Education Transformation 2020

College Developmental Reading: A Sample Lesson on Student Engagement

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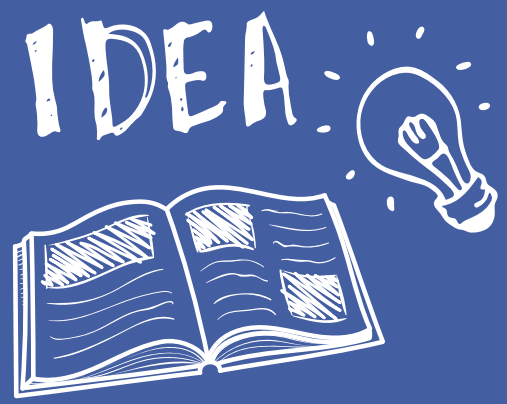
A Recipe for Success

- Teaching with the end in mind
- Scaffolding by using mentor texts
- Thinking aloud
- Using metacognition
- Spiraling
- Incorporating movement
- Giving recognition

Teaching with the End in Mind

Two of the overarching questions for developmental reading students include...

- How can I better understand what I've read?
- How can I relate to and make connections (text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world) to what I've read ?



Determining a theme of a text and analyzing its development over the course of a text spoke to BOTH overarching questions (competencies) for developmental reading.

Scaffolding: Gradual Release

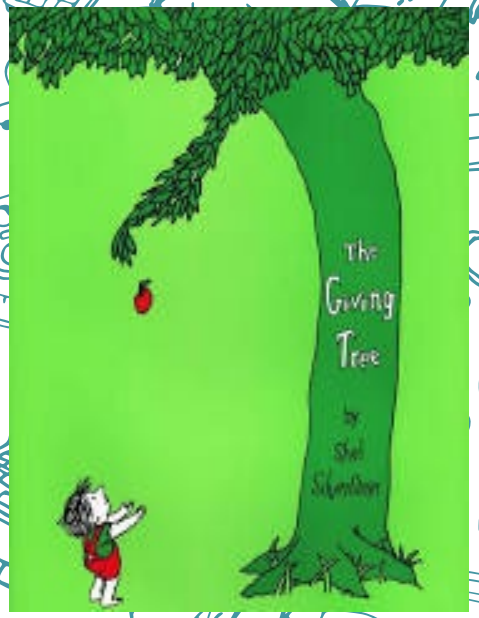
”You’re not Superman, and I’m not Superman either. I can’t teach you how to leap tall buildings in a single bound. I can however show you where the stairwell is. We can get to the top one step at a time.”

~ John Denker

Scaffolding: Using Mentor Texts

For this lesson, I wanted my students to be able to identify possible themes for their (somewhat difficult) narrative text, *The Soloist*.

The scaffolding tool I used was a mentor text. By using text with a reduced cognitive load, students could focus on identifying thematic patterns first rather than an overall comprehension of the story.



Think Alouds and Metacognition

Teacher think alouds model metacognition and “make visible” my thoughts as a reader while I read to my class:

“I predict that giving will be a big topic.”

“He keeps asking for more and more.”

“He doesn't seem satisfied.”

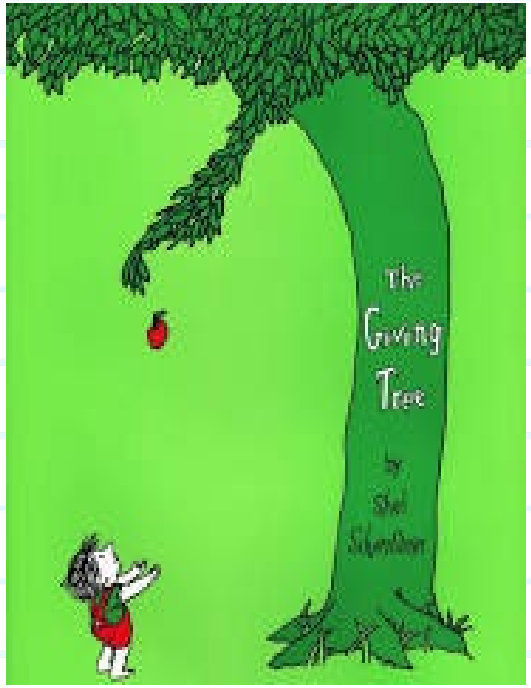
"It's interesting to me that the tree calls him BOY."

“The tree keeps giving.”

“The tree is like a mother.”

"I see some repetition in the conflict."

“Giving and taking seem to be important topics here.”



