

Narrative #1 - Reading to Learn in English Language Arts

The following scenario illustrates an English teacher using the process of Reading to Learn to support comprehension of a sophisticated piece of literature. Read the scenario and use the codes on the right to identify the different parts of Reading to Learn. Be prepared to share your thoughts with a partner.

Suggested Codes

SP - Setting a Purpose
TT - Identifying Text Type
PK - Establishing Prior Knowledge
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How Writers Build Suspense

In Mrs. Sullivan's 8th grade English class, the students are reading part of the short story "Night Drive" by Will F. Jenkins. This story is a suspenseful thriller about revenge. Mrs. Sullivan has divided the text into four parts. The students are beginning to read the second part as class begins. In this part of the story, the female protagonist realizes she might have a serial killer in her car.

At the beginning of class, Mrs. Sullivan speaks to the students. "As you know, we need to warm up before we start reading. So let's review our purpose for today." She scans the room and looks at a quiet boy in the middle of the room. "Johnny, remind us why we are reading "Night Drive"."

Johnny pauses for a moment and says, "We are looking for examples of how the author builds suspense."

Mrs. Sullivan smiles. "Excellent. Tell me a little more. Why will this be useful?"

Johnny thinks for a moment. "Because you want us to use some of the same strategies in the stories we are writing."

Mrs. Sullivan nods her head in approval. "Well done Johnny." Looking at the class she says, "Yesterday we identified ways the author starts to build suspense. What were some of the

strategies Jenkins uses?” Once again, Mrs. Sullivan scans the room. Many hands are raised, but she calls on an attentive student in the back of the room. “Jessica.”

Jessica opens a notebook on her desk. She considers it for a moment and then responds. “We identified four strategies: descriptions of nervousness, eerie details, details that don’t fit or seem out of place, and references to a past mystery.”

Mrs. Sullivan looks pleased. Walking towards the front of the room she says, “That was a very complete answer; Jessica. Thank you.” She points to a prompt written on the white board. “Please open your writer’s notebooks. You have five minutes to respond to the following prompts: Describe what you anticipate will happen in the next section of the story. Also, predict what strategies you think Jenkins will use to build suspense. He will use some of the strategies you have already noticed. He will also show you some new ones. What do you think these will be?” When she is finished, Mrs. Sullivan looks at the clock on the wall. “You have five minutes. Go.” She pauses for a second. “Remember, use all of the time to write!”

As the students write, Mrs. Sullivan walks around the room. She frequently stops to read what a student is writing and whisper feedback or encouragement in his or her ear. After the five minutes are over, Mrs. Sullivan asks a few students to read what they wrote. She then asks them to take out their stories and to divide into their reading pairs.

Once the students are with their partners, Mrs. Sullivan explains the reading task. “Today you will be doing what you did yesterday. You will underline sentences or passages in the second section of the story. You will also code the text. However, yesterday you put an ‘S’ in the margins to indicate a passage that builds suspense. Today I want you to be more specific. I have created a legend based on yesterday’s observations. As you see, I would like you to put an ‘FN’ next to lines that indicate feelings of nervousness. For eerie or scary details put an ‘ED’ in the margins. If you think Jenkins is referring to a past mystery, write ‘PM’. And, write ‘ODD’ for details that seem odd or out of place. You can still put an ‘S’ for suspense if you think Jenkins is using a strategy we have not described or coded yet.” She looks at the room. “Any questions?” The students look like they are ready to begin reading. “Okay, you may begin. You have twenty minutes to finish reading and coding Section Two.”

As the students read softly in pairs, Mrs. Sullivan walks around the room occasionally chatting with students. The students in each group take turns reading. Each pair also stops every few minutes to discuss and code passages that build suspense. When the twenty minutes are over, most of the students are finished. A few pairs are still reading. Mrs. Sullivan tells the students who have finished to record the author's new strategies in their notebooks.

When all of the students have finished reading and coding the text, Mrs. Sullivan asks them to describe the new strategies Jenkins uses to build suspense. She lists these on the white board. After doing this, she asks the students to turn in their notebooks so she can review their work and give feedback. She then gives them fifteen minutes to work on the mysteries they are writing. She reminds them to use strategies for building suspense. Once again, as the students work, Mrs. Sullivan walks around the room holding mini conferences with students.

Just before the bell rings, Mrs. Sullivan returns to the front of the room. She points to the homework assignment on the board. "Before you leave, make sure you have tonight's homework assignment written down. Make sure to go on the classroom website to complete the entry ticket for tomorrow. Please let me know how 'coding the text' is helping you understand what Jenkins is doing to engage or hook the reader. The ticket will also ask you to explain which strategies you are including in your own stories. As always, just be thoughtful." As the bell rings, she yells above the din, "Have a good day! See you all tomorrow. Excellent work today!"

