Creating Environments that Work for All Students:

Real Manuals for Real Teachers

# Reading Strategies for Special Populations

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# Reading Strategies for Special Populations

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# Introduction

A child who does not learn to read well will find it almost impossible to be successful in school or in the workplace. Research shows that enhancing reading comprehension is one of the most effective interventions that teachers can undertake (Forness, Kavale, Blum, & Lloyd, 1997) since reading affects every other school activity.

To read well, students must perform several different tasks simultaneously:

1. They must recognize the words they read and connect them with ideas and meanings.
2. They must be able to build sentences with the words, connect the sentences, and understand the larger text.
3. They must be able to use strategies for remembering and interpreting as they read (Talbott, Lloyd, & Tankersley, 1994).

The reading process can break down in any of these areas. Students with reading disabilities are often unable to distinguish between "word calling" and reading, believing that if they are able to decode a word that they can read. Students need direct instruction to learn the skills they need to enhance reading comprehension.

The purpose of this manual is to provide teachers of children in special education with strategies to improve students' reading. These strategies are based upon research and the suggestions of a panel of teachers and parents. Read through it and choose the strategies that make sense for you and your classroom. Keep notes about:

- ✏ What you did,
- ✏ How well it worked,
- ✏ Suggestions you would make about implementation,
- ✏ Other strategies that you tried that weren't mentioned in this manual.

# Teachers' Suggestions

## Present Levels of Functioning

In order to plan effective instruction for students in special education, it is important to know their present levels of functioning. Knowing present levels will help to identify areas of strength and weakness that, in turn, will identify areas on which to focus instruction.

You may get present reading levels from tests such as the SRI Interactive computer-based reading test or the Standardized Test of Assessment for Reading (STAR). The SRI will result in a reading level (lexile) that, in turn will generate information about each student. Table 1 is an example of grade level lexile ranges.

**Table 1**

**Grade Level Lexile Range**

| Grade | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 100-400 |
| 2 | 300-600 |
| 3 | 500-800 |
| 4 | 600-900 |
| 5 | 700-1000 |
| 6 | 800-1050 |
| 7 | 850-1100 |
| 8 | 900-1150 |
| 9 | 1000-1200 |
| 10 | 1025-1200 |
| 11 | 1050-1300 |

Additionally, you may get this information from informal reading inventories (IRIs) that you administer in your classroom or from the student's cumulative folder. The important thing is to have an idea of what the student's reading level is so that you are able to plan instruction at the appropriate level. Once you have determined the student's instructional level, you need to consider the following general strategies for instruction.

## General Strategies

The reading strategies referred to in this section are from *Project CRISS: Creating Independence through Student-owned Strategies* (Santa, Havens, & Maycumber, 1996). The point of the CRISS strategies is to make students independent readers. Many of the CRISS strategies are things that you probably do now or have done in the past. The manual puts them together in a logical sequence with clear explanations about how and why to use them. The following suggestions by the panel of teachers are based on these strategies and the teachers' ideas of how best to implement them.

**Students read for a variety of reasons in a variety of contexts**. They need to understand the purpose of their reading – for pleasure or for information. Help them to determine the purpose before they begin and to understand differences in strategies and then teach students how to use their instructional materials effectively.

The CRISS manual provides an assessment for evaluating content area text materials (CRISS Manual, p. 15-18). This assessment asks questions about:

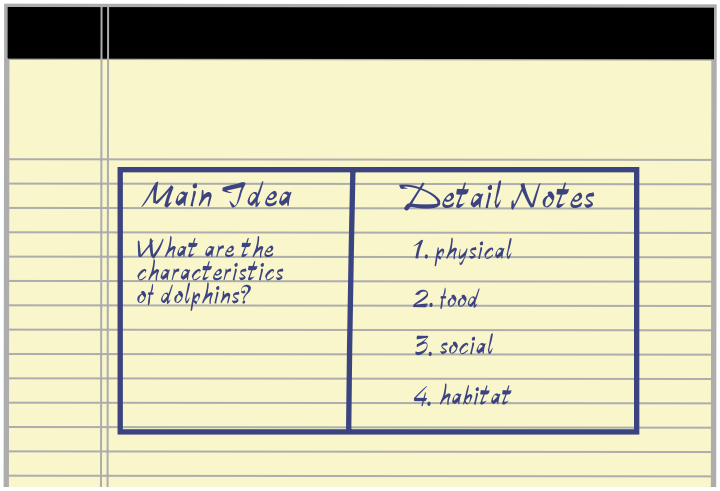
- **Curricular demands** – Does the text address the information that you feel is important? Is the information current?
- **Background Knowledge** – Does the text provide methods, such as chapter introductions, to activate background knowledge?
- **Purpose for Reading** – Do chapters begin with lists of objectives? Do titles indicate main ideas?
- **Main Ideas** – Is the main idea of each section clear and obvious?
- **Supporting information** – Is there sufficient information to support the main idea? Do charts, graphs, and pictures support the main idea?
- **Organization** – Is the information organized in a logical manner? Is the organization consistent throughout the text?
- **Vocabulary** – Are important words and concepts clearly defined and highlighted?
- **Metacognition** – Do questions and summaries help students check their understanding of the material?

