

Making the Shift to a Meaning-Based Approach

From . . .	To . . .
<p>The teaching of genre, decoding skills, fluency, vocabulary, literary elements, text structures and comprehension strategies.</p> <p>Explicitly modeling an articulated teaching point before asking students to try to transfer and apply it to their independent reading after a brief moment of active engagement.</p> <p>Expecting students to practice one or more reading strategies or skills with ongoing scaffolding and support.</p> <p>Using the “I-We-You” or “To-With-By” approach to releasing responsibility to students.</p> <p>Assessing students’ mastery of strategies, skills and/or individual reading goals, which can reinforce a fixed mindset.</p>	<p>The teaching of a process that shows students how readers enter a book knowing virtually nothing and end with some insightful thoughts about the human condition, life or the world.</p> <p>Setting students up to read strategically, drawing on and developing a range of strategies to figure out what the text means and/or what the author is trying to show them.</p> <p>Expecting students to strategically problem solve with less scaffolding and support and more productive struggle.</p> <p>Using a “You/We/I” with students first thinking individually then collaborative, and then the teacher noticing and naming what they did.</p> <p>Noticing and naming for students what they have done, which can help develop a growth or dynamic mindset.</p>

© Vicki Vinton. 2016. *Teaching Reading in a Complex World: Shifting to a Problem-Based Approach* (Working Title).

Balanced Literacy Re-Purposed for a Meaning-Based Approach

1. Combine read aloud and shared reading into what you could call a shared interactive read-aloud, which gives students access to the text (by distributing copies or projecting it on a screen) so they can actually see the author's words on the page in ways that support more text-based thinking and talk while you read the text aloud. Use this interactive read aloud to support the meaning-making process.
2. Hand over the responsibility of making meaning in that read aloud directly to the students, which means setting them up to problem solve, rather than having them watch you solve problems. This way they can experience for themselves the whole range of problems readers must deal with in order to deeply understand not just the characters or the facts, but what the author might be trying to show them through those characters and facts.
3. Instead of launching independent reading with a mini-lesson where you demonstrate a strategy or skill, remind students of what they've already done and experienced in the read-aloud and invite them to deliberately try to do that same work in their independent books. This acknowledges that it's far easier to transfer and apply something you've already done than something you've just watched and listened to.
4. Based on what you notice about how individual students are handling the problems they face (or not) in both the read-aloud and their independent reading books, form flexible needs-based small groups that offer students more time to practice solving particular kinds of problems, using an accessible text that poses those problems.
5. During independent reading conferences, observe and carefully listen to students to get a real feel for how deeply they're reading and how much they're taking away from the whole class and small group work. And use what you've observed and heard to offer a teaching point, rather than impose a pre-determined agenda.