

The Savvy Teacher's Guide: Reading Interventions That Work

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Introduction

I created the manual, *The Savvy Teacher's Guide: Reading Interventions That Work*, for classroom instructors who need to have a range of reading interventions available for students with diverse learning needs.

The great majority of the interventions described in this manual were selected because they had been cited as effective in the recent National Reading Panel (2000) report, a comprehensive meta-analysis of successful reading strategies.

All interventions presented here are research-based. In most cases, I attempted to reconstruct the reading strategy from the cited research articles with few if any changes. In some instances, however, I did make adaptations to the interventions to make them more classroom-friendly.

Instructors who want to remain current on school-based interventions being added to this manual series are encouraged to visit my website, *www.interventioncentral.org*.

Jim Wright
July 2001

References:

National Reading Panel. (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction.* (NIH Publication No. 00-4754). Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

The Savvy Teacher's Guide: Reading Interventions That Work

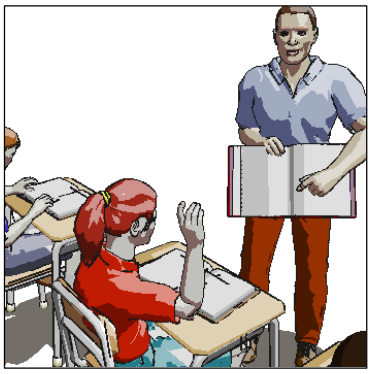
Contents:

Introducing Academic Strategies to Students: A Direct-Instruction Approach

Teachers know how difficult it often is to get students to understand and use a new academic strategy. A number of roadblocks can prevent students from successfully applying strategies. For example, students may initially learn the steps of a strategy incorrectly and become discouraged when they discover that it does not help them with their work. Even if students become proficient in using a strategy, they may fail to recognize those academic situations when the strategy should be applied. (An unused strategy is equal to no strategy at all!) Or students may know full well when they are supposed to use a strategy (e.g., proofreading a homework assignment) but simply be unmotivated to do so.

Fortunately, you can follow a direct-instruction sequence to increase the probability that your students will both correctly master and actually use effective academic strategies. This framework includes four major stages: (1) you explicitly show students how to use the skill or strategy, (2) students practice the skill under your supervision--and you give frequent corrective feedback and praise, (3) students use the skill independently in real academic situations, and (4) students use the skill in a variety of other settings or situations ("generalization"). To avoid overloading your students with more new information than they can absorb, teach only one strategy at a time and make sure that your students have thoroughly mastered each strategy before teaching them another.

1. **"Show them!": The teacher demonstrates to students how to use the skill**. The goal in this introductory step is to demonstrate the strategy so clearly that students will have a firm understanding and foundation for their later mastery of the skill. In most cases, you should devote at least a full session to demonstrating the strategy. (More complex strategies may require additional time.) During the lesson, students should be actively engaged and responding, rather than passively listening. If possible, make the session fast-paced, interactive, and fun!



   Introduce the skill. To build a rationale for using the skill, discuss the problem or difficulty that it can resolve.

   - You might, for example, introduce the use of *keywords* (a strategy for memorizing factual information) by holding up a classroom science text and saying, "You will need to remember hundreds of important facts from your

science reading. Today we are going to learn a strategy that can help you to do this."

- You can also stimulate student interest and motivation and activate the class's prior knowledge of the topic by having the group briefly share their own favorite techniques for accomplishing the same academic goal (e.g., "What are some of your favorite ways to memorize lots of facts?").

Describe & demonstrate the skill. Present the main steps of the strategy in simple terms. List the same main steps on a wall poster or in a handout so that students can refer back to them as needed. Use overhead transparencies or other visual aids to display examples of text, academic worksheets, or other materials that you will use to demonstrate the strategy. Consider handing out student copies of the same materials so that your class can work along with you. Take students through several demonstrations in which you walk through the steps of the strategy. Use a "think-aloud" procedure to share your reasoning with students as you apply the strategy. Start with simple examples that most students should be able to understand without difficulty. Introduce increasingly complex examples until you are demonstrating the strategy using grade-appropriate content.

Elicit student participation. Run through several more demonstrations of the strategy, inviting student volunteers to come to the front of the room to walk the class through the strategy. Or call on different students to share how they would apply each step. Give gentle, corrective feedback as needed. Praise students frequently and give them specific positive feedback whenever they correctly use a step in the strategy.

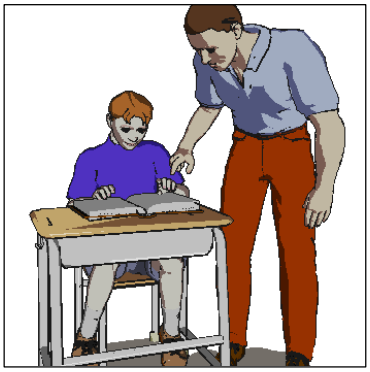
Assess student understanding. The class is ready the move to the next stage of instruction when most students appear to have a general understanding of the steps in the strategy, and guidelines for when to use it. You should be able to tell through the quality of student responses whether the class grasps the strategy.

2. **"Watch them & praise them!": Students practice the skill under teacher supervision**. At this stage, students have begun to acquire the strategy but need opportunities to practice it under teacher supervision. Teacher oversight and feedback is especially important to prevent students new to the skill from practicing it incorrectly.

   Start by giving students simple examples. As students become more skilled in using the strategy, give them more advanced academic materials, until the examples are equal to grade-level work.

   For this stage, you may want to pair students and have them alternate roles: one student applies the strategy to an example, while the other acts as the observer who checks the posted strategy steps to be sure that all steps were correctly followed. As students work, you can walk around the room to monitor the dialog,

and provide feedback, praise, and assistance as needed. Alternatively, you may want to have students work independently and then 'report out' on their strategies to the larger group.

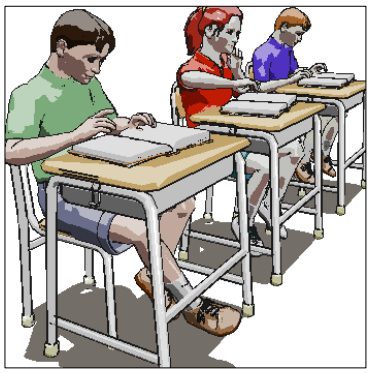


Many students, particularly those who need more practice and support to learn a new skill, do best at this stage if they are encouraged initially to "think aloud" as they move through the strategy—i.e., stating each step of the skill as they implement it and giving reasons for the decisions that they make. As students show that they can use the strategy dependably, you can 'fade' students' use of "think aloud". First, demonstrate to them how lower their tone of voice during "think-aloud" until students are whispering softly the steps of the strategy. Then model to students how to mouth the steps silently or simply to *think* through the steps without actually stating them.

While most of your students are likely to progress at a similar rate, you will probably find that several students are advanced in their understanding of the skill and others lag behind. You may want to assign advanced students as peer "strategy" coaches to work with their classmates. Students who struggle in acquiring the strategy may require scaffolding support (individual modifications to help them to master the concepts or tasks), such as additional teacher feedback and praise, simplified practice materials, or more opportunities to try out the skill.

Assess student acquisition. Your class is ready to advance to the next stage when the majority appears to understand and to be able to use the strategy reliably—at least with simple materials.

3. **"Make them use it!": Students employ the skill independently in real academic situations**. After learning a strategy and practicing it under your supervision, students are now ready to use it to complete classwork and homework assignments.



Again, you should start off with students applying the strategy to simpler assignments. Gradually increase the length and complexity of assignments as students become more confident and skilled with the strategy. Be prepared at the start of this stage to monitor students' follow-through and care in using the strategy. Give ongoing feedback and encouragement as needed.

4. **"Expand their horizons!": Students use the strategy in all appropriate settings or situations**. The ideal outcome of strategy training is that the student *generalizes* the training (e.g., is able and willing to use the strategy in any academic situation in which it would benefit him or her). Although it is every teacher's fervent wish that students generalize good academic strategies, most children need direct training and reinforcement to help them to apply a skill across settings (e.g., at school and at home) or in different activities. Here are some ideas to assist students to generalize skills:

- When you first train students to use the strategy, give them varied materials. If you are training them to use a reading strategy, for example, you might use excerpts from an encyclopedia, a news magazine, and a history textbook.

- Use a clear, simple verbal prompt or other reminder whenever you want students to employ a specific strategy.

- Let other teachers know that you have taught your students a specific strategy. Share copies of the strategy steps with these instructors and urge them to require students to apply the strategy in their classrooms.

- Send a note home to parents outlining the steps of the strategy that their child has been taught. If appropriate, encourage parents to help the child to use the strategy on a homework assignment.

- Enlist students who are proficient in using the strategy to serve as peer tutors, available to train other students (or even adults!) to use the skill.

- Have students share creative ideas for extending, improving, or enhancing the strategy. Type up these ideas to share with other students and instructors.

