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THE LANGUAGE AND LITERACY COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK:
A GUIDE TO MORE EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND BETTER READERS

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Abstract

As an ever-changing society creates multifaceted issues in literacy education, teachers can approach literacy across the curriculum by engaging a systematic literacy framework that has the potential to address the needs of the child at a particular grade level, while also setting the basis for literacy education across the different levels of education throughout a students' career. By adapting the Reading Apprenticeship Framework to include elementary school students, teachers can better understanding how students are reading, what they are reading, and why they are reading (Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, Hurwitz, 1999). This adapted framework will serve as a guide for teachers to help their students develop an understanding of how language works in today's complex society and essentially help them to eventually become independent readers.

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I. Introduction

"It is by now pretty much a cliché to say that the pace, scope, and impact of changes in the current period are as great as at any previous time in human history – if not greater"

(Lankshear, 1997, p. 1).

Rapid social and technological change over the past decades contributes significantly to complexities in literacy education. A sampling of the titles of recent publications in education gives a glimpse of these trends: "Narrow aims of literacy pedagogy no longer fill the needs of our *changing* society" (Kalantzis and Cope, 2001); "*Changing* communication and *changing* literacy teaching" (Kalantzis, 2001); "*Change* undoubtedly is occurring on many fronts and at many levels..." (Lankshear, 1997); "*Changing* contexts of text and image in classroom practice" (Unsworth, 2001); "Bring about meaningful *changes* in our teaching practices" (Kalantzis and Cope, 2001); "Old and New Literacies: Negotiating *Change*, Continuity, and Complementarity" (Unsworth, 2001). I-pods, I-pads, text messaging, blogging, tweeting and other communication tools present new opportunities and new challenges for educators who wish to foster conditions for literacy learning and effective communication among K-12 students. While these changes are certainly exciting, they also present complexities for educators.

To better understand these complexities and possibilities for literacy education, one must define "literacy." This definition has also evolved over the years, reflecting the complexities of the text-based world in which we live. Literacy once meant the ability to decode print-based text; however, this definition is no longer broad enough to encompass the many ways in which people much engage texts in today's complex society. Linguist

James Gee defines literacy in relation to discourses. To Gee, discourse reflects the rules and norms for language and behavior within certain groups. He explains that all people are born into a particular primary discourse group (the family), but as young children begin to engage the world through school, clubs, and other activities, they become members of other secondary discourse communities. As such, they must learn the language of these communities. Gee explains literacy as the mastery of the language of a secondary discourse group, which differs from the primary discourse group's use of language. In this definition of literacy, Gee is conscious to also define "control" as "some degree of being able 'to use' or 'to function with.'" Therefore, literacy can be referred to as using the language that was both purposely taught and subconsciously acquired through exposure in social situations with others (Gee, 1989).

Cultural and linguistic diversity further complicates literacy teaching as students come into the secondary discourse of schooling from many diverse primary discourse groups. Because of immigration, multiculturalism, global economic integration, and the emergence of multiple variations of English, Kalantzis and Cope (2001) believe that the ways we make meaning are changing. Therefore, literacy pedagogy has to change "and with it our notion of what can be defined as literate" (p. 9). They believe that one's working life, public life, and private life all consist of "different languages" to make meaning, and these languages are radically changing. As a result, this has an effect on the way literacy is taught. Elements of language make for one of several complex issues in literacy education (Kalantzis and Cope, 2001).

In agreement with Kalantzis and Cope is Professor Len Unsworth, department leader of the Centre for Research in English and Multiliteracies at the University of New

England. He believes that rapid cultural and technological changes are creating complexities in literacy pedagogies (Unsworth, 2001). There is a “bi-directional impact” of research and practice from classroom teachers (p. 1). As new research suggests new practices, teachers are encouraged to engage new technologies and classroom practices while simultaneously teaching students to decode and make meaning from print. The cultural and technological changes require negotiation between traditional literacy pedagogy and the varieties of multiliteracies in today’s world (Unsworth, 2001)

As “different languages” co-exist and compete across an individual’s community life, working life, and private life, a range of literacies is needed by students to effectively function and communicate knowledge in all of the content areas found in public school curricula (Unsworth, 2001). Fiction and non-fiction texts require readers to understand the linguistic forms being used in that specific domain resulting in distinct literate practices in each area. The idiosyncratic use of language in content areas varies from word level (such as vocabulary) to grammar to the “organization of whole texts” (including genre or text types). Students and teachers alike need to recognize and understand that different texts exist, social purposes vary with text/genre, certain structures/formats are used for particular texts, and they have distinct grammatical elements (Unsworth, 2001). Students must learn to use knowledge and make connections to help solve complex real-world dilemmas (International Center for Leadership in Education, 2010).

Given these changes and conditions, it is an exciting yet challenging time to teach literacy to students in America’s public schools. While many methods and practices are used, teachers must ultimately decide the best ways to engage literacy education in the classrooms and communities where they teach. For beginning teachers, this may feel like a

daunting task; however, a research-based framework can help to remind teachers of the broader constructs that can foster literacy learning. In what follows, I outline one such framework, the Reading Apprenticeship Framework.

