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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Small Group Reading With Multilingual Learners*.

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Asking Questions While Reading

Teachers are often in the driver's seat at the reading table and ask the majority of the questions to ensure students are comprehending what they are reading; however, this does not build self-regulation of reading comprehension (Pressley, 2006). To help readers monitor their own comprehension and guide their own thinking about what they are reading, they need to ask questions about the text themselves (James & Carter, 2007; Joseph & Ross, 2017). Multilingual students often rely on us to ask the questions, but we need to engage students to ask the questions themselves.

- Students can start by asking basic questions like *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where* about the text they are reading, and then, most importantly, they can *dive into* the text to explicitly find the answers.
- When students answer without referencing the text, encourage them to find the place in the text that backs up their thinking.
- As students grow in their ability to ask questions and find the answers of questions themselves, they can stretch into asking *why* and *how* questions. Why and how questions are not always answered explicitly in the text, and students may need to find more than one place in a book or text to answer their questions.
- Why and how questions lead students to make inferences about characters' thoughts and feelings based on actions or on why the details in an informational text lead to an overall understanding of a topic or issue (Mathes et al., 2007; Pressley & Wharton-McDonald, 1997). How and why questions develop students' skills at inferring the answers about what happened or how someone did something that may not be explicitly written out, and students will have to look at different parts of the text and put their ideas together to make an inference.

To help multilingual learners see the answers in the text or find parts of the text that help them make an inference, it can be helpful to give them a sticky note to place under the line of text that helps with the answer. If they are using a copied text



or electronic text, they can highlight the part of the text and even the part of the sentence that help them answer explicitly. By focusing attention on the specific parts of the text or the sentence, they don't have to process the entire text at once and can just focus on the language and structures of the language that they are reading and working through (Carnine et al., 1997).

TEACH IT!



To guide students to ask questions of text

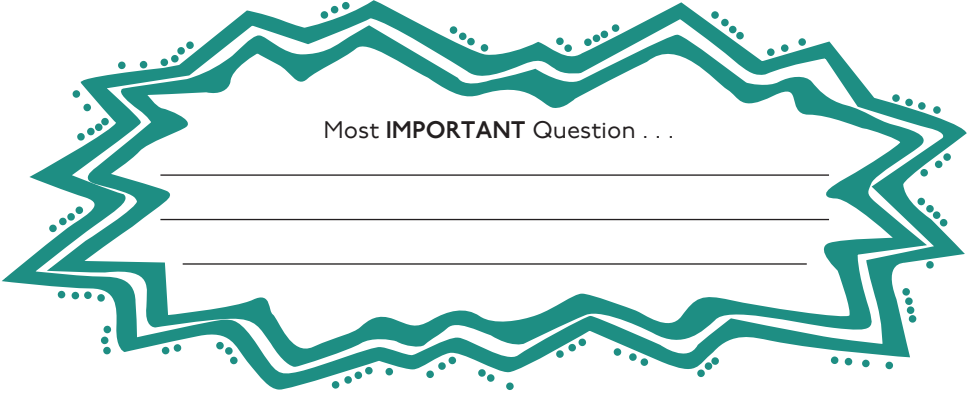
- Practice with *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where* questions first. These are green-level questions, as students' thinking can be fast and quick, referring back to the text to explicitly answer their own questions.
- Once students can identify answers to *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where* questions, encourage them to ask *why* and *how* questions. These are yellow-level questions. Students need to slow down and consider the parts of the text that help them answer.
- Students can continue asking inferential questions and come up with the most important question of all—they can write down their question and then write the answer and explain what parts of the text helped them answer the question.

Sentence Starters for Answering the Most Important Question

Help students kick-start their thinking to identify the most important point to question:

- What question helped you get to the biggest idea about the text?
- What seems to be the author's important points? What would you ask the author?
- What information is repeated or explained in detail? What questions do you have about this information?





Most IMPORTANT Question . . .

Figure it out! Write the answer to the most important question below.



As students become more practiced in asking questions that help them focus on making meaning from the text, they can begin working on answering the questions that they are asking or that you are asking (Ness, 2016). Remember that multilingual learners learn best through interactive instruction with an element of direct instruction (Genesee et al., 2005).

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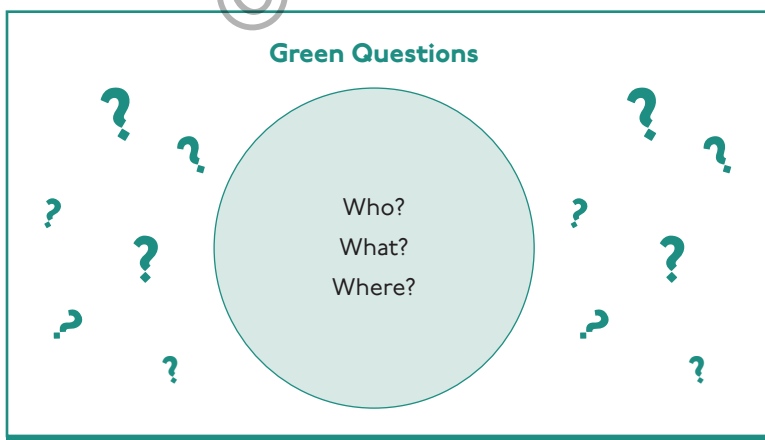
- Encourage students to talk with you about the strategies you are using after you do a model using a strategy.
- The more discussion they are involved in about a strategy, the better they will understand how to use the strategy.
- Discussion develops their understanding of text.
- To stay focused on interactive instruction, you can focus on talking through the answers to questions and help students find text evidence to back up their answers (Pearson & Johnson, 1978).

