Determining Importance and Summarizing Expository Text
Big Ideas

- Expository ≠ Narrative
- Think-Aloud Is Critical
- Tools for Success
- CPQ = Scaffold
Kids Say...

“You know how when it rains? The grass and flowers and trees soak up all the water they need, and the rest just runs on down the street. We soak up what’s important, to us, too, and let the rest of it go away.”

Christopher, a first grader (as quoted in Miller, 2002, p. 69)
Determining Importance & Summarizing

Mathematical Formulation

The inner product between two state vectors is a complex number known as a *probability amplitude*. During a measurement, the probability that a system collapses from a given initial state to a particular eigenstate is given by the square of the absolute value of the probability amplitudes between the initial and final states.

(“Quantum mechanics,” in wikipedia.org)
Goals for This Training

• Clarify the value of Determining Importance and Summarizing.
• Plan and practice an introduction lesson for Determining Importance and Summarizing.
• Plan and practice think-alouds for teaching Determining Importance and Summarizing
Determining Importance and Summarizing

...one piece of the comprehension puzzle.
Why Should We Teach

DETERMINING IMPORTANCE and SUMMARIZING?
Why Should We Teach Determining Importance and Summarizing?

Students are expected to:

• 3.13(A): identify the details or facts that support the main idea.

• 4.11(A): summarize the main idea and supporting details in text in ways that maintain meaning.

• 5.11(A): summarize the main ideas and supporting details in a text in ways that maintain meaning and logical order.

• Figure 19(E): summarize information in text, maintaining meaning and logical order.
Why Should We Teach Determining Importance?

Determining Importance helps readers to...

• Monitor understanding.
• Make connections.
• Manage excessive amounts of information.
• Extract relevant information.
• Understand the author’s purpose.
• Remember text.
• Improve overall comprehension.

How Should We Teach

DETERMINING IMPORTANCE and SUMMARIZING?
Cognitive Strategy Routine

Strategy Instruction

1. Use a real-world example to create a context (anchor lesson).
2. Give the strategy a name.
3. Define the strategy, how and when it is used, and how it helps with reading.
4. Give students touchstones, such as a hand gesture or icon, to help them remember the strategy.
5. Think aloud, using the strategy in a variety of contexts.
6. Engage students by providing opportunities for them to share their thinking during the reading. Practice shared application with planned discussion prompts.
7. Scaffold practice, providing opportunities for students to use the strategy while reading, with teacher support and monitoring.
8. Provide accountability measures for students while using the strategy independently.

Gradual Release of Responsibility

Ongoing Assessment and Feedback

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Begin With an Anchor Lesson (Step 1)

• An anchor lesson is a real-world example used to create context for a cognitive strategy.
• It is useful to create a different anchor lesson for each cognitive strategy.
• We refer to the anchor lesson to remind students of the cognitive strategy.
• Learning is more consistent for students when the same anchor lesson is used within and across grade levels.
Introduce the Strategy (Step 1)

Anchor Lesson

• 4 years old
• Eats Purina One food
• Blue collar
• Favorite toy is a stuffed squirrel
• Likes kids
• Last seen at school playground
• Has a tag labeled Sonny
• Wags his tail a LOT!
• Likes to cuddle
• Likes to hide in small places
• Knows how to sit, stay, and lie down
• Has ridden on a plane five times
• Smallest puppy in the litter
Introduce the Strategy (Step 1)

Lost Dog

- Blue collar
- Has a tag labeled Sonny
- Last seen at school playground
- Likes to hide in small places

REWARD
Please Call 713-500-0000
Introducing the Strategy (Step 1)

Use a real-world example to create a context (anchor lesson).

Record what you will do for Step 1 on your orange Cognitive Strategy Routine Lesson Planning Card.
Teaching the Strategy (Steps 2-4)

Strategy Instruction

Direct – Explicit – Systematic

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Teaching the Strategy (Step 2)

Give the strategy a name:

“Today, we’re going to talk about a strategy called Determining Importance & Summarizing.”

Record what you will say for Step 2 on your orange Cognitive Strategy Routine Lesson Planning Card.
Teaching the Strategy (Step 3)

Define the strategy, how and when it is used and how it helps with reading.

“Have you ever noticed how difficult it is to remember everything that you read?... Our brains just can’t seem to hold all of that information at the same time.” To help us determine importance while reading expository text, we think about our purpose for reading – what it is we want to find out. When we do this, it helps us to identify the topic and main idea of the text.

(McGregor, 2007, p. 81)
Teaching the Strategy (Step 3)

Record what you will say for Step 3 on your orange Cognitive Strategy Routine Lesson Planning Card.

