

Mini-unit/Lesson Plan(s)_Part A

Lesson Plan Title: Comprehension Lesson

Concept / Topic To Teach: Comprehension Monitoring Strategies/BDAs

Comprehension is when connections are made between new concepts or ideas to previously learned information. Being able to decode words and read fluently is of no value unless students truly understand the meaning of key words within text. How actively engaged a student becomes involved in the reading and how much he/she retains is a more valid means of measuring comprehension. The ability to draw on past experience is crucial when accessing new and unfamiliar material. Thus, providing background information or accessing prior knowledge is critical for comprehending.

Standards Addressed: LA -1.1.10.2, LA - 1.1.10.3

LA - 1.1.3.8, LA - 1.1.6.7

General Goal(s): Introduce, model, and evaluate Before, During, and After Reading Strategies to monitor comprehension and increase active involvement between students and text.

Specific Objectives:

1. Students will access prior knowledge/provide background information
2. Students will highlight important terms/vocabulary
3. Students will display active involvement with text
4. Students will apply comprehension monitoring strategies

Anticipatory Set (Lead-In):

Activating Prior Knowledge

Pre-reading/To establish purpose, activate background, sustain motivation, and provide direction.

Focus Event/Introduction

Let's eat! One thing all people have in common is eating. However, people from different cultures around the world have very different styles of eating. Europeans and people from North and South America share the custom of using metal utensils (forks, spoons, knives) when eating. In India and Ethiopia, people often eat with their hands. They use soft, flat bread for picking up more slippery items of food. In eastern Asia, people use chopsticks and their main food is rice.

Step-By-Step Procedures:

Do Now/Think Pair Share Strategies for Activating and Developing Prior Knowledge

1. Teacher: Class I want to introduce you to a strategy that will assist you in the comprehension of themes/concepts that will be explored in our unit dealing with cultural differences and stereotypes. This strategy, called a Do Now, encourages writing to learn.

Directions:

- A) Teacher generates topic for consideration
- B) Supplies/paper, pen or pencil
- C) Quickly write down thoughts or ideas related to topic
- D) Disregard spelling, punctuation, or grammar rules

Today's topic: I want you to search your memory for an experience, either positive or negative, in which you felt different from the people around you.

Examples...

New School/Grade/Class	Academic Struggle
Remarriage/Step Family	Age/Gender
Extracurricular Activity	Peer Pressure

2. When adequate time is given for the Do Now, allow students to pair and share experiences.
3. After partner shares, encourage whole class discussion through student volunteer or teacher share.

Lesson 2/Creating Story Impressions

Story Chain

1. Review/refer back to yesterday's lesson-Do Now
2. Today we are going to make predictions about the story "The All American Slurp" using a strategy called story chaining.
3. Using an overhead/transparency display story chain clues.
4. Read clues aloud together and explain how arrows link one clue to another in a logical order.
5. Your job is to write your own version of the story using the clues and, after reading, compare what you wrote with the actual story.
6. Demonstrate how to write a story prediction by brainstorming story ideas and creating a class-composed version linking all of the clues.

The All-American Slurp

Story Chain

Story Guess

Emigrated ➡ Neighbors ➡ Dinner party ➡ Raw celery ➡ Zip ➡ Mortified ➡ Etiquette ➡ Americanized ➡ Jeans ➡ Chinese food ➡ Chopsticks ➡ Dairy Queen ➡ Chocolate ➡ Milkshakes ➡ Slurp	
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Lesson 3/Active Reading
Think Aloud

Reading Tip/Motivation

Similarities and differences “The All-American Slurp” describes many similarities and differences between Chinese and American culture. The narrator actually states some comparisons. Others are hinted at through incidents and dialogue in the story. As you read “The All-American Slurp,” keep a running list of the similarities and differences between Chinese and American culture.

1. Before reading, explain that this story comes from an anthology, which guides the reader by underlining troublesome vocabulary, and provides footnoted definitions.
2. Teacher will model Glossing method with the use of an overhead projector/transparency of the literature by underlining the title, pointing out significant vocabulary and definitions, making predictions, sharing analogies, and highlighting similarities and differences in Chinese and American culture.
3. Students will be encouraged to use this method throughout the reading/each student will be provided with a copy of the literature for this exercise.
4. When reading is complete students will develop a Venn diagram to analyze the similarities and differences in Chinese and American culture.

Chinese American

A Venn diagram template consisting of two overlapping circles. Each circle is divided into two sections by a vertical line, creating four distinct areas for text. The circles overlap in the center, creating a shared area.

Similarities

Closure (Reflect Anticipatory Set):

Lesson 4/Comprehension Check

Teacher Observation

1. Class will discuss similarities and differences between Chinese and American culture, supplementary information may be added to Venn diagram if necessary.
2. Teacher will use whiteboard/dry erase markers to display cultural similarities and differences.

Plan For Independent Practice:

Homework

Students will evaluate their story chain predictions by comparing clue information extracted from the text with story versions created during Lesson 2 using a Venn Diagram.