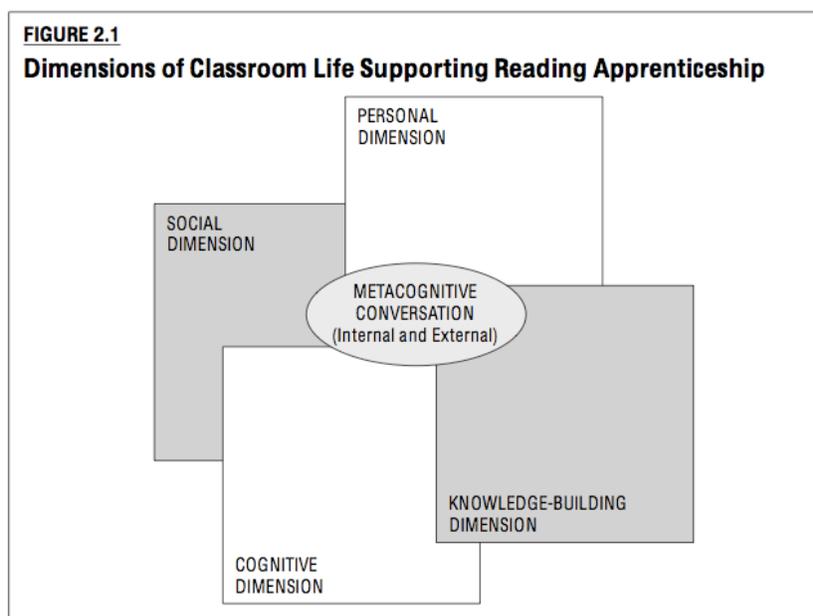
II. What is the Reading Apprenticeship Framework?

The Reading Apprenticeship Framework is a guideline that many middle schools and high schools use in order to help students understand *how* they read, *why* they read, and *what* they read in regards to subject area content (Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, Hurwitz, 1999). Because reading is such a complex process that involves several key elements, this framework centers on the idea of “making the invisible visible” (Schoenbach, et al, 1999, p. 21). By using this framework, educators have the ability to influence and establish independent and strategic readers.

The first aspect of the framework is the “social” dimension. The main components of this dimension focus on creating a safe environment where students are given the opportunities to interact with one another and learn valuable information and strategies from their teachers and peers. The second aspect, the “personal” dimension, draws on students as individual learners. This includes developing reading and writing identities, valuing personal interests, and helping individuals become confident and competent readers. Next is the “cognitive” dimension, which focuses on strategies to help students become better readers and understand what they are reading. Teachers encourage students to find strategies and practices that work best for them. Finally, there is the “knowledge-building” dimension. This aspect of the framework concentrates on understanding how language works, including the development of schemata, word and text structure, vocabulary improvement, and reading a variety of genre. Centered on these four

interacting dimensions are metacognitive conversations, which are the ongoing internal and external conversations that take place between students and their teachers. These conversations reflect both the individual learner's consideration of her personal mental processes and the sharing of these processes, strategies, techniques, interactions, and resources with others. Engaging in conversations about reading and its various methods is essential because it allows for students to reflect on their own thought processes and compare this with how others may be thinking (Schoenbach, et al, 1999). "A great deal of research in the past two decades has identified metacognition as key to deep learning and flexible use of knowledge and skills" (Schoenbach, et al, 1999, p. 23).

Overall the key elements of this framework include offering students opportunities to consider what they are doing while they read – how to make sense of texts and how well strategies being used are working for them. "Internal and external conversations about reading processes and the relationships they make possible between and among teachers and students are key to the reading apprenticeship approach" (Schoenbach, et al, p. 24). The framework reminds teachers of the *what*, *why*, and *how* of reading that will encourage students to understand texts more deeply.



(Source: Schoenbach, et al, p. 23)

III. A Natural Learning Environment and the Social Dimension

The social dimension of the framework requires some attention the learning environment teachers create and foster. This includes the physical environment where learning is expected to take place, as well as the particular needs of students as individuals who are developing readers.

Supporting students' interests and efforts in a natural environment is essential for learning to occur. It is especially beneficial for teachers to understand how student learning takes place and how the brain functions because it can positively influence most of the decisions made in the classroom.

"Knowing how humans learn and how the brain works...helps explain why learning is best approached as a matter of inquiry, with learners making choices and pursuing their own interests. It tells us why rote drill and practice exercises are examples of low-level learning and, in some instances, may actually inhibit cognitive development. It

tells us why intelligence testing...and standardized achievement testing...are limited in value and inappropriate for so many of the nation's children" (Bertrand and Stice, 2002, p. 13).

Professor Brian Cambourne, internationally recognized expert of literacy learning and teaching, explains how a natural learning environment is key for learning to take place. He presents seven conditions for literacy learning in which each condition allows for learning to become a natural process. The first condition is *immersion*. In this element for natural learning, an environment conducive to learning surrounds children, including artifacts and positive demonstrations from teachers and other children. During *demonstration*, the teacher's responsibility is to set an example of what he expects his students to do in regards to behavior and completing tasks. If a teacher wants her students to become good readers who use a variety of strategies, she also needs to demonstrate fluent reading. She should "think aloud" as she reads to her students. Cambourne explained that sometimes students struggle with literacy practices because another person has given them faulty demonstrations. Demonstration and immersion are necessary conditions for natural learning, but they must work together with Cambourne's other conditions in order for students to learn naturally (Bertrand and Stice, 2002).

