Narrative Comprehension

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Definitions

- **Events –** Attempts to solve a problem of achieve a goal in the narrative; Plot.

- **Moral -** Theme.

- **Narrative Text –** Stories containing elements such as setting, characters, events, problem, moral and resolution. Difficulties in narrative text comprehension involve lack of prior knowledge or schema, unfamiliarity with story grammar elements.

- **Parsing –** Dividing a story into elements of story grammar.

- **Problem –** The events that sets the characters in the narrative into action.

- **Resolution –** Point at which the problem is solved, with indications of future

  trends.

- **Schema –** The network of associations and meanings surrounding a particular concept, event, emotion, or role.

- **Setting –** Information about the story location and characters.

- **Story Grammars –** Rules governing the construction of narrative stories.

Assessment Listings

Informal

- Oral Story Retellings

- Story Frames

- Scrambled Schema Task

- Story Maps

- Story Grammar Questioning

- Summary Writing

Norm & Criterion Referenced
(Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2003)

- **Burns/Roe Informal Reading Inventory: Pre-Primer to Twelfth Grade, 4th Edition.**
  AUTHOR: Betty Roe
  DATE PUBLISHED: 1993
  COST: $36.00 for administration instructions and reproducible forms
  TIME TO ADMINISTER: Not reported
  ADMINISTRATION: Individual
  GRADES: Pre-K, K, 1, 2, 3, and higher
  COGNITIVE ELEMENTS SUPPORTED:
      Reading Comprehension
      Decoding
  SUBTESTS AND SKILLS ASSESSED: Two subtests:
  Word naming -- a test of decoding skill; graded word lists
  Oral reading -- graded reading passages; reading accuracy and reading comprehension are both assessed. Comprehension is assessed through questions that target main idea, detail, inference, sequence, cause-and-effect, and vocabulary
  LANGUAGES CAN BE ADMINISTERED IN: English
  SCORE REPORTING AND TEST DATA: Instructions for qualitative analysis are provided for miscues. Instructions for interpretation of the quantitative data are also provided -- scores are reported as raw scores, and criterion referenced levels are provided for determining the independent level, the instructional level, the frustration level (and the listening comprehension level.). A checklist for free recall data (retelling) is provided.
  NOTES: Publishers state that this assessment can be administered by non-certified instructional assistants, and that the graded passages can be used for assessing both reading comprehension and for assessing listening comprehension.
  PUBLISHER:
  Riverside Publishing Company (division of Houghton Mifflin)

425 Spring Lake Dr.
Itasca, IL 60143
WEB SITE: http://www.riverpub.com/products/
PHONE: (800) 323-9540

- **Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)**
  AUTHOR: Joetta Beaver
  DATE PUBLISHED: 1997
  COST: $89.00 for booklets and reproducible response forms
  TIME TO ADMINISTER: Approximately 20 minutes
  ADMINISTRATION: Individual
  GRADES: K, 1, 2, and 3
  COGNITIVE ELEMENTS SUPPORTED:
   - Reading Comprehension
   - Decoding
  SUBTESTS AND SKILLS ASSESSED: Graded reading passages -- Both reading comprehension and oral reading accuracy (an assessment of decoding skill) are assessed. Comprehension is assessed through story retelling and comprehension questions.
  LANGUAGES CAN BE ADMINISTERED IN: English
  SCORE REPORTING AND TEST DATA: This is a criterion referenced test; no normative data is presented. Rubrics are provided for evaluating story retelling and for oral reading accuracy, and most of the passages are followed by specific comprehension questions.
  NOTES: The assessment procedures have been trialed by Reading Recovery teachers and have been heavily influenced by the work of Dr. Marie Clay. This informal reading inventory uses a collection of graded reading passages which are presented in little book form. Little books have relevant content for young children and include traditional folk-tales given at levels 18 and 20. Levelled books range from predictable, simple text (level 1 to 6) to complex stories (level 18 and up).
  PUBLISHER:
  Pearson Learning Group / Scott Foresman - Addison Wesley
   10 Bank Street
   8th floor
   P.O. Box 5026
  WEB SITE: http://www.pearsonlearning.com/plearn/html/cat_progseries.cfm
  PHONE: (800) 552-2259

- **Gates-MacGinite Reading Tests, 3rd Edition (GMRT-3)**
  AUTHOR: Walter and Ruth MacGinitie
  DATE PUBLISHED: 1989
  COST: $78 for package of 35 hand-scorable test booklets
  TIME TO ADMINISTER: 55 to 105 minutes

