



On Target:

Reading Strategies to Guide Learning



Grades 4 - 12

ESA Regions 6 & 7
South Dakota Department of Education

“To read without reflecting is like eating
without digesting.” – Edmund Burke

Dear Educators:

We've long known that the key to success often lies in keeping things simple and finding just the right strategy to work with our students. Unfortunately, with the increased pressures of *No Child Left Behind* and high-stakes testing, we find ourselves with less and less time to focus and find those strategies that really make a difference for our students.



Moreover, as the emphasis on teaching reading in the content areas at the middle school and high school level has increased, other problems have arisen. True, classroom instructors across all content areas need to hone in on reading skills for all students. However, just how do teachers recognize valid ideas from the plethora of strategies, suggestions and ideas now available via the Internet, strategy workshops, in-service trainings, and written publications? *On Target: Reading Strategies to Guide Learning* is designed to make the task easier for content area classroom teachers. The strategies organized in this booklet are ones that teachers recommend as strategies that work well in their classrooms. They are strategies supported by research and/or best practice in classrooms. They are strategies originally developed by reading specialists, content area teachers, and reading researchers. The strategies featured here are divided into three categories: Before Reading, During Reading, and After Reading.

Graphic organizers provide frameworks for implementing strategies into content classrooms. Whenever applicable, a graphic organizer has been included to help educators adapt the strategy for classroom use. Although many of these strategies can be learned without the organizer template, a framework for learning generally helps students adapt to new material and new ideas. Further, the framework guides the learning process and provides an organizational tool for students.

On Target: Reading Strategies to Guide Learning is the first in a series of On Target strategy booklets compiled by South Dakota's Education Service Agencies 6 and 7 and the South Dakota Department of Education.

June Preszler
Education Specialist
SDEducation Service Agency
Black Hills Region 7

Editorial Credits

June Preszler, editor; Gloria Gunn, designer; Joesphine Hartmann, content consultant

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Helping Students ‘Get’ the Message

When I was teaching high school I experienced an epiphany of sorts. Until one of my good students told me tearfully that she just “didn’t get it” in response to a reading assignment, I had never suspected that well-intentioned, hard-working adolescents actually might struggle with reading.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows that 40% of U.S. adolescents have difficulty comprehending specific factual information. Few pre-teens and teens have progressed to advanced reading and writing; fewer than 5% of the teens tested by NAEP could extend or elaborate the meanings of text.

Pre-adolescent and adolescent literacy in the content areas is a concern as we wonder why increasing numbers of students struggle and how we can design interventions to help. The transitional bridge between learning to read and reading to learn is seldom constructed. We assume that by practicing what students already know how to do, improvement will occur. Little instruction is provided to equip young scholars with tools to help navigate treacherous waters of content area text, both printed and digital.

The bottom line is that in order to help students read to learn, content area teachers must teach students strategies to tackle the materials containing needed information. No, we aren’t reading teachers and the old adage that “every teacher is a teacher of reading” probably won’t fly. However, all teachers **are** responsible for instructing students in methods for understanding content embedded within the printed word of their disciplines.

Only a math teacher can help students learn to read mathematics problems and go beyond basic computation. Only a science teacher can help students learn strategies to decipher difficult scientific texts. Only the content area teachers can unlock the wonders of their disciplines by helping students master the language and format of print in their areas.

Only the content area teachers can unlock the wonders of their disciplines. . .

Educators are well-meaning creatures by nature – God bless us, every one. We’ve all been in classrooms and understand that if students don’t “get” the message of the assignment, we are only too willing to explain it to them at length. Students quickly catch on that they really don’t **have** to read assignments, as we will tell them exactly what the author has said. They are better served if we teach them how to read the textbook for themselves and interpret the meaning in lively discussion.

I’m sure we all remember the advice about the temporary value of giving a man a fish versus the lasting impact of teaching him how to fish. Well, we can tell our students what the author is saying or we can teach them how to extract the information for themselves.

Strategies in this book present ways to provide needed support as students use print to explore the world and their lives. They present multiple ways to enhance reading. They are classroom tested, research-based, and above all eminently **practical**. And nothing is more rewarding after teaching a strategy, than to hear a struggling student exclaim, “Hey, I’m not as dumb as I thought I was.”

Josephine Hartmann, Reading Specialist and Consultant

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Before, During, & After

Reading strategies can often be divided into three categories—Before, During & After. Before reading strategies tend to be those that activate our students’ prior knowledge. When we incorporate these strategies, we let students tell us what they know before we begin the process of teaching the students. Research indicates that by spending a considerable amount of time on before reading strategies, we increase student involvement in the learning process, and we allow our teaching to be more directed toward student levels and needs.

During reading strategies are those that help students progress and manage complex information as they read and learn. These strategies often employ organizers or frameworks which allow students to efficiently categorize information.