Determining Importance and Summarizing is...
Touchstones (Step 4)

Provide students with a hand motion that signals determining importance & summarizing

Display strategy posters in the classroom

Refer back to the anchor lesson
Teaching the Strategy (Step 4)

Touchstones: Model the hand gesture, explain the strategy poster, and refer to the anchor lesson.

“Remember when we made our lost dog poster? We had a long list of details about the dog. Pretend that all of my fingers are those details. We didn’t want to put all of those details on our poster, we had to figure out which information was the most important – like my thumb here. The unimportant details can hide behind my hand, so that only the most important or key information is left. You will know when I am Determining Importance while reading, because I will show you this thumbs-up hand signal.”
Teaching the Strategy (Step 4)

Record what you will say for Step 4 on your orange Cognitive Strategy Routine Lesson Planning Card.
Practice Steps 2-4

You Do:
Practice Steps 2-4 of your Determining Importance lesson.
Cognitive Strategy Lesson Planning Card (Side 2)

• Step 5 is where we SHOW students how we use the strategy while reading.

• We plan a Comprehension Purpose Question (CPQ), as well as places to model “thinking aloud” for students.

• Step 5 will differ with each lesson. We transfer the sticky notes from the planning card and place them on our teacher edition or text.
Modeling With Think-Alouds (Step 5)

Where do I begin?
Determining Importance and Summarizing
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Who or what the text is about; can often be expressed in one or two words.</td>
<td>Sharks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Idea</td>
<td>What the text says about the topic; can often be expressed in one sentence or less.</td>
<td>Sharks do many things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>A synthesis of the important ideas in a text; may be of varying length, expressed in the reader’s own words.</td>
<td>Sharks swim through the oceans hunting for prey, such as fish and seals. Sometimes, they work together to attack prey and may even engage in playful activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Modeling With Think-Alouds (Step 5)

Where do I begin?

Considerations:

- Previous experience with the strategy
- Student background knowledge
- Grade level
- TEKS
- Purpose
Modeling With Think-Alouds (Step 5)

I notice...

The topic is...

This is mostly about...
Modeling With Think-Alouds (Step 5)

I notice...

The topic is...

This is mostly about...

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Modeling With Think-Alouds (Step 5)

Scott Foresman Reading and Lectura Grade 3, Volume 1, Unit 2
Determining Importance Toolbox

- Purpose for reading
- Scanning the text
- Background knowledge
- Location in paragraph or text
- Rereading
- Text features:
  - Headings and subheadings
  - Fonts (colored, italics, bold)
  - Signal words and phrases (in conclusion, most importantly...)
Year after year, snow falls in the North. It falls on Alaska, Canada, Siberia, and Greenland. It also falls on the South Pole in Antarctica—where the penguins are.

Even the summer is cold in those places, so the snow does not melt. Over thousands of years it gets packed harder and harder until it is ice. In some places the ice can be three miles deep. This big cover of ice is called a glacier.

¿Cómo se forman los icebergs?


Incluso durante el verano hace frío en esos lugares y por eso la nieve no se derrite. A lo largo de miles de años, la nieve se ha concentrado hasta convertirse en hielo. En algunos lugares, el hielo alcanza tres millas de profundidad. A esa enorme capa de hielo se le llama glaciar.

Handout 5
As the ice gets thicker and thicker in the glacier, it pushes toward the ocean.

The ocean waves beat hard against it. They make cracks in the glacier. All at once, there is a loud chunk of the glacier breaks off. This great chunk of ice is an iceberg.

Thousands of icebergs break off from glaciers each year. Some are large and look like shiny mountains. Others look like big buildings. Some are very wide and flat. Entire towns could be built on them.

A medida que el hielo del glaciar se hace cada vez más grueso, va adentrándose en el mar.

La fuerza con que las olas chocan contra el glaciar abre en él profundas grietas y cuando finalmente un pedazo de hielo se desprende del glaciar, se produce un ruido aterrador. Ese enorme pedazo de hielo se llama iceberg.

Todos los años se desprenden miles de icebergs de los glaciares. Algunos de ellos son muy grandes y parecen montañas relucientes. Otros parecen grandes edificios. Otros son tan anchos y planos que se podría construir una ciudad sobre ellos.
Year after year, snow falls in the North. It falls on Alaska, Canada, Siberia, and Greenland. It also falls on the South Pole in Antarctica—where the penguins are. Even the summer is cold in those places, so the snow does not melt. Over thousands of years it gets packed harder and harder until it is ice. In some places the ice can be three miles deep. This big cover of ice is called a glacier.