ADMINISTRATION: Group or Individual
GRADES: Pre-K, K, and 1, 2, 3, and higher
COGNITIVE ELEMENTS SUPPORTED:
 - Reading Comprehension
 - Concepts About Print
 - Symantics (Vocabulary and Morphology)
 - Phonological Awareness
SUBTESTS AND SKILLS ASSESSED: The subtests vary depending on what level is given (see notes for a description of the levels). There are four levels.
Level PRE -- four subtests: literacy concepts (concepts about print), relational concepts (concepts like "under," "first," "middle," etc.), oral language concepts (phoneme sequencing, phoneme matching, phoneme segmentation, and word length), letter-sound knowledge (see notes).
Level R -- three subtests: letter-sound knowledge (initial letter and final letter are assessed seperately -- see notes), vowels (picture-word matching -- see notes), sentence context (syntax -- fill in the blank in a sentence with a grammatically appropriate word).
Levels 1 and 2 -- two subtests: vocabulary (match word with picture) and reading comprehension (choose picture that matches text)
LANGUAGES CAN BE ADMINISTERED IN: English
SCORE REPORTING AND TEST DATA: Raw scores can be converted into national stanines, normal curve equivalents (NCEs), national percentile ranks, grade equivalents, and extended scale scores. Additional score interpretation is available from the Riverside Scoring Service. Norms were established in the 1987-88 school year.
NOTES: The levels correspond to grade levels, so Level PRE is appropriate for preschool aged children, Level R is appropriate for kindergarten students, and Levels 1 and 2 correspond to 1st and 2nd grade. In the Level PRE "letter-sound knowledge" subtest, students match letters, name letters, and identify letter sounds. In the Level R "vowels" subtest, a picture is followed by 4 words -- the child chooses the word that matches the picture -- it is called "vowels" because the four words all share the same vowel (e.g. beside a picture of a gate are the words "gate" "rate" "date" and "hate"). In the Level R "letter-sound knowledge" subtest, students match the first or last sound in the name of a picture with the letter. Machine scorable booklets are availabe from the publisher for a fee.
PUBLISHER:
Riverside Publishing Company (division of Houghton Mifflin)
 425 Spring Lake Dr.
  Itasca, IL 60143
WEB SITE: http://www.riverpub.com/products/
PHONE: (800) 323-9540

- **Gray Oral Reading Test-Diagnostic (GORT-D)**
  AUTHOR: Brian Bryant and J. Lee Wiederholt

DATE PUBLISHED: 1991
COST: $149.00 for manual, student book, and record forms (50 count); record forms can be purchased independently for $39.00 (25 count)
TIME TO ADMINISTER: 50 - 90 minutes
ADMINISTRATION: Individual
GRADES: K, 1, 2, 3, and higher
COGNITIVE ELEMENTS SUPPORTED:
 - Reading Comprehension
 - Decoding
 - Cipher Knowledge
 - Syntax
SUBTESTS AND SKILLS ASSESSED: Seven subtests:
Paragraph reading -- a test of decoding skill; reading rate, accuracy and comprehension as assessed by specific content questions
Decoding -- a test of cipher knowledge; first the child identifies a single letter, then pronounces two letters combined, then pronounces three letters combined.
Word attack -- finding small words that are imbedded in larger words (e.g. within the word "potato" are the words "pot" and "to")
Word Identification -- written vocabulary; select two printed words that are related from a larger set of words
Morpheme analysis -- knowledge of inflected endings, contractions, and compound words
Contextual analysis -- fill in the blank in a sentence with a word that begins with a certain letter
Word ordering -- syntax; make a sentence from a collection of words
LANGUAGES CAN BE ADMINISTERED IN: English
SCORE REPORTING AND TEST DATA: Raw scores can be converted to grade equivalent scores, standard scores, and percentile ranks. This assessment was normed on 831 students across 13 states. Reliability (internal and test-retest) scores were found to be above .80, and validity measures were assessed using the SCREEN, the DAB-2, and the GORT-R.
NOTES: Two forms of the test are available for test-retest applications. A software scoring and report system is available ($89.00) for PC or Apple II computers. This assessment is only appropriate for the second half of kindergarten and beyond. Publishers state that if the child performs well on the paragraph reading subtest, then the other subtests need not be administered.
PUBLISHER:
PRO-ED Inc.
  8700 Shoal Creek Blvd.
   Austin, TX 78757-6897
WEB SITE: http://www.proedinc.com
PHONE: (800) 897-3202

- **Informal Reading Comprehension Placement Test**
  AUTHOR: Ann Edson and Eunice Insel
  DATE PUBLISHED: 1997

COST: $59.95 for software package
TIME TO ADMINISTER: 30 - 45 minutes
ADMINISTRATION: Individual
GRADES: K, 1, 2, 3, and higher
COGNITIVE ELEMENTS SUPPORTED:
 - Reading Comprehension
 - Symantics (Vocabulary and Morphology)
SUBTESTS AND SKILLS ASSESSED: Two subtests:
Vocabulary -- analogies, definitions, prefix definitions, sentence completion
Comprehension -- reading comprehension with graded reading passages;
comprehension is assessed through cloze-type comprehension questions asked
after the passage is read
LANGUAGES CAN BE ADMINISTERED IN: English
SCORE REPORTING AND TEST DATA: Raw scores can be converted into
grade-equivalent scores. Normative data for this assessment was gathered using
3,000 students in Baldwin, New York, public schools.
NOTES: This is a computer-based assessment (Windows, DOS, or Macintosh
compatible) designed to assess the grade reading level of the student.
PUBLISHER:
Educational Activities, Inc.
  1937 Grand Avenue

Links

- www.intervention.org - has interactive probe generators; cloze passage
  generators; lots of good links.
- www.sedl.org - the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory – has a
  searchable assessment database.

Informal Assessments

Story Maps
Story Frames
Retelling Assessment

Story Maps
(Mariotti & Homan, 2001)

A story map is a visual representation of the key elements in a narrative text. These elements are setting, the main character(s), the problem, the main character's goal, the plot or events, and the resolution.