It is essential that teachers not only have high *expectations* for their students, but students should also have high expectations for themselves. Students must be aware of the teacher's expectations in order for them to feel capable about their abilities. Because learning is a process, teachers cannot expect their students to catch on immediately. Therefore, the condition of *approximation* indicates that teachers must provide positive feedback, reinforcement, and encouragement when a student comes close to producing

what an expert would. An expert and a novice both have *responsibilities*, but the responsibilities of the students are especially important. They must take charge of their own learning and make independent decisions that contribute to progression in their own learning. When this happens, the teacher is responsible for trusting the student to accomplish tasks and make decisions about their learning (Bertrand and Stice, 2002).

Cambourne also states that students must *use* what is being learned. There are so many factors of learning and “use” must work collaboratively with the other conditions as an essential part to the entire learning process as a whole. While the learner is using information, *response* should be shared to support them in their efforts. By providing feedback, a learner is able to either continue what he is doing or adapt his practices to perfect his abilities. The final condition for natural learning, and the most essential condition that allows learning to take place is *engagement*. A student must be engaged in activities, lessons, and materials in order for learning to take place. Engagement works in tandem with each of the other conditions. In order to remain engaged, learners must have self-confidence, be willing to take risks that can enhance learning, and have a positive relationship with their teachers (Bertrand and Stice, 2002). Cambourne claims that whenever positive, successful learning takes place, these seven conditions are all present.

If teachers adapt a socio-constructivist view and apply best practice in their classrooms, students can feel more comfortable with making their own decisions and meaningful learning can take place naturally. Teachers should be encouraged to make connections between what is being taught and applying it to real life so students are able to recognize the purpose for learning. As Cambourne proves through his research, it is important for students to be *immersed* in a variety of print and practice what they are

learning. Teachers should first *demonstrate* how processes and thinking occurs as well as how students should approach activities and assignments in order for students to see what is *expected* from them so they can apply this to their own development. As long as educators hold high *expectations* for their students and are confident that each and every student is capable of learning, students will gain confidence and realize their strengths. Guidance and feedback will also be essential for students to recognize what they are doing well and what they need more help with (Bertrand and Stice, 2002).

In this learning environment, teachers can learn about each student specifically and find ways to address their individual needs in a variety of settings (Taberski, 2000). One way of addressing this issue of differentiated instruction is through using multiple sign systems. Sign systems are communication systems that can be utilized to construct and express meaning. For example, music, art, drama, language, and mathematics are multiple types of sign systems that often work together to communicate information or expression to others. Rather than students constantly engaging in language as the only sign system, teachers can try to incorporate other sign systems that give students the opportunity to express themselves and they can communicate their learning in other ways. This is an effective way for natural learning to occur because they open up a means of communication about a particular subject and allow all students to feel as if they are a part of the learning community. Multiple sign systems are also a great way for teachers to learn about students' personal interests and experiences. By applying all of these concepts and thinking beyond the traditional ways of teaching, students will be able to gain a better understanding of how language works and their understanding will progress over time. Students will start off at the lower end of the continuum, learning through demonstrations and shared practices,

and will eventually work their way towards gaining independence. The Reading Apprenticeship Framework connects these key ideas and works toward accomplishing a main goal: finding ways for each and every student to become confident and competent independent readers in all content areas.

As previously stated, the “social” dimension of the Reading Apprenticeship Framework primarily focuses on creating a safe environment for students to interact with one another and with their teachers so they can discuss strategies and processes and learn valuable information that will lead them towards learning and mastering the language of a secondary discourse group, in this case school literacies. This dimension considers students’ opportunities for many of the conditions of learning as they use language and literacy in social situations. Children who come from homes where oral literacy is valued over print may benefit from these connections between home and school practices. Researcher Shirley Brice Heath, who studied the language uses of African American families in rural Appalachia, encouraged the use of daily conversations as a means of recognizing certain language patterns and strengths of students from all backgrounds. She stated, “With early and intensive classroom opportunities to surround learning with many different kinds of talk and much talk about talk, children from homes and communities whose uses of language do not match those of the school *can* achieve academic success” (Heath, 1983, p. 136). Similarly, Sibberson and Szymusiak (2003) believe that reading a shared text with the whole class can be beneficial because everyone can participate in a conversation about what has been read. Conversation can be a powerful tool that allows all types of learners to feel like they are part of the learning community.

Within a safe and purposeful learning environment, students learn to value one another and appreciate the range of skills and practices related to literacy. They can be inspired by another student's personal insights, reflections, and inquiries. When students are naturally conversing about reading and writing, they can prompt one another to think harder and consider various perspectives. If teachers set the tone at the beginning of the year and encourage thoughtful conversations and questions in one-on-one, small group, and whole-class settings, students will reap the benefits of becoming engaged literacy users and producers who possess knowledge about how language works in certain contexts.