After reading strategies allow students to reflect on what they have learned and to share what they’ve learned. The strategies tend to be interactive so that students learn from each other.

Although the strategies in this booklet tend to fall primarily into one category or another, many of them can be adapted for use throughout the study of a unit. An example might be the ABC Alphabet Chart which is featured in this booklet as a before reading strategy to activate students’ prior knowledge. Students begin the lesson by listing all they know about a topic in the alphabet chart. Students can work together or they can work independently; the teacher selects that element. However, as the unit of study goes on, the teacher can ask students to refer back to their charts and make adjustments or additions as needed. Now the chart becomes a during reading strategy. After study has been completed, the teacher may give students a blank chart to fill in again. The chart becomes a method of review. Therefore, the strategy, originally developed as a before reading strategy has been modified for a variety of uses.

Read-Alouds Open Doors to Learning

At night, five-year-old Angie brings a book to her daddy and pleads, “Read to me, read to me.” Earlier in the day, her three-year-old brother Jamie had said much the same to his playmate at day care. Except Jamie pled, “Let me read you a story.” The power of the story. Children know it. They learn it from the adults who read aloud to them.

Listening to stories yields more than pleasure. Author and read-aloud advocate Jim Trelease contends that nothing improves the reading levels of children more than having stories read to them. In 1985 the National Commission on Reading recommended that reading aloud to students continue through the twelfth grade.

According to Trelease, reading aloud to students tapers off markedly around the fourth grade when teachers (not students) decide that the learners in their classrooms are too old to be read to. Trelease clearly believes this is the wrong path for today’s educators to follow. Because most students can listen and comprehend a higher vocabulary, usually up to two grade levels, than they can read themselves, the opportunity to listen to content is also an opportunity to learn.

Trelease reminds us of advertising wizard David Ogilvy who once snipped: “You can’t bore people into buying your product. You can only interest them in buying it!” Trelease reminds us that we are selling reading, that as teachers one of our primary products is reading. Trelease points out that every time a teacher reads to a class, that teacher is advertising the product of reading and is advertising that product as pleasure. Likewise, every time a teacher hands out a worksheet, the product is still reading—but the pleasure has been replaced by pain.

Worksheets and the plain old student effort needed to learn cannot be replaced by reading aloud. However, reading aloud should have a place in the upper level classrooms of schools. Teachers can find contexts for read-alouds that feel comfortable to them as educators. Look for opportunities to read aloud newspaper or magazine articles with direct connections to the classroom context. Introduce material by reading aloud the beginning sections or even by previewing certain interesting pieces of information from the text. Use reading aloud as an opportunity to snag student interest and attention.

But just as important as reading to students, is giving students the opportunity to read to each other. For years, the only time reading aloud by students occurred was with the “round robin” approach. You remember it. Students take turns reading certain portions of the text—perhaps each student reads a paragraph until all students have read a passage. Although easy to incorporate into the classroom—it is not particularly effective, according to Doug Buehl, high school teacher and author of *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning*. Buehl says many students choose not to pay attention as they wait their turn to read. Some students find the pace too slow and frustrating, so they read ahead. Other readers, especially struggling readers, dread the moments when they will be required to publicly perform.

Teachers can incorporate oral reading into the classroom without using the round robin approach. The “Say Something” strategy calls for students to work in pairs. If students are studying a section of text on the Vietnam War, the first student reads aloud a paragraph from the text. At the end of the paragraph, the partner must “say something” about what was read. The listener can repeat a fact, make a comment on an interesting piece of information, or add background information from the listener’s personal experience or knowledge. The partners change roles and continue. The “say something” strategy encourages interaction and conversation. Students make connections and clarify learning.

As teachers include opportunities for read-alouds in their upper level classrooms, they should see an increase in students’ reading fluency, in focused conversations about learning, and in student involvement. These three outcomes alone clearly indicate that reading aloud provides an opportunity for increased learning in content area classrooms.

June Preszler, Reading Specialist

Sources

Buehl, Doug. “Reading Aloud May Aid Understanding.” On *WEAC: The Reading Room*. 8 Sept. 1997. 9 Sept. 2004 <<http://www.weac.org/News/SEPT97/read.htm>>

Gaither, P. “Caught in the Act: Strategies to Engage Readers with Informational Text.” Presentation at IRA Convention, Atlanta: May, 1997.

Trelease, Jim. *The New Read-Aloud Handbook*. 4th ed. New York: Penguin. 2001.



Before Reading: Brainstorming Prior Knowledge

Discover what students already know by tapping into their prior knowledge base. Often students know more than we credit them for. Before starting any unit, give the students in your classroom a chance to reveal their thoughts and ideas on a topic.

Several strategies encourage students to access prior knowledge. Two classroom favorites tend to be LINK (List, Inquire, Note, and Know) and ABC Alphabet Charts.