References:

Baumann, J.F. (1984). The effectiveness of a direct instruction paradigm for teaching main idea comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly, 20,* 93-108.

Carnine, D. (1994). Diverse learners and prevailing, emerging and research-based educational approaches and their tools. *School Psychology Review*, *23*, 341-350.

Pressley, M., Johnson, C.J., Symons, S., McGoldrick, J.A., & Kurita, J.A. (1989). Strategies that improve children's memory and comprehension of text. *The Elementary School Journal*, *90(1)*, 3-32.

Schunk, D.H. & Rice, J.M. (1993). Strategy fading and progress feedback: Effects on self-efficacy and comprehension among students receiving remedial reading services. *Journal of Special Education*, *27*, 257-276.

Techniques to Promote Error Correction

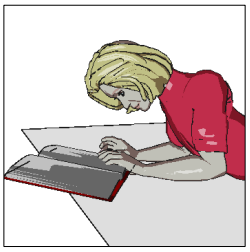
The National Reading Panel (2000) noted the interaction between a reader's ability to recognize the meanings of *individual words* in printed text (vocabulary comprehension) and that reader's skill at comprehending *the larger meaning* of a passage (text comprehension).

According to the Panel, vocabulary instruction should be taught to students both directly and indirectly. Children learn vocabulary items better if given repeated exposure to those items (e.g., in regular vocabulary review sessions).

Students who are just learning to read or have delayed reading skills often benefit from having a more accomplished reader listen to their reading and correct any reading mistakes immediately.

This section presents several error-correction techniques and one procedure for vocabulary drill-and-practice that teachers, tutors, or parents can use with developing readers.

Error Correction and Word Drill Techniques



Description: Students who are just learning to read or have delayed reading skills often benefit from having a more accomplished reader listen to their reading and correct any reading mistakes immediately. Below are several error-correction techniques and one procedure for vocabulary drill-and-practice that teachers, tutors, or parents can use with developing readers.

Word Supply

Before the student begins to read, tell the student, *"If you come to a word that you do not know, I will help you with it. I will tell you the correct word while you listen and point to the word in the book. After that, I want you to repeat the word and continue reading. Try your best not to make mistakes."* When the student commits a reading error (e.g., substitution, omission, 5-second hesitation), immediately pronounce the correct word for the student, have the student repeat the word correctly, and then direct the student to continue reading. NOTE: To avoid too many reading interruptions, do not correct minor student errors (e.g., misreading or omitting *the* or *a*, dropping suffixes such as *–s*, *-ed*, or *–ing*)

Word supply is the simplest error-correction to use, so it can be ideal for student tutors or parents to use. On the other hand, the approach is less powerful than others described here for building student reading vocabulary (Singh, 1990).

Sentence Repeat

At the start of the reading session, say to the student, *"If you come to a word that you do not know, I will help you with it. I will tell you the correct word while you listen and point to the word in the book. After that, I want you to repeat the word and then read the rest of the sentence. Than I want you to read the sentence again. Try your best not to make mistakes."* When the student commits a reading error (e.g., substitution, omission, 5-second hesitation), immediately pronounce the correct word for the student and have the student repeat the word correctly. Then direct the student to reread the entire sentence in which the error occurred. The student then continues reading the passage. (If the student repeats the original reading error when rereading the sentence, you should again pronounce the word correctly and have the student repeat the word. Then continue on.) NOTE: To avoid too many reading interruptions, do not correct minor student errors (e.g., misreading or omitting *the* or *a*, dropping suffixes such as *–s*, *-ed*, or *–ing*) (Singh, 1990).

'Word Attack' Hierarchy

In this approach, the instructor prompts the student to apply a hierarchy of word-attack skills whenever the student misreads a word. The instructor gives these cues in descending order. If the student correctly identifies the word after any cue, the instructor stops delivering cues at that point and directs the student to continue reading. NOTE: To avoid too many reading interruptions, do not correct minor student errors (e.g., misreading or omitting *the* or *a*, dropping suffixes such as *–s*, *-ed*, or *–ing*).

Here are the 'Word Attack' Hierarchy instructor cues:

1. *"Try another way."* This cue is given directly after a reading error and alerts the student to the fact that she or she has misread the word.
2. *"Finish the sentence and guess the word."* The student is encouraged to make use of the sentence context to discover the correct word pronunciation.

3. *"Break the word into parts and pronounce each one."* The student is directed to sound out the segments of a word independently.

4. Using an index card, the tutor covers over parts of the word and each the student to sound out only the part of the word that is visible. This approach teachers the student a method for reducing the amount of visual information in each word.

5. *"What sound does '___' make?"* As the tutor covers selected parts of the word with an index card, the student is directed to use phonics information to sound out the word.

6. *"The word is ___."* If the student cannot decode the word despite instructor support, the instructor supplies the word. The student is directed to repeat the word and to continue reading.

(Haring, et al., 1978)**.**

Error Word Drill

The Error Word Drill is an effective way to build reading vocabulary. The procedure consists of 4 steps:

1. When the student misreads a word during a reading session, write down the error word and date in a separate "Error Word Log".

2. At the end of the reading session, write out all error words from the reading session onto index cards. (If the student has misread *more* than 20 different words during the session, use just the first 20 words from your error-word list. If the student has misread *fewer* than 20 words, consult your "Error Word Log" and select enough additional error words from past sessions to build the review list to 20 words.)

3. Review the index cards with the student. Whenever the student pronounces a word correctly, remove that card from the deck and set it aside. (A word is considered correct if it is read correctly within 5 seconds. Self-corrected words are counted as correct if they are made within the 5-second period. Words read correctly after the 5-second period expires are counted as incorrect.)

4. When the student misses a word, pronounce the word for the student and have the student repeat the word. Then say, *"What word?"* and direct the student to repeat the word once more. Place the card with the missed word at the bottom of the deck.

5. Error words in deck are presented until all have been read correctly. All word cards are then gathered together, reshuffled, and presented again to the student. The drill continues until either time runs out or the student has progressed through the deck without an error on two consecutive cards.

(Jenkins & Larson, 1979)

References:

Haring, N.G., Lovitt, T.C., Eaton, M.D., & Hansen, C.L. (1978). *The fourth R: Research in the classroom.* Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing.

Jenkins, J. & Larsen, D. (1979). Evaluation of error-correction procedures for oral reading. *Journal of Special Education*, *13*, 145-156.

Singh, N.N. (1990). Effects of two error-correction procedures on oral reading errors: Word supply versus sentence repeat. *Behavior Modification*, *14*, 188-199.

Techniques to Promote Reading Fluency

Students who can decode text accurately, read at an acceptable rate, and read aloud with appropriate expression are said to be *fluent* readers (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Research indicates that readers become more fluent when they are given lots of opportunities to practice their reading—either independently or with guidance and assistance from a more accomplished reader. Reading-fluency interventions can pay surprising dividends: not only do these strategies help children to read more fluently, but they also improve readers' *accuracy* and *reading comprehension* (National Reading Panel, 2000).

This section presents intervention ideas for promoting student reading fluency. All are so simple that parents, adult tutors, or peer tutors could be trained to use them.

Assisted Reading Practice

Description: In this very simple but effective intervention, the student reads aloud while an accomplished reader follows along silently. If the student commits a reading error, the helping reader corrects the student error.

Materials:

- Reading book

Preparation:

- The teacher, parent, adult tutor, or peer tutor working with the student should be trained in advance to use assisted reading approach.

Intervention Script:

1. Sit with the student in a quiet location without too many distractions. Position the book selected for the reading session so that both you and the student can easily follow the text. (Or get two copies of the book so that you each have your own copy.)

2. Instruct the student to begin reading out loud. Encourage him or her to "do your best reading."

3. Follow along silently in the text as the student reads.

4. If the student mispronounces a word or hesitates for longer than 5 seconds, tell the student the word. Have the student repeat the word correctly. Direct the student to continue reading aloud through the passage.

5. Occasionally, praise the student in specific terms for good reading (e.g., "You are doing a really great job of sounding out the words that you don't know. Good work!").

Tips:

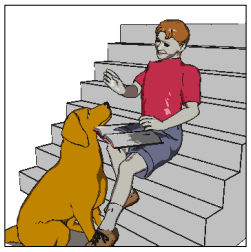
Train Parents to Use This Strategy. Assisted reading is an easy method to learn and gives students valuable practice that can really boost their reading fluency. You can train parents to read with their children on a regular basis using assisted reading practice.

References:

Shany, M.T. & Biemiller, A. (1995). Assisted reading practice: Effects on performance for poor readers in grades 3 and 4 . *Reading Research Quarterly*, *30*, 382-395.

Listening Passage Preview

Description: The student follows along silently as an accomplished reader reads a passage aloud. Then the student reads the passage aloud, receiving corrective feedback as needed.



