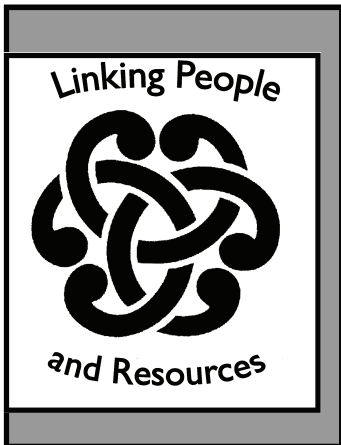


Regional Wrap-Up

Region 5 T/TAC @ JMU

Forming Questions to Increase Student Comprehension



Kandy Grant, B.A.
VDOE Region 5 T/TAC @ JMU

We comprehend in all contexts using our prior knowledge, feelings, and perceptions about each situation. In reading, we think of comprehension as how we make sense, or grasp an understanding, of written material. One strategy that good readers use is to ask themselves questions from text and then search for the answers.

Often students are practiced in answering teacher created questions. However, it is much more difficult, yet very beneficial, for them to learn to create their own questions from the text.

Gravois, Rosenfield, and Gickling present *Forming Questions* as a means to this end. This strategy involves making students more comfortable with questioning skills by giving them a starting point.

- ⇒ First, activate prior knowledge by asking students to brainstorm questions they hear in everyday conversation, i.e. "When does the movie start?" "Where is the remote?"
- ⇒ Next, discuss the words that begin questions, or "starter words," such as who, when, where, why, what, and how. Relate this to a conversa-

tion between the author and the reader guided by the asking of questions.

- ⇒ Read one sentence from a passage of text. For example: *The boy sat on the chair in the back of the room.* Ask the student to make one who, what, or where question based only on that statement. Other questions can be created depending on the information in a particular sentence. If the student has difficulty forming the question, model a "Think Aloud" as to what word in the sentence is "a who" (boy). The student can then cover that word and replace it with the word **who** to form the question: *Who sat on the chair in the back of the room?* The answer is under the student's finger. Continue this process with other examples until the student feels comfortable.

A fun way to provide group practice is to make a cube with one question word on each side (who, what, when, where, why, how). Each student takes turns rolling the cube and using the word to create a question based on the reading assignment. The other

Inside this issue:

Why Content Enhancement Routines?	2
Early Childhood Special Education Teachers....	3
Promoting Literacy	4
Seventh Annual Content Teaching Academies	4
THANK YOU!	5
Conferences & Training Events	5
Taking a Closer Look	5

As the student becomes proficient with creating literal questions, the strategy can be adapted to make inferences and predictions or to use larger sections of text. At this point, such words as: is, will, would, can, did, and might could be used as “starter words” and the same procedure practiced.

Using this strategy helps make students more comfortable forming questions thereby allowing them to comprehend more fully and become better readers.

References:

Glazer, S. (1992). *Reading comprehension: Self-monitoring strategies to develop independent readers*. New York: Scholastic Books.

Gravois, T., Rosenfield, S., & Gickling, E. (2003). *Instructional Consultation Teams: Training manual*.

Why Content Enhancement Routines?

Gina Massengill, M.Ed.
VDOE Region 5 T/TAC @ JMU

Content Enhancement Routines is an approach to planning instruction for and teaching content to diverse groups of students in the general education classroom. It involves making decisions about what content to teach, manipulating and translating that content into easy-to-understand formats, and presenting it in memorable ways (Deshler et al., 2001). This approach includes:

1. Selecting the central concepts that make the details and fact hang together, and identifying relationships among the concepts;
2. Selecting and constructing instructional devices that will make the content more understandable and memorable; and
3. Presenting the content in a way that actively involves students while enhancing their learning.

Content Enhancement Routines are showing up more and more in classrooms throughout the state as the Virginia Department of Education has recognized the Strategic Instruction Model

(SIM) from the University of Kansas as a researched-based model effective for meeting the needs of students in middle and high school classrooms.

Since adolescents with learning disabilities are a heterogeneous group, and therefore no general instructional model can be recommended for all of them, how does Content Enhancement Routines address the needs of students with disabilities? The Strategic Instruction Model, along with the Content Enhancement Routines, includes most, if not all, of the instructional principles that define what might be considered LD-effective instruction. Each of these instructional principles is woven into the linking steps of each Content Enhancement Routine (Lenz, 2002)

According to research on intervention practices, **effective strategic instruction** for students with learning disabilities is:

- **Structured**

It presents strategies in sequential stages designed to promote mastery at each level taking into consideration the diverse learning characteristics of a variety of learners.