The teacher selects a narrative passage and discusses the organization of a story. Using the story map, the teacher explains each element of the story.

Then the students read the story and complete the map, writing the appropriate answer in each box. When used for diagnostic purposes, the maps are collected and a group discussion takes place.

To guide children in completing a story map, teachers should ask five questions about a story:

1. Where and when did the events take place (setting)?
2. Who are the main characters or people in the story (characters)?
3. What was the main character's dilemma or predicament (problem)?
4. What happened (plot)?
5. How did the story end (resolution)?

During instruction, teacher and students complete the maps together.

Rather than working with the entire map, the teacher may concentrate on one aspect, such as the plot or problem. In assessment, the teacher can evaluate entire maps completed by individual students to assess the student's knowledge of story structure.

In evaluating a student's performance, the teacher uses the following questions to identify behaviors:

1. Can the student determine the setting?

2. Can the student state the problem?

3. Can the student recognize the main characters?

4. Does the student provide the events in sequential order? Are the events given critical to the story?

5. Can the student identify the resolution?

STORY MAP FORM

The Setting [Where and when does the story take place?]

Main Characters [Who are the people in the story?]

The Problem [What is the Main Character's problem?]

The Main Character's Goal [What does the Main Character want to do?]

The Plot - What happened?

Event 1

Event 2

Event 3

Event 4

The Resolution [How did it end?]

Story Frames

(Mariotti & Homan, 2001)

Another way to assess story grammar is to provide a story frame. A story frame consists of a series of incomplete sentences that deal with the elements of a story. After students read a story, they fill in the blank spaces in the "frames." Oral discussion can either precede or follow the story frame activity. Evaluation of students' responses on the story frame should include an examination of the students' knowledge of story structure and comprehension of the story.
The story frame that follows is generic and can be utilized with any story. Story frames can be constructed for specific selections, focus on a particular character, or strengthen a comprehension strategy (comparison, sequence, cause-effect).

Story Frames

Student _____ Date _____

Title _____

Author _____ Genre _____

The main character in this story is _____

_____

The supporting characters are _____

_____

The story takes place _____

_____

The problem in the story is _____

_____

_____

_____

Some of the major events are _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(major events cont.) _____

_____

_____

The problem is solved when _____

_____

_____

_____

The author's message is _____

_____

_____

_____

The message makes me think _____

_____

_____

_____

I (liked / did not like) this story because _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Forms for Assessing Progress Using Story Maps and Story Frames

(Mariotti & Homan, 2001)

Students' knowledge of story structure can be recorded onto record sheets, which can assist the teacher in determining needed instructional areas as well as monitoring students' progress. Two such forms are provided on the following pages.
The Literary Elements Individual Record is completed on an individual child, is maintained over time, and should be included in a child's portfolio or reading file. After reviewing a child's responses to the story map or story frame, the teacher judges if the child has developed the concept by marking DA (Developing Adequately); NI (Needs Improvement), or NO (Concept Not Observed) in the appropriate spaces on the record. These forms are only samples; you may want to develop your own record keeping system as well as evaluation codes.

Literary Elements Record

Student _____ Date _____

Date	Title	Charac-ter	Setting	Problem	Event	Solution	Theme	Applica-tion	Re-sponse

Key:
DA = Developing Adequately
NI = Needs Improvement
NO = Not Observed

Retelling Technique
(Miller, 1995)

The retelling technique also can be called the tell-back strategy. This strategy first was used around 1920 as the major way of assessing comprehension. Retelling was discontinued after a time due to the difficulty of accurately assessing a child's responses on the first standardized reading tests that were given around that time. Instead, such tests used multiple-choice items to assess comprehension skills because they were easier to evaluate. However, today retelling is used quite commonly especially in whole language programs because it assesses holistic comprehension in an informal way. It is an example of what is called process comprehension.

Allowing a listener or reader to retell a story or book offers active participation in a literacy experience that helps a child develop language structures, comprehension, and a sense of story structure. Retelling in either an oral or written form engages the child in holistic comprehension and organization of thought. It also encourages personalization of thinking as children merge their own life experiences into the retelling.

Retelling is different than asking a child to respond to comprehension questions since it emphasizes holistic comprehension instead of isolated pieces of information.

With practice in retelling, children also begin to understand the concept of story structure. They learn to introduce a story with its beginning and its setting. They learn to recall its theme, plot episodes, and resolution. They also demonstrate understanding of story details and sequence.

IMPROVING ABILITY IN THE RETELLING TECHNIQUE

To use this simple, but valuable, technique, it is important to tell a child before he or she reads a story or book that he or she is going to be asked to retell it. Even then it is not an easy task for many primary-grade children, but with practice they make rapid improvement. Further guidance depends upon the teacher's purpose in the retelling. If the intent is to teach or assess sequential ability, the child should be told to concentrate on what happened first, second, and so forth. If the goal is to teach or assess the ability to integrate information and make inferences from text, a child should be told to think of things that have happened to him or her like those that happened to characters in the story (book). Props such as puppets, felt-board characters, or the pictures in the material can be used to help a child retell a story (book).

After the child has heard or read a story or book, you can ask questions such as these:

. What was this story (book) about?
. Can you tell me all that you remember about this story (book)?
. What do you remember about the story (book) that you just have read?