One example from classroom practice is Ellen Kaiden, a reading professor at Ramapo College of New Jersey who planned instructional activities around productive social interactions. She was able to watch her students engage in meaningful conversations with one another and construct meaning together. It was a good idea for the teacher to address this prior to learning so none of her students would find the work ambiguous and they could work towards accomplishing the specific goal for instruction. After utilizing two of Cambourne's conditions by demonstrating the activity and engaging in a conversation with her students about the purposes of reflections and conversations with each other about readings, she witnessed her students displaying "the attributes of the engaged reader-motivated, strategic, knowledgeable, and socially interactive" (Kaiden, 1998, p. 477). Kaiden's example demonstrates how a teacher may conduct and monitor group work to give students opportunities to gain valuable insight from their peers and positively influence their group members by sharing reflections and talking about a common topic. According to Kaiden, "The transformation of passive readers into active readers and learners is clearly enhanced through the dynamics of social interaction with peers" (p.

477).

When difficult texts are introduced across the curriculum, students can participate in whole group and small group discussions to solve problems and make sense of the texts they are reading. Through this social dimension of the framework, students at the primary and intermediate levels can notice how different readers think and notice different strategies that are being used to try out on their own and see if those strategies are useful to themselves as readers. By setting the tone for this metacognitive conversation in the social aspect at the elementary level, teachers can develop a routine and a comfortable environment that will allow teachers at the middle school and high school levels to continue using this organized structure.

As students begin to develop socially in a safe classroom environment, they also begin to naturally develop as an individual learner. Once they are able to communicate understanding, techniques, questions, and interpretations with others, individuals begin to look at themselves independently to determine strengths and goals in reading as well as likes and dislikes. It is in this personal dimension of the framework that students find purpose and interest in reading and find themselves to be successful in their effort as an individual reader.

IV. The Personal Dimension

The next part of the framework is the “personal” dimension, which focuses on the learner as an individual. Second grade teacher Sharon Taberski is one of the many experts whose research truly acknowledges specific readers. Her goals include helping children become strategic readers, encouraging children to read a variety of genres, using writing as a tool to deepen their understanding of what they read, and motivating children to love to

read. When analyzing each of her goals more closely, it is clear that Taberski values having conversations to get to know her students as individual readers and writers. This includes scheduling reading conferences, wisely choosing books for book bags that children take home to read, taking running records to assess and analyze an individual's reading strengths and weaknesses, providing students with useful strategies, and recognizing when an individual is ready to move to more complex texts or different genres.

For children who are simply uninterested in written and oral language, teacher Beth Berghoff suggests using multiple sign systems to get to personally know students and find techniques that are useful to their learning. (1998). Barry Hoonan, co-author with Berghoff of *Beyond Reading and Writing: Inquiry, Curriculum, and Multiple Ways of Knowing* (2000), describes a particular situation when he taught a fifth/sixth grade combination class. He includes a personal story of how multiple intelligences motivated him to incorporate the arts into learning. After unconsciously neglecting a student's continuous effort to include his personal interests and skills into his writing, Hoonan realized that he needed to find something that would allow the student to feel comfortable participating in group activities, completing reading and writing assignments, and developing that child's competence. After the teacher realized that the student was particularly interested in drawings, he encouraged the child to find unique ways to incorporate his drawings into different assignments. The teacher's recognition of the importance of using multiple intelligences as an effective teaching method led to a student who became a student leader in charge of creating a sports magazine for his classroom. "...I learned to see a learner in ways that before were only peripheral for me. I discovered how to step back and bring into focus the larger picture when thinking about a learner" (p. 70).

Howard Gardner, author of *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century*, explains that humans learn in terms of “multiple intelligences” (1999). While multiple sign systems refer to the communication systems that can be utilized to construct and express meaning, multiple intelligences are related to sign systems in the sense that it refers to its own system of representing meaning. While humans learn through direct/indirect experience and through observation, Gardner presents the idea that humans have natural intelligences as well. The eight forms of intelligence that he proposes deal with language thinking, spatial conceptualization, musical analysis, and mathematical computation; understanding others, understanding ourselves, and understanding relationships; solving problems using the body; and recognizing/classifying the species (Bertrand and Stice, 2002). Gardner describes how everyone has these natural intelligences but some intelligences are stronger than others depending on how often they are utilized (1999). In the example from Hoonan, his student’s natural intelligence for solving problems in an artistic way was stronger than his intelligence of thinking with language. By recognizing that multiple intelligences exist, teachers and their students can create opportunities to use multiple sign systems in order to effectively communicate and express meaning in multiple ways.

Researcher and teacher Jeff Wilhelm (2007) emphasizes that we are teaching individual students who hold a wide variety of interests and issues. Rather than using the traditional methods in the classroom, teachers need to think further and “possess a repertoire of teaching techniques” based upon the students’ needs and development (p. 40). Teachers need to recognize students as individual learners and provide them with the appropriate challenges. One way of doing this is through providing practical experiences

and allowing children to further inquire about themselves as individuals, as readers, and as writers, while also ensuring that the children are gaining valuable knowledge and skills.

Rather than teaching to look at difference as a negative aspect of the classroom, it should be encouraged and help should be provided so all children have the opportunity for success.