Using this assessment to evaluate your textbook and other teaching materials will help to identify the skills that you need to teach your students (more than once) and the strategies that will help students learn and retain information more effectively.

**Suggestions and strategies for improving reading are vital for all classes** not just reading or language arts classes. Collaborate with other teachers to implement the same strategies across curricula. Students need to know that these are not isolated strategies that they use in only one class.

CRISS outlines several strategies that are especially appropriate for content area courses:

- **Two Column Notes** (CRISS Manual, p. 82) – This strategy encourages students to identify main ideas and supporting details.



✏ **Opinion-Proof Notes** (CRISS Manual, p. 87) – This strategy encourages students to state their thesis (opinion) and provide supporting evidence (proof).

| Opinion | Proof |
|---|---|
| People should not get drivers licenses until they are 21 | 1. Insurance is Expensive<br>2. Not as cautious.<br>3. More accidents. |

*Requiring students to supplement their reading with writing activities will help them to gain and retain more information. This is especially important for students whose preferred modality is visual or kinesthetic.*

✏ **Process Notes** (CRISS Manual, p. 98) – This strategy is especially good for helping students think about the steps in a math problem or science experiment.

**Take time to learn the strategies that you will use.**

Problem: Allison went to mall to buy Christmas presents. She bought a blouse for $25.00, a CD for $15.35, and cologne for $45.67. When she got home, she found out that her sister had bought the same blouse for their mother, so she returned hers and bought a sweater for $27.98. How much did Allison spend on Christmas presents?

| | |
|---|---|
| Main idea | To find out how much money Allison spent. |
| Important facts | Blouse - $25.00, CD – $15.35, Cologne – $45.67, Sweater – $27.98 |
| Clues | How much, returned blouse, bought sweater |
| Predict | Could add CD, Cologne, and Sweater and not worry about Blouse, or could add Blouse, CD, Cologne, and Sweater, and then subtract Blouse. |
| Need second step? | No |
| Do the work and check it. | $15.35 + $45.67 + $27.98 - $89.00 or$25.00 + $15.35 + $45.67 + $27.98 – $25.00 - $89.00 |

- **Rehearse the strategies** and anticipate the difficulties that you and your students will encounter.
- **Plan ahead** and familiarize yourself with the texts and materials that you will use and how the strategies will fit into your instruction.
- **Plan extra time** for teaching reading strategies. What takes a student in basic education one week to learn may take a student in special education three weeks to learn.
- **Review previously learned strategies** with students before using them again.

**Make the commitment to use the strategies that you choose.**

- **Be persistent.** They don't always work immediately. Just like any direct instruction of new material, you will have to repeat this strategy instruction many times before students master it.
- **Reflect on the effectiveness of the strategies** and allow the students to do the same. Did the strategy work the way it was supposed to and did it help the student learn more effectively?
- **Determine which strategies best meet the students' needs.** Not every strategy will be effective and appropriate for every student. Be ready and willing to accommodate students' needs.
- **Teach students the rationale behind each strategy.** They will be more likely to use a strategy if they know beforehand how it will benefit them.
- **Teach students how to use textbooks effectively** and use the same strategies with newspapers and magazines (CRISS Manual, p. 15-18).
- **Make sure that reading material is at the student's instructional level** (lexile scores will help with this) or adapt reading selection to the student's level. (Turn to page 16 for suggestions on making accommodations.)
- **Review strategies frequently.**

**Familiarize parents with the reading strategies.**

- The **SRI parent letter** does a good job of this. Make sure that students take it home and give it to their parents.
- **Encourage parents to participate** in activities such as CRISS Parent Training.
- **Send home copies of activities** that you're doing in class along with appropriate strategy sheets. Have students demonstrate use of the strategy to parents.

**Use a variety of authentic reading activities that will engage students in current events:**

- **WOW (Word of the Week)** – Feature this word in Daily Oral Language activities and other reading and language activities.
- **POW (Person of the Week)** – Feature prominent people in reading and language activities.
- **WIN (What's Important Now)** – Focus on a specific current event and discuss its significance to students and other current events.
- **Quote of the day**
- **Use newspapers and magazines** to create interest in reading. Model how to read them:

- Don't read every article
- Read headlines and titles first
- Look at pictures and read captions
- Choose stories or articles to read

## Systematizing Information

Once present levels of functioning have been determined, a method for keeping track of progress toward goals (systematizing information) needs to be chosen. The method should provide useful, easily understood information for the teacher, student and parents about academic progress. Allowing students to take part in recording information on graphs or charts ensures that they get immediate feedback. Teachers, of course, keep their own set of records tracking student progress to share at conferences with parents and students and to aid in writing IEPs. Measurement tools should be consistent (i.e., LEXILE levels at the beginning, midpoint, and end of the year).