Materials:

- Reading book

Preparation:

- The teacher, parent, adult tutor, or peer tutor working with the student should be trained in advance to use the listening passage preview approach.

Intervention Script:

1. Sit with the student in a quiet location without too many distractions. Position the book selected for the reading session so that both you and the student can easily follow the text. (Or get two copies of the book so that you each have your own copy.)

2. Say to the student, *"Now we are going to read together. Each time, I will read first, while you follow along silently in the book. Then you read the same part out loud."*

3. Read aloud from the book for about 2 minutes while the student reads silently. If you are working with a younger or less-skilled reader, you may want to track your progress across the page with your index finger to help the student to keep up with you.

4. Stop reading and say to the student, *"Now it is your turn to read. If you come to a word that you do not know, I will help you with it."* Have the student read aloud. If the student commits a reading error or hesitates for longer than 3-5 seconds, tell the student the correct word and have the student continue reading.

5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until you have finished the selected passage or story.

Tips:

Ask Occasional Comprehension Questions. You can promote reading comprehension by pausing periodically to ask the student comprehension questions about the story (e.g., who, what, when, where, how) and to encourage the student to react to what you both have read (e.g., "Who is your favorite character so far? Why?").

Preview a Text Multiple Times as a Rehearsal Technique. In certain situations, you may wish to practice a particular text selection repeatedly with the student, using the listening passage preview approach. For example, if the student is placed in a reading book that is quite difficult for him or her to read independently, you might rehearse the

next assigned story with the student several times so that he or she can read the story more fluently during reading group.

References:

Rose, T.L., & Sherry, L. (1984). Relative effects of two previewing procedures on LD adolescents' oral reading performance. *Learning Disabilities Quarterly, 7,* 39-44.

Van Bon, W.H.J., Boksebeld, L.M., Font Freide, T.A.M., & Van den Hurk, J.M. (1991). A comparison of three methods of reading-while-listening. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 24,* 471-476.

Paired Reading

Description: The student reads aloud in tandem with an accomplished reader. At a student signal, the helping reader stops reading, while the student continues on. When the student commits a reading error, the helping reader resumes reading in tandem.

Materials:

- Reading book

Preparation:

- The teacher, parent, adult tutor, or peer tutor working with the student should be trained in advance to use the paired-reading approach.

Intervention Script:

1. Sit with the student in a quiet location without too many distractions. Position the book selected for the reading session so that both you and the student can easily follow the text.

2. Say to the student, *"Now we are going to read aloud together for a little while. Whenever you want to read alone, just tap the back of my hand like this* [demonstrate] *and I will stop reading. If you come to a word you don't know, I will tell you the word and begin reading with you again."*

3. Begin reading aloud with the student. If the student misreads a word, point to the word and pronounce it. Then have the student repeat the word. When the student reads the word correctly, resume reading through the passage.

4. When the child delivers the appropriate signal (a hand tap), stop reading aloud and instead follow along silently as the student continues with oral reading. Be sure occasionally to praise the student in specific terms for good reading (e.g., "That was a hard word. You did a nice job sounding it out!").

5. If, while reading alone, the child either commits a reading error or hesitates for longer than 5 seconds, point to the error-word and pronounce it. Then tell the student to say the word. When the student pronounces the error-word correctly, begin reading aloud again in unison with the student.

6. Continue reading aloud with the student until he or she again signals to read alone.

Tips:

Consider Using Paired Reading for Peer Tutoring or as a Parent Strategy. Paired reading is a highly structured but simple strategy that can easily be taught to others—including to school-age children and youth. If you have a pool of responsible older

students available you may want to create a cross-age peer tutoring program that uses paired reading as its central intervention. Or train parents to use this simple reading strategy when they read with their children at home.

References:

Topping, K. (1987). Paired reading: A powerful technique for parent use. *Reading Teacher, 40,* 608-614.

Repeated Reading

Description: The student reads through a passage repeatedly, silently or aloud, and receives help with reading errors.

Materials:

- Reading book
- Stop watch (if readings are to be timed)

Preparation:

- The teacher, parent, adult tutor, or peer tutor working with the student should be trained in advance to use the listening passage preview approach.

Intervention Script:

1. Sit with the student in a quiet location without too many distractions. Position the book selected for the reading session so that both you and the student can easily follow the text.

2. Select a passage in the book of about 100 to 200 words in length.

3. Have the student read the passage through. (Unless you have a preference, the student should be offered the choice of reading the passage aloud or silently.)

4. If the student is reading aloud and misreads a word or hesitates for longer than 5 seconds, read the word aloud and have the student repeat the word correctly before continuing through the passage. If the student asks for help with any word, read the word aloud. If the student requests a word definition, give the definition.

5. When the student has completed the passage, have him or her read the passage again. You can choose to have the student read the passage repeatedly until *either* the student has read the passage a total of 4 times (Rashotte & Torgesen, 1985) *or* the student reads the passage at the rate of at least 85 to 100 words per minute (Dowhower, 1987; Herman, 1985).

Tips:

Take Steps to Keep the Student Invested in the Activity. Repeated reading is effective as an intervention to build student reading fluency because it gives the student lots of reading practice. However, this activity *could* become dull and uninteresting for the student over time. If you find that the student is beginning to lose interest in repeated reading, consider:

- Provide praise to the student in specific terms for good reading.

- Allow the student to pick out high-interest books or articles to use for repeated reading.
- Using a stop-watch, monitor the student's reading rate during each repeated reading and chart the results on a graph.

References:

Dowhower, S.L. (1987). Effects of repeated reading on second-grade transitional readers' fluency and comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *22*, 389-406.

Herman, P.A. (1985). The effects of repeated readings on reading rate, speech pauses, and word recognition accuracy. *Reading Research Quarterly, 20*, 553-565.

Rashotte, C.A. & Torgesen, J.K. (1985). Repeated reading and reading fluency in learning disabled children. *Reading Research Quarterly, 20*, 180-188.

Rasinski, T.V. (1990). Effects of repeated reading and listening-while-reading on reading fluency. *Journal of Educational Research, 83*(3), 147-150.

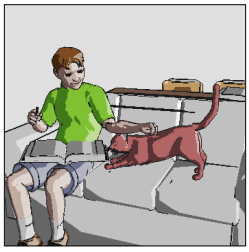
Techniques to Build Text Comprehension

Text comprehension can be thought of as the interaction of reader and text. That is, readers must *construct* meaning by interpreting information presented in the reading through the lens of their own prior knowledge of the topic or events that make up the content of that passage (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Teachers find that fluent readers are not always *comprehending* readers. This section lays out a number of strategies that instructors can use to improve student comprehension of both stories and expository text.

Advanced Story Map Instruction

Description: Students are taught to use a basic 'Story Grammar' to map out, identify and analyze significant components of narrative text (e.g., fiction, biographies, historical accounts).



Reserve at least a full instructional session to introduce this comprehension strategy. (For effective-teaching tips, consult the guidelines presented in "*Introducing Academic Strategies to Students: A Direct-Instruction Approach*").

Materials:

- Overhead transparencies of short stories or other narrative texts, transparency markers
- Student copies of *Advanced Story Map Worksheet*, and practice narrative passages (optional) or reading/text books

Preparation:

- Prepare overheads of sample narrative passages.

Intervention Script:

1. Introduce the concept of a Story Grammar to students and preview main elements. (Refer to the *Advanced Story Map Worksheet* as a guide.) Tell students that a Story Grammar can help them to better understand a story's characters and events.

2. Set aside at least four successive instructional days to introduce the major components of the Story Grammar: (A) Identifying important characters and their personalities and motivation, (B) Identifying main problem and significant plot developments, (C) Noting characters' attempts to solve problems, and (D) Identifying a narrative's overarching theme.

   Interactive Instruction: Make the instruction of each story component highly interactive, with clear teacher demonstration and use of examples. 'Think aloud' as you read through a story with the class to illustrate to students how you arrive at your conclusions. Elicit student discussion about the story. As you fill out sections of the *Advanced Story Map Worksheet* on the overhead, have students write responses on their own copies of the worksheet.

3. Error Correction: When students commit errors, direct them to the appropriate section of the narrative to reread it for the correct answer. Use guiding questions and modeling as necessary to help students to come up with an appropriate response.

4. After students have been introduced to the key Story Grammar elements, the group is now ready to use the Grammar to analyze a sample narrative passage. Have students

read independently through a story. Pause at pre-determined points to ask the group key questions (e.g., "Who is the main character? What is she like?"). After discussion, encourage students to write their answers on the *Advanced Story Map Worksheet* while you fill out the same worksheet as an overhead. Give specific praise to students for appropriately identifying Story Grammar elements.

5. When students are able to use the Story Grammar independently, have them read through selected stories and complete the *Advanced Story Map Worksheet* on their own. Check students' responses and conference individually with those students requiring additional guidance and support.

