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Learning How and Teaching Others: Procedural Genres

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+ **Procedural Text Purpose**

- The purpose of procedural text is to instruct a reader in how to do something, typically written by someone who knows how to do the procedure for someone who must rely on the text to properly do the procedure (Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007)
- We read procedural text to learn how to do something you want or need to know how to do (Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2012)
- We write procedural text to teach others how to do something (Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2012).

Principle 1: Design Compelling, Communicatively Meaningful Environments.

Teacher: Sheila Bell

+ **Principle 2: Provide exposure and experience.**

- Engage students in reading how-to texts or watching how-to videos (e.g., at www.activitytv.com) to learn how to do something they'd like to do.
- Ask students to write you a note about something they'd like to, but don't know how to do (then you recommend texts).
- Post procedural texts for classroom routines (e.g., listening center).
- Provide a manual on how to do each classroom job.
- Provide procedural texts for P.E., art, and other "specials."

(Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2012)

+ Principle 2: Provide exposure and experience.

Engage students in:

- designing science investigations and writing procedures for them for another class
- writing reader-friendly technical manuals about how to use particular pieces of technology (for senior citizens, a community group, etc.)
- providing procedural texts for a school event (e.g., the annual carnival or ice cream social).
- collecting and publishing procedural texts on things their families know how to do—hobbies, cultural traditions, vocational or technical skills, and so on.

(Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2012)

+ Principle 3: Explicitly teach genre features.

Some characteristics of procedural text (from Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007 -- unless otherwise noted):

Content Characteristics

- Provides information about how to do something
- Can occur in any number of domains, from cooking to crafts to science to sociology

+ Procedural Text Characteristics, cont.

Structural Characteristics

- Has a statement of goal (sometimes in the title) and/or inquiry question
- Has a materials section
- Includes methods/procedures/steps
- Uses letters or numbers to indicate the order of the steps (less often, may use temporal terms such as *first, then*)
- Has an evaluation of the outcome (e.g., Now look at your two plants. Which one grew better?)
- Indicates the expected results and/or provides a scientific explanation for the results (texts in science)

+ Procedural Text Characteristics, cont.

Language Characteristics

- Has an explicit, clear description of materials
- Has explicit information about procedures (how, when, etc.; e.g., *In two weeks, look at your plant versus Look at your plant later*)
- Uses *you*, if any personal pronoun
- Employs imperative verbs (e.g., *put, make*)
- Uses units of measure (e.g., centimeters, inches)

+ Procedural Text Characteristics, cont.

Graphical Characteristics

- Has graphics, and the graphics are almost always demonstrative
- Has a graphic of the end product (e.g., a grown plant)

Navigational Features

- Has headings/subcategories
- Lists materials in order of use

** Any given procedural text is unlikely to, and needn't, have all of these characteristics.*

+ Principle 4: Explicitly teach genre-specific or genre-sensitive strategies.

Strategies for *reading* procedural text include:

- **Previewing the text.** It is helpful to look ahead to see what materials, time, and expertise are needed and to see what the finished product looks like.
- **Gathering or ensuring that you have the materials or ingredients needed.** While this isn't always necessary, it is usually a good idea.
- **Reading steps in order from beginning to end.**

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- **Pausing frequently.** It is generally best for readers to read a chunk of text, pause to follow that instruction, and then read the next chunk.
- **Using the illustrations.**
- **Rereading.** It is often helpful to reread a step or part of a step multiple times before attempting to implement it.
- **Taking notes.** When the procedural text is more like a self-help guide, it can be useful to take notes on key points.

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Principle 5: Offer ongoing coaching or feedback.

- There are very few assessments of procedural reading or writing.
- A knowledgeable teacher who observes students carefully is our best tool.

Example on the following slides from Denise Dufort and Jamie Slear