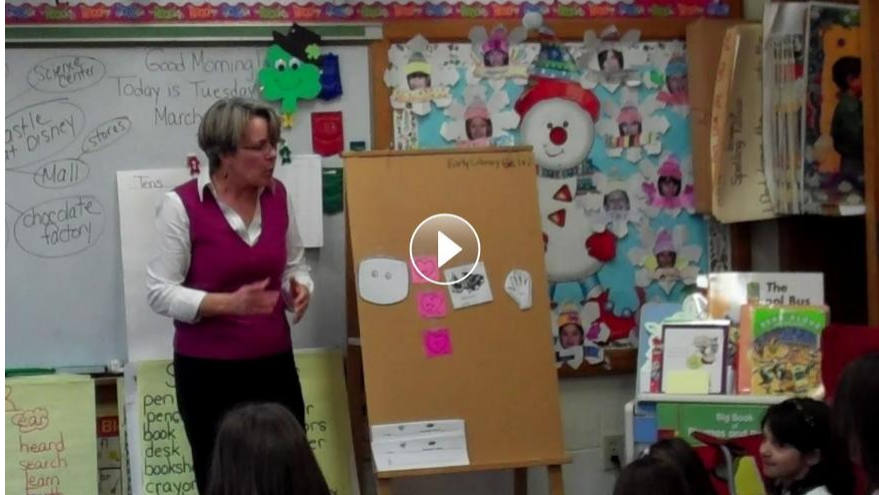


Understanding Narrative Text Structure: Story Grammar



Mentor Wendy North uses the critical thinking triangle (*kick off, feelings, and initial attempt at a plan*) as a personal story starter. What happened after Mr. North washed and waxed his wife's car?

Beyond Beginning, Middle, and End

Research findings overwhelmingly suggest that comprehension strategies can be taught, resulting in "substantial improvements in student understanding of text." Narrative text structure is one of the comprehension strategies that can and should be explicitly taught. Students with a good understanding of this story structure will have fewer problems comprehending narrative (Dymock, 2007).

The Story Grammar Marker (SGM) is one effective, evidence-based tool for teaching text structure. Teaching students about story grammar moves teachers away from general explanations of story structure (beginning, middle, ending) to the more specific. It helps students learn inferencing skills through the "critical thinking triangle"—the kick-off (initiating event), characters' feelings (internal response), and development of a plan (goal).

Feelings: The Character's Internal Response Guides the Narrative

A character's reaction to the kick-off or initiating event determines the initial course of the story. In the video above, what would Mrs. North have planned if she was *disgusted* with her clean car instead of *thrilled* with it? In the video below, see how Small Pig's furious response to his clean sty drives his plan to muddy it up again. These activities help students inference, comprehend text, and build robust vocabulary. Combine them to have students write, illustrate, and share their story starters.



How do characters' emotions drive the story? Mentor Wendy North guides students through Small Pig's changing feelings in Arnold Lobel's classic tale.



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