The Giving Tree

Teacher Modeling: "I Do"

- I modeled my detection of patterns across the mentor text. In this case, they were mainly problem-solution/conflict-resolution patterns.
  - This teacher modeling of patterns led to modeling how to extract the book's themes.
    - For example, the pattern of the boy taking and the tree giving (repetition) led to the determination of themes:

A mother's love is sacrificial.

Love is unconditional.

Selfishness leads to destruction.

More with Mentor "Texts"

- La Luna

Spiraling: Echoes of Prior Learning

Drawing on prior learning and concepts in order to move forward with new learning: spiraling

Identifying topics and main ideas in non-fiction texts (we looked for patterns here, too)!

Annotating texts

Making inferences

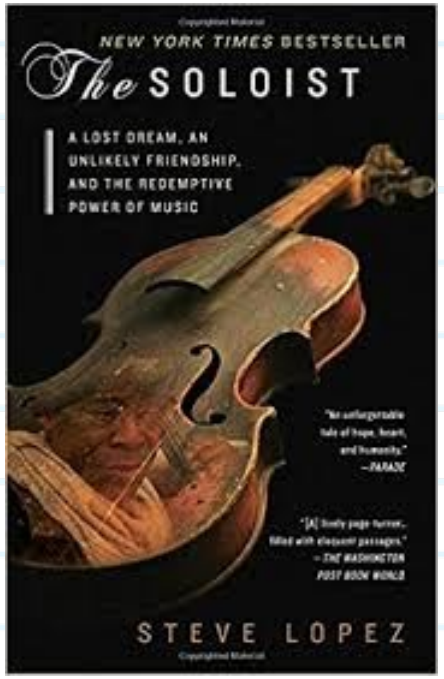
Foundational skills were prerequisites for later course competencies. The order of presentation and spiraling to reference them is crucial.

Scaffolding: Gradual Release "We Do"

With support, students apply the same skills to more challenging text:

Groups of students identified several topics in *The Soloist*.

Friendship	Victimization	Love
Music	Alienation	Mental Illness
Homelessness	Chaos	Self-Actualization



Groups located several quotes from the book that connected to the topics.

Incorporating Movement

I placed the large posters around the room. The posters had the headings (topics) written on the top.

I marked (highlighted) their best work from their submitted practice quotes. I also made sure that every group had a highlighted quote.

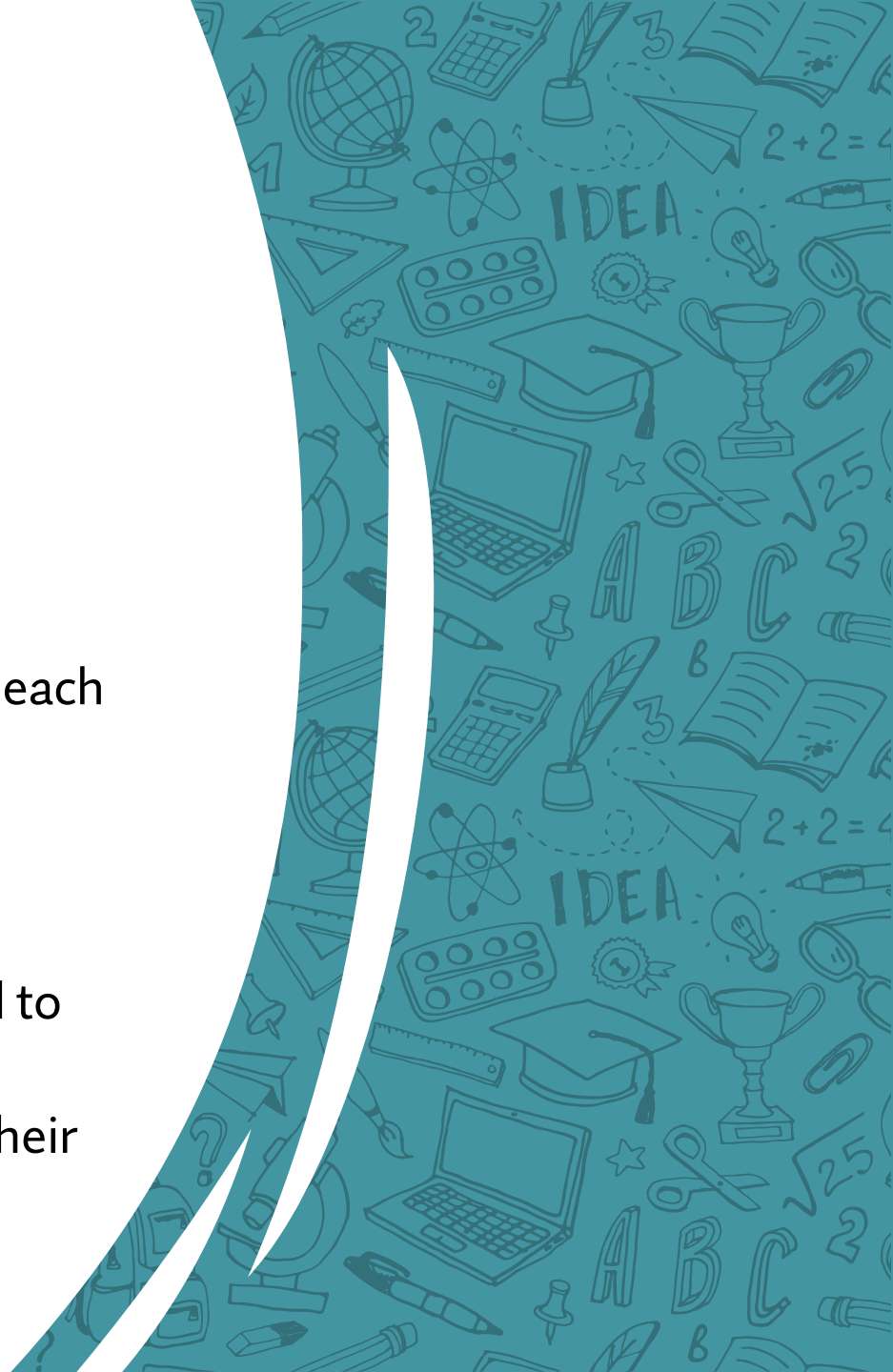
Students recorded their best work on the posters around the room.