How to Ask Deep Questions

Too often we focus on asking students questions focused on skills at the word or sentence level rather than helping them think deeply about text (Degener & Berne, 2016). Students need to understand the text at the word and sentence level, but the questions we ask need to help them understand the text and monitor their own understanding while building and developing their knowledge of what they are reading and develop background knowledge. Questions at the deeper level encourage the students to understand how the text's meaning fits in with his or her understanding of the world (Degener & Berne, 2016).

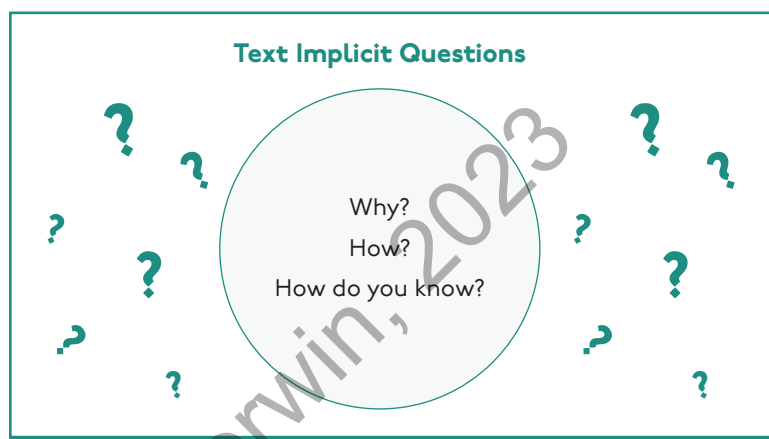
Text-Explicit Questions

One type of question that students will be answering is text-explicit questions. These are the answers to the green questions: *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where*. Students will be able to find the answer directly in the text. I have discussed these types of questions in the preceding section. Green questions are literal questions, and students will be able to find the answers *right in* the text without having to interpret information in the text to answer.



Text-Implicit Questions

Text-implicit questions lead students to interpret text in order to answer. Text-implicit questions include making inferences. These types of questions include the questions below. Text-implicit questions make students slow down and think carefully about the answers to the questions. They may have to refer to several different parts of the text or different sentences in more than one place in the text to answer (Spear-Swirling & Cheessman, 2012).

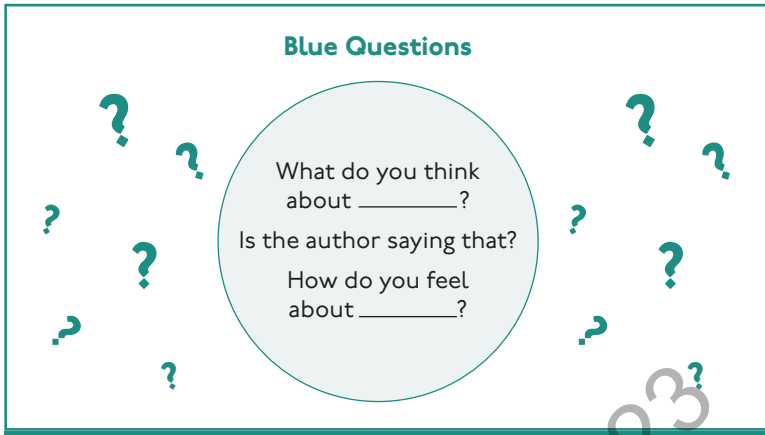


Script-Implicit Questions

Pearson and Johnson (1978) once said that the process of comprehension is “building bridges between the new and the unknown” (p. 24). This bridge that students build is their background knowledge. There are also questions where students have to apply their background knowledge in addition to what the text says in order to answer the questions (Spear-Swirling & Cheessman, 2015; Degener & Berne, 2016). Sometimes students either ignore the text completely and try to answer questions using only their background knowledge, or they only rely on the text to answer, not referring to what they already know and how what the text says enhances their knowledge (Raphael, 1982). When students apply their background knowledge to a question while considering what the text says, they synthesize information to come up with a new understanding. These are questions that have students apply their knowledge in order to answer (Raphael & Au, 2005). Questions to encourage students to apply their knowledge and



reference the text are blue questions. These are initiating questions to encourage thinking and conversation about text (Beck & McKeown, 2006).



QUESTIONS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO APPLY THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND CHECK THE TEXT

What is the author trying to say here?

How do you know?

What is the author talking about?

What does it mean?

How does all of this information fit together?

How do the character actions relate to the outcomes?

Why do you think the author tells us this now?

Given what the author has said, what do you think now?

Adapted from Beck and McKeown (2006).



Questioning

Date: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____

Genre: _____

Questions **BEFORE** reading:

Questions **DURING** reading:

Questions **AFTER** reading:

Were you able to answer any of your questions?

What did you use to answer your questions?