You also can ask the child to retell the story (book) in this way:

"A little while ago, I read the book _____

to you. Would you retell the book (story) as if you were telling it to a friend who has never heard the story?"

You can use prompts such as these if they seem necessary:

. Who was this book (story) about?
. When did this book (story) happen?
. Where did this book (story) happen?
. Who was the main character in this book (story) and what problem did he or she have?
. How did (the main character) in this book (story) try to solve the problem?
. How was the problem finally solved?
. How did the book (story) end?

EVALUATING A BOOK OR STORY RETELLING

If you plan to evaluate a book (story) retelling using the reproducible assessment device included in this handbook, during the introduction of the book (story) tell the child that he or she will be asked to retell it after listening to it or reading it. During evaluative retelling, do not give prompts beyond general ones such as:

. What happened next?

. Can you think of anything else about the story?

To assess the child's retelling for sense of story structure, you first should divide the events of the story into these four categories-setting, theme, plot episodes, and resolution. The retelling assessment device and the outline of the divided material then are used to record the number of ideas and details that the child includes within each category in the retelling. This device indicates which elements the teacher should stress in teaching about setting, theme, plot episodes, and resolution. Comparing analyses of several retellings over a year indicates a child's progress in understanding story structure.
Here is an outline of the picture storybook Our Teacher's Having a Baby by Eve Bunting (New York: Clarion Books, 1992). This book is about a teacher named Mrs.
Neal who has a baby during the year her class is in first grade. When Mrs. Neal finally has a baby girl named Isabel and the class subsequently gets a substitute teacher, they become very worried that Mrs. Neal will no longer be able to be their first-grade teacher. The book ends by Mrs. Neal's telling the class during a visit to the school that she will be returning as their teacher soon, and that a mother can be a teacher too.
Here is a divided outline that can be used to help analyze a child's retelling of this book. It is included here for illustrative purposes.

DIVIDED STORY

Our Teacher's Having a Baby by Eve Bunting, illustrations by Diane de Groot. New York: Clarion Books, 1992.

Setting

1. A first-grade teacher named Mrs. Neal is going to have a baby.

2. Characters: Mrs. Neal (main character), Samantha, Polly, Janice, Mike, the baby who is named Isabel, and the substitute teacher Mrs. Boskie.

Theme

Mrs. Neal, a first-grade teacher, tells her class that she is going to have a baby. Later she has a baby girl who is named Isabel.

Plot Episodes

FIRST EPISODE: One day Mrs. Neal tells her first-grade class that she will be having a baby after a little while.

SECOND EPISODE: The first-grade class studies about baby animals of various kinds and how they are born.

THIRD EPISODE: The first-grade class writes letters to the baby, which its mother will give to it later. The children suggest names for Mrs. Neal's baby when it is born.

FOURTH EPISODE: One day Mrs. Neal has a baby girl whom she names Isabel. The first-grade class gets a substitute teacher for a while.

FIFTH EPISODE: Mrs. Neal brings her baby Isabel to the first-grade class to visit.

Resolution

1. Mrs. Neal tell~ the first-grade class that she will be coming back to be their teacher again after a little while.

2. The first-grade class is relieved as they had been worried that a mother never could be a teacher too.

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTION

Here is a verbatim transcription of Kristi's (aged six) retelling of Our Teacher's Having a Baby.

Mrs. Neal was a teacher and she told her class she was having a baby. And the class talked about it. The class learned about baby animals and they made up names for the baby. And they marched around the room one day. Then Mrs. Neal really had a baby, a baby girl Isabel. Then the class had another teacher but they wanted Mrs. Neal back. She came back for a visit with the baby. She told them she would be their teacher again. And they all were very happy.

Kristi's Book-Retelling Ability Checklist

Here is a "Retelling Ability Checklist" that has been completed for Kristi's retelling of the picture storybook Our Teacher's Having a Baby. By examining it, you should easily be able to complete the reproducible model of this assessment device for any child's retelling of a book or story. .

NOTE: In many instances, a reading teacher simply can complete the reproducible model of this checklist by using checks instead of numbers. These checks can be used to gain a general sense of the elements of a book or story that a child includes and his or her progress over a period of time.

Name _____ Grade _____ Teacher _____ Date _____

STORY (BOOK) RETELLING ABILITY CHECKLIST*
(Primary-Grade Reading Level)

Title of Story (Book) _Our Teacher's Having a Baby_ _____

Directions for the Teacher: Score *1* point for each element the child included. Give *1* point for each character named as well as for generic words such as *boy, girl, dog,* or *cat.* Credit plurals (for example, the word *friends*) with *2* points under characters.

SENSE OF STORY STRUCTURE

Setting:

1. Begins story with some type of introduction   1
2. Names the main character   1
3. Number of other characters named   2
4. Actual number of other characters in the story (book)   6
5. Score for the element of "other characters" in the story (book) retelling (#3 divided by #4)   .3
6. Includes a statement about the time and place in the story (book)   0

Theme:

1. Refers to the goal of the main character or the problem to be solved in the story (book)   1

Plot Episodes:

1. Number of episodes or plot events recalled   5
2. Number of episodes or plot events included in the story (book)   5
3. Score for the number of plot episodes remembered for the retelling (#1 divided by #2)   1

Resolution:

1. Includes the solution to the problem in the attainment of the goal   1
2. Provides an ending to the story (book)   1

Sequence:

1. Retells the story (book) in the proper sequence illustrating an understanding of *story structure*: setting, theme, plot episodes, and resolution. (Score *2* for completely correct, *1* for partially correct, or *0* for no evidence of sequence used.)   2

                                        Best possible score: 10

                                             Child's score: 8.3

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*Checks can be used instead of numbers to gain a general sense of the elements a child includes and his or her progress over a period of time. A quantitative analysis is optional.