Tips:

Edit student creative writing using the Story Map Worksheet. Students can use the *Advanced Story Map Worksheet* to check the structure of stories that they have written. Peer editors can also use the worksheet to give feedback to students about the clarity of their story structure.

Consider the Story Grammar as a tool for analyzing historical narratives . Many historical accounts are structured as dramatic narratives—with central characters taking part in key events. Students can productively use elements of a Story Grammar to analyze these historical narratives.

Troubleshooting:

Students do not seem motivated to use the Story Grammar framework. To make a Story Grammar analysis more inviting, consider screening a video of a popular movie or television program. At key points, stop the tape, have students complete relevant sections of the *Advanced Story Map Worksheet*, and discuss the results. This exercise can be highly motivating and also makes clear to students that a Story Grammar is a universal tool that help us understand narratives presented in any medium.

Some students do not appear to be successful in using the Story Grammar independently. Pull aside individuals or small groups of students who might be having similar problems mastering the Story Grammar. As you read together through a story, have students "think aloud" the strategies that they follow to identify Story Grammar elements. If you discover that a student is using a faulty approach (e.g., rotely selecting the first character named in the story as the main character) you can gently correct the student by modeling and demonstrating more appropriate strategies.

References:

Gardill, M.C. & Jitendra, A.K. (1999). Advanced story map instruction: Effects on the reading comprehension of students with learning disabilities. *The Journal of Special Education*, *28*, 2-17.

Advanced Story Map Worksheet (Adapted from Gardill & Jitendra, 1999)

Student: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Story Name: _____

---

1. Who is the central character? _____
2. What is the main character like? (Describe his/her key qualities or personality traits).

   _____

   _____
3. Who is another important character in the story? _____
4. What is this other important character like? _____

   _____
5. Where and when does the story take place? _____

   _____
6. What is the major problem that the main character is faced with? _____

   _____
7. How does the main character attempt to solve this major problem? _____

   _____
8. What is the twist, surprise, or unexpected development that takes place in the story?

   _____

   _____
9. How is the problem solved or not solved?

   _____

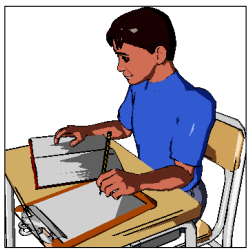
   _____
10. What is the theme or lesson of the story?

    _____

    _____

"Click or Clunk?" A Student Comprehension Self-Check

Description: Students periodically check their understanding of sentences, paragraphs, and pages of text as they read. When students encounter problems with vocabulary or comprehension, they use a checklist to apply simple strategies to solve those reading difficulties.



Reserve at least a full instructional session to introduce this comprehension strategy. (For effective-teaching tips, consult the guidelines presented in "*Introducing Academic Strategies to Students: A Direct-Instruction Approach*").

Materials:

- Overhead transparencies of practice reading passages and "*My Reading Check Sheet*", transparency markers
- Student copies of practice reading passages (optional) or reading/text books, "*My Reading Check Sheet*"

Preparation:

- Prepare overheads of sample passages.

Intervention Script:

1. Tell students that they will be learning ways to read more carefully. Hand out student copies of "My Reading Check Sheet".

   Review all of the reading strategies on the student handout.

   Instruct students that, during any reading assignment, when they come to:

   - the end of each sentence, they should ask the question, "*Did I understand this sentence?*" If students understand the sentence, they say "Click!" and continue reading. If they do not understand, they say "Clunk!" and refer to the strategy sheet "*My Reading Check Sheet*" to correct the problem.

   - the end of each paragraph, they should ask the question, "*What did the paragraph say?*" If they do not know the main idea(s) of the paragraph, students refer to the strategy sheet "*My Reading Check Sheet*" to correct the problem.

   - the end of each page, they should ask the question, "*What do I remember?*" If they do not remember sufficient information, students refer to the strategy sheet

"*My Reading Check Sheet*" to correct the problem.

Read through a sample passage with the class. At the end of each sentence, paragraph, and page, "think aloud" as you model use of the comprehension checks. (As you read each sentence, be sure to call out "Click!" when you and the class understand a sentence and "Clunk!" when you do not.)

2. When students have learned to use the "Click or Clunk?" strategy, have them use it in independent reading assignments.

Tips:

Create Silent "Click/Clunk" Signals. Although it may seem rather silly to have students call out "Click" and "Clunk" as an aid to monitor their own reading, .the technique is actually quite valuable. When students must make regular summary judgments about how well they comprehend at the sentence level, they are more likely to recognize—and to resolve—comprehension errors as these mistakes arise.

You might find, however, that students start to distract each other as they call out these comprehension signals. Once you see that students consistently use the technique, you can train them to softly whisper the signal. Or confer with your students to come up with an unobtrusive non-verbal signal (e.g., lightly tapping the desk once for "Click" and twice for "Clunk") that is obvious enough to allow you to monitor readers' use of the technique without distracting other students.

References:

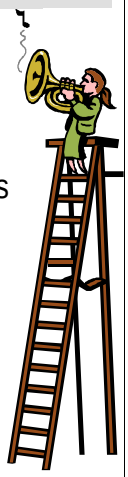
Anderson, T. (1980). Study strategies and adjunct aids. In R. J. Spiro, B. C. Bruce, & W. F. Brewer (Eds.) *Theoretical Issues in Reading Comprehension*, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Babbs, P. J. (1984). Monitoring cards help improve comprehension. *The Reading Teacher*, *38*(2), 200-204.

My Reading Check Sheet*

Name: _____ Class: _____

Sentence Check... *"Did I understand this sentence?"*



If you had trouble understanding a word *in the sentence, try…*

- Reading the sentence over.
- Reading the next sentence.
- Looking up the word in the glossary (if the book or article has one).
- Asking someone.

If you had trouble understanding the meaning *of the sentence, try…*

- Reading the sentence over.
- Reading the whole paragraph again.
- Reading on.
- Asking someone.

Paragraph Check... *"What did the paragraph say?"*

If you had trouble understanding what the paragraph said, try…

- Reading the paragraph over.

Page Check... *"What do I remember?"*

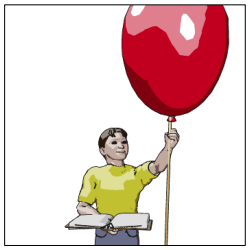
If you had trouble remembering what was said on this page, try…

- Re-reading each paragraph on the page, and asking yourself, "*What did it say?*"

*Adapted from Anderson (1980), Babbs (1984)

Keywords: A Memorization Strategy

Description: In this mnemonic (memorization) technique, students select the central idea of a passage and summarize it as a 'keyword'. Next, they *recode* the keyword as a mental picture and use additional mental imagery to *relate* other important facts to the keyword. They can then recall the keyword when needed, *retrieving* the related information.



Reserve at least a full instructional session to introduce this comprehension strategy. (For effective-teaching tips, consult the guidelines presented in "*Introducing Academic Strategies to Students: A Direct-Instruction Approach*").

Materials:

- Overhead transparencies of sample passages taken from expository texts, transparency markers
- Student copies of *Memorizing Facts: The Keyword Strategy* and practice expository passages (optional) or text books

Preparation:

- Prepare overheads of sample expository passages.
- Review the procedures in the worksheet *Memorizing Facts: The Keyword Strategy*

Intervention Script:

1. Tell students that a good way to remember lots of facts is to use keywords. With the keyword approach, students:

    - highlight important facts or ideas in a passage
    - write a "gist" sentence that summarizes the highlighted ideas or facts
    - select a 'keyword' that will help them to recall a central idea about the article or passage.
    - create a mental picture to remember the keyword, and then
    - add details to the mental picture or create a story around the keyword to memorize additional facts or ideas.

    If you have *younger* students (e.g., 5th grade or below), read through several sample passages with the group. Then display a drawing or collage that represents your own representation of the passage's main ideas as mental imagery. Using a "think-aloud" approach, explain the mental imagery of the picture and show how it encapsulates the

main facts of the original passage. Show students how they can more easily recall facts using this approach.

If you have *older* students (e.g., 6th grade or above), read through several sample passages with the group. Write a description of the mental imagery that you used to memorize the keyword and related facts. Using a "think-aloud" approach, explain the mental imagery of your keyword and related story and show how the imagery encapsulates the main facts of the original passage. Show students how they can more easily recall facts using this approach.

2. Pair students off and give them a sample passage. Assign each pair of students to:

    - identify the main idea of the passage
    - write a "gist" sentence to summarize the passage's main idea and related important facts
    - select a keyword based on the main idea
    - write out a description (or draw a picture) of the mental imagery that they will use to recall the main idea and important facts of the passage.

3. When students are able to use the keyword strategy independently, have them use the technique when reading through expository passages. Monitor students' use of the method and their accuracy in recalling key facts. Conference individually with those students needing additional guidance and support.

