READING TO LEARN

Detailed Reading and Rewriting

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About this book

This book shows how to use the powerful strategies of Detailed Reading and Rewriting. To use this book, you will need to watch the videoed lessons.

Detailed Reading and Rewriting are the turbo-charged engines of the Reading to Learn program. They enable all students to:

- read challenging texts with full comprehension (including struggling readers and students with English as a second language)
- read the content of a text with detailed understanding, and recognise the language choices that the author has made in writing it
- use the content of factual texts to write new texts of their own
- use the language resources of accomplished authors in their own writing

They enable teachers to:

- meet the language and content goals of their curriculum programs
- manage their classes so that all students get equal benefit from studying texts at the same high level.

While the focus of Preparing for Reading and Joint Construction are on the global structures of texts - genres, their stages and phases - the focus of Detailed Reading and Rewriting is on patterns of language within and between sentences of a short passage.

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Learning cycles in Detailed Reading

In Detailed Reading, students are prepared to read each sentence in a short passage, by preparing them to identify each group of words in the sentence, which they highlight, and then elaborating on the meaning of the words. These three steps follow the pattern of the learning cycle discussed in Book 1:

- the students’ task is to identify wordings in each sentence
- the teacher prepares with cues telling them what the words mean and where to look
- the task is then elaborated by defining words, explaining concepts, or discussing students’ experience.

Through these carefully planned cycles, every student is able to read a text with complete understanding, no matter what their starting level.

R2L learning cycles are designed from close analyses of learning interactions between parents and children in the home. They are similar to the cycles of ‘initiate-respond-feedback’ that all teachers use, but they are planned to ensure that every student can do each task and then to benefit equally from the elaborations.

Designing and using such highly detailed lesson plans when teaching can be difficult to do at first. The aim of this book is to show why they are used and how they work. It uses the lessons shown on the R2L videos for Stories and Factual Texts.

Rewriting stories, factual texts, arguments and text responses

Different strategies are used for Rewriting stories and factual texts. Highlight these differences.

The focus of Detailed Reading for stories is on the literary language resources that authors use to engage and entertain readers. When Rewriting stories, students borrow these sophisticated language patterns but with different content - characters, events, settings.

The focus of Detailed Reading for factual texts is on the key information in each sentence. When Rewriting factual texts, students first make notes of the information they have highlighted in the text, and then use the same content to write a new text with different sentence patterns.

Like stories, arguments and text responses borrow the language patterns with different content, but the focus is on identifying and using patterns of evaluative language.
Normal classroom interactions

This lesson is in a Year 5 maths class. In the first interaction cycle the teacher asks a Focus question, and Phillip Proposes an answer from his own knowledge. The teacher Affirms and Elaborates with more technical information about the graph. But in the second cycle, no student can the right response, so the teacher has to take a step back and Prepare. Then in the third cycle, Phillip gives the wrong response and again the teacher takes a step back and Prepares.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>How would we represent that sort of information? All that information on one graph.</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phillip</td>
<td>You could put them...like the Monday underneath it like that.</td>
<td>Propose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>You could. You could put Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday at the bottom of your graph. That's true. So let's assume it's going to be just like most graphs – it has a vertical and a horizontal axis and at certain points it has little bits of information.</td>
<td>Affirm Elaborate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>So what we gonna do now? How are we going to show the weather on Monday of last week? [no response]</td>
<td>Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Well it was sunny. What could you do to show that?</td>
<td>Prepare Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillip</td>
<td>Put it in a colour...of the sun. Put yellow.</td>
<td>Propose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Good idea. So instead of using the symbols as they are, we could make them into the colour to represent that symbol.</td>
<td>Affirm Elaborate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>So if we’re gonna use colours to represent sun and rain and fog and so on, what else are we going to need on our graph?</td>
<td>Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillip</td>
<td>What the temperature is.</td>
<td>Propose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>No we’re thinking about the colours now.</td>
<td>Reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Are those colours gonna mean anything to anyone apart from you? Unless you do what?</td>
<td>Prepare Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillip</td>
<td>You put a little key down the side.</td>
<td>Propose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Little key,</td>
<td>Affirm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once the teacher prepares, Phillip is able to give the right responses because he has some experience in reading the genre, i.e. the kind of graph that the teacher is constructing. But notice that Phillip is the only student in the class who responds, and the only one who is affirmed. Most classes have at least some students like Phillip who consistently respond successfully to our questions. All teachers depend on these students to keep the lesson going, while interacting with the class.
Types of interaction moves in the classroom

We have found that all classroom interactions can be analysed into 8 kinds of moves. Highlight these terms and definitions.

Focus teacher focuses on the task, usually with a question
Prepare teacher gives information to enable successful responses
Identify students identify element in a text
Propose students propose elements from their knowledge and experience
Affirm teacher affirms student responses (or students concur)
Reject teacher rejects response by negating, ignoring or qualifying it
Elaborate define new terms, explain new concepts or relate to experience
Direct teacher directs an activity

Analysing classroom interactions

This may seem very complex when we analyse lessons so closely, but it shows exactly what teachers and students do all the time in the classroom. We ask students to identify things in texts, and we ask them to propose things from their experience. We then elaborate by explaining or discussing the students’ experience. This is a highly complex set of skills that teachers use all the time in the classroom.

The important difference with Detailed Reading is that these interaction cycles are carefully planned, so that all students’ responses are always successful, and our elaborations always build on successful responses.

Preparations enable all students to engage and understand:
1. To identify wordings or images in the text
2. To propose ideas from their knowledge.

Elaborations extend all students’ understanding and skills:
1. To learn more about the content
2. To learn something new about language.

How you prepare depends on the needs of your students.

How you elaborate depends on your purpose for the lesson.
Reading and writing stories

For Detailed Reading of stories, a short passage is selected from the story, such as an exciting action sequence, or a rich description. The passage should include well written language patterns that are used to build tension in an action sequence, create images in a description, or carry a key message in the story.

These are literary language patterns that readers must recognise, to get the full meaning and value of the story, and which the students will learn to use themselves in their writing.

Very importantly the passage must be interesting and challenging for the students. (Interesting does not mean easy to read, as you will support them to engage with challenging language.)

Enlarge the passage on A4 copies for all students, so that it is easy to read and highlight. If it breaks across pages of the book, cut and paste it on one page, or type it out. To make Detailed Reading easier, the passage can be copied on an overhead, and students take turns to come out and mark it. However this strategy should not be used once the class is familiar with the strategies, as Detailed Reading is more effective if all students find the wordings to mark on their own copies, rather than copying from an overhead.

Here is the passage used in the Stories lesson video. Watch the video, then read this.

At 2am that morning when most people were asleep the earthquake struck. It started with a long low roar that seemed to be approaching from the north of the city. Those people who were awake heard a sound like distant thunder, and as the first ripples of the earthquake sped towards the city the ground beneath their feet started to shake. Glasses in cupboards started to tinkle, plates started to rattle. Within seconds the roar grew louder and the ground wobbled like a huge bowl of jelly.

“The ground will stop shaking soon,” he said, trying to reassure himself. “It’s only a small earthquake. Just a light tremor.”

But he couldn’t have been more wrong. This earthquake was big. And it was about to get bigger.

Language focus for Detailed Reading

This is an action sequence which starts with a long low roar, then builds up with first ripples, shake, tinkle, rattle, then grew louder and the ground wobbled. This building problem is followed by the character’s reaction, trying to reassure himself, and then a comment by the author telling the reader what to expect it was about to get bigger.