Name _____ Grade _____ Teacher _____ Date _____

STORY (BOOK) RETELLING ABILITY CHECKLIST*
(Primary-Grade Reading Level)

Title of Story (Book) _____

Directions for the Teacher: Score *1* point for each element the child included. Give *1* point for each character named as well as for generic words such as *boy, girl, dog,* or *cat.* Credit plurals (for example, the word *friends)* with *2* points under characters.

SENSE OF STORY STRUCTURE

Setting:

1. Begins story with some type of introduction _____

2. Names the main character _____

3. Number of other characters named _____

4. Actual number of other characters in the story (book) _____

5. Score for the element of "other characters" in the story (book) retelling (#3 divided by #4) _____

6. Includes a statement about the time and place in the story (book) _____

Theme:

1. Refers to the goal of the main character or the problem to be solved in the story (book) _____

Plot Episodes:

1. Number of episodes or plot events recalled _____

2. Number of episodes or plot events included in the story (book) _____

3. Score for the number of plot episodes remembered for the retelling (#1 divided by #2) _____

Resolution:

1. Includes the solution to the problem in the attainment of the goal _____

2. Provides an ending to the story (book) _____

Sequence:

1. Retells the story (book) in the proper sequence illustrating an understanding of *story structure*: setting, theme, plot episodes, and resolution. (Score *2* for completely correct, *1* for partially correct, or *0* for no evidence of sequence used.) _____

                                    Best possible score: 10

                                    Child's score: _____

_____

*Checks can be used instead of numbers to gain a general sense of the elements a child includes and his or her progress over a period of time. A quantitative analysis is optional.

Instructional Techniques

Shared Reading
(Reutzel & Cooter, 1999)
A technique involving teachers and students in guided reading and discussions using high-quality, predictable books

- The success of the Shared Reading Experience, also called the Shared Book Experience (Holdaway, 1979), is naturally dependent upon the selection of high quality predictable books. Several criteria need to be observed. First of all, books and stories that are proven favorites of children need to be chosen. Any book or story to be shared (including those in basal readers) should have literary merit and engaging content. Pictures should augment the text and support the telling of the story in proper sequence. The text should be characterized by repetition and a logical and cumulative sequence. Sometimes it is also helpful to select books having rhyme and rhythm to entice and "hook" children on the language patterns. Further, books should put reasonable demands on the reader or, put another way, the amount of print should not overburden the reader.
- In books for emergent readers, pictures should carry the story. Later, books can be selected in which the print and the picture carry nearly equal shares of the story.
- With practice and increased independence in reading, books can be chosen in which the print carries the story and the illustrations simply augment the text (Peterson, 1991). Big books are used when available so that groups of students are able to see the print and pictures about as well as they would if sharing a book one-on-one with an adult. When these conditions are observed, children share the discovery of good books, an awareness of how print works, and the power and humor of language. What's more, they gain a growing confidence in their ability to read (Barrett, 1982).

Procedures
- A Shared Reading Experience is begun by introducing a book. For instance, if the book The Napping House (Wood, 1984) was selected for sharing, the introduction might begin with children looking at the book cover as the teacher reads the title aloud. Talk about the front and back covers of the book, and attend to certain features of the book, such as the author and illustrator names, publisher, copyright, table of contents, etc. Next ask, "What do you think this story might be about?" After looking at the cover and reading the title aloud, children may want to make predictions about the contents of the book. The intent of the introduction is to heighten children's desire to read the story and help them draw upon their own experiences to enjoy and interpret the story.
- Next, read the story with "full dramatic punch, perhaps overdoing a little some of the best parts" (Barrett, 1982, pg. 16). If the story possesses the characteristics outlined above that make the text predictable, children will begin chiming in on the repetitive and predictable parts. In The Napping House, children may join in on the phrase, ". . . in the Napping House, where everyone is sleeping." At key

points, teachers may pause during reading to encourage children to predict what is coming next in the book. Be sure to tell students that making predictions that seem to "make sense" is the goal. In other words, avoid the notion of "right" and "wrong" predictions.

- After completing the book, a discussion usually ensues. Children often want to talk about their favorite parts, share their feelings and experiences, and discuss how well they were able to make logical predictions. The same story can be reread on subsequent days and will eventually become a part of the stock of favorite stories children request for rereading. During subsequent re-readings, hand movements or rhythm instruments can be used to add variety to the routine for early readers.

Story Retellings
(Reutzel & Cooter, 1999)

Seldom do children spontaneously produce quality oral retellings (Morrow, 1985). However, they can quickly learn to retell stories with the help of teacher demonstrations and individual or group practice. Story retelling is a strategy that helps students achieve that important developmental milestone.

Materials:
- Any predictable book, picture book, short story, poem, or book that follows a logical story structure and sequence of events is appropriate.

