

## Combined notes from Deb Smith/Ginger Weincek

### Tapping the Power of Thinking to Teach Reading Comprehension Spring 2003

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Intro:

Started 17 years ago; Left 3 years ago to work with poverty schools.

**Building an understanding of what the poverty looks like:** Working with 14 low-income school districts, 29 of the lowest schools (2 per district). Very lowest schools, Trenton NJ to Philadelphia, Cleveland Ohio, 16 languages in one school, 18 in another. New Haven, Connecticut. Crushing urban poverty. Working with 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, last year their 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher was shot in the parking lot as she was about to enter the building. Working in the South, Talladega, Alabama – where 40% of students have NO electricity. Kids without electricity, homes in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains; Dalton Georgia... in 5 years time, the population changed from 85% African American to 90% Hispanic from the mountains of Mexico (they are a HUGE carpet manufacturer and the factory work draws the Hispanic workers) – Anglo/African American teachers/ administration don't know what to do with the Spanish monolingual speakers; Mississippi – school district covers 1500 square miles, kids sleep in school on cots during week; Philadelphia – can't pull kids to gather around during a lesson because they can't sit on floor due to rats.

MOT was written for upper class, maybe middle class, she had never worked with kids in extreme poverty. Keene started asking herself, "Can this be done? "I am ashamed to admit I had my doubts" (the answer is YES and she is doing it with strugglers and getting some of the most POWERFUL thinking she has ever heard. MUCH MORE deep than her kids back in Denver!)

When they arrived at some of these building they found decades of the lowest amount of revenues – NO money for decades, teachers hoarded stuff, hiding supplies/partially used workbook, etc. in ceiling tiles.

Where do you start?

How do you move beyond the feeling that this is hopeless?

How can we get the teachers to believe in the ability to move these kids?

Can it be done?

Some of the districts have "lifetime certificates". No professional development, no one remembers EVER experiencing professional development or remembered anyone GETTING/OFFERING professional development.

They had high hopes of video conferencing between the schools but in reality they were dealing with "Where is there electricity?" "Are there computers? No."

What is the cross OVER point? The point where she KNEW this work was possible with these high poverty kids. The children are intellectually STARVING. They found it is so embarrassingly easy to get

the kids thinking at higher levels than the affluent kids in Denver. They are capable of extraordinarily writing, insights into their lives.

She shared how she had always accepted, as a happy accident, what her Denver kids were doing/saying. She talked a lot about conversations she had with her husband after a days work. “Guess what!! My kids were brilliant today... you have no idea how smart they were.” And she would go on to tell him something someone had said or done. She said he calls them her “God bless America” speeches. Her lawyer husband would always ask, “Why don’t they do that everyday?” Keene made a rash of excuses... barometric pressure, assemblies, but the truth is the guy was right.....

The reason they didn’t have higher levels daily, is: crummy teaching, she didn’t ask them to! She feels shame, she wasn’t asking them to think in higher-level thinking. She did all the literature units, how many dioramas can they do? She wasn’t creating the conditions. She wasn’t causing it to happen! Good comprehension instruction isn’t a happy accident. NOW they are asking it of these kids ALL THE TIME and GETTING IT!!!!

### High-level of instruction.

How many of us can say that kids are on fire, that it is daily fare?

She gave us examples of how she is constantly being courted by publishers to endorse their programs/materials:

“Dear Ellin,

Use the comprehension materials, sign that you agree that these are comprehension materials, we’ll use your name.” Blah blah blah.....

She is afraid that they are going to do it anyway. Companies say that these are widely comprehensive materials. They will even sometimes pay a lot of money for her endorsement. Now she doesn’t even open the HUGE boxes. She just carts them to the garbage.

The problem she has with these materials/programs is that they are insulting the kid’s intelligence. Meaningless text. IF USED FOR COMPREHENSION. She has NO problem using the books for word work. She made that quite clear. But NOT for comprehension work.

We face 3 big problems in teaching comprehension. These are the ideas that “someone” “somewhere” has defined as comprehension instruction/what “others” are BELIEVING comprehension teaching MEANS:

3 BIGGIE problems

1. **Answering questions** - teacher guiding the kids by the teachers asking the kids questions.