LINK:

- Select a key word or concept
 - Write the word on the chalkboard or transparency
 - Give students three minutes to **list** on paper their associations for the word
 - Ask students to share associations
 - Begin with students who are less likely to share.
 - List student ideas without comment
- Give students a chance to **inquire** of each other
 - Clarify
 - Challenge
 - Model with questions
 - Establish ground rules for sharing ideas
- Following discussion, students turn over papers and **note** what they have learned about the original idea or concept.
 - Definition
 - Paragraph
 - Summary
- After reading, students reflect on what they now **know** after completing the lesson.

ABC Alphabet Chart:

- Provide each student or learning group with an alphabet chart and a study guide.
- Students create an alphabetical list of terms, ideas, or concepts that they think are connected to the topic. Give students a time frame and make sure they understand that they don't need to fill in every letter.
- Ask students to share and compare ideas.
- During and/or after reading, students compare and adjust their charts.

Sources:

Ricci, G., and C. Wahlgren. "The Key to Know 'PAINE' Know Gain." Paper presented at the International Reading Association, Orlando, May, 1998.

Buehl, Doug. *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning*. 2nd. ed. Newark, DE: IRA, 2001.



ABC Chart—Space Exploration

A Astronauts	B	C Challenger	D Discovery	E Exploration	F Flag Waving	G John Glenn
H Hubble telescope	I ISS	J January 28, 1986	K Kennedy Space Center	L Lift offs and landings	M Moon	N NASA
O Orbit	P Politics	Q Quest	R Sally Ride	S Shuttle	T Tourist Tito	U USSR
V Voyager	W	X	Y	Z		

ABC Chart

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
H	I	J	K	L	M	N
O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
V	W	X	Y	Z		





Before Reading: Story Impressions

Story Impressions help students develop ideas about a concept. The simple activity requires a small amount of preparation on the part of the teacher but engages the classroom prior to reading.

Steps:

1. Select words or phrases that represent important elements of a fiction or nonfiction reading.
2. List the clue words/phrases according to the sequence of the original text.
3. Students use the words to create their own stories—their ideas of what the text will actually be. Students share, compare, and discuss predictions.
4. After reading the “real” story, students compare their versions with the one from the text. Students describe similarities and differences. They should focus on setting, characters, plot, and other literary elements if reading fiction.

Adaptations:

- Discuss movie previews and make predictions regarding the movie.
- Before directing students to write independently, create several stories as a group.

Sources:

Buehl, Doug. *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning*. 2nd ed. Newark, DE: IRA, 2001.

McGinley, W.J. and P.R. Denner. “Story Impressions: A Prereading/Writing Activity.” *Journal of Reading*, 31 (1987): 248-53.

University of Texas System/Texas Education Agency. *Meeting the Needs of Struggling Readers: A Resource for Secondary English Language Arts Teachers*. 2003.





Before Reading: Word Splash

Word Splash helps students access prior knowledge of words, build meaning for the words related to the concept, and find repetition of key ideas important to the new unit of study.

Steps:

1. Brainstorm, Predict, and Write

- Introduce 6-7 words key to developing a conceptual understanding of the unit topic.
- Arrange the words on a board so that they can be rearranged later.
- Students write complete sentences using three of the words. Sentences should demonstrate their understanding of the words.
- Large group share out of a few of the sentences.

2. Explore Word Relationships

- Tell the class that one of the words is the “all-encompassing” word and the rest fit under it.
- Have students arrange the words in a graphic that makes sense to them.
- A few students come up, rearrange the words on the board, then explain their organization.
- Special education students and ELL students would benefit from having a sheet of words that they cut out and manipulate on the desktop.

3. Read and Compare

- Students individually read the passage, paying attention to the words on the board.
- Their purpose is to see what new understandings of words develop through reading.

4. Comparative Results

- Students revise three sentences to better portray the words as developed in the passage.
- In small groups, share sentences. Sentences continue to be revised based on group feedback.
- Each student stars his/her strongest sentence, then adds the sentence to the chart paper for their group.

5. Share Revised Sentences with Class

- As a group, the students share the sentences they developed to represent the new concept.

Sources:

Video: *Reading in the Content Areas: Before-Reading Strategies*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2002.

Web: *Student Owned Strategies (SOS) for Reading and Thinking in the Content Areas*, <http://www.geocities.com/morrowcoteacher/SOS/>

Before Reading: Anticipation Guide

Anticipation guides get students interested in learning new material by activating prior knowledge, interests, and beliefs.

