

Program Content

The content for this competency comprises a repertoire of texts, essential reading strategies and response processes.

Making Sense of a Text: Resources Readers Use

Repertoire of Texts

Over each year of the program, texts from the following categories must be represented in the student's repertoire. It is understood that within each of these three categories, the student's choice will be encouraged and

respected. Since information-based texts permeate our daily lives, it is anticipated that teachers will provide many opportunities to build specific knowledge of information-based genres/text types. Students need to be given time to read, listen to, view and discuss authentic texts. Texts may be listened to, e.g. teacher read-aloud, audiotapes or CDs, viewed and/or read. In the case of multimodal texts, students should frequently be asked to, for example, view and listen. The focus of all opportunities to read is on the development of lifelong literacy, i.e. we are not only looking at texts used at work. Texts must include written, spoken and media texts.

Types of Texts

- **Information-Based Texts:** e.g. popular trade magazines; newspapers; letters asking for or providing information, e.g. about possible employment, photographs, manuals.
- **Media Texts and Texts of Popular Culture:** e.g. songs, movies, situation comedies, TV serials, blogs, advertisements, TV news, Web sites.
- **Literary Texts:** In this program literary texts refer to any text that provides a particular reader with a deeply engaging, aesthetic experience. These include Young Adult Literature, illustrated books, comics, formulaic fiction.

Essential Reading Strategies

Reading strategies are specific actions readers take to make meaning from text. Research has provided us with essential reading strategies that proficient readers use every time they read. Proficient readers do this continually and without conscious thought. Those who experience difficulty with reading are unaware of what proficient readers do when engaged in the act of reading. In classes where students are drawing on very few of these essential strategies, much time needs to be taken to introduce, apply and review those strategies that are new to them. The teacher plays an important role in modelling these strategies through many examples and in a range of different reading situations. Teacher read-alouds offer an excellent context for modelling the use of effective reading strategies. Students need opportunities to talk about these strategies and to practise them within the

context of real reading with texts that are relevant and of interest to them. They use the strategies in small groups, with peer and teacher assistance and move toward independence. The purpose of direct instruction in the essential reading strategies that follow is to give the means to adapt to a range of reading contexts, from those they encounter in the classroom to those associated with individual needs and interests.

The strategies that follow apply to all of the texts that are read, viewed or listened to. Reading strategies are not applied in a hierarchical fashion but rather represent an integrated resource that students call upon, as needed. In other words the list below is not intended to be used in lock-step fashion.

TABLE: Essential Reading Strategies

Strategies	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Builds relevant background knowledge from a variety of sources prior to reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Views and discusses a documentary depicting the time period in a Young Adult novel s/he is going to read
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Draws on background knowledge as a resource when reading, i.e. where the focus is always to make meaning of the text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses existing life knowledge to make sense of new information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Compares new text to past experiences; compares new texts to texts already read/viewed/heard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls on text-based knowledge when reading particular text types – Sets purpose for reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinks about why the text is being read • Adopts a stance, i.e. reads in an appropriate fashion to meet her/his purposes for reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Calls upon knowledge about how to read for information, how to use text supports such as titles, subheadings, graphs, etc., awareness of codes and conventions of media texts – Reads for pleasure, for information, in order to talk with someone – Reads with the intention of remembering details and/or examples; notes organizational devices, such as the use of classification and sources; reads for pleasure, making sense of the text by relating personally to characters and events, entering the world of the story, comparing feelings or actions or decisions with those of the character(s)

Working With Information

The ability to read and produce information-based texts is central to success and survival in the workplace and the community. Information is communicated in spoken, written and media texts. Some media such as television, also combine sound and image. The primary function of information-based texts is to report, persuade or argue. When preparing to work with these texts, teachers should concentrate both on their structures and features and the uses to which they are put in the world. For example, an interview is a genre that allows us to obtain or present information from a primary source. Moreover, a variety of spoken, written and media texts is essential, since many of the ways in which information is communicated and stored today involve technologies that are standard in the world of work, as well as in many homes. Lastly, information-based texts allow for connections to other disciplines and to real-life issues, making them an ideal learning resource.

Content area reading is more difficult than reading fiction. When working with information, the reader focuses her/his attention on what is to be learned or taken away from the text with a specific purpose or intention in mind: this focusing is referred to as the reader's "stance." It is essential to provide students with interesting and understandable information-based texts, while also providing them with strategies for understanding text structures. The information-based texts must be relevant to the needs of the students as they work on specific group inquiry projects and/or production units. When working with information-based texts, they use the essential reading strategies as well as those listed in the table below.

