

• Components of Effective Vocabulary Instruction

- Encouraging wide reading
- Exposing students to high quality oral language
- Promoting word consciousness
- Providing explicit instruction of specific words
- Providing modeling and instruction in independent word-learning strategies

25,000 The number of words in the vocabulary of the average 14 year old in the US in 1950.
10,000 The number of words in the vocabulary of the average 14 year old in the US in 1999.

To assist those attempting to improve adolescent literacy at both the classroom and the school-wide level, the literature from several relevant fields, including cognitive psychology, English Language Arts instruction and assessment, linguistics, motivation theory, English as a Second Language, education, and discourse analysis was examined. What was found seems to suggest that effective support results from a threefold approach: 1) careful attention to the social and motivational issues attendant to adolescent learners, 2) explicit teaching and use of cognitive strategies, and 3) integration of literacy instruction with content area learning, in ways that support teaching and learning in that discipline. A balanced literacy approach to supporting content area reading and writing to learn would need to incorporate all three.

Research strongly suggests that school and classroom cultures play large roles in terms of supporting or undermining adolescents to develop positive literacy identities (e.g., McCombs & Barton, 1998). Attention to how to meet the social and emotional needs of adolescents in learning situations is correlated with how motivated students are to further develop their literacy skills and engage in reading and writing. Literacy clearly has social and cultural attributes. Those who have experienced repeated failure at reading are often unwilling to participate as readers or writers. School and classroom cultures that successfully promote the development of adolescent literacy skills are characterized by connections, interaction, and responsiveness, leading to student engagement and reflection (Collins, 1997; Davidson & Koppenhauer, 1991; Krogness, 1995; Moore, et al., 2000; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997; Wilhelm, 1995).

A growing body of research about the differences in the metacognitive skills of good vs. poor readers (e.g., Schoenbach et al., 1999; Wilhelm, 1995; Wisconsin Department of Education, 1988) is providing a foundation for identifying promising reading comprehension strategies for adolescent learners (e.g., Rosenshine & Meister, 1994). Adolescent students "must learn to think about the complexities of the reading process and then actively apply appropriate strategies" (Allen, 2000). They must, therefore, learn the literacy strategies, be given time to practice and apply them to a variety of contexts, and subsequently use them for learning in the content areas. The research suggests a menu of best practices that together comprise good instruction to further develop adolescent literacy.

Research clearly supports the use of a variety of comprehension strategies to enhance learning in the content areas (Haller et. al., 1988; NRP Report, 2000). However, the literacy demands of different content areas, while sharing some similarities, also vary substantially (Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995). "Reading is a different task when we read literature, science texts, historical analyses, newspapers, tax forms. This is why teaching students how to read the texts of academic disciplines is a key part of teaching them these disciplines" (Strategic Literacy Initiative, 1999). Effective content-based vocabulary instruction, understanding of text structures, and discourse analysis all play key roles in assisting students to maximize content area reading and writing to learn.

Characteristics of Proficient Readers

Mosaic of Thought by Ellin Keene and Susan Zimmerman

Proficient readers know what and when they are comprehending; they can identify their purposes of reading and identify the demands placed on them by a particular text. They can identify when and why the meaning of the text is unclear to them , and can use a variety of strategies to solve comprehension problems or deepen their understanding of a text.

- ✓ Activate relevant, prior knowledge before, during and after reading
- ✓ Determine the most important ideas and themes in a text
- ✓ Ask questions of themselves, the authors and the texts they read
- ✓ Create visual and other sensory images from the text during and after reading
- ✓ Draw inferences from the text
- ✓ Retell or synthesize what they have read
- ✓ Utilize a variety of fix-up strategies to repair comprehension when it breaks down

Analyzing the Reading Process

- 1.** Before reading, ask students what good readers do when they read. (Other prompts: "How can you tell when someone is a good reader? What do you think teachers look for when they are trying to understand how well someone reads?")
- 2.** Record all answers for the group to see, under the title "Good Readers' Strategies." Whether the answers support your notion of reading or not, they will help construct a sense of what the students' beliefs about reading are. Later conversations will revise and elaborate on this initial list.
- 3.** Give out a piece of text to be read. Ask students to read as they normally would, noting that discussion will follow about how they read. While they read, also read the text yourself.
- 4.** After they read, ask students to write brief answers to prompts such as: What did you notice? What was hard? What did you do to make sense of the text as you read? (Again, you should write your own answers.)
- 5.** Ask students to share their answers, making sure to validate the many different kinds of thinking that led to the successful completion of the reading task. If necessary, get them started by sharing one or two of your own answers. Prompt students with questions such as: "Did anyone notice that they had to re-read any part?" or "Did anyone think of something else that they knew about that was kind of related?"
- 6.** Record people's observations for all to see, pointing out and labeling various comprehension strategies so the class may begin to build a common vocabulary about reading process.
- 7.** As students share their strategies, revisit the items on the list they made at the start of the session. Based on this last reading experience, do they want to add or revise anything? For example, many initial lists include the comment, "Good readers read fast." If students say that they had to slow down because the text was confusing, a revised list might read, "Good readers sometimes read fast, but they know to slow down when they need to."

Sucessful Content-Area Reading

How it is read.

- The purpose for reading is not just to pass a test or get through the textbook. The students' work is to gather information, construct meaning, and apply knowledge about important issues
- The teacher selects some, but not all of the readings, students also make choices of their own
- Not every student reads the same texts. There are some common readings and some "jigsawing" of related but different texts
- Teachers teach (and kids use) a repertoire of specific thinking strategies that help them enter, understand, and apply the material they read
- Teachers offer students practical tools that help them process different kinds of texts
- Teachers organize classroom structures and activities that deepen student engagement with key written materials
- Reading is seen as a social, rather than a solitary activity; there is plenty of collaborative work in pairs, teams, or inquiry groups
- Instead of an exclusive focus on right answers, there is also room for debate and discussion for differences of opinions and interpretation.
- Instead of receiving a string of 180 daily reading assignments, students do their subject area reading as a part of longer, coordinated themes or inquiries
- Reading is linked to action in the real world; young readers engage in research, documentation, correspondence, and advocacy
- The assessment of kids' reading relies less on quizzes and worksheets, and more on complex performances, products, and exhibitions

Five Roadblocks that Affect Teachers and Students

- Students avoid reading the textbook**
- Some students can't read the textbooks**
- The myth of Learning to Read vs Reading to Learn**

In secondary settings our responsibility is to help students construct meaning by modeling and teaching the strategies and techniques that support learning to read while reading to learn.