- **Use graphs and charts** to record progress and provide feedback to students. Fuchs and Fuchs (1986) say that this also results in more accurate and frequent analysis of students' progress.
- **Students can keep track of their progress** so that they will always know where they stand in the class. It will also help them to understand what their strengths are and what they need to work on. They do, however, need to be taught how to do this and encouraged to regularly chart their progress. This has the side benefit of teaching students graphing skills.

| Correct Spelling Words | Sept 12 | Sept 19 | Sept 26 | Oct 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | | | | X |
| 9 | | | | X |
| 8 | | X | | X |
| 7 | X | X | | X |
| 6 | X | X | X | X |
| 5 | X | X | X | X |
| 4 | X | X | X | X |
| 3 | X | X | X | X |
| 2 | X | X | X | X |
| 1 | X | X | X | X |

The following chart reflects some grade level reading expectations for the sixth grade (Florida Sunshine State Standards). It is one example of a method for systematizing reading progress information. A blank chart is provided for you to customize for your class.

# Grade Level Reading Expectations

| Expectation | December | March | May | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Predicts ideas or events in text, gives rationale for prediction, confirms & discusses predictions. | E | | | |
| 2. Uses pre-reading strategies (i.e., skimming text headings, bold type, and other text features) | M | | | |
| 3. Makes predictions about purpose and organization using background knowledge and text structure. | M | | | |
| 4. Reads and predicts from graphic representations (i.e., example, illustrations, diagrams, graphs, maps). | M | | | |
| 5. Uses context and word structure clues to interpret words and ideas in text. | NM | | | |
| 6. Makes inferences and generalizations about what is read. | NM | | | |
| 7. Uses graphic organizers and note-making to clarify meaning and to illustrate organizational pattern of texts. | E | | | |
| 8. Identifies word parts: prefixes<br>suffixes<br>roots | E<br>E<br>E | | | |
| 9. Selects appropriate meaning for a word according to context. | NM | | | |
| 10. Analyzes word relationships such as analogies. | NA | | | |
| 11. Restates text by note making or summarizing. | E | | | |
| 12. Uses a graphic organizer to clarify meaning of text. | E | | | |
| 13. Determines text's major ideas and how they are supported with details. | E | | | |
| 14. Draws inferences and supports them with text evidence and experience. | NM | | | |
| 15. Paraphrases and summarizes text to recall, inform, or organize. | NM | | | |

**NM = Not mastered E = Emerging M = Mastered NA = Not Applicable**

# Getting Started

The beginning of the semester is often spent getting to know students and determining their strengths and needs. The following recommendations were made to help do this quickly and efficiently:

- **Determine present levels of functioning** by giving baseline tests (i.e., STAR or LEXILE). Establishing baseline data will help teachers, students, and parents to more easily track progress and identify areas that need more attention.
- **Discuss the results with the student** and develop reading goals. Choose one or two goals and save the rest for a later date.
- **Hold individual conferences** if possible with students to discuss academic and behavioral goals – yours and theirs.
- **Develop a system for tracking progress** toward the goals. This should be a system that students and teachers can manage easily.
- **Build a checklist** of what needs to be accomplished (see the example in the Resource Section). Give each student a checklist to help keep track of accomplishments. This will also help them set goals for the next several weeks.
- **Develop a list of materials** on students' instructional and interest levels. SRI Interactive tests will provide this information.
- **Provide parents this information** with one or two suggestions for how they can help their child at home. Make sure that this information is in the family's home language.
- **Focus on two or three CRISS strategies** (see attached monthly CRISS suggestions).

**Reading Checklist**

| Goal | Date | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Reading baseline (SRI Interactive, STAR, IRI or cumulative folder). | | |
| 2. Present levels of functioning determined (lexile scores or grades levels). | | |
| 3. Goals determined from baselines and present levels. | | |
| 4. Discussed present levels and goals with students. | | |
| 5. Decided on curriculum and rubrics that will address the goals. | | |
| 6. Taught student to track grades and progress. | | |

# Making Accommodations

Making accommodations for students with special needs simply means providing the opportunity for each student to participate as fully as possible in your curriculum.

## Adapting instructional methods and materials

*Ask yourself, "What must the student know or be able to do at the conclusion of this lesson?"*

In order to effectively adapt methods and materials for students who need accommodations, you must first determine what the student needs to learn from the material. Ask yourself, "What must the student know or be able to do at the conclusion of this lesson?" Once you have established the principles or "big ideas" that students should learn, you can begin to decide how best to present the information.