- **Informative**

It keeps learners informed about the instructional procedures being used to teach them, what seems to help them learn, and their progress in learning.

- **Explicit**

It explains everything and multiple models or correct performance are provided. It begins with creating an advance organizer to foster an awareness of the overall topic then continues with the focus on smaller parts, and concludes with checks and reviews.

- **Direct**

It provides face-to-face instruction and guidance to learners to ensure that they have acquired the correct information and are thinking about using information correctly. It provides step-by-step guidance in showing the learners how to effectively and efficiently learn and perform.

- **Scaffolded**

It provides scaffolded instruction that ensures that what the student already knows is used as a guide to determine the “next step” for instruction. It uses interactive teaching that provides guidance through teacher questioning.

- **Processing Sensitive**

It provides activities and instructional sequences that must be sensitive to the information-demands of the task and to the range of information-processing characteristics of learning.

- **Intensive**

It occurs frequently and demands a high degree of attention, learner response, and teacher evaluation and feedback.

- **Accommodating**

It includes options that compensate for disabilities in ways that enable the learner to learn and perform.

- **Enduring**

It often needs to be provided over a long period of time.

(Adapted from “How SIM Addresses What is Unique about Teaching Students with LD,” Lenz, 2000)

During the past 25 years, educators have struggled with the question of what is unique about instruction for students with learning disabilities. Although questions about neurological and developmental differences and causes persist, research has shown that interventions based on teaching strategies consistently are effective for students with learning disabilities (Lenz, 2000). These nine instructional principles, that research has shown to be effective for students with LD, have been incorporated into the interventions for these students.

References:

Bulgren, J., Deshler, D. D., Schumaker, J.B., & Lenz, B. K. (2000). The use of and effectiveness of analogical instruction in diverse secondary content classrooms. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 92*, 426-441.

Deshler, D.D. (1998). Grounding interventions for students with learning disabilities in powerful ideas. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 13*, 29-34.

Deshler, D.D., Schumaker, J.B., Lenz, B. K., Bulgren, J.A., Hock, M. F., & Knight, J. (2001). Ensuring content-area learning by secondary students with learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 16*, 96-108.

Lenz, K. (2002). How SIM addresses what is unique about teaching students with LD. *Institute for Academic Access, 1-5*.

Swanson, H.L. (1989). Strategy instruction: Overview of principles and procedures for effective use. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 12*, 3-15.

Early Childhood Special Education Teachers....

remember to go to T/TAC Online to complete the early childhood inclusion survey. The survey will assist in identifying services and needs within early childhood programs related to inclusive environments. Upon completion of the survey, you will be entered into a drawing to win a free resource for your classroom. Visit <www.ttaonline.org>, click on Region 5, then click on the early childhood survey.



Promoting Literacy: Ideas and Resources for Your Classroom

From VAAP E-news

Literacy is a common part of everyday life. Whether you are in your home, school, and community, or on the job using literacy skills is expected in order to function properly in these environments. Students with significant cognitive disabilities are being assessed in the area of reading not only for accreditation purposes, but also to improve their quality of life. Many people in the field of special education have been doing research, training, and writing books and resources to demonstrate how literacy might be taught and provided to students with more significant disabilities. Below are some ideas for providing meaningful literacy lessons and opportunities for your students, as well as to meet the Aligned

Ideas for Activities in the Classroom:

(adapted from Musselwhite, C. (2004). "Emergent to Transitional to Conventional Literacy," AAC in the Mountains Conference. Park City, Utah.)

