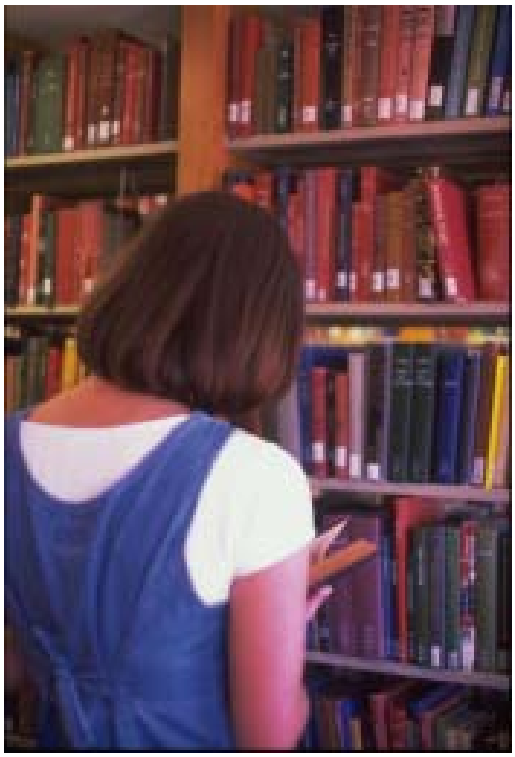

On Target:

Strategies to Help Struggling Readers

Grades 4 - 12

ESA Regions 6 & 7

Dear Educator:

Despite our belief that all students can learn, we often find ourselves perplexed over ways to help those students who learn differently. Sometimes these students struggle with comprehension, lack of motivation, or have qualified for special education programs. Yet, it is our responsibility to provide them with the opportunities and challenges that will most motivate their learning and enhance their academic experiences.

We want to do our best for students, but sometimes it just isn't easy to know what the best is. The strategies in this booklet are designed to help you along in that process. This booklet focuses on the struggling student, or perhaps more specifically, the struggling reader. The strategies organized in *On Target: Strategies to Help Struggling Readers* are ones that teachers say work well in their classrooms. They are strategies supported by research and best practice in classrooms.

On Target: Strategies to Help Struggling Readers is the third in a series of strategy booklets compiled by South Dakota's Education Service Agencies 6 & 7 with support from the South Dakota Department of Education. The two previously published books are *On Target: Reading Strategies to Guide Learning* and *On Target: Strategies to Improve Student Test Scores*.

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The *On Target* strategy booklets are created by ESA 6 & 7 with support from the South Dakota Department of Education

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Before, During, & After

Reading strategies can often be divided into three categories—Before, During, and 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 process 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.

Seeking New Ways to See Our Struggling Students

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes."

Marcel Proust

When seeking our "new eyes," we should remember that Winston Churchill and Albert Einstein were both considered "learning disabled." I prefer to think of children as being "learning different." Kids have "difficulties," not "disabilities," by the way.

On a contemporary note, Dick Cheney flunked out of Yale twice. Colin Powell was a D student in public school and a C student at City College, NY, where he received his undergraduate degree. If we relied on "A" students, we'd have the Martha Stewarts and Ken Lays of the world running things.

On a contemporary note, Dick Cheney flunked out of Yale twice.

The development of this book was undertaken in the hope that it might provide its users with "new eyes" when working with struggling readers and children with learning difficulties. There is no magic program or cure to launch students into novel and instantaneous reading proficiency. Silver bullets belong to the Lone Ranger, not to reading educators, unfortunately.

We can, however, examine the large body of existing research. This research outlines effective instruction to deal with students lagging behind the general expectations of competence. From this research, we can suggest best practice, keeping in mind both the urgency and importance of our classroom work. We should remember that reading skills are the basis for subsequent mastery of almost every subject area. (Kameenui, Carnine, Dixon, Simmons, & Coyne, 2002). As such, their development takes precedence.

Seven Big Ideas

There are seven "big ideas" that we need to understand when working with struggling students:

1. Reading is not a "hard-wired" natural process.
2. There is no "reading area" of the brain.
3. Reading difficulties result from both genetic and environmental factors.
4. Development of reading is both complex and long term.
5. Students must learn the alphabetic principle and the alphabetic code.
6. Phonemic manipulation and phonics are generally the most effective ways to teach reading.
7. Students must develop automaticity (fluency) with the code.

Simply understanding the seven research-based big ideas will suggest strategies and procedures one can adopt in the classroom. However, further assistance is offered not only by the activities contained in this book, but also by following the ten tactics for the brain compatible classrooms suggested by Bender and Larkin, 2003.

Ten Tactics

1. Provide a safe, comfortable environment.
2. Provide comfortable furniture.
3. Provide water and fruits.
4. Require frequent student responses.
5. Base instruction on bodily movements whenever possible.
6. Emphasize visual novelty.
7. Use chanting, rhymes, and music to increase novelty in learning.
8. Increase "wait time."
9. Increase student choices.
10. Use students to teach other students.

Above all, remember that when we say "reading," we do not mean simply calling aloud the words with little or no comprehension; we mean extracting meaning from text. This requires far more than phoneme awareness and phonics instruction. It requires joy and excitement, engagement, and interest. Think of the way we learned to speak. It shares three important things with good reading instruction – modeling, repetition, and tons of positive attitude and expectations. Good luck. Remember we can change the world – perhaps not for everyone, but for at least one child.

We should remember that reading skills are the basis for subsequent mastery of almost every subject area.