## Six techniques for increasing the effectiveness of instruction

Beech (1999) recommends the following techniques for increasing the effectiveness of your instruction.

1. **Graphic organizers.** Semantic webs and concept maps are two ways to help students make connections between important ideas and key concepts. These techniques are especially effective for students who are primarily visual learners. (See samples of graphic organizers in the CRISS Manual.)

2. **Thematic instruction.** Instructional units that encompass several different content areas will help students see the relevance of the material being presented and help them to make curricular connections. The *Florida Curriculum Frameworks* (1996) describes the following models for thematic instruction:

   - **Infusion** – one subject is integrated with another, such as Art with History or Math with Reading.
   - **Parallel Instruction** – a common theme is developed in different subject areas, although each subject is taught separately. For instance, a unit on Japan might include Japanese culture, history, art, literature, food, and contributions to science.
   - **Multidisciplinary Instruction** – a common theme, concept or problem is addressed through different subject areas and a joint project links the various areas. An example might be an "Environmental Issues" unit that connects different subject areas through a project designed to address local environmental problems and possible solutions.

3. **Model and think aloud.** When you introduce a new concept or procedure, such as developing a concept map or other graphic organizer, describe the mental processes for the steps that you are following. If students are expected to discover the steps for themselves, provide a set of procedures for them to follow.

   Some strategies are too broad for students with learning problems to follow. Telling students to identify the main idea in a paragraph is not specific enough. Instead, give them steps to follow:

   - ✏ **Look for a title or words in boldface type.**
   - ✏ **Read the first and last sentences.** Who or what are they talking about?
   - ✏ **Look for pictures or charts.** If there are any, what are they about?
   - ✏ **Read the rest of the paragraph.** What is the main idea of the paragraph?

4. **Provide temporary support.** We often forget that students need direct instruction to learn new concepts and skills. They also need support while they master them. Teachers have long provided this support through scaffolding techniques such as verbal prompts and cues and visual highlighting and diagrams.

   **Scaffolding** is intended to be a temporary means of supporting students as they learn and it may be helpful to think of it as a minimum-maximum situation. Some students will require the maximum amount of support that you and classmates can give them while others will eventually require only a minimum amount of support. For students to become independent learners, support must be withdrawn gradually.

   Following are some scaffolding techniques recommended by Beech (1999):

   - ✏ **Provide the starters of incomplete statements** and have the students add the rest.
   - ✏ **Give students an outline**, diagram, or study guide.
   - ✏ **Use oral reading and interspersed questions** to help students process material in textbooks.
   - ✏ **Identify the page numbers** where topics are discussed or answers to questions can be found.
   - ✏ **Use color-coding or underlining** to highlight important ideas or key steps.
   - ✏ **Use oral or written prompts** or cues to remind students what to do.
   - ✏ **Use peer tutoring** or cooperative learning to provide support for students.
   - ✏ **Incorporate activities** in lessons that provide guided practice before you expect students to perform skills or use knowledge independently. (p. 16)

5. **Activate background knowledge.** Students' ability to learn and remember new material depends on how effectively they can relate it to things that they already know. Beech (1999) recommends the following techniques to help them make associations more easily:

   - **Use synonyms or antonyms** to make comparisons. *This is the same as… This is the opposite of…*
   - **Use comparisons.** *The character of David Copperfield reminds me of…*
   - **Give symbolic examples** to help form a mental picture. *The Food Pyramid represents one way to plan what we eat.*
   - **Use a personal example** or story to make associations. *As we traveled across the country last summer, I tried to imagine how the characters in the book felt about making the trip in a covered wagon.*
   - **Relate a topic to a current or past event** that the students already know about. *The development of a multinational space station brings us closer to a "Star Trek" world.*
   - **Relate the concept to a fictional story** or scenario. *The story of Romeo and Juliet helps us to understand how family conflicts can…*

Students may not always have the prerequisite background knowledge, and you may need to provide instruction so that they will be able to take advantage of these techniques.

6. **Finding the Main Idea.** Beech (1999) further suggests the following techniques for students who have difficulty finding the main idea in information they are reading:

   - **Highlight important points** of the text. Tell the student to read these points first.
   - **Give a list of the important vocabulary** to the student.
   - **Have the student read the summary or objectives first.** If the textbook does not provide these, then you should.
   - **Have the student read the review questions first**, then look for the answers.
   - **Give the student a worksheet or study guide** to follow when he or she must do independent reading.
   - **Use hands-on activities,** pictures, or diagrams to provide alternate ways of learning abstract concepts or complex information.
   - **Let the student use sticky notes** or an erasable highlighter to mark key points in the textbook.
   - **Let the student use a book written at a lower grade level.** This helps the student pay more attention to the main points (p. 21).

In the next section you will find CRISS strategies for seven months based upon a program developed by Hialeah-Miami Lakes Senior High School (2000). Detailed information about these strategies will be found in the CRISS manual. Try the strategies in your classroom and keep notes about what worked and what did not.