Tips:

Encourage Students to Share Helpful Keyword Examples With Peers. Your students will probably come up with clever and memorable ways to recall information using the keyword strategy. Note any students who do especially well at memorizing complex information and invite them to share their mnemonic strategies with other students.

References:

Levin, J.R., Levin, M.E., Glasman, L.D., & Nordwall, M.B. (1992). Mnemonic vocabulary instruction: Additional effectiveness evidence. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *17*, 156-174.

Levin, J.R., Shriberg, L.K., & Berry, J.K. (1983). A concrete strategy for remembering abstract prose. *American Educational Research Journal*, *20*, 277-290.

Peters, E.E. & Levin, J.R. (1986). Effects of a mnemonic imagery on good and poor readers' prose recall. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *21*, 179-192.

Memorizing Facts: The Keyword Strategy

In most of your school courses, you are probably expected to remember lots of important facts and ideas. One useful method that can help you to do a better job of memorizing facts is called the 'keyword' strategy. With this technique, you:

- highlight important facts or ideas in a passage
- write a "gist" sentence that summarizes the highlighted ideas or facts
- select a 'keyword' that will help you to recall a central idea about the article or passage.
- create a mental picture to help you to remember the keyword, and then
- add details to the mental picture or create a story around the keyword to memorize additional facts or ideas.

The keyword strategy can seem a bit silly when you first try it—but it works! Here are the main steps of the keyword strategy—along with two examples:

- **Step 1: Read a passage from a textbook or article and highlight the most important ideas or facts.** The first trick in effective memorization is to decide what facts are important enough to remember. Read the passage carefully and note what ideas, terms, or phrases are most important. Highlight only these important ideas.

  Here is a sample passage from a history text. The student has read through the passage and highlighted the main points (underlined text):

  "Long before the start of the classical period, Greeks had spread beyond the limits of Old Greece. After the great migrations to the coasts of Asia Minor and the Aegean Islands (c. 1000-800 BC) there were extensive colonizing movements, in which settlers from individual Greek cities founded a new city either in a different part of Greece or in a barbarian land. The main colonizing age lasted from the eighth century to the sixth century BC, although colonies were still being founded in the classical period"

  --from Hooker, J.T. (1995). Hellenic Civilization. In A. Cotterell (Ed.) *The Penguin encyclopedia of classical civilizations* (pp. 1-40). London: Penguin Books.

- **Step 2: Write or think about a summary ("gist") sentence that captures the important ideas of the passage.** The "gist" sentence reduces the original passage to the bare essentials—just the information that you want to memorize.

  In our example, the student wrote a "gist" sentence that sums up the central facts from the longer passage on the movement of peoples in ancient Greece:

  The Greeks spread beyond the limits of Old Greece, migrating first to Asia Minor and the Aegean Islands and later founding new cities in other parts of Greece or

in barbarian lands.

- **Step 3: Write (or think of) a keyword that provides a mental picture to represent a main idea in the passage.** Add details to the mental picture or create a story around the keyword to memorize the facts or ideas. (Feel free to use silly keywords or stories, as silly examples can stand out and be easier to recall.)

  In our example, the student selected the keyword "old geese" (to represent the term "Old Greece" that appears in the original passage). The student then weaves a story around the keyword to make it easier to remember the main facts of the passage:

  A flock of old geese [keyword: represents Old Greece] *left their pen* ["great migrations"] *and flew off to a tiny Chinese restaurant* [Asia Minor] *on a giant island* [Aegean Islands]. *There the geese found an undiscovered city* [founded new cities] *filled with other geese* ["in a different part of Greece"] *and cavemen* ["or in a barbarian land"].

In the next example, the student uses the keyword strategy to remember facts from a textbook on natural ecology:

- Step 1: Read a passage from a textbook or article and highlight the most important ideas or facts.

  "Three major classes of processes cause the cycling of carbon in aquatic and terrestrial systems. The first includes the assimilatory and dissimilatory reactions of carbon in photosynthesis and respiration. The second class includes the physical exchange of carbon dioxide between the atmosphere and oceans, lakes, and streams. The third type of process that drives the cycling of carbon consists of the dissolution and precipitation (deposition) of carbonate compounds as sediments, particularly limestone and dolomite"

  --from Ricklefs, R.E. (1993). *The economy of nature.* (3rd ed.) New York: W.H.Freeman

- **Step 2: Write or think about a summary ("gist") sentence that captures the important ideas of the passage.**

  Carbon cycles through ecological systems in three ways: (1) photosynthesis and respiration, (2) physical exchange between the atmosphere and bodies of water, and (3) depositing or dissolving of mineral sediments such as limestone.

- **Step 3: Write (or think of) a keyword that provides a mental picture to represent a main idea in the passage.** Add details to the mental picture or create a story around the keyword to memorize the facts or ideas.

  A man on a sooty bicycle [keyword: represents "carbon cycles"] *rode into a*

greenhouse ["photosynthesis and respiration"]. *The man put on an air tank and jumped into a pool of water* ["physical exchange between atmosphere and bodies of water"], *where he chiseled limestone off the bottom of the pool* ["depositing or dissolving of mineral sediments such as limestone"].

Main-Idea Maps

Description: This simple strategy teaches students to generate a graphic organizer containing the main ideas of an expository passage.

Reserve at least a full instructional session to introduce this comprehension strategy. (For effective-teaching tips, consult the guidelines presented in "*Introducing Academic Strategies to Students: A Direct-Instruction Approach*").

Materials:

- Overhead transparencies of practice expository passages, transparency markers
- Student copies of practice expository passages (optional) or reading/text books, *Main Idea Graphic Organizer*

Preparation:

- Prepare overheads of sample passages.

Intervention Script:

1. Introduce the strategy by telling students that we can draw pictures, or Main Idea Maps, that help us to understand how the ideas of a multi-paragraph passage fit together. Present these three steps for mapping out the main ideas of an expository:

   Locating the Main Ideas of Paragraphs. Read through a short (2-6 paragraph) practice expository passage with students.

   On a blank overhead transparency or chart paper, begin building a graphic organizer by writing the title of the passage in the center. Draw a box around the title. (If the passage has no title, query the class and make up a suitable title based on their suggestions.) NOTE: Instead of drawing your own map, you can use the pre-formatted *Main Idea Graphic Organizer* that is included with this strategy.

   Tell students that some paragraphs have summary sentences that state the main idea or "gist" of the paragraph or passage. Other paragraphs have *implied* main ideas, which the reader must figure out, based on key facts or ideas that they contain.

   Go through each paragraph in the practice passage and identify the paragraph's main idea. Demonstrate how to summarize that main idea as a single, succinct phrase.

   Building the Main Idea Graphic Organizer. As you summarize each paragraph's main idea, write the number of the paragraph and main-idea summary phrase on the graphic organizer. (Start writing at the upper left corner of the organizer sheet and continue clockwise around the page. Space the summary phrases to allow space to

write under each. See the sample "Main Idea Graphic Organizer.").

Adding Key Facts. When you have written the main idea for all of the paragraphs onto the graphic organizer, return to the passage. For each paragraph, pull out 2-3 important facts, ideas, or supporting details. On the graphic organizer, write these key pieces of additional information under the main-idea phrase for that paragraph. Then draw a box around the main-idea and supporting details and move on to the next paragraph.

2. Practice Using the Graphic Organizer as a Study Tool. Demonstrate how the completed Main Idea Graphic Organizer can be a useful method to summarize and review the content of expository passages. Give students new practice passages and have them create their own graphic organizers. Provide feedback and encouragement as needed.

