

Discussion Board 2 EDDN 637

1. In Teaching Scenarios, Chapter 2 p. 57 rate Mrs. Hargrove's lesson on each of the Lesson Preparation features. Please be specific when you explain your rating.

Mrs. Hargrove did a lesson on the Gold Rush. Based on the lesson, I would give her different scores for each of the Lesson Preparation features (Vogt, Echevarria & Short, 2016). I gave Mrs. Hargrove a 2 for content objectives. She started the lesson by saying, "Today you'll learn about the Oregon Trail, the Overland Trail, and the Route around Cape Horn." She also talked about what they were going to do during the lesson. She lost points for not writing it on the board. I think it would be difficult for ELL students to hear this, understand it, and remember the lesson objective. The content objective should be clearly displayed throughout the lesson. I gave Mrs. Hargrove a 0 for language objectives. I do not believe she had any language objectives in her lesson. She did not help the students with vocabulary or language concerns. She did tell the students to raise their hands if they had "difficulty with any words", however she did not plan for language development. I gave Mrs. Hargrove a 4 for content concepts. I believe that the Gold Rush is aligned with 4th grade learning standards. I gave Mrs. Hargrove a 2 for supplementary materials. Throughout the lesson, she orally lectured, used an electronic document reader to point out the trails in the textbook, pointed out pictures in the book, and assigned independent reading. She used some supplementary materials; however, she did not use it to make it clearer and more understandable to the ELL students. I gave Mrs. Hargrove a 0 for adaptation of content. The lesson was the same for all the students, there was no differentiation for the ELL students. During the lesson, half the class (which was mostly Native English speakers), finished the reading. The other half (the ELL students) did not. This tells me that they had a hard time with the reading. I would give Mrs. Hargrove a 2 for meaningful activities. Coloring the trails on the map with different colors was meaningful. However, there were not many opportunities for language practice.

2. What Makes a Text ‘Complex’? Share one short text excerpt you use in your teaching and analyze it for complexity. What makes a text ‘complex’ is subjective. What is complex for one student may not be complex for another student. However, there are certain characteristics that can help you estimate a text's complexity (Hallmark 1 of Advanced Literacy Instruction). There are quantitative and qualitative measures. Quantitative measures look at things like word count, sentence length, sentence structure, text level. Qualitative measures look at how many levels of meaning the text contains, text clarity, and language used. Other things to consider when looking at the complexity of a text is figurative language use, graphics to help convey the meaning, and the students background knowledge about the topic. The following passage is an excerpt from a 4th grade workbook. The reading program is HMH: Into Reading.

12 Flora's mother had often accused Flora of being a
“natural-born **cynic**.”

13 Flora suspected that this was true.

***SHE WAS A NATURAL-BORN CYNIC WHO
LIVED IN DEFIANCE OF CONTRACTS!***

14 *Yep*, thought Flora, *that's me*. She bent her head
and went back to reading about the amazing
Incandesto.

15 She was interrupted a few minutes later by a very
loud noise.

16 It sounded as if a jet plane had landed in the
Tickhams' backyard.

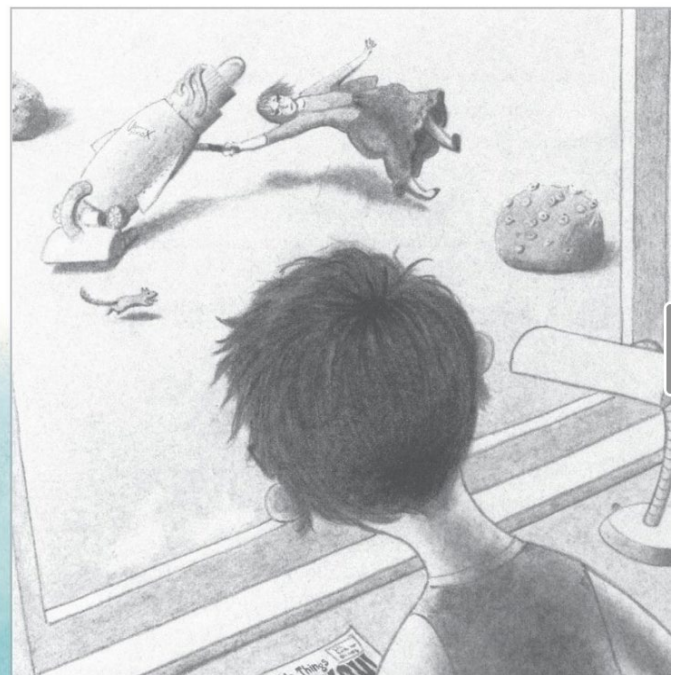
17 “What the heck?” said Flora. She got up from her
desk and looked out the window and saw Mrs.
Tickham running around the backyard with a shiny,
oversize vacuum cleaner.

18 It looked like she was vacuuming the yard.

19 *That can't be*, thought Flora. *Who vacuums their
yard?*

20 Actually, it didn't look like Mrs. Tickham knew
what she was doing.

21 It was more like the vacuum cleaner was in charge.
And the vacuum cleaner seemed to be out of its
mind. Or its engine. Or something.



cynic A cynic is someone who always expects bad things to happen.

defiance If you act in defiance, you know something is not allowed, but you do it anyway.

Students get a physical workbook, and there is an online one available.

