

Teaching Adults to Read: Comprehension

Wyoming Adult Education 2019 Summer Institute

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What is LINCS?

WHAT IS LINCS?

LINCS, the Literacy Information and Communications System, is an initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). LINCS aims to expand evidence-based practice in the field of adult education. The LINCS website provides high-quality, on-demand educational opportunities to practitioners of adult education, so those practitioners can help adult learners successfully transition to postsecondary education and 21st century jobs.

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE



LEARNING PORTAL



RESOURCE COLLECTION



LEARNER CENTER



LINCS FOR STATES








How can LINCS help you?

- A **Resource Collection** containing high-quality, evidence-based materials in 16 topic areas critical to the field
- A **Learner Center** that connects adult learners to free online resources to reach life goals
- An online **Community of Practice** where you can share and collaborate with your peers
- A **Learning Portal** where you can engage in self-paced and facilitated professional development courses
- A **Professional Development Center** that provides evidenced-based professional development activities

New LINCS Quick Reference Guide

Where do I Start?

LINCS COMPONENT	 INSTRUCTORS	 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS	 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPERS	 STATE STAFF	 ADULT LEARNERS
Community	✓	✓	✓		
Learning Portal	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Resource Collection	✓	✓	✓	✓	
State Resources				✓	
Learner Center					✓

Don't Miss a Beat; Connect with LINCS

- Join the **Community**: <https://community.lincs.ed.gov>
- Access the **Learning Portal**: <http://lincs.ed.gov/courses>
- Search the **Resource Collection**:
<http://lincs.ed.gov/collections>
- Explore the **Learner Center**: <https://learner.lincs.ed.gov/>
- Follow the latest updates: **@LINCS_ED**
- Join our professional group: **LINCS_ED**
- Watch webinar archives and more: **LincsEd**

What is Reading?

Activity:

- Spend 2-3 minutes working individually to define the term “reading”.

What is Reading?

Reading is a complex system of deriving meaning from print that requires all of the following:

- The skills and knowledge to understand how **phonemes**, or **speech sounds**, are connected to print
- The ability to **decode** unfamiliar words
- The ability to read **fluently**
- Sufficient background information and **vocabulary** to foster reading **comprehension**
- The development of appropriate active strategies to construct **meaning** from print
- The development and maintenance of a **motivation** to read

Reading Components

- **Alphabets:** The use of letters in an alphabet to represent spoken words
 - **Phonemic Awareness:** Knowledge of speech sounds
 - **Word Analysis (Phonics plus):** Letter-sound knowledge
- **Fluency:** Ability to read with speed, accuracy, ease, phrasing and expression
- **Vocabulary:** Knowledge of word meanings
- **Comprehension:** Understanding a text, or “constructing meaning”

Reading is More than Comprehension

The Components of Reading

Print-Based Components

Alphabetic:

Phonemic Awareness

Word Analysis
(decoding,
word recognition;
structural analysis)

