

K-5 Syntax Course Companion

Literacy Academy on Demand

The Course Companion is designed to allow participants to capture notes, reflections and action steps as they work through a course. Additionally, the Course Companion contains a list of all extra resources listed in the course. Each section of the Course Companion is linked to a corresponding section of the course.

Consider this Scenario:

Ms. Day has been working with her 5th grade science students on basic experiments. At the conclusion of each experiment, she wants her students to create a one paragraph "lab report" that describes their hypothesis, experiment and findings. She explained the purpose of the reports and provided an example of a quality lab report. However, she notices that many of her students get stuck on the first sentence of their paragraphs and cannot seem to move on. Furthermore, when they do complete an entire paragraph, the sentences are often unrelated or seemingly out of order.

Can you relate to the scenario? In what ways are your challenges in literacy instruction similar or different?

Syntax with William Van Cleave (Video)

Consider the “two grammar camps”:

1. “Grammar should be taught intensively and in isolation”
2. “Explicit grammar instruction is useless. Teach grammar only when the need arises”

Q: Do you find yourself consistently falling into one of these camps? What might you need to change to move away from them?

Q: Consider Mr. Van Cleave’s six-part Elements of a Sentence Structure Lesson. Where could you introduce this lesson structure in your classroom, building or district work?

- What are the challenges that you might need to overcome to successfully implement this process? How can you overcome these challenges?

Resources

Notes (article and video):

The article [Sentence Combining](#) from Reading Rockets describes the importance of sentence combining to increase the quality and complexity of students' sentences. List 1-2 takeaways from the article.

Course Reflection:

Identify one or two key takeaways from what you learned in this course. How can you begin to implement your learning in your work in your classroom, building or district?

- What barriers do you anticipate in implementing this new strategy or approach?
- Are there other people who need to be involved to help you improve your work? Who are they and what are the next steps that you need to take in order to involve them?

The following resources are listed in the course:

- [Skills for Early Reading: Syntax](#) from the Massachusetts Department of Education, provides an overview of the importance of syntax instruction for reading development.
- Literacy How: Syntax: What is it? <https://www.literacyhow.org/syntax/>
- Syntax Matters: The Link Between Sentence Writing & Sentence Comprehending [This is a similar presentation to the video in this course but with more detail] <https://www.wvced.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Syntax-Presentation-for-Kendore.pdf>