TABLE: Strategies for Working With Information

Strategies	Examples
— Uses awareness of information-based text structures to construct meaning	— Recognizes that comparisons, cause and effect and visual arrangement on a page contain information
— Draws on features of information-based texts	— Captions, labels, glossary
— Uses effective strategies for highlighting important, interesting or puzzling sections	— Coloured highlighter, post-it notes
— Uses graphic organizers to scaffold meaning-making processes	— Mind maps, etc.
— Selects a note-taking strategy suited to the task and information sources	
— Shares own evaluation of ideas in the text	

Working With Media Texts and Texts of Popular Culture

In today's world, the importance of being able to read media texts critically cannot be overstated. We are bombarded with information from different media in every aspect of our daily lives, e.g. advertising billboards, satellite radio, Internet. Huge volumes of data are easily accessible. Being critical means that we do not take information at face value, but that we pose questions

and think about the underlying messages and values and consider whose perspectives and interests are being served. Being critical means being alert and open to change and new developments. When working with media texts and texts of popular culture, the students use the essential reading strategies as well as those listed in the table below.

TABLE: Strategies for Working With Media Texts and Texts of Popular Culture

Strategies	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Draws on textual features, codes and conventions to construct meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captions, credits and titles • Dialogue and voiceovers • Colour, lighting and sound • Camera language • Symbols • Narrative structure • Sequencing, passing of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A TV news anchor usually sits behind a desk – Dark lighting or music is used to convey a particular mood or setting – Importance of angles, composition of shots in conveying character – Diamond ring to portray wealth, marriage – Plot development, resolution – Fade out
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deconstructs codes and conventions of familiar media texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Code of TV news reporting, soap operas, music videos
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Confirms by talking with peers and teacher, that a media text can contain more than one message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Shares responses with other students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Questions the message in a media text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Who created this message and why? – What techniques are being used to attract my attention? – What lifestyles, values and points of view are represented? – How might different people understand this message differently? – What or who is omitted from this message?

Working With Literary Texts

The students in this program have the opportunity to read/hear/view literary texts that are selected by the teacher and students themselves because of their interest and relevance to their age group (see examples of required literary texts above). Literature holds a privileged place in the traditions of different cultures, including our own. It is through this literary “window” that we explore our own world and the world of the imagination, in the larger context of what is possible. Students can be helped to enjoy and understand these texts through deliberate conversation, drama and the

visual arts. As well, it is important to remember that in this competency, for a student, listening to the teacher reading a literary text is equivalent to reading her/his own texts. This is a way to become part of the social context of reading, which includes talking about books with others, choosing texts and understanding how texts work and the active role of the reader. When working with literary texts, the student uses the essential reading strategies (see above), as well as those in the table below.

TABLE: Strategies for Working With Literary Texts

Strategies	Examples
— Relates to characters in various ways	— By empathizing with and observing a character
— Connects literature to own life	— Identifies with character or events based on something similar in own life
— Uses imagination and visualization to take various perspectives	— Imagines a conflict from the perspective of different participants
— Uses knowledge of media texts such as films, to understand literary texts	— Ways the producer/author creates suspense, use of flashbacks
— Responds to texts through drama, music, visual arts	— Role-plays different characters in specific situations in order to better understand the character, makes a photo story to illustrate the theme of a novel

Response Process

Exchanges With Other Readers in the Classroom

The classroom is a community of readers and, as such, provides an environment where the students discuss their first impressions about a text they have read with peers and the teacher. In other words, talk provides the medium and the resource for a more circumspect and critical reading of the text. As well, talk provides the means through which they can learn to transfer and integrate knowledge about the different genres of spoken, written and media texts into their initial responses to make sense of themes and/or ideas and/or information for self.

- Follows a response process:
 - Interrelates essential reading strategies, strategies specific to a genre and similar texts in reading profile
 - Keeps and uses a written record, e.g. notes, reading-response log, post-it notes, in order to keep track of ideas, questions, during reading and in discussion groups
 - Draws on responses of peers to extend or clarify own understandings
- Develops profile of self as a reader by engaging in conversations that extend her/his response(s) to information-based, popular and literary texts:
 - Shares connections between own world and the world of the text; compares own values with those presented in the text; draws on personal bias, experience with other texts, attitudes, opinions, personal expertise, etc.
 - Calls upon knowledge of relevant, familiar texts, e.g. recognizes that the text s/he is reading has a storyline similar to a popular TV show and/or another text s/he has read; connects own understanding of a text to other texts produced for teenagers
 - Explores the structures and features of different texts to discover how they help construct meaning, e.g. How do media texts and print texts “tell” the same story? How do visual texts such as a photo story, advertisement or comic strip construct meaning?

- Demonstrates an interest in and regard for the ideas of others, such as peers, teachers, other adults, etc.
- Steps back in order to reflect upon the significance the text holds for her/him:
 - Transfers her/his reflections about specific texts into projects/activities that demonstrate her/his creativity and potential, e.g. produces a public service announcement on the dangers of smoking; formulates a question to guide research, e.g. what kind of texts do people read in a specific job/career?
 - Expresses own interpretations in a variety of modes, e.g. visual, print, sound and combinations of these and media, e.g. Microsoft® PowerPoint® presentations, combinations of print and media, multimedia projector