**Principle:**

# Activate Background Knowledge

Reading Strategy

**Purpose:** Focus for reading

**Strategies:**

- KWL
- Think-Pair-Share

**Key Importance of this principle:** Readers interpret text based on their own background. Having students integrate new information with prior knowledge is at the heart of comprehension.

**Ideas to guide your teaching:**

- Help students recall what they know about a topic.
- Help them use this knowledge to guide their own comprehension.
- Decide what you want students to focus on during the assignment.

**The Introduction, Modeling (Script) and Extended Activities for the following strategies are in the CRISS Manual on the following pages:**

KWL..... 55-57
Blackline Master..... 76

Think-Pair-Share..... 34

Oct

Reading Strategy

**Principle:**

# Active Reading, Listening, and Learning

**Purpose:** Engaging Students

**Strategies:**

- Selective Highlighting
- Selective Underlining
- One-sentence Summary
- Framed Paragraph

**Key Importance of this principle:** If students are actively engaged in their learning, they will learn and retain content more effectively.

**Ideas to guide your teaching:**

- Presenting a variety of strategies will allow students to find one that meets their particular needs and learning styles.
- Strategies should be modelled frequently.
- Gradually step back and allow students to use strategies independently.

**The Introduction, Modeling (Script) and Extended Activities for the following strategies are in the CRISS Manual on the following pages:**

Selective Highlighting/underlining..... 26-27

One-sentence Summary ..... 71-73
Blackline Master..... 79

Framed Paragraph ..... 131-32
Blackline Master..... 78

**Principle:**

# Questioning

Reading Strategy

**Purpose:** Understanding how to respond to questions.

**Strategies:**

- QARs
- Authentic Questions
- Question Frames for Developing Higher-Level Questions
- Question Starters

**Key Importance of this principle:** When students are asked specific questions, they must learn how to respond to them in a specific way.

**Ideas to guide your teaching:**

- Keep classroom discussions focused.
- Help students to generate their own discussions about lecture topics.

**The Introduction, Modeling (Script) and Extended Activities for the following strategies are in the CRISS Manual on the following pages:**

QARs ..... 41

Authentic Questions..... 37

Questions Frames..... 48

Questions Starters ..... 49

Reading Strategy

**Principle:**

# Organizing and Learning

**Purpose:** Better understanding of personal learning styles and methods of organizing information.

**Strategies:**

- Two-column Notes
- Content Frames
- Story Plans

**Key Importance of this principle:** Students must learn how to decide which strategies produce the most effective learning for them.

**Ideas to guide your teaching:**

- Students should understand which strategies work best for them and produce the most effective learning.
- Students should understand the learning goals and structures of the information so that they can effectively select workable strategies.
- Students should learn a variety of organizing strategies so they can develop a personal organizational system.

**The Introduction, Modeling (Script) and Extended Activities for the following strategies are in the CRISS Manual on the following pages:**

Two-column Notes..... 82
Blackline Master..... 109

Content Frames..... 100

Story Plan ..... 104
Blackline Master..... 111

Problem Analysis..... 96
Blackline Master..... 110

**Principle:**

# Writing and Learning

Reading Strategy

**Purpose:** Develop FCAT strategies

**Strategies:**

- Selective underlining
- Marginal notes
- Graphic organizers

**Key Importance of this principle:** Students need to distinguish among the different types of text they encounter on FCAT and be able to respond in writing.

**Ideas to guide your teaching:**

- Help students become familiar with the different types of text they will read and write on FCAT (i.e., explanatory, narrative, persuasive). Explain the importance of not rating everything the same way.
- Practice selective underlining and marginal note-taking with students on a variety of texts. These strategies will help students become actively involved with the text and lead to better understanding.

**The Introduction, Modeling (Script) and Extended Activities for the following strategies are in the CRISS Manual on the following pages:**

Selective Highlighting/underlining..... 26-27

Graphic Organizers ..... 58-68

Feb

Reading Strategy

**Principle:**

# Metacognition

**Purpose:** Awareness of one's own thinking

**Strategies:**

- All CRISS strategies

**Key Importance of this principle:** Students need to learn how to make sense of their own reading. A good reader knows how to find the author's meaning and purpose and combine it with his/her own background knowledge. Students need to set learning goals, be familiar with different strategies, and decide how to use these strategies to meet these goals. They also need to know when a strategy is not working and it is time to try a different one.

**Ideas to guide your teaching:** Students should spot check their reading with questions such as:

- Do I need to reread this section?
- Do I understand this point?
- Should I write this point down?
- Is the author making this clear, or do I need additional information?

Students should have opportunities to:

- Understand why they are doing a task.
- Develop strategies to help them when they do not understand what they are reading.
- Talk about their learning.

