CHAPTER 1

Reading Matters

PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the critical role that teachers play in helping students think and learn with text.

UNDERLYING CONCEPTS

1. Using texts effectively requires a willingness to explore instructional strategies that move beyond assigning and telling.

2. Teachers need to adapt instruction in the content areas to meet the diverse nature of classrooms of the 21st century.

3. Content area teachers need to assist students in knowing how to think with text in order to respond to, discover, organize, retrieve, and elaborate on information and ideas they encounter in content learning situations.

4. Reader Response Theory underscores the importance of allowing students to explore their personal responses to text.

5. Schema Theory underscores the importance of activating prior knowledge as students think about text.

6. Instructional scaffolding underscores the importance of providing students with support during the learning process.

7. The term ‘text’ which sometimes refers only to words can be expanded to mean print text, oral text and image text.

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

1. Students will appreciate the importance of providing their own students with opportunities for learning on their own.

2. Students will appreciate ways in which literacy and learning are related.

3. Students will develop an understanding of content area literacy and what it means to think with different kinds of text.
4. Students will be able to explain how reader response and schema influence comprehension and learning.

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Prereading

1. Using the graphic organizer at the beginning of the chapter, explain how the content of the chapter relates to the chapter title.

2. Have the students write an autobiographical reflection in which they recall middle and high school teachers (no names used) whom they believe were effective and/or ineffective. What strategies did the teachers use that engaged and/or disengaged students. Following the written assignment, divide the chalkboard into two columns: Effective Strategies and Ineffective Strategies. Have the students share their autobiographical reflections by contributing memories under each column. Use the entries as a springboard for discussion.

3. As an alternative to activity 2, provide the students with a think-sheet entitled: Autobiographical Reflective Activity. The following directions can be used: From your earliest childhood memories of school, up to (and including) your high school recollections, scan your brain for this exercise!

First, quickly scan this list of content areas in which you have recollections and select three subject areas. Circle those areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Social Studies/History/Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>Computer Sciences</td>
<td>English/Language Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Drama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second, think about those memories from a student perspective. What are your memories? Think about the positive memories and the negative ones. What did your teachers say, do, assign? How did they influence your attitude toward the subject? What did they do that you recall in a positive way? In a negative way? Third, use the section below to jot down your thoughts. Your reflections will serve as the focal point of a class discussion. NO TEACHERS’ NAMES WILL BE USED.

SUBJECT AREA ONE:

SUBJECT AREA TWO:

SUBJECT AREA THREE:

4. Selected true – false statements and/or multiple choice test questions might be used as a pre-assessment.
5. Selected true – false test statements might be used as springboard for discussion and to determine student prior knowledge.

6. Provide the students with the following list of statements about content area reading and have them rate the statements as + if they tend to agree and – if they tend to disagree. Use the results as a springboard for discussion.

**STATEMENTS**

1. Reading and viewing instruction in secondary schools is unnecessary.
2. Content area teachers should expect students to read their textbooks.
3. Content area teachers should teach their students how to study.
4. The primary role of the content area teacher is teach subject matter.
5. Teaching students how to think and evaluate the usefulness of texts is important.

*During Reading*

7. Provide the students with a template or think-sheet as they read the chapter pages on Diversity. Entitle the think-sheet, “Diversity.” Divide it into three equal boxes labeled: Cultural and Linguistic Differences, Language and Dialect Differences, and Achievement Differences. As the students read these pages, have them jot down important concepts regarding diversity. Use the completed think-sheets as a springboard for discussion.

*After Reading and/or In the Field*

8. Instruct the students to conduct an interview with a content area teacher regarding effective teaching strategies that s/he uses to engage students in learning. Students may share their findings in small group or whole class discussions.

9. Instruct the students to conduct an interview with a content area teacher regarding how s/he addresses diversity in the classroom and/or how s/he motivate students to read or view text material. Students may share their findings in small groups.

10. Divide the class into two groups. Have one group brainstorm reasons why understanding content area textbooks is important. Have one group brainstorm reasons why teachers can teach effectively without textbooks. Have a panel discussion/debate. Following the panel discussion, have the students write a reflection on what they learned from the discussion that might not have occurred to them prior to the debate.
Chapter 1

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

True/False Test Items

___1.1 Content area literacy is all about using texts to think and learn.

Answer: T

___1.2 Assigning and telling are common instructional strategies that inspire students to take an active role in learning.

Answer: F

___1.3 In the content-area classroom, showing students how to read usually enters into the plan of teachers.

Answer: F

___1.4 Language is a vehicle by which teachers, students, and authors communicate with one another.

Answer: T

___1.5 The reader’s/listener’s/viewer’s prior knowledge is the single most important variable in learning with texts.

Answer: T

___1.6 Print texts are always the best medium for learning academic content.

Answer: F

___1.7 Shifting the burden of learning from teacher to student requires an understanding of the relationships that exist between literacy and learning.

Answer: T

___1.8 Learning with print texts is the most appropriate way to reach diverse learners in ways that make a difference in their academic development.

Answer: F
1.9 When students use their own culturally acceptable conversational style to talk and write about ideas they read and view in texts, they are likely to become more content-literate and to improve their literacy skills.

