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05/31/2023

Teaching Strategy: Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)

Strategy Definition

The Directed Reading Thinking Activity strategy, developed by author Russell Stauffer in 1969, is a teaching strategy that guides students through the process of making and adjusting inferences about a text during reading to promote reading comprehension, critical thinking skills, and active reading.

Strategy Description

DRTA is used to actively engage students with their reading. This strategy guides students to make predictions and ask questions about a text before, during, and after reading, confirming or disproving their predictions as they read.

> **Direct**: In a guided reading activity for a predetermined text, teachers will activate students' prior knowledge by scanning elements of the text such as the title or illustrations. The teacher will guide students by asking open-ended questions and encourage the students to make predictions about the text before reading.
> **Read**: Then, students listen to or read the text up to a selected stopping point.
> **Think**: At the stopping point, the teacher will ask more open-ended questions about the text and students will be prompted to readjust or solidify their predictions based on evidence from the text to check for comprehension. This process will be repeated at each stopping point until the text is complete.

Strategy Benefits

Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) is an effective reading instruction strategy because it promotes **reading comprehension** and **critical thinking skills**. Students are able to engage and connect with the text in a variety of ways (i.e., activating prior knowledge, making predictions, and using the text to either confirm or refute those predictions) which ensures that each student is actively connected to what they are reading.

DRTA is also an excellent way to help students **keep track of their understanding** of a text because they reflect on their reading as they read. For example, teachers pre-select stopping points during reading to give the students a chance to process information and compare their predictions to the text. This could be especially useful in helping English Learners understand complicated texts. This strategy also **helps teachers check for student comprehension** during reading by having the students

talk through their thinking process when making initial predictions, then using the text to support or refute their prior predictions.

Further, DRTA **promotes a love for reading** by providing the students with a comprehensive reading strategy that they can use across the curriculum to help students better understand what they are reading and connect to any prior knowledge they may have about the theme or concept.

Demonstration Steps (Implementing Directed Reading Thinking Activity)

1. Teachers select a text and predetermine stopping points within the text.
2. Before beginning the activity, teachers introduce the "Before, During, After" prediction chart organizer and explicitly model how to use it by placing sticky notes under the appropriate headings.
3. Teacher introduces the text.
4. Teachers direct by thinking aloud and orchestrating discussions about the text by posing open-ended questions to activate prior knowledge and prompting students to make predictions about the text before reading based on the title and cover image. Students will record their predictions on a sticky note under "before reading" on the chart organizer, discuss their predictions with a partner, and share their predictions in class discussion.
5. Students listen to or read the text up to the stopping point.
6. At the stopping point, teachers ask questions to encourage students to think about and reflect on their reading, readjusting their predictions if necessary based on new evidence from the text. Students will record their new predictions on a sticky note under "during reading" on the chart organizer.
7. Repeat for each different section of the text until the text is complete.
8. Have students reflect on reading and summarize ideas from the text. They will record their final thoughts on a sticky note under "after reading" on the chart organizer and verbally discuss their thought process in a class discussion.

Book Collection (Textsets):

## Informational Book Collection Grades 2-3 (Theme: Earth Science)
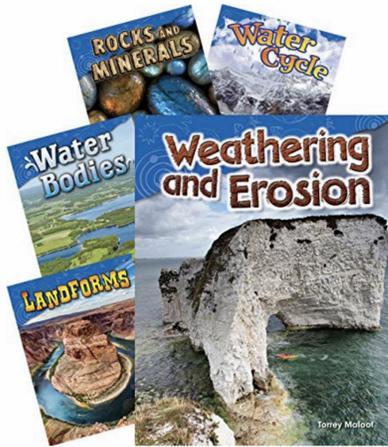
Purpose: This set of books by Teacher Created Materials, align with the 2nd and 3rd-grade Next Generation Science Standards. (i.e., "**2-ESS2 Earth's System**.") Students will engage with books related to specific scientific concepts such as the Water Cycle, Landforms, Rocks and Minerals, Weather and Erosion, and Water Bodies. **Note:** These books contain new vocabulary words, so it's essential to introduce the tier-2 words to students in a mini lesson prior to reading them reading the text.