- Middle school Reading Traditions cannot be used in high school**

Sage on the Stage vs. Student as Learner

Get students involved in their own learning

Showing care and concern for students as individuals. That, combined with showing that teachers are invested in student reading progress, can make a difference in student achievement (Dillon, 1989; Dillon and Moje, 1998)

Helping students to set goals for reading and plans for achievement. Research shows that students with reading difficulties use more comprehension strategies when clear goals for a comprehension task and feedback on the progress are offered (Schunk and Rice, 1993)

Encouraging wide reading

In order to stay at grade level, students need to learn at a rate of 2000-3000 words per year.

If over a school year, a fifth grade student reads an hour each day, five days a week (in and out of school), at a conservative rate of 150 words per minute, the student will encounter 2,250,000 words in the course of reading. If 2 to 5 percent of the words the student encounters are unknown words, he or she will encounter between 45,000 and 112, 500 words. Research states that students learn between 5 and 10 percent of previously unknown words from a single reading. This accounts for at least 2,250 new words that the student learns from context each year.

In order for wide reading to work:

- Student must read a variety of genres
- Students must read texts for enjoyment and some texts that challenge them
- A motivating factor in wide reading is a classroom environment that encourages and promotes social interactions in relation to the reading.

Wide reading does not give immediate results; its effects are cumulative over time.

How to implement:

1. Recommend or provide lists of books for students to read outside of class and make time in class to discuss what has been read.
2. Set aside a time daily for independent reading.

High Quality Oral Language

Let students hear spoken English that incorporates more of the vocabulary and syntax typical of written and particularly literate English.

- Reading to students when accompanied by discussion.
- Availability of quality audio books and players that students can use on their own can broaden their language experience
- Developing word consciousness
 - Students need to develop a feel for how written English is different from everyday conversation. It is valuable to draw attention to the distinctive characteristics of written language, even when read aloud. Having students write down from their reading examples of effective language could include metaphors, similes. Reading two versions of a story; one with vivid language and another with language that is less interesting can promote word consciousness.

Reading Guides

- ❖ Reading Guides are NOT study questions
- ❖ Direct students to what is important
- ❖ Help students with connections
- ❖ Explain the rhetorical context of the reading
- ❖ Fill in the needed cultural knowledge
- ❖ Ask critical questions for students to consider
- ❖ Provide basis for classroom discussions

Pre-Reading Strategies

What you bring to the printed page will affect how you understand what you read, and may be what is most important in understanding what you read

Organize yourself before you read

Strategies to activate your prior knowledge:

Brainstorming:

Examine the title of the selection you are about to read

List all the information that comes to mind about this title

Use these pieces of information to recall and understand the material

Use this knowledge to reframe or reorder what you know, or to note what you disagree with, for further research

Group discussions:

Group discussions in and out of class will help you to discover what you bring to your reading, what your fellow students bring, as well as shared experiences

If you find they have new background information, ask for more information from them

Concept or mind mapping:

This is a type of brainstorming where you place the title/subject as the main idea, then develop a "mind map" around it. It can be effective either in a group or by yourself

Pre-questions:

Often chapters in texts provide organizing questions.

You can also write out a series of questions you expect to be answered when reading:

Examples:

Definition

What is....?

Where does ... fit?

What group does ... belong to?

Examples

What is a good example of ...?

What are similar examples that share attributes but differ in some way?

Characteristics

How would I describe...?

What does ... look like?

What are its parts?

Experience

What experience have I had with?

What can I imagine about ...?

Visual Aids:

Pictures and other visual material can activate your prior knowledge.

Use the Internet to search for pictures related to your title/topic to give you visual images of what you are about to read.

K-W-N-Q

K	W	N	S
What facts do I <u>KNOW</u> from the information in the problem?	What <u>WHAT</u> does the problem <u>ask</u> me to find?	Which information do I <u>NOT</u> need?	What <u>STRATEGY</u> / operation/tools will I use to solve the problem?

KWL

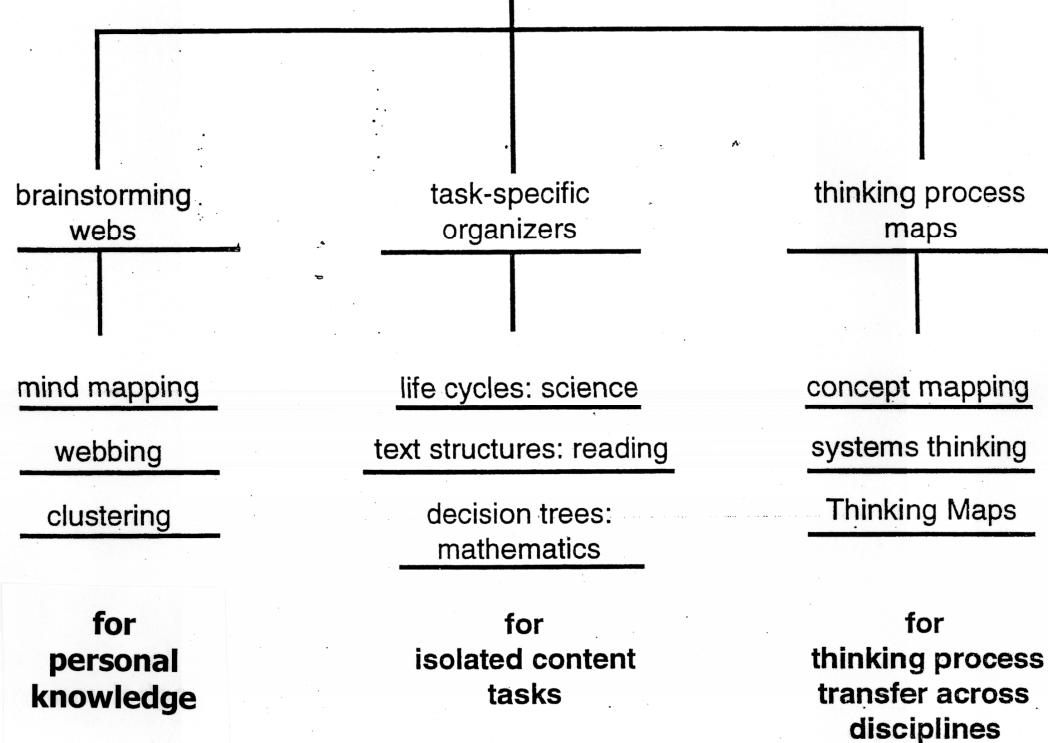
One of the most effective strategies is Donna Ogle's KWL. It involves three overlapping events: students brainstorm what they **already know** (**K**), record what they **want** (**W**) to know, and then list what they have **learned** (**L**) at the end of the lesson, activity, or unit.