Steps:

1. Write statements that tap into students' knowledge. Statements should make students think.
Statements should encourage discussion. Provide three to eight statements.
 - Cognitive or fact-based statements help students clarify.
 - Affective or emotion-based statements allow students to bring personal values, opinions, and judgments to the reading.
 - Identify major ideas or themes and key information in the reading assignment.
 - Consider students' knowledge and beliefs.
 - Best statements will promote discussion and draw on varying opinions and beliefs.
 - Avoid obviously true or false statements and statements that do not draw on student experience or lack effectiveness.
2. Decide on a format for presenting statements and include clear instructions. (See template on page 11 for one presentation option.)
3. Provide a brief introduction to the text.
4. Allow discussion of responses.
5. Set a purpose for reading.
6. After reading, allow time for further discussion.

Adaptations:

- Make connections between reading and author. For example, "In the second column, write A or D to show whether you think the author would agree or disagree with you." Always make sure students support their response with evidence from the text.
- Use two response columns as above, but use the second for a character's viewpoint, either from a fiction or nonfiction reading.
- Have students write journal entries based on one of the statements. Entries can be extended to a formal essay.
- Add a section to the guide that requires students to compare predictions to what is learned. For example: "Check yes or no to indicate whether the text supports your prediction. Write the explanation from the text in your own words." This process connects reading and writing while providing practice in paraphrasing.

Sources:

Alverman, D.E., and S. F. Phelps. *Content Reading and Literacy: Succeeding in Today's Diverse Classrooms*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002.

University of Texas System/Texas Education Agency. *Meeting the Needs of Struggling Readers: A Resource for Secondary English Language Arts Teachers*. 2003.

Anticipation Guide – Template

Instructions:

Check “Agree” or “Disagree” beside each statement below **before** you start the task.

Compare your choice and explanation with a partner.

Revisit your choices at the end of the task. Compare the choices that you would make **after** the task with the choices that you made before the task.

Before		Statement	After	
Agree	Disagree		Agree	Disagree
		1.		
		2.		
		3.		
		4.		
		5.		

Sources:

Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches, Grades 7-12. Expert Panel on Students at Risk (Literacy). 2003-2004, p. 14.



During Reading: Think-Alouds

Think-Alouds Can Target Common Troubles of Struggling Readers

Poor readers often plow right through a reading, decoding words but not comprehending.

Think-alouds can help because they require readers to slow down and to reflect on how they are understanding and interpreting text.

Poor readers don't bring meaning forward with them or build meaning as they work through a text.

Think-alouds can help students to identify, consolidate, and summarize the meanings they make while reading so that the meaning can be used.

Poor readers just give up.

Think-alouds can help by giving students strategies to try in lieu of just giving up.

How Do I Implement Think-Alouds?

Ideally, model, followed by guided practice and then independent practice.

Teacher Does/ Students Watch

To introduce students to the concept of checking understanding while reading, model a wide variety of fix-up strategies, help students identify the strategies, and then post a list or flow chart of the strategies in the classroom. Tell students that the strategies outlined will help them monitor their comprehension and read better, no matter what they are reading.

Teacher Does/ Students Help

Then read another text and ask students to help by asking questions and prompts that encourage thinking and understanding.

Students Do/ Teacher Helps

When the process of comprehension monitoring becomes relatively clear to them, students then take over the process themselves in small groups, and when ready begin to use the process on their own.

Tips:

Start off by telling students to continually pause and ask themselves the question, “Does this make sense?”

Tell students who answer, “No, this isn’t making sense” to use the most basic fix-up strategies of rereading, reading ahead, and skipping or filling in a word. Later, introduce other strategies, some of which need to be modeled and taught more explicitly. If students don’t “get it” the first time, go back and do more modeling and provide more assistance.

Flow Chart of Comprehension-Monitoring Behaviors

1 Read a passage of text.

2 Pause, ask yourself: Does this make sense? (Do this periodically; pause at ends of natural text segments like paragraphs.) Check yourself: Can I retell the important points of the last segment? Can I say it in my own words? Are my hypotheses and predictions holding up?

4 Ask: When did I lose track?
When did it start to go wrong?

3 If Yes, then your reading makes sense! Continue reading by going to the next passage (#1). If No, continue to #4.

5 Isolate cause of difficulty (each difficulty is matched to an appropriate problem-solving strategy in #6. Did I:

- Run into difficulty with a word or words? (vocabulary)
- Stop concentrating?
- Read it too fast?
- Lose the thread of meaning? i.e., struggle to understand how it relates to what was written before?
- Not know enough about the topic that's been taken up?
- Lose image or mental representation? i.e., Can't "see" what it is I'm reading about?
- Not understand how text is organized and where it's headed, what I should expect?
- Try a strategy that didn't work? Not know which strategy to try?