“The importance of knowing and relating to students (because you can’t teach who you don’t know) and of connecting students personally to their reading and writing experiences foregrounds the personal and relational nature of teaching, learning, and literacy”

(Wilhelm, 2007, p. 40). Wilhelm believes teaching can be interpreted as the apprenticeship of particular students as a part of the practicing community. In order for a student to feel like a member of the community, teachers need to create instruction that allows the learner to imagine he/she is a professional who enjoys this particular area of expertise, whether it is in reading, math, science, or social studies. By creating a pretend or virtual environment or allowing the students to practice what they have learned in real situations, teachers are supporting students and giving them more opportunity to achieve. This reminds teachers to keep expectations high, as Cambourne suggests, and never give up on a student. If a particular student is struggling or failing, it is the teacher’s job to find strategies and methods that work for this child, helping him or her to become a competent reader and writer. Teachers need to stay abreast of new methods and strategies, improve the ones that work well in their classroom, and always be open and understanding when a child needs their help. “This is our privilege and our purpose as teachers, and it is the only path to transformative teaching and learning” (Wilhelm, 2007, p. 41).

While the social dimension focuses on students as a part of a classroom community working in whole and small groups, the personal dimension centers on the individual

working with the teacher to develop a “reader identity.” In this identity, students become aware of their own interests and skills in regards to reading, set goals for what they hope to accomplish as a reader, recognize what challenges they face as readers and attempt to tackle those challenges to move forward and develop as a reader. While this personal dimension is important for all learners, it is especially important for those students who consider themselves poor readers and are disinterested in reading because of that lack of confidence. It is in the personal dimension where students gain confidence in their abilities and compare themselves to no one but him or herself.

In order to get students to think about their thinking, teachers can provide one-on-one assistance in helping students to notice what is happening in their mind not only when they read but also in everyday situations and then identifying the thought process involved. It is also important for students to notice where their thinking is when they are reading text. Students need to think about whether they are able to have a vivid image of what they are reading or if those “television screens” are fuzzy or completely off when they are reading. Self-reflection is a key aspect of the personal dimension because it allows for students to deeply analyze their thought processes to create attainable goals and reach those goals.

For those students who do not enjoy reading and do not see themselves as successful readers, becoming more fluent in their reading is a necessary factor that has the potential to not only increase their abilities but to also increase their confidence. Everyone has room for improvement when it comes to reading and it is important for teachers to communicate that with their students. Teachers can also have a variety of genre present in the classroom to encourage students to explore and engage in different types of text. This

will allow students to discover what interests them as readers and to pursue reading as they expand their interests. Overall, the goal of the personal dimension is for the teacher and student to focus on each student as an individual reader and learner in the classroom and to partake in internal and external conversations that will encourage the student to discover his reader identity. After discovering what works well for a student and what interests him, both student and teacher can work collaboratively to come up with attainable reading goals that will promote growth and independence.

V. The Cognitive Dimension

Next is the “cognitive” dimension, which involves “developing readers’ mental processes, including their repertoire of specific comprehension and problem-solving strategies” (Education Development Center, Inc., 2008). In this dimension, teachers focus on finding problem-solving and comprehension strategies and practices to enhance student learning. Sharon Taberski (2000) uses the whole class, small group, and one-on-one settings to demonstrate useful strategies for her students. For example, in read aloud and shared reading, Taberski encourages her students to “stop to think” about what they are reading and use story maps and character maps to follow the author’s message. In shared reading, she focuses on the importance of students exploring the letter-sound relationships, figuring out unfamiliar words by using the illustrations, sampling the entire word, recognizing familiar patterns, and using meaning, structure, and graphophonic cues, among many other strategies.

In small-group situations, Taberski clusters children with similar needs and allows the children to figure out as much as they can on their own, but she is also there to provide assistance when students need help. All of these features focus on students *using* what they

know to make new connections on their own, just as Cambourne describes “use” as one of the necessary conditions for natural learning. Learning is a repetitive process for children as they continuously read and make connections between everything they have learned. This is the reason why providing strategies for students are so powerful in helping them decode texts: “It’s through the repetitions of the same strategies in different contexts that children grow stronger and more confident in their use. It’s how they learn...” (Taberski, p. 95).

Students need to become familiar with the codes found in the texts they read. According to Marcy Zipke, professor at Providence College and former elementary school teacher, metalinguistic awareness is “the ability to objectify language and dissect it as an arbitrary linguistic code independent of meaning” (p. 128). When students are learning about language, they need to understand that not all letters have the same sounds, different letter-combinations represent different sounds, a word can have more than one meaning, and some sentences are structurally ambiguous. An interesting case study by Zipke focused on students manipulating language to gain a deeper understanding of how it works. The teacher used riddles as a strategy to help students learn about language. Riddles were proved to be an effective way to manipulate language and help children improve their reading comprehension because if they are able to manipulate language, this means they are able to understand multiple meanings, metaphors, and idioms; they can detect ambiguity; and they can understand shifts in perspectives. Researchers discovered that understanding words and sentences with multiple meanings improved comprehension because it allowed the readers to “think flexibly about the appropriate meaning” (Zipke, p. 128).

Teachers can also provide reading comprehension strategies for students through pictures (Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003). Students are able to gain a deeper understanding of a meaning or concept with visual images helping them. Creating mental images come naturally for some people while others struggle to imagine what they just read. Therefore, teachers need to prompt students to use mental imagery. This will help the students who struggle to make meaning from a text create a vivid image in their minds and think beyond the picture to find deeper meanings.

