

DOINGWHATWORKS



Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

I Do, We Do, You Do: Scaffolding Reading Comprehension in Social Studies

KIPP San Francisco Bay Academy, California • February 2009

Topic: Adolescent Literacy

Practice: Comprehension Strategies

Highlights

- Sixth-grade teacher Megan Montgomery explains how she uses the graphic organizer spoke diagrams and thinkalouds to help students in developing reading comprehension skills in Social Studies class.
- Using the model of “I do, we do, you do” instruction is modeled for students, followed by opportunities to practice in small groups or pairs, with individual practice next. As students are working with the text, the teacher monitors student progress by circulating throughout the class asking probing questions to further student thinking.

About the Site

KIPP San Francisco Bay Academy

San Francisco, CA

Demographics

44% Hispanic

37% Black

11% Other

5% Asian

2% White

77% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

21% English Language Learners

KIPP San Francisco Bay Academy takes an explicit instruction approach to literacy development. Distinctive features of the school include:

- A longer school day,
- Schoolwide use of a vocabulary journal in every class across all subject areas,
- Scaffolding reading comprehension using graphic organizers, and
- Maximal use of classroom time for learning using Do Now and Exit Ticket activities.

Full Transcript

Hi, my name is Megan Montgomery, and I'm a social studies teacher at KIPP San Francisco Bay Academy, and I teach the fifth and sixth graders.

Montgomery to class: So, I know this is a book that tells facts about Ancient Sumer, and I know that there are two main parts that I want to look at today and study today. And the first one is called "A Family Farmstead," and when I look at the pictures here I can see, looks like lot of animals, goats, a lot of empty land.

Montgomery: When I'm teaching strategy through the thinkaloud, I am modeling what I'm thinking as a reader in my head because I want the students to know what a good reader would be thinking about while they were trying to access a particular text.

Montgomery to class: So, you can read along on your page with me. I'm going to read it one time through, and then I am going to go back and think about what the facts are. "Your farmstead's quite large because your father's brothers, their wives and children live with you, too." Oh, so this book is pretending that I'm an Ancient Sumerian and it's explaining my life to me. "Each family has its own living quarters..."

Montgomery: So, today when I was doing the thinkaloud strategy of the spoke diagram, I was thinking about how the text that I had chosen fits into that diagram and exactly what I want the students to be thinking about during the time that they are reading and they're applying the strategy. And the way that I ask the students to practice the strategy that I've taught for the day is really, I try to scaffold it very much. So I

start with the thinkaloud with the “I do,” and then we move on to a “we do,” which is where they sit with a partner and they might read. One way that they might read is popcorn style. Another way they might read is chorally. They might read in their heads. And then they talk about the comprehension strategy and complete it together because we know that it’s really important for students to be verbal about what they are reading and to bounce the ideas off of each other.

Montgomery to student: What about the title? What’s the main title here?

Student: Oh, when it was flooding. Right?

Montgomery to student: Half of the year it floods. We know the other half of the year there is a drought. Is there a big topic that that’s about?

Student: Yeah, the uncontrolled water supply.

Montgomery to student: Awesome.

Montgomery to class: I was just talking with this group and Aqiela said something very wise. She was able to look at the title...

Montgomery: And then after the “we do,” then we’ll come back together and share what they thought about so that I can identify any misconceptions that they have or the way that they are thinking so I can make sure that they are on the right track.

Montgomery to class: What do you think our main topic should be here on our spoke diagram so we can organize our thoughts?

Student: The uncontrolled water supply.

Mongomery: And then the last part is the “you do,” when I let them off on their own to try to apply the strategy themselves on a text that has an appropriate level for them. My goal for today’s lesson was to teach the students, for the first time, how to use the spoke diagram as a way to help them organize the text in their head so that they can get all of the information that they need to out of their textbook. So, I wanted them to see what I had done and then work on their own using the same kind of thought pattern to comprehend the textbook. I want the students to be able to use this graphic organizer across a variety of texts, across a variety of disciplines and really take ownership of that as a tool they have to help them become better readers and also better writers.

Montgomery to student: What did you read about in your book?

Student 1: We read about that they plow.

Student 2: We read about oxen.

Montgomery to student: Okay, does this have to with a plow or oxen?

Student 2: No.

Montgomery: When a student or a pair of students is having some kind of difficulty with a thinkaloud process, I really try to listen to them and to see what they are thinking because a lot of times if I truly listen to what they are saying, I can understand where their thinking is breaking down. So, when the class is working, I'm never standing still. I'm always going around, trying to see what the students are doing, try to understand more of what they are thinking, what's working, and what's not working. And then if I see there's something that's not working for a pair of students or even a bigger group of students, I'm right there to intervene and make sure that I'm guiding them to be thinking the way that I want them to be thinking.

Student: "Farmer's need a faster way to prepare the land for planting." Popcorn, Marques.

Marques: "Sumerians made the first plows out of wood."

Montgomery: When students are able to use their graphic organizer during the time that they're reading, it helps them make sense of the text in a way that's accessible and visual for them. For example, in today's text there were a lot of facts about the Ancient Sumerians that I wanted the students to be able to understand. And when the students are reading a text that's so packed with facts, it can be difficult for them to determine what the main ideas are versus what the details are and to find out what are the most important things. So, when I use the spoke diagram it's a way for them to visually break down the text into the main points, the sub points, and the details that are supporting that. And when they can see that all laid out in front of them, it helps them to say, "Oh, okay, this is what the text is really about, and this is what I am needing to know." I'm definitely seeing a lot of improvement in the way that our students are able to comprehend the material that they're reading. I know that I'm seeing a lot of improvement because of the kinds of diagnostic tools and the assessments that I am using, and I am typically seeing between two- and three-years growth from our students in their ability to comprehend.