

Teaching *for* Comprehension

Historically, 'doing' a comprehension has involved reading a text and answering a series of questions. But what do we do with these 'right' and 'wrong' answers? How do they inform the next steps in learning? And why do we treat the text as somehow neutral?

This programme addresses these questions (and others); and consider how we might plan, teach and assess for reading comprehension, in a more pedagogically coherent way. It particularly focuses on the role of questioning in helping young readers engage with the 'layers' of meaning presented in a text.

Areas covered in this programme:

Pedagogy

- Developing pedagogy: A demonstration of practice and approaching planning
- Teaching *for* comprehension: Reasserting the cycle of planning-teaching-assessing
- Assessing Reading comprehension: Developing formative approaches

Theory

- The comprehension process: What goes on in children's heads when they read?
- Monitoring comprehension: Exploring how readers make sense of text in unique ways
- The role of talk: Encouraging dialogue

Texts

- Engaging with texts: Exploring 'Text Potential'
- Using diverse texts: Exploring representation
- Subject-based reading: Exploring the changing demands of reading in primary and secondary education

Outcomes from previous programmes include:

- Sustained progress in reading across years
- Children demonstrating greater engagement with, and enjoyment of, reading
- Teachers with a deeper understanding of the comprehension process
- Teachers with a deeper understanding of the role of inference making
- Teachers making more effective use of planning time

The programme is designed by Dr Wayne Tennent (Senior Lecturer, Brunel University of London). Wayne works with schools, nationally and internationally, developing pedagogical practices to support teaching *for* reading comprehension. He is interested in the role of inference making and how dialogic interactions between teachers and children can be structured.

Relevant publications:

Tennent, W. (2015) *Understanding reading comprehension: processes and practices*. London: Sage.
NB: Second edition of this book is due to be published in October 2025.

Tennent, W., Reedy, D., Gamble, N., and Hobsbaum, A. (2016) *Guiding Readings – Layers of meaning. A handbook for teaching reading comprehension to 7 – 11 year olds*. London: IOE press, UCL.