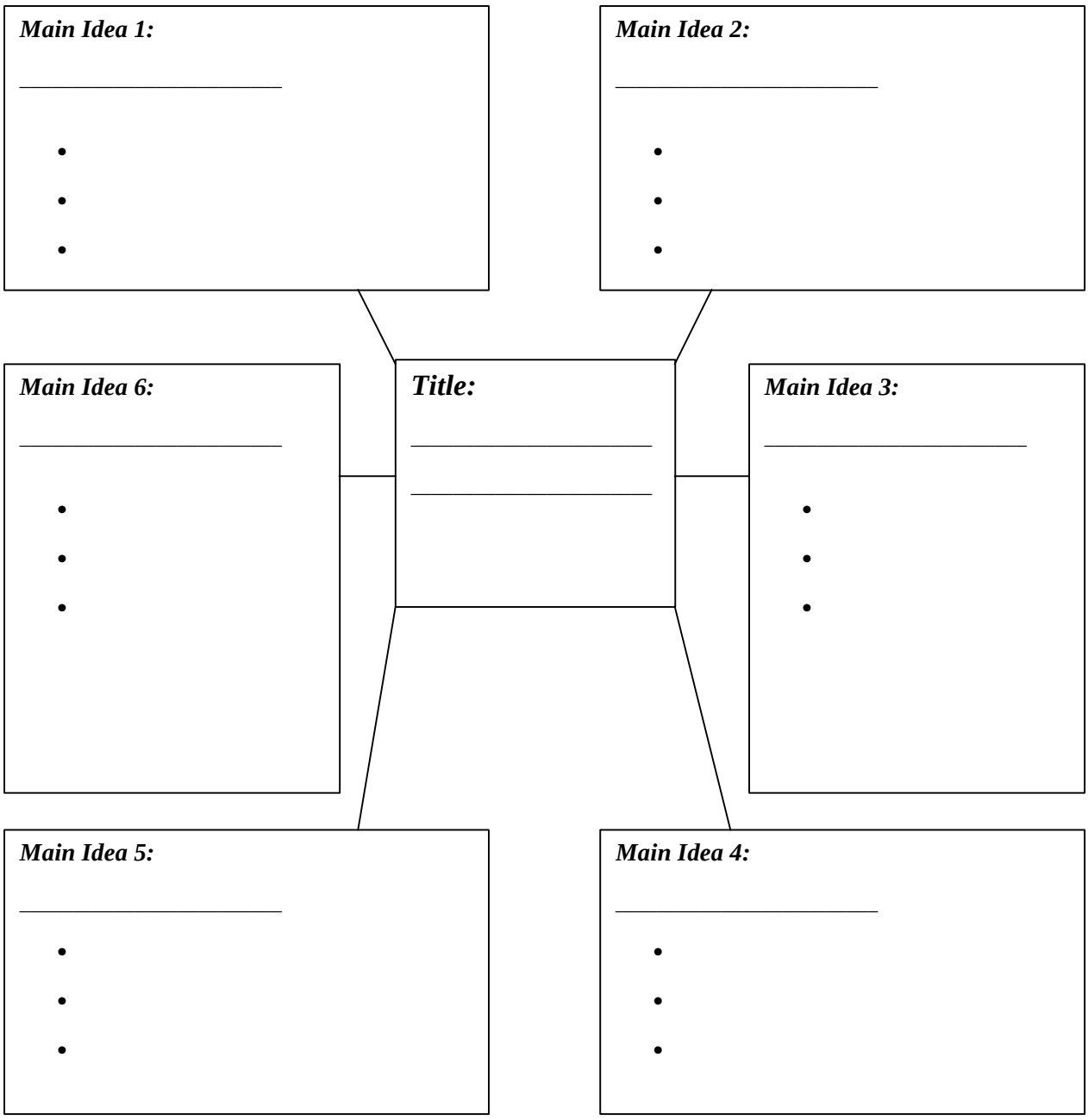
Tips:

Use a Giant 'Main Idea Map' to Teach The Strategy. You can make the teaching of this strategy fun and highly interactive by drawing a giant version of the Main Idea Graphic Organizer onto newsprint and laying it on the floor. Assign each individual in the class to read through a practice passage and write out a summary main-idea phrase and key ideas or facts for each paragraph. Review the passage with the group. For each paragraph, invite a volunteer to stand on the space on the giant organizer that corresponds to the paragraph and read aloud his or her summary for class feedback. Continue through the passage until all paragraphs have been reviewed and student volunteers have occupied each point on the graphic organizer.

References:

Berkowitz, S.J. (1986). Effects of instruction in text organization on sixth-grade students' memory for expository reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *21*, 161-178.

Main Idea Graphic Organizer (adapted from Berkowitz, 1986)



Mental Imagery: Improving Text Recall

Description: By constructing "mental pictures" of what they are reading and closely studying text illustrations, students increase their reading comprehension.

Reserve at least a full instructional session to introduce this comprehension strategy. (For effective-teaching tips, consult the guidelines presented in "*Introducing Academic Strategies to Students: A Direct-Instruction Approach*").

Materials:

- Overhead transparencies of sample passages taken from expository or narrative texts, transparency markers
- Student copies of practice expository or narrative passages (optional) or reading/text books

Preparation:

- Prepare overheads of sample expository or narrative passages.

Intervention Script:

1. Tell students that they can remember more of what they read by:

   - making pictures in their mind of what they are reading
   - carefully studying pictures or illustrations that appear in their reading or text books

2. Using a "think-aloud" approach, read through a short sample narrative or expository passage. Pause at several points to tell the class what "mental pictures" come to your mind as you read; ask students to describe their own mental imagery as they react to the same passage. As you come across pictures or illustrations in the passage, study them and reflect aloud on what clues they give you about the passage's meaning.

3. Read aloud from additional passages. Stop at key points in the passage and call on students to relate their mental imagery evoked by the passage or to give their interpretation of the significance of illustrations or pictures.

4. When students are able to use mental imagery independently, use a prompt at the start of reading assignments to cue them to use the strategy. You might say, for example, "Now we are going to read about what life is like in a country village in Zimbabwe. Remember to make pictures in your head about what you are reading and study the pictures carefully."

Tips:

Have Your Students Become More Active Reading Participants. As your students become more adept at using mental imagery and text illustrations to comprehend their reading, enlist them in critical discussions about the strengths or drawbacks of a particular book, chapter, or article. How clearly does the author write? Is it easy or difficult to form mental pictures of the passage's content, and why? How would they grade the author on the quality and clarity of his or her illustrations?

References:

Gambrell, L.B. & Bales, R.B. (1986). Mental imagery and the comprehension-monitoring performance of fourth- and fifth-grade poor readers. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *21*, 454-464.

Gambrell, L.B. & Jawitz, P.B. (1993). Mental imagery, text illustrations, and children's story comprehension and recall. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *23*, 265-273.

Oral Recitation Lesson

Description: This intervention builds student motivation and interest by having them participate along with the teacher in repeated public readings of a story across several days. Throughout the process, the entire class discusses the work as literature.

Materials:

- Teacher and student copies of reading series or literature books

Preparation:

- Select and become familiar with a story to be read by the class across multiple days.

Intervention Script:

1. On day 1, introduce the story, giving general information about the characters, setting, and plot. Engage students in a discussion about what they predict might happen in the story.

   Read the entire story aloud to the class while students follow along in their own books. Read in an expressive manner (e.g., using a dramatic voice to emphasize dire or urgent situations, changing inflection and tone of voice to reflect the dialog of various characters, etc.). Stop periodically in your reading to ask reaction questions ("How do you feel about the predicament that Mr. Blaha finds himself in? Has anything like that ever happened to you?") and prediction questions ("OK, we know that Mr. Blaha is in trouble because he is lost in the cave with no flashlight. What do you think he will do next?").

   At the conclusion of the story, discuss its narrative elements with the class. For example, you might ask students to:

   - describe the personality of the main character
   - talk about other important characters in the story and their foibles or qualities
   - give details about the time and setting of the story
   - pinpoint the central problem(s) or challenge(s) that the main character faces
   - describe how the main character responded to various plot developments
   - decide what overarching theme or lesson the story might convey.

   Wrap up the lesson by summarizing the story. Be sure to fold into your summary key points that came up in class discussion. Use this opportunity to highlight and define new vocabulary that appeared in the story.

2. On day 2, give a thumbnail review of the story that you read to the class on Day 1.

   Inform students that in this session they will have the chance to practice reading the story aloud. Their goal is to read selections from the story with fluency, and feeling.

   Read an opening passage from the story. As you read, stop occasionally to point out to students how you use expressive qualities of your voice to make the story "come alive."

   Read another short passage. Then direct the entire class to read the same passage aloud. Next, select a single student to read the passage, directing him or her to use an expressive voice. If the student reader has difficulty, model by reading the passage aloud again. At the end of the student's reading, gently correct any reading mistakes that interfere with the story's meaning and praise the student. Ask other students to read additional passages aloud as time allows.

   Assign each student in the class a short passage from the story that they will be responsible for reading aloud at the next session. (Day 3). Allow them time to practice their passage (or assign as homework).

3. On day 3, read an introductory passage from the story aloud, again with expression. As you come to a passage assigned to a student, ask that student to read his or her section aloud. Provide supportive feedback to the student about his or her performance and ask other students to comment on the reading as well. Continue through the story until all students have read their assigned selections.

Tips:

Let Students Vote on Stories to Be Recited. To build student motivation for this activity, you may occasionally want to let the class vote on a book that they would like to recite. If your range of book choices is constrained by your curriculum, you might offer 4-5 acceptable stories and have students choose from that list.

Make Your Book Recitations Public Events. Oral recitation lessons are intended as public performances. Once your students become comfortable reading aloud to an audience, you might invite other classes or parents to attend your final readings. Another idea is to help your students to turn an oral recitation lesson into a community service experience. For example, students might ask residents of a nursing home to select a story that they would enjoy hearing and then visit the facility to give an expressive reading.

References:

Hoffman, J.R. (1987). Rethinking the role of oral reading in basal instruction. *The Elementary School Journal, 87*, 367-373.

Reutzel, D.R. & Hollingsworth, P.M. (1993). Effects of fluency training on second graders' reading comprehension. *Journal of Educational Research, 86*, 325-331.