Basal questions – anthologies – read back cover, lame picture walks... Read page 2-3 what do you notice about the cat? What happened next? Asking simple literal questions. Guiding the kids through their reading, ridiculous, insulting to the kid’s intelligence. You don’t know what you are doing. We have to purchase this series for the first year teachers to get their feet on the ground. If you do these insipid questions and use insipid texts for year or two, it damages the teachers / colleagues thinking. Our thinking is ruined. This material is on the INCREASE. We are under enormous pressure to buy and use

these insipid materials. (again she stressed that THESE types of materials-books-are what we need to be using with our primary (k-2) students for WORD WORK- NOT comprehension work.)

2. **Retelling** - always asking kids to retell
3. **Vocabulary** – poor teaching of vocab when the students: look up the following words in the dictionary, write the words in the sentences.

Her daughter tested out of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade vocabulary workbook. She “got” to bring home the 8<sup>th</sup> grade vocabulary book. She finished it one evening! In and out of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade vocabulary book in 48 hours by writing meaningless sentences (I like anthropomorphism.) THAT THE TEACHER ACCEPTED.

Researchers say... **Comprehension isn't taught, but caught.**

Ellin has three big questions that still need to be answered since she wrote Mosaic of Thought.

### **Three Big Questions since MOT:**

1. **Redefining what comprehension even is.**
2. **Working that new definition of comp into the overall k12 program.**
3. **How do we tackle the day-to-day details of comprehension instruction when we are being asked to teach ‘formatted’ programs?**

### **Redefining Comprehension for this country –**

What is it that characterizes really smart thinking – how do you figure out a tough challenge? Extraordinary challenges.

#### Example 1

In college she turned in a paper that followed all the “expectations”. She received a B+. She marched into the professor’s office demanding to know why she didn’t receive an A. Saying it had what he had asked for. He told her there was not an ORIGINAL THOUGHT in the paper anywhere. THIS was her first glimpse of her first tough academic challenge. She had not IDEA how to have an original thought. No clue. She remembers the daunting nature of that challenge.

#### Example 2

1<sup>st</sup> year teacher – her mom was diagnosed with \_\_\_\_\_ (some type of cancer). Died at age 50, tight family, they had the best marriage, nothing like that had ever happened them. They started investigating/learning/searching/hunting. Got to Mayo, etc. Figuring out how to you get your arms around the disease? How do you come to understand oncology when you have no background?

What are the commonalities of how to figure out hard, difficult thinking?

Our kids want it to be hard. We are feeding them, “Why did Tom get on the table” instead we should be saying, it is going to be HARD, we are going to be frustrated. It is complex. We can then find the depths of our intellect. That is what school is for. School is not for insipid thinking. School is for the development of scholarship. School is for finding how hard you can work, how brilliant you are, how far you can go? Anyone can say, Q: “Do you know what these are?” A: “chili peppers”

Let's not say, "Ask them harder questions..."

Let's think back and think about a time when YOU were really struggling and figure out what you did to conquer hard difficult text.

The premise is "WHAT DO GOOD READERS DO TO FIGURE OUT HARD, DIFFICULT TEXT?"

\*\*\*She then asked us to write about a time WE remember an intellectually charged situation. It could be educational or not. (Like her examples above) She told us that after we wrote, we would share with JUST ONE OR TWO (not more) people next to us and then together we will EXTRACT the common elements from this experience.

WRITE FOR TEN MINUTES – gift of silence – true silence –

Deb's writing:

- reminds me of the book, How to Read A Book, by Mortimer Adler
- Thinking of the time when I took philosophy, didn't get it AT ALL, wondering if I wouldn't have done better to engage in conversations, a book study group to get feedback,
- Always scored well on tests, but always had a fear that I was not a good thinker.
- Wondering if I was ever really taught to have comprehension? What does it mean to comprehend?
- Reading ELA research for the last ten years.
- MOT class, forcing us to read and discuss and get to a higher plane of understanding.

Ginger's writing:

I remembered how after adopting my daughter at five days old she began showing signs of distress/trauma. Crying all the time. Unable to be consoled. I KNEW something was wrong. I had so many questions. I was aware that I needed to learn what was going on with her. I began reading. I searched adoption books. I ordered articles from Eric searches. I weeded out what fit and what didn't seem to apply to us. I narrowed it down. I found one book called, The Primal Wound, by Nancy Verrier and remember sitting at a teacher institute day reading when I should have been listening and just crying with relief that THIS BOOK was speaking to me about my daughter. I was living that book. I found out how to contact the author. Had sessions with her over the phone. Got validated. Became empowered. Started understanding. Adjusted my own expectations and behaviors and saw how it mattered. Kept learning over the years. Informed those in our life who needed to know. Found a lot of peace. Kept seeking support. Continued to learn. Became changed because of what I was learning. Helped my daughter as she got older. Understood.