6 Use an appropriate strategy for your problem:

- Skip the work and read to the end of sentence or segment, trying to figure it out from the context.
- Guess the meaning or substitute a word that seems to fit and see if it makes some sense.
- Ask someone the meaning of the word, look for definition in the text, or ask someone else to read it aloud to you.
- Read aloud or ask someone else to read it aloud to you. It really helps to hear the text.
- Slow down and reread, or read aloud.
- Chunk the confusing segment with what came before or what comes afterward. Try to understand a whole chunk that is short and manageable.
- Identify the topic and bring personal knowledge to bear. What do you know about this or a similar topic that might help you?
- Try to create an image or mind picture of what is going on (could use picture mapping, tableaux, or mapping techniques.)
- Ask: How is the text organized? How should what comes before help me with my problem? (Very helpful to know that in an argument a claim is followed by evidence and evidence is usually followed by a warrant; in cause and effect text structures, causes are followed by effects; in classification, one class or category is followed by a parallel category.)
- Recognize and use text features and cues to text structure like transitions, headings, illustrations, and captions, charts, etc.
- Ask: Am I supposed to make an inference? Fill a gap in the story? Put several pieces of information together to see a pattern?
- Read on and see if the confusion clears up.
- If still confused, try another strategy or ask for help. Ask a peer, then the teacher, or another expert reader.

7 Check understanding - If Yes, back to #1 to continue reading. If No, ask for help.

During Reading: Concept Definition Map

Students use the Concept Definition or Word Map strategy to read unfamiliar words and build vocabulary

Steps:

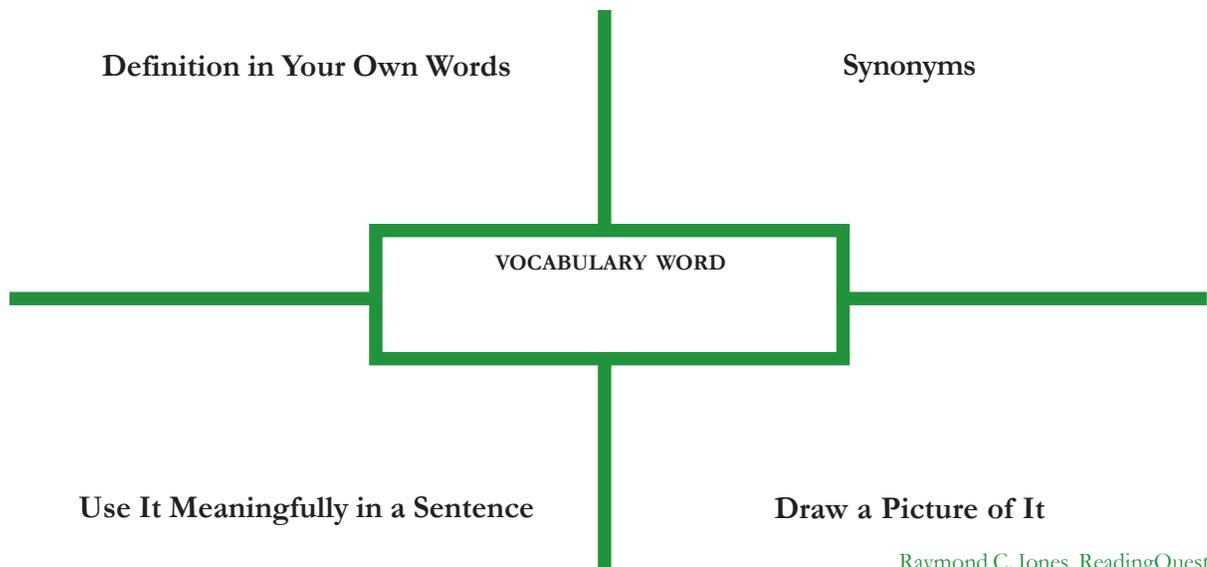
1. Explain that in order to understand the meanings of new words, students need to understand the parts of the definition. The Concept Definition Map helps them gain a deeper understanding of words.
2. Show students that they will need to answer the following questions in order to complete the map:
 - What is it?
 - What is it like?
 - What are some examples?
3. Model by using a familiar word. Complete the map together.
4. As a class, write a definition of the familiar word.
5. Pair students and have them work on other words.
6. When students are skilled at using the map for vocabulary, extend learning to concepts from stories and reading selections.
7. Vary the map designations as needed.

Sources:

Schwartz, R.M., and T.E. Raphael. "Concept of Definition: A Key to Improving Students' Vocabulary." *The Reading Teacher*. 1985: 39(2), 198-205.

University of Texas System/Texas Education Agency. *Meeting the Needs of Struggling Readers: A Resource for Secondary English Language Arts Teachers*. 2003.