Fluency

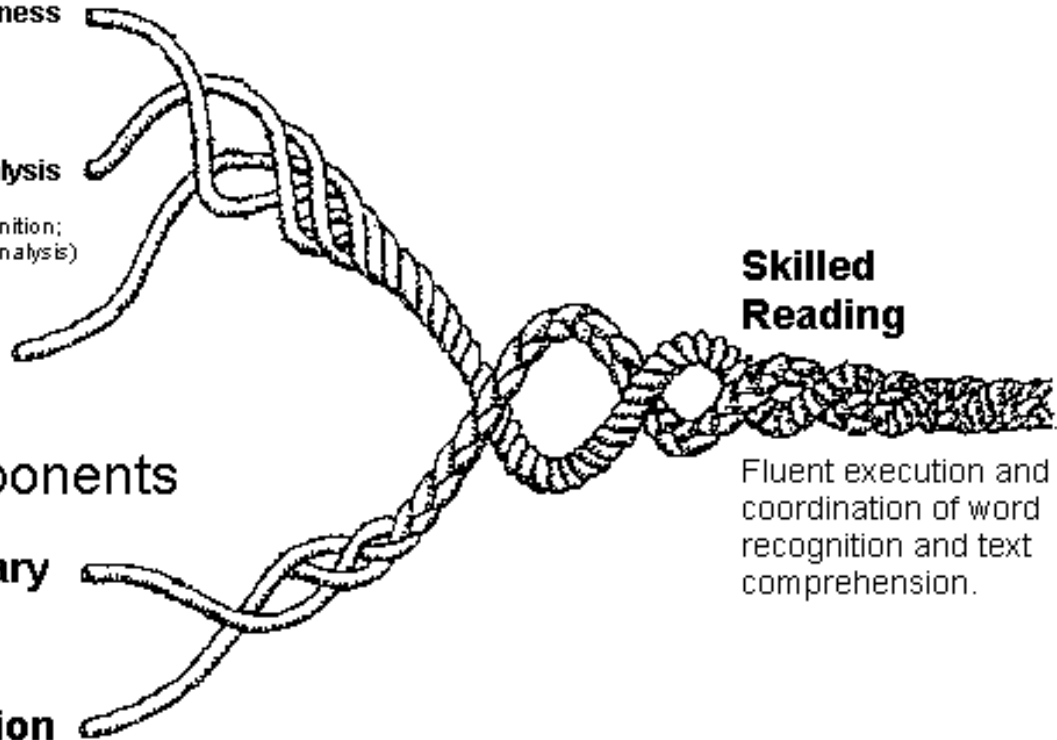
Meaning-Based Components

Vocabulary

Comprehension

**Skilled
Reading**

Fluent execution and
coordination of word
recognition and text
comprehension.



Comprehension



Comprehension

What is it?

Reading comprehension has been defined as “the process of simultaneously **extracting** and **constructing** meaning through **interaction** and **involvement** with written language.” (Rand Reading Study Group, 2002)

Jabberwocky

Twas brillig, and the slithy toves

Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.

All mimsy were the borogoves.

And the mome roths outgrabe.

Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking Glass

Comprehension Questions

1. What was slithy?
2. What did the toves do?
3. Describe the borogoves.
4. What did the mome raths do?

Comprehension Questions

Little Jack Horner sat in the corner
eating his Christmas pie.

He put in his thumb
and pulled out a plum
and said, “What a good boy am I!”

True/false/can't tell from the text

1. Jack Horner was little.
2. Jack was sitting in the corner while he was eating.
3. Jack was sitting in a chair.
4. Jack was eating a plum pie.
5. Jack is a good boy.

Why is comprehension-strategy instruction important?

- Many readers don't know they're not "getting it," or they just pretend to understand. They don't always "demand that a text makes sense."
- They might not know what they're missing or notice inconsistencies.
- Many are unaware of the kind of active processing good readers do.
- They don't know what's causing the "comprehension breakdowns."

What causes comprehension breakdowns?

- Limited vocabulary and/or background knowledge
- Weak decoding skills and slow word identification
- Limited use of strategies

Who needs strategy instruction?

- Most (maybe all) learners in ABEL and family literacy classrooms can benefit from comprehension-strategy instruction.

Research Related to Comprehension

Research Findings: Comprehension Instruction

- Most (maybe all) learners in ABEL and family literacy classrooms can benefit from **comprehension strategy instruction**.
- ABEL reading instruction can lead to improved reading comprehension.
- Effective approaches provide direct, explicit as opposed to incidental instruction in **comprehension strategies**.
- Focusing on more than one component of reading during instruction is recommended.
- Enabling settings or approaches are effective.

Assessment of Comprehension

Standardized Assessments

- Assessments are available in written and oral forms.
- Most standardized tests are written tests of silent reading comprehension, mostly multiple choice.
- Curriculum-based tests are usually multiple choice or short answer.
- Informal reading inventories include oral comprehension assessments.

LINCS Resources for Assessment

Assessment Strategies and Reading Profiles

Published Tests

- http://lincs.ed.gov/readingprofiles/MC_Test_Bank.htm

Free Tests and Resources

- <http://lincs.ed.gov/readingprofiles/resources.htm>

Alternative Assessments

- May allow learners to demonstrate comprehension in other ways.
- May allow glimpse of other aspects of reading outcomes.
- Tutoring/classroom activities provide opportunities for informal assessment.

Questions to Ask

What's behind the comprehension problem?

- **Print skills?**

- Word-reading difficulty?
- Limited decoding skills?

- **Fluency problem?**

- Slow/inaccurate word identification?
- Lack of phrasing or expression?

Questions to Ask (continued)

What's behind the comprehension problem?

- **Meaning skills?**
 - Limited vocabulary?
 - Limited background knowledge?
 - Few comprehension strategies?
- **Or both:** Limited print and meaning skills?

Instruction in Comprehension

Comprehension Strategy Instruction

For good readers procedural strategies for understanding are **automatic**. We do them without thinking.

But poor readers need to be **explicitly taught** the **reading strategies** that good readers use.

Teach reading strategies for **before**, **during** and **after** reading

- Using titles, headlines, illustrations
- Thinking about what you already know
- Making predictions
- Skimming, scanning
- Using context clues
- Re-reading
- Posing and answering questions

Video Demonstrations

Video of instructor Meg Schofield teaching comprehension strategies to two adult students in Richmond, California.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbrky4PpQGA>

Video Demonstrations

Access to Learning Videos

Tutors and learners demonstrating a variety of comprehension strategies.

