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Introduction

Many school professionals, even experienced practitioners, see the teaching of reading as the responsibility of the English teacher, the Reading Specialist, or the Resource Room teacher. In elementary schools, teachers usually assume that reading is taught during the reading or Language Arts period, and not at other times. In fact, if you examine the state learning standards for the content area you teach or are planning to teach, you will probably find little mention, if any, of oral and written communication skills except those in the Language Arts standards. Yet, in order for students to do well in any content area, they need to be able to process text, communicate in oral and written form, and associate what they read with the concepts presented in class. All of these skills are literacy skills. So, developing literacy skills also helps students develop their understanding of the content you are teaching.

This book is based on the assumption that learning content requires reading, writing, and oral communication skills. For this reason, there is a strong argument that it is in every teacher's interest to help his/her students develop their literacy skills. That is why this book was written—to help you help your students make the most of what they read, write, hear, and say, particularly in the content area you teach. Integrating literacy skills into your content area does not mean you need to abandon

your curriculum or become a reading teacher. Integrating literacy skills across the curriculum can enhance the content you teach in the classroom, while also making students stronger readers.

In this book, you will read about strategies for helping your K–6 students develop their reading, writing, and oral communication skills within the context of the content you teach. These strategies are based on solid research, strong theoretical principles, and the experience of content area teachers. As you learn about these strategies, you will also be developing your ability to match effective strategies with the needs of your particular groups of students.

How This Book Is Organized

Each chapter of this volume addresses a particular literacy skill area, such as, using prior knowledge, questioning, and summarizing. Each chapter begins with a rationale for developing that skill and follows with ways to integrate that skill into your content area. Each chapter concludes with opportunities for you to review and reflect on what you have learned and what it might mean for your own practice.

Chapter 1 describes the overall model of content area reading that we will assume throughout the book. This model will give you an organizer for the chapters that follow. **Chapters 2** through **9** focus on vocabulary development, tapping into prior knowledge, making predictions, self-monitoring, using organizers and visual representations, summarizing, and questioning. **Chapter 10** takes up the topic of writing and the relationship between reading and writing in a balanced approach to teaching literacy in content areas. **Chapter 11** offers ways to integrate these skills into a comprehensive approach to developing literacy in the context of your content area.

in preparing students for the next topic they will be learning, since one purpose of post-reading activities is to help students connect what they have just read to other knowledge. For example, if your students will be learning about reptiles next, have them use their knowledge about mammals to compare them to reptiles. First, be sure that students have an accurate schema of mammals by going over the activity sheet on mammals as a group. Have students check that they have written the characteristics of mammals mentioned in their reading. While they do this, walk around the room, checking each student's work.

Once this activity is finished, move students to the next step—comparing mammals with reptiles. Get pictures of lizards and snakes from magazines (or by downloading them from the Internet). Choose these pictures carefully to include pictures of reptiles with their eggs. Organize students into small groups and have each group choose a picture. Then, have each group look again at their activity sheets and decide whether the picture they have is of a mammal or of some other type of animal. To close the lesson, note on the whiteboard, overhead projector, or butcher paper each group's decision about its picture and the reasons for their choice. Conclude by congratulating the groups on noticing the differences between the animals in their pictures and mammals. Announce that the animals in the pictures belong to another category that they will be learning more about in class—reptiles.

Conclusion

There are many ways other than the one described above to implement the three phases of reading in your content area. You will read about some of these strategies in later chapters of this book. As you read, consider the following factors as you decide when and how to use a strategy in your class.