Teach Students to Identify and Use the Text's Organizational Structure to Comprehend, Learn, and Remember Content

Purpose

This document provides educators with information about a high-leverage, evidence-based practice recommended in the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) practice guide, Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade.[1]

Introduction

Teaching students to identify and use the text's organizational structure to comprehend, learn, and remember content is an evidence-based practice to help educators increase student achievement in critical foundational skills for early readers. Page 17 of the practice guide states:

> The panel believes that students comprehend and remember content better when they are taught to recognize the structure of a text because it can help them to extract and construct meaning while reading…Students can begin to develop a sense of structure as early as kindergarten. Although instruction at that stage is typically based on narrative text, the panel believes that students in the early grades should also be exposed to informational text because its structure can build their understanding and recall of key points…The idea is to prepare students to draw on what they know about structure to help them understand more complex texts.

For more information about this practice guide, see the AOE's Annotated Guide, as well as Resources for Educators on the WWC (including videos and instructional rubrics).

ESSA Level of Evidence

ESSA levels of evidence are the result of a synthesis of current evidence-based research. Below is the level of evidence for this recommendation:

- **Tier 3 – Promising (Moderate Evidence)**

See the full practice guide for more information about specific studies. For more information about levels of evidence, see the REL document ESSA Tiers of Evidence: What You Need to Know.

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[1] What Works Clearinghouse/IES Practice Guides provide recommendations for educators of evidence-based practices to improve student outcomes. WWC/IES Practice Guides were developed by a panel of literacy experts based on reviews of research, practitioner experiences, and expert opinions.

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information, please contact:

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How to Carry Out the Recommendation

Listed below are ways [to teach students to identify and use the text's organizational structure to comprehend, learn, and remember content](#). See the pages of the guide referenced next to each instructional practice to find more specific implementation strategies.

- Explain how to identify and connect the parts of narrative texts (18-19).
- Provide instruction on common structures of informational texts (19-21).

Connections to Literacy Essential Practices

[Literacy Essentials](#) provide evidence- and research-based approaches educators can use to support early literacy. This resource was introduced to Vermont through work done with [Dr. Nell Duke](#) and includes classroom practices teachers can use daily to implement the recommendations in the WWC practice guides. See the page number referenced next to each Essential Practice to find more specific implementation strategies.

Literacy Essential Practices for Prekindergarten

- **Essential Practice #1:** Intentional use of literacy artifacts in dramatic play and throughout the learning environment (3)
- **Essential Practice #2:** Read aloud with reference to print (3)
- **Essential Practice #9:** Ongoing observation and other forms of assessment of children's language and literacy development that informs their education (7)

Literacy Essential Practices for Grades K-3

- **Essential Practice #2:** Read-alouds of age-appropriate books and other materials, print or digital, including culturally relevant texts (3)
- **Essential Practice #3:** Small group and individual instruction, using a variety of grouping strategies, most often with flexible groups formed and instruction targeted to (i.e., differentiated by) children's observed and assessed needs in specific aspects of literacy, including both writing and reading development (and therefore not by perceived general "ability" or "level") (4)
- **Essential Practice #9:** Ongoing observation and other forms of assessment of children's language and literacy development that informs their education (7)

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