Struggling readers sometimes have difficulty because they lack prior knowledge and vocabulary skills. For example, Hibbing and Rankin-Erickson (2003) describe one student who was reading about a saucer and only knew its relation to outer space. The student became confused when reading about teacups and saucers because she was picturing something that did not make sense to her. This is a difficult issue to deal with but teachers need to respond to students and help them develop the knowledge needed as they keep students immersed in text to expand their vocabulary and knowledge.

To improve students' comprehension, Hibbing and Rankin-Erickson (2003) suggest different strategies, such as using drawings, illustrations in the text, and picture books in the classroom, as well as appropriate high-quality movies. These are ways of building background knowledge and comprehension. Another strategy to help with comprehension is "television in the mind," which helps readers improve their comprehension by creating a mental image of the text (Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003). When a student is reading, she must "watch the television screen" as she is reading. It is important to emphasize that the words must match the picture. If students find their minds wandering or finish reading a

paragraph or page without remembering or imagining what was happening, they can recognize that they “changed” the channel. By creating this analogy, students will realize that reading is more than just saying words in your mind or out loud; it is about “watching” what you are reading. If you are “watching” something other than what you are reading, then it is important for you to get back on track and “switch the channel” back to what is being read. This is a good strategy for imagining because teachers can find ways to get students back on track if they are not “watching” the right channel, the channel that includes images transferred from the text.

When a student is able to realize that his picture has become fuzzy or completely lost, a teacher can encourage him to use strategies to stay focused and bring the clear picture back. For example, he can reread the text, slow down (or speed up) the pace of reading, take a minute to refocus their attention, or ask a teacher for help in understanding a confusing part. These are referred to as the “fix-up” strategies. Teachers need to repeatedly prompt students to monitor their comprehension by using the “television in the mind” strategy as well as the “fix-up” strategies so students can become more aware of themselves as readers and apply these strategies for when they find themselves struggling.

It is important for a teacher to remember that it is more beneficial for the students to incorporate the learning of these strategies within a text rather than to teach several disconnected strategies all at once. For example, if a teacher is reading a challenging literature selection as a whole group, the teacher can use that text to start a discussion about strategies that students used to comprehend what the plot events of the story were. After the teacher calls on a few students to share, he/she can use the time that follows to teach one or two helpful strategies that good readers use. By having the strategies relate to

the text, students will have an easier time of developing strength and independence.

While the social and personal relationships to metacognitive conversation promote thinking about processes and sharing those with others, the cognitive dimension of the framework focuses on collecting a range of strategies that can be used in order to make sense of texts. By compiling a range of strategies, students can learn new ways to become more independent readers. In the cognitive dimension, conversation plays a crucial role in helping students and teachers communicate a number of strategies that can be used by students who do not automatically use them on their own. Overall, the goal of this is to help students gain confidence and control of their own reading and comprehension.

VI. The Knowledge-Building Dimension

Finally, there is the “knowledge-building” dimension of the framework, which includes “identifying and expanding the knowledge readers bring to a text and further develop through personal and social interaction with that text...” (Education Development Center, Inc., 2008). The goal of knowledge-building is to “help children become active word solvers who can recognize words, take them apart or put them together, know what they mean and connect them to other words—all directed toward reading and writing continuous text” (Pinnell and Fountas, 1998, p. 31).

Pinnell and Fountas (1998) largely focus on specific strategies that help readers naturally understand how language works. Word studies are a way for teachers to observe children’s behavior while they are focusing on certain words, talking about them, noticing patterns, putting them together and taking them apart, and working with roots. “Word study activities involve inquiry and discovery processes in addition to practicing and

applying principles” (p. 111). They discuss the importance of having a “dynamic classroom environment for word solving,” which includes a word study center that centralizes on word work, name/theme/alphabet charts, word charts addressing patterns, and interactive word walls (p. 33-53). Remembering that language surrounds us everywhere and the complexities of language can be a challenge for young learners, word study gives children the opportunity to make their own discoveries about language and develop their reading and writing skills. Teachers can provide a number of valuable tools that will support students’ efforts in decoding language. Some activities include word sorts, prompts, word webs, crosswords, spelling dictionaries, and buddy checks. Other useful materials could include charts posted around the classroom giving readers tips and strategies to use in their reading and writing, such as “Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check,” charts of frequently used words, “Sound, Look, Mean, Connect, Inquire,” etc. These visuals will serve as a constant reminder for children to use these techniques in their own reading and writing. By engaging in more activities, students will begin to learn about the basics of language and eventually build upon their knowledge, developing the necessary skills to become proficient readers and writers.

Making Words is an inventive word study activity by Pat and Jim Cunningham (Rasinski and Oswald, 2005). The basic process involves the teacher handing out a list of letters and guiding the students in making words using structural, semantic, and syntactic clues. While the words start off very basic, students continue adding and/or cutting a few letters at a time, eventually using all of the letters to make a word. Making and Writing Words (MWW) is very similar; the only difference is that students write down words on a chart as opposed to using letter cutouts or tiles. The purpose is for students to recognize

the various characteristics of words through writing. MWW instruction in a second-grade classroom provided a hands-on and engaging activity that all students participated in. They were actively involved in word manipulation and even began to recognize patterns in other activities, particularly noticing smaller words within larger words. “Results indicated that students who received the MWW treatment made significant gains in decoding ability over a similar group of students receiving a more traditional phonics program (Rasinski and Oswald, 2005, p. 162). Students gained valuable experiences from the MWW treatment. They learned to analyze words from different perspectives; word recognition improved; self-esteem improved as children of all abilities were found to be successful with MWW; and students gained more knowledge about the meanings of words and how they are constructed. The second-grade students who were exposed to the MWW activities treatment group had about three times the gain in word recognition than the other second-grade class with standard phonics and basal instruction (Rasinski & Oswald, 2005).