What do you **KNOW**? What do you **WANT** to know? What did you **LEARN**?

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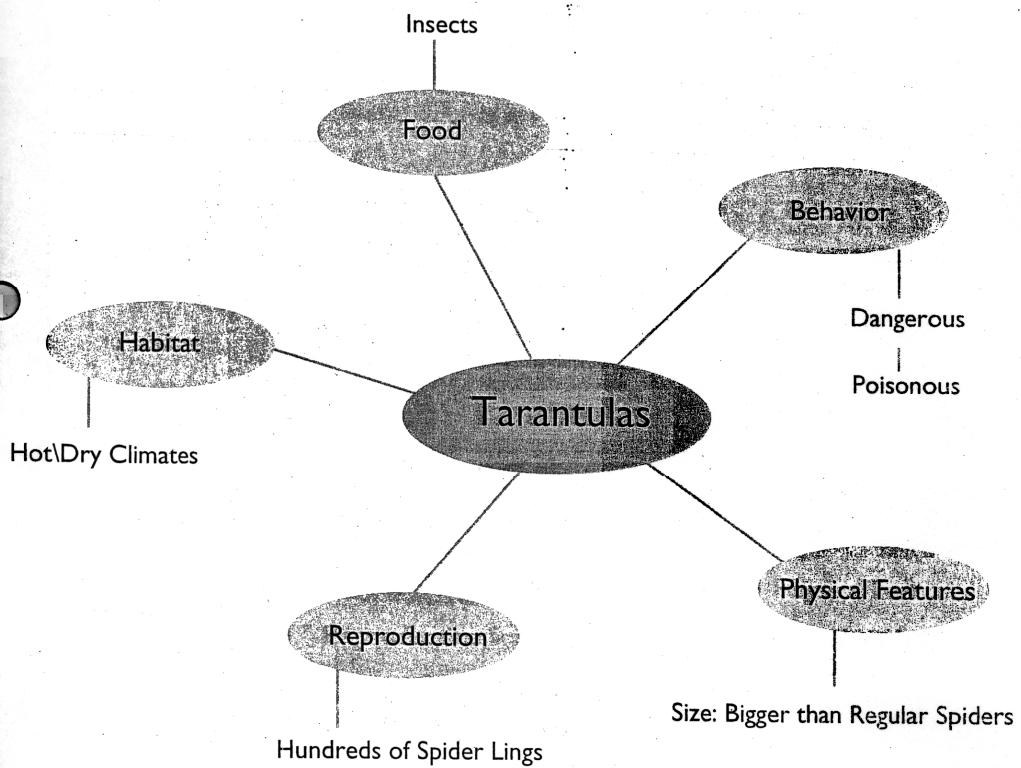
Types of Visual Tools



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Concept Mapping

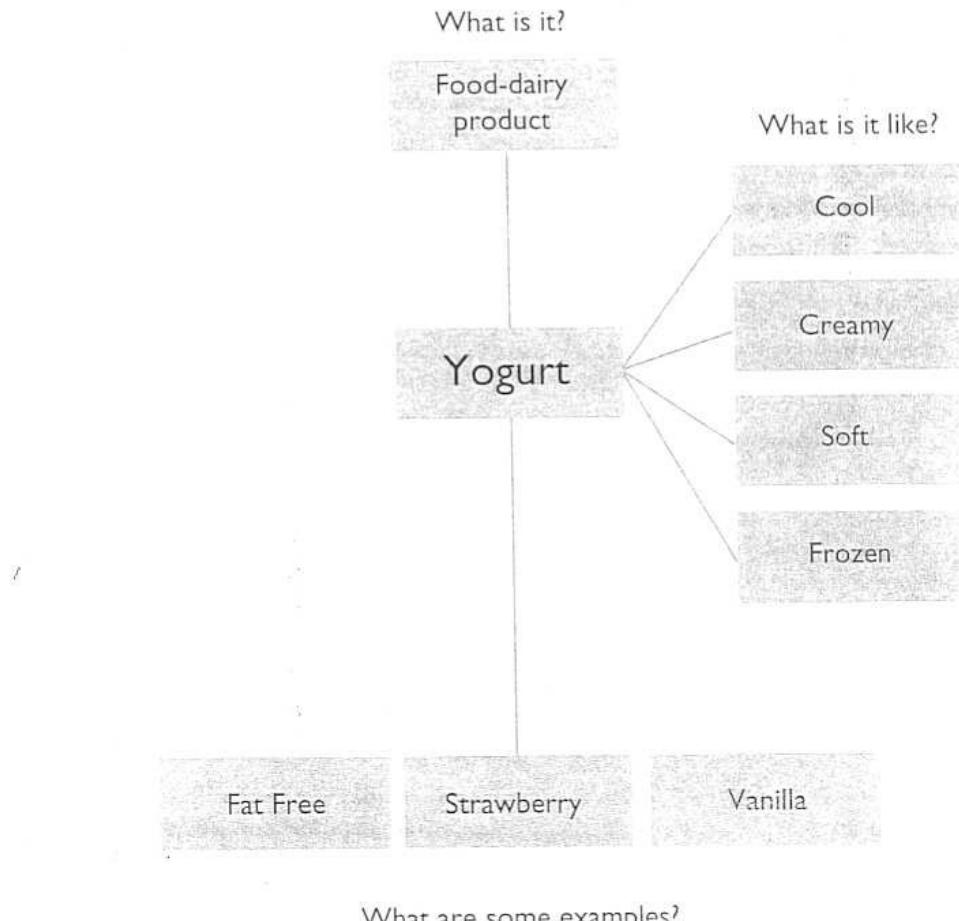
Concept mapping is a concrete representation of the relationships among ideas. It is an organizational chart of the superordinate and subordinate components of a concept. It is useful before, during and after reading, and as a procedure to organize information for reports:



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Mapping Complete Definitions

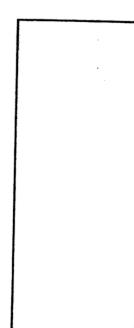
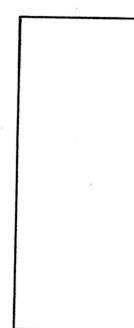
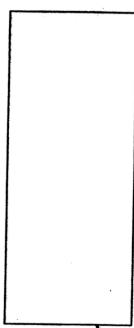
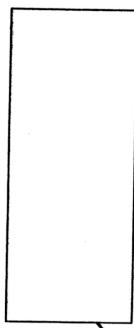
Word maps and charts help students expand meanings and relationships of words much better than simple one or two word definitions. In addition, they provide students with a way to learn vocabulary independently.



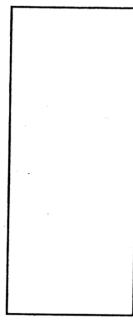
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Concept
Map

What is it Like?

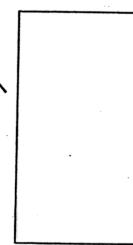
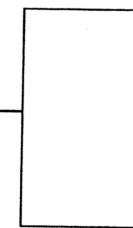


What is it?



The Word >

What are Some Examples?



Additional Pre-reading Strategies

Overviews

Discussing information about the selection or assignment prior to reading must take place. This may take the form of class discussions, printed previews, photographs, outlines, or films. Spend enough time before the students begin the assignment to insure understanding of it.

Vocabulary Previews

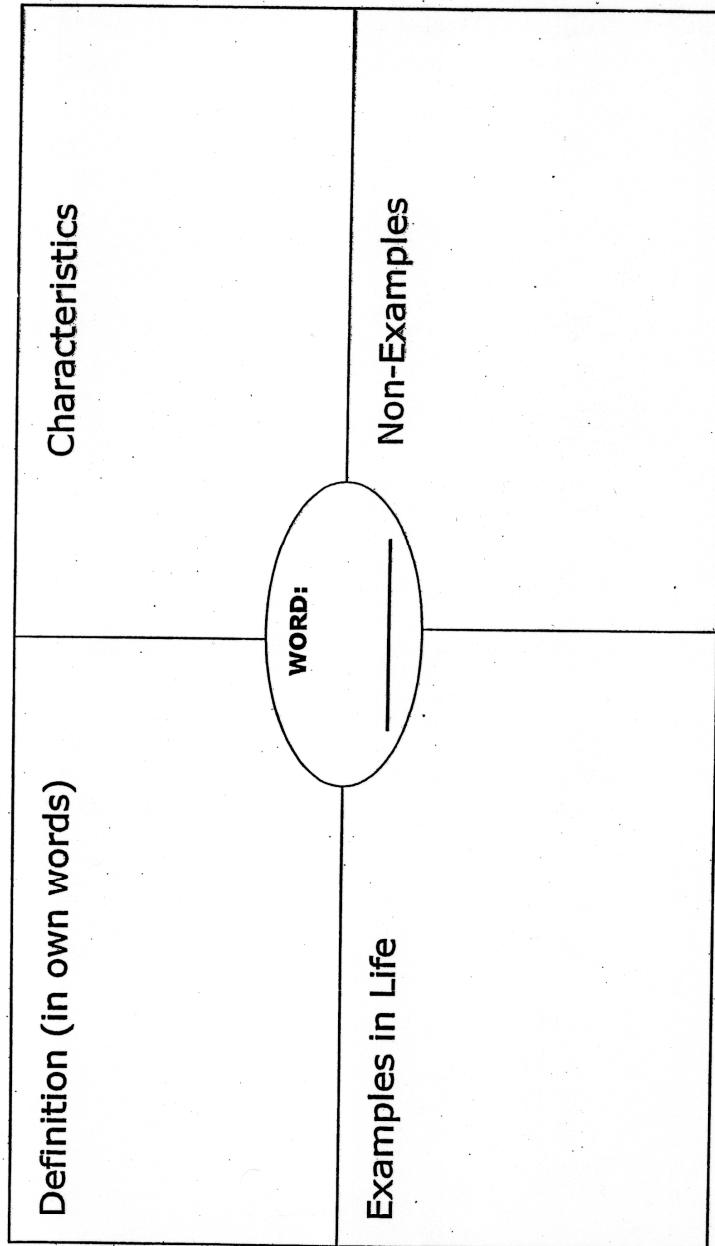
Unfamiliar key words need to be taught to students before reading so that new words, background information, and comprehension can improve together.

List all words in the assignment that may be important for students to understand. Arrange words to show the relationships to the learning task. Add words students probably already understand to connect relationships between what is known and the unknown. Share information with students. Verbally quiz them on the information before assigned reading begins.

Structural Organizers

Before reading an assignment, basic frameworks which are included in the text should be pointed out such as cause-effect or problem-solution. It can be beneficial to call attention to specific plans of paragraph or text organization such as signal words, main idea sentences, highlighted phrases, headings and subtitles. A review of skimming techniques might also be appropriate as these various areas are covered.