Prior Knowledge: Activating the 'Known'

Description: Through a series of guided questions, the instructor helps students activate their prior knowledge of a specific topic to help them comprehend the content of a story or article on the same topic. Linking new facts to prior knowledge increases a student's *inferential* comprehension (ability to place novel information in a meaningful context by comparing it to already-learned information).

Reserve at least a full instructional session to introduce this comprehension strategy. (For effective-teaching tips, consult the guidelines presented in "*Introducing Academic Strategies to Students: A Direct-Instruction Approach*").

Materials:

- Overhead transparencies of practice reading passages and sample Text Prediction questions, transparency markers
- Student copies of practice reading passages (optional) or reading/text books, blank paper and pencil or pen

Preparation:

- Prepare overheads of sample passages.
- Locate 3 main ideas per passage and—for each idea—develop a prior knowledge question and a prediction question (see below).

Intervention Script:

1. Introduce this strategy to the class:

    1. Explain the Benefit of Using Prior Knowledge to Understand a Reading Passage: Tell students that recalling their prior experiences ("their own life") can help them to understand the content of their reading. New facts make sense only when we connect them to what we already know.

    2. Demonstrate the Text Prediction Strategy. Select a sample passage and use a "think-aloud" approach to show students how to use the text-prediction strategy. (Note: To illustrate how the strategy is used, this intervention script uses the attached example, *Attending Public School in Japan*.)

        Step 1: Think About What and Why: Describe what strategy you are about to apply and the reason for doing so. You might say, for example, "*I am about to read a short article on public schools in Japan. Before I read the article, though, I should think about my life experiences and what they might tell me*

about the topic that I am about to read about. By thinking about my own life, I will better understand the article."

Step 2: Preview Main Ideas from the Reading and Pose Prior Knowledge and Prediction Questions. One at a time, pose three main ideas that appear in the article or story. For each key idea, present one question requiring that readers tap their own *prior knowledge* of the topic and another that prompts them to predict how *the article or story* might deal with the topic.

Here is a typical question cycle, composed of a main idea statement, prior knowledge question, prediction question, and student opportunity to write a response.

"*The article that we are going to read describes how different the writing system used in Japanese schools is from our own writing system* " [A main idea from the passage].

"*What are your own attitudes and experiences about writing?*" [prior knowledge question] Answer this question aloud, and then encourage students to respond.

"*What do you think that the article will say about the Japanese writing system?*" [prediction question] Answer this question aloud, and then seek student responses.

"*Now, write down your own ideas about what you think the article will say about the Japanese writing system.* " [student written response] As students write their own responses, model for them by writing out your answer to the question on the overhead transparency.

Step 3: Students Read the Story or Article Independently. Once you have presented three main ideas and students have responded to all questions, have them read the selection independently.

2. When students have learned the Text Prediction strategy, use it regularly to introduce new reading assignments.

Tips:

Use Text Prediction to Prepare Students for Homework Reading. You can apply the Text Prediction strategy to boost student comprehension of homework reading assignments. When assigning the homework passages, take students through the steps in the strategy. Then require that students take their own written predictions home to compare to their actual reading.

Transition from Group to Individual Application of the Strategy. As your students become proficient in applying the strategy, you can gradually train them to use the strategy independently. As the instructor, you might hand out the three main ideas for a story and then direct students to take each idea and write out (1) a short account of their own experiences with the topic, and (2) a prediction of what the article or story will say about the main idea. You can collect these written assignments to monitor student understanding and follow-through in using the technique.

References:

Hansen, J. & Pearson, P.D. (1983). An instructional study: Improving the inferential comprehension of good and poor fourth-grade readers. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *75*, 821-829.

Attending Public School in Japan

Japan is a country of 125 million inhabitants, with a rich and ancient cultural tradition. The geography is varied, with many mountains and valleys.

The Japanese language is quite different from English. In fact, linguists (researchers who study to form and structure of languages) disagree on how Japanese evolved as a language and how closely it is related to other world languages. Because Japan is an archipelago (a series of islands), sections of the country were once quite isolated from one another. Even now, throughout Japan there are a number of different *dialects* (variant spoken versions of the language) that can make it difficult at times for a speaker of one dialect to understand a speaker of another dialect.

The food in Japanese public schools is generally very healthy but quite different than students are used to eating in America. Dishes may contain combinations of raw or cooked seafood, vegetables, noodles, rice, or seaweed. While meat is commonly served, the portions are smaller than are typical in American meals. Fast food has become popular in Japan, but diners must also be able to handle chopsticks.

In Japan, all children attend primary (elementary) school and middle school. Although high school is not mandatory in Japan, virtually all high-school-age students attend them. Unlike most American school systems, high schools in Japan are selective. Students must take competitive exams to be admitted to these schools, which are largely designed to prepare students for college. Many students choose to attend vocational schools, rather than academic high schools.

In public school, students must learn four separate writing systems: Kanji, hiragana, katakana, and romaji. The most challenging of these systems, kanji, is based on Chinese ideograms (words written as a pictorial series of brush- or pen-strokes) and takes years to learn to read and write properly.

Most high school students in Japan will tell you that they have no assigned homework. However, Japanese students regularly spend *several hours* per night reviewing their lessons and reading ahead on the material that will be covered in school the following day. Japanese students, like their American counterparts, love television shows, movies, computer games, and other forms of popular entertainment.

Question-Generation

Description: Students are taught to boost their comprehension of expository passages by (1) locating the main idea or key ideas in the passage and (2) generating questions based on that information.

Reserve at least a full instructional session to introduce this comprehension strategy. (For effective-teaching tips, consult the guidelines presented in "*Introducing Academic Strategies to Students: A Direct-Instruction Approach*").

Materials:

- Overhead transparencies of practice reading passages, transparency markers
- Student copies of practice reading passages (optional) or reading/text books

Preparation:

- Prepare overheads of sample passages.

Intervention Script:

1. Introduce this strategy to the class:

   A. Locating Explicit Main Idea: Tell students that some passages have summary sentences that state the main idea or "gist" of the paragraph or passage. Using examples of passages with explicit main ideas, train students to identify and underline main-idea sentences.

   B. Finding Key Facts. In some passages, the main idea is implied rather than explicitly stated. Readers must first identify the key facts or ideas of the passage before they can summarize the passage's main idea.

   Using examples of passages with implied main ideas, locate and circle key facts or ideas. Describe to students how you distinguished this central information from less important details. Have students practice this skill on additional practice passages.

   C. Writing a "Gist" Sentence. Show students a passage with an implied main idea. Circle all key ideas or facts. Demonstrate how to write a "gist" sentence (one that is built from the identified key ideas and summarizes the paragraph's main idea). Emphasize that the reader may have link information from different sections of the passage to build a gist sentence. Have students practice this skill on additional practice passages.

   D. Generating Questions. Tell students that careful readers often construct questions about what they are reading to help them learn. Put up a list of 'signal words' that can be used as question-starters: e.g., who, what, where,

when, why, how. Using sample passages, show students how to convert explicit main-idea sentences or reader-created "gist" sentences into questions. Point out that these questions can be a good study tool because they are linked to answers that the student has already located in the passage.

2. Give students selected practice passages and instruct them to apply the full question-generation strategy. Provide feedback and encouragement as needed.

Tips:

Use "Gist" Sentences to Organize Student Research Notes. When students are writing research papers, they often find it challenging to synthesize their scattered research notes into an orderly outline with sequentially presented main ideas. Students who have mastered the skill of assembling key ideas into "gist" sentences can identify their most important research notes, copy these notes individually onto index cards, and group cards with related notes. The student can then write a single "gist" sentence for each pile of note cards and use these sentences as the starting point for a paper outline.

Collect Exemplary Examples of Student-Generated Questions as Study Aids. If your class is using an assigned textbook, you may want to collect well-written student-generated questions and share them with other students. Or assign students different sections of an article or book chapter and require that they 'teach' the content by presenting their text-generated questions and sharing the correct answers.

Select Student Questions As Quiz or Test Items. You can build classroom interest (and competition!) in using this question-generation strategy by occasionally using one or more student text-questions as quiz or test items.

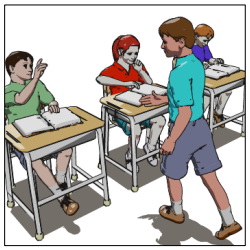
References:

Davey, B., & McBride, S. (1986). Effects of question-generation training on reading comprehension. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 78,* 256-262.

Rosenshine, B., Meister, C., & Chapman, S. (1996). Teaching students to generate questions: A review of the intervention studies. *Review of Educational Research, 66,* 181-221.

Reciprocal Teaching: A Reading Comprehension Package

Description: The intervention package teaches students to use reading comprehension strategies independently, including text prediction, summarization, question generation, and clarification of unknown or unclear content.



