Diving Deep into Non-Fiction:
Using Readers’ Rules of Notice for
Expertise and Equity

Focus on Reading to notice
topics and key details, and how
they express main ideas

Facebook:
jeffrey.d.wilhelm
Twitter:
@ReadDRJWilhelm

Jeffrey D. Wilhelm
Boise State University

Teaching with a sense of URGENCY: For
over 34 years I’ve dedicated my teaching
and my research to helping struggling
students to productively struggle,
particularly striving readers
Yes, I am saying that motivation and engagement are of prerequisite importance (You GOTTA BE the Book), that we need to get kids reading a lot, that choice is important, that exciting materials matching kids’ interests must be immediately available, and teachers/peers must provide repeated invitations for engaging matches.

BUT I’m also saying MUCH MORE than this! That reading is a civil right. And that we must **consciously and actively and explicitly** teach students HOW to read if we want our students to access this civil right!
“Reading Don’t Fix No Chevys”
Competence is the linchpin of all motivation.
“\textit{I just want to be good at it!”}
Functional application
Visible signs of accomplishment
Assistance through the struggle

The Power of Pleasure: the British Cohort Study, 2013

\begin{itemize}
\item Following the lives of more than 17,000 people born in England, Scotland and Wales in a single week of 1970
\item Analysis establishes that reading in youth has the most \textit{EXPLANATORY} impact on future educational attainment, job and life satisfaction, and social mobility, in part because reading actually “increased cognitive progress over time.” MUCH more significant than parents’ education or socio-economic status
\end{itemize}
Creating a culture of literacy: These 8th grade students are engaged in multiple levels of inquiry

• Are learning the English language, and speaking, listening, reading and composing in English – sometimes as a 4th or 5th language
• And they are doing it through inquiry that connects current events (e.g. European refugee crisis) and literature and nonfiction to their personal lived experience THAT REQUIRES CONTINUAL READING, WRITING, SPEAKING AND LISTENING – and inquiring into expert reading, and how texts work for meaning and effect.
• Our essential question: How can we best navigate struggle?
Inquiry as Cognitive Apprenticeship

Requires us all to inquire together into issues, problems and challenges that affect and require all of us to address

*Democracy as complementarity
Teaching is a transitive verb:
It takes both a direct and indirect object, i.e.
You teach something to somebody.
Socioculturalism/Apprenticeship: What is learned, must be taught

YOU must address the specific human beings before you

• Here is the point of inquiry: HELP KIDS MAKE SENSE OF the world/the discipline and the text while helping them make sense of their own LIVED EXPERIENCE!
TEACHING WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY:

- SEIZE THE MOMENT – EACH INTERACTION WITH A KID, AND A KID WITH A TEXT, AND A KID WITH OTHER KIDS IS A POTENTIAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITY AND LEVER POINT.

This workshop focuses on how expert readers understand non-fiction texts by using 4 different kinds of “rules of notice” to attend to 4 different facets of texts, and a curricular path to teach students.

What Expert Readers Do

Using Rules of Notice to help in Noticing the Conversation

Using Rules of Notice to help in Noticing key details

A Path towards teaching rules of notice to promote expert reading
Our job as teachers is to make public those secret things that expert readers know and do . . .

And then to assist and support students in taking on those same stances and strategies.

To do this we must make strategies explicit, visible and available – and then help students learn how to employ the strategy in contexts of real use – giving them practice, practice, practice to develop their expertise!
And the more non-mainstream, marginalized or damaged the learner identity the more important it is

• to recruit the cultural resources of the learner.
• to engage in explicit, situated teaching, and to give practice and support over time.
• to embrace and express the growth mindset and provide procedural feedback that specifically describes what the learner has done, the meaning and effect, and what might be tried next.

*Culturally relevant pedagogy*: Gloria Ladson-Billings: We must make teaching and learning relevant and responsive to the languages, literacies, and cultural practices of students across categories of difference and (in)equality.
Culturally sustaining pedagogy: Django Paris: We need instruction that supports the value of our multiethnic and multilingual present and future. Culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling.

Reading a complex non-fiction text is like being dropped into unfamiliar terrain, especially for kids.
When you’re in a unfamiliar place, what do you do?