By Josephine Hartmann, Reading Specialist and Technology & Innovation in Education (TIE) Consultant

Sources

Bender, William N. and Martha J. Larkin. *Reading Strategies for Elementary Students with Learning Difficulties.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2003.

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Before Reading: Probable Passage

Struggling readers frequently neglect to predict what a selection might be about before they approach the text. These readers tend to be more focused on their frustration with reading an assigned text than on imagining what they might expect to learn from the material. They tend to open a text and look at words without thinking about the context of the material being presented. Author Kylene Beers in *When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do* suggests that teachers can help students increase comprehension by activating their prior knowledge before they actually begin reading the text.

Beers suggests that it is essential to teach readers, especially struggling or reluctant readers, strategies to utilize **before** they begin reading. She suggests the Probable Passage strategy which encourages students to make predictions, access background knowledge, see relationships between ideas, make inferences, and form pictures about what might occur in a reading.

Although the strategy can be time-consuming, the benefits for students make the time well spent. In order for this strategy to work well, the teacher must model the strategy several times before assigning it to students. Also, a fishbowl approach (a small group of students acting out the process for the larger class) is also effective before assigning the strategy to the entire class.

Steps:

1. Choose 10-15 key words or phrases. The words should reflect the main ideas and concepts to be presented in the reading.

2. Create categories for students by providing labels. (If possible, label one category **Unknown** for words that are completely unfamiliar to students.)

3. Divide class into cooperative learning groups. Ask groups to place the key words in the categories that you've provided.

4. Based on the key words and categories, ask students to write a **Summary** or **Gist Statement*** that explains what they *think* they will learn as they read the material. (Decide beforehand if students will need to use all of the key words or phrases except those that fall into the **Unknown** category.)

5. The **To Discover** section asks students to detail what they hope to learn or find out regarding the topic and the **Unknown** items as they read.

6. Before students actually read the material, go through the group **Summary Statements** and discuss the concepts students hope to discover or learn more about. Create an overhead to record several **Summary/Gist Statements, Unknown Words,** and **To Discover** concepts.

7. After students have read the selection, return to the overhead and review the **Unknown Words**. Also ask students if they need to adjust the words in the categories.

8. Ask students to create new **Summary/Gist Statements** to reflect what they have actually learned.

*** Gist Statement:** a statement that reflects what students think will be the gist or fundamental information that they will learn in the reading.

Probable Passages

The following template includes possible categories for key concepts. Categories should be modified as is appropriate for the text. Additional templates are provided by Beers in *When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do,* 323, and in Harvey Daniel's and Steven Zemelman's *Subjects Matter: Every Teacher's Guide to Content-Area Reading,* 112.

Selection Title: _____

Categories:

Problem

Cause

Solution

Setting

Characters

Unknown Words

Summary/Gist Statement: _____

_____

_____

To Discover:

1.
2.
3.

Probable Passages

Adaptations:

Doug Buehl in his book *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning* suggests a similar process called Possible Sentences. Possible Sentences can be used as a precursor to Probable Passages or as an alternative. Like Probable Passages, this version of the strategy asks students to make predictions based on their background knowledge.

Steps:

1. Identify key words for students (limit to about 10) from the text.
2. List key words on the chalk board or on an overhead transparency.
3. Ask students to select two or more terms and use them in sentences that might appear in the text.
4. Make sure students understand that it is okay to guess at the meanings of unfamiliar terms.
5. Students share Possible Sentences while you record the sentences on a transparency or on the chalk board. Continue recording sentences until all of the key concepts are represented.
6. Assign the reading passage. While students read, they reflect and note the accuracy of the Possible Sentences recorded for the class.
7. Following the reading, adjust the Possible Sentences to more accurately reflect the material from the text.

Sources

Beers, Kylene. *When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do: A Guide for Teachers Grades 6-12.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003.

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

Daniels, Harvey and Steven Zemelman. *Subjects Matter: Every Teachers Guide to Content-Area Reading.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004.

Wood, Karen. "Probable Passage: A Writing Strategy." *The Reading Teacher.* 37 (1984): 496-99.

Before Reading: Book Cover Predictions

The Book Cover Predictions strategy provides struggling students with an opportunity to focus on a text and make predictions based on the visual clues offered by an illustration or photograph. The nonthreatening activity gives struggling students a context for their reading. If students understand that they are to check and analyze their predictions as they read, the strategy motivates students to read carefully.

Steps:

1. Explain to students that finding clues from illustrations and photographs helps them make predictions about a story or other text.

2. Give students copies of a novel and ask them to look at the illustration or photo on the cover.

3. Ask students to think about what they already know regarding setting, characters, and other story elements as they look over the book cover.

4. Ask students, "What do you think this story will be about? Why?"

5. Provide students with the Book Cover Prediction Chart (page 10). Give them time to record their thoughts.

6. Pair students and have each share their chart for one minute (two minutes for the pair). Students may add predictions.

7. Have pairs form groups of four. Each group chooses a question card. Give students two minutes to form answer(s). One student from each group reads the question and explains the group answer. Sample questions for the question cards may include the following:
   - What do you think is happening? Why?
   - Where do you think this story takes place?
   - What do you think is being said or done in the picture?
   - If it is a photo, where/when do you think the picture was taken?
   - If it is a photo, why do you think it was taken?
   - What do you think the artist or photographer tried to capture in this picture? What is the artist/photographer trying to show us? What message is he/she trying to send?
   - If you were the subject of this picture, what would you be thinking or feeling? What makes you think that?
   - What information is missing in the picture? (What are you wondering about that would help you to better understand the message?)
   - What do you find interesting about the picture?
   - What about the picture makes you want to read this story?

