

Assessing Independence: Preview II

Why?

- To build background about topics before reading

How?

- Closely read selected text features (e.g., title, headings if there are any; subheadings if there are any; first sentence of each paragraph; diagrams; captions)
- Closely reading involves stopping to explain each part read in your own words until it is easy to explain; raising questions about what you aren't sure about

Gathering data to inform instruction and to assess independence with this process

What will I observe a student doing/saying that will indicate that my instruction has been effective in helping his child become independent with Preview II?

- Begins Preview 2 immediately after Preview 1 without prompting
- Eyes move across each selected text feature; does not move quickly down the page
- Stops to think; stops to explain what s/he is learning in own words
- Makes inferences about possible meanings, stating them tentatively (e.g., maybe, perhaps, it could be...I'll need to read to confirm/disconfirm)
- Identifies uncertainties and flips them into questions
- Uses text organization (headings, subheadings, paragraphs) to navigate and to locate information
- Is able to talk about what the author seems to want us to know/understand/learn from this text. Can talk about what s/he has learned from previewing
- Is able to determine which sections of text need to be closely read and which sections can be read more quickly or even skimmed (e.g., *this is a long piece. I'm going to closely read the sections about ...*)

Now what? Small Group Instruction

Teaching for independence relies heavily on a teaching/learning cycle that drills down to the level of addressing the needs of each individual student. Small group and individualized lessons that focus on what students still need to learn help students to put in place the processes necessary to independently construct meaning across complex informational texts.

After providing one or two whole group mini lessons in how to do whatever it is you are trying to teach students to do, step back and observe your students as they work independently. *Don't help during these observations!* You are trying to find out what they can do on their own, not what they can do with your assistance. Observe and collect data on what they are now able to do on their own (or with the assistance of your anchor charts).

The time you spend observing will pay off quickly as you discover what individuals control, almost control, and where they still need instruction. Use these data to put together small groups of students with similar needs and provide short, focused lessons to take them from where they are to where they need to go next.

For example,

- Some students will demonstrate that they know how to use text features to read selectively to build background. Give them texts and let them go to work.
- You may have 2-3 students who still don't understand which text features (e.g., headings and paragraphs vs. bold print and italics) authors use to organize texts. Gather them up and do a small group lesson. Guide them through using and talking about how these major text features provide an overall organization while other text features (bold print, italics, insets) are used to draw attention to concepts and ideas. Help them practice finding and describing major text features in one or two articles. End the lesson with specific instructions for what they will now do differently. For example, *"So we know that authors use many, many text features when they craft texts. When we do a quick preview to find out how an author organized a particular text, which ones really help us figure out the overall organization?...So which ones will you pay the most attention to when you preview?...and which ones will you read closely for Preview II?"* Release them to go and practice.
- Another group may be able to tell you which text features to use to build background during Preview 2, but don't use them. Instead, they just start reading. You notice that when you give students time to turn and talk after Preview 2 and before Close Reading, that these students can only talk about what they had time to read. They don't have a good overview of the entire text, because they didn't gather information from the whole text. Gather them together in your small group space, and share with them what you observed. Point out all of the things students learned across the whole text by

previewing. If necessary, provide another quick demonstration of Preview 2, then put them to work in front of you. Observe. Move in and out as needed so they use text features to build background about the whole text. End the lesson with specific instructions for what they will now do differently. For example, *“Preview 2 helps us get to know a text and what it is about, so that when we go to actually read it, we know where information is located, and which parts we can probably just read through, and which parts we need to closely read.”*

Learning how to do Preview 2 will take most students several days. Others may need a week or so. Keep in mind a few things:

1. Preview 2 is an important sense-making process, especially for complex texts. It isn't just about building background about what a text is about; it is also about being able to locate information and determine importance so that during reading, we can make the decisions we need to make to build deep understandings, monitor our understandings, and when necessary, change what we are doing.
2. Small groups are flexible and are put together based on the observation data that you collect on a regular basis. A particular group may come together for just one lesson or a short series of lessons. As soon as most of the students in a group demonstrate independence, the group is disbanded. If an individual student still needs instruction, that instruction should be provided in a group of one.