Frayer Model



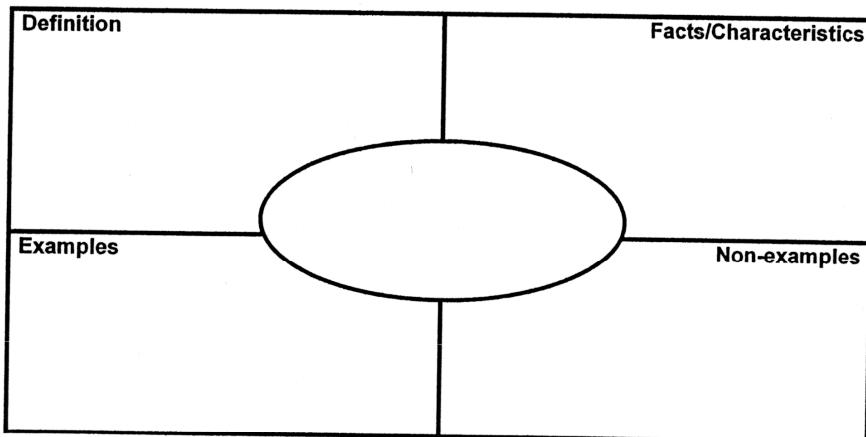
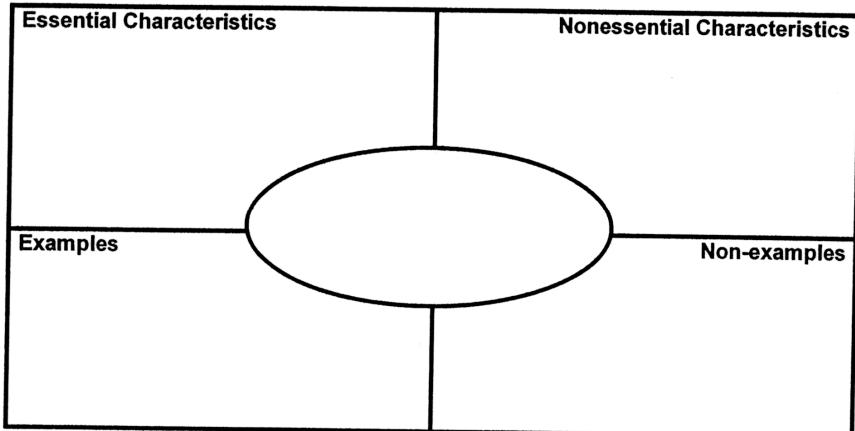
The Frayer Model – Templates for Two Versions

Choose the version whose headings best suit the concept/word.

Print the template on card stock.

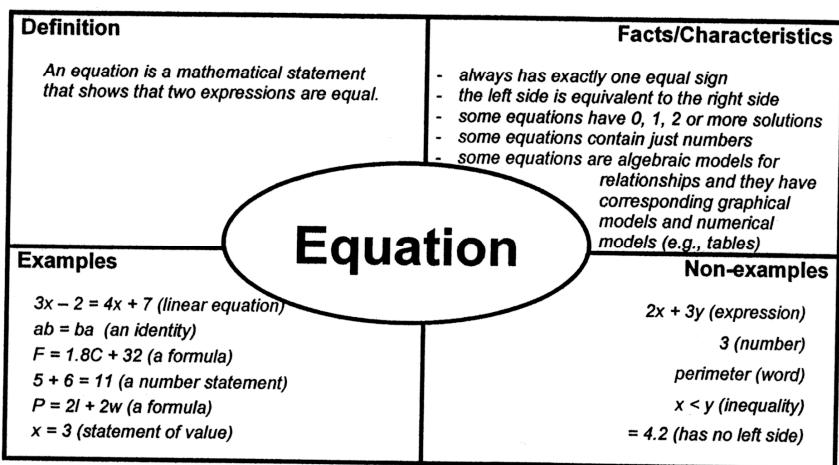
Direct students to complete the template individually, in small groups or as a whole class.

Print the vocabulary word on the reverse side then place the card on a word wall for future reference.

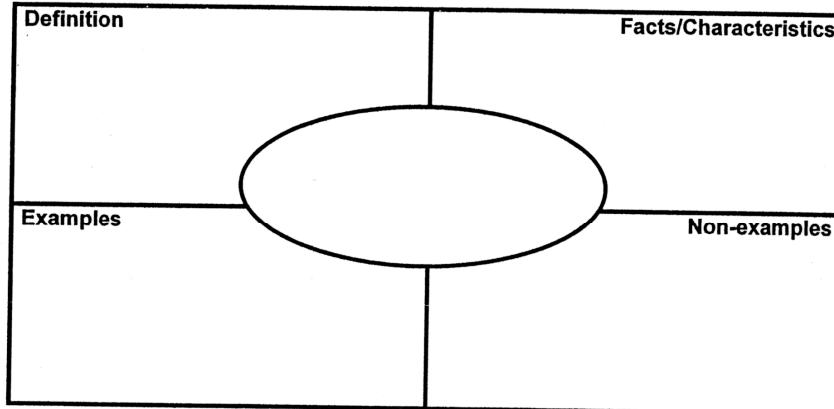


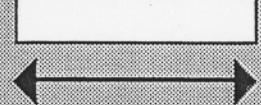
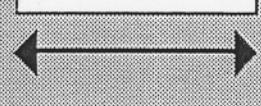
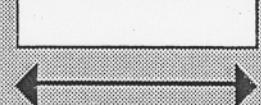
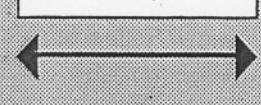
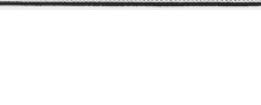
The Frayer Model – Samples (Grade 8)

Notice that the top two boxes are titled "Definition" and "Facts/Characteristics". How does thinking about non-examples clarify your understanding about the word?



Complete a Frayer Model using the word _____.



	HOW ALIKE?	
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
	HOW DIFFERENT?	
WITH REGARD TO		
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	 <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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A Purpose for Reading

When students have a purpose for reading a selection, they find that purpose not only directs their reading towards a goal, but helps to focus their attention. Purposes may come from teacher directed questions, questions from class discussions or brainstorming, or from the individual student. Along with the question, it is a good idea to pose predictions of the outcome and problems which need to be solved. These may be generated by the student or the teacher, but the teacher should use these to guide students in the needed direction for the assigned selection.

