

# A Summary of the Focus on Comprehension Forum

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# Defining Reading Comprehension

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- Reading comprehension is the construction of meaning from text through a process that involves a reader, text, activity, and context of reading.
- Reader, text, activity, and context factors all need consideration in the design of comprehension instruction.

# The Components of Effective Comprehension Instruction



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- **1. Teaching comprehension strategies**
  - What comprehension strategies to teach
  - How comprehension strategies should be taught
    - See Michael Kamil's presentation at:  
[www.prel.org/programs/rel/comprehensionforum.asp](http://www.prel.org/programs/rel/comprehensionforum.asp)
- **2. Content-Focused Comprehension Instruction**
  - Ensuring a range of text genres and structures
  - Responses to and extensions of text (dialogic responses and responding in writing)

*From* THE THREE Cs OF  
COMPREHENSION INSTRUCTION

**Isabel Beck & Margaret McKeown**

**University of Pittsburgh**

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- **Focus on Content**
- **Make Connections**
- **Strive for high standards of Coherence**

From presentation given at the Focus on Comprehension Forum, October 1, 2004, New York City: See entire presentation (and others at: <http://www.prel.org/programs/rel/comprehensionforum.asp>)

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# Questioning the Author (QtA)

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Toward encouraging engagement, we developed Questioning the Author. It's an approach that attempts to focus students' attention on text content through directed discussion.

Teacher and student work through a text together:

- Portions of text are read.
- Open questions are interspersed.
- Students' responses are followed up and used to create focused discussion.

## QtA Discussion Moves

- Marking
- Turning-back
  - ....to students
  - ....to text
- Revoicing
- Modeling
- Annotating
- Recapping

## **Example of how a strategies approach and a content approach might play themselves out**

Students have just finished reading a short segment of text.

In a strategies approach, the teacher might ask the students to summarize the text and would ask them to recall what kind of information goes into a good summary. She might follow up a student's summary by asking other students if it was a good summary and why or why not.

In a content approach, the teacher might ask what the portion of text had been about, and as students respond, might follow up by asking how contributed pieces of information fit in with what is being read or why the information is important.

# Most researchers would agree:



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- **Students and teacher should work through a text together, at least some times.**
- **Most of the teacher's questions should be open questions that are not satisfied by simply retrieving information.**
- **Prompts should be provided that induce students to work through the ideas in a text.**
- **Make the kids do the work of thinking so that understanding is built and learning takes place.**

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- **3. Comprehension and Reading**
  - Volume of meaningful reading
  - Participation in communities of readers
  - Facility with text resources




# Ten Strategies for Building Comprehension of Informational Text

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1. Have a clear vision of effective comprehension of informational text.
2. **Increase exposure to and instructional time with informational text.**
3. Start early to lay a foundation for learning from text.
4. **Provide many opportunities to read and be read to.**
5. Accord appropriate attention to underlying skills and dispositions.

*from* N.K. Duke (October 2, 2004). Strategies for Building Comprehension of Informational Text. Entire presentation at:

[www.prel.org/programs/rel/comprehensionforum.asp](http://www.prel.org/programs/rel/comprehensionforum.asp) (Used with permission of presenter)

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6. Teach strategies for comprehending informational text.
  7. Foster rich talk with and about informational text.
  8. Make reading-writing connections with informational text.
  9. Increase attention to the unique and challenging characteristics of informational text.
  10. **Promote use of informational text for authentic purposes as much as possible.**



# Illustrations of Effective Comprehension Instruction

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- Teaching multiple strategies simultaneously may be particularly **powerful** (Duke & Pearson, 2002,; NRP, 2000; Pressley, 2000).

# Illustrations of Effective Comprehension Instruction

- Dickinson & Smith's dialogic book reading with preschoolers
- Echevarria, Vogt, & Short's SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Protocol)
- Beck & McKeown's Question the Author
- Guthrie's Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI)
- Collaborative Strategic Reading (Duke)
- All are described in more depth in Principal Investigators' presentations at:
- [www.prel.org/programs/rel/comprehensionforum.asp](http://www.prel.org/programs/rel/comprehensionforum.asp)