

DOINGWHATWORKS



Presentation

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Interactive Strategies for Teaching Nonfiction Text Structure

Garfield Elementary School • November 2010

Topic: Improving K-3 Reading Comprehension
Practice: Focus on Text Structure

Highlights

- Dawn Chappelle, a third- and fourth-grade teacher at Garfield Elementary, demonstrates how she helps students understand the organizational structure of nonfiction text.
- Students first learn appropriate signal words and use graphic organizers for low-level compare-and-contrast text before completing activities that use text that is at their instructional levels.
- Chappelle offers students the opportunity to work in partners to help them be better involved in the activity. Various cooperative learning strategies are used, such as think-pair-share and partner work in which students alternate generating written responses.

About the Site

Garfield Elementary School

Garden City, Kansas

Demographics

81% Hispanic

13% White

4% Other

2% Black

83% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

63% English Language Learners

12% Special Education

Garfield Elementary's engaging and interactive culture is an important component in meeting the individual needs of its high migrant and English language learner student population. At each grade level, staff work to incorporate reading, writing, speaking, and listening into lessons.

- Cooperative learning strategies are used to facilitate student discussion around texts.
- Students learn to identify and implement appropriate metacognitive and reading comprehension strategies for selected texts.
- Teachers model reading comprehension strategies using puppets and props.
- The reading coach works one-on-one with teachers to provide feedback on instruction and to model effective practices.

Full Transcript

Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome to Interactive Strategies for Teaching Nonfiction Text Structure.

Slide 2: Introducing Dawn Chappelle

Hi, my name is Dawn Chappelle. I teach third and fourth graders at Garfield Elementary School in Garden City, Kansas.

Slide 3: Introducing the idea

The objective of the lesson today is to introduce the idea that nonfiction text has a special organization. This gets students exposed to vocabulary and ideas associated with each text structure, which will essentially improve their comprehension of nonfiction text.

Slide 4: Identifying structures

What I do to help students identify and use the text organizational structure is to introduce the signal words and give them graphic organizers for new text structures. I use low-level text at first so that they are able to focus on the structure instead of the actual comprehension, and then we are able to work up to activities that use text that is actually at their instructional levels.

Slide 5: Compare and contrast

Today I am introducing students to the compare-and-contrast text structure. Prior to today's lessons I had students write down the signal words, the graphic organizer, and the definition for *compare and contrast*. This would allow us to begin today's lesson by searching for the signal words in an example passage and begin practicing using the graphic organizer a little bit faster.

Slide 6: Beginning the lesson

To begin the lesson I read aloud a passage about chimpanzees, and that passage uses the text structure compare and contrast. This passage is shown on a SMART Board and students are instructed to follow along as I read it out loud. Then they come forward to circle the signal words that identify the compare-and-contrast text structure. And after we agree that all of the circled words are on the list of signal words, students are given instructions for the next activity.

Slide 7: Working with partners

I engage students to be able to practice the strategy by getting to work with a partner; they look for signal words together. They work on recording the information in an appropriate graphic organizer and they are doing that with a partner, so it helps them to be better involved in the activity.

Slide 8: Think-pair-share

For today's lesson some of the cooperative learning strategies are a think-pair-share, they get to talk with their shoulder partner before they share out with the class. Students are working cooperatively using red and blue colored pencils to show each student's work in the project. This is a Kagan Cooperative Learning Strategy called Rally Table. They take turns writing and using different colors so I can see that the work is being shared by the partner group and that if there are any misconceptions, it shows me who needs more help with this concept.

Slide 9: Independent work

During the independent time I am monitoring their work by moving around the classroom so I can clarify questions and misunderstandings. After about ten minutes of work time I give the students a two-minute warning and ask them to finish their work. The pages are then collected so I can determine the next step in the series of lessons.

Slide 10: Incorporating learned structures

The final activity incorporates the two text structures that they have learned up to this point. Each student is given a card with a passage, definition, or graphic organizer that is related to either the sequence or compare-and-contrast text structure. Students first mix and pass their cards until I say, “Freeze.” When I say, “Freeze,” they stop and read their card and decide which corner they will go to. When I say, “Go to your corner,” they go to the side of the room that has the sequence, or compare-and-contrast poster, depending on what their card says. When they get to their corner they check each other’s cards, and I am also moving around to be sure that answers are correct. When we repeat this process by passing the cards, freezing, and going to a new corner. As we learn more text structures, I’ll be adding more cards that are related to the newly learned structures.

Slide 11: Review

When we do the next text structure we will also review the signal words and graphic organizers that we used for previously learned text structures, so we are going to be building on the text structures as we move on to the remaining three that we haven’t done yet. And so when we do the description text structure we will also be reviewing sequence, and compare and contrast.

Slide 12: Meeting student needs

Students need to learn to identify some of these common structures of informational text because it will help their understanding of nonfiction and it will help with their writing and help them better comprehend the text by organizing their thinking.

Slide 13: Learn more

To learn more about Interactive Strategies for Teaching Nonfiction Text Structure, please explore the additional resources on the Doing What Works website.