8. As students read, they adjust and refine their predictions based on learning.

Adaptations:

- Provide students with clues regarding the setting.

- Use novels with elaborate covers.

- Make a transparency of the prediction chart and fill it in during discussion. Allow students to refer to it while they fill in their charts.

- Adapt the process for short stories or nonfiction. Instead of basing predictions solely on a cover, consider other photographs and design elements.

Book Cover Prediction

Name(s): _____

Date: _____

Name of Reading Selection: _____

What is this story about?	**My predictions:**
My predictions with a partner:	**My group's question and answer:**

Source

Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (formerly the University of Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts). *Meeting the Needs of Struggling Readers: A Resource for Secondary English Language Arts Teachers.* 2003.

Before Reading: Teaching the Text Backwards

Successful Before Reading strategies usually aid students in two fundamental ways. The strategies set a purpose for reading and activate the students' prior or background knowledge of a topic. These aspects are especially important for struggling students who frequently feel overwhelmed when they approach a new piece of text. By setting a purpose for reading and activating prior knowledge, good instructors make the task less overwhelming and narrow the students' focus for reading.

The Teaching the Text Backwards strategy is also effective for struggling students because it gives them a framework for their reading. The students will use the questions and the pre-reading answers as a guideline while they read.

The Teaching the Text Backwards strategy has been used effectively in the Chicago Public Schools as one of the primary strategies selected to improve standardized test scores. As teachers practiced the strategy, they were surprised to find that students of all ability levels frequently misread questions. Students often failed to recognize the intent of a question and thus answered with information that neglected to actually address the question. Practicing Teaching the Text Backwards also helped prepare students for identifying the purpose of test questions in standardized testing situations.

Steps:

1. Before assigning the text to students, review questions at the end of an assigned text or write questions for students.

2. Assign questions to individual students or allow students to work in pairs.

3. Ask students to rewrite the questions in their own words.

4. Share rewritten questions with the class. Discuss whether the student rewritings accurately reflect the intent of the question.

5. Ask students to revise their rewritten questions, when needed.

6. Have students attempt to answer questions based on prior knowledge. As a class, discuss possible answers.

7. Read material.

8. After reading, students answer questions again—this time based on the information gathered from the reading of the text.

Source

Bavis, Peter A. and Susan A. Lofton, "Instructional Strategies to Prepare Students for Standardized Tests." ASCD Spring Conference: Orlando, April, 2005.

During Reading: Main Idea Record

The Main Idea Record teaches students how to determine the main idea of a meaningful section, to make predictions, and to evaluate their predictions. The Main Idea Record combines various strategies to help students comprehend material. The strategy can be used with either fiction or nonfiction pieces of work.

Steps:

1. Model the process with students, then allow students to work in pairs before asking students to complete this process independently.

2. Assign students to read a section of a novel or a portion of nonfiction text.
   Direct students to:
   - Identify **who** or **what** the selection is about.
   - Identify what is important about the **who** or **what**.

3. With the class, develop a main idea statement about the **who** or **what**. Record it on the board. Students should record the statement in their Main Idea Record.

4. Critique the main idea with students.
   - What is the most important information in the statement?
   - How can I put the main idea into my own words?

5. Direct students to skim the section for quotes that confirm the main idea statement. Ask students to share their quotes. Students should provide a page number and read the passage. Record the quotes on the board as students record in their Main Idea Record. Include page numbers when recording quotes.

6. Make predictions about what might happen next based on the first reading. Students should be able to provide quotes to support their predictions. Provide students with a Prediction Chart.

7. After reading the next section of the text, students should refer back to their predictions and evaluate them before making new predictions. Students record comments under Evaluation. Students might ask and respond to the following:
   - Was my prediction correct? If not, explain (under Evaluation) what really happened in the text.
   - If my prediction was incorrect, were there clues within the text that hinted at what actually happened? List new clues (under Evaluation).

8. Repeat process as the unit or novel continues by making predictions for each new section.

Source

Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (formerly the University of Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts). *Effective Instruction for Secondary Struggling Readers: Research-Based Practices.* Austin: Texas Education Agency, 2002.

Main Idea Record

Name(s): _____ **Date:** _____

Chapter/Section Title: _____

Main Idea of Chapter/Section: _____

_____

_____

_____

Quotation supporting main idea:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Quotation supporting main idea:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Quotation supporting main idea:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Quotation supporting main idea:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Source

Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (formerly the University of Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts). *Effective Instruction for Secondary Struggling Readers: Research-Based Practices.* Austin: Texas Education Agency, 2002.

Prediction Chart

Prediction	Quotation	Evaluation

Source

Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (formerly the University of Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts). *Effective Instruction for Secondary Struggling Readers: Research-Based Practices.* Austin: Texas Education Agency, 2002.

During Reading: Bookmarks

Author Kylene Beers worked with middle school students and teachers to create bookmarks that helped students "mark" areas of interest or concern as they read a text. The bookmarks allow struggling readers to detail important information in a manageable manner. Likewise, the bookmarks provide a simple but effective framework for taking notes.