Scenario #2 - Reading to Learn in Mathematics

The following scenario illustrates a math teacher using the process of Reading to Learn to support teaching and learning of the distributive property using the math textbook. Read the scenario and use the codes on the right to identify the different parts of Reading to Learn. Be prepared to share your thoughts with a partner.

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The Distributive Property

The students in Mr. White's sophomore algebra class just completed the warm-up word problem in their math journals. After they close their journals, Mr. White asks them to take out their textbooks. When everyone is ready, he says, "We are going to begin lesson eight point five today. I would like to someone to remind the class what we do when we begin a new lesson." Mr. White selects a popsicle stick from a can on his desk and reads a name on it. "Max. Can you tell us what we do?"

A brown-haired boy in the front row answers. "We scan the lesson in the textbook to preview what we will be learning."

Mr. White smiles and places the popsicle stick back in the can. "That's right! So, I would like everyone to scan lesson eight point five now. I want you to pay attention to two things as you scan. First, as always, figure out the purpose of the lesson. I also want you to notice how many sections are in this chapter and what they are called. You have five minutes to do this. Go!"

Mr. White walks in between the desks as the students preview the lesson. Occasionally a few students start chatting and Mr. White quietly reminds them to work by themselves. After five minutes, Mr. White tells the students to discuss with each other in pairs what they found during their preview. He listens for a couple of minutes and then addresses the entire class.

"Okay. So, what is the purpose of this lesson?" he asks. Mr. White selects another stick from the can and reads a name. "Sandy."

A petite girl in the middle of the room answers. "We are going to multiply polynomials."

Sandy glances at the textbook and responds with a humorous smirk. "It's written on the first page where it says 'objective'." A few students laugh at Sandy's 'Isn't it obvious?' tone.

Mr. White smiles good-naturedly. "Excellent Sandy." He puts the popsicle stick back and pulls out another one from the can. Before he reads the name on the stick he asks, "How many of you are not sure what it means when we say we will be learning to multiply two binomials?" Almost half of the students in the class raise their hands. Mr. White nods his head when he looks at the hands. He looks back at the popsicle stick in his hand and reads the name on it. "Charlene. How many sections are in this chapter?"

A girl two seats down from Sandy replies, "There are three sections."

"What are they?" presses Mr. White.

"There is the introduction, a bunch of examples, and then the problems at the end."

"Well done Charlene."

Mr. White turns again to the entire class. "Yes. The focus of today's lesson will be to learn how to multiply two binomials. There is a name for the process that helps with this. It is called FOIL." Mr. White writes "FOIL" in large capital letters on the white board. "Now, that you have had time to scan the lesson, what do you think might be the trickiest part of this lesson? I would like you to write your response in your journal entry for today. Feel free to review the chapter once more if you are not sure what might be the trickiest part of today's lesson."

Many students open their math journals and begin writing. Others take a minute or so to look at the first few chapters of the lesson in the textbook. Mr. White circles the room and takes

note of what the students are writing in their journals. When he returns to the front of the room, he picks up a pile of sheets from his desk.

“A lot of you wrote down that this chapter has a lot of big words in it. I agree with you. There is a lot of technical vocabulary. So, before you read, I want to make sure you are familiar with some of the important concepts in this chapter. You should all be familiar with knowledge rating guides. Please take five minutes to fill this out. Remember, you should be able to teach someone what a word means if you check that you know it well. Also, if you check that you have seen it before, write down what you think the word means.”

When the students receive the knowledge rating guide, they begin reading the words on the list and indicate how well they know each word. The list contains the following terms: binomial, polynomial, trinomial, FOIL, and distributive property. After a few minutes, Mr. White asks the students to share their results with a neighbor. When all the students have had time to assess their understanding of the words, he asks for volunteers to quickly define each term.

After going over the vocabulary terms, Mr. White speaks again. “Now let’s get down to business. I am going to demonstrate a process for multiplying two binomials called FOIL.” He spends the next ten minutes demonstrating how to use FOIL. When he is finished showing the students how to solve a practice problem, he answers a few questions.

Mr. White addresses the entire class again. “Okay, now it is your turn. I would like you to read the three examples in your text book. I just demonstrated a problem that is like the first example. Examples Two and Three are a little different. So this is what I want you to do.” He points to directions he has written on the white board. First, read each example and give it a name. I did the first one for you. I call it Multiplying Two Binomials.” He points to a section of the white board where the following is written:

Example 1 - Multiplying Two Binomials

Example 2 -

Example 3

“What is a good name for the next two examples? Write these in your journal.”

“Second, I want you to number your journals from one to eight for each of the practice problems. Leave enough room to do your work and to write the answer.

“Third, before you complete the problems, look at each practice problem and determine which example will help you solve it. Next to the number of each practice problem write down a one, two, or three to show which example the practice problem connects to. If you are not sure, raise your hand and I will help you.”

