

# TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR READING FOR INFORMATION

**These reading interaction strategies are designed to be used by subject-area teachers using their own materials. These strategies will enhance learning when integrated within reading in all disciplines. These strategies can be incorporated into any lesson that requires students to read new material. With teacher direction, some of them will help students with more difficult reading materials.**

## STRATEGY 1

The following is a list of activities that can be used when reading nonfiction with students. These activities can be done in 10 minutes when introducing new material.

1. Preview the materials by examining any charts, pictures, graphs, section headings, etc.
2. Ask the student to think about what he or she already knows.
3. Set purposes that will direct the students to information.
4. Identify the method of organization, which is a clue to developing interpretation.
5. Separate facts from opinions.
6. Consider the writer's tone.
7. Summarize.

## STRATEGY 2

### **Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA)**

The purpose of this activity is to help motivate students to read a topic in the textbook or other materials. The teacher asks **What?** and **Why?** and requires students to **prove** their statements. The students 1) predict, 2) read and 3) give proof. Choose a reading that can be divided into 3-5 parts and has a title.

**Step 1:** Read the title. With only reading the title, ask the students what they think the reading is about. Write student predictions on the chalkboard, overhead transparency, etc. As students make predictions, ask them why they made each prediction. Accept all predictions.

**Step 2:** Have the students read about one-fourth to one-third of the reading or choose a place where students could easily stop reading. Go over the predictions on the chalkboard and ask the class if that prediction applies to the reading. Omit predictions that do not apply. Modify predictions that are partly on target. Keep predictions that are appropriate. Ask why the students feel certain predictions should be kept or modified. Have the students read to the class a sentence, or phrases from the reading that support each prediction. Finally, ask the students if they want to make any new predictions based on what they have read, and explain why.

**Step 3:** The students read another one-third or one-fourth of the reading assignment. Stop and follow the same procedure given in step two. Go over the predictions to omit, modify or support them. Be sure the students provide and read proof from the reading to support their predictions and ideas.

**Step 4:** Read another part of the reading and follow the procedure in step two and three or read the remainder of the reading assignment and go over the predictions, again having students provide proof from the reading to support their statements. Summarize the main ideas of the reading.

**Students also may use the charts below for this activity.**

| <b>Prediction</b>                                  | <b>Evidence to Support</b>                                    | <b>Evidence to the contrary</b>                               |
|--|---|---|
| Student cites what he or she believes will happen. | <b>Textual evidence</b> that supports the student prediction. | <b>Textual evidence</b> that does not support the prediction. |

### STRATEGY 3

**Graphic organizers** focus on information. Choosing the specific shape of a graphic organizer depends on purpose, text characteristics and preferences. After reading a selection, students are instructed to select the information that will complete the graphic organizer. Modeling this strategy on an overhead or the chalkboard first is advised. For a modification of this strategy, you can first use a cloze graphic organizer, one that is partially filled in to help students see the categories and the relationship of details to the whole. Using various types of graphic organizers will help readers practice different organizational strategies. Graphic organizers can be used to illustrate story sequence (story map), to compare and contrast two ideas (Venn diagram) and to show relationships among details.

### STRATEGY 4

**List-group-label** is a useful activity to help readers identify key ideas and create key idea statements. Readers note important words or phrases as they read, listing them on a paper or noting them in the margin. After completing the passage, readers review their list and place their words or phrases in groupings that the reading or their experience suggests to them. Finally, they create labels for each of the groupings. Once the groups are labeled, readers may revisit the placement of some of the terms. From those labels, readers should be able to generate key idea statements.

### STRATEGY 5

**Develop an Anticipation Guide:** An anticipation guide is a method that allows students to move from generalizations to more specific interpretations of text.

| <b>Before Reading</b> |          | <b>Generalizations</b>   | <b>After Reading</b> |          |
|-----------------------|----------|--|----------------------|----------|
| Agree                 | Disagree | Provide a list of general statements related to the reading and ask students to complete a chart and then discuss if opinions changed and why. | Agree                | Disagree |

### STRATEGY 6

**Using a K-W-L Chart.** **K-W-L** (Ogle, Carr and Ogle, 1987) charts help students identify what they already **KNOW** about the subject, what they **WANT** to know about the subject and what they have **LEARNED** as a result of reading. The K-W-L strategy requires students to build on past knowledge and is useful in making connections.

K-W-L activities and their variations give students opportunities to focus on important information within their purpose for reading and help them connect background and new knowledge. This will help them move toward independence as learners and as readers.

