Answers to Chapter 3: Comprehension Questions

1. *Why is it important for students to be familiar with different linguistic and nonlinguistic text types and structures?*

When teachers ask questions during questioning sequences, students have two sources of information they can use to answer: their prior knowledge and external sources. As students consult external sources (both print and electronic), they will encounter different text structures and document types. Knowing what to expect from each structure or type will help them quickly identify information to help them answer a question. Additionally, familiarity with various structures and types allows students to detect potential author biases or missing information.

2. *Describe the five linguistic text structures reviewed in this chapter, and explain how students can identify them.*

The five linguistic text structures are (1) description, (2) sequence, (3) causation, (4) problem/solution, and (5) comparison. Description structures give information about a topic by highlighting its characteristics, attributes, or identifying marks and are signaled by words and phrases such as *attributes, characteristics, for example, for instance, namely, specifically, and such as.* Sequence structures organize a series of events in chronological order. Time words and phrases such as *before, after, later, previously, early, finally, following, next, years ago,* and so forth signal sequence structures. Causation structures present cause-and-effect relationships, using signal words and phrases such as *consequently, as a result, in order to, the reason, this is why,* and so on. Problem/solution structures present problems and potential solutions; sometimes problem/solution structures feature questions and answers. Signal words and phrases such as *problem, solution, question, answer, response, satisfy, issue, prevent,* and *solve* alert students to the use of a problem/solution structure. Finally, comparison structures highlight the similarities and differences between two items or ideas. Words and phrases such as *although, compared to, difference, in common, in contrast, instead,* and *on the other hand* can help students identify comparison structures.

3. *How can teachers help students practice identifying and interpreting nonlinguistic texts?*

As teachers introduce various types of matrix, graphic, and mimetic texts, they can ask students to find examples of each type of text and bring them to class. Then, the class can analyze each one to decide which subcategory it fits into (for example, *Is it a simple, combined, intersecting, or nested list? Is it a pie chart, bar or line graph, or map? Is it a picture or schematic?*), what information it is communicating, and how it might communicate bias or reinforce misconceptions.

4. *How are electronic texts similar to and different from linguistic and nonlinguistic texts?*
Like traditional linguistic and nonlinguistic texts, which are usually printed on static pages, electronic texts are usually organized using recognizable structures. Students who know these structures can use them as they read electronic texts to help them know what to look for and remember in each type of text. However, electronic texts differ from traditional linguistic and nonlinguistic texts because they are usually displayed on a screen, are read by scrolling up or down rather than by turning pages, and can be resized and reshaped depending on the size and orientation of the screen. These unique features mean that students will need to focus more time and energy on electronic texts, or use strategies (such as printing them out) that make it possible to read electronic texts like traditional print texts. Additionally, electronic texts require a more extensive set of comprehension skills, and the ability to distinguish relevant from irrelevant information.

5. **How can teachers help students find and synthesize information from multiple texts?**

First, teachers help students clearly identify what they are looking for. This could involve generating keywords or narrowing searches to focus precisely on the information students need. Teachers can also help students identify the elements of the answer that they already know and what information they still need to find. As students conduct research, teachers can help them revisit their focus and continually refine their search.