

DOINGWHATWORKS



Presentation

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Question Sea: On- and Under-the-Surface Questions

Adlai E. Stevenson II Elementary School, Illinois • November 2010

Topic: Improving K-3 Reading Comprehension

Practice: Teach Comprehension Strategies

Highlights

- Lauren Cottrell, a third-grade teacher at Stevenson Elementary, describes her school's approach to teaching comprehension strategies.
- Cottrell walks us through a lesson on question-asking that begins with modeling how to ask under-the-surface questions and moves to guided practice in small groups.

About the Site

Adlai E. Stevenson II Elementary School

Bloomington, IL

Demographics

52% White

22% Black

11% Asian

9% Multiracial

5% Hispanic

47% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

7% English Language Learners

Stevenson Elementary has a coherent and consistent focus on reading comprehension. All teachers are on board and unified with a set of clear learning targets, and they help each child succeed through a variety of approaches:

- All teachers help students become effective members of their community through clear norms and expectations for behavior.
- Reading comprehension strategies are taught across the curriculum.
- Teachers use read-alouds, guided reading, and independent practice to teach comprehension strategies.
- Text structure is a focus of instruction.
- Text discussions are used to further students' learning and understanding in large-group, small-group, and partner formats.
- Staff are leaders within their school and in their district, supporting their colleagues' work in teaching reading.
- Staff use a number of sources of data to monitor student progress and adjust instruction accordingly.

Full Transcript

Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome to Question Sea: On- and Under-the-Surface Questions.

Slide 2: Introducing Ms. Cottrell

My name is Lauren Cottrell. I am a third-grade teacher at Stevenson Elementary School.

Slide 3: Strategies across the curriculum

Our school's approach to teaching reading comprehension strategies is that we don't just teach it in reading; we teach it on all the content areas.

One way we do this is we have them posted in all of the rooms. We also recycle them throughout the day. It's not a one-time you are learning, predicting, and inferring and you are expected to remember it. We really believe that through modeling and bringing it up and recycling it in each of the content areas and

allowing students to practice the reading strategies, they will make it a part of their everyday reading.

Slide 4: Gradual release of responsibility

I use a gradual release of responsibility with all of the comprehension reading strategies that we teach, and one way I do this is I always start out with modeling. The students need to see that I use the strategy and that it's important to me so that they are able to see that it's something that's valuable to them as well. From modeling then we do some guided practice, and the guided practice then also leads us into our centers or our stations, where the students are able to try it independently on their own.

Slide 5: Target: Questioning

Today I started a lesson on questioning, and we always start each of our lessons with a target, and that's our objective or our goal. It's important to use the questioning strategy during reading and also after reading, so giving them the purpose for the strategy so that they are able to know why we are using it.

Slide 6: On-the-surface questions

I then showed the students on the whiteboard the Question Sea poster. We started today with the review of what the on-the-surface questions are, and the students actually raised their hands and gave examples using the four question words that are on-the-surface question starters: *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where*. And we did this with our basal reader that the students had been working on throughout the week, *Grandma's Records*.

Slide 7: Under-the-surface questions

We then looked at the Question Sea again and talked about the importance of not always having on-the-surface questions but going a little bit deeper in our questioning as well to help us understand the story on a new level. This gave us an introduction to four new question words that we would be using: *why*, *would*, *how*, and *what if*. And today I modeled these questions for the students and how we could use those and relate those to our basal reader.

Slide 8: Guided reading

And the way we practice this is through guided reading stations. We used the story *Miyu and the Cranes for Peace*, our leveled reader for today. And the students took turns looking through their story and coming up

with questions for each of those prompts. And as they did that we talked about finding the answers to it. We had some students struggle with this, and at times they were giving questions where, for example, they would be giving a *how* question but they really were asking a *what* question. And so we talked about why their question was an on-the-surface level versus an under-the-surface, and the student then revised their own question.

Seeing that modeling and the teachable moments that not only I had with the students but that the peers were able to take on the modeling role and be able to guide their classmate through it. I have always heard that if you can teach it then it will stay with you longer.

Slide 9: Learn more

To learn more about teaching questioning strategies, please explore the additional resources on the Doing What Works website.