Triple R Teaching

So you have a grade level text you want your whole class to read. How can you make the most of this reading comprehension lesson? What are the before, during, and after reading activities you can do to help make this text accessible and interesting to everyone? That's what we're going to cover today!

Welcome to Triple R Teaching, where we encourage you to think differently about education by helping you reflect, refine, and recharge. This isn't just about trying something new as you educate those entrusted to your care. We'll equip you with simple strategies and practical tips that will fill your toolbox and reignite your passion for teaching. It's time to reflect, refine, and recharge with your host, Anna Geiger.

Hello, hello! Anna Geiger here from Reach All Readers. Today, we're talking reading

they're reading the same text, what's the best way to go about this?

I'm going to share something with you from our online course, Teaching Every Reader, and this is based on a framework called the Berger framework. I have not been able to track down who Berger was or where the Berger framework came from, but it's something I learned about when I took The Reading Teacher's Top Ten Tools by Deb Glaser. We have adjusted this framework a little bit to make it our own, but I want you to know that this comes from the Berger framework.

This is a really useful thing to keep in mind as you're planning a whole group lesson because you don't want to go down the old path of having everyone take turns reading round robin style, and then reading a list of questions at the end. There's so much more we can do to make the text interesting and accessible.

Before you read the text with your class, make a note of the things you want your students to learn. Remember, the thing you write down should not be, "I want them to learn to make connections," or, "I want them to learn to do cause and effect." Those things are important and they can be a secondary item because they are important reading strategies, but the main thing is you want them to learn something from the text, right?

So if you want them to learn to compare and contrast, what are they comparing and contrasting? Make sure the text is worth reading. Maybe the text is the difference between frogs and toads, and that's what you want them to learn. Learning knowledge for knowledge's sake is important. Learning vocabulary for vocabulary's sake is important. That's really what you want to start with, the themes or concepts that are most important for your students to learn.

The next thing you should write down is the things in the text that may be difficult for your students. For example, a text that uses a lot of pronouns to refer to items in previous sentences can be a little hard for young or struggling readers. Maybe there are things in the text that are not explicitly stated, and students will need to make inferences. Those are things you should mark.

I'll be upfront with you, if you are brand new to this, this step is probably going to be hard. You may not have really analyzed a text this deeply before. In our course, Teaching Every Reader, we go through this quite a bit, talking about what could make a text challenging, like challenging sentence structures, cohesive ties, so that's going back to those pronouns where something is related to something else, and helping students make those connections. But as you get practice with this, you will start to notice what parts of the text may trip your students up.

Once you've made these notes for yourself, you know the things that you're going to focus on during your lesson. It's time to think about your before, during, and after reading activities. As you begin to read the text, probably with echo reading or coral reading (NOT round robin reading), make sure that you start by setting a purpose for reading. Tell your students what you want them to learn.

If necessary, address key vocabulary words. Some of them you may need to pre-teach. However, if you think that they can figure out what the words mean by context, you can wait to discuss them as they come up. You want to call attention to any of those things that are challenging such as an especially long sentence. If there's a text structure that's obvious, talk about it. Maybe it's a descriptive text. Maybe it's a text that very clearly compares and contrasts something. Maybe it's a text that addresses a problem and a solution. Call attention to the text structure. If you're reading a fiction text, you might make predictions about the plot.

Here's something else you could do. If you're reading a nonfiction text about a topic that you think your students know something about, you could make a list of the vocabulary words they might find in the text. You could have them have the text turned over and you could say, "Today, we're reading a text comparing frogs and toads. Who can give some words that we might find in this text?" and they'll probably list words like

amphibian, tadpole, and so on. It's really fun for kids if you put those words up on the board where everybody can see it and then keep a tally of the words as they appear in the text. It will really keep their attention.

Whether you're just getting started in your teaching career, or you're an experienced teacher ready to learn more about the science of reading, our online course, Teaching Every Reader, is for you. The doors open on May 16th, 2022. When you join us, you'll get access to eight video modules all about the science of reading and how to apply it to your day to day teaching. Module one is all about the big picture. Gain a solid understanding of the science of reading. Module two will help you build a solid foundation of oral language. Module three is all about phonological and phonemic awareness, and the following modules will help you teach phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. Finally, in the final module, you'll learn how to use what you've learned to plan differentiated small group lessons. We've even got a bonus module all about teaching learners with dyslexia. To learn more, visit teachingeveryreader.com.

If the text has text features like headings, subheadings, illustrations, or bold print, call attention to those things before they read. If you're going to be using this text to teach a reading comprehension strategy such as cause and effect or monitoring comprehension or building background or using prior knowledge, discuss that before you begin.

As you are reading the text with your students, stop at vocabulary words that may be difficult. Stop at those words you introduced before reading, or those words that you marked, but decided to have students try to figure out the meaning using context.

Note cohesive ties. If they are reading a sentence and you know that a phrase in that sentence refers to something in a previous sentence, you can stop, direct them to that cohesive tie, they can underline it, and then you can say, "This is the word 'they.' What is 'they' referring to? Oh yes, 'they' is referring to amphibians, which was in the previous sentence." If it's a text they can write in, which is always useful, have them underline that word and draw an arrow to the word that precedes it.

You could do a think-pair-share. At different points in the reading, you could stop, ask a question related to the text, have students talk about it with each other, and then take turns sharing it with the group. You can ask quick questions about the text that can be answered with a thumbs up or a thumbs down. You can stop at different points to summarize what you've read so far.

You see how this whole class reading of a text is really quite deep and thick. It's not just

reading it and being done, it's stopping often to discuss it. If you have your questions and your points of discussion ready, and you're involving the students and not just calling on individual students here and there, you can keep them engaged and you can make this interesting. Not only will their comprehension in general improve, but, of course, they'll also learn some useful information.

Other things teachers like to do is have their students code the text. Maybe you choose just two or three things they could use to code. For example, a star if they think something is important, a question mark if they're confused, and an exclamation mark if it was something really interesting.

Finally, after reading, and you can see we've already done a ton of work with the text, you're going to review the vocabulary words that you taught. You're going to ask both low and high level questions. You're going to have students work to summarize the text, maybe in pairs. You could have them do a writing activity. They could complete a graphic organizer. Each child could write a quiz about the text and then switch quizzes with another student and see how they do at completing each other's quiz.

I hope that this has helped you see that a reading comprehension lesson does not have to be dry and boring. There's so much you can do to make it interesting. Inside our course, Teaching Every Reader, we actually have a three-part module all about reading comprehension, and we go through everything: a summary of the research, how to teach story structure and text structure and cohesive ties, how to teach reading comprehension strategies and keep them in the proper perspective, as well as working through a reading comprehension lesson as you've heard today.

In the show notes for this episode, reachallreaders.com/episode76, I'm going to in the course, so you can print this out and use it as you plan your own reading comprehension lessons. Thanks so much for listening, and we'll talk to you again next week!