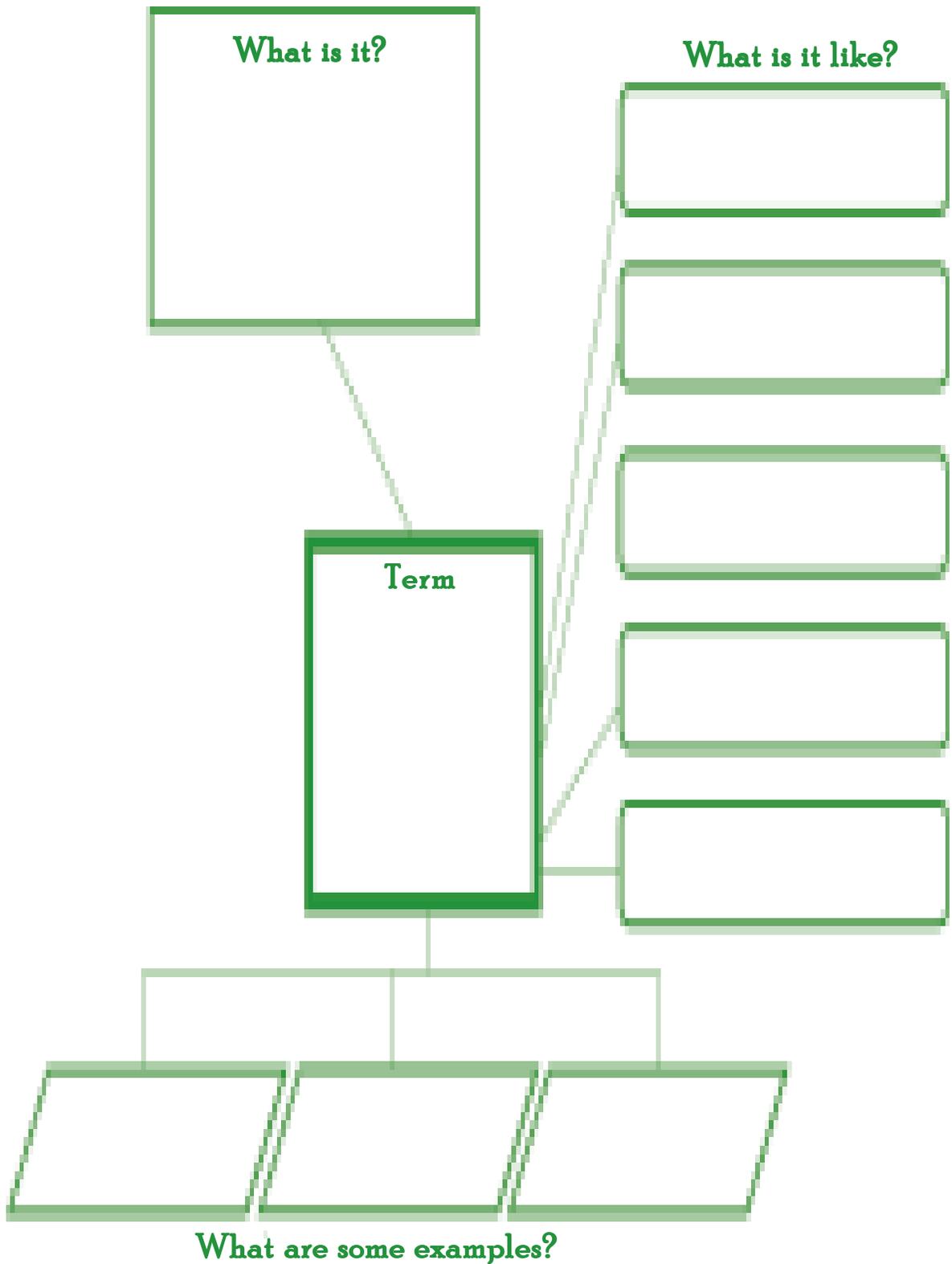
Vocabulary Word Map



Raymond C. Jones, ReadingQuest

Concept Definition Map

(Schwartz & Raphael, 1985)



During Reading: KWL

KWL guides students through their reading material. Although the process begins as a before reading activity, its primary purpose is to develop a framework which students can use as they read.

Steps:

1. Provide students with the opportunity to brainstorm and list the ideas and details that they already **know** about a topic.
2. Next, they review the topic again and consider what they still **want to know**. They list these items in the **W** section of the chart. Items should be listed as questions.
3. As they read or after they read, students add details that they have **learned** while reading. They list these items in the **L** section of the chart.

Teaching Suggestions:

Tips for K...

- Prepare questions in advance to help students brainstorm their ideas. Prompt students: “Tell me everything you already **know** about _____.”
- Require that students explain their associations. Explaining associations helps students provide specific details and requires them to put some thought into their answers. You might ask them: “What made you think of that?”

Tips for W...

- Explain that **want** is best defined as what they **need** to know or learn. Students have a tendency to proclaim, “I don’t want to know anything about it.”
- Ask alternate questions in order to prompt student responses. Questions may include: “What do you think you will learn about this topic?”
- Refer back to the **K** section of the chart. Ask students “What more could you learn about this idea?”

Tips for L...