The knowledge-building dimension of the framework not only encompasses word knowledge, but also knowledge about text format and structure across the curriculum. It is important that students understand how texts differ from subject to subject. A math textbook is structured much differently than a science textbook or a social studies textbook. When students are able to distinguish the differences among texts and why authors construct them in particular ways, comprehension improves and it is a step towards making students more independent readers. This idea also applies to different types of genre that students study. It is important that students understand that there are different characteristics of a book depending on the genre. When a student is able to distinguish those differences, it also makes them better readers because they know what to

expect when they are reading. After knowing the genre, they are better able to preview the text and ask themselves key questions in order to answer them as they read. When a student has word-knowledge and knowledge about text structure and genre, the actual discipline-specific knowledge naturally increases as a result.

Metacognitive conversation is just as important in the knowledge-building dimension as it is in any other dimension of the framework because it is through conversations that students are talking about a topic that they may or may not know much about. By administering pre-assessments before lessons, teachers can learn more about their students by figuring out what students already know and what they need to learn. These pre-assessments on the teacher's end can spark meaningful conversation before learning about a new topic. While a student may be internally thinking about what he/she already knows about the topic, the teacher and the whole class can share what they already know. For the students who may not have the same background knowledge as another student, they can listen to the knowledge being transferred through conversation to help them build on their schemata before delving into the lesson in detail. This is one way to use conversation meaningfully to build students' knowledge.

Students need to develop knowledge of texts' structures and topic knowledge. Although all four dimensions of the framework are interdisciplinary, it is easier to understand the knowledge-building component when relating it to the disciplinary subjects. Students need to recognize the differences between the text structure of a science book, math book, reading book, and social studies book. They also need to understand the language and terminology used in each of these types of texts, as well as the author's purposes, the audience of the text, function of a text, and the large questions that texts

propose. As educators, we often read the latest research and journal publications and understand the “teacher jargon” that is used throughout, yet we may find it more challenging to read a book or article about nuclear engineering, such as *Experimental Investigation and CFD Simulation of Horizontal Stratified Two-Phase Flow Phenomena* (Vallee, 2008). Texts that students read in the content areas are designed in the same way. The terminology is domain-specific and even the structure and format of a text is different from another content areas. Through think-alouds and class discussions, teachers can make their thinking visible to students early on in their school careers and they can go into more depth and detail as students progress into the next grade level. By doing this, teachers can help build discourse knowledge and prepare students to tackle challenging texts.

VII. The Role of Metacognitive Conversation

At the center of the Reading Apprenticeship Framework is metacognitive conversation, which is the ongoing internal and external discussions that take place with students and teachers about the social environment, personal relationships in reading, cognitive activity, and the knowledge that is necessary to make sense of text (Schoenbach, et al, 1999, p. 22). It is through self-reflection and group sharing that students can begin to understand themselves as readers. By holding these routine conversations in a classroom, students are given the opportunity to understand *what* they are reading, *why* they are reading, and *how* they are reading.

Relating metacognitive conversation to each of the four dimensions of the framework is crucial in order to understand its function. To establish the social dimension

of the framework through metacognitive conversation, it is important to create a safe environment where students feel comfortable discussing areas of reading that cause difficulty. Students need to be able to express when they got confused reading a text, what confused them, and what strategies they found useful.

The relationship between metacognitive conversations and the social dimension can help to make students feel comfortable and will set the tone for conversation and learning in the classroom. Teachers can have ongoing discussions about reading with their students, using questions that range from interests in reading to observations about how and why people read. Teachers and students can share books and get others excited about reading. Teachers may have students share with one another which books they liked, why they liked them, and they can even share how they came about choosing a book. Not only does book sharing open communication with students, but it also encourages that type of environment in which reading is seen as fun, important, and safe for everyone.

Reading comprehension is an aspect of literacy that causes trouble for students of all ages. For students who struggle with comprehension, sharing their confusions in front of their peers is not always easy. Therefore, it is important that teachers stress this safe environment and communicate to those students how important it is for them to talk about what is confusing in texts. Once students share these confusions, it opens up communication to everyone. Students can share strategies they use to make sense of texts. This not only benefits the student who struggles, but it also benefits the other students because it allows everyone to look at reading from a different perspective they may not have previously considered.

Proficient readers also monitor their comprehension in a text. They do this by asking themselves questions as they are reading and asking themselves if what they just read makes sense. Being able to summarize a text is also an important characteristic of comprehension. Children should be able to read a text and restate in their own words what happened in that text. If they cannot do that, the comprehension is not present and another strategy needs to be used in order to understand the text. The role of metacognitive conversation in the cognitive dimension focuses on students being exposed to a variety of strategies that are going to help them become more powerful readers on their own. The external conversation takes place when a teacher models strategies in meaningful ways connected to specific texts, while the internal conversation takes place when an individual student determines what strategies worked well and what strategies they find useful for them as individuals.