I think this is a good text for ELL students. The sentence structure is not complex. There is no double meaning and there is no figurative language used. The text gives definitions for new vocabulary words. The definitions are simple and use language that is easy to understand. If the students are reading the story online, they can click the word and the definition will appear. There are pictures and graphics throughout the story to give the reader a visual of what is going on. I also like how the author wrote the

story. It does not look dense and overwhelming for students. Overall, I would say this text has a low level of complexity.

2. The following passage is excerpted from the Grade 4 NYSESLAT Student Practice Book. Analyze the text and give specific insight into its complexity, referring back to your ELLs students. Give 3 explicit ideas on how you might prepare your students for a text such as this. You can also use a mindmap to showcase your approach

The Star Maiden: A Native American Legend

One night, a young boy was sleeping under the stars. In a deep sleep, the boy dreamed about the silver stars in the night sky. There was one star in his dream that was brighter than all the others. Suddenly, this star began to move across the sky, floating closer and closer to Earth. It landed on a tree just above the boy's head. In his dream, the star was transformed¹ into a beautiful young woman with long hair and glowing eyes. She was still shining like a star. The star maiden reached out to the boy and said, "I have seen your world. It has called out to me. Everything is so beautiful: the clear blue water, the pretty flowers and your people. I want to live in this world. If you speak to your wisest chiefs, perhaps I can change my form and live among your people. Ask them what form I should take." When the boy woke up, he ran to his village and found his chief. A meeting was called and all the wisest chiefs listened carefully to the boy's story. One chief stood up and said, "Of course we will welcome this beautiful star into our village. Tell her that she may take on any form she wants. She can be anything that makes her happy. Go now and tell her this." That very night, the boy went back to the tree where he slept the night before, and waited. As he looked up, the bright star descended from the heavens. The star maiden² appeared. Startled and excited, the boy told the woman what the chiefs had said. He led the star maiden back to the village. The next day, the star maiden turned herself into a gorgeous wild flower. This didn't make her happy though. Animals came close to crushing her in their path. The ground shook all around her and she was sad. The next day, the star maiden turned into a lovely red rose. But the garden she lived in was far away from the village. She missed the people who she wanted to be around the most. That night it seemed she gave up. She rose back up into the sky and the people in the village were afraid she was leaving for good because she couldn't be happy among them. They watched as the star maiden floated over their lake. She looked down into the water and saw her reflection and the reflection of her sister stars. "Come my sisters!" the star maiden called out. "Come with me and make these beautiful waters our home." The people smiled, and satisfied, they went to sleep. The next morning they went back to the lake and saw something magical. The lake was covered with hundreds of floating flower stars like the villagers had never seen. The star maiden and her sisters became water lilies. So, every time you see a

water lily, remember the star maiden and how she came down from heaven to live among us.

1 transformed: changed 2 maiden: young girl

I think that this is a fairly complex text. Multiple sentences have a complex structure. The text is long with difficult vocabulary. There are no pictures or graphics to provide the students with a visual aid. The author uses figurative language that may be difficult for the students to understand. Some ELL students may have a hard time understanding the meaning of the story because it is a legend. The first way I would help my students prepare for this reading would be to review what a legend is. We would discuss the historical significance of legends and what they are. This will help students understand that not everything in the story is true, but the author wants to teach the reader a lesson. The second way I would help my student prepare is by reviewing similes. The text has the simile "She was still shining like a star." This is a good example to discuss how the author compares the maiden to a star and how bright it is. The last way I would help prepare my students would be breaking apart the reading. I think this is a long and dense story. The class would read the first half of the story and discuss it. I would have my students circle words that they don't know. The class can work together to figure out the meaning of those words. Then, we would read the second half. I think that would make reading it less overwhelming for the students.

References:

C Vogt, M., Echevarria, J. J., & Short, D. J. (2016). *Making content comprehensible for English learners*. (5th ed.). Pearson: New York.

Hallmark 1 of Advanced Literacies Instruction: Engaging, Content-Rich Texts (nysed.gov).

Peer responses:

Hi L.,

I really enjoyed reading your responses! My school is also using the HMH curriculum this year. This is the first time we are using this curriculum, and so far, I really like it. I think that the stories are a lot more fun and interesting for the students. I also think that the text complexity is appropriate for each grade. I really liked how you analyzed the text in question three. I originally thought that the text was complex, but you pointed out how this is accessible for intermediate and advanced ELL students. I agree that this would be okay for students with a higher English proficiency, whereas it may be more difficult for the students who are at a lower level. This would be a good opportunity for

the teacher to pull a small group of students who have a lower English proficiency. This way the students get more individual support.

Hi J,

I really liked reading your post! I gave a similar definition for what makes a text "complex". You mentioned how background knowledge plays a part in the complexity of a text. I completely agree. When I introduce a new story, I usually like to activate the students' prior knowledge and get them thinking about the topic. If the story is about bats, for example, I will see what the students already know about bats. I might show them a picture or a short video about bats. Then, the class would brainstorm all the things they know about bats. If students don't know much about the topic, usually others in the class can teach them something new. I think activating students' background knowledge helps get them engaged and ready to read the text.

Hi S.,

Great post! I really liked your analysis of the science text. There are a lot of new science terms for the 4th graders such as chlorophyll, pigment, and glucose. One way to help the student understand these words would be to show them a visual of what they mean. Showing the students real pictures of the plants and the different parts can help them connect the new word to a tangible thing.