CHUNKING THE TEXT

Description: Chunking the Text provides students with the ability to break the text into shorter, more manageable units. This strategy enables students to read with more independence while reinforcing text organization skills and increasing text opportunities since students are reading shorter pieces and reflecting upon the content. Chunking the text begins with teacher modeling and instruction in determining appropriate “chunking” indicators (i.e., examples, transition words, and paragraphing) and leads to students’ independently chunking the text.

Step-by-Step

1. Choose an appropriate text to model the chunking (dividing) strategy.
2. Depending on the text (e.g., genre, length, structure, and type) determine how a text should be chunked.
   - Paragraphs
   - Stanza
   - Scene
   - Section
   - Chapter
   - Page
   - Line
   - Sentence Segments
   - Problems (in math & science)
3. Instruct students using the following sequence:
   - Model the chunking strategy using a simple text.
   - Model the chunking strategy using a class reading assignment.
   - Guide them through an initial practice and evaluate the degree of mastery before moving to an independent application of the strategy.
   - Allow students to use the strategy, scaffolding the instruction, until they gain proficiency.
4. Through various discussion opportunities (small groups/whole class) have students evaluate the decisions made while utilizing the strategy. This will encourage them to extend awareness of text features as they read.
5. Extend the strategy by rewriting or making notes after completing a “chunked” text.

Extensions

- Encourage reflection of both teaching and reading by engaging in discussion.
- Summarize the last section to reinforce instruction of main idea & separating details.
- Formulate questions to answer from reading the previous chunk as students read the next chunk.
- Make predictions about chunked texts.
   - Determine if this is the right book to meet the needs of these students at this time.
   - Ask if this book can be read in such a way that students will not be bored.
   - Choose books that you enjoy, as this will help you read them better.
   - Choose a book that matches instructional goals.

7. Use reading aloud across the subject areas (e.g., reading story problems aloud in math class helps to emphasize their narrative structure).

8. Before, during, and after read alouds have students
   - make predictions.
   - follow along on the page while the text is being read aloud.
   - take notes.
   - relate reading to specific content.
   - summarize. (written or oral)

Extensions
   - Have students record their own reading and thinking aloud - this allows both the student and the teacher to assess fluency.
   - With a timer, set for 1 minute, have students record their reading.
   - When the timer indicates, stop reading and mark the precise spot in the text.
   - Count the number of words. High school students should read 120 words per minute; Middle School students should read 100 words per minute. This builds fluency, accuracy, and speed.
   - Use audiotapes of books or poems to add variety to read alouds. Also consider using videotaped performances of poems and plays.