Get oriented in terms Of the big picture  
Pay attention to the details of the immediate situation

Generative Principle: Reading is Top-Down & Bottom-Up

Noticing the conversation  
Noticing the Genre  
Noticing Key Details  
Noticing Text Structure
Generative Principle: Reading is a transaction

• How you notice and unpack/interpret is partly informed by your background and context and current interests and needs as a person and reader

Principle: Reading is a conventional activity and contract
Principle: There are three general rules of notice used by authors signaling what we are to notice and interpret!

Explicit Announcements

Calls to attention

Ruptures

And another one applied by readers: Rules of the Reader’s Response – what gives us an emotional charge, makes us question, intense agreement, etc.
So, expert readers read along a 2 x 2 matrix: they read for how topics and key details relate and inform each other to make a comment about the topic/s; and they read for how genre and text structures interplay to structure and pattern the key details about the topic/s for meaning and effect.

A Sequence Designed to Enact These Principles and Develop Expertise

- Introducing the Strategy with Visual Texts
- Practicing in Miniature: That is, we provide repeated practice in deliberately and consciously applying a strategy in short texts that we have written or selected to DEVELOP CONSCIOUS COMPETENCE.
- Thinking-aloud
- Casting Students as Writers and Respondents
- Applying a Questioning Heuristic
- Searching and Finding
- Putting it All Together – integrating strategies for transfer
Do this work together, then students practice these strategies with small group and free choice reading

Getting Started with Topic (Top-Macro) and Key Details (Bottom-micro)
Top Down: Identifying the topic or general subject of the ongoing conversation
Bottom Up: Identifying Key Details in this text’s turn in the conversation
Identifying the topic and key details allow us to understand main ideas

- Students need to learn how to notice the conversational topics of a text, and how patterns of key details are used to express “comments”, i.e. main ideas or themes about that conversational topic
Now we can move on to more complex texts, continuing to practice the basic moves
• Direct Statement: Title: American Gothic – these are American “types” with a repressed story
• Calls to Attention: pitchfork (front and center, and repeated), their expressions, clothing, the house, all comparison/contrasts, repetitions
• Ruptures: she stands behind him, she looks askance
• Readers Response:???
• Genre: Double portrait
• Salient text structure: Comparison

Keep practicing the “topic-comment” strategy

The topic comment strategy:
STATE THE TOPIC, THEN MAKE A COMMENT ABOUT THE TOPIC. BE PREPARED TO EXPLAIN HOW THE PATTERNING OF KEY DETAILS EXPRESSES THAT COMMENT ABOUT THAT TOPIC
Relationships are . . . Can be . . .
Gender roles require/ have the effect of . . .
Farm life is . . .
Practice with Parodies: Changing key details changes topics and comments

• Which is why you have to notice all the key details in context . . .

• CHANGING a detail can change the topic and/or change the comment

• The topic-comment strategy is hugely helpful to kids in reading for theme!
Practice in Miniature: 
Transferring the strategy to texts is key, and lots of practice is crucial
Introductions

• Are another call to attention that signal the conversational topic and the direction that key details will take.

• Introductions have a privileged position – along with conclusions, climaxes/turning points
• “The educational and life resilience of all learners is a prime concern of educators and has many factors, but for minority students resilience is associated with perceived school support over time, relationships with teachers, academic self-esteem, and mother’s work history.”

• On the basis of these sentences, what do you think is the subject of the text from which they were taken? What rules of notice helped you?

• How do you expect this text to tie in with the ongoing conversation about this subject? What makes you think so?

• Please complete the following sentence frame based on the prediction you made above.

• Resilience is an important issue for all students and learners, ____________________________, and the author of this statement argues that for minority students, resilience is fostered in particular by ____________________________.

• It is already understood that technology has a huge effect on shaping the human brain and changing how it functions, but the effects of cell phone use while driving is an especially scary case (based on Richtel, 2014).

On the basis of this sentence, what do you think is the subject of the text from which it was taken? What rule/s of notice helped you?

How do you expect this text to fit in with the on-going conversation about this subject? What makes you think so?

Please complete the following sentence frame based on the prediction you made above.

• Although we already know that ____________________________, the author of this statement argues that the problem is extended and exacerbated when ____________________________.
• “There are many men who have argued over the ages that women don’t have enough mental strength to become morally good on their own: they need the guidance of men” (Wollstonecraft, 1792).