- <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZfx1RWm8nvjSCoWFpxt8xzNECtZP1ram>

Tutor Ready Comprehension Learning Plans

(see handouts for how to access them)

Comprehension Strategy Instruction (ARRIA)

Research-based Strategies

- Comprehension monitoring (p. 80–82)
- Graphic organizers (p. 83–87)
- Story structure (p. 88)
- Question answering (p. 89–91)

Comprehension Strategy Instruction (ARRIA) Continued

Research-based Strategies (continued)

- Question generating (p. 92)
- Summarization (p. 93–96)
- Multiple-strategies instruction (p. 97)
- Cooperative learning (instructional approach) (p. 98)

Research-based Strategies Jigsaw Activity

- Form a group of 6.
- Select a reading on one of the following topics:
 - Graphic organizers (p. 83–87)
 - Story structure (p. 88)
 - Question answering (p. 89–91)
 - Question generating (p. 92)
 - Summarization (p. 93–96)
 - Multiple-strategies instruction (p. 97) & Cooperative learning (p. 98)
- Read about your topic(s).
- Summarize what you've read for your group.
- Ask how your group could use your strategy.

Comprehension Monitoring

Think Aloud: A Teacher and Reader Strategy

What might you demonstrate for learners?

- Re-reading and restating a difficult passage
- Showing confusion by asking questions
- Identifying important or not-so-important information
- Figuring out meanings of words using context clues

Migration/Movement of Peoples

*When did people first **migrate** to the **Western Hemisphere**?*

From Europe's discovery of the American "Indian" at the end of the fifteenth century to the present, the questions of who the native American populations are and how they came to the Western Hemisphere have intrigued scholars, clergymen, and laymen.

Early theories (put forth primarily by clergymen and not long after Columbus arrived in the Americas in 1492) posited that the New World's indigenous people were descended from the ten lost tribes of Israel, or that the Indians' ancestors were Welshmen, or even that the natives came from the fabled lost continents of Atlantis and Mu.

Nelson, R. (1999). Exploration & Migration. In *The Handy History Answer Book* (p. 69).

Canton, MI: Visible Ink Press

Think Aloud Pair Practice

- Assemble in pairs.
- Each partner selects a text to read (either Prohibition or Eating for Healthy Heart).
- Plan a think aloud demonstration.
- Demonstrate your think aloud to your partner.

You have 15 minutes for this exercise.

Suggestions for Strategy Instruction

- Start with only one or two that are broadly applicable.
- For introduction, choose materials with familiar words and subject matter (unless the strategy involves word identification or using context clues).
- Be explicit about *when* as well as *how and why* to use it.
- Model strategy use and give lots of practice, reading text aloud so weaker readers can participate.
- Review strategies often.

Working with Beginners

- Teach one strategy at a time.
- Stop more frequently.
- Use materials at appropriate level.

Text-Dependent Comprehension Questions

CCRS materials should include:

- ✓ Questions that are text-specific rather than “cookie-cutter”
- ✓ Effective sequences of questions that build on each other so students stay focused on the central ideas of the text
- ✓ Culminating text-based assignments that integrate reading and writing (and perhaps speaking and listening too)