**Principle:**

# Discussion and Instructional Conversation

Reading Strategy

**Purpose:** Increased comprehension

**Strategies:**

- Think-Pair-Share
- Sticky-note Discussions
- Read & Say Something
- Authentic Questions
- Seed Discussions

**Key Importance of this principle:**

Students need to be involved in their learning. When classroom discussions revolve around content, learning naturally takes place. When students share their understanding and talk about what they think, they gain a clearer and more meaningful focus for learning.

**Ideas to guide your teaching:**

- In order for classroom discussions to be successful, they must remain focused.
- Students need to generate their own discussion about the subject they are studying.
- Students need to write about what they are thinking before they share their ideas.

**The Introduction, Modeling (Script) and Extended Activities for the following strategies are in the CRISS Manual on the following pages:**

Think-Pair-Share ..... 34
Sticky-note Discussions ..... 35
Read & Say Something ..... 36
Authentic Questions ..... 37
Seed Discussions ..... 39

# Summary of Reading Strategies

**KWL** is a learning strategy that involves three overlapping events: Students brainstorm what they Know (K), record what they Want (W) to know, and then list what they have Learned (L).

—Shane Fulton/Health

**Marginal Note taking** is a learning strategy that helps students understand better by writing down the main idea, questions that they have, unfamiliar words, and important details in the margins of the text.

—Vivian Hernandez/E.H.

**Selective Underlining** is a learning strategy that helps students organize information enabling them to better understand the author's craft as well as remembering the text.

—Karla Withee/English

**Power Notes** is a learning strategy that helps students differentiate between main ideas and details. Power notes begin with the student listing the main idea, as Power 1, and the supporting details with Powers 2,3, and 4. It concludes when the powers can no longer be supported by previous powers.

—Roger Mitchell/Freshman Experience

**One Sentence Summary** is a learning strategy that requires students to read selection, come up with a few ideas from it, and combine these ideas to create a one-sentence summary.

—Darleny Diego/ESE

A **Framed Paragraph** is a learning strategy that begins with the teacher explaining to the students the structure of the framed paragraph, continues with by providing students with an example of a frame and together writing a response. It concludes with students developing their own paragraphs.

—Diana Fernandez/Spanish

**QAR** is a learning strategy that helps students understand how questions are written. This also helps students develop and analyze their own questions.

—Michael Walters/Science

**Authentic Questions** is a kind of learning strategy that helps students monitor their reading comprehension by encouraging them to generate and record questions about any material they do not understand during reading.

—Jennifer Velasquez/English

**Mapping** is a learning strategy that helps students transform information from one form to another and encourages active comprehension and discussion. Mapping begins with the teacher choosing a word or concept which relates to the topic, continues with a brainstorming session in which students discuss all the information they think they know about a topic. It concludes with the student organizing this information in the form of a "map."

—Cheryl Concepcion/English

# Resources

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# Grade Level Reading Expectations

| Expectation | Date: | Date: | Date: | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
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NM = Not mastered  E = Emerging  M = Mastered  NA = Not Applicable

# Reading Checklist

| Goal | Date | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Reading baseline (SRI Interactive, STAR, IRI or cumulative folder). | | |
| 2. Present levels of functioning determined (lexile scores or grades levels). | | |
| 3. Goals determined from baselines and present levels. | | |
| 4. Discussed present levels and goals with students. | | |
| 5. Decided on curriculum and rubrics that will address the goals. | | |
| 6. Taught student to track grades and progress. | | |

# Sample Reading Lesson

*Created by: Cari Meigs Wesley Chapel High School*

The following generic ideas can be used with almost any piece of literature, fiction or nonfiction.

**Objectives:**

The student will be able to:

- ☐ Identify with a character or situation within a story.
- ☐ Make reasonable predictions about the story.
- ☐ Evaluate and modify their predictions as they read.
- ☐ Justify their predictions by using specific examples
- ☐ Give examples of short story elements within the text.

**Think-Pair-Share**

1. Introduce the story by engaging students in a class discussion about the central theme of the story (i.e., censorship in Fahrenheit 451).
2. Have each student brainstorm a list of ideas about the topic.
3. Put the class into groups of two or three to discuss the topic. Encourage them to modify their lists collaboratively.
4. After the pairs of students finish their discussion, discuss the topic as a class. Complete a cluster on the board as the students discuss and share their ideas.
5. Use this activity as a springboard to introduce the book you are reading.

**Preview the Book**

Give each student a copy of the book. Look at the cover, title, author, pictures, etc. If the students are not familiar with the author, take a few moments to introduce him/her.

**Making Predictions**

1. Have students look at the cover of the book while you model how to make predictions about the story based on the cover illustration. A good way to do this is to "think aloud."
2. Ask each student to make three predictions about what will happen in the story. Ask them to give a reason for each prediction. Explain that predictions are not always correct.
3. Have the students modify, add, and delete predications as they read. Tell them to locate specific examples in the story that support their predictions.
4. Have volunteers explain to the class how and why they made or modified their predictions.