\*\*She then had us turn and share and discuss not actually our own experiences but what we saw that was in common.

Book suggestion:

What Research Has to Say About Reading Instruction  
ISBN 0872071774

### **Transforming Ordinary Literacy Experiences into intellectual charged experiences.**

After our few minutes of sharing she generated a list from the participants. (Ellin adjusted it by adding comments and expanding on ideas) These are what she says defines comprehension work:

1. personally important
2. self motivated – internally motivated

Stars, candy, external motivation gives the WRONG message,

3. support
4. discourse
5. willing to live with confusion
6. ownership of learning
7. intellectually engaging experiences lend themselves to wanting more experiences like that
8. aware of the perspective of the writer, their assumptions, bias, “tell me more”, expanding on the thoughts of the person sharing, being able to train yourself to be a critic
9. no right or wrong, eliminating preconceived notions/bias
10. combining the theory and practice; being able to be flexible; a scholar is working in the theoretical and going back to the practice; Writers have to know more about their characters than they would ever include in their writing
11. TIME, time to probe, explore, question, we are trying to jam everything into the literacy learning, we need to find the ESSENTIAL, it isn't possible to develop the intellectual learning without the essential, we must figure out what to give up.
12. A revelation – an AHA moment, an insight
13. trust
14. someone having the expectation that you will rise to the occasion
15. common language
16. curiosity –
17. experience of change – changes who you are! You are not the same as you were before.
18. element to newness, freshness, surprise
19. passion!!

Keene's overhead:

What do we mean by comprehension? What does it mean to understand? We hope that students will:

- Read a wide variety of texts
- Reflect on ideas
- Struggle for insight
- Extend existing knowledge stores
- Reapply that knowledge in new contexts and generate new knowledge
- Create models
- Manipulate thoughts to understand more completely
- Consider multiple perspectives
- Understand ways in which memory, knowledge, emotions, values, and thinking CHANGE
- Engage in rigorous discourse about idea
- Remember what they read and learn

HOW DOES USING THE STRATEGIES help them READ, identifying the strategies is not the goal! What we want is intellectual FIRE, engaged, reading and thinking and writing at the highest levels. We want be a higher level of thinking! BREADTH AND DEPTH. Reading across genre. Intellectual passion is what it is about.

We can't teach passion with Mrs. Wishy Washy!!!!!!!!!!!!!! We need TIME to reflect – the gift of silence is a GIFT, absolute silence is a gift.

It is supposed to be HARD. We run around trying to HELP TOO MUCH, we don't want them to be sad. But we know now is that we DO WANT them to STRUGGLE! The stories break my heart, but that doesn't make me want to avoid HARD WORK. The only thing that will get them out of the situations they find themselves living in IS HARD WORK. What do we hope for? It is about the struggle.

Struggle for insight – leads to self-motivation, about knowing more.

Multiple perspectives – listening to others.

Change, you can't write if you haven't changed the reader. Writers want you to be changed. Writers are terribly afraid you won't be changed and that you won't change...

Discourse – it is not discourse, if everyone agrees. She wants students to be able to prove it if they disagree! (Both her grandfathers were senators from each political party. There was always arguing at Thanksgiving and Christmas family gatherings, opposite sides, argument, defend your position. She grew up with discourse as normal) We must seek challenging books, intellectual challenging books are necessary. Children can't learn to debate and have opinions if they never read challenging books.

Remembering – intellectual books allow us to remember, will they remember?????

Practicing word work – our little ones need WORD WORK but we are pretending that Guided Reading (little groups) are teaching comprehension, this is where she has a problem. Yes our little ones need WORD instruction. Yes our kids need word work, BUT she has a problem if ALL their time / ALL their instruction is only word work, and NOT comprehension instruction.

Ellin had Ginger talk about the Mosaic listserv. Encouraged teachers to join. Told of the great conversations and resources. <http://u46teachers.org/mosaic>

## **How does the new comprehension fit into the overall literacy program?**

What is ESSENTIAL?????????????????????????????????????