Author Consideration

Depending upon the content area, a discussion of the author of the particular work can be helpful to the understanding of it. What is the author trying to say? What is his point of view and his reason for writing the particular work?

KWL: This strategy consists of three steps for students to use with expository text:

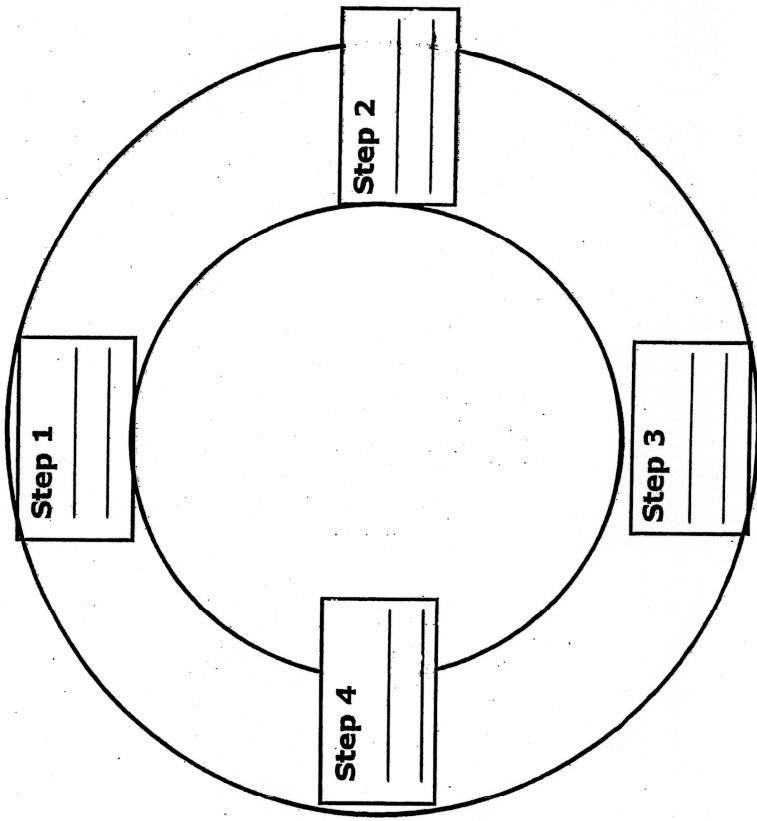
What do I **Know**? What do I **Want** to learn? What did I **Learn**?

Think Alouds: Actively exploring Meaning as you Read

The teacher reads a passage aloud and stops repeatedly along the way to explain his/her mental processing of the ideas being portrayed. The process is modeled first and then students try it in pairs or in a whole class discussion. When done together as a whole class, this strategy essentially becomes what is called a **Directed Reading Thinking Activity**.

Use a short passage, and provide students with copies so that they can follow along. Stop after a couple of sentences to tell what you think is coming next, make a connection to your own experience, question what a statement might mean, or express confusion about some idea. When you stop to think, shift your voice to indicate that you've moved from reading the words to your own thinking. After modeling, have students try it in pairs.

Sequence Circle



Textbook Feature Analysis

Types of Text: Skim through the book and make a list of all the different types of documents or types of text you will have to read (include graphic texts like graphs, maps)	
Sidebars and Pull Boxes: Find examples of pull out boxes or sidebars. What kind of information appears in these: Are they standardized throughout the book (e.g. Science in the Workplace)	
Feature: Typography: Find examples of different type faces and styles. Write down the examples and where they appear (e.g. large, bold type for chapter titles. What does it mean when they use italicized words?)	
Feature: Color Does the textbook use color to convey information (e.g. what does it mean when you see words in red ink on the page?)	
Feature: Symbols and icons Does the textbook use symbols or icons to convey information? Are you supposed to do something, like ask a question? Or is it a link to a theme running throughout the book	
Features: Images and Graphics What kind of information accompanies illustrations or images? Find examples of a map, chart, and a photograph and then look for captions or sidebars that explain or discuss the image.	
Organization: How are chapters organized? Make a brief but accurate outline.	
Navigation: Headers and Footers Look at the top and bottom of the pages of the books. These are called the header and footer. What kind of information is contained in this space? What do you notice as you skim through 50 consecutive pages? (does the content of the header or footer change? If so in what way and for what purpose?)	
Testing: What features of this book would help you to prepare for a test other than practice or study questions?	
Reading Speed: While your teacher times you, read one page of the book, taking notes as you normally would while reading it for homework. How long did it take you? Figure out how long it will take you to do reading homework for 10 pages.	
Concerns: What concerns or questions might you have now that you have analyzed this textbook?	

SOAPS

What is the SUBJECT

The general topic, content, and ideas contained in the text. The student should be able to state the subject in a few words or short phrase

What is the OCCASION

The time and place of the piece: the current situation. It is particularly important that students understand the context that encouraged the writing to happen

Who is the AUDIENCE

The group of readers to whom this piece is directed. The audience may be one person, a small group, or a large group. It may be a certain person or a certain people. This is a difficult concept. Students tend to think that authors just write, not that they write for anyone.

What is the PURPOSE

The reason behind the text.

Who is the SPEAKER

The voice that tells the story. When students approach a piece of fiction, they often believe that the author and the speaker are the same. They fail to realize that in fact the author may choose to tell the story from any number of different points of view. In fact, the method of narration and the character of the speaker may be crucial to an understanding of the work.

During-Reading Strategies

Independent Word Learning Strategies

- Efficient use of the dictionary
- Use of prefixes, suffixes, roots, compound words to unlock a word's meaning.
- Use of context clues

Efficient use of the dictionary:

Students should be able to translate the cryptic and conventionalized content of definitions into usable word knowledge. Modeling of this technique would include thinking aloud about the various definitions in an entry and deciding which is the most appropriate definition for a particular context.

Use of prefixes, suffixes, roots, compound words to unlock a word's meaning

Teacher modeling of this process is especially important to impart the strategy's value to students. Only 20 prefixes account for more than 97% of prefixed words that appear in printed school English.

