

Emily Georgoulakos

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Text Analysis and Critique

Selecting texts for English language learners (ELL) has a great impact on the student's language development and comprehension of the material. It is essential the text is developmentally appropriate for the student to ensure the student is capable of comprehending the meaning of the text. In order to choose an appropriate text there are key factors to be considered such as the quantitative elements, qualitative factors, the readers, and the task considerations. This entails the teacher's consideration of the vocabulary, sentence structure, and discourse patterns of the text prior to introducing it to students. This way the teacher can decide if the text is appropriate and beneficial for the ELL to be exposed to. It is also important that the teacher reviews text previously to encounter any high frequency words or academic vocabulary which should be previously introduced before reading the text. The text will be analyzed from a decodable reader from Unit 2 of the WonderWorks curriculum. The WonderWorks program is specifically designed for special education students. The text is titled, *Camping Fun* by Jamie Cydzik illustrated by Sarah Dillard. Based on the key factors of the analysis of text is appropriate for developing ELL when exposed to the appropriate background information prior to, during, and after reading the text.

In order to analyze the text I first completed a linguistic analysis that included reviewing the text and sentence structure. The first consideration is the quantitative measure and qualitative indicators refer to the text complexity referring to the word frequency, sentence length, text cohesion, and text structure (*Hallmark 1 of advanced literacies instruction, NYSED*). This text is indicated for a student at the beginning of 1st grade. The expected Lexile of the students in this

class can range from BR405L to 500L, and this text falls in between this Lexile. The next-generation standards state at this level students are still emerging readers therefore they should be reading texts at an appropriate complex level to strengthen students vocabulary and comprehension (*New York State Next Generation English Language Arts Learning standards*). This text includes decodable words, words to review, and high frequency words. The words to review and the high frequency words include many to most of the words used in the text compared to the decodable words. Throughout the text, I noticed two words that were used frequently, including 'and' and 'can'. The repetition of these words is appropriate for emergent readers to begin fluent reading. Complex vocabulary includes cast, gust, mast, slump, mend, bask, and plunk. These words are 1 syllable words the students will be able to decode, but the meaning of the words is advanced and specific. Many of these words relate to camping and water activities which ELL may not have the comprehension of. The students have the capability to decode these words using phonemic strategies, but they will not have the knowledge of the meaning of the words. Therefore ELLs will be able to read the words, but will not have the comprehension of the text. Some of the vocabulary is not specifically relevant to camping and does not align with an ELL student's proficiency level. For example, the words 'mend' and 'bask'. The students have the ability to use phonemic strategies to read the words, but they will not have the background to understand the meaning of the words and sentences. The students are capable of mapping the sounds of the words and reading the text, but they don't have the ability to find the meaning of the word independently (*What Goes into Effective Reading Comprehension?*. NYSED). This makes the text to be challenging for ELLs in order to understand the meaning of the text. Although it will give them the opportunity to advance their vocabulary once the students understand the meaning of the words and text. Also, the text

includes high-frequency words including eat, of, no, under, and who. These are the keywords that should be reviewed before the text is read. These keywords enforce scaffolding and allow students to be encouraged to read sight words. Besides the vocabulary words, there are multiple vocabulary words in the text which may confuse the reader. As a developing ELL language learner, the student may not know the meaning of these specific vocabulary words that the text includes. I found that there are multiple vocabulary words in the text that are considered to be complex based on the meaning and comprehension of ELL.

The sentence structure of the text has a large variety of factors including length, grammatical structures, and syntactic complexity. The length of the sentences is from 5 to 8 words per sentence. The text includes compound sentence structure, for example, “Frank and Meg sit on a stump by plants”. The sentence structure of the text is appropriate for ELLs but includes words that ELL students may not understand which will limit their comprehension of the text. The grammatical structures of the sentences include 1 to 2 syllable words including decodable and high frequency words. The decodable words focus on the final consonant blends including -nd, -nk, -nt, and -st. The text is in the present tense as it includes words such as sit, sink, send, eat, jump, and come. The sentence structure and the grammatical structure show the text is age-appropriate for the 1st-grade students. There are a few conditional sentence examples in the text which include “No! A gust of wind! It will sink under” and “Meg can jump in. Plunk!”. In the first example, it refers to a boat getting tipped over and the possibility of it sinking into the water. The second example refers to a girl being able to jump in the water, and plunk being the sound of the splash of her jumping. The sentence structure is appropriate for the student's language proficiency level but includes complex vocabulary which will develop student knowledge and vocabulary. The ELLs are in the developing stage of

language development. The background knowledge of this text includes the student having an understanding of outdoor activities which an ELL may not have the knowledge of.