- Remind students that they should try to answer their **W** questions as they fill in the **L** column.
- Encourage students to write any new and interesting information that they **learned**.
- Suggest students search in other sources for the answers to questions that were left unanswered in the text.

Sources:

Connor, Jennifer. “Instructional Reading Strategy: KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned.” <http://www.indiana.edu/~1517/KWL.htm>

Ogle, D.M. “K-W-L: A Teaching Model That Develops Active Reading of Expository Text.” *Reading Teacher* 1986: 564-570.

GRAVITY

K	W	L
<p>It keeps us from floating around.</p> <p>It makes things fall.</p> <p>There is less gravity on the moon.</p> <p>Isaac Newton discovered gravity.</p>	<p>What is gravity?</p> <p>Why is there less gravity on the moon?</p> <p>How did Newton discover gravity?</p> <p>What determines how fast something will fall to the ground? (<i>teacher question</i>)</p>	<p>Gravity is the force that pulls objects toward Earth.</p> <p>The amount of gravity depends on the masses of the objects involved. The moon is a lot less massive than the earth, so there is less gravity on the moon than there is on earth.</p> <p>Air resistance determines how fast something will fall to the ground.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Connor, Jennifer)</i></p>

Note: The answer to the question about Newton was not found in the text. Students were encouraged to look in other resources for the answer.

K W L

What do you
Know?

What do you think you
Will learn?

What did you
Learn?

--	--	--

K W L (Modified)

Adapted from Ogle, 1984, 1986

What is the concept?

What I know about. . .

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

What I WANT to know or WONDER
about or think I WILL learn. . .

?
?
?
?

How I might FIND OUT about. . .

⇒
⇒

What have I learned?

During Reading: INSERT Notes

Purpose:

INSERT is an active reading strategy designed by Vaughn & Estes (1986). It is a particularly helpful way for less skilled readers to become more aware of breakdown in comprehension so that they can remember to clarify the issue at a later time. This is a particularly useful strategy when students have their own books and can mark in them. However, students can use post-it notes, separate sheets of paper, strips of paper in the margins, etc. to deal with an “in common” textbook.

INSERT Marking System

X	I thought differently
+	New & important information
!	WOW
??	I don't get it
*	VERY important to remember

Steps:

Overview & Purpose

- Describe the INSERT strategy and why it can be helpful to use it .

Demonstrate – Model

- Think aloud as you model using INSERT.

Guide Class in Using INSERT

- As a whole class practice using INSERT, be sure to discuss your thinking, rationale for using various marks, etc.

Practice in Pairs and/or Teams

- Structure cooperative pairs/teams to read segments together and use INSERT, compare and discuss their marks.

Practice on Your Own

- Assign homework and/or other independent work using INSERT (be sure to discuss after, using pairs/teams/whole class).

During Reading: Word Sorts

Word Sorts are simple small group activities. They help students understand key words from a reading selection. Students identify meaning and properties of words before sorting the list into defined groups.

Types of Word Sorts:

- Closed Word Sort: Teacher provides the categories. Students then match the words to the categories.
- Open Word Sort: Teacher provides only the list of words. Students work together to find common features and create categories for the words.

Steps:

1. List between 10 and 20 key vocabulary words from a reading selection. Create word cards.
2. Divide class into small groups no more than four students.. Distribute word cards.
3. For a closed Word Sort, provide students with categories. For an open Word Sort, tell the teams that they will need to create categories for organizing the words.
4. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for students to work in teams.
5. Discuss word list results. Ask students to explain their category choices.

Suggestions/Adaptations:

- Word Sorts can be created to fit needs of struggling students.
- Words Sorts can be used at any grade level.
- Make sure to keep groups small—no more than four students.
- Create clear, concise categories.
- Although Word Sorts work well as a During Reading strategy, they can also be used as a Before Reading strategy to spark students' prior knowledge and as an After Reading strategy to help the teacher measure learning.

Sources:

Web: Just Read Now. <http://www.justreadnow.com/strategies/sort.htm>

Bear, D. et al. *Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004.

Word Sort Template



During Reading: The Jigsaw

Jigsaw was originally developed by Elliot Aronson (1978). It has since been adapted by a number of researchers and practitioners in a variety of ways. Jigsaw is a cooperative learning lesson design that takes the place of a lecture. Each student within a team has a piece of the information to be learned by all students, and each student is responsible for teaching that section to the other students on the team. When all the pieces are put together, the students should have the whole picture—the completed Jigsaw.

Steps:

1. Divide the reading material into five segments (could be more or less).
2. If needed, make five copies of each segment to be read.
3. Divide students into groups of five. Give group one a segment to read, give group two a different segment, and so forth.
4. Give each group a specific location in which to congregate.
5. Distribute the piece of material you want each group to read.
6. Instruct them to read the material carefully, taking notes.
7. When all members of a group have finished, they should go around the group, and each member contributes what he/she thinks the most important points are. Then group members discuss the material until all members are confident of their mastery for the piece.
8. Re-form groups so that one person from each of the original groups is in each new group. (Make sure that all segments of the reading are represented in each group.)
9. Each member of the new group “teaches” the material from his/her reading segment.