**Two-Column Notes**

1. As they read, have students take two-column notes on the story elements: plot, setting, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, protagonist, and antagonist. (Two-column notes are explained on page 82 of the CRISS manual.)
2. After students have finished reading the story, gather the class for discussion. Ask volunteers to give answers as you complete the two-column notes on the board.
3. After the class discussion, have students use their two-column notes to write a brief summary of the story. This is a good strategy for students to use when writing book reports.

*It is often difficult to get kids to realize that the skills they learn in one class will be useful in other classes. This lesson incorporates reading strategies with math content.*

# Sample Lesson: Geometric Figures

*Creators: Wendy Pellegrino and Alicia Russell, Thomas E. Weightman Middle School*

**Objective:** Students will be able to identify geometric figures (polygons).

**Materials:**

- *Greedy Triangle* by Tana Hoban
- KWL worksheet
- Construction paper cut into geometric shapes

**Lesson:**

1. Review with students the attributes of a polygon:
   - Figure must be closed
   - Sides must be straight
   - Lines cannot cross
   - Must have at least three sides
   - Polygon names are based on the number of sides it has.
2. Explain to students that you are going to read a book, *The Greedy Triangle,* that goes along with today's geometry lesson.
3. Give each student a copy of the KWL worksheet and ask them to look at the K (what I know) section. This section will help them to activate prior knowledge about geometric shapes.
   - Ask students to list what they know about polygons. This information should be familiar to them from previous lessons (see the review above).
   - Review all of the information listed in the Know column.
4. Ask the students to look at the W (what I want to know) section of their worksheets.
   - Ask them to list what they'd like to know about geometric shapes.
5. Read the book summary to the students.
   - Ask: From the title and summary, what do you think the book might tell you about geometric shapes that you don't already know?
   - Review comments with the class.
6. Tell the students that they should take notes in the L (what I learned) section of the sheet.
   - This may be a problem for some of the students, so you might tell them to listen to the book as you read it once, and then take notes when you read it the second time.
   - Read slowly and stop often to emphasize the important information.
7. As you read the book aloud, use the first shape change as an example of how to use the KWL chart.
   - "The shape shifter turned the triangle into a quadrilateral."
     - Ask students to find the "L" column on their sheets. Have them write, "If you add a side to a triangle, it has four sides and is called a quadrilateral."
     - Discuss the prefixes "tri" and "quadri" and the roots "angle" and "lateral."
8. After finishing the book, review the "L" column with the students.

Getting parents/caregivers involved: Send information home about the lesson so that parents can discuss it with their children. Tell them the name of the book & author and activities that you will be doing with the students. Offer students a reward for bringing a form back with parent's/caregiver's signatures indicating that they've seen the information. Provide suggestions for extending the lesson at home.

Parents and students could:

1. Identify geometric shapes in the home & neighborhood.
2. Review prefixes – tri (3), quadri (4), penta (5), hexa (6), hepta (7), octa (8), nona (9), deca (10).
3. Develop a list of other words that use these prefixes.

9. Review the following shapes:
    - 3 sides = triangle
    - 4 sides = quadrilateral
    - 5 sides = pentagon
    - 6 sides = hexagon
    - 7 sides = heptagon
    - 8 sides = octagon
    - 9 sides = nonagon
    - 10 sides = decagon
10. Students should be able to identify and draw shapes when given the names.

**Making modification and accommodations**.

- Give students with auditory problems a copy of the book so they can follow along while you read.
- Some students will need a buddy to help them complete the KWL chart.
- Give students shapes cut from construction paper to use while you read the story and discuss the shapes. You can use these shapes to quiz the students who need manipulatives.

| K<br>What do you **KNOW**? | W<br>What do you **WANT** to know? | L<br>What did you **LEARN**? |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

# Mystery Novel Project: Create a Mystery Box!

*Creators: Wendy Pellegrino, Alicia Russell, & Ann Shanks, Thomas E. Weightman Middle School*

**Objective:** Students will identify various literary terms and their relationships to a mystery novel.

**Materials:**

- Small box with a top, at least 6"x 6" but no larger than a shoebox
- 3x5 cards
- A fictional mystery novel at grade level or above approved by the teacher

**Lesson:**

1. Before students read their novels, discuss with them the following terms. (You might do a KWL chart with them):
   - Plot
   - Setting
   - Rising action
   - Falling action
   - Climax
   - Resolution
   - Protagonist
   - Antagonist
2. Tell students that they should keep track of these elements as they read their novels. They can use the KWL chart to make notes.
3. After reading their mystery novels, using the boxes brought from home, students will create a mystery box. Classmates will read the information about the novels and try to guess the solution to the mystery. Impress upon students the importance of giving enough but not too much information to help solve the mystery.
4. Give students the following instructions:
   - Print only your name and class period on the bottom of your box.
   - All information and illustrations will be completed on separate paper and glued to the top and sides of your box.
   - You will put the title of the book and the author's name on the box top. Be sure to underline the title and include an appropriate illustration.
   - Number the remaining sides from one to four. Print the number in the upper right hand corner of each side. Make it small but readable.

