RESEARCH
REPORT

Reading Quest

Newbridge®

Executive Summary

Introduction

With the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* and *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read—Kindergarten to Grade 3* recognized scientifically based reading research and recommended effective practices for reading instruction in the following areas— phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. The instructional recommendations continue to be applied to the development and implementation of reading programs and supplemental reading programs to address the goal of all students acquiring grade-level reading skills by grade 3.

> *Meeting these needs will require expanding the discussion of reading instruction from* Reading First—*acquiring grade-level reading skills by third grade—to* Reading Next— *acquiring skills that can serve youth for a lifetime.* (Reading Next 2004, p. 3)

As students progress in school, the concern shifts to all students remaining at and above grade level and developing lifetime reading ability. Recognizing the extensive reading instruction research presented by the National Reading Panel and the wealth of research on adolescent literacy and content area instruction, educators collaborated to bring about a national focus on adolescent literacy. The needs of adolescent learners and the importance of professional development for teachers working in the middle grades became evident.

In 2001, the International Reading Association and National Middle School Association jointly adopted and published *Supporting Young Adolescents' Literacy Learning.* In 2004, educational researchers met with representatives of Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Alliance for Excellent Education to discuss and address the concerns and issues of adolescent literacy in the United States. Their publication, *Reading Next— A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy: A Report from Carnegie Corporation of New York,* serves as a resource of recommendations for researchers, policy makers, and educators.

> Reading Next *is a cutting-edge report that combines the best research currently available with well-crafted strategies for turning that research into practice. Written by five of the nation's leading researchers,* Reading Next *charts an immediate route to improving adolescent literacy. The authors outline 15 key elements of an effective literacy intervention, and call on public and private stake holders to invest in the literacy of middle and high school students today while simultaneously building the knowlege base around adolescent literacy.* (http://www.all4ed.org/publications/Reading Next/index.html)

Newbridge Educational Publishing has responded to the need for effective literacy instruction in the middle school with the development of *Newbridge Reading Quest. Newbridge Reading Quest* is a content-area literacy program built around the science and social studies curricula at the middle grades. Its primary goal is to support students' reading of informational texts through engaging topics. *Newbridge Reading Quest* may be implemented by both content teachers to teach science or social studies concepts and also by reading/language arts teachers to teach reading and writing of informational text.

Newbridge Reading Quest

- *Reading Quest* student books are standards-based science and social studies texts.
- The *Reading Quest* Student Handbook serves as a reading/writing resource book for students.
- *Reading Quest* Teaching Strategy Guide, or Teacher's Guide, for each student book provides built-in professional development to support teachers as they scaffold instruction and implement research-based teaching practices.

   Schools serving young adolescents should provide: Continuous reading instruction for all young adolescents. This instruction requires that all middle school teachers understand reading/learning processes, the complexity and diverse needs of young adolescents, and know how to help students develop both the competence and desire to read increasingly complex materials across the curriculum. Reading strategies and skills are central to the success of the integrated, multidisciplinary middle school curriculum and every teacher must possess the knowledge and skills to integrate reading instruction across the curriculum. (Supporting Young Adolescents' Literacy Learning: A Position Paper jointly adopted by International Reading Association and National Middle School Association)

The principles that research and experience suggest most significantly contribute to student success are:

- Learning has to be meaningful.
- Students' interests are connected to their prior knowledge and experiences.
- The purpose for studying or learning a topic should be clear and evident.
- Metacognition, the act of thinking about one's own thinking, is critical to becoming an independent student.
- Prior knowledge needs to be activated, elaborated upon and organized.
- Select information that is related to purposes for reading and learning.
- Create personally meaningful organization.
- Synthesize, integrate, and consolidate background knowledge with new information.
- Take advantage of literacy as a social practice.

These principles are the foundation from which instructional decisions are made for selecting and incorporating strategies into content area instruction. *(Anders & Guzzetti 2005, p. 75)*

The purpose of this document is to show how *Newbridge Reading Quest* was developed to "link" research on effective reading instruction and principles of adolescent literacy instruction with appropriate teaching practices for the adolescent learner in the middle grades.

