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Introduction

This is the third in a series of activity booklets intended to help educators from public, private or home-schooling environments to develop skills for third millennium schooling. The ‘third millennium school’ builds on what we have learnt about education in the second millennium and pushes our thinking forward to what the next generation of students will need to know and understand if they are to survive in a rapidly changing political, economic and social environment. It suggests that there should be a new focus for education – the global – and a new scope for education – education for everyone. It identifies four pillars of third millennium learning:

- education for survival in the third millennium
- education to understand our place in the world
- education to understand communities
- education to develop personal responsibility

The third millennium schools are made up of what we call ‘the global classroom’ (see Townsend and Otero, *The Global Classroom*, Hawker Brownlow Education, 1999). In the global classroom, relationships drive teaching and learning. You may, therefore, find the global classroom at the kitchen table of home-schoolers, on a project to improve housing conditions in a community devastated by a natural disaster, as well as in the more commonly known context of teachers and a number of students. The global classroom is built on relationships. I believe strongly that all learning is relational (see Otero and Sparks, *Relational Learning*, Hawker Brownlow Education, 2000).

This guide focuses specifically on the skills and abilities needed for the first pillar, education for survival in the third millennium. Those skills include, but are not limited to:

- literacy and numeracy
- communication skills
- critical thinking skills

Overview

To be functionally literate in today’s world with the increasingly rapid rate of change and the dynamics of interdependence working on each of us, we must develop the ability to critically read and think about our global society and our role in such a changing world.

This guide is designed as an activity supplement for secondary teachers interested in helping students in years 6–12 improve their ability to critically read content materials. In addition to



Introduction

The activities in this section are intended to help students in content courses take control of the reading process in their learning. These activities demonstrate important aspects of the reading process in a format that secondary students and content teachers can understand. Many of these activities model skills that students must utilise to read content material effectively. Other activities can be used to demonstrate to students aspects of the reading process in a way that will enable the students to better understand and communicate to the teacher those reading skills that may be preventing them from effectively reading the materials used in the classroom. In summary, these activities focus on the ‘basics’ of reading to learn.

What is Taught and What is Caught

Much of what we teach to students is presented to them with the assumption that they will learn the material as we have given it to them. Basic to this entire guide and to the effective teaching of reading and thinking skills is the fact that what is taught is not necessarily what is caught. Ten people can read the same document and get ten different meanings from what they read. This difference in interpretation has little to do with the ability of the person to read the words on the page. The interpretations have everything to do with the frame of reference, experiences and perceptions of the reader. This reading helps to document this point.

Ask the students if they can remember what they learned about geography when they were in lower primary school. Tell them you are going to read to them (or have them read) what one boy remembers that he learned about geography.

Read the following article or have students read the article, picking out those statements that indicate that the boy learned something other than what the teachers probably had in mind.

Ask students to suggest possible reasons that would explain why people do not always learn the same thing, even when they have read the same materials.

Some possible explanations include the following:

- cultural training
- individual perceptions
- frame of reference
- purpose in reading materials
- motivation
- time taken to examine materials
- rewards and punishments associated with the reading and learning
- past experiences

Each of these factors affects what we read, how we read, and what we will learn when we read. These factors must be taken into account when studying any subject matter. We all have a relationship to the subject matter. We gain more control over what we are



Reading Levels – A Guide

Independent Level

This is the level at which a student can read with no more than one word recognition error in each 100 words (99%) with at least 90% comprehension.

The independent reading level is the highest level at which the student can read with full understanding and ample evidence of success. The reading is done without tension movements, lip movement, finger pointing, and other evidence of difficulty.

Silent reading is characterised by a relatively fast rate of comprehension and absence of vocalisation. Oral reading is characterised by superior comprehension, rhythm, accurate interpretation of punctuation, accurate pronunciation of more than 99% of the words, and a conversational tone.

At the independent level, the reading is fluent and good reading habits are practised. At this level, the child should be able to read from trade books with efficiency.

Instructional Level

This is the level at which the student can read with no more than five word recognition errors in 100 words (95%) with 80% comprehension.

The instructional, or teaching, level is the highest level at which the child can read satisfactorily under teacher supervision in a group situation. For normal progress, this reading has the same characteristics as independent reading, with one exception: the student may require help on the recognition of not more than five words in 100.

At this level, the student should be able to read successfully with teacher guidance. This should be the level of the student's content reading material.

Frustrational Level

This is the level at which the pupil can no longer read effectively. Comprehension is about 50%, based on factual and inferential questions. The student is unable to pronounce more than 95% of the vocabulary.

No student should be required to read at this level.

Cloze Procedure

The Cloze Procedure is a useful method for both teacher and students in determining to what degree the reader comprehends what is read. Often a student can read (decode) the words, but does not understand what has been read. Comprehension is a crucial part of reading. A student who does not comprehend what is read cannot be considered to be reading completely and definitely is not capable of critical reading about a social issue or historical event. The Cloze Procedure requires students to fill in blanks in the text in order to make it meaningful. Thus, if the student 'understands' the text, he or she can fill in many blanks accurately. The Cloze Procedure is a reader's best tool in understanding the printed word. We cannot understand what we read without it. This procedure amplifies the fact that the reading process is an ongoing endeavour in making meaning.



Answers

child; frightened

thunder; your brother; comfort

calmed; that

clouds; it; cold

mass; if

correct; about

thunder; that

would; explanation; someone

must; better

as; explain

a; happening

and; early

for; intrigued

him; of

twinkling; of

birth; important; is

more; knowing

and; in

needs; is

he; answers

to; need

to; too; unique

animals; who

believe; true

animals

Reading Skills





'Knowing' the Answers²

As a very young _____, you may remember being _____ by some natural occurrence – _____, for example. Running to _____ parents or an older _____ or sister, you sought _____ and protection. They probably _____ your fears by explaining _____ 'it was only the _____ bumping together, or that ' _____ was a mass of _____ air banging into a _____ of hot air.' Even _____ their explanations were scientifically _____, you probably learned nothing _____ the true nature of _____, for it is unlikely _____ at that age you _____ have really understood the _____. But the fact that _____ 'knew' what had happened _____ have made you feel _____. Thunder is somehow not _____ scary if you can _____ to yourself, even in _____ fanciful way, what is _____. In a similar way _____ for the same reasons, _____ man thought up explanations _____ the natural phenomena which _____, startled and often frightened _____ – earthquakes, drought, the movements _____ the sun and moon, _____ stars, the sudden death _____ a mate, the _____ of a child. 'Knowing' is _____ to man because he _____ a curious animal. But _____ important, it is through ' _____ ' that man finds security _____ the will to survive _____ his threatening world. Man _____ to know because he _____ uncomfortable and insecure when _____ does not know. The _____ do not necessarily have _____ be scientifically correct; they _____ only be convincing enough _____ dispel his fears. This, _____, is a trait _____ in man. Among the _____, man is the only one _____ knows and yet continues to _____ things that are not _____. Man alone of all the _____ is superstitious.