Types of Bookmarks:

- **Mark My Words**
  - Students record interesting or unusual words that they find as they read material.
  - Every week or so review student words.
  - Chart words or create a word wall.
  - Consider choosing one or two words each week that all students try to use during the following week—either in written or oral communication. Give points for using words.

- **Marking Time**
  - Students mark how a setting changes or an event progresses over a period of time.
  - Marking Time works well for fiction or nonfiction. The bookmark is especially effective for recording historical events or timelines.

- **Question Mark**
  - Students record questions as they read assigned material.
  - Students record page numbers so they can go back and check on questions and concerns.
  - Provide time to discuss and/or review student questions.

- **Mark the Bold/Talk the Bold**
  - Students record boldfaced words on the front of the bookmark (Mark the Bold). On the back of the bookmark (Talk the Bold), students define the term in their own words.
  - Once a week, review terms. Students "talk the bold" by sharing and discussing their definitions.

Source

Bookmarks

Mark My Words

Name_____
Book _____

Page ____
Word

Page ____
Word

Page ____
Word

Page ____
Word

Page ____
Word

Page ____
Word

Marking Time

Name_____
Book _____

Page ____

Page ____

Page ____

Page ____

Page ____

Page ____

Question Mark

Name_____
Book _____

Page ____

Page ____

Page ____

Page ____

Page ____

Page ____

Mark the Bold

Name_____
Chapter _____

Page ____

Page ____

Page ____

Page ____

Page ____

Page ____

Talk the Bold

Comments:

Comments:

Comments:

Comments:

Comments:

Comments:

During Reading: Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal Teaching provides students with an opportunity to discuss texts and to further develop the skills that will help them better comprehend texts. The strategy is especially effective for struggling readers when they are allowed to participate at levels that are challenging but not frustrating. The extended discussion allows the struggling students to gather additional information that they may not have comprehended while reading the text in a traditional manner.

Reciprocal Teaching promotes comprehension by focusing on the following skill areas:

- **Summarizing:** Students identify and condense most important aspects of a reading.
- **Questioning:** Students create questions about what they don't understand or still need to know.
- **Clarifying:** Students develop statements that make sense out of confusing or difficult portions of the text. They may explain vocabulary terms, for example.
- **Predicting:** Students consider the information (including information actually listed in the text, graphics, and background knowledge) to make a guess about what might occur in the next portion of the text.

Steps:

1. Model each of the skill areas before beginning the Reciprocal Teaching process.
2. Give students time to practice each skill area. Students need to be proficient at summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting before they embark on this strategy. In *Teaching Reading in the Content Areas: If Not Me, Then Who?,* authors Rachel Billmeyer and Mary Lee Barton suggest that students practice summarizing by retelling book, movie, or TV show highlights.
3. Donna Dyer, North West Regional Education Service Agency in North Carolina, suggests the following process for using reciprocal teaching in the classroom:
   - Place students in four-person teams.
   - Provide each student with a role: summarizer, questioner, clarifier, predictor.
   - Assign students to read a few paragraphs of the assigned text. Suggest they take notes to help them prepare for their role.
   - At the stop point, the Summarizer highlights key ideas; the Questioner poses questions and concerns; the Clarifier addresses the confusing parts and attempts to answer the questions that were posed; the Predictor offers guesses about what will come next.
   - Shift roles in the group and read the next portion of the text. Repeat the process until the reading selection has been completed.

Sources

Billmeyer, Rachel and Mary Lee Barton. *Teaching Reading in the Content Areas: If Not Me, Then Who?* Aurora, CO: McREL, 1998.

Jones, Raymond C. "Reciprocal Teaching." *ReadingQuest.org: Making Sense in Social Studies.* 7 November 2001. 24 June 2005 <http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/readquest/strat/rt.html>.

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Zwiers, Jeff. *Building Reading Comprehension in Grades 7-12.* Newark, DE: IRA, 2004.

During Reading: Three Voices in Our Heads

Even if we hesitate to admit it publicly, most of us talk to ourselves. We use internal speech to guide our behavior. This internal dialogue helps us organize our thoughts, direct our thinking, and focus on the tasks at hand. These processes also allow competent readers to extend their learning and comprehension.

However, children with reading difficulties tend **not** to carry on an internal monologue as they read. Therefore, the skill of listening to inner voices must be taught through modeling first by the instructor and then by students themselves. Although similar to "think-aloud" reading strategies, listening to inner voices is more focused and defined. By being aware of all three inner voices, students can increase their comprehension and extend learning.

The Three Voices:

1. **Decoding or Recitation:** The first voice is an inner voicing or recitation of the text that most people do as they read. The process is similar to moving one's lips while reading. Most readers use this voice by habit and shift between decoding to self-talk as they process the material. Many struggling readers are word-callers who decode and recite the words but never really engage with text.

2. **Self-Talk:** The second voice occurs when readers comment on text, make observations, and find connections as they read. Effective readers use this voice without conscious thought. Self-talk focuses a reader's attention. In reading, self-talk increases the students' abilities to engage with the text, ask questions about the text, make connections between the text and their own lives, and link what they are currently learning to previous learning.

3. **Distractor:** The third voice occurs when a piece of text sparks thoughts or inner dialogue that is seemingly unrelated to the text. Overuse of this voice can inhibit comprehension. By becoming aware of the Distractor voice, students are better able to monitor its use.