This document is organized into the following areas of adolescent literacy instruction: Instructional Strategies for Comprehension Instruction, Instructional Strategies for Content-Area Reading, Instruction for Motivation and Self-Directed Learning, Writing Instruction, and Assessment. Each instructional area includes a section on Research Findings and *Reading Quest* Instruction.

Research Findings

This section references recommendations of the *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* and principles of the *Reading Next—A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy: A Report to Carnegie Corporation of New York.* Recent research studies and summaries are cited to support specific strategies and practices.

Research Implications

This section highlights specific instructional features of the student books and Teacher's Guide lessons to illustrate how *Newbridge Reading Quest* addresses the research recommendations and principles of adolescent literacy.

Key Research Findings in Support of
Reading Quest

Instructional Strategies for Comprehension Instruction

Research Findings

✔ Direct, explicit comprehension instruction, which is instruction in the strategies and processes that proficient readers use to understand what they read, including summarizing, keeping track of one's own understanding, and a host of other practices *(Reading Next 2004, p. 4)*

✔ Effective adolescent literacy interventions must address reading comprehension … Possible approaches include:
- comprehension strategies
- comprehension monitoring and metacognition instruction
- teacher modeling
- scaffolded instruction
- apprenticeship models *(Reading Next 2004, pp. 13–14)*

✔ A set of specific comprehension strategies that have firm scientific basis for improving text comprehension include:
- monitoring comprehension
- using graphophonic and semantic organizers
- answering questions
- generating questions
- recognizing text structure
- summarizing *(Put Reading First 2001, pp. 49–53)*

✔ A summarizing training program expanded to include addition training in identifying main ideas appear to improve students' reading and learning from text skills. It appears to do so by increasing students' awareness of major information during studying. *(Rinehart, Stahl & Erickson 1986, pp. 434–435)*

✔ Previews of text help to increase students' comprehension of explicit and implicit information. (Graves & Cooke, 1980.) *(Paris, Wasik & Turner 1996, p. 611)*

✔ The model of comprehension instruction we believe is best supported by research does more than simply include instruction in specific comprehension strategies and opportunities to read, write, and discuss texts—it connects and integrates these different learning opportunities. Specifically we suggest an instructional model including the following five components: 1. An explicit description of strategy … 2. Teacher and/or student modeling of strategy ... 3. Collaborative use of strategy … 4. Guided practice using the strategy with gradual releases of responsibility … 5. Independent use of the strategy. *(Duke & Pearson 2002, pp. 208–209)*

Research Findings

✔ Several instructional studies, however, have demonstrated that students can be taught to improve main idea comprehension. Baumann (1984) used direct explanation to teach student five steps to construct main ideas—introduction, examples, direct instruction, teacher-directed, application, and independent practice. Baumann (1984) found that sixth graders who were taught these steps were more skillful at comprehending explicit and implicit main ideas in passages than students who received traditional basal lessons. *(Paris, Wasik & Turner 1996, p. 612)*

✔ Teachers who provide comprehension strategy instruction that is deeply connected within the context of subject matter learning, such as history and science, foster comprehension development. *(RAND Reading Study Group 2002, p. 39)*

✔ Scaffolded instruction, which involves teachers giving high support for students practicing new skills and then slowly decreasing that support to increase student ownership and self-sufficiency. *(Reading Next 2004, p. 14)*

Research Implications

Newbridge Reading Quest provides multiple instructional approaches to support comprehension. The direct and explicit instruction teaches comprehension strategies and processes that proficient readers use to make meaning from informational texts. The scaffolded instruction in the Teacher Guides supports adolescent learners as they become strategic metacognitive readers who apply appropriate strategies to their own reading in a variety of contexts.

Each Building Reading Strategies lesson plan offers an instructional path for teaching comprehension that:

- engages students Before Reading, During Reading, and After Reading
- takes students directly into the Student Books with Before You Read questioning and previewing activities and Keep Going! activities to extend learning

- supports comprehension monitoring and metacognitive instruction by guiding students through the reading process with Making Connections, Previewing and Predicting, Self-monitoring, Summarizing, and Synthesizing
- provides teacher think-alouds to model the use of strategies
- offers mini-lessons for explicit instruction on specific comprehension strategies, including: questioning; making inferences; visualizing; and using details to identify the main idea to meet students' needs.
- presents mini-lessons in a gradual release sequence—from Introduce the Strategy for explaining the strategy, to Model the Strategy for modeling use of the strategy with a think-aloud, to Practice and Apply for practicing and applying the strategy to the student text.