For effective-teaching tips to use when introducing this strategy, consult the guidelines presented in "*Introducing Academic Strategies to Students: A Direct-Instruction Approach*".

Materials:

- Overhead transparencies of practice reading passages, transparency markers
- Student copies of *Be a Careful Reader!: Four Strategies to Better Understand What You Are Reading*, *Reciprocal Teaching Strategies Worksheet*, and practice reading passages (optional) or reading/text books

Preparation:

- Prepare overheads of sample passages.

Intervention Script:

1. Set aside at least four successive instructional days to introduce each of the following comprehension strategies: Day 1: prediction, Day 2: summarization ("list main ideas"), Day 3: question generation, Day 4: clarifying. As you introduce each strategy, "think aloud" as you apply the technique to a sample passage, write down responses on the Reciprocal Teaching Strategies Worksheet, and check for student understanding of key concepts.

2. After students have been introduced to the key strategies, the group is now ready to apply all four strategies from the Reciprocal Teaching package to a sample reading passage. For each strategy (prediction, summarization, question generation, clarifying), briefly review the technique. Then randomly select a student "instructor" to guide the group to apply the strategy and complete the relevant section of the Reciprocal Teaching Strategies Worksheet. (Be prepared to offer assistance to the student "instructor" as needed.) Give specific praise to students for appropriately using comprehension strategies.

3. As the group shows an increased mastery of the strategies, assign students to read text segments silently. Then take the students as a group through the four strategies, calling on different students to discuss how they applied the strategies to the passage.

4. Give students copies of the Reciprocal Teaching Strategies Worksheet and instruct them to read a passage silently without interruption. Prior to their starting, remind students to take time occasionally during reading to make predictions about the text, note main ideas, formulate key questions, and clarify unclear material.

Tips:

Let students select Reciprocal Teaching passages. Allow the group to vote for a preferred passage from among several possible choices. Choice often increases student motivation and investment.

Start a 'Reciprocal Teaching' Tutoring Program. Once students become proficient in using the Reciprocal Teaching package, consider assigning them as peer tutors to train other students to use Reciprocal Teaching Strategies.

Troubleshooting:

While they participate in the large-group instruction, some students do not appear to use the comprehension strategies in their independent reading. After independent reading assignments, pair students off to compare their completed Reciprocal Teaching worksheets. Have individuals in each student pair alternate in discussing how they applied the strategies. Walk around the room observing discussion. If you notice that a student has failed to complete his or her worksheet, pull him or her aside later for a private conference to discover what problems might be preventing the student from using these strategies.

Students do not use the Reciprocal Teaching strategies across instructional settings. Let other teachers know that you have taught your students to use this package of comprehension strategies. Share copies of the Reciprocal Teaching Strategies Worksheet with your fellow instructors and invite them to use it. Share a copy of the worksheet with students' parents and encourage them to see that their child uses it for all reading assignments.

References:

Lysynchuk, L.M., Pressley, M., & Vye, N.J. (1990). Reciprocal teaching improves standardized reading comprehension performance in poor comprehenders. *The Elementary School Journal*, *90*, 469-484.

Be a Careful Reader!: Four Strategies to Better Understand What You Are Reading

When you are reading an article, book chapter, or story, you can use these four simple techniques to be sure that you fully understand the content.

Prediction. Before you begin to read the selection, look at the main title, scan the pages to read the major headings, and look at any illustrations. Based on these clues, try to *predict* what the article or story is about.

Now read the selection to see whether it turns out as you predicted! Stop at several points during your reading and ask yourself how closely the content of the actual story or article fit your initial prediction. How do the facts and information that you have read change your prediction about what you will find in the rest of the story or article?

List Main ideas. Stop after each paragraph or major section of the passage. Construct one or two complete sentences that sum up only the *most important* idea(s) that appear in the section. (Good summary sentences include key concepts or events but leave out less important details!)

Write these summary (main idea) sentences down and continue reading.

Question Generation. Look at the ideas that you have summarized as you read the passage. For each main idea listed, write down at least one *question* that the main idea will answer. Good questions should include words like "who, "where", "when", "why", and "what".

For example, if you are reading an article about the extinction of the dinosaurs, you might list the following main idea: "Most scientists now believe that the extinction of the dinosaurs was caused by a large meteor striking the earth." You could then write this question: "What event do most scientists now believe caused the mass extinction of the dinosaurs?"

Clarifying. Sometimes in your reading you will run into words, phrases, or whole sentences that really don't make sense. Here are some ways that you can *clarify* the meaning of your reading before moving on:

Unknown words. If you come across a word whose meaning you do not know, read the sentences before and after it to see if they give you clues to the word's meaning. If the word is still unclear, look it up in a dictionary.

Unclear phrases or sentences. Reread the phrase or sentence carefully and try to understand it. If it contains words such as "them", "it" or "they", be sure that you know what nouns (persons, places, or things) to which these words refer.

If all else fails, ask another student or an adult to help you to clarify the meaning of a confusing word, phrase, or sentence.

Reciprocal Teaching Strategies Worksheet (Adapted from Lysynchuk, Pressley, & Vye, 1990)

Student Name: _____ Reading Assignment: _____ Date: _____

Prediction. Before you begin to read the selection, look at the main title, scan the pages to read the major headings, and look at any illustrations. Write down your *prediction about* what the story or article will cover:

_____

_____

List Main Ideas. As you finish reading each *paragraph* or *key section* of the passage, summarize the main idea of that paragraph or section in one or two complete sentences. (Use the back of this sheet if needed.):	**Generate Questions.** For each main idea listed, write down at least one *question* that the main idea will answer. Good questions should include words like "who, "where", "when", "why", and "what".
• ***Main idea 1:***_____ _____	• ***Question 1 :***_____ _____
• ***Main idea 2:***_____ _____	• ***Question 2 :***_____ _____
• ***Main idea 3:***_____ _____	• ***Question 3 :***_____ _____

Clarifying. Copy down any words, phrases, or sentences in the passage that are unclear: _____

_____

_____

Text Lookback

Description: Text lookback is a simple strategy that students can use to boost their recall of expository prose by looking back in the text for important information.

Reserve at least a full instructional session to introduce this comprehension strategy. (For effective-teaching tips, consult the guidelines presented in "*Introducing Academic Strategies to Students: A Direct-Instruction Approach*").

Materials:

- Overhead transparencies of short (100-200 word) passages from expository text and teacher-prepared text and lookback/think questions, transparency markers
- Student copies of expository text passages and text-lookback /think questions

Preparation:

- Create at least 3 lookback questions and one think question for each expository text passage selected

Intervention Script:

1. Introduce the text-lookback strategy by telling students that people cannot always remember everything that they read. If we read an article or book chapter, though, and are asked a 'fact' question about it that we cannot answer, we can always look back in the article to find the information that we need.

2. Describe for the class the difference between lookback and think questions. An example of an explanation that you might use is:

   "*When we are asked questions about an article, sometimes the answer can be found directly in the article and sometimes it cannot be found directly.*"

   "*Lookback questions are those that tell us that the answer can be found right in the article. For example, if a question uses phrases such* as in the article *or* in the author's words*, these phrases would be clues that the question is a lookup question and that we can find the answer in the article.* "

   "*Think questions are those that ask you to give your own opinion, beliefs, or ideas. Our answers to these questions are based on our own ideas or thoughts about the topic. For example, if a question uses phrases such* as in your opinion *or* what do you think*, these phrases would be clues that the question is a think question and that the answer cannot be found in the article.* "

3. Read aloud through the sample expository passage. Then read the series of 4 text-lookback/think questions to the class. As you read each question, highlight for students the word clues that indicate whether the question is a think or text-lookback question.

4. Tell students that they must reread carefully to find the answer to a text-lookback question. However, they can save time by first *skimming* the article to get to the general section where the answer to the question is probably located. To skim, the student should:

   - read the text-lookback question carefully and underline the section that tells the reader what to look for (e.g., "What does the article say <u>are the five most endangered species of whales</u> today?").

   - look for titles, headings, or illustrations in the article that might tell the reader where the information that he or she is looking for is probably located

   - look at the beginning and end sentences in individual paragraphs to see if that paragraph might contain the desired information.

5. "Thinking aloud", demonstrate for students how to skim the example article to locate efficiently the answer to each text-lookback question.

6. Present additional example articles with text-lookback questions and monitor student mastery of the technique. Assign students to use the strategy independently when, under your supervision, they can distinguish reliably between think and text-lookback questions and are able to find the answers to text-lookback questions in the text.

Tips:

Have Students Write Text-Lookback Questions for Assigned Reading. For homework, encourage students to compose several challenging text-lookback questions based on their assigned reading. Use these questions later for class review.

References:

Garner, R., Hare, V.C., Alexander, P., Haynes, J., & Vinograd, P. (1984). Inducing use of a text lookback strategy among unsuccessful readers. *American Educational Research Journal, 21*, 789-798.