Answer: T

1.10 Cultural contexts do not influence what students read and write.

Answer: F

1.11 The academic language of textbooks is the language of conversational speech.

Answer: F

1.12 Unsuccessful readers often have difficulty with reading tasks because they lack knowledge of and control over the strategies needed for effective print text learning.

Answer: T

1.13 Literacy is situational.

Answer: T

1.14 An efferent response to text is driven by personal feelings and attitudes that are stirred by the reader’s transactions with the text.

Answer: F

1.15 Reading is a conversation between the reader and the print text.

Answer: T

Multiple Choice

1.1 Recent explanations of the reading process suggest that the meaning of text:
   a. does not reside in the material, but in the transactions between the reader and the author
   b. does not reside in the material, but in the transactions between the reader and the teacher
   c. resides in the material as established by the author
   d. resides in the material as established by the teacher

Answer: a
1.2 All the following characteristics relate to the reading process except:
   a. transactions and interactions
   b. constructions
   c. meaning making
   d. passive learning

Answer: d

1.3 Reading is an active process mainly because:
   a. students have to physically interact with the book
   b. students have to ask questions about the material
   c. students connect new and old knowledge
   d. students decode print

Answer: c

1.4 From a strategic point of view, a learner’s main goal is to:
   a. make sense out of the text
   b. read textbook assignments
   c. answer assigned questions
   d. analyze images

Answer: a

1.5 The value of content area literacy instruction lies in:
   a. showing students how to comprehend and to learn from texts
   b. demonstrating how to learn from reading errors
   c. teaching the content area as a reading course
   d. utilizing information resources outside the classroom

Answer: a

1.6 All of the following statements are true about assigning and telling teaching practices except:
   a. dampen active involvement in learning
   b. deny students’ ownership for the acquisition of content
   c. deny passive involvement in learning
   d. deny students’ responsibility for the acquisition of content

Answer: c
1.7 In the present day society, ________ classrooms best represents the population of Canadian schools.
   a. monocultural
   b. multicultural
   c. bicultural
   d. tricultural

Answer: b

1.8 A successful reader utilizes all but one of the following strategies:
   a. knows how to approach text and makes plans for reading
   b. locates and summarizes important points
   c. rereads text whenever s/he finishes reading
   d. predicts and verifies predictions while reading

Answer: c

1.9 The term ________ denotes one’s ability to read and write a language:
   a. functional literacy
   b. aliteracy
   c. cultural literacy
   d. print literacy

Answer: d

1.10 ________ refers to what an educated person should know about the arts, literature and ways of interacting in society.
   a. Family literacy
   b. Cultural literacy
   c. Situational literacy
   d. Workplace literacy

Answer: b

1.11 One theory related to the reading process, ________ contributes to the understanding as thinking with text and underscore the active role of the reader.
   a. zone of proximal development theory
   b. metacognition theory
   c. eye-scanning theory
   d. reader response theory

Answer: d
1.12 Which of the following activities is least likely to evoke student’s aesthetic responses to informational text?
   a. ask students about their interests
   b. pretest students about the information
   c. encourage a group discussion about experiences
   d. ask students to write about their experiences

   Answer: b

1.13 According to schema theory, which of the following strategies will least influence comprehension?
   a. organizing text
   b. making inferences
   c. decoding unknown words
   d. elaborating information

   Answer: c

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Essay questions include a mixture of questions designed (1) to help students apply and synthesize ideas, and (2) to help students clarify and understand ideas.

1. Place yourself in the place of a “concerned citizen” in your school district. Write an editorial to your local newspaper using your powers of persuasion to convince the school community to take a more active role in ensuring that texts of all kinds become an integral part of content area instruction. Do your best to convince your readers why content area teachers need to go “beyond assigning and telling.”

1.2 When content area teachers “scaffold” instruction, what strategies might they employ?

1.3 The text’s authors stated, “All teachers play a critical role in helping students think and learn with text.” Discuss the meaning of this statement and the role you will take in order to insure that students do think and learn with texts of all kinds.

1.4 What is reading? Why does reading matter? Why bring students and texts together in the classroom? What is the value of learning through print texts in the content areas?

1.5 Compare and contrast the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful reader. Discuss the teacher’s responsibility in the development of reading in both types of readers.
1.6 Teachers need to develop understanding, attitudes, and strategies related to student diversity in order to adapt instruction to the differences in their classroom. Discuss how you will adapt instruction for students in your classroom that have differences in the following areas: cultural, linguistic, language, dialect, and achievement.

1.7 Visual literacy has become an important skill in society at large. To what extent might content area teachers develop their students’ ability to view images? Is this a primary responsibility of a content area teacher? Why or why not? In what ways is viewing like ‘reading’? In what ways is it quite different?

Chapter 1
VOCABULARY AND KEY TERMS

achievement differences
assigning and telling
classroom diversity
content literacy
content reading
cultural differences
dialect differences
instructional scaffolding
language differences
learned helplessness
linguistic differences
literacy
metacognition
multiculturalism
reader response
reading process
schema activation
schema theory
strategic reader
texts
think and learn

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