Metacognitive conversation in each of the four dimensions serves as the glue of the framework. It is the necessary conversation between teachers and students, students and their peers, as well as the internal conversation that takes place in the individual. Each of these discussions that take place contribute to the individual developing a reader identity. This will allow students to analyze themselves as readers. Metacognitive conversation in each domain is vital to understanding the whole reader. After conversing about reading socially, personally, cognitively, and from the knowledge-building perspectives, connections among the individual are being made and built upon. Conversation is the key to helping a student figure out who they are as readers and what they can do to become independent readers in all of the core content areas being taught in the school system.

VIII. The Role of the Teacher and the Student in Relation to the Framework

“When I look back, I am so impressed again with the life-giving power of literature. If I were a young person today, trying to gain a sense of myself in the world, I would do that again by reading, just as I did when I was young” - Maya Angelou

Literature has the power to influence and inspire all readers. Novice readers begin with little knowledge about text, but as they increase the amount of meaningful encounters with text, they become more knowledgeable about information they are reading, and they become active, independent readers. Through years of experience with text, under the guidance of a thoughtful teacher, students transform from novice to expert readers. One way of accomplishing this is through the teacher-student apprenticeship.

An apprenticeship can be thought of as an expert guiding a novice in a particular art or trade. Therefore, the Reading Apprenticeship Framework requires both the students and teachers to play critical roles in order to accomplish the goals of the framework. In a classroom setting, the teacher serves as the expert reader who is guiding his or her students through the reading process, while the student is the novice who is learning how to read a variety of texts and recognize its distinguishing features in order to comprehend it as fully as possible. The goal is to then have those students who were once novices slowly transform into independent readers who can tackle any text that they come across.

The teacher has many critical roles in this process of guiding students from novice to expert. First, the teacher must recognize that reading is a process and in order to fully understand the complexities involved, it will take students' years of experience, many

approximations, and wide exposure to a variety of texts to become independent. Therefore, it is the teachers' responsibility to guide the process not only throughout the school year but from grade to grade as well. As the expert, the teachers also need to demonstrate and share their own thought-processes during teaching. They need to listen to students' thoughts and ideas in order to understand their thinking and plan accordingly. Teachers need to figure out what students already know and then build on that knowledge in order to progress. When teaching students how to read particular pieces of text, an excellent strategy is to prompt students by asking questions that will entail a deeper level of thinking. This encourages students to think more deeply on their own without being directly told what to do. It also opens up active discussion about topics or strategies that students' use in their own reading to come up with conclusions. The teacher needs to encourage students to explore their reader identities and set achievable long- and short-term goals.

Overall, the role of the teacher is to use the framework as a guide to his or her teaching. By keeping the four dimensions in mind during every lesson and maintaining purposeful metacognitive conversations in one way or another, the teacher is guiding and modeling to students what takes place in the mind of an expert reader and then influencing each child to work their way towards becoming an independent, strategic reader.

While the teacher's role is to serve as the expert reader and guide students to read a variety of text, the student also plays an equally vital role in the apprenticeship. Although they are the "novice" compared to the teacher, the student is the one who can show progress and understanding of texts in the learning process. In order to do this, the most important role of the student is to be an active participant in his or her own learning. They

must accept the guidance from the teacher and trust that the teacher will lead them in the right direction. By actively participating, students will be able to gain a better sense of themselves as readers. As they begin to develop this reader identity, students will be able to understand where their strengths lie and what goals still remain to be accomplished. Again, as Maya Angelou states, literature has the power to help a person gain a sense of who he or she is. It is through reading that the novice will eventually transform into the expert as long as both student and teacher are fulfilling their responsibilities.

IX. Conclusion

Given all of the complexities that currently exist in literacy education, the adapted Reading Apprenticeship Framework is an excellent structure for teachers to follow. The ideas and goals that guide the framework focus on truly helping students at this level to understand text in order to become independent readers. The framework encompasses all the main ideas of learning and considers learners and learning from a holistic viewpoint.

The framework can foster conditions for learning that help students to become more independent readers. Teachers can encourage children to think about their thinking, to understand how social contexts can enhance their own reading, to analyze their own reading strengths and set goals for what they plan to accomplish, to understand the various strategies that exist and choose which strategies work best for them as an individual, and to build knowledge of text structure, format, and content.

Elementary school is the time for students to develop routines in their learning and begin to discover their reader identities. It is in the early stages of children's lives when

they begin to learn to read; therefore, it should also be a time when they learn to recognize all of the other components that contribute to successful, independent reading, despite all of its complexities. It is through this adapted framework that students will simply begin their journey of becoming lifelong readers. This framework fosters a learning environment that invites children to literacy learning in all its complexities and serves as a set of principles to guide teachers as they make important decisions about literacy teaching. Although “change” is a factor that creates these complexities, teachers who follow the framework from the beginning stages of learning have the potential to turn novice readers who are still learning about reading into developing readers who begin to develop reader identities and recognize the various processes that go into reading.

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