Procedures:

- Begin by introducing the story and any important concepts or vocabulary. Next, read the story aloud to the children with enthusiasm and expression. Following the reading, demonstrate a quality retelling of a favorite story for your students. Explain that the best retellings include key story elements such as a description of characters, setting, and so forth. When you feel the students are ready to begin producing their own oral retellings of a story, be sure to let them know before they read the story that you will want them to give retelling a try (Morrow, 1989). We have also found that it is best that students be allowed to read a story at least three times before they are asked to retell it on their own. This helps children learn how to produce a quality retelling while also attending to important story elements.

Schema Stories
(Reutzel & Cooter, 1999)

Watson and Crowley (1988) describe schema stories as a reading strategy lesson that helps readers "reconstruct the order of a text based on meaning and story grammar".This strategy helps students learn to anticipate such elements as setting, problem to be addressed by the characters, key events in the story, and resolution of the story.

Materials:

- For emergent readers or students having reading problems, the key is to select texts that contain familiar phrases such as "Once upon a time" and "They lived happily ever after." After choosing an interesting text, prepare the schema story strategy lesson by making a photocopy of the text and physically cutting the photocopy into sections that are long enough to contain at least one main idea. Usually, one or two paragraphs will be a sufficient length to accomplish this purpose.

Procedures:

- To begin the lesson, distribute a section of the story to each small group of students (4 to 8 students in each group is about right). Typically, one student is selected in each group to read the text aloud. Addressing the group, ask the child who believes she was given a section with the beginning of the story on it to raise her hand.
- Members of the group must state why they believe they have the beginning. After a majority of the students agree as to which section of text is first, the group proceeds to the next segment of the text. This procedure continues as described until all of the segments have been placed in order.
- Schema story lessons make excellent small group or individual activities that can be located at a classroom center or station devoted to developing a sense of story.
- All of the segments of a text can be placed into an envelope and filed in the center. Small groups of children or individuals can come to the center and select an envelope, working individually or collectively on reconstructing a story. A "key" for self-checking can be included in the envelope, as well, to reduce the amount of teacher supervision necessary in the center.
- As children work through a schema story strategy lesson, they talk about how language works, ways authors construct texts, and how meaning can be used to make sense out of the scrambled elements of a text or story,

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              Wordless Picture Boards
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(Reutzel & Cooter, 1999)

Wordless picture books are books in which the illustrations tell the entire story (Norton, 1991). Wordless picture books are ideal for helping children learn about how stories are formed without having to focus attention on decoding the print.

Materials:
- Donna Norton (1991, p. 185) offers several questions to guide the selection of wordless picture books for sharing and instruction:

1. Do the pictures follow a sequentially organized plot?
2. Is the depth of detail appropriate for the children's age levels?
3. Do the children have enough experiential background to interpret the illustrations?
4. Is the size of the book appropriate for group sharing?
5. Is the subject one that will appeal to children?

Procedures:

- We suggest that you initially select a picture book such as The Three Little Pigs.
- Physically cut it apart (or cut a photocopy, if you prefer) and temporarily mount the pages on separate pieces of chart paper, or place them inside an acetate story frame board. If the book has text to accompany the pictures, mask the text with removable adhesive notes or correction tape. An acetate story frame board is shown in Figure 10.12 with pages from The Three Little Pigs.
- One disadvantage of the story frame board is that two copies of the book are needed to display both sides of the pages. However, this disadvantage is offset by the advantage of providing protection for the pictures in the book as well as the ease of cleanup and the opportunity for repeated usage. A water-based pen can be used to record children's dictation on the acetate sheets of the story frame board, then cleaned later with water and a dry rag. Chart paper is not as easy to use and provides less protection for the original pages of the book.
- When introducing a wordless picture book such as The Three Little Pigs, children and teachers can begin by looking carefully at each picture in the book. They may discuss what they think is happening in each of the pictures. After this initial discussion, individual children can be called upon to describe the events in a particular picture. The descriptions dictated by the children to the teacher can be written beneath the wordless picture book pages on the chart or on the story frame board. The text of these dictated wordless picture book stories can then be read and reread.
- Finally, students can compare their dictated story with another version of the book The Three Little Pigs to see how well they were able to construct the story line.
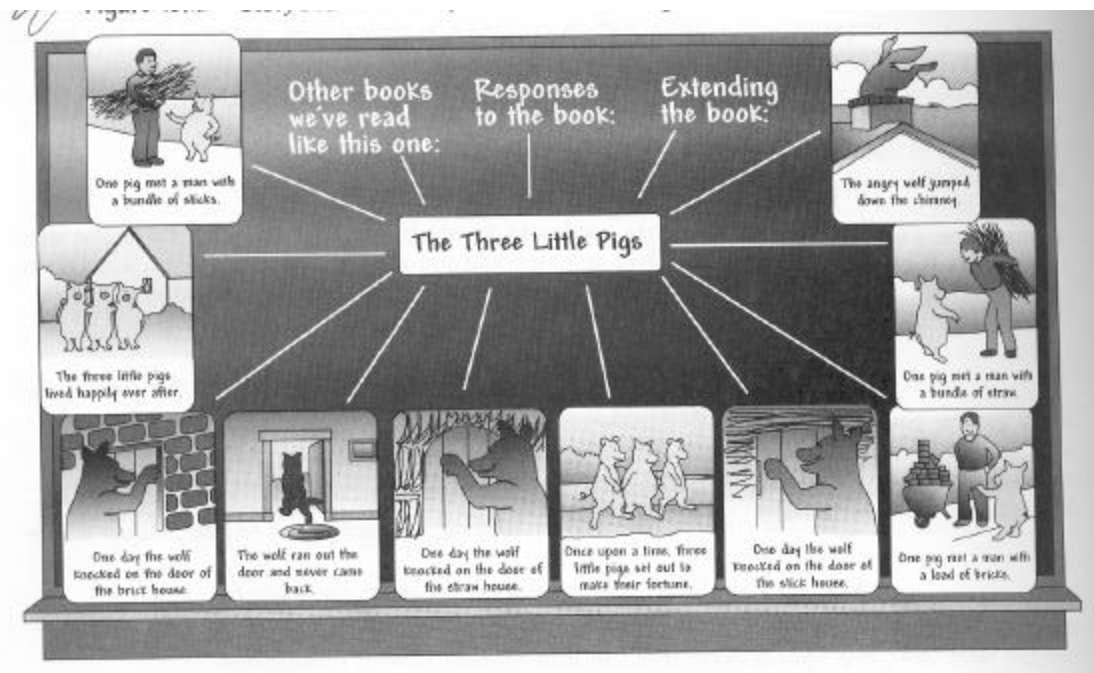
Literature Webs