Ellin had 4 pages in her handout to discuss here. She said that this is the document that she would take with her out of a house on fire! This is the document that she has spent the last 15 years working on. She called herself a research junky! She said she does enjoy reading research. She likes it because she has a problem with authority – up the down and down the up staircase. I was the systems worst nightmare. She feels strongly that the practitioner needs to bring research in to the classroom and try stuff out! These 4 pages are the compilation of the dozens of the studies, what did kids who beat the odds do with their teachers? These are the pages of the synthesis of these research pages, about 60 of us have looked at these over the last 15 years.

The information is based on about 15 experiments and articles – how do things work, we were systematic, we were monitoring the websites, the articles, the research. The Denver group worked on this together.

# **1. COGNITIVE STRATEGIES (the content piece)**

30 years of research with just one question: What is reading? (Get a life category question) David Rumelhart used psychologists, sp ed people, speech language, early anthropology, search of commonalities across cultures, all disciplines EXCEPT educators. He wanted to know if there is there a common thread, (since the reading people just fight about it!) If we can find a common answer, then we can teach the kids!

Ringlear and Weber “Interactive Model of Reading”

The theory of simultaneity – in all the 19 disciplines, there are only **6 common threads** needed for:

Writing  
Listening  
Speaking  
Reading

You only have **SIX**, and they develop simultaneously and **MUST BE TAUGHT SIMULTANEOUSLY**, (think scope and sequence here), we can’t wait. This has been around for 20 years.

We have **3 Surface Structure Systems**:

1. Grapho-Phonic
2. Lexical
3. Syntactic

We have **3 Deep Structure Systems**:

1. Semantic
2. Schematic
3. Pragmatic

They have figured this out at a RESEARCH level. What is frustrating is that the research isn’t shared with the teachers. We need to free ourselves up to focus on the essential. The doctoral level is where they know, not the real teachers in the real classrooms. The researchers explored languages, all languages, NOT just English language,

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## **SURFACE STRUCTURE SYSTEMS (there are three)**

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The Surface Systems, are visible and audible.

### **1. GRAPHO-PHONIC SYSTEM (Surface Structure System)**

VISUAL and AUDITORY

Letter/sound knowledge, phonemic awareness, decoding

### **2. LEXICAL SYSTEM (Surface Structure System)**

(To read more about the Lexical System find Frank Smith’s piece in April 2003 Language Arts Journal.)  
Chinese – has no alphabet, this led to the lexical system – beyond sight word recognition.

VISUAL word recognition, VISUAL memory of words. BUT MORE THAN JUST SIGHT WORDS. When you make a picture in your mind and it saves them for next time you read the word. SINGLE MOST USED of all the systems.

### Example of Lexical System:

Debbie Miller's first grader, Jessica, reading Frog and Toad, first time reading a chapter book (a moment similar to first "kiss") Debbie says, "Could you read a bit to us?" Jessica says "F-r-o-g (by individual letter sounds) then says FROG (blended into the word). Although Frog and Toad appears on all the pages every time she says- "F-R-O-G" ... In Debbie's sweet and patient voice, she says, "You don't have to sound it out." Ellin just says, "Why are you doing this... STOP IT!!!!!" Debbie says, "This isn't good conferring skills" to Ellin. Ellin says, "STOP IT!" Debbie says, "Obviously I haven't taught the Lexical System." When she FINALLY just READS the word FROG without breaking it apart by sounds Debbie asked her, "Why did you do this Jessica?" She tells Jessica to "Take a picture of the word. Close your eyes. See the word. You can read it now whenever you see it again. You own the word." Debbie shakes Jessica's hand. You never have to sound it out again. She said she remembers it from before now. Debbie tells her, "I just believe you are the first child in the first grade to use the Lexical System." Debbie gets her notebook and writes down that Jessica can teach the class about the Lexical System. Which she does with charts and all in a mini lesson.

Lexical system – camera takes a picture of this word, sound out if you need to, but this is the one that is responsible for the conventional spelling system.

(If the only ones who know this are the doctoral students, then we have a problem.)

### **3. SYNTACTIC SYSTEM (Surface Structure System)**

AUDITORY system, permits us to hear when something isn't right.

Ellin said the following sentences:

"If I order out to spoke to began"

"If I order out to speak to began"

"If I begin to speak out of order"

She says we must hear begin-began and know they do not sound right. We must hear sentence order. We must hear speak-spoke as well. At the word level, the sentence level, the text level.