“Finally, when you have connected each practice problem to the appropriate example, you may go ahead and work on the problems. If you do not finish in class, please do so for homework. Any questions?”

Mr. White answers a couple clarifying questions and then tells the students to begin. As they work, he walks around and helps individual students.

Scenario #3 - Reading to Learn in Physical Education

The following scenario illustrates a Physical Education teacher using the process of Reading to Learn to support teaching and learning of how to secure a climbing rope to a harness as part of a rock climbing unit. Read the scenario below and use the codes on the right to identify the different parts of Reading to Learn. Be prepared to share your thoughts with a partner.

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Project Adventure

The students in Mr. Doucette's class were sitting on the gym floor in pairs as Mr. Doucette walked around the room, passing out a single sheet of paper. As he placed each sheet on the floor by each pair, he asked them to keep it face down.

"Remember everyone, do not look at the sheet I am passing out yet!" He turned towards a student a few feet away and smiled. "Jocelyn, no peeking!"

After all of the students had received their sheet, Mr. Doucette walked to the front of the room. He reached into a plastic trash bin and pulled out a rock climbing harness and a length of rope.

"Good morning everyone! As you know, today we will practice scaling the climbing wall. However, before we can do that, I need to teach you how to put on and tie a rope to your climbing harness. No one will be able to start climbing until I am certain everyone has tied his or her harness correctly. Do you understand?"

Mr. Doucette paused as some students nodded their heads. "Here is how I am going to teach you today. First, I am going to demonstrate how to put on the harness. Then I will show you the steps for tying the rope. I want you to watch carefully."

A couple students were whispering quietly, so Mr. Doucette looked at them and paused for a moment. When the whispering stopped he continued. "After I demonstrate how to put on the harness and tie the rope, you will work in pairs to practice. The sheet in front of you describes the steps I am about to show you. You will use the sheet to learn how to do it on your own. Of course, I will walk around and help anyone who needs additional support. At this point, does anyone have any questions?"

A few students asked some clarifying questions. After he answered them. Mr. Doucette slowly demonstrated how to put on the harness. Once he had the harness on, he looked around the room. "Now that I have the harness on correctly, how many steps do you think it will take to tie the rope to the harness? Discuss briefly with your partner." A few moments later, Mr. D. randomly called on a few students to see how many steps they predicted. Then he showed the students how to tie a figure eight knot and secure it to the harness. After the demonstration, he asked a student from each pair to come to the front to grab two harnesses and a length of climbing rope.

When the students returned to their pairs with the equipment, Mr. Doucette asked, "So how many steps did it take to secure the rope to the harness? Double check with your partner." After ten seconds, he stated to the class that there were nine steps. "How many of you counted nine steps?" A little more than half of the groups raised their hands.

Mr. Doucette untied the rope around his harness. "Okay, for those of you who did not see the nine steps, here it is one more time." Once again he modeled the process of tying a figure eight knot and how to secure it to the harness.

After the second demonstration, Mr. Doucetter addressed the class again. "Okay. Here is what I want you to do next. One person in each pair should pick up the written directions. The directions are a bit complicated, but they have everything you need to know to do what I just showed you. The person with the sheet will read the directions and use them to help his or her partner put on the harness and tie the rope. Use the words and the pictures to help you. When you think you have it on correctly, raise your hand. I will come over to check your work. If

everything looks good, the next person can try. Again, one person should read the directions and help the other person. What questions do you have before you begin?"

One student raised her hand. When Mr. Doucette pointed to her she asked, "Are we allowed to show our partner the directions?"

"Good question Emily. Yes. The directions are not a secret. You can both look at the directions and the pictures. But, one person should be in charge of the directions and the other should focus on the harness and rope." Mr. Doucette looked around the room. "Any other questions." There were none. "Okay, you can begin."

As the students worked in pairs, Mr. Doucette walked around to help students for whom the directions were not enough support. After fifteen minutes or so, all of the students had their harnesses on and ropes secured correctly. Mr. D. returned to the front of the gym to address the class one more time.

"Alright everyone. Excellent work. You did a very good job paying attention and following the directions. I can see many of you are excited to start climbing! However, before we do that, I want to see how well you learned the steps. I am going to put on the harness and rope again for you. But, this time I am going to make a mistake or two. Watch carefully. You may also use your directions for help. When I am done, I want you to write down on the back of the directions where I made my mistakes."

Mr. Doucette put on the harness one more time. This time he slipped a leg through one of the wrong slots of the harness. He also missed the last part of securing the rope to the harness. After he finished, he told the students they had two minutes to talk in their pairs and write down the mistakes he made.

When the students finished writing, he asked them to put their names on the sheets and to pass them forward. "Okay everyone, let's move on to the next step. Now that you have your harnesses on securely, you need to learn how to belay."