Año tras año nieva en el norte. Nieva en Alaska, en Canadá, en Siberia y en Groenlandia. También nieva en el Polo Sur, en la Antártida, donde viven los pingüinos. Incluso durante el verano hace frío en esos lugares y por eso la nieve no se derrite. A lo largo de miles de años, la nieve se ha concentrado hasta convertirse en hielo. En algunos lugares, el hielo alcanza tres millas de profundidad. A esa enorme capa de hielo se le llama glacier.
As the ice gets thicker and thicker in the glacier, it pushes toward the ocean.

The ocean waves beat hard against it. They make deep cracks in the glacier. All at once, there is a loud sound as a chunk of the glacier breaks off. This great chunk of ice is an iceberg.

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**Topic:** Iceberg Formation

**Main Idea** (This text is *mostly* about):

- Icebergs are created when waves beat against a glacier until a large piece of ice breaks off.

- Icebergs are created when a large piece of ice breaks off of a glacier.
Planning Your Think-Aloud (Step 5)

You Do:

• Read the sample text. Use the flags on the index card to mark the three most important pieces of information in the text.

• Explain to your neighbor what you flagged and why.
Planning Your Think-Aloud (Step 5)

- Use the sticky note on the orange Planning Card to record a CPQ for the text. Place the sticky note on the front of the article.
Determining Importance Toolbox

• Look at the Determining Importance Toolbox poster. Which one or two tools will you explicitly model while reading this text?
Planning Your Think-Aloud (Step 5)

- Beside the flags you placed in the text, record on the three think-aloud sticky notes the thinking you will share out loud to show how you determine importance while reading this text.
Planning Your Think-Aloud (Step 5)

- On Handout 7, record the **topic** and **main idea**. Remember, it may be messy! Think about how you will explain your thinking to the class.
- Practice Steps 2-5 of the lesson you just planned.
What about teaching me to summarize?
What Is a Summary?

“A summary is a synthesis of the important ideas in a text. Summarizing requires students to determine what is important in what they are reading, to condense the information, and to put it into their own words. Instruction in summarizing helps students:

• Identify or generate main ideas;
• Connect the main or central ideas; and
• Eliminate redundant and unnecessary information, and...”

(CIERA, 2003, p.53)
Laying the Foundation for Summarizing

“Model many times over how to make a summary of a short passage or a paragraph; progress gradually to longer segments of text. Summarizing is difficult and in the beginning should be taught through extensive modeling and supported practice.”

(Moats, 2005, p. 52)
Modeling With Think-Alouds (Step 5)

Summary CPQ: What do you learn from this text?
**Topic (This text is about...):**
Iceberg Formation

**Main Idea (This text is mostly about...):**
Icebergs are created when waves beat against a glacier until a large piece of ice breaks off.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details 1:</th>
<th>Details 2:</th>
<th>Details 3:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • snow never melts  
  • thousands of years gets packed into ice called a glacier | • waves beat the glacier  
  • causes a crack  
  • chunk breaks off | • large and tall  
  • wide and flat |

**Summary (the important ideas in this text include...):**
Glaciers are formed over thousands of years as snow gets packed into layers of ice. The glacier is beaten by ocean waves until a large piece breaks off becoming an iceberg. Icebergs can be various shapes and sizes.
Modeling With Think-Alouds (Step 5)

Where do I begin?

Considerations:

• Previous experience with the strategy
• Student background knowledge
• Grade level
• TEKS
• Purpose
Thinking Together (Step 6)

Use Think-Turn-Talk to allow students to share thinking.

• “What information do you think we should flag?”
Using CPQs to Scaffold Student Learning

Refer students to the Comprehension Purpose Question (CPQ) to help them decide what information is important.

- Ask: “Does that information help you answer the CPQ?”
- Acknowledge that information that is not important to answering the CPQ may be interesting to them.
Scaffolding with Graphic Organizers

- Complete together as a class (Step 6).
- Complete in pairs or small groups (Step 7). Teacher monitoring and support as necessary.
- Complete alone (Step 8). May use for Assessment.
Big Ideas

- Expository ≠ Narrative
- Think-Aloud Is Critical
- Tools for Success
- CPQ = Scaffold
“Given the rapidly changing world in which today’s students operate and given the plethora of information at their fingertips, the importance of modeling how we determine importance has increased dramatically.”

Keene & Zimmerman, 2007
References


References


References


Scott Foresman Reading. (2000). Danger – Icebergs! Grade 3, Volume One, Unit 2.


References