Modeling Steps:

1. Select a piece of content-related text that will be of high interest to students.

2. Provide students with a copy of the text.

3. Read the text aloud to students as you model your thought processes.

4. Demonstrate all three voices.

5. After reading the text and modeling with students, encourage students to discuss their reactions to your inner voices. Ask students to consider the following questions as they monitor their reactions:
   - Which of the teacher's comments seemed most interesting to me?
   - How did the teacher's comments help me better understand the text?
   - How did the teacher's comments make me more involved in the reading?
   - What other comments did I have going on in my mind as the teacher read?

During Reading: Three Voices in Our Heads

Example:
The following excerpt is taken from an article titled "The Demon in the Freezer" by Richard Preston.

"The smallpox virus first became entangled with the human species between three thousand and twelve thousand years ago, possibly in Egypt at the time of the Pharoahs. Somewhere on earth at roughly that time, the virus jumped out of an unknown animal."

The Three Voices Modeling Dialogue:

The small pox virus *(Voice 1: "vi-RUSS")* first became entangled *(Voice 2: "How could a virus entangle itself? I thought viruses were pretty focused—all they did was attack, attack, attack.")* with the human species between three thousand and twelve thousand years ago, *(Voice 3: "I wonder what's for lunch today. I hope they'll give me credit; I forgot my lunch money.")* possibly in Egypt *(Voice 2: "Egypt? Where is that? I think it's somewhere by Israel.")* at the time of the Pharaohs. *(Voice 2: "I saw that Tut dude on TV. He was a pharaoh, wasn't he?") (Voice 3: "He was a kid just like me. Boy, that'd be cool to rule the world. I would outlaw school and let kids run things and make teachers learn.")* Somewhere on earth at roughly *(Voice 1: "RUFF-lee")* that time, the virus jumped *(Voice 2: "Uh-oh. First it was entangling and now it's jumping. Active little critter.")* out of an unknown *(Voice 1: "un-NO-un")* animal. *(Voice 2: "Could it have been a cat or a dog or a monkey?") (Voice 3: "I'd like a pet monkey. I wonder if you can house train them or if they'd have to wear diapers all the time like my little brother. Ugh!")*

By Josephine Hartmann, Reading Specialist and TIE Consultant

During Reading: Say Something

Strong readers often carry on an inner dialogue as they read material and process what they are learning. This running monologue or self-talk becomes a habit that proficient readers do naturally. However, struggling readers often lack this skill. Therefore, it is helpful if instructors show struggling readers how to increase their comprehension by talking about material, making connections with material, and posing questions regarding the material as they read. The strategy is especially effective for students who are auditory learners since they both say (read) the text aloud and listen to a partner's thoughts and ideas regarding the text.

Steps:

1. Select a piece of text for students to read.

2. Pair students and provide each student with a copy of the assigned text.

3. Ask readers to designate a Reader A and a Reader B.

4. Reader A reads aloud a portion of the text. (Assign students to read a block of text, for example, a paragraph or a subsection. If text is complex or unfamiliar to students, keep the chunk of assigned readings small.)

5. After Reader A has finished reading the passage aloud, Reader B makes a response. The comment should reflect Reader B's thoughts while listening to the passage. Some possible reflective comments might include the following:
   - Agreements or disagreements
   - Questions about complex or confusing ideas
   - Predictions about what might come next in the text
   - Requests for clarity or explanation from the other reader
   - Summaries of important or interesting details from the text
   - A comment relating the passage to the student's own life or past learning

6. Reader A responds to Reader B's comments or insights.

7. Partners switch roles and Reader B reads aloud the next chunk of text.

8. Process continues until the assigned reading is completed.

Adaptations/Suggestions:

- Model prior to assigning the process to student pairs. Demonstrate the process with a classroom volunteer.
- After the paired readings have been completed, reinforce important concepts from the text by leading a discussion that gives students the opportunity to share some of the ideas and thoughts that they generated during the reading process.
- If students are struggling with ways to phrase their responses to partners, suggest the following beginning statements:
  - This reminds me of…
  - When reading this I felt…
  - I didn't understand it when the author said…because…

Sources

Elkins, Hope. "Ideas and Strategies for Teaching in the Content Areas." Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, Department of Language Education. 21 June 2005 <http://www.indiana.edu/~l525/x425_l525/ideastrat.html>.

"Summarization: Say Something." *The Reading Lady.* 20 June 2005 <http://www.readinglady.com/mosaic/tools/Synthesis%20handout%20by%20Deb%20Smith.pdf>.

During Reading: Three-Minute Pause

Time for a break? The Three-Minute Pause gives students the opportunity to take a break and check learning. Doug Buehl, Madison East High School teacher and author, suggests that students can benefit from a learning pause in much the same way that a basketball player can benefit from a time out during a fast-paced game. Buehl explains, "Like athletes, they (students) may need to 'catch up' with what is going on, raise questions, clear up confusions, and set their minds for what will happen next."

A Three-Minute Pause provides double rewards for struggling students. Not only can they stop and check their learning, but they will gather additional information from discussions with students who may have picked up on details and concepts that were too complex for the struggling student to comprehend.

Raymond C. Jones, creator of ReadingQuest.org, suggests that using the Three-Minute Pause is well worth an instructor's time. Jones says the Three-Minute Pause helps reduce the amount of a time an instructor must spend reteaching concepts by giving students time to think about, make sense of, organize, interpret, and reflect on what they have read. He adds that the process allows students to bridge what they have learned with what is coming next.

Steps:

1. Create pairs or reading buddies for a lesson (or longer period, if desired). For each pair, one student is Partner A and the other student is Partner B.