- Maloof, T. (2014). *Weathering and Erosion*. Teacher Created Materials.
  - Summary: Through an engaging science experiment and easy-to-read-text, this non-fiction book breaks down the complexies of the weathering and erosion process.

- Maloof, T. (2014). *Water Cycle*. Teacher Created Materials.
  - Summary: This non-fiction book introduces students to the water cycle. Through detailed images and easy-to-read-text, students can engage and use critical thinking skills to connect what already know to this new information.

- Maloof, T. (2014). *Rocks and Minerals*. Teacher Created Materials.
  - Summary: The easy-to-read, non-fiction science book includes a fun and engaging science experiment used to engage students through the introduction to rocks (igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary) and minerals.

- Rice, D. H. (2014). *Water Bodies*. Teacher Created Materials.
  - Summary: This non-fiction book is used to teach students various types of water bodies.

- Rice, W. B. (2014) Landforms. Teacher Created Materials.
  - Summary: This book is used in conjunction with state standards to teach students the concept of landforms by engaging students with easy-to-read-text.

Narrative Book Collection Grades 2-3 (Theme: Magic Tree House)
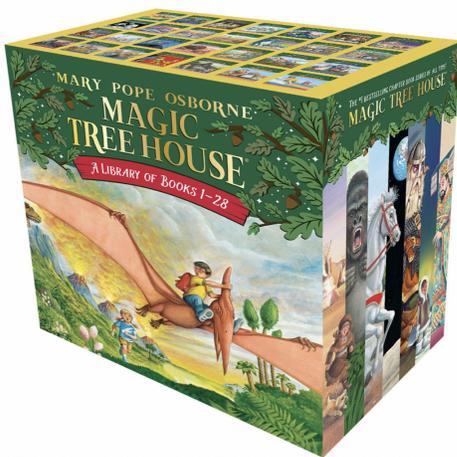
Purpose: The Magic Tree House series follows siblings Jack and Annie along many wondrous adventures. These nonfiction books offer plenty of opportunities for students and teachers to implement DRTA reading strategies.
- Osborne, M. P. (1992). *Dinosaurs Before Dark*. Random House Books for Younger Readers.
  - Jack and Annie discover a magic treehouse filled with books that take them on magical adventures. In this book, the sibling journey to prehistoric times where they encounter dinosaurs.
- Osborne, M. P. (1993). *The Knight at Dawn*. Random House Books for Younger Readers.
  - Jack and Annie time travel back in time for another adventure; this time they venture to a castle in medieval England.
- Osborne, M. P. (1993). *Mummies in the Morning*. Random House Books for Younger Readers.
  - Jack and Annie travel to ancient Egypt where they navigate the inside of a pyramid and meet an ancient ghost queen.
- Osborne, M. P. (1994). *Pirates Past Noon*. Random House Books for Younger Readers.

     ○   Jack and Annie venture to the eighteenth-century Carribean when they meet pirates and search for hidden treasure.

Example of DRTA:

Making Inferences.

| Clues from the book | **+** | What I already know | **=** | My Inference |

Making Predictions:
Good readers stop to infer what might happen next in the story.

I think...

Now I think...

Now I think...

Now I think...

Worksheets for making inferences and predictions are useful for implementing the DRTA strategy. Students can record their predictions on these worksheets as they read independently or follow along in a group reading.

References

Journal Article:
https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/267825043.pdf

Internet Resouces:
https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/drta#:~:text=The%20Directed%20Reading%20Thinking%20Activity,thoughtful%20readers%2C%20enhancing%20their%20comprehension.

https://www.k5learning.com/reading-comprehension-worksheets/second-grade-2/childrens-stories

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