This reading strategy consists of four steps. Make three columns on a chalkboard and label one column what do you **know (K)**. Label column two what do you **want (W)** to learn and label column three what I **learned (L)**.

**Step 1:** Introduce the topic of the reading to the students. Have the students state what they already know about the topic (prior knowledge) and list their comments on the chalkboard under column one, or K.

**Step 2:** Have the students brainstorm to identify ideas they would like to learn about the topic and list their comments under column two, or W.

**Step 3:** Have the students read the reading assignment.

**Step 4:** Discuss the reading assignment and list what the students learned under column three, or L. Summarize the reading assignment.

| KNOW   | WANT   | LEARNED   |
|--|--|---|
| <p>As students brainstorm background knowledge, they should be encouraged to group or categorize the information on what they know about the topic. This step helps them connect prior knowledge with what they will read.</p> | <p>Focusing on their purpose, they create questions about the subject in terms of what they want to know. These questions help readers prepare to find information. They may generate more questions as they read.</p> | <p>This step provides students with an opportunity to make direct links among their purpose for reading, the questions they had as they read and the information they found. Here they identify what they have learned. During this step, students identify what they read, summarize the important aspects, and should be reflective about their process and make plans for their next use of text. Categorizing at this stage of the K-W-L activity also helps readers identify the more important information.</p> |

## K-W-L (KNOW/WANT/LEARNED) SAMPLE CHART

A **K-W-L** chart such as the following illustrates the **K-W-L** technique for current events or for a concept such as rain forests. Students brainstorm what they know about rain forests, then list questions they might want to investigate and finally complete the "What I Learned" column based on answers they find in a reading about the diminishing rain forests.

### *Diminishing Rain Forests*

| <i><b>K-What I Know</b></i>  | <i><b>W-What I Want To Find Out</b></i>  | <i><b>L-What I Learned</b></i> |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rain forests are lush and dense.</li> <li>• They are very wet.</li> <li>• Rain forests contain a lot of animal life.</li> <li>• Rain forests are being threatened.</li> <li>• Rain forests are important to the world's climate.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why are rain forests being threatened?</li> <li>• How large are the rain forests?</li> <li>• Who or what is threatening the rain forests?</li> <li>• Where are they located?</li> <li>• Are rain forests inhabited?</li> <li>• Why are they important to the world's climate?</li> <li>• What kinds of animals live in the rain forests?</li> </ul> |                                |

### STRATEGY 7

**Main Idea (Nonfiction):** Constructing meaning and building comprehension require that readers go beyond the parts of a text and create a big idea that unites the parts for them. Main idea or theme not only identifies the topic of a text, but what the author says about the topic. There are many ways to help students synthesize across the text and arrive at main idea or theme, and different kinds of practice, modeling and discussion increases reader's ability to look at the "bigger picture" in a text. In reading nonfiction, the teacher may ask, "What is the most important sentence in the passage?" "What is the writer's opinion of the topic?" "What words helped you identify the writer's opinion?"

### STRATEGY 8

**Inductive Reasoning:** As students become more strategic and proficient readers they begin to formulate generalizations about the text that will help them later as they develop a critical stance. It is important that students use the text in support of the critical stance and general statements. The following strategy is designed to engage students while they read a text. The activity leads

students to formulate generalizations and to promote the students' critical thinking dispositions and abilities.

| Making Inferences                           |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| Question                                    | It(text)says                                   | I say  | And so  |
| Student poses a question about the reading. | Quote from the text or paraphrase in response. | Student includes his or her thoughts about the text. | Student combines the information from It says and I say to draw an inference. |

| Making Generalizations    |  |  |   |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Question                  | It (text) says                                 | I say  | And So  | My generalization  |
| Student poses a question. | Quote from the text or paraphrase in response. | Student includes his or her thoughts about the text. | Student combines the information from It says and I say to draw an inference. | Student extends the inference beyond the text to the world in general. |

## STRATEGY 9

**Questioning.** The use of many questions in encountering a text deepens understanding and leads to higher-level thinking. Encouraging students to question a text involves them more actively in the reading. Students can develop a repertoire of questions to ask each other as they read text. Before reading, have students generate questions about the topic or concept. After reading, the teacher asks questions such as, “What questions are still unanswered?” “What did you learn that you didn’t have a question for?” “What did the writer do to make you think that way?” How did the writer use language to convince you?” “What evidence did you find to convince you of the writer’s idea?” By asking speculative questions, teachers model that practice for students and encourage them to ask their own.