2. Explain to students that the Three-Minute Pause actually includes three ways of thinking and processing information. During each pause, a partner will complete the following steps:
   - Summarize what's been learned so far.
   - Identify most interesting details.
   - Pose questions or concerns.

3. When a Three-Minute Pause is announced, Partner A or Partner B summarizes, identifies interesting information, and poses questions to his or her partner.

4. Consider using a timer to keep students on task and aware of the three-minute frame.

5. Students switch speaker/listener each time a Three-Minute Pause is announced.

Adaptation:

- The Three-Minute Pause can be adapted into a Think-Pair-Share activity. For a Think-Pair-Share, provide students with a question to consider. The question should be thought-provoking and open-ended. Give students a short wait time to consider their responses. After the wait time, students meet in pairs and discuss their responses to the question. Finally, they share their thoughts and ideas with the larger class as part of a whole-group discussion.

Sources

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Jones, Raymond C. "Three-Minute Pause." *ReadingQuest.org: Making Sense in Social Studies.* 2000. 21 June 2005 <http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/readquest/strat/3mp.html>.

Marzano, Robert, et al. *Dimensions of Learning Teachers Manual*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 1992.

McTighe, Jay and F. Lyman. "Cueing Thinking in the Classroom: The Promise of Theory-Embedded Tools." *Educational Leadership,* April 18-24, 1988.

After Reading: Give One/Get One

Give One/Get One allows struggling students to gather new knowledge and information about a content topic. Since students share information and question each other, all students in the classroom—regardless of ability levels—can reap positive rewards from this strategy. The strategy can be used during the study of a lesson to reinforce key concepts or as a review after completing a unit of study.

Steps:

1. Select a topic from the content being studied.
   Examples:
   - What I know about whales
   - Key words for studying space
   - Reasons to exercise
   - Favorite idioms, metaphors, sayings

2. Provide students with Give One/Get One recording sheet.

3. Students record four important pieces of information that they know or have learned regarding the selected content. They record the information in numbers 1-4.

4. Students fold papers in half horizontally with numbers 1-4 above the fold and numbers 5-8 below the fold.

5. Have students circulate through the room and exchange their ideas. Students record their new ideas in numbers 5-8. Students include the names of the classmates who provided them with the new information. The details placed in 5-8 must be different from the information students independently listed in numbers 1-4.

6. Regroup students and share with class.

7. Students share and explain the ideas they found (5-8). As the ideas are shared, the person named as the originator of an idea or piece of information is the next person to share. If the "turn" gets to the same person more than once, the repeater doesn't share another idea but names a student of their choice as the next person to share.

Sources

Hartmann, Josephine. Personal Interview. 20 June 2005.

Healy, Margo.*TOBI Resource Guide: Reading Strategies for Content Areas.* Boise: Lee Pesky Learning Center, 2004.

Kagan, Spencer. *Cooperative Learning.* San Clemente: Kagan, 1992.

Zwiers, Jeff. *Building Reading Comprehension Habits in Grades 6-12*. Newark, DE: IRA, 2004.

Give One/Get One

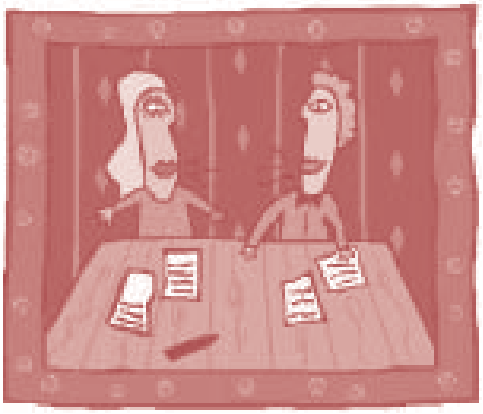
Topic: _____

Ideas I will give:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Ideas I got: From:

5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____



After Reading: One Sentence/One Word

One Sentence/One Word helps students focus on main ideas and themes of a reading or topic under study. The strategy aids in comprehension development, finding meaning, paraphrasing, and summarizing. An added benefit is that all students can participate and find success—regardless of student ability levels. When working with nonreaders or struggling readers, teachers may choose to omit One Sentence and focus on One Word.

One Sentence

Steps:

1. Select a reading. The selection can be anything from a short article to a picture book to a literary work to a content area reading. Either fiction or nonfiction is appropriate.

2. Assign the reading.

3. After students have completed the reading, bring the class together. If possible, place the group in a circle. If working with a large group, break up into smaller groups of no more than six.

4. Ask each student to mark a phrase or sentence or two from the article/story that held the most meaning for them. The student should NOT paraphrase at this point. The goal is to get a variety of statements—not just one or two. Students should work independently.
   (This step requires students to assimilate the knowledge they aquired while reading. It also makes them synthesize the information and evaluate what they consider to be important.)

5. When students have made their selections, call upon them to share. Since you are trying to monitor student learning, it is important to encourage participation from as many students as possible.

6. The student reads his/her selection. As a student shares, ask the student to explain why or how the statement was important to the reading. The student should also explain the setting and action surrounding the statement. As students discuss the statements, they begin to paraphrase the reading and to focus on the selections main idea(s).
   (Adapt this process depending upon the content. If you are dealing with fiction, the student should be able to talk about the characters involved and the events that were unfolding in the story.)

7. After a student shares, ask if other students had the same or similar selections. Get their input.

One Word

Steps:

1. Select a reading. The selection can be anything from a short article to a picture book to a literary work to a content area reading. Either fiction or nonfiction is appropriate.

