From Passive to Active

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- Am I noticing and encouraging my students’ “active strategic problem solving” behaviors?
- Are my teaching routines and behaviors helping my students become “active strategic problem solvers”?

Adjusting the Lens:
-noticing active problem solving
Running Records of Text Reading

• Do RRs always show the problem solving?

When it is overt (we can see it, hear it)
  Re-reading
  Self-Correction
  Multiple responses
  Word work
    letter by letter h/a/t
    Twa /am/ st/ er
    Analogy look/took

Becoming Literate the Construction of Inner Control
Clay, p3

“(In this book a strategy cannot be seen --- it is some activity ‘in the head,’ a move directed by the child during reading work to problem-solve a section of text and it belongs to an orchestrated set of strategies needed in literacy activities.)”

If “strategic problem solving activity”, is “in the head,” it might look like this on a running record:

√
√ / A / Y / T
# √ (wait, correct response)
# T (wait, Told)
Becoming Literate the Construction of Inner Control

• “A model of reading acquisition which defines reading as working on continuous texts with the story as the focal point of attention describes word-solving in somewhat different ways from a theory that regards reading new words in isolation as the significant activity……

• Observations of children reading stories suggest the following:
  – Competent children choose most often to ask someone who might know the word.”

Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals Part 1

“Ken Goodman and Carolyn Burke in 1973 wrote that the proficient reader gets the most meaning with the least effort in the fastest time!”

So I began to wonder…..

Teachers say:
# T = “he comes to something he doesn’t know and he just sits there; he doesn’t do anything!”

Can we be sure this is true?
• “According to Clay (1985), what teachers notice is a powerful influence on children; that is, children attend to what teachers attend to.”

Am I bringing attention to active problem solving?

or

Am I bringing attention to passive behavior?

“Children can learn to read on texts. And when things work well together the brain seems to know when it is making a good response and how to get to even better responses in the future.”
“In reading we sometimes consciously search for a word or a meaning or a correction but most of the time our active search is a fast reaction in our brain that appears to be automatic and is rarely conscious. I use the words strategic activities to describe this fast brainwork. The term refers to electrical impulses that race around the neural networks as we read, without consciously directing them.”

“He has to slow down while he learns to make detailed distinctions and then speed up again to fast processing that includes all the new detail he has learned. How to pay attention to detail in a slow, careful manner is learned from the teacher, but as soon as the detail is easily recognised the teacher should lead the learner back to fast processing.”
Are we asking the student to articulate his "in the head activity"?
Can he know?
Do you really know?

"Too often teaching practice perpetuates slow processing. Readers do need to analyse and solve problems but they also have to work fast."

"Using observation of what the child can already do and is at present trying to do, the sensitive teacher can interact with these activities taking the child towards the prescribed curriculum not via arbitrary exercises but through activities that are meaningful and enjoyable."
Adjusting the Environment-
teaching routines and
teacher behaviors

“A child can solve problems in many alternative ways in his daily life. He uses what he knows, he does what he knows how to do, and he jumps to a solution.

Can we provide a learning environment for our students in which they can bring their problem solving successes outside of the school environment to the task of reading and writing?
Make the time the student is with you “different”

“Cohen (2001) argues that students’ “social emotional capacities powerfully affect, and even determine, their ability to listen and communicate; to concentrate, to recognize, understand, and solve problems, to cooperate, to modulate their emotional states, to become self-motivating and to resolve conflicts adaptively.”

Table 4.2 Characteristics of Teachers with Higher Student Outcomes

- CREATING A SUPPORTIVE SOCIAL CONTEXT
  - Is warm and friendly in the interaction
  - Accepts the child’s efforts, even those partially right
  - Observes and responds to the child’s moves
  - Personalizes the story for the individual child
  - Sounds positive and reassuring that the child has done something good
“An early intervention would need to provide learners with individually designed and individually delivered instruction which could find ways around a child’s limitations in some functions, and which could break a cycle of interacting deficits, whatever those limitations might be.”

“When one is having difficulty with a task one tries several approaches. When an attempt results in failure one ceases to try it. The struggling reader and writer has stopped trying to problem solve because he could not be successful. If you give him your support and he succeeds then he begins to try again to use some of the old discarded strategic activities.”

• “Once he is doing this he can discover new things that work. You should show delight when he spontaneously relates this to that. Often what he discovers was not one of the things you were looking for. You could easily miss how clever he was.”
So you unleash two sets of responses - those discarded approaches this child has ceased to use on texts, and new ones that come from 'we know not where'. You probably could not achieve this if you were trying to use a standard or published curriculum. You are likely to be successful because you are responding to the child in an individual teaching situation. It only works this way if the child’s own competencies are for the most part determining the teacher’s design for his lesson series.

“Make it easy”

“The struggling reader and writer has stopped trying to problem solve because he could not be successful.”
“Success encourages more risk-taking which, in turn, is likely to extend the range of strategies they try.”

Attending to known words in text:
- “Can you find a word that you know on this page?”
- Show a known word: “This is the word “the” that you know, can you find it on this page”
- “The” is a word that you know, can you find it on this page”
- What is this word? (indicating the word to be read)

Allow think time
• “There are two ways we can help a child to learn. One of them is by attempting to teach him; the other is by facilitating his attempts to teach himself. We need to give the child freedom to explore and to learn on his own…… the child is self-stimulating and self-starting provided conditions are right for him.”

Bring attention to good problem solving

Reading Recovery sets the highest value on independent responding, and this must involve the risks of being wrong.
“In the reading or writing situation the child can be praised for the quality of the reading work he did, whatever the correctness of the response.”

Keep the session moving

Balancing Act

Momentum

Accountability
"The teacher knows when in text reading this child can tolerate such interference, and importantly, when to let it go. He or she is not driven by a curriculum prescription. The teacher tries not to dismember the text reading task, and not to destroy existing effective response systems. He or she is constantly thinking about the quickest way to move the child on with the fewest teaching moves, the least explanation, and an economic use of examples."

Focus on reading books

love the book,

not the work

• "... I regard meaning as the 'given' in all reading—the source of anticipation, the guide to being on track, and the outcome and reward of the effort."
“The child is learning how to read because of the effective processing he does when he reads. Using what he can do well makes a good system stronger. Contrast this with forcing a child to use a confused processing system without offering help. That can only create further confusion!”