Developed out of early oral language

Average speaking ability of the children in kindergarten she is working with now: one-word utterances. Kids NEED to be interacting with each other for a HUGE part of the day. We need to bank oral language experiences.

We aren't carving out time to interact and have conversations!!!

Do our kids have the opportunities to interact? We must move kids out of separate isolation. They don't develop an idea. They don't take their ideas to a higher plane. It is developing an idea over TIME.

We KNOW HOW TO TEACH PHONICS!!

The research supports **15 minutes a day of phonics for those who don't know it yet.**

Strategies for Solving Word Problems and Reading Fluently. Do these to strengthen the 3 Surface Structure Systems mentioned above. There is a direct CAUSE/EFFECT. Use context, visual word recognition strategies, word analysis strategies (prefixes, suffixes, compound words, word derivations), text management strategies (rereading/reading ahead, deep reading, skimming/scanning), decoding strategies (word families, chunking, point and slide, finding known words inside new words), and cross check across systems (does it make sense, sound right, letters match sounds, ask another reader)

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## DEEP STRUCTURE SYSTEMS (there are three)

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These Deep Structure systems are invisible and inaudible. The reading folks in this country often say semantic is the only deep structure system. There are REALLY THREE Deep Structure systems!

### **1. SEMANTIC SYSTEM (Deep Structure System)**

Semantic has to do with word meanings/the associations we have with words, not the bigger picture. These are based on our life experiences and how we interact with words. It is not about dictionary definitions, it is how we define the experiences as we relate to the word. It is not about what the word means, it is about the experiences we have with the word.

### **2. SCHEMATIC (Deep Structure System)**

Schematic is holding on to the meaning from page 1 to the last page of a book. The big picture, big theme, big ideas. "Oh yeah, I think that connects to this." "I remember...it connects to this and that." At the whole text level. It is the system that helps us change from being a person that we were before and what we know to who we are now after our reading.

### **3. PRAGMATIC (Deep Structure System)**

Pragmatic – social – we can't ignore how we interact with each other. How we socially construct meaning. Reading and writing for specific purposes and audiences.

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When we think about the Surface Structure Systems we think of the architecture of language, stanza, the sounds of the language, the nuances, the beauty, when we associate our own meaning, how you interact with the text that is the Deep Structure Systems.

**When all six interact and operate simultaneously, only then are you reading proficiently.** How about if we teach kids to do that?

We need to get the grapho phonic system habitual by the end of 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mostly these systems need to be taught in the first 3 years (k-2). Get it out of the way. Get it done.

We teach the **comprehension strategies** – the thinking strategies to build and strengthen the Deep Structure Systems.

This is easy to understand, but we don't have the information. Most doctorate reading students are working in these surface structure systems – deep structure systems and knowing it is what teachers should be teaching but do the teachers in the classrooms know it??????????????

## **Question: How much time should be spent on Surface Structure vs. Deep Structure teaching???**

Michael Pressley

K-1-2 study of researchers studied – Comprehension: where are we in this country?  
20 years after the 1<sup>st</sup> grade studies they found that less than 15% of instructional time is focused on comprehension instruction.

### Grades K-2 (MOST PLACES NOW!)

Surface Structure System – 90% of instructional time

Deep Structure System – 10% of instructional time

Given her knowledge of the research, it is recommended that 50% of instructional time be spent on Surface Structure Systems and 50% of instructional time be spent on Deep Structure Systems **until the children learn to decode**. THEN it should reflect the grade 3-12 recommendations.

### Grades 3-12 (MOST PLACES NOW!)

Surface Structure System – 85% of instructional time

Deep Structure System – 15% of instructional time

When we all were gasping at this Ellin said, “Come ON! Grammar instruction is one of the syntactic systems!!!” (diagramming sentences and other grammar work in secondary levels?????!!!!)

Given her knowledge of the research, it is recommended that 8% of instructional time be spent on Surface Structure Systems and 92% of instructional time be spent on Deep Structure Systems.

See the study at: [www.rand.org/achievementforall/multi/reading](http://www.rand.org/achievementforall/multi/reading) to read more about these findings and recommendations!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Question: Where is the balance? What about the syntactic issues, nonstandard English. Need lots of real reading, lots of TALK, WRITE, READ – partner reads, development oral language over all the times!!!!!!!!!! Using this in the Spanish, bilingual classrooms.