(Reutzel & Cooter, 1999)
Reutzel and Fawson (1989) designed a successful strategy lesson to be used with predictable books for building children's understanding of story structure. A literature web is constructed from the major story elements in a predictable book by selecting sentences from a book that tell about each major element of the story (ie., setting, problem, events, and resolution).

Materials:
- The following materials are needed for literature webbing: books having clear story structure, sentence strips, hand drawn or copied pictures from the selected book, and a chalkboard or other display area for posting the literature web.

Procedures:

- The sentences from the strips are written around the title of the book in mixed order on a chalkboard or a large bulletin board.
- Prior to reading the story, children read the sentences aloud with the teacher. In the early part of the school year, the sentences selected for the web sentence strips are usually heavily augmented with hand drawn or copied pictures from the book.
- Next, children are organized into small groups and each group is given one of the picture/sentence cards from the board. The children are asked which group thinks it has the first part of the story. After discussion and group agreement is reached, the first sentence/picture card is placed at the one o'clock position on the literature web. The remainder of the groups are asked which sentence/word card comes next, and the cards are placed around the literature web in clockwise order.
- Next, the story is read from a traditional-sized trade book or big book. Children listen attentively to confirm or correct their literature web predictions. After the reading, predictions are revised in the literature web as necessary. Children respond to the story, and these responses are recorded near the end of the literature web. Other books similar to the one read may be discussed and comments recorded on the web. Finally, the children and teacher brainstorm together some ideas about how to extend the reading of the book into the other language arts while recording these ideas on the web.
- Reutzel and Fawson (1991) have also demonstrated that children having reading problems who participate in literature webbing of a predictable book learn to read these books with fewer oral reading miscues, fewer miscues that distort comprehension, and greater recall. They attribute this to the fact that children must impose an organization onto their predictions when using literature webs, rather than simply making random predictions from story titles and pictures.

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                 Advanced Story Map Instruction
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(Wright, 2002,)

Description: Students are taught to use a basic 'Story Grammar' to map out, identify and analyze significant components of narrative text (e.g., fiction, biographies, historical accounts).

Preparation:
Prepare overheads of sample narrative passages.
Intervention Script:
1. Introduce the concept of a Story Grammar to students and preview main elements.(Refer to the *Advanced Story Map Worksheet* as a guide.) Tell students that a Story Grammar can help them to better understand a story's characters and events.
2. Set aside at least four successive instructional days to introduce the major components of the Story Grammar: (A) Identifying important characters and their personalities and motivation, (B) Identifying main problem and significant plot developments, (C) Noting characters' attempts to solve problems, and (D) Identifying a narrative's overarching theme. Interactive Instruction: Make the instruction of each story component highly interactive, with clear teacher demonstration and use of examples. 'Think aloud' as you read through a story with the class to illustrate to students how you arrive at your conclusions. Elicit student discussion about the story. As you fill out sections of the *Advanced Story Map Worksheet* on the overhead, have students write responses on their own copies of the worksheet.
3. Error Correction: When students commit errors, direct them to the appropriate section of the narrative to reread it for the correct answer. Use guiding questions and modeling as necessary to help students to come up with an appropriate response.
4. After students have been introduced to the key Story Grammar elements, the group is now ready to use the Grammar to analyze a sample narrative passage. Have students read independently through a story. Pause at pre-determined points to ask the group key questions (e.g., "Who is the main character? What is she like?"). After discussion, encourage students to write their answers on the *Advanced Story Map Worksheet* while you fill out the same worksheet as an overhead. Give specific praise to students for appropriately identifying Story Grammar elements.
5. When students are able to use the Story Grammar independently, have them read through selected stories and complete the *Advanced Story Map Worksheet* on their own. Check students' responses and conference individually with those students requiring additional guidance and support.
Edit student creative writing using the Story Map Worksheet. Students can use the *Advanced Story Map Worksheet* to check the structure of stories that they have written. Peer editors can also use the worksheet to give feedback to students about the clarity of their story structure.
Troubleshooting:
Students do not seem motivated to use the Story Grammar framework. To make a Story Grammar analysis more inviting, consider screening a video of a popular movie or television program. At key points, stop the tape, have students complete relevant sections of the *Advanced Story Map Worksheet,* and discuss the results. This exercise can be highly motivating and also makes clear to students that a Story Grammar is a universal tool that help us understand narratives presented in any medium.
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Advanced Story Map Worksheet (Adapted from Gardill & Jitendra, 1999)

