

Day 3 ELA Sessions

Winter Institute 2017

Grades P-3

Table of Contents

Student Profile	3
Reflection	4
Dimensions of Complexity	5
Blog Post: Using the “Juicy Sentence” to Help Students Access Complex Text	6
Deconstruction Exercise I	8
Deconstruction Exercise II	9
Creating Text Dependent Questions	10
Considerations for TDQs	11
Blog Post: Grammar and Comprehension	12

Student Profile

Student Name _____

Where does this student excel?	
Home language? Language minority?*	
Reading/literacy level and ability	
Interests	
Interaction with peers	
Writing ability	
Additional background	
Concerns	
<p>*The subgroup of the language minority population does not speak, understand, read, or write the dominant language well enough to participate effectively in an English-only classroom. They are referred to as “minorities” not just because they are not a numerical majority in the population (although they may be locally) but because they often wield little influence or power within the country. American Indians, for example, are sometimes considered language minorities even if they speak only English because their history includes a non-English language and repressive language and cultural policies by the US federal government, so that their current use of English was impacted by that history</p>	

Reflection

Questions	Beginning of the Day Reflection: Think about your current practice as it applies to the question.	End of Sessions Reflection: How will your current practice change based on the day's learning?
How do I provide my students the time and support they need to access text at a complexity level beyond their independent reading level?		
How do I address reading fluency and language development through the texts I teach?		
What is my process for preparing to teach texts before I teach them?		
How do I use the standards for lesson planning?		
How do I strike a balance between working with fiction and nonfiction text in the classroom?		

Figure 2: Qualitative Dimensions of Text Complexity

Levels of Meaning (literary texts) or Purpose (informational texts)

- Single level of meaning → Multiple levels of meaning
- Explicitly stated purpose → Implicit purpose, may be hidden or obscure

Structure

- Simple → Complex
- Explicit → Implicit
- Conventional → Unconventional (chiefly literary texts)
- Events related in chronological order → Events related out of chronological order (chiefly literary texts)
- Traits of a common genre or subgenre → Traits specific to a particular discipline (chiefly informational texts)
- Simple graphics → Sophisticated graphics
- Graphics unnecessary or merely supplementary to understanding the text → Graphics essential to understanding the text and may provide information not otherwise conveyed in the text

Language Conventuality and Clarity

- Literal → Figurative or ironic
- Clear → Ambiguous or purposefully misleading
- Contemporary, familiar → Archaic or otherwise unfamiliar
- Conversational → General academic and domain-specific

Knowledge Demands: Life Experiences (literary texts)

- Simple theme → Complex or sophisticated themes
- Single themes → Multiple themes
- Common, everyday experiences or clearly fantastical situations → Experiences distinctly different from one's own
- Single perspective → Multiple perspectives
- Perspective(s) like one's own → Perspective(s) unlike or in opposition to one's own

Knowledge Demands: Cultural/Literary Knowledge (chiefly literary texts)

- Everyday knowledge and familiarity with genre conventions required → Cultural and literary knowledge useful
- Low intertextuality (few if any references/allusions to other texts) → High intertextuality (many references/allusions to other texts)

Knowledge Demands: Content/Discipline Knowledge (chiefly informational texts)

- Everyday knowledge and familiarity with genre conventions required → Extensive, perhaps specialized discipline-specific content knowledge required
- Low intertextuality (few if any references to/citations of other texts) → High intertextuality (many references to/citations of other texts)

Adapted from ACT, Inc. (2006). *Reading between the lines: What the ACT reveals about college readiness in reading*. Iowa City, IA: Author; Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy. (2010). *Time to act: An agenda for advancing adolescent literacy for college and career success*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York; Chall, J. S., Bissex, G. L., Conrad, S. S., & Harris-Sharples, S. (1996). *Qualitative assessment of text difficulty: A practical guide for teachers and writers*. Cambridge, UK: Brookline Books; Hess, K., & Biggam, S. (2004). A discussion of "increasing text complexity." Published by the New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont departments of education as part of the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP). Retrieved from www.nciea.org/publications/TextComplexity_KH05.pdf

Blog Post: Using the “Juicy Sentence” to Help Students Access Complex Text

Chris Hayes

The juicy sentence is a strategy developed by Lily Wong Fillmore, specifically to address the needs of ELL’s and accessing complex text. But, I have found it to be a useful tool for all students. The juicy sentence provides the opportunity for students to gain a deeper understanding of the text by breaking apart a complex sentence. Through this close look at the sentence, many aspects of language can be taught in context. Here is my version of how the juicy sentence can be used in a classroom:

- After engaging the students in a close read using an exemplar, a BAP lesson, a RAP lesson, or even a class read-aloud, I choose a sentence worthy of our time which may include: vocabulary worth investigating further, complex structure, language features that match grade level language standards, etc.
- I write the sentence on the board and ask the students to copy the sentence verbatim. Then the students are instructed to write what they think the sentence means. We then discuss the meaning of the sentence, which will usually lead to a deeper discussion of how that sentence relates to the story we had read. I also take this opportunity to discuss any vocabulary and the use of context clues to determine the meaning (other instructional opportunities may come up for vocabulary – word replacement, etc.)
- Then I have the students write about “anything else they notice” about the sentence. This is difficult at first, as they need some modeling as to what this means. This is when I really go into the language standards – circling verbs and discussing tense, circling words with affixes and discussing meanings, base words, etc., circling punctuation and discussing purpose, etc... The grade level language standards really drive this learning.
- The last part I ask the students to do is to rewrite the sentence using the same structure as the author. For example, if the sentence uses quotations, the students will include the same quotations. If the sentence is a compound sentence, the students will write a compound sentence. The topic does not have to mimic the original sentence, and actually, I think it shows a deeper understanding when it doesn’t.

Here is an example from a fifth grade story found in Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's, *Katie's Trunk*:
My breath got caught somewhere midst my stomach and chest, and I could not get it back.

This sentence gives the opportunity to discuss how the sentence relates to the overall meaning of the story, to determine the meaning of *midst* using context clues, to teach about compound sentence structures, and verb endings. Another version of how to use a juicy sentence is described in the article found on this website:

<http://leafturned.wordpress.com/2010/03/13/juicy-language/> .

After using the juicy sentence to examine syntax, you can take this instruction further. Judith Hochman uses kernel and complex sentences to expand students' understanding of syntax in her book *Teaching Basic Writing Skills*. A kernel is when a sentence is broken apart into the smallest sentence possible (Volcanoes erupt). The complex sentence expands a kernel into a more detailed, complex sentence. You can begin this understanding by tearing the juicy sentence into a kernel, and expanding it using the student's own language. Then this learning can be connected to sentence expansion with the students' personal writing. Hochman's book also gives specific examples to learning other aspects of language from the sentence level to full essay writing, with applications from K-6th grades.

More information about Lily Wong Fillmore's work can be found in this article:
(http://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/academic-papers/06-LWF%20CJF%20Text%20Complexity%20FINAL_0.pdf)

Deconstruction Exercise I

With those words, the first since her mama went searching, Nasreen opened her heart to Mina.

1. Copy the sentence.
2. Write, "I think this sentence means _____."
3. Write other things that you notice.
4. Write a new sentence mimicking the author's structure.

Deconstruction Exercise II

I heard whispers about a school – a secret school for girls – behind a green gate in a nearby lane.

1. Copy the sentence.
2. Write, “I think this sentence means _____.”
3. Write other things that you notice.
4. Write a new sentence mimicking the author’s structure.

Creating Text Dependent Questions

1. Identify the standards that are being addressed
2. Identify the core understandings and key ideas of the text
3. Target small but critical-to-understand passages
4. Target vocabulary and text structure
5. Tackle tough sections head-on: notice things that are confusing and ask questions about them
6. Create coherent sequences of text-dependent questions
7. Create the assessment

Text Dependent Questions for Close Reading Demand that Students:

1. Focus on specific excerpts of a text
2. Notice and work through things that are confusing
3. Collaborate with peers when possible
4. Work with questions that may have more than one answer derived or inferred from text

Considerations for TDQs

STEP	RESPONSE
<p>Identify the standards that are being addressed</p>	
<p>Identify the core understandings and key ideas of the text</p>	
<p>Target small but critical-to-understand passages <i>Why is this passage critical to understanding?</i></p>	
<p>Target vocabulary and text structure <i>List vocabulary and elements of structure demonstrated in the passage.</i></p>	
<p>Tackle tough sections head-on: notice things that are confusing and ask questions about them <i>What might be confusing about this text?</i></p>	
<p>Create coherent sequences of text-dependent questions <i>List your sequence of questions</i></p>	
<p>Create the assessment <i>How will you assess understanding?</i></p>	

Blog Post: Grammar and Comprehension

Scaffolding Student Interpretation of Complex Text

Dr. Timothy Shanahan, retrieved from shanahanonliteracy.com, June 17, 2015

I'm a fourth grade special education teacher in NYC. Our school has acquired a new reading/writing program and has discontinued a grammar program we've used for several years. In the new program the grammar component is virtually non-existent. On a gut level I feel that students are struggling with test questions, even math ones, due to lack of practice/knowledge of grammar. They simply don't understand what the questions are asking. I was wondering what your opinion/research shows as far as the relationship between grammar instruction and reading comprehension. Do you have any preference as far as grammar programs/teaching methodologies go?