Question – Michael Pressley supports strategy instruction quickly. Keene says 6-9 weeks because kids can go SOOOOOOOOOO deep.

What is Essential?

## **2. TEXT STRUCTURES (the HOW piece)**

– how is the text structured? What kind of text structure is it? We've got to show kids HOW to understand text structures.

This is broken down into Narrative Text Structure and Expository Text Structure.

### 1. NARRATIVE TEXT

Teach text structure and narrative technique.

### 2. EXPOSITORY TEXT

Teach text structure, text hurdles, expository technique.

Ellin says we should teach the above and revisit it QUARTERLY!!!!!! for 2-3 days.

Some examples of text hurdles:

1. Anaphora: single biggest hurdle kids face in expository text (like social studies text). Words are anaphoric when they refer back to words or phrases found previously or elsewhere in the text. A lot of expository text is anaphoric. As you read you get further and further away from the earlier referents. This is confusing for kids. We need to explicitly teach how to tackle this hurdle by modeling it on overheads of actual text. (She did it for us!)

2. Staccato Reading – musical go back and forth between parts of the text. When you have to leave where you are reading to view something else on another page (as told to you by the text) and come back to continue reading. (example: see map on page 328) They leave and they never come back. Teach them to put their finger on the place where you leave AND come back!

3. Naïve Conceptions – firmly held beliefs that are absolutely WRONG!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Built by authority figures in our lives... can be undone by the peers. Her example was a boy who TRULY believed there were four moons (based on being told there were 4 phases of the moon) The way she dealt with it after arguing with him was to tell his best friend to go tell him the truth about there being only one moon. It worked.

## **3. Practicing the Craft in a Wide Variety of Text Genres and Levels (the WHAT TO USE piece)**

Use different level texts for different purposes. Vary the genre.

When we are talking about the correct level of text, **we are talking about word work, the surface structures**. Instructional level text is where they do the word work.

**Don't try to teach comprehension strategies in the leveled books!!!!!**

We need to work in very challenging texts that may have been read to children for:

- Application of comprehension strategies
- Repeated readings
- Book club discussion
- Reading with a partner
- Reading to learn new content

Use SOPHISTICATED text, reading it multiple times. (Like the story: The Other Side by Woodson) After they have heard it numerous times, put it into their hands. This works for ESL and K kids. If we always keep them in Mrs. Wishy Washy, we won't get to the comprehension strategies, to think deeper about the text. **Using the comprehension strategies will strengthen the Deep Structure Systems.**

If we must teach non-English readers, we can't teach with the Mrs. Wishy Washy type books. We will need to read a bit slower, be very animated, pointing to the pictures, we are **modeling**. We read numerous times. Give them the books and they start tracking and starting to read and match the words to what they know it will say.

Example:

The Other Side used with first grade day one!!!

Ultimate goal - Thinking more deeply about text

Use text that is more challenging to their thinking.

After reading aloud the second time:

They got out colored pencils and white paper,

Capture their questioning in pictures as well as words.

Some responses: One student – will their moms be friends? Will they be friends? Will they go to the white side of the fence? Issue isn't about the kids, it is about the moms (adults)

Another student – She is playing. She is lonely. She isn't playing with others. (Ellin say this student is in 3<sup>rd</sup> and a very reflective writer now)

Another student – why did them mom tell them not to cross the fence

I wish my mom could be nice. My mom is mean to white people.

Draw house sizes – white house large; the African American home is small; dog teeth are bared at the big house. Ellin interprets: You may think this is aimed at a long time ago but guess what this is my life.

Another child - I wonder would they be friends

Would they mom be friends. Would they be good? (The central theme – is obedience – issue of obedience is a big southern issue.) Will they get along? Do not scared.

Another student- Will they cross the gate? Will they be sorry? Will they be rich?

**These kids DON'T need Mrs. Wishy Washy!**

Where are we six weeks later? Where is that thinking now? **It is off the charts!**

## **4. SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM CLIMATE FO RIGOR, INQUIRY, AND INTIMACY (the ENVIRONMENT piece)**

Classroom conditions that make this possible and probable! Not desks in rows and bright lights.

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These are the KEY ESSENTIAL PIECES. Far less complicated than we are prone to make of it! We must challenge ourselves to bring this key evidence to our schools.

