Text Features Focus Lesson

Teaching text features is a two-step process. The first step is to explain what text features are. The second step is to show students how to use text features as a strategy. To do this, educators must be explicit with their teaching.

1. Choose a mentor text. Determine which text features need explicit teaching. Keep in mind that not all text features need to be taught.

2. Consider administering a needs assessment to determine students’ background knowledge about text features.

3. Explain what text features are. Students must know what text features are before using it as a strategy.
   
   Today we will be learning about text features. Text features are the physical features of the text. The features are objects on the page that stand out and say, “Hey, look at me!” Text features are important because they help us understand the text.

4. Use a think-aloud and an anchor chart to help students understand text features. Conduct a text feature walk – reading/viewing the text features found in the text and predicting how each of the key text features will assist with comprehension of the main text. Let the students hear your thinking as you study the text features included in the text.

   Let’s look at the text. What jumps out at you?
   A student raises her hand. The title jumps out at me.
   Confirm. The title is large and bold. It helps the reader know what the text will be about. On the chart, I will write “title” and how that information helps us as readers.
   Explain: As a reader, I use the title to prepare myself to understand what I am going to read. The title of this article is Title. I’m wondering what I know about Title that might give me a clue to what the author mean.

   Continue: The photograph shows something that looks like Title, but the caption talks about a Caption. I think this text is about Text.

5. Provide explicit **vocabulary instruction** for key words before reading the text. Use student-friendly definition, context clues, repeated exposure, and active involvement to help with word knowledge.
6. Transition to partner work to release some of the responsibility on to the students to determine if they understand how to use text features as a strategy.

   *Work with the person next to you. I want the both of you to preview the text and tell me what text features jump out at you.*

7. Gathers the students back for a brief whole group conversation. Model (and gradually diminish help on) how to use text features as a strategy before reading, during reading, and after reading. As each text feature is discussed, write the information on an anchor chart identifying and explaining its purpose, like the one below:

   ![Anchor Chart Example]

8. After the discussion, have students read the text independently or in pairs. Provides time afterwards for the students to discuss the content by providing a list of questions to ensure that students get to the heart of comprehending the text.

9. Explain the assignment in which students identify the text features and explain what content information is presented. Have students write the information on cards, then posts the information onto the article. (See Appendix A).

**Next Steps**

   1. Continue to teach the value of text features over time until the students begin automatically integrating the use of text features in their daily reading.

   2. Connect text features from reading to writing.

   3. Post an anchor chart in the classroom that illustrates the various text features for teacher and students to view as needed.