

Comprehension and Critical Thinking Instruction

The procedure provided below may be used to support instruction and assessment around all critical literacy skills, resulting in improved content-specific comprehension.

Plan To:

**Define* Model* Formatively Assess* Provide Feedback* Shape Instruction to Address Needs*
Engage in Reflective Practice**

Materials Needed:

Mentor text for all students to see (copies provided or use of overhead transparency or poster)

Highlighters

Active reading tools: sticky notes, double or triple entry journals, foldables, manipulatives, and/or paper

Skill Log/Anecdotal Evidence

Reflection Sheet

Procedure:

Define Your Learning Goals and Objectives

What do students need to KNOW and be able TO DO as a result of instruction?

What are the content-specific objectives?

What do they need to do as READERS and THINKERS?

- Preview text and all support materials to inform you further
- Revisit content-specific goals and objectives and define which thinking and comprehension skills students may have to rely upon most in order to be successful
- Work through these comprehension and thought processes yourself, and take note of the strategies that you use as a reader and a thinker. How might you teach students to do the same?

Plan to Think Out Loud

Identify the comprehension or critical thinking skill to be taught.

Select a content-specific text that supports your objectives.

Determine how you will demonstrate use of comprehension and thinking skills as you read this text aloud to students. Where will you stop to model thinking and strategy use?

Activate Prior Knowledge

Use total participation to determine what students already know about the CONTENT and the COMPREHENSION or CRITICAL THINKING skills you are about to teach.

Provide students time to speak, as this is where we begin to cultivate background knowledge.

Define

Provide direct instruction around content-specific concepts as well as the meaning of your targeted comprehension and critical thinking skills.

Model via Think Aloud

Use mentor text or other support materials to model how you comprehend and think about new learning (see Plan to Think Aloud).

Formatively Assess as Students Engage in Guided Practice

Ask students to practice what you have taught them, using provided text or other resources.

Students must use active reading tools to capture what they are learning as well as how they are comprehending and thinking. Provide choice!

As students work, capture information about their progress on a skill log. Provide feedback to students as you do so, coaching them to improve as you move through the room.

Use this data to IMMEDIATELY respond to what you are noticing. Save this data to inform other conversations, studies, and inquiries throughout the year.

Engage in Reflective Practice

Teachers and students should reflect independently on the strengths and weaknesses of their process. Conversation should take place around WHAT was learned, HOW learning happened, WHERE confusion occurred, HOW teachers and students can approach instruction and learning differently to address needs and maximize learning, and WHY it is important to teach, learn, assess, and respond in this way.