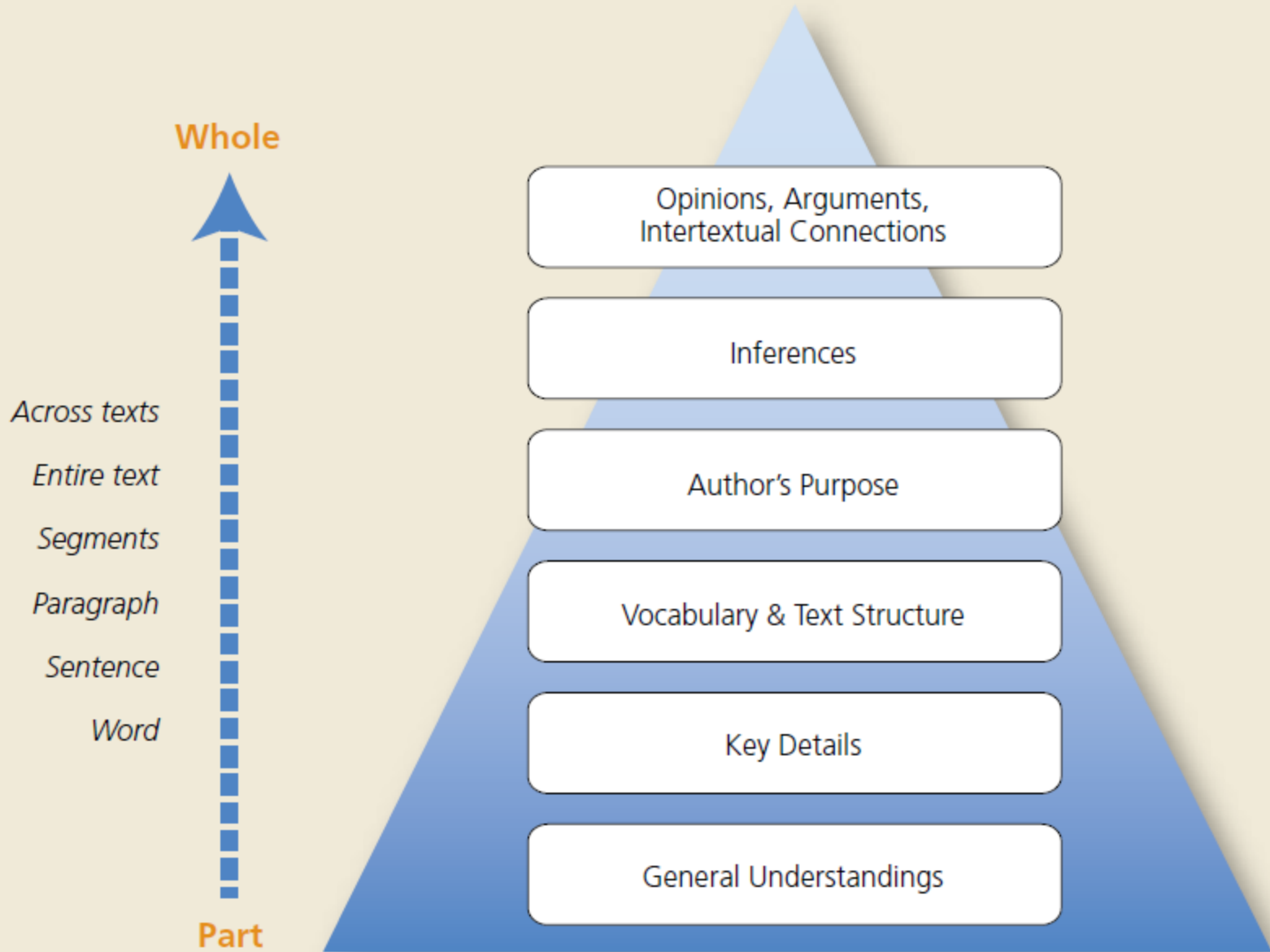
Text-Dependent Comprehension Questions

What are the guidelines for creating text dependent comprehension questions?

Text-Dependent Comprehension Questions...

- Can **only** be answered with evidence from the text.
- Can be literal (checking for understanding) but must also involve analysis, synthesis, evaluation.
- Focus on word, sentence, and paragraph, as well as larger ideas, themes, or events.
- Focus on difficult portions of text in order to enhance reading proficiency.
- Can also include prompts for writing and discussion questions.

Progression of Text-Dependent Questions



Video Clip of Text Dependent Questioning

The Art of Questioning: Content, Meaning and Style

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/structuring-questioning-in-classroom?fd=1>



Grades 9 – 12

ESL Adv, ASE Adv

Text-Dependent Comprehension Questions

Check Your Understanding of
Text Dependent Questions:

Interactive Activity

Text Dependent or Non-Text Dependent?

- In “Casey at the Bat,” Casey strikes out. Describe a time when you failed at something.
- What makes Casey’s experiences at bat humorous?
- What can you infer from King’s letter about the letter that he received?
- In “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” Dr. King discusses nonviolent protest. Discuss, in writing, a time when you wanted to fight against something that you felt was unfair.
- In “The Gettysburg Address” Lincoln says the nation is dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Why is equality an important value to promote?
- The “Gettysburg Address” mentions the year 1776. According to Lincoln’s speech, why is this year significant to the events described in the speech.

Non-Examples and Examples

Not Text-Dependent

- In “Casey at the Bat,” Casey strikes out. Describe a time when you failed at something.
- In “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” Dr. King discusses nonviolent protest. Discuss, in writing, a time when you wanted to fight against something that you felt was unfair.
- In “The Gettysburg Address” Lincoln says the nation is dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Why is equality an important value to promote?

Text-Dependent

- What makes Casey’s experiences at bat humorous?
- What can you infer from King’s letter about the letter that he received?
- The “Gettysburg Address” mentions the year 1776. According to Lincoln’s speech, why is this year significant to the events described in the speech.

Putting the Strategies into Action

- As a table group, discuss which of the strategies we've discussed that you think might help your students.
- What are the benefits of using the strategies?
- What are the challenges of using the strategies?
- How can you use them in a classroom setting?

Questions and Comments

- What questions do you have?
- What comments would you like to share?
- What aha moments did you have?

Thank You and Evaluations

Thank you for completing your evaluation form.
We really appreciate your feedback!