Generating and Answering Questions

Research Findings

✔ For students from fourth to eighth grade, teaching them about information sources both sensitizes them to task demands of questions and improves the quality of their answers. Students of average and low reading ability tend to demonstrate the greatest improvement after training. *(Raphael 1984, p. 310)*

✔ Overall, teaching students the cognitive strategy of generating questions about the material they had read resulted in gains in comprehension, as measured by tests given at the end of the intervention. *(Rosenshine, Meister & Chapman 1996, p. 181)*

✔ Results of this study indicate that when children use questions that guide them to connect ideas within a lesson together or connect the lesson to their prior knowledge, they engage in complex knowledge construction that, in turn, enhances learning; and these learning effects are stronger for questions that connect to prior knowledge. *(King 1994, p. 363)*

✔ Effective teachers also use a variety of instructional practices that relate more specifically to reading comprehension. For example, effective teachers ask high-level comprehension questions that require students to make inferences and to think beyond the text. Effective teachers help readers make connections between texts they read and their personal lives and experiences. *(RAND Reading Study Group 2002, p. 43)*

Research Implications

Newbridge Reading Quest Building Reading Strategies lesson plans engage adolescent learners while answering and generating questions before, during, and after reading informational texts and guide them as they self-monitor and access information sources to answer questions.

- Making Connections questions help students activate prior knowledge and generate their own questions
- Previewing and Predicting questions help students attend to text features and generate their own questions

- Self-monitoring questions help students develop metacognition
- Summarizing and Synthesizing take students back into text to access sources of information
- Discussion Questions encourage students to think about the text in different ways, including: recalling information directly stated in the text; putting together information found in different places in the text; and making inferences.

Analyzing and Using Informational Text Structures and Features

Research Findings

✔ The research literature indicates three important conclusions about knowledge of text structure:

> Conclusion 1: Readers use their knowledge of structure in processing text. When an expected structure is violated, comprehension is impaired.

> Conclusion 2: Knowledge of structural forms of text develops with experience with different genre, and is correlated with age/time in school.

> Conclusion 3: Making readers more aware of genre structure improves learning. *(Goldman & Rakstraw 2000, p. 311)*

✔ [T]he results of this study suggest that direct instruction of a conventional text structure can facilitate formation of a macrostructure for that type of text. *(Armbruster, Anderson & Ostertag 1987, p. 345)*

✔ A knowledge of text structure is an important factor in fostering comprehension. Students with some knowledge of text structure expect texts to unfold in certain ways. *(RAND Reading Study Group 2002, p. 40)*

✔ A comparison of awareness and recall performances supported the hypothesis that structure-aware students are more likely to use a structural strategy when they read than unaware students. *(Richgels, McGee, Lomax Sheard 1987, p. 177)*

✔ Explicit teaching about structure enables students to differentiate among common structures and to identify the important information in a text in a coherent, organized way (Armbruster & Armstrong, 1993). *(RAND Reading Study Group 2002, p. 40)*

Research Implications

Newbridge Reading Quest Text Structure mini-lessons help adolescent learners analyze and use text structure to comprehend. The mini-lessons focus on the following informational text structures:

- Compare and contrast
- Problem and solution
- Cause and effect
- Sequence
- Procedural
- Question and answer
- Descriptive

Writing Informational Text lesson plans focus on a specific text structure and refer to paragraphs with the same text structure in student book as models for writing.

Newbridge Reading Quest Text Features mini lessons highlight specific text features that help students learn key concepts.