The student may have difficulty with comprehension of a few of the terms, but using their background knowledge, the illustrations, and discussions about the text the student will be successful in building comprehension (Vogt, 2016). In order to challenge students and continue building their knowledge and comprehension students must continue to be introduced to new vocabulary through texts.

The discourse patterns which are used in the text to organize ideas and information are used throughout the text. The conjunction used throughout the text includes 'and', which is used mostly when referring to names and actions in the text. There are no transitional phrases used in this text. There are no pronouns used in the text, the author only refers to the people by names or mom and dad. This allows the reader to follow along simply with the text and there is no confusion on who the text is referring to. The discourse patterns in the text keep the sentence structure straightforward by using basic academic vocabulary. From sentence to sentence the text is easy to follow. The coherence of the text flows simply allowing the reader to follow along with the story.

The text barriers multiple linguistic, cultural, and cognitive barriers. There are multiple words within the text that can prevent the student from comprehending the meaning. Specifically the sentence, "Look at the mast slump". Alone the sentence can be extremely difficult to understand. The text is referring to a toy sailboat floating in the water which is about to tip over. The text never refers explicitly to the sailboat in the water but by only the illustration you see the author is referring the the boat. Without the picture clue, any reader would have difficulty understanding the meaning. Culturally, if students have not experienced camping or water

activities whether they have moved from a different country or it is not an activity that their family does they may not have the knowledge of specific vocabulary used in the text. Camping is not a specific activity tradition or culture, but only happens in certain climates and areas which will eliminate the knowledge of certain vocabulary words and background knowledge. Based on the text, the student may struggle cognitively with the text based on the vocabulary in the text. The students have the ability to read the words in the text, but not the ability to understand the meaning. In order for ELL students to be successful in reading this text there must be scaffolded instruction based on the vocabulary.

For this text, I found that it is appropriate for a 1st-grade emerging reader, although there is some complex vocabulary throughout the text. Therefore the task considerations for this text include activities prior to the read and post read. The activities will include vocabulary, which an ELL student will not have the knowledge or comprehension of. The activity which will be completed prior to the text will introduce the vocabulary and the meaning. The vocabulary will include cast, gust, mast, slump, mend, bask, and plunk. The teacher will present the students with the word, a visual aid, and present the word or cognates in the ELL student's native language. This will allow ELLs to make connections with the word and to incorporate any background knowledge if possible. The students will repeat the word and have small group discussions about what they think the word means based on the picture. The teacher will then give the students a basic but explicit definition of the vocabulary. While reading the text the teacher will stop the students, and ask them the meaning of the vocabulary words based on the context of the text. After reading the text the teacher will create a charades activity based on the vocabulary words. The students must act out the vocabulary and the other students will guess which word they are doing.

Based on my analysis of the text *Camping Fun* in the 1st grade decodable reader including the analysis of quantitative elements, qualitative factors, the readers, and the task considerations I found this text to be appropriate for ELL students. The text includes decodable words, words to review, and high frequency words that are appropriate for review and scaffolding. The text includes decodable constant blends that align with state standards. Although the text includes complex vocabulary this creates an appropriate challenge for the students, as the words are decodable. The teacher can create and inform students of the meaning prior to, during, and after the text is read. The text includes compound sentences with 1 to 2 syllable words which is appropriate for emergent readers. Also, the discourse patterns in the text are simple and appropriate for the readers. Therefore based on my analysis and critique this text is appropriate for 1st grade developing ELL and emergent readers.

References

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