     Side 1: An illustration of the protagonist(s) and a paragraph* describing him/her and his/her mission in the novel. Do not give away the ending.

     Side 2: An illustration of the antagonist(s) and a paragraph describing him/her and his/her misdeeds in the novel. Do not give away the solution. If describing what the antagonist did would solve the mystery, then illustrate and describe the various suspects, instead.

     Side 3: An illustration of the main setting and a paragraph explaining how the setting is important in the story. Do not give away the ending.

     Side 4: An illustration of the climax of the story and a paragraph describing it. Remember, the climax of the story is the highest point of suspense in the story.

     Inside: Write a paragraph describing the story's falling action and conclusion on a 3x5 card and place it in the box. The paragraph will include who did it, how it was done, and who solved the mystery.

Give students the following information before they begin:

- A paragraph is four to six sentences.
- You may type your paragraphs. If you choose to write by hand, be sure to use ink, and print very neatly. Illustrations may be drawn, computer generated, or cut from magazines.
- Spelling, neatness, grammar, and accuracy of information will determine your grade.

# Social Systems Project

*Creator: Ann Shanks, Thomas E. Weightman Middle School*

This project requires that students create a dodecahedron (twelve-sided figure) from paper plates that have been decorated with information about themselves. They are encouraged to be as imaginative as possible when creating each side of the figure. The nature of the information needed requires that parents/caregivers be involved.

**Objective:** Using a geometric shape and personal artifacts, students will identify facets of their lives and how they are interconnected.

**Materials** (students will supply their own materials):

- 15 paper plates
- Personal photographs – you will glue these to your paper plates.
- Magazines
- Small objects to glue to the plates that illustrate something about you
- Colored pencils

**Procedure:**

Each of twelve paper plates (the other three are extras) will be one side of the finished project. The answers to the following questions will be used to create each side:

1. If I could visit any place it would be:
2. My favorite hobby is:
3. My favorite subject in school is:
4. What I appreciate most in life is:
5. The person I most admire is:
6. My best friend is:
7. My favorite food is:
8. What I looked like when I was a baby:
9. My favorite animal is:
10. When I "grow up" I want to be:
11. Demonstrate a proper table Place setting:
12. One thing I did over summer vacation:

When students have created each of the twelve sides, fasten each plate to four others at the 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, and 9:00 positions. When all plates have been fastened together, have students present them to the class, explain each side and its significance, and then attach a string and hang the "dodecahedron" from the ceiling.

To get parents involved: Send home a note two weeks ahead of time with the list of questions to give students and parents time to collect pictures and items for the project. Make sure that parents know what questions the students must answer and that everything will be glued to the plates. Ask parents to return a signed form indicating that they understand what is expected of the students and when supplies must be brought to school.

# The Lesson Planning Pyramid Sample

Date: 4/22/02 Class Period: 7th grade language arts Unit:

Lesson Objectives: All students will be able to write a correctly punctuated sentence. Most students will be able to write a paragraph with a topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding sentence. Some students will be able to combine complete paragraphs into a 5-paragraph essay.

Materials: Paper, pencils, OH transparencies, sample sentences & paragraphs, objects to use for sentence & paragraph starters

Evaluation: Students will write a correct sentence, paragraph, or essay.

In-Class Assignments: Each student will write a sentence or paragraph about one of the objects on the front table. Peer editors will proofread for grammar and punctuation.

Homework Assignments: Students will choose objects or people at home to describe in a sentence or paragraph.

---

What **some** children will learn

- 5 paragraph essay

---

What **most** children will learn

- Paragraph with topic sentence, 3 supporting details and concluding sentence

---

What **all** children **should** learn

- Complete sentence with capital letter at the beginning, correct punctuation, and subject-verb agreement.

Source: Shumm, Vaugn & Leavell (1994)

# The Lesson Planning Pyramid

Date: _____ Class Period: _____ Unit: _____

Lesson Objectives:

Materials:

Evaluation:

In-Class Assignments:

Homework Assignments:

What **some** children will learn

What **most** children will learn

What **all** children **should** learn

Source: Shumm, Vaugn & Leavell (1994)

# Conclusion

Families can be our greatest educational allies, and we can be theirs. If we make the effort to establish frequent, positive communication with families, the benefits to students, families, and the school will be great. This manual provides some basic strategies for increasing family involvement in the classroom and the school. Not all families will respond with the same amount of enthusiasm to your attempts to help them be involved, but some will, and these families will benefit greatly from your sincere efforts.

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