R group space

Frontloading is a strategy teachers use to provide students predetermined guidance and reminders for applying necessary skills, strategies, and behaviors for success in the day's learning. Frontloading is the intentional, explicit language the teacher uses while guiding students so as to maximize students' comprehension of the content.

When we think of Pearson and Gallagher's Gradual Release of Responsibility Model, we know the modeling by the teacher of the new skill or strategy is the first step in learning. The next step in the Gradual Release Model is the stage when students have the opportunity to experiment with the new strategy or skill - while the teacher continues to provide support. It is during this step that Frontloading becomes an essential strategy. Frontloading provides the guidance and reminders to help students in the application of the new skills/strategies before attempting it alone. The Gradual Release model emphasizes students' need to have plenty of scaffolded practice prior to becoming independently proficient at a skill/strategy. The frontloading strategy can be used across all content areas, multiple times within lessons.

So, let's talk for a moment about how frontloading might look and sound in a classroom...
Prior to the lesson, the teacher intentionally segments the day's learning into instructional chunks, or sections. (This segmenting of new information is based on research by Marzano and is also referenced in the conversation about the Discourse strategy.) For each of these prearranged instructional chunks, the teacher determines 1-2 instructional reminders, or frontloads. The teacher thinks carefully about the explicit instructional language for each of the frontloads. These instructional reminders should be stated in a manner that encourages transfer from teacher to student of the strategy or skill being targeted. The teacher then decides the most effective mode of response for each of the instructional chunks when checking for understanding.

A frontload regarding the comprehension strategy and behavior of inferencing might sound something like this:

> *"Oftentimes, the author doesn't specifically state all that the reader should know or think about the text. It is really important that readers read between the words and lines to understand what the author is talking about. We call this "reading between the lines behavior "making inferences" or "drawing conclusions". We ask ourselves, 'What else do I know, what inferences, generalizations and/or conclusions can I draw from the text?' As we read this section, be aware of the inferences, deductions and generalities you are making based on the author's words and your prior knowledge..."*

Another example of a frontload about main idea and details might sound like this:

> *"Looking at the next chunk of text, we see the subtitle 'Harriet Tubman: Conductor of the Underground Railroad'. We know that a subtitle will give us information about the main idea of the section. In this case, the subtitle is telling us that this portion of the article is about Harriet Tubman. As we read this section be conscious of the details which support the main idea... evidence, facts and specific information about the topic of Harriet Tubman's affiliation in the Underground Railroad..."*

Now, let's listen to yet one more frontload about fact and opinion:

> *"When we read informational text it is important to recognize the difference between a fact (a statement that is true) and an opinion (a statement that is someone's view). When we read the next section, be sure to evaluate the information to discriminate fact from opinion."*

After the section is read, the teacher gives the students the opportunity to think about the text, reminding them of the frontloads to help them make meaning of what they are reading.

In summary, frontloading is an effective strategy that adds intentionality during daily lessons to maximize teaching and learning opportunities. Frontloading promotes:
- Clarity of focus in the lesson.
- Targeted instruction.
- Gradual Release of Responsibility (Pearson and Gallagher, 1983).
- Automaticity of skill and strategy application.
- Access to the learning for all learning.
- Opportunities for students to construct meaning.
- High expectations and accountability.
- Increased engagement.