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Using Graphic Organizers

Research Findings

✔ Results of this study support three conclusions about helping students learn from expository text. First, students are likely to comprehend and recall more from text if they receive well-defined information on organization of a passage before they read it. Second, the facilitative effects of providing students with information on the organization of a passage are likely to be greatly heightened if students use that information to produce an outline of the text. Third, note-taking is likely to improve students' comprehension and recall of text. *(Slater, Graves, & Piche 1985, pp. 199–200)*

✔ In yet another study with fourth graders, Boothby and Alvermann (1984) found significant differences between students who used GAOs (graphic advanced organizers) and students who received regular lecture/reading instruction in social studies classes … . Analysis of written free recalls indicated that the GAO group recalled significantly more idea units than did students in the control group immediately after reading the passage and also 48 hours later. *(Griffin & Tulbert 1995, p.78)*

Research Implications

Newbridge Reading Quest Supporting Comprehension mini-lessons and Writing Informational Text lesson plans include graphic organizers as tools to guide adolescent learners as they read and write informational text.

Comprehension Strategy mini-lessons use graphic organizers to introduce, model, and practice the target comprehension strategy.

Text Structure mini-lessons use graphic organizers to teach the organization of text and to provide a tool for analyzing text and note-taking.

Writing Informational Text lesson plans provide graphic organizers to facilitate note-taking and for organizing and writing a specific type of text structure paragraph.

Instructional Strategies for Content-Area Reading

Research Findings

✔ Effective instructional practices embedded in content, including language arts teachers using content-area texts, and content-area teachers providing instruction and practice in reading and writing skills specific to their subject area *(Reading Next 2004, p. 4)*

✔ These three strategies [semantic mapping, semantic feature analysis, and semantic-syntactic feature analysis] were used in 47 classrooms at three grade levels and in three different content area classrooms; upper elementary students, many of whom were ESL students, reading social studies: middle-school students reading science; and high school students reading vocational materials. Candy and Patty (Bos & Anders, 1993) compared the interactive strategies with direct instruction of the conceptual vocabulary, asking students to memorize definitions of the vocabulary, which were the same terms used in the feature analysis charts and in the maps. In every case they found that the students participating in the interactive practices outperformed the direct-instruction students. *(Anders & Guzzetti 2005, pp. 202–203)*

✔ If students learn that strategies are tools for understanding the conceptual content of text, then the strategies become purposeful and integral to reading activities. Connecting cognitive strategies to students' growing knowledge of a content area enables students to both increase their awareness of and deliberately use the strategies as means for learning (Brown, 1997) in microgenetic analyses of instruction. Unless the strategies are closely linked with knowledge and understanding in a content area, students are unlikely to learn the strategies fully, may not perceive the strategies as valuable tools, and

are less likely to use them in new learning situations with new text. *(RAND Reading Study Group 2002, p. 39)*

✔ To the extent that texts are an integral part of content studies, teachers have a direct and functional role to play in adolescents' literacy development. On a practical, day-to-day basis, teachers need to reflect on the strategies their students need to be successful in academic subjects. *(Vacca 2002, p. 200)*

✔ The second finding was that CORI (Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction*), had a positive effect on conceptual knowledge through mediating variable of strategy use. In other words, this instruction increased students' ability to use a range of strategies, and students who were more adept in using these strategies gained more conceptual knowledge in the performance assessment than students who were less proficient in the strategies. *(Guthrie & et al. 1998, pp. 272–273)*

✔ In summary, research strongly supports the use of semantic feature analysis in vocabulary development, prereading instruction and content area instruction. In addition, evidence suggests that this technique is effective with learners of diverse ages, ethnic backgrounds and reading abilities. *(Pittelman, Heimlich, Berglund & French 1991, p. 7)*

*Note: CORI is an integrated reading/language arts-science program that emphasizes real world science observation, student self-direction, strategy instruction, collaborative learning, self-expression and coherence of literacy learning experiences. *(Guthrie et al. 1996, p. 306)*

Research Findings

✔ Our research suggests that long-term reading engagement depends on a sustained context…. Teachers can create this context by (a) identifying a knowledge goal and announcing it, (b) providing a brief real-world experience related to the learning goal; (c) making trade books, and multiple resources available; (d) giving students some choice about the subtopics and texts for learning; (e) teaching cognitive strategies that empower students to succeed in reading these texts; (f) assuming social collaboration for learning; and (g) aligning evaluation of student work with the context. *(Guthrie & Cox 2001, pp. 299–300)*