Giving Praise

I publicly gave feedback to my students for their volunteered responses.

This feedback was oral and specific; I recognized the students in each group by name and praised their contributions to the class.

Many students in this developmental class were not accustomed to specific praise, and I found that this attention served to bolster their confidence and participation in the future.



“We Do” Leads to “You Do”

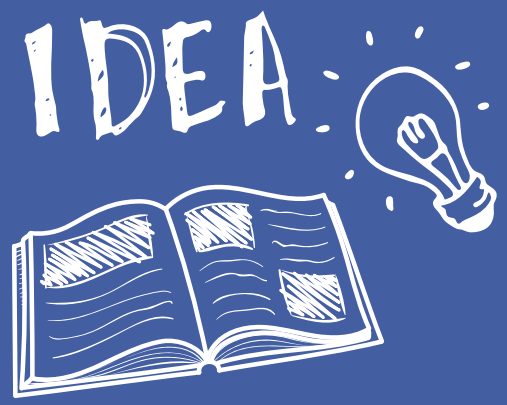
For each poster, we now had a class discussion/cooperative effort that involved detecting patterns across their submitted quotes. There was a group discussion of patterns leading to themes for a few of the topics.

I used this lesson as an incremental step in the process of recognizing patterns in increasingly challenging literature. In this way, students supported each other in a cooperative, low-stakes manner while exploring their own pattern observations.

Revisiting Teaching with the End in Mind

- Final Project
  - The Soloist: An Analysis of Theme

The students then used a graphic organizer to document their pattern discoveries across the text. This eventually led to them locating additional patterns in *The Soloist* in the coming week(s) and inferring themes on their own. They used these independent inferences for their final project where they made connections between a theme in the text and a contemporary event (text-to-world).



These Were Not My Own Ideas

For more about…

- TEACHING WITH THE END IN MIND, see the book *Understanding by Design* by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe.
- USING MENTOR TEXTS, look up Lisa Patrick. She's an Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at The Ohio State University.
- THINKING ALOUD USING METACOGNITION, see the book *Reading for Understanding: How Reading Apprenticeship Improves Disciplinary Learning in Secondary and College Classrooms* by Ruth Schoenbach, Cynthia Greenleaf, and Lynn Murphy.
- TEACHER MODELING, look at the article "Teacher Modeling as an Effective Teaching Strategy" by Warren Haston.
- SCAFFOLDING and GRADUAL RELEASE, look up Vygotsky (an oldie, but a goodie).
- SPIRALING, see "The Spiral Approach to Thinking and Learning" by John Denker.
- INCORPORATING MOVEMENT, read Donnelly and Lambourne's article entitled "Classroom-Based Physical Activity, Cognition, and Academic Achievement."
- GIVING RECOGNITION, see the article "Doing One Thing to Increase Student Engagement: The Power of Praise" by Butler Knight.