- Identify literacy goals in the ASOL of each content area
- Create opportunities for your students to engage in literacy activities by pairing communication and literacy together. It provides a natural context in which communication partners may interact
- Think about how you can pair the written word with meaningful, motivating events
- Read aloud to your students, no matter what their age, using age appropriate materials
- Use poetry in your classroom for rhyme and rhythm
- Turn a favorite song into a poem or story
- For older students, use lyrics from favorite age-appropriate songs (rock, pop, country, etc.) for motivation and for easy reading
- Use pictures from outdated wall calendars to create books
- Use Powerpoint to create electronic books for

Some favorite literacy Web sites:

<http://www.readinga-z.com> - Print 1,600 books and thousands of reading resources - anytime, anywhere

www.aacintervention.com - AAC intervention and literacy strategies with adaptation ideas and teaching tips.

www.poetry4kids.com - Fun poetry

www.gigglepoetry.com - More fun poetry

lyrics.astraweb.com - Search for song lyrics

www.adaptedstories.com - Mini-books that can be printed

www.nellieedge.com - Literacy resources and activities for young children

www.readinglady.com - Reading and math resources-including downloads, links, lesson plans, classroom materials etc.

www.creativecommunicating.com - Adapted stories and AAC with teaching strategies

www.donjohnston.com - Don Johnston's Web site with literacy resources

www.ablenetinc.com - AbleNet's Web site with lots of literacy and AAC products (ex. BookWorm, Buildability, Book Easel)

www.softtouch.com - Software: My Own Bookshelf - Students can build their own digital library

www.donjohnston.com - Software: WordMaker-provides phonics, phonemic awareness, and spelling activities to build students' core reading strategies.

Seventh Annual Content Teaching Academies at JMU Coming Soon!

Mark your calendars for June 26-30 to attend the Content Teaching Academies on the beautiful campus of James Madison University in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley. This year there will be 14 academies for general and special educators, covering a wide-range of topics including general special education, autism, early childhood special education, gifted, art, educational technology, k-5 core, and 6-12 English, science, social science, and mathematics. All the information you need to know about registration, housing, activities, location, content, and other topics is available on the Academies Web site at <http://coe.jmu.edu/>

THANK YOU!

to the individuals who attended the November 11 "Feeding Children with Disabilities" workshop and contributed non-perishable food to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank Network. Over 91 pounds of food was donated, which Food Bank personnel report will assist in providing 68 meals to hungry people in need. Food Bank shelves, locally and throughout the country, have been depleted as much aid has been sent to assist the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The staff of the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, as well as Cheryl, Dianne, and Suzanne, thank you for your

Project HOPE-Virginia

is Virginia's Program for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. The College of William & Mary administers the program for the Virginia Department of Education. Funding is authorized under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act (P.L. 107-110). The purpose of Project HOPE-Virginia is to ensure the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth in school. Resources and further information is available at the Web site: <www.wm.edu/hope>.

Definition of homeless:

Anyone who, due to a lack of housing, lives:

- in emergency or transitional shelters;
- in motels, hotels, trailer parks, campgrounds, abandoned in hospitals, awaiting foster care placement;
- in cars, parks, public places, bus or train stations, abandoned buildings;
- doubled up with relatives or friends;
- in these conditions and is a migratory child or youth.

Where can I go for assistance and resources?

Project HOPE-Virginia. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, have questions related to the education of homeless children and youth, or would like additional information, brochures, posters, or resource materials, please contact (877) 455-3412 (toll-free in VA), (757) 221-2988 (fax), homlss@wm.edu (E-mail).

Conferences & Training Events

March 16: *Fifth Annual Raising the Bar: Improving Services for Individual with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Across Virginia*. Festival Conference & Student Center, JMU, Harrisonburg. Sponsored by Region 5 T/TAC and Alvin V. Baird Attention & Learning Disabilities Center @ JMU. Contact Judy Hensley, Region 5 T/TAC, (540) 568-6746 to register.

April 20 & 21: *Effective Educational Strategies for Children with Autism*. Stonewall Jackson Hotel & Conference Center, Staunton. Sponsored by The Virginia Institute of Autism

April 29: *3rd Annual Shenandoah Valley Autism Partnership Conference*. Lucy F. Simms Center, 620 Simms Ave., Harrisonburg. In collaboration with VA Dept. of Education Region 5 T/TAC. Contact Sally Chappel, Region 5 T/TAC, at chap-pesl@jmu.edu for more info.

Taking a Closer Look: A Guide to Online Resources on Family Involvement

There is more information on family involvement online than any one person can keep track of. To help, the Harvard Family Research Project has compiled and categorized this large body of information to make it easier to access and use. This resource guide contains Web links to research, information, programs, and tools from over 100 national organizations. It provides information about parenting practices to support children's learning and development, home-school relationships, parent leadership development, and collective engagement for school improvement and reform. The information is available online at <www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/resources/guide/guide.html>.