2. Assign the reading.

3. Students select one word from their own experience (the word itself does not have to be in the text) that best defines the meaning of the story/reading.

4. Each student shares his/her word and explains why that word sums up the meaning of the story or selection.
   (This portion of the strategy leads to a discussion of the selection's main idea and author's purpose.)

Source

Preszler, June. Technology and Innovation in Education (TIE). 2004.

After Reading: Three Facts and a Fib

Three Facts and a Fib provides instructors with a method of checking and reinforcing student knowledge while giving ALL students the opportunity to show what they have learned. The activity requires students to create three true statements from their learning and one false statement.

The strategy works especially well with struggling readers because they can extract three details from the content but will "learn" considerably more information from their peers.

Steps:

1. Model and practice first.

2. Introduce the strategy separate from content. Allow students to practice the strategy before applying it to content areas.
   – Example: One successful approach is to ask each student to write three facts and a fib about him or herself. Students of all ages enjoy tricking each other while also learning more about each other.

3. Remind students that the goal is to trick as many other students as they can by the false statements.

4. Students read or study the assignment.

5. Students think of four statements—three true, one false.

6. Students write each statement on a separate index card.

7. Students show their index cards to one another and try to identify fibs.

8. If a student incorrectly guesses another's fib, he/she must sign or initial the back of an index card.

9. The student who has the most signatures wins the game.

Adaptations:

- Vary the number of facts depending upon content complexity.

- Create a more structured sharing time by forming students into mixed ability groups. Each group member independently creates Three Facts and a Fib. Students in the small group share their statements and then create one set. Each group then presents the new set to the other groups in the class.

- Three Facts and a Fib can be used as a Before Reading Strategy to check each student's prior knowledge of a content topic.

- The activity can be adapted to math by using three correct problem processes and one incorrect process.

Adapted from Forsten, Char, Jim Grant and Betty Hollas. *Differentiating Textbooks: Strategies to Improve Student Comprehension and Motivation.* Peterborough, NH: Crystal Springs Books, 2003.

After Reading: Name Card Method

The Name Card Method lets students know that we expect *all* to participate in classroom discussions. According to author Susan Winebrenner, the Name Card Method eliminates several common classroom problems:

- Hiding students
- Dominating students
- Blurting out answers

A basic premise of this method is that the teacher maintains high expectations for all students, including struggling students. Since students are provided time to reflect and discuss answers in pairs prior to a whole-class discussion, all students should be able to respond to the teacher's follow-up discussion points.

Process:

- Inform students that you are eliminating hand-raising from your class.
- Write each student's name on an index card.
- Create student discussion buddies. (Winebrenner suggests the following possibilities for creating pairs: place the most capable students together, place high achievers with average students, place kids who love to help with struggling students. Allow some variation in ability but not wide-range variation.)
- Change pairs frequently.
- Initiate a discussion by using an open-ended question.
- Give students 10-15 seconds to THINK about the answer.
- Pair students with their discussion buddies. Give them time to come up with several more possible answers.
- Begin to share answers. Call on students by drawing names from the deck. Ideally, shuffle the deck and then begin to draw from the top.
- If you call on a student, stay with the student until you receive a response. If no response arrives, provide hints, scenarios, or options from which a student can choose.
- Allow a few more students to respond by drawing cards.
- This activity works best if you are promoting ideas rather than looking for one correct answer. By allowing several students to respond, you encourage students to continue thinking about the topic.
- After drawing several student names, you may want to allow other students to volunteer their ideas. Encourage students to share only ideas that have NOT already been mentioned.

Sources

Davidson, Neil and Toni Worsham, eds. *Enhancing Thinking through Cooperative Learning.* Columbia, NY: Teachers College Press, 1992.

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

After Reading: Exit Cards

Exit cards help the teacher gather information on student readiness levels, interests, and/or learning profiles. They can also help the teacher identify which concepts students may need extra help on or which concepts have been mastered.

Steps:

1. Hand out index cards to students at the end of a class period.
2. Ask the students to respond to a prompt or a series of 2-3 questions.
3. Students turn the questions in as they leave the room.
4. Review the student comments.
5. Modify and adapt upcoming lessons based on the knowledge gathered from the cards.

Exit Cards: American History/Vietnam Conflict/The Draft

Name: _____

- Why did the United States institute the draft during the Vietnam Conflict?

- Describe at least two ways that America's youth responded to the draft.

Source

Carol Ann Tomlinson. *Educators at Work: Differentiation Curriculum and Instruction.* ASCD Professional Development Opportunities. Orlando, 30 March 2005.

Marzano's Framework of Educational Strategies

As educators, we often face a deluge of material and find ourselves overwhelmed. Sometimes it's just a case of too much. How do we know what to use and what to discard? How can we tell what's best for our students? One well-documented starting point should be the work of Robert J. Marzano and his colleagues in *Classroom Instruction that Works.*

In the book, the authors identify nine research-based strategies that have been proven to improve student achievement. Although not specifically focused on improving skills of the struggling reader, the strategies tend to work well—when used appropriately and explicitly—in mixed-ability classrooms. Each of the nine categories includes subcategories of tools and ideas that fit into the strategy's basic framework.

The following information details and provides a brief introduction to each category of instructional strategies. The strategies are best described in the following publications:

Marzano, Robert J., et al. *A Handbook for Classroom Instruction that Works.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2001.
Marzano, Robert J., Debra J. Pickering and Jane E. Pollock. *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2001.