Context clues

Context clues are clues to the meaning of a word contained in the text that surrounds it. These clues include definitions, examples, and restatements. Teaching students to use context clues is an extended process that includes:

Modeling the strategy

1. Providing explicit explanations of how, why, and when to use it
2. Providing guided practice
3. Gradually holding students accountable for independently using the strategy

The Most Frequent Affixes in Printed School English

Rank	Prefix Prefix	Percent of All Prefixed Words	Suffix	Percent of All Suffixed Words
1	un-	26%	-s, -es	31%
2	re-	14%	-ed	20%
3	in-, im-, il-ir- (not)	11%	-ing	14%
4	dis-	7%	-ly	7%
5	en-, em-	4%	-er,-or (agent)	4%
6	non-	4%	-ion, -tion, -ation, -ition	4%
7	in-, im- (in)	3%	-able, -ible	2%
8	over-	3%	-al, -ial	1%
9	mis-	3%	-y	1%
10	sub-	3%	-ness	1%
11	pre-	3%	ity, -ty	1%
12	inter-	3%	-ment	1%
13	fore-	3%	-ic	1%
14	de-	2%	-ous,-eous, ious	1%
15	trans-	2%	-en	1%
16	super-	1%	-er (comparative)	1%
17	semi-	1%	-ive,-ative, -tive	1%
18	anti-	1%	-ful	1%
19	mid-	1%	-less	1%
20	under- (too little)	1%	-est	1%
	All others	3%		7%

Common Greek and Latin Roots

Root	Meaning	Origin	Examples
aud	hear	Latin	audiophile, auditorium, audition
astro	star	Greek	astrology, astronaut, asteroid
bio	life	Greek	biography, biology
dict	speak, tell	Latin	dictate, predict, dictator
geo	earth	Greek	geology, geography
meter	measure	Greek	thermometer, barometer
min	little, small	Latin	minimum, minimal
mit, mis	send	Latin	mission, transmit, remit, missile
ped	foot	Latin	pedestrian, pedal, pedestal
phon	sound	Greek	phonograph, microphone, phoneme
port	carry	Latin	transport, portable, import
scrib, script	write	Latin	scribble, manuscript, inscription
spect	see	Latin	inspect, spectator, respect
struct	build, form	Latin	construction, destruction, instruct

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5	en-, em-	4%	-er,-or (agent)	4%
6	non-	4%	-ion, -tion, -ation, -ition	4%
7	in-, im- (in)	3%	-able, -ible	2%
8	over-	3%	-al, -ial	1%
9	mis-	3%	-y	1%
10	sub-	3%	-ness	1%
11	pre-	3%	ity, -ty	1%
12	inter-	3%	-ment	1%
13	fore-	3%	-ic	1%
14	de-	2%	-ous,-eous, ious	1%
15	trans-	2%	-en	1%
16	super-	1%	-er (comparative)	1%
17	semi-	1%	-ive,-ative, -tive	1%
18	anti-	1%	-ful	1%
19	mid-	1%	-less	1%
20	under- (too little)	1%	-est	1%
All others		3%		7%

Common Greek and Latin Roots

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astro	star	Greek	astrology, astronaut, asteroid
bio	life	Greek	biography, biology
dict	speak, tell	Latin	dictate, predict, dictator
geo	earth	Greek	geology, geography
meter	measure	Greek	thermometer, barometer
min	little, small	Latin	minimum, minimal
mit, mis	send	Latin	mission, transmit, remit, missile
ped	foot	Latin	pedestrian, pedal, pedestal
phon	sound	Greek	phonograph, microphone, phoneme
port	carry	Latin	transport, portable, import
scrib, script	write	Latin	scribble, manuscript, inscription
spect	see	Latin	inspect, spectator, respect
struct	build, form	Latin	construction, destruction, instruct

Seven Steps to Reading a Graphic

- Look at the graphic and read the title.
Think about the title's meaning and what it tells you about the graphic
- Read all of the text in the graphic
- Think about the information. Ask yourself how it relates to the chapter or the article
- Ask yourself, "What's important?"
- Make sure you understand all the words.
Work with a partner to figure out the meaning of those words unknown to you
- Connect this information to your life and experiences and to issues and problems in your community and world
- Paraphrase what you have learned from the graphic

Explicit Instruction of Specific Words

- Use both definitional and contextual information about word meanings
- Involve students actively in word learning
- Use discussion to teach the meanings of new words and to provide meaningful information about the words

Use both definitional and contextual information about word meanings:

Learning lists of words and definitions as an instructional tool is of limited value. Students need to know how a word functions in various contexts. Instructional methods that provide students with both definitional and contextual information do improve comprehension and research shows significantly.

1. Teach synonyms. Often a synonym is all a student needs to understand a new word in context
2. Teach antonyms. Not all words have antonyms, but thinking about antonyms requires students to identify the crucial aspects of a word. For example, the word chaos implies an abyss, a void, or clutter, but its antonym, order narrows the focus of the word's meaning.
3. Rewrite definitions. Restating a dictionary definition in a student's own words can be more effective than requiring them to remember the exact wording of a definition
4. Provide example sentences.
5. Provide non-examples. If students truly understand the meaning of a new word then they should be able to supply words that are not examples of the word's meaning
6. Discuss the difference between the new word and related words. A discussion of the word debris might include the discussion of words such as waste, garbage, or trash.

Use of the following tools may be effective:

Concept maps
Mapping Complete definitions
Graphic Organizers
Word Walls
Semantic maps

Reciprocal Teaching: Helping Students Understand What They Read

Many secondary teachers have found help for struggling readers in the activity called "reciprocal teaching." Aimed specifically at improving comprehension in the subject areas, this strategy has teachers and students enter into a dialogue in which they summarize, generate questions, clarify, and predict various things about a segment of text. Teacher and students take turns leading the dialogue, in a group effort to bring meaning to the text.

Summarizing asks the group to identify and integrate the most important information in the text—across sentences, across paragraphs, or across the passage as a whole.

Question generating carries the learner one more step along. Students first identify what information might prompt a question, then pose this information in question form and make sure they can answer it. Questions can arise at many levels: students might ask questions about supporting details, for instance, or they might practice inferring or applying new information from a text.

Examples of question generating:

I wonder why . . . ?
Does this mean . . . ?
What about . . . ?

