

The background of the slide is a light beige, aged paper with a subtle, organic pattern. On the left side, there is a vertical stem of a pressed leaf, with a single leaflet extending upwards. On the right side, there is another stem with a single leaflet extending downwards. The overall aesthetic is that of a botanical specimen or a piece of antique paper.

Adolescent Accelerated Reading Initiative (AARI)

**Sharon Russell,
University of Michigan**

**Cyndi Settecerri,
Birmingham Public Schools**



Video Clip of AARI in Action

- What do you notice?
- What's the same or different from typical reading instruction?



What is AARI?

- An intervention to increase academic literacy.
- Focuses on expository text reading to help students access content from texts.



What is AARI?

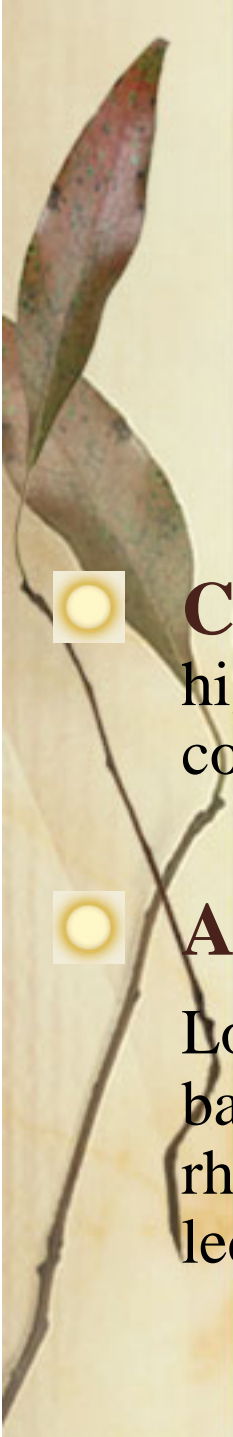
- Emphasizes small group instruction that meets students where they are and accelerates their reading through instruction built around
 - Community
 - Inferencing and critical thinking
 - Text structure



**Research Behind AARI:
International Reading Association
Dissertation of the Year
Top Ten Finalist 2006**


Challenging Task in Appropriate Text:
Designing Discourse Communities to
Increase the Literacy Growth of Adolescent
Struggling Readers


(Russell, 2005) University of Maryland



The framework of challenging task in appropriate text situated within a discourse community designed for the purpose of academic literacy:

allows for a match between the reader's decoding and cognition needs

 **Challenging Task** : a problem that requires one to engage in higher mental thought processes that stretch the current level of cognitive ability

 **Appropriate Text for adolescent struggling readers:**
Low-level exposition with four distinct features: Links to background knowledge and interest, density of ideas, Clear rhetorical patterns, clear signaling devices. Those four elements led me to work solely with exposition.



Research Based Key Instructional Elements

Signaling Devices

(i.e., Lorch, Pugzles & Inman, 1993)

Inferential Questioning

(i.e., Raphael, 1986)

Questioning the Author

(Beck, McKeown, Worthy & Kucan, 1997)


Genre Analysis (Text Structure) as Pedagogy

(i.e., Armbruster & Anderson, 1987;
Chambliss & Calfee, 1999; Swales, 1990).



Text Structure as Pedagogy

- Chambliss and Calfee (1998) identified eight structures used by writers and codified in college composition books.
- Those eight structures accounted for the majority of text structure instruction.



Supportive Elements that Encourage Critical Thinking with Text

Scaffolded Questioning

(Gallimore & Tharp, 1990; Wood, Bruner & Ross 1976).

Emergence of Discourse around Genre

(Bakhtin, 1989; Chapman, 1999; Swales, 1990).

Small Group instruction with highly reflective, responsive teachers

(Gallimore & Tharp, 1990).



Accessible Text with Four Key Elements

Links to background knowledge and interest (Chambliss & Calfee, 1998)

Sufficient density of ideas

(Chall, Bissex, Conrad & Harris – Sharples, 1996)

Clear Rhetorical Patterns (Meyer & Poon, 2002)

Clear Signaling Devices

(Lorch, Pugzles & Inman, 1993)



Participants

- ❑ 40 ninth graders were assessed at the end of their 8th grade year and deemed to be below grade level.
 - ❑ Matched pairs were created based on reading level.
 - ❑ The school randomly selected one student from each matched pair to participate in the reading classes.
 - ❑ Unassigned students became the control group.
 - ❑ Treatment Group: n=22
(6 small groups)
- Control Group n=18



Instruction

- All 22 instruction students engaged in the framework of *Challenging Task in Appropriate Text* daily for 18 weeks.
- Control students received regular high school programming.



Who Benefitted?

1. All students in the instruction group improved dramatically in overall literacy growth in expository text.
2. Students identified as “special education” or “second language” benefitted more – likely because they had farther to go.

The background of the slide features a pressed leaf on aged, yellowish paper. The leaf is dark brown and elongated, positioned on the left side. A thin, dark stem extends from the leaf across the bottom of the page. In the center of the paper, there is a faint, circular watermark of a flower or floral design.