Research Based Instructional Strategies

- Identifying Similarities & Differences
- Summarizing & Note Taking
- Reinforcing Effort & Providing Recognition
- Homework & Practice
- Nonlinguistic Representations
- Cooperative Learning
- Setting Objectives & Providing Feedback
- Generating & Testing Hypotheses
- Cues, Questions, & Advance Organizers

Identifying Similarities and Differences: The ability to identify similarities and differences is essential to learning. Marzano suggests the process can best be approached through comparing, classifying, creating metaphors, and creating analogies (*Classroom*, 16).

Summarizing and Note Taking: Educators frequently ask students to summarize what they've learned or read. Unfortunately, teachers don't always teach students a process by which they can effectively summarize. After all, it would appear to be an almost automatic process. Throughout the day we regularly summarize and categorize information. We identify what is important, what we want to remember, and

what we're willing to let go. The problem is that much of the process is automatic and unconscious. When working with struggling students, we need to understand that summarizing academic learning doesn't come automatically. In fact, we need to provide students with a variety of approaches to use as they attempt to summarize. These approaches might include using summary frames, teaching students reciprocal learning techniques, modeling thinking aloud with students, and using a rule-based approach that provides students with specific steps to undertake when summarizing (*Handbook,* 58-60).

Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition: It seems obvious that as classroom leaders we reinforce the efforts and achievements of our students. However, sometimes we forget and students are left unaware and unsure about whether or not they are headed in the right direction as far as their learning is concerned. In addition, Marzano suggests that students need to be taught that effort can directly improve achievement. Moreover, they need to know *how* to increase their efforts and even how to recognize whether or not they are actually applying effort to learning situations (*Handbook,* 95-99).

Homework and Practice: Experience and research tell us that in order for students to achieve mastery, they need to practice a skill…and practice it repeatedly. Marzano suggests teachers establish and communicate a homework policy, be clear about the purpose for the homework, ask students to complete assignment sheets, and make comments on homework (*Handbook,* 119-124).

Nonlinguistic Representations: Since teachers traditionally present information through talking about content or assigning students to read content, the nonlinguistic approach is too frequently left to happenstance. However, involving students in the creation of graphic organizers has shown to increase brain activity and stimulation (*Handbook,* 143). In addition, graphic organizers can be especially helpful for students who struggle with reading comprehension.

Cooperative Learning: The concept of using cooperative learning groups to reinforce or extend learning is not new. Research has consistently supported its use and has revealed that students involved in cooperative learning groups generally outperform students who work independently (*Handbook,* 159).

Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback: Setting goals provides a direction for learning while feedback reinforces to students that they are on the right track in their learning. Both processes enhance student achievement. (*Classroom*, 93-96).

Generating and Testing Hypotheses: Students apply their knowledge when they create hypotheses. In addition, they extend that knowledge when they can explain their hypotheses. Tasks which help students generate and test hypotheses include systems analysis, problem solving, decision making, historical investigation, experimental inquiry, and invention (*Handbook,* 197).

Cues, Questions, and Advance Organizers: Activating prior knowledge by using cues, questions, and advance organizers helps students recognize and use what they already know about a topic to be studied. Marzano suggests that accessing prior knowledge provides a context for future learning (*Handbook,* 265).

Sources

Marzano, Robert J., et al. *A Handbook for Classroom Instruction that Works*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2001.
Marzano, Robert J., Debra J. Pickering and Jane E. Pollock. *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2001.

For Further Reading

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

Beers, Kylene. *When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do: A Guide for Teachers 6-12.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003.

Bender, William N. *Differentiating Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities: Best Teaching Practices for General and Special Populations.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2002.

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

Winebrenner, Susan. *Teaching Kids with Learning Difficulties in the Regular Classroom: Strategies and Techniques Every Teacher Can Use to Challenge and Motivate Struggling Students.* Minneapolis: Free Spirit Press, 1996.

Zwiers, Jeff. *Building Reading Comprehension Habits in Grades 6-12: A Toolkit of Classroom Activities.* Newark, DE: IRA, 2004.

– – –. *Developing Academic Thinking Skills in Grades 6-12: A Handbook of Multiple Intelligence Activities.* Newark, DE: IRA, 2004.

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

Just Read Now
http://www.justreadnow.com/strategies/

Knowledge Loom: Educators Sharing and Learning Together
http://knowledgeloom.org/adlit/index.jsp

Learning to Read: Resources for Language Arts and Reading Research
http://www.toread.com/

Literacy Matters
http://www.literacymatters.org/index.htm

Literacy Web at the University of Connecticut
http://www.literacy.uconn.edu/index.htm

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

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory's Building Reading Proficiency at the Secondary Level
http://www.sedl.org/pubs/reading16/

Teaching Today from Glencoe Online
http://www.glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/index.phtml

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Serving schools in southcentral South Dakota...

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- Pierre
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- Bennett County
- Jones County
- Kadoka Area
- Midland
- Winner
- Wood
- White River
- Todd County (11 schools)

ESA Region 7

Serving schools in the Black Hills area of South Dakota...

Northern Hills Area

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- Lead-Deadwood
- Newell
- Spearfish
- Meade

Central Hills Area

- Douglas
- Haakon
- New Underwood
- Rapid City
- Wall

Southern Hills Area

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- Edgemont
- Elk Mountain
- Hill City
- Hot Springs
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