implementation	1 Little or no development and implementation
Students document their return to reading purpose to check that learning goals have been achieved.	Students return to reading purpose to check that learning goals have been achieved.	Students occasionally return to reading purpose to check that learning goals have been achieved.	Students do not use a reading purpose and do not connect reading to learning goals.
Students consistently use textual evidence to correct misunderstandings and to complete post-reading tasks.	Students consistently use textual evidence to correct misunderstandings and sometimes to complete post-reading tasks.	Students occasionally use textual evidence to correct misunderstandings and to complete post-reading tasks.	Students do not return to the text after the initial reading.
Post reading tasks require students to make several connections: text with outside world, text with previous unit of study and text with upcoming content.	Post-reading tasks encourage students to make several connections: text with outside world, text with previous unit of study and text with upcoming content.	Post-reading tasks sometimes encourage students to make connections: text with outside world, text with previous unit of study and text with upcoming content.	Students do not connect text to other texts or concepts in the class or world.
Students always evaluate the text using higher level thinking tasks to place work in a larger context, and formulate their own opinions and defend them with evidence.	Students often evaluate the text using higher level thinking tasks to place work in a larger context, and formulate their own opinions and defend them with evidence.	Students formulate their own opinions about the text, but do not have to defend them.	Students take the text at face value and do not critique it or formulate their own opinions, but parrot the ones provided to them.
Reading comprehension is assessed in a way that requires the ongoing use of text and higher level thinking.	Reading comprehension is assessed in a way that encourages the ongoing use of text and higher level thinking.	Reading comprehension is assessed and requires Level One and Level Two thinking.	Reading comprehension is either not assessed or assessed only at Level One comprehension.

GREAT ONLINE RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

Colorado Virtual Library

This site, linked through the Colorado Department of Education, can search all the libraries in the state, facilitate interlibrary loans, and has great materials for Colorado history.

http://www.coloradovirtuallibrary.org/

CMAP Tools Program

This sophisticated Institute for Human and Machine Cognition (IHMC) website shares information and templates for cross-curricular concept maps. With its programs, visuals, models and tools this site provides start to finish help for creating unique reading graphic organizers for any particular class.

http://cmap.ihmc.us

Differentiation Toolbox

This website provides a wealth of resources (assessments, choice sheets, chat forums) to help teachers customize their content, and reading lessons to differentiate for different learners at different levels in the same classroom.

http://people.virginia.edu/%7Emws6u/diff/index.htm

Eduplace

This resource sponsored by Houghten Mifflin has many free, downloadable graphic organizers that support reading (maps, charts, diagrams) and even has Spanish versions.

http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/

Learning Space

This teacher-created site provides lots of suggestions and tools for using technology in the classroom to further reading skills and curricular mastery.

http://www.learningspace.org

Indiana University Research Tutorial

This great tool, put together by Indiana University, has a tutorial for evaluating research sources and advice for focusing topics, citing sources, etc.

http://www.indiana.edu/%7Elibinstr/Tutorial/

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

This great organization "Linking Research to Practice" has been instrumental in some of the reading and writing research that has changed the face of current educational practice, including the "6 Traits" model of reading and writing. They are selling

educational products, but all the research links go to free articles about cutting edge practices.

http://www.nwrel.org

Reading Quest: Reading Comprehension Activities for Social Studies Teachers

This site has explanations and forms for hundreds of activities to help students comprehend and evaluate content area reading. They also have many reprintable note-taking forms and graphics organizers that are free for classroom use.

http://www.readingquest.org/strat/

Read Write Think

This offshoot of the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association focuses on lesson plans and resources for any teacher using reading in the classroom. They have interactive online tools to use with students ("Fact fragment frenzy," for example, is a game where students must find facts in a non-fiction text). These resources include standards based lessons, interactive timelines and weblinks to other reading sites.

http://www.readwritethink.org

University of Connecticut Literacy Topics Homepage

This website is a clearinghouse of academic topics and resources surrounding literacy.

http://www.literacy.uconn.edu

Rubistar

This website allows teachers to create rubrics, and (even better!) to see rubrics created by other teachers for a whole variety of projects and assignments in different subject areas.

http://www.rubistar.4teachers.org

The National Institute for Literacy

This national organization's site provides links to workshops, research and programs to address literacy across grade levels.

http://nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/adolescence

Ed Helper

The "Teacher's Resources" section contains printable graphic organizers in many different categories appropriate for many grade levels.   They have quick level-appropriate reading comprehension passage with attached questions for quick assessment or practice in the classroom.

http://www.edhelper.com

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