✔ Students with well-developed schemata on a topic are able to answer more questions about a passage than those with weakly developed schemata. This effect is particularly prominent when questions require prior knowledge to be accessed. *(Pearson, Hanson & Gordon 1979, p. 201)*

✔ Preparing students for a reading assignment is fundamental to good comprehension instruction. Doing so helps students to see relationships between their interests and the assignment, to connect their prior knowledge with the assignment, and to set purposes for their reading. *(Anders & Guzzetti 2005, p. 193)*

Research Implications

Each *Newbridge Reading Quest* Building Concept Knowledge lesson plan offers an instructional path for teaching content while promoting students' construction of meaning with informational texts. The *Newbridge Reading Quest* Teacher's Guides provide comprehensive teacher support to implement a range of instructional strategies. Each Building Concept Knowledge lesson plan includes one of the following instructional strategies: Concept Features Chart, Concept Features Chart Plus (summary statements), Anticipation Guide, or Concept Map.

Building Concept Knowledge lesson plans foster instruction that engages students as they develop an organizational framework for reading informational text and learning concepts. The Teacher Guide provides a student copy of the chart, map, or guide for students to use as a tool throughout the before, during and after teaching sequence. The interactive strategies engage students before, during and after reading to provide them with occasion to put into practice the thinking processes that promote their construction of meaning in the content areas.

• Before Reading activities are designed to help students prepare for reading by making connections, activating, building on, and organizing prior knowledge, and setting their purpose for reading.

• Introduce the Chart teacher prompts explain the strategy to students, and students discuss key concepts in the text, make predictions, and ask questions.

• Model the Chart teacher prompts guide the teacher in modeling the use of the strategy while supporting students as they make predictions and ask questions about concepts.

• During Reading students read independently, in pairs or small group with the teacher to practice and apply the strategy to check, confirm, or change predictions and answer their questions about concepts.

• After Reading students discuss and explain their predictions and questions as related to their learning goals.

• The Inquiry Learning Activity and Keep Going! in the student book honor real world experiences to extend student learning.

Developing Conceptual Vocabulary

✔ Both vocabulary and comprehension involve the meaning of the text, albeit at different levels. Vocabulary is generally tied closely to individual words whereas comprehension is more often thought of in much larger units. To get to the comprehension of larger units requires the requisite processing of the words. Precisely separating the two processes difficult, if not impossible. *(NICHD 2000, Chapter 4, p. 15)*

✔ Vocabulary instruction is most effective when learners are given both definitional and contextual information, when learners actively process the new word meanings, and when they experience multiple encounters with the words. *(Graves & Watts-Taffe 2002, p. 143)*

✔ Students must read, write, speak, and hear conceptual vocabulary (the words that represent key ideas in the reading assignment) many times before it becomes part of their working vocabulary. *(Anders & Guzzetti 2005, p. 192)*

✔ Adequate progress in learning to read English beyond the initial level depends on having established a working understanding of how sounds are represented alphabetically, sufficient practice in reading to achieve fluency with different kinds of texts written for different purposes, instruction focused on concept and vocabulary growth, and control over procedures for monitoring comprehension and repairing misunderstandings. *(Snow, Burns & Griffin 1998, p. 223)*

✔ We believe that the research suggests four main principles to instruction:
  1. That students should be active in developing their understanding of words and ways to learn them.
  2. That students should personalize word learning.
  3. That students should be immersed in words.
  4. That students should build on multiple sources of information to learn words through repeated exposure. *(Blachowicz & Fisher 2000, p. 504)*

Research Implications

Newbridge Reading Quest Building Concept Knowledge and Building Reading Strategies lesson plans provide multiple reading, listening, speaking, and writing experiences with conceptual vocabulary presented in the student text.

Each Building Concept Knowledge lesson plan includes an instructional strategy—Concept Features Chart, Concept Features Chart Plus (summary statements), an Anticipation Guide, or Concept Map—that helps students actively construct their understanding of conceptual vocabulary.

- Before Reading the teacher reads, discusses, and explains concepts with students in meaningful ways to help the students make connections and predictions. When appropriate, word analysis is modeled as a way of predicting meaning and building vocabulary.