**Translating Research into
Practice:
Oakland County Adolescent
Accelerated Reading Initiative**



Research into Practice Caveat

Clear distinction between research results and effective practice in ecologically valid settings

- ☉ **Our research is ongoing and we have many unanswered questions.**
- ☉ **Results are dramatic enough and consistent enough across iterations to warrant a continuation of the AARI program while we continue the research**



Oakland County Sites: Fall 2010


- 33 Districts
- 40+ Schools
- 33 Teachers
- 10 AARI Classroom Coaches



Fall 2008
All Sites
Overall Averages

○ Average Beginning
QRI level was
Independent 4

○ Average Ending QRI
level was Independent
Upper Middle School



Fall 2009

- Same robust findings as in Fall 2008
- Program worked equally well across schools and grade levels.
- Program worked equally well across gender and school services
- Key variables: Time on task and group size



SY 2010-2011

- Working with Oakland Schools data analysts to align AARI with external achievement measures. No results to date.
- Our goal is the “What Works Clearinghouse.”



**AARI Systemic
Professional Development for
Intervention Teachers**

Initial Summer Institute

Advanced Summer Institutes

Assessment PD

Coaching

Training and Coaching Coaches



AARI Content Area Classroom Support


Transition to text

Content Area Literacy PD (baseline
knowledge)

Content Area PD for AARI
(beginning January 2011)



Non-Negotiables



**Results rest on teacher knowledge
and pedagogical skill.**

Staff development including coaching
are key components of the work.



Instructional Conditions

Assessment

Appropriate level of text

Small group

Daily instruction



Caveat Emptor

- AARI requires administrative support in scheduling small classes



Rationale for High Level of Support



What Do Students Face?

Students are “double whammied” with expository text negotiation

- ❑ Typically, textbooks are not well organized
- ❑ Standards are requiring students to learn from text much earlier in their school careers.
- ❑ Standards also require increased amounts of expository reading.
- ❑ Begins in elementary school



What Do We Want to Teach?

- Students use what they know. When narrative comprehension skills are insufficient, they have no recourse without having been taught expository comprehension strategies.
- Historically, we disservice students by delivering content orally because students indicate difficulty and because text is confusing.



Why Is It Important?

- Negotiating exposition requires a completely different set of cognitive skills from the comprehension of narrative literature.
- Students typically don't understand that these processes are different, thus, assessment results will differ from literacy assessments conducted with narrative text.



Why Text-Based Inferencing?

- Authors repeatedly commit “assumicidies”
- Authors leave out information they believe to be obvious. It is this obvious information that students who struggle don’t “get.”
- If we help students find these breakdowns, we are helping them to think critically for themselves.
- “Ground” kids in text



Mental Models For Text

- You have a mental model for understanding exposition.
- Because you have a mental model, you also have a way to organize confusing expository text.
- You know when to use headers & when they are confusing, you know when you don't understand and why.
- You know if a vocabulary word is critical or not and how to figure it out.
- You know when to read or skip a chapter summary.



“Student will be able to....(SWBAT)”

- Understand of how text works
- Solidify comprehension
- Evaluate and analyze at increasing levels of abstraction
- Understand multiple purposes for reading the same and novel texts
- Acquire content knowledge and vocabulary
Practice foundational literacy skills




Common Core Alignment

“All students must have the opportunity to learn and meet the same high standards if they are to access the knowledge and skills necessary in their post-high school lives. “
(p.9)




AARI meets K-12 College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards -pp.10 & 35

- (1) Close reading – inferencing and textual evidence to support claims
- (5) Analyze the structure of texts
- (6) Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style
- (8) Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text



AARI provides a Tier 2 -3 RTI Intervention Addressing what the Common Core Does NOT

- “define the intervention methods or materials necessary to support students who are well below ... grade –level expectations.” (p.9)
- Define the full range of supports appropriate for English Language Learners and for students with special needs” (p.9)




Questioning the Author



Revisiting the Lesson

- Video clip



Scaffolded Questioning



Inferential Questioning



ACTIVITY:

Literal, Inferential or Extension ?

- What do spiders do with their food?
- Why do spiders drink their food?
- Do you think spiders have jaws?

How Do Spiders Eat?



Spiders have a strange way of eating. They turn their food into a liquid. Then they drink the liquid. It is like drinking milk through a straw!



Halpern, J. (1998). *A Look at Spiders*. Austin, TX. Steck-Vaughan.



Literal, Inferential or Extension ?

- What do spiders do with their food?
- Why do spiders drink their food?
- Do you think spiders have jaws?

Spiders have a strange way of eating. They turn their food into a liquid. Then they drink their liquid. It is like drinking milk through a straw.



Mapping the text



RTI – Case Study



Contacts

Sharon Russell

slrussel@umich.edu

Laura Schiller

laura.schiller@oakland.k12.mi.us

Cyndi Settecerri

cs14bps@birthingam.k12.mi.us