Assessment Based On Objectives:

Question Frames

Levels of comprehension/Literal, Interpretive, Inferential, Evaluative

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Recall: | Which raw vegetable did the Chinese guests enjoy at the Gleason's dinner party? |
| Compare/Contrast: | How did your story chain prediction compare to what the story was actually about? |
| Analysis: | What effect did the Lin's lack of western etiquette have on the narrator? |
| Inference: | Was Mrs. Lin's approach to learning the English language Effective? |
| Evaluation: | The narrator indicates she thinks that it is an important goal to become Americanized. Do you think this should be an important goal for people who move to the United States from other countries? Support you answer. |

Adaptations (For Students With Learning Disabilities):

1. Support staff/peer scribe for Do Now
2. Copy of “All American Slurp” for text rendering
3. Scribe for Story Chain activity/tape recorder
4. Graphic organizers/Modern Venn Diagram, Story Chain
5. Oral responses to Question Frame/support staff or teacher

Required Materials:

1. Copy of “All American Slurp” for text rendering
2. Graphic organizers/Story Chain, Modern Venn Diagram
3. Transparencies/overhead
4. Whiteboard/dry erase markers
5. Paper/pen or pencil

Reflection_Part B

Our school is committed to the evolution of a middle school approach to instruction, which involves developing cross-curricular lessons/units. Literacy Studies has a flexible curriculum that easily adapts to incorporate the content areas of study. Teaming allows for congruent teaching of skills and concepts. When selecting novels for literature circles or trade books for whole class instruction it is of the utmost importance that materials chosen connect students to information being taught in core classes.

When assessing prior knowledge it is invaluable to know what concepts are being introduced within the core classes in order to build on classroom experiences for the enhancement of comprehension. This unit plan was created through the collaboration of content, special education, and reading teachers to provide students with the background knowledge necessary to understand the important cultural information embedded within the elements of the story and for future Asian studies in geography class.

The literature chosen to aid in the creation of this comprehension lesson is a short story by Lensy Namioka, called The All American Slurp. I used this material to elicit discussion on cultural differences to prepare students for the reading of Asian themed novels. Before understanding the importance of developing background knowledge and pre-teaching vocabulary to enhance comprehension I often led loosely organized literature discussions. Changing the structure of these lessons increased the quality of discussion as well as the level of individual participation.

Establishing a purpose for learning through activities such as the “Quick Write” assists in the process of activating and developing prior knowledge for deeper understanding of textual material. The “Quick Write” for The All American Slurp required students to search their memories for an experience, either positive or negative, in which they felt different from the people around them. Before students participated in their “Quick Write” I modeled the strategy by sharing my personal experience with cultural difference and stereotypes. This made it easier for students to record their own experiences and later share in class discussion. The discussion generated through this activity was incredibly valuable for developing background knowledge for our literature unit. Students were so enthusiastic about sharing their stories that it took almost two class periods to get through the focus lesson.

The **second lesson** taught in this unit involved creating a story impression utilizing the Story Chain strategy. The Story Chain is comprised of essential vocabulary words that, when linked together; provide the reader with an overview of the story plot. This activity was a bit more challenging for our struggling learners even after generating a class-composed version to model the

strategy. Although students were reassured that their predictions would not be evaluated by how close their impressions were to the actual story the fear of being incorrect can debilitate student achievement. Students were instructed to hold questions for ten minutes in an attempt to force them to work through their anxieties. This was a painful directive for many because sixth graders seem to ask questions as a stall tactic.

The **third lesson** in this unit involved distinguishing similarities and differences between Chinese and American culture. Students were instructed to keep a running list of the similarities and differences between Chinese and American culture. They were also shown the Think Aloud method which they were expected to utilize as their active reading strategy for “The All American Slurp.” I was impressed by how many students were able to employ this strategy with minimal support. After the reading was completed students were able to highlight any missed similarities and differences through a guided class discussion.

The **fourth lesson** involved creating a Venn diagram to visually display similarities and differences between the two cultures. It was evident that graphic organizers had been utilized in the primary grades because students had little difficulty placing information in the correct spheres. After the diagram was completed students were given time to work on a Question Frames assignment designed as an evaluation tool for comprehension. Students were instructed to answer the questions without “look backs” for a more accurate measure of comprehension. Modifications for this assessment were limited to scribing, restating questions, and the provision of quiet work areas for students with attention concerns. This work is still being processed but there are some interesting trends beginning to surface. Although faulty comprehension is not an easy weakness to repair, critical reading strategies are being introduced and exercised on a daily basis.

Overall the unit went exceeding well with the exception of the Story Chain activity. Students did not easily adapt to the new rule of working for a set amount of time without asking questions. Weaning sixth graders off teacher dependency is a complicated task. Supporting students through the metacognitive process and encouraging them to trust in their abilities takes an enormous amount of patience and consistency.

This unit confirms my belief that direct instruction of critical reading skills and active reading strategies need to be an integral part of the core curriculum. Reading to learn is still a fairly new concept for students entering secondary school. Employing BDA (before, during, after) reading strategies has been proven to increase motivation to read. Assessing background knowledge, setting a purpose for reading, and pre-teaching vocabulary strengthens comprehension. Lackluster lesson planning may contribute to student disinterest in reading tasks.

The additional responsibilities relegated by administration consume the majority of our planning time. Acquiring the time in to develop structured lesson plans that incorporate literacy strategies has to become a priority. With the infusion of technology adolescents entering the world will do more reading and writing tasks than at any other time in human history. Preparing students for the independent navigation of textual material is quite an enormous responsibility.