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### **What are the cognitive Strategies known to be used by proficient readers?**

Monitoring for Meaning

Determining Importance

Relating the New to the Known (Schema)

Synthesizing

Inferring

Asking Questions

Creating Sensory Images

Ellin has expanded (and sometimes dramatically changed) the definitions since writing Mosaic of Thought. \*\*\*see [www.u46teachers.org/mosaic/tools/tools.htm](http://www.u46teachers.org/mosaic/tools/tools.htm) under STAFF DEVELOPMENT for an updated version of Ellin's definitions as provided by Ellin.

New definition of synthesizing – being a flexible reader and changing your mind about the meaning of the story as you are reading. Read a bit (stop and think what it is about) then read on (and stop and think what it is about now) then read on (and keep adjusting your thinking about the text). “Now I think it is about.....”

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Now for a very new piece: The PLANNING TEMPLATE!!!

\*\*See [www.u46teachers.org/mosaic/tools/tools.htm](http://www.u46teachers.org/mosaic/tools/tools.htm) under STAFF DEVELOPMENT for a copy of Ellin's Planning Template.

The comprehension strategies are emphasized for 6—9 weeks.

It is so crucial that they can verbalize how the strategy helps them understand the piece (text) BETTER, not just that they can talk about what the strategy is. They need to be able to verbalize HOW they USE the strategy to help them understand the story.

Early phase – 2 weeks

Middle phase – 4 weeks

Late phase – 1-2 weeks

Slowly release your responsibility as your kids increase their responsibility

KEY piece in Early Phase is MODELING. Kids work with a trio or partner. Modeling is the KEY, I must think aloud more, show them show them show them. If kids are not getting it, it is more than likely because we need to model more. So return to the modeling along the release.

In the Middle Phase- talk about the strategies I have already taught. I am pulling together groups of kids who have similar needs. Kids are showing oral written artistic and drama to show my thinking.

Late Phase- students are really taking over and showing others, and teaching other kids about the strategy.

Assessment data: USE THE MPIR Assessment

\*\*See [www.u46teachers.org/mosaic/tools/tools.htm](http://www.u46teachers.org/mosaic/tools/tools.htm) for Ellin's MPIR under ASSESSMENT

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Ellin had us practice THINKING ALOUD. With the focus on Sensory Images.

She had two poems and a copy of a painting by Edward Hopper. Painting is located in the Whitney in New York. She had us read the poems and let the images come to us. Don't try to analyze them. Not making judgments and interpretations. After reading to ourselves we had to turn to a partner (not more than two others) and practice thinking aloud, focusing on images. She had us share how it felt and offered her own observations from previous groups and what she listened in on.

The point is to keep the focus on JUST ONE STRATEGY when thinking aloud. It gets too confusing to the kids when we think aloud with several strategies. (unless the point is to model integrating them all!!) So if the lesson is on Sensory Imagery we've got to focus on the images not our memories / background knowledge.

She came up with a hand signal – (both hands thumb and pointer interlocking with each other like a link) to stand for “What is the connection to the text? – How does it help you understand the text? Tell me more.”

Someone asked how to address when a student gives a weak connection. She doesn't say, “That's not relevant.” I ask what else? I push a long way. “Let's work out how you having a dog is going to help me figure this out this story.” Keep on it.

Face of the thinker. Deep breath. Work hard. Gear up. Bear down until we get this down. We are going to find the connection.

**Think aloud is the MOST important thing – don't read the questions out of the manual – it is hard to do a think aloud – and it is SUPPOSED TO be hard!!!!**

Someone asked what to do when a student wants to share a connection when you are modeling sensory imagery. The student says, “I have a connection...” Ellin says to say, “Tell me your connection, and THEN I want you to tell me the image it helps you see.” Student- “It doesn't.” Ellin- “I know it doesn't, but if it DID WHAT WOULD IT BE?” Student- “I don't know.” Ellin- “Keep thinking.”  
YOU WAIT SILENTLY – very uncomfortable and hard for us to do!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Until the student comes up with something.

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Purposeful- systematic doing comprehension on purpose!

Work of literacy isn't accidental. It's HARD! Not an easy time to do it.

That makes her want to do it more. They are telling us to ask these lame questions. It makes us want to do it THIS kind of teaching MORE!!!! She wants us to start now!!!

All the great minds before you have had it HARD. We are doing this because it is HARD. We are doing this not because it is easy, but because it is HARD.