## STRATEGY 10

### **Reciprocal Teaching** (Palinczar and Brown, 1986)

Reciprocal teaching facilitates the construction of deeper meaning to text through a modeling process that emphasizes reader control of questioning, clarifying, summarizing and predicting. It is a group effort between teacher and students that leads students to greater independence as critical readers as they share their unique understandings of parts of the text. Helping students learn how to attend to clues as they read to recognize patterns or commonalties is critical to successful prediction.

The following technique works best when teachers and students share their unique understandings of the text. The dialogue involves summarizing, questioning, clarifying and predicting. The teacher and students take turns assuming the role of leaders in the dialogue or discussion. Reciprocal teaching can be successfully implemented at any grade level with small heterogeneous groups.

When the teacher first introduces reciprocal teaching, teacher and students discuss why a text may be difficult to understand, why it is important to have a strategic approach to reading and studying, and how to monitor one’s own understanding. After giving the students a description of the four strategies (summarizing, questioning, clarifying and predicting), the teacher models by asking *questions* he or she believes are most important in the material read.

The students respond to the questions. The teacher then *summarizes* the information read, points out issues in or with the text that are unclear (*clarifies*) and finally *predicts* what will happen next in the text. Once the teacher models the process, a student can assume the lead role and model the procedure for others. Students continue to read parts of the text until all students have had an opportunity to assume the lead role.

### STRATEGY 11

**Generating Open-Ended Questions:** Student learning will benefit from incorporating strategies for developing open-ended questions for comprehension, interpretation and critical stance. The ability to create and respond to open-ended questions will improve a student’s interaction with text and provide for deeper insight. Initially, teachers should develop open-ended questions for discussion. As students become more proficient, they should be encouraged to develop their own questions, perhaps through journals or reader-response notebooks. An important consideration for the teacher to remember in generating open-ended questions is that you are not looking for a single correct answer, but many possibilities to extend meaning. The verbs associated with comprehension, analysis, evaluation and synthesis found in Bloom’s Taxonomy is an excellent source for generating questions.

### STRATEGY 12

The **Reader-Response Log or Notebook** requires that students become active readers by writing questions and making predictions while reading and then responding to those questions. There are many models for a reader-response notebook. (See **Strategies for Responding to Literature**). One model asks readers to write specific passages in one column and respond to them in an adjacent column. Students should be encouraged through modeling to provide extensive personal responses that include questions.

| Text  | Response or Questions   |
|---|---|
| Provide a direct quote from the text that is challenging, interesting and/or confusing. | Respond to the quote by predicting what will happen, what is confusing, why you find the quote interesting. Make a personal response to the passage chosen. |

An effectively developed model by the teacher will avoid the common occurrence of the one or two responses or searching for facts only. Encourage students to share quotes and responses in the development of the discussion about the text.

A variation of the response notebook is the dialogue notebook. Students share notebooks and respond to each other in a third column. The dialogue notebook makes the important connection between reading and writing. It is this connection that leads to improved reading comprehension.

| <b>Text</b>   | <b>Response</b>  | <b>Dialogue</b>   |
|---|--|---|
| The student chooses, as above, a challenging, interesting or confusing passage. | He or she writes his initial response to the passage. This response may be only further questions about the passage. | Another student reads the passage and the response and offers further insight or perhaps even more confusion. |

What is important here is that, in constructing meaning, the students are engaging in a written dialogue with each other. They are developing an initial understanding, interpretations and taking a critical stance. A strategy such as this needs to be modeled initially with teacher-selected passages.

### **STRATEGY 13**

#### **Guided Reading Procedure (GRP)**

The purpose of this procedure is to help students identify facts from the reading and to organize three facts. Choose a reading of 500 to 2000 words, depending upon the grade of the students.

- **Step 1:** The students read the entire reading assignment and close the textbook.
- **Step 2:** Have the students brainstorm to identify facts and ideas they just read. Write all the student contributions on the chalkboard. Encourage students to think about what they read to identify as many facts as they can. List all student statements, even if some were not in the reading assignment.
- **Step 3:** Have the students read the reading assignment again, only this time they are to read to determine if any facts were left out or need some modification.
- **Step 4:** Go over the student statements on the chalkboard to omit any facts or ideas not in the reading, to modify any facts not completely accurate, and to add new facts or ideas not included after the first reading.
- **Step 5:** Organize the facts and ideas on the chalkboard into an outline form, a concept map or webbing procedure. Summarize the reading and discussion.

### **STRATEGY 14**

**Peer reading** creates a question-and-answer dialogue between two students reading a short passage in a textbook. Choose a reading assignment with four to eight paragraphs. Divide the students into pairs and assign one as student A and the other as student B.