• On the basis of these sentences, what do you think is the subject of the text from which they were taken? What rules of notice helped you?
• How do you expect this text to tie in with the ongoing conversation about this subject? What makes you think so?
• Please complete the following sentence frame based on the prediction you made above.

• Although throughout the ages men have contended __________________________________________,
  the author of this statement argues ____________________________________________________.

Questioning Strategies: Using the QtA

• Introduce six key questions and have a student record them on chart paper that can be seen by everyone in the class.
  – What topic is the author addressing?
  – What are the most salient key details about the topic?
    – What is the author’s comment on that topic?
  – What other comments on that topic are possible?
  – What does the author do to convince you that his or her comment is the best one?
  – How did the rules of notice help you in this process?
Applying QtA to Introductions/Call outs

• “I hate a song that makes you think that you’re not any good. I hate a song that makes you think you are just born to lose. I am out to fight those kind of songs to my very last breath of air and my last drop of blood.”
  Woody Guthrie
What artists, poets and songwriters do you know, or what artistic traditions do you know

- That uplift, that work to see possibility?
- That work for diversity?

How does the QtA and the rules of notice help you to navigate and interpret this poem?

My Rules: If you want to marry me
By Shel Silverstein

If you want to marry me, here’s what you’ll have to do.
You must learn how to make a perfect chicken dumpling stew.
And you must sew my holey socks.
And soothe my troubled mind.
And develop the knack for scratching my back.
And keep my shoes spotlessly shined.
And while I rest you must rake up the leaves.
And when it is hailing and snowing you must shovel the walk… and be still when I talk.
And… hey, where are you going?
Promoting a classroom conversation:
Write your own “If you want to go out with me/impress me” poem

• The Shark, By John Ciardi
  *
  * My dear, let me tell you about the shark
  * Though his eyes are bright, his thought is dark.
  * He’s quiet, that speaks well of him
  * So does the fact that he can swim
  *
  * And though he swims without a sound
  * Wherever he swims he looks around
  * With his two bright eyes and his one dark thought
  * He has only one, but he thinks it a lot
  *
  * And that one dark thought he can never complete
  * Is his one dark thought of something to eat
  * Most anything does, and I have to add
  * That when he eats his manners are bad
  *
  * He’s a gulper, a snatcher, a ripper, a grabber
  * Yes, his manners are bad, but his thought is drabber
  * That one dark thought he can never complete
  * Of something, somewhere, somehow to eat
  *
  * Be careful where you swim, my sweet.
• Several lines in the poem develop the topic . . . .
  • of the shark’s keen eyesight
  • sharks’ dark thoughts about things to eat
  • sharks’ capacity to swim without making a sound

• The central focus/main idea of the poem . . .
  • sharks have terrible manners
  • The bright eyes of the shark increase its ability to see its enemies or prey
  • Swimming is dangerous
  • Watch out when swimming in shark infested waters because the shark has a voracious appetite.

• PICTURE MAPPING DIRECTIONS

  • Identify the topic of your reading - symbolize the topic with a visual (no words allowed!)
  • As you read, mark or list each key idea about the topic
  • Symbolize each key idea with a picture or a symbol - do this as simply as you can!
  • Show the relationships and the patterns of the key details
  • Show the central focus and/or implied actions that follow from this trajectory of these details
Technique: Seek and Find
Give students LOTS of PRACTICE in using the heuristics and in articulating the principles to cultivate TRANSFER!
Effective teaching is principled practice: three key instructional principles at play

The Importance of KNOWING HOW

The Importance and Difficulty of TRANSFER

The Importance of Practice, Practice, Practice, Practice, Practice, Practice, Practice, Practice, Practice, Practice, Practice, PRACTICE . . . .

The Rules of Notice are a kind of THRESHOLD KNOWLEDGE that can be developed and refined in unconstrained ways throughout a lifetime

A Sequence Designed to Enact These Principles

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Reading and inquiring for reciprocal service to self, peer, class, community, environment

To find short texts and excerpts that can be layered at different reading levels

- Your library media specialist!
- Seek and finds from kids and friends
- Cartoons
- Daily newspaper
- Newsela
- Ctrl