Student: _____ Date: _____ Class:

_____

Story Name:

_____
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1. Who is the central character? _____

2. What is the main character like? (Describe his/her key qualities or personality traits).

_____

_____

3. Who is another important character in the story? _____

4. What is this other important character like? _____

_____

5. Where and when does the story take place? _____

_____

6. What is the major problem that the main character is faced with? _____

_____

7. How does the main character attempt to solve this major problem? _____

_____

8. What is the twist, surprise, or unexpected development that takes place in the story?

_____

_____

9. How is the problem solved or not solved?

_____

_____

10. What is the theme or lesson of the story?

_____

_____

More Recommendations
(McCarney, 1993)

1. Check the student's understanding of first, next, and last by having the student tell what happens during daily events in first, next, and last order.

2. Provide the student with a tape of the story to listen to as he/she reads along.

3. Have the student write the main events of stories as he/she reads them.

4. Have the student read one paragraph of a new story and make notes on the events, then read the next paragraph and make notes, etc.

5. Read selections with the student and make notes of the sequence of events in order to act as a model for the student.

6. Have the student paraphrase the sequence of events in each paragraph read. The teacher can transcribe the paraphrased sequence or the student can record with a tape player.

7. Informally assess the student's auditory and visual short-term memory skills in order to determine which is the stronger. Use the student's stronger channel to facilitate retention of sequential information.

8. Give the student one task to perform at a time. Introduce the next task only when the student has successfully completed the previous task.

9. Teach the student to visualize information as if it were a movie, then play it back mentally when he/she needs to verbalize it.

10. Have the student practice repetition of information in order to increase short-term memory skills (e.g., repeating names, telephone numbers, dates of events, etc.).

11. Teach the student to identify the main idea of a story and causal relationships within the story in order to enhance recall of information in the correct order.

12. Have the student practice remembering sequences by engaging in sequential activities which are purposeful to him/her(e.g., operating equipment, following recipes, opening a combination lock, etc.).

13. Use a flannel board or Colorforms to practice sequencing a familiar story or a familiar action.

14. Have the student act as a peer tutor to teach another student a concept he/she has mastered.
15. This can serve as reinforcement for the student.

16. Provide practice in sequencing using a computer software program that gives the student immediate feedback. "

17. Make certain the student has mastery of reading concepts at each level before introducing a new skill level.

18. Make certain the student is not required to learn more information then he/she is capable of at anyone time.

19. Reduce the emphasis on competition. Competitive activities may cause the student to hurry and commit any number of errors.

20. Reduce the amount of information on a page if it is causing visual distractions fOr the student (e.g., have less print to read, isolate information that is presented to the student, etc.).

21. Identify the student's most efficient learning mode and use it consistently to increase the probability of understanding (e.g., If the student fails to understand information presented verbally, present it in written form. If the student has difficulty understanding written information, present it verbally.).

22. Give the student time to read a selection more than once, emphasizing comprehension rather than speed. "

23. Use reading series materials with high interest (e.g., adventures, romances, mysteries, athletics, etc.).

24. Write notes and letters to the student to provide reading material which he/she will want to read for comprehension. Students may be encouraged to write each other notes and letters at a time set aside each day, week, etc.

25. Write paragraphs and short stories requiring skills the student is currently developing. These passages should be of high interest to the student using his/her name, family members, friends, pets, and interesting experiences.

26. Make certain that the reading demands of all subjects and assignments are within the ability level of the student. If not, modify or adjust the reading material to the student's ability level. A lower-level text may be an alternative.

27. Have the student practice a new skill or assignment alone or with an aide, the teacher, or a peer before the entire group attempts the activity or before performing for a grade.

28. Speak to the student to explain: (a) what the student is doing wrong and (b) what the student should be doing.

29. Reinforce the student for sequencing: (a) give the student a tangible reward (e.g., classroom privileges, line leading, passing out materials, five minutes free time, etc.) or (b) give the student an intangible reward (e.g., praise, handshake, smile, etc.) for accurately demonstrating correct sequencing activities.

30. Communicate with parents (e.g., notes home, phone calls, etc.) in order to share information concerning the student's progress and so that they can reinforce the student at home.

31. Evaluate the appropriateness of the task to determine: (a) if the task is too difficult and (b) if the length of time scheduled to complete the task is appropriate.

32. Identify a peer to act as a model for the student to imitate and also to assist the student with directions, etc.

33. Allow the student to perform alternative versions of the assignments. Gradually introduce more components of the regular assignments until those can be performed successfully.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Checklists to assess multiple aspects of narrative and expository comprehension as well as study skills and silent reading skills.

Appendix B – Glossary of reading and assessment related terms.

Appendix C – The National Reading Panel Subgroup Report on Text Comprehension