- **Step 1:** Both students read the first paragraph and then ask each other questions about the content of the paragraph.
- **Step 2:** Both students read paragraph two and student A asks questions about the content of the paragraph and student B answers the questions.

- **Step 3:** Both students read the third paragraph and student B asks questions about the content of the paragraph and student A answers. If there are more than four paragraphs continue the rotation between the students until reaching the last paragraph.
- **Step 4:** Both students read the last paragraph and both students ask each other questions about the content of the paragraph and both students give answers. This can be expanded to a summary of the entire reading. If desired, a whole-class discussion or larger group discussions can follow the peer reading activity.

## STRATEGY 15

### Listen, Read, Discuss (LRD)

- **Step 1:** Prior to teaching a particular topic, prepare and present a 5 to 15-minute lecture on the topic. The lecture should go beyond the content of the student textbook.
- **Step 2:** After the lecture, ask the students to read the appropriate section in the textbook that relates to the lecture content.
- **Step 3:** Lead a discussion to clarify the text and to stimulate thinking. The discussion is organized around three questions.
  - 1) What did you understand best about what you heard and read?
  - 2) What did you understand least?
  - 3) What questions or thoughts did this material raise for you?

A modification of step three is to arrange the students in groups of four or five and each group discusses the three questions. The entire class, lead by the teacher, then can summarize the topic.

## STRATEGY 16

### SQ3R — A Reading/Study System

**SURVEY** — gather the information necessary to focus on and formulate goals.

1. Read the title — prepare to read the subject at hand.
2. Read the introduction and/or summary — orient yourself to how this chapter fits the author's purposes, and focus on the author's statement of most important points.
3. Notice each boldface heading and subheading — organize before you begin to read — build a structure for the thoughts and details to come.
4. Notice that any graphics, — charts, maps, diagrams, etc. are there to make a point — Don't miss them.
5. Notice reading aids — italics, boldface print, chapter objective, end-of-chapter questions are all included to help you sort, comprehend, and remember.

**QUESTION — Engage and concentrate.**

One section at a time, turn the boldface heading into as many questions as you think will be answered in that section. The better the questions, the better your comprehension is likely to be. You may always add further questions as you proceed. When your mind is actively searching for answers to questions it becomes engaged in learning.

**READ — Fill in the information around the structures you've been building.**

Read each section (one at a time) with your questions in mind. Look for the answers and notice if you need to make up some new questions.

**RECITE — Concentrate and learn as you read.**

After each section, — stop, recall your questions and see if you can answer them from memory. If not, look back again (as often as necessary) but don't go on to the next section until you can recite.

**REVIEW — Refine your mental organization and begin building memory.**

Once you've finished the entire chapter using the preceding steps, go back over all the questions from all the headings. See if you can still answer them. If not, look back and refresh your memory, then continue.

## **Twelve Simple Suggestions for Pre Reading and Post Reading in the Content Areas**

1. Before starting a new chapter, tie the new learning to the old learning. How does the topic relate to what has been formerly learned? Try to keep it simple.
2. Relate the new topic to the real world. Provide instances where this topic plays an important role in current research, the news and modern exploration.
3. At the beginning of each class, ask students to share what they misunderstood, or didn't understand. Have them talk in pairs at the beginning of class to come up with these topics.
4. Ask students to keep a journal in which they write at the end of each class. Topic — What I learned today? What I am still confused about? Collect and plan accordingly.
5. Take some time before reading a chapter to define new terminology. Don't overdo it. Five words are plenty. If many more, the reading was too extensive.
6. As often as possible, introduce chapter concepts with images, pictures or cartoons that reference the subject. Explain text pictures (if there are any) before reading.
7. Use K-W-L sheets. What I know, want to know and learned when reading?
8. Use graphic-like Venn diagrams, webs, excel charts to explain relationships and growth of ideas visually.
9. Make sure students understand why this learning is important. Ask them to choose the five most important sentences from a reading. Ask them to share in pairs. Ask them to negotiate it down to the three most important sentences. Share these ideas on the board.
10. Don't overassign amounts of reading, especially if text is thick with terminology.
11. As often as possible, use things, artifacts and "show and tell" materials to motivate interest in a subject. Keep going back to them as learning progresses. Encourage students to bring in things about the subject to share with class members.
12. Keep a bulletin board where students can keep articles they cut from magazines and newspapers or download from the Internet that pertain to the subject being learned. Leave space on the board for questions or comments about the subject. You should comment as well. Change the board with each topic.