Great question. There is a lot of evidence showing the importance of grammar in reading comprehension. Studies over the years have shown a clear relationship between syntactic or grammatical sophistication and reading comprehension; that is, as students learn to employ more complex sentences in their oral and written language, their ability to make sense of what they read increases, too.

Also, readability measures are able to predict how well students will comprehend particular texts on the basis of only two variables: vocabulary sophistication and grammatical complexity. At least for the Lexile formula, grammar is much more heavily weighted than vocabulary. This means that the text factor that is most predictive of comprehensibility is how complicated the sentences are grammatically.

There are also experimental studies that show that there are ways that grammar can be taught formally that improve reading comprehension. For example, teaching students to combine sentences seems to improve how well students understand what they read. Clearly, it makes sense to guide students to understand how sentences work.

Studies of metacognition and theories of reading comprehension suggest the importance of students having a language of grammar (knowing the difference between a noun and a verb for example), and common sense would suggest that it makes sense to help students to unpack sentences that confuse them.

That doesn't necessarily justify a lot of grammar worksheets and the like, but it does argue for teaching students about sentences as they meet them. For example, look at the following sentence from Nikki Giovanni:

“The women of Montgomery, both young and older, would come in with their fancy holiday dresses that needed adjustments or their Sunday suits and blouses that needed just a touch—a flower or some velvet trimming or something to make the ladies look festive.”

It is a long sentence (44 words), and it has lots of embedding (witness the author’s use of 2 commas and an em-dash). I surmise many students would struggle to make sense of this sentence primarily because of the complex grammar. How would you deal with this?

First, I would have the students read this page from Giovanni’s *Rosa* and one of the questions I would ask would be, “What did the women of Montgomery do?” Perhaps I’d find that the students weren’t as perplexed as I assumed in which case I’d move on. But let’s imagine that they couldn’t answer my question... then I’d show them how to break this sentence down.

For example, I would point out that the phrase between the commas, “both young and older,” adds an idea but that I want to set it aside for now. That would simplify the sentence a bit:

“The women of Montgomery would come in with their fancy holiday dresses that needed adjustments or their Sunday suits and blouses that needed just a touch – a flower or some velvet trimming or something to make the ladies look festive.”

Even with such a simple change, I bet more kids would understand it better, but maybe not. Let’s go further:

As with the commas, the word “that” (which shows up twice here) signals the inclusion of a separate or additional idea, and as a reader that is another point of attack that I can use in trying to interpret this sentence. And the word “or” is another good place to separate these additional ideas.

Let’s slice the sentence at the first “that” and the first “or:”

“The women of Montgomery would come in with their fancy holiday dresses”

“that needed adjustments”

“or their Sunday suits and blouses that needed just a touch—a flower or some velvet trimming or something to make the ladies look festive.”

Obviously, we could keep breaking this one down, but again, many kids would get it at this point: The women were bringing in their fancy dresses... Which women? The young and the old. Which fancy dresses? The ones that needed adjustments. What other kinds of outfits did they bring in? Sunday suits and blouses. Which suits and blouses? The ones that needed just a touch—something that would make them look festive.

The point of this kind of exchange would not be to teach grammar per se, but to help students to untangle complex grammar so that they could independently make sense of what they read. Frankly, few of our children know what to do when they confront this kind of text complexity. Kids who know something about sentences and parts of speech will be at an advantage, but they still will not necessarily be able to interpret a sentence from that alone. This kind of scaffolded analysis is aimed at both untangling the meaning of this sentence and in giving students some tools for unpacking such sentences when they are on their own.

Your reading program should provide some instruction in grammar, and it should provide you with some support in providing students with instruction in parts of speech, sentence combining, and/or the kinds of scaffolding demonstrated here. It is pure romanticism that assumes that children will just figure this kind of thing out without any explicit instruction (and it is even more foolish to assume that English language learners will intuit these things without more direct support).