



Using Embedded Story Structure to Teach Reading Comprehension

What is the evidence base?

- This is an research-based practice for students with disabilities based on one methodologically sound group experimental studies across
 - 79 at-risk students (14 students with LD)

Where is the best place to find out how to do this practice?

The best place to find out how to implement Embedded Story Structure is through the following research to practice lesson plan starters:

- [Using Embedded Story Structure to Teach Reading Comprehension \(Faggella-Luby, Schumaker, & Deshler, 2007\)](#)

With whom was it implemented?

- Students academically at-risk for failure (1 group experimental study, n=79)
 - Students with disabilities (n = 14 students with LD)
- Ages (average age = 14 years)
- Males (n=43), females (n=36)
- Ethnicity
 - African American (n=11)
 - Caucasian (n=59)
 - Hispanic (n=4)
 - Other (n=5)

What is the practice?

Embedded Story Structure is described by Kintsch (2004) as a process that involves categorizing information according to certain text structures. Kintsch explains that several factors contribute to reading comprehension skill development including knowledge of syntax, vocabulary, and use of text structure. Syntactic and semantic instruction effects sentence-level knowledge development; whereas knowledge of text structure positively impacts comprehension during the encoding processes to facilitate organization of text into higher-order units and can improve construction of discourse-level structure through teaching genre-specific text structures. Thus, explicit instruction in genre-specific text (narrative or story structure) can contribute to acquisition comprehension skills for students at-risk for or with disabilities.

In the study used to establish the evidence base for using embedded story structure (ESS) to teach reading comprehension included using three targeted strategies:

- (a) self-questioning during pre-reading involved seven questions (who, what, when, where, which, how, and why); (b) story-structure analysis during reading; and (c) summary writing after reading
- An ESS organizer and text (teacher modeling and guided practice was provided for students using the device)
- A picture/text cue was provided to students to visually aid them through the self-questioning, story structure analysis, and summary writing processes
- Students were evaluated based on their knowledge of the ESS strategy (complete the diagram and label initiating event, climax, and resolution; match the picture cues to the corresponding event; open ended questions to describe components of characterization or types of conflict) in addition to a unit comprehension test based on the eight readings.

Where has it been implemented?

- Typical classroom setting with small class sizes (about 15 students per group)

How does this practice relate to Common Core Standards?

- Broad standard from www.corestandards.org ELA Grades
 - [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1](https://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/9-10/1)
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
 - [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2](https://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/9-10/2)
Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
 - [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3](https://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/9-10/3)
Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

How does this practice relate to the Common Career Technical Core?

- List Career Ready Skills addressed (broad) and/ or Specific Career Clusters at www.careertech.org/CCTC

- 2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills. Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation.

References used to establish this evidence base:

Faggella-Luby, M., Schumaker, J. S., & Deshler, D. D. 2011). Embedded learning strategy instruction: Story-structure pedagogy in heterogeneous secondary literature classes. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 26, 131-147-407.

This Practice Description was developed by The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT), Charlotte, NC, funded by Cooperative Agreement Number H326E140004 with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). This document has been reviewed and approved by the OSERS. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education. OSEP Project Officer: Dr. Selete Avoke. RSA Project Officer: Kristen Rhinehart-Fernandez. This product is public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, the citation should be: National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (2019). *Using Embedded Story Structure to Teach Reading Comprehension*.