Clarifying is particularly important for students who typically have difficulty with comprehension. These students may believe that the purpose of reading is saying the words correctly; they may not be particularly uncomfortable that the words, and in fact the passage, do not make sense to them. Asking them to clarify helps them notice that text is difficult to understand for many reasons—new vocabulary, unclear reference words, unfamiliar and perhaps difficult concepts. Then they can re-read, ask for help, or take other measures to restore meaning.

Examples of clarifying:

Maybe it's trying to say that . . .
The author is trying to make us see that . . .

Predicting occurs when students hypothesize what the author will discuss next in the text, calling on the background knowledge they already possess about the topic. This gives them a purpose for reading—to confirm or disprove their hypotheses—and they can also connect new knowledge from the text with what they already know. The predicting strategy also helps students learn that headings, subheadings, and questions in the text are useful means of anticipating what might occur next.

Examples of predicting:

This might be about . . .
I think that what will happen is . . .

Examples of connecting:

This reminds me of . . .
I can relate to this because . . .

For more, see A.S. Palincsar's section on reciprocal teaching in Teaching Reading as Thinking (Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 1986)

Post-it Response Notes

Most of us have looked back after half an hour of reading something to realize we have no idea of what we just read. Tracking and returning to important spots in our reading is something that all competent readers do, particularly with material for a course or other practical purpose.

When students first try using this tool, give a few simple directions about what they should watch for as they read, and what to write on their sticky notes. For example instructions may sound like this: As you read the article place sticky notes at any spot where you were confused and write a few words or phrases on them to explain your confusion or question. Also place sticky notes at points where the information surprised you and explain on them how your thinking was changed.

If you need to assess this work, ask students to place the page number where they'd attached it on each note, and to transfer the notes to a separate sheet of paper with their name on it.

Classroom documents created by and available to students

Creating these documents engage students and promote skill building. The process also encourages in-depth learning and the increasing of long term memory.

Activities might include composing summaries for single texts and creating synthesis statements for multiple texts regarding the same content area.

Use of Cooperative Learning

Reading instruction is usually not seen as a time to develop these cooperative and social skills. Ninety-eight per cent of reading instruction in the United States is focused on the use of the basal reading series, and its typical management system encourages division and competition. Children are typically grouped and placed at appropriate levels of instruction according to academic ability. Individual performance in groups is stressed, not cooperation. Rasinski and Nathenson-Mejia (1987) argue that school, and particularly reading instruction, should promote cooperative and socialization skills. Schools must help children see that they live in a world of others and bear a responsibility to others. Selflessness, not selfishness, is as important a determinant of the viability of a society as are the academic levels its citizens achieve. (p. 260). They conclude, "the purpose of school is to teach children how to live together as well as how to know" (p. 265).

A growing body of research on effective literacy instruction and developmental learning confirms that programs which stress the cooperative and social nature of literacy are most appropriate (Goodman, 1980; Meek, 1982; Smith, 1978; Clay, 1980). Such programs are characterized by shared literacy experiences, emphasis on the development of skills in the context of authentic literacy episodes and working and talking in groups to promote social and cooperative skills as the teacher adopts the role of a facilitator.

Hepler and Hickman (1982) refer to classrooms which exemplify these traits as "communities of readers." They feel that the establishment of such communities is essential to the successful development of literacy. The authors identify the ways in which classmates socialize and cooperate together as they find their way to reading. They observed children turning to each other: for information about what to read, to explore meanings together, as an audience for the sharing of extension activities, and as models for reading behavior. The teacher in these communities assumes the role of community planner. This notion of the social nature of reading is corroborated by researcher Margaret Meek who confirms that, "for all the reading research we have financed, we are certain only that good readers pick their own way to literacy in the company of friends who encourage and sustain them and that the enthusiasm of a trusted adult can make the difference" (1982, p. 60)

The Shared Book Experience Approach

Adolescents are, first and foremost, social creatures, so effective literacy programs capitalize on this important motivational force. Involving students in discussions of what they have read or using reading groups focused on specific, high-interest topics provide significant motivation for students to grapple with reading material in order to participate with their class peers. One approach to beginning reading instruction which fosters these cooperative and social skills is the Shared Book Experience Approach developed by Don Holdaway. The materials and strategies provide equal opportunities for all students to share book experiences by de-emphasizing cultural and academic differences. Holdaway stresses that reading instruction should be non-competitive and states:

There is no greater source of inefficiency in school methods of teaching language than the dependence on competition as a motivator. The real business of learning is concerned with performing better than yesterday or last week: it has absolutely nothing to do with performing better than someone else. Children want to learn any developmental task in order to be *the same* as their peers, not better than them. (1980, p. 18)

He developed his approach in response to New Zealand educators' concerns that populations of Native Polynesian and Maori children were not succeeding in traditional reading and language programs. Two major goals for instruction were established: children would not be segregated by ability and children of different cultural backgrounds would experience success.

The Shared Book Experience Approach is modeled upon the framework for the natural acquisition of oral language (Holdaway, 1982). Texts used in the approach are selections from quality children's literature and are to be shared and enjoyed. These selections have been enlarged so that they can be shared with large groups and are called Big Books. The teacher's role is to induce rather than to directly teach a process. As the class enjoys books, active participation is encouraged as together, children respond in unison, discuss, and become involved in extension activities. The lessons are presented to involve children in using their visual, auditory, and kinesthetic senses. In these contexts, social and cooperative skills are promoted and developed. Each child's progress is monitored individually and there is no competition among peers.

The success of this approach has been thoroughly documented and the model has been adapted internationally (Holdaway, 1982). Children from diverse backgrounds perform at levels equal to or above their peers. In addition, all children seem to develop very positive attitudes about reading. Thus, children who participate in this program which emphasizes cooperative and social skills seem to become communities of readers as described by literacy experts such as Yetta Goodman and Frank Smith. They also are involved in opportunities to use all learning modalities and language learning is strengthened.

After Reading Strategies

Exit Slips and Admit Slips

At the end of class, students write on note cards or slips of paper stating one important idea they learned, a question they have, a prediction about what will come next, or a thought about a character, event, or other element in the reading. Students can turn in these responses at the beginning of