- During Reading students are immersed in the words as they construct meaning in context.

- After Reading students discuss concepts and personalize the meanings.

Building Reading Strategies Word Study mini-lessons focus on a specific vocabulary strategy in a three-step sequence, namely: Introduce/Model the Strategy with a think-aloud; Practice and Apply the strategy with words in the student text; and Extend to discuss and use the vocabulary word and strategy. Specific strategies include: using context clues, using visual clues, analyzing word structure, identifying word relationships, word origins and using reference aids.

Building Reading Strategies Vocabulary activities encourage students to use context clues, visual clues, the glossary and/or a dictionary to determine the meanings of specialized vocabulary that appears in the book.

Inquiry Learning and Activity and Keep Going! activities provide a context for students to hear, write, and use the vocabulary words.

Instruction for Motivation and Self-Directed Learning: Diverse Texts and Collaborative Learning

Research Findings

✔ Motivation and self-directed learning, which includes building motivation to read and learn and providing students with the instruction and support needed for independent learning tasks they will face after graduation *(Reading Next 2004, p. 4)*

✔ Diverse texts, which are texts at a variety of difficulty levels and on a variety of topics. *(Reading Next 2004, p. 4)*

✔ Text-based collaborative learning, which involves students interacting with one another around a variety of texts *(Reading Next 2004, p. 4)*

✔ Instructional processes and context surround the engagement processes and reading outcomes…. They (instructional processes) include learning and knowledge goals, real-world interactions, autonomy support, interesting texts, strategy instruction, praise and rewards, evaluation, teacher involvement, and coherence of instructional processes. *(Guthrie & Wigfield 2000, p. 409)*

✔ Note: 1,765 sixth-grade students in reading language arts classrooms in 23 diverse schools in the mid-Atlantic and northeastern United States were surveyed. We identified several overall findings about positive features of instruction. First, students valued independent reading and the teacher reading aloud as part of instructional time. Second, when asked what they liked most about time spent in the class, students focused more on the act of reading itself or personal reason for reading rather than on social aspects or activities related to the reading. Third, when students were asked what motivated them to read at school, they emphasized quality and diversity of reading materials rather than classroom setting or other people. *(Ivey & Broaddus 2001, pp. 350–377)*

✔ Linguistic quality of text is another critical factor in readers' ability to learn from what they read. Texts constructed to facilitate readers' attempts to learn have been called 'considerate' (Armbruster, 1984). In contrast, texts that cause readers to expend large amounts of cognitive effort to offset their poor construction are characterized as 'inconsiderate.' Several factors contribute to the considerateness and quality of texts, including purpose, audience appropriateness, unity of focus, organizational structure, development and validity of ideas, stylistic expression, and correct usage. *(Jetton & Alexander, 2001, July/August)*

✔ Meanings are constructed in content area classrooms when the social nature of students is honored, celebrated, and used to find and interpret multiple resources, conduct activities, and report on developed or developing understandings. Hence, meaning is not transmitted from the knower to the naïve; rather, meaning is constructed as the naïve question, challenge, dig, and create understandings. *(Anders & Guzetti 2005, p. 274)*

✔ With elementary and middle school students, quasi-experimental and structural equation modeling studies have shown that teachers who provide meaningful choices and autonomy increase students' motivation to read and to expend effort to gain knowledge from text. *(Reeve, Bolt & Cai 1999) (RAND Reading Study Group 2002, p.42)*

Research Findings

✔ In brief, the most predictive statistical models show that engagement is a mediator of the effects of instruction on reading achievement. If instruction increases students' engagement, then students' achievement increases. In this literature, engagement refers to a combination of the following: (a) the use of cognitive strategies; (b) the presence of an intrinsic motivation to read; (c) the use of background knowledge to understand text; and (d) the social interchanges in reading, such as discussing the meaning of a paragraph or the theme of a narrative. Therefore, instruction affects reading comprehension outcomes through the avenue of active engagement in frequent, thoughtful reading for understanding. *(RAND Reading Study Group 2002, p. 42)*

✔ Effective teachers of comprehension enact practices that reflect the orchestration of knowledge about readers, texts, purposeful activity, and contexts for the purpose of advancing students' thoughtful, competent, and motivated reading. *(RAND Reading Study Group 2002, p.42)*

Research Implications

Newbridge Reading Quest student books and lesson plans provide opportunities for self-directed learning and collaborative learning experiences that help students build motivation for reading informational texts and learning content.

   The standards-based social studies and science books were written and designed to appeal to adolescent learners. Unique approaches to individual topics include narrative leads, interviews, and first-person accounts. The books display a variety of informational text features, structures, and styles.

   The Reading Informational Text: Building Reading Strategies and Building Concept Knowledge lesson plans:

   • scaffold instruction to provide teacher support and opportunities for students to read, write, and work independently and collaboratively to learn content.

   • facilitate interaction and discussion of the content and reading process.

   The Reading Informational Text: Building Concept Knowledge lesson plans implement instructional strategies using Concept Feature Charts; Concept Maps; and Anticipation Guides that create a social learning environment for learning and inquiry.

   Keep Going! and Inquiry Learning Activity features provide inquiry options and opportunities for students to work collaboratively and extend their learning.

Writing Instruction

✔ Intensive writing including instruction connected to the kinds of writing tasks students will have to perform well in high school and beyond. *(Reading Next 2004, p. 4)*

✔ This study of higher and more typically achieving schools bore out the theoretical expectations and identified the following distinguishing features of instruction in the higher performing schools: (a) skills and knowledge are taught in multiple types of lessons; (b) tests are deconstructed to inform curriculum and instruction; (c) within curriculum and instruction, connections are made across content and structure to ensure coherence; (d) strategies for thinking and doing are emphasized; (e) generative learning is encouraged; and (f) classrooms are organized to foster collaboration and shared cognition. *(Langer 2001, p. 877)*

✔ The experimental manipulation of knowledge of text structure has also been examined in a number of studies. Taylor and Beach (1984) found that seventh graders' understanding of expository text structure was enhanced as a result of opportunities to write summaries, in contrast to merely responding to questions. *(Tierney & Shanahan 1991, p. 258)*

✔ Based on an integrated communication arts approach, the procedures included speaking, listening, and reading for all students, with writing the crucial variable of difference between experimental groups. Based on a written posttest results indicated that the treatment group generated significantly higher quality ideas than the control group including few text based ideas and more class brainstorming ideas, and produced more coherent, integrated writing samples. *(Konopak, Martin & Martin 1990, p. 19)*

Research Implications

Newbridge Reading Quest Writing Informational Text lesson plans provide instruction in the writing process while focusing on specific text structures students need to effectively write informational texts. Each lesson plan:

- follows a writing process: prewrite, draft, revise, edit, publish.
- focuses on a specific text structure—cause and effect; compare and contrast; problem and solution; sequence; procedural; question and answer.

- uses the student book as a writing model.
- provides mini-lessons for writing skills— sensory images, leads, quotes, nouns, verbs, figurative language, repairing run-ons, fixing fragments.
- provides opportunity for student collaboration.

The *Newbridge Reading Quest* Student Handbook helps students learn the process of writing a research report.

Assessment to Inform Instruction

Research Findings

✔ Ongoing formative assessment of students, which is informal, often daily assessment of how students are progressing under current instructional practices. *(Reading Next 2004, p. 4)*

✔ Formative assessment, or assessment for learning, is the forward-looking assessment that occurs in the process of learning, the feedback the teacher provides to the student, and the nature of the feedback matters. *(Johnston & Costello 2005, p. 259)*

✔ Formative assessments address the need for teachers to be able to analyze and evaluate the data gathered from students, the evidence students provide, indicating that they have indeed engaged concepts and have integrated information and experiences in their schema. *(Anders & Guzzetti 2005, p. 235)*

Research Implications

Newbridge Reading Quest provides a variety of informal, formative assessment tools for observing and assessing students' progress as they read, write, and learn content.

- Observation of student interactions and activities help teachers address immediate needs.

- Discussion Questions show students' understanding of content on different levels.

- Test Your Understanding provides a standard test format for assessing content knowledge and test taking skills.

- Writer's Checklists help students self assess and teachers assess the student's use of the writing process and their success in writing a paragraph with a specific text structure.

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