After Reading: Save the Last Word for Me

Save the Last Word for Me provides a framework for student review of materials. The discussion encourages students to share ideas and opinions. Since the discussion takes place in a small group, students who typically do not participate in large discussions are more comfortable joining in the review.

Steps:

1. Assign a story, selection, or passage. As students read, they should mark statements that they find interesting or statements they want to talk about. The statements could be ones they agree or disagree with. The statements may be ones that surprised, excited, or puzzled them. Students can lightly mark the statements with a pencil or attach a sticky note.
2. Provide each student with 3 to 5 index cards. (The more cards, the longer the time needed to complete the activity.) Each student writes a statement on the front of a card. On the back side, the student writes a response or comments. Students complete the front/back of a card for each of their marked statements.
3. Divide the class into small groups. (The larger the group, the longer the time needed to complete the activity.) Students select a member to begin the sharing process. The selected student reads the front of one card and then shows the card to the other students in the group. Each of the other students responds to the card. Following their responses, the first student tells his or her opinion and ideas.
4. After all cards are discussed, the group selects one card, and one student reports the group's discussion and ideas to the larger class.

Sources:

Buehl, Doug. *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning*. Newark, DE: IRA, 2001.

Vaughan, J., and T. Estes. *Reading and Reason Beyond the Primary Grades*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1986.



Need More Strategies? These Books Will Help

Allan, Janet. *Tools for Teaching Content Literacy*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse, 2004.

-- *Words, Words, Words: Teaching Vocabulary in Grades 4-12*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse, 1999.

-- *Yellow Brick Roads: Shared and Guided Paths to Independent Reading 4-12*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse, 2000.

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Elliott, Judy L. and Martha L. Thurlow. *Improving Test Performance of Students With Disabilities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2001.

Harvey, Stephanie, and Anne Goudvis. *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse, 2000.

Miller, Wilma H. *Ready-to-Use Activities and Materials for Improving Content Reading*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.

Murray, Niki. *Teaching Mathematics Vocabulary in Context: Windows, Doors, and Secret Passageways*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004.

Robb, Laura. *Teaching Reading in Middle School*. New York: Scholastic, 2000.

Tovani, Cris. *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?* Portland, ME: Stenhouse, 2004.

-- *I Read It, But I Don't Get It. Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse, 2000.

Tompkins, Gail E. *50 Literacy Strategies: Step by Step*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill, 1998.

Tompkins, Gail E. and Cathy Blanchfield. *Teaching Vocabulary: 50 Creative Strategies, Grades K-12*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2004.

Trelease, Jim. *The Read-Aloud Handbook*. 4th ed. New York: Penguin, 2001.

Winebrenner, Susan. *Teaching Kids with Learning Difficulties in the Regular Classroom*. Minneapolis: Free Sprit, 1996.

Websites To Explore

Clearinghouse on Reading, English and Communication

<http://reading.indiana.edu/>

Education Reference Desk

<http://www.eduref.org/>

ERIC (Education Resources Information Center)

<http://www.eric.ed.gov/>

Greece Central School District, New York

<http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Reading/Reading%20Strategies/reading%20strategies%20index.htm>

Home Page of John Nemes

<http://www.toread.com/>

Inspiration

<http://www.inspiration.com>

Just Read Now

<http://www.justreadnow.com/strategies/sort/htm>

Literacy Matters

<http://www.literacymatters.org/index.htm>

Literacy Web at the University of Connecticut

<http://www.literacy.uconn.edu/index.htm>

MiddleWeb: Exploring Middle School Reform

<http://www.middleweb.com>

Read Write Think (Sponsored by the International Reading Association, National Council of Teachers of English, and MarcoPolo)

<http://www.readwritethink.org>

Reading Online (Published by the International Reading Association)

<http://www.readingonline.org/>

Reading Quest—Strategies for Social Studies

<http://www.readingquest.org>

SOS Reading Strategies

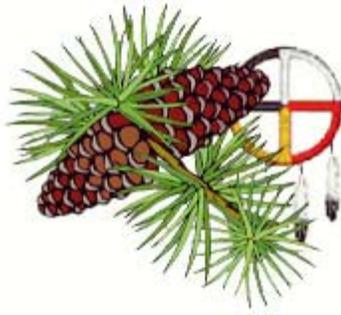
<http://www.geocities.com/morrowcoteacher/SOS/>

Text Mapping Project: Improving Reading Comprehension Skills Instruction

<http://www.textmapping.org/>

Web English Teacher

www.webenglishteacher.com/index.html



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