Using Embedded Story Structure to Teach Reading Comprehension

**Objective:** To teach reading comprehension skills

**Setting and Materials:**

**Settings:**
- In small class sizes of 10-15 students across nine days for 90 minutes on days 1 and 9, 120 minutes on days 2-8 = total of 17 hours of instruction

**Materials:**
- Eight preselected stories (e.g., classic/contemporary, narratives/folktales, between 9-18 pages long with Lexile scores ranging from The Tell Tale Heart = Lexile 600, to The Monkey’s Paw = Lexile 1220)
- ESS graphic organizer (see appendices)
- Component, Question, and Picture Cue for ESS Instruction

**Content Taught**
By participating in a specialized reading program designed for readers who struggle with multisyllabic words, students are provided with explicit instruction centered on daily lessons that aim to increase fluency, comprehension, and academic vocabulary with a gradual release of responsibility to the student as their proficiencies grow. Students learn highly generalizable and transferrable word attack strategies that extend from the ELA classroom into the content areas (e.g., ELA/social studies/science). Through repeated reading with partners, students increase reading fluency and comprehension skills.

**Students:**
- Learn flexible strategies for decoding grade-level multi-syllabic words
- Increase oral and silent reading fluency
- Expand their knowledge of general academic and domain-specific vocabulary
- Improve comprehension as decoding and fluency increase
- Read accurately, quickly, and with confidence

**Teaching Procedures**
- Phase 1: (days 1-2) teacher demonstration and modeling of the three targeted strategies (self-questioning during pre-reading, story structure analysis during reading, and summary writing after reading facilitated by the
organizer and cue cards in Appendices A and B) while incorporating think-aloud and problem solving

- Phase 2: (days 3-4) student-teacher collaboration and co-construction of knowledge and strategy use (teacher provides corrective feedback)
- Phase 3: (days 5-8) student peer collaboration (cooperative learning) and teacher guided practice (teacher provides corrective feedback)
- Phase 4: (days 5-8) independent student practice (teacher provides corrective feedback)
- Considerations:
  o Teacher provides one-on-one instruction to students as needed in phases 3 and 4
  o Provide an overview and review before/after each lesson

**Evaluation**

Student mastery set at 80% accuracy on comprehension measures from the unit test covering the eight passages previously taught throughout the lessons.

**Lesson Plan Based on:**


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Figure 1. Graphic organizer for the ESS routine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who are the main characters?</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Clues/Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protagonist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antagonist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- What is the Central Conflict?
- How does the central conflict begin? (Initiating Event)
- When does the story take place? (Time)
- Where does the story take place? (Place and Background info)
- Which decision or event is the climax (or turning point)? (Climax)
- How does the central conflict end/resolve? (Resolution)

Why does the author tell us the story in this way? (Theme)

Story Structure Picture:

Summary:

(Faggella-Luby et al., 2007)
Table 3
*Component, Question, and Picture Cue for ESS Instruction*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story-Structure Component</th>
<th>Story-Structure Question</th>
<th>Picture Cue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Character (protagonist and antagonist)</td>
<td>Who is the main character?</td>
<td>☑ / ☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Conflict/Initiating Event</td>
<td>What is the central conflict and how does it begin?</td>
<td>⚡ / 📽️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>When does the story take place?</td>
<td>🕒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Where does the story take place?</td>
<td>📍</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climax</td>
<td>Which decision or event is the turning point?</td>
<td>☠️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>How does the central conflict end/resolve?</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Why did the author tell us the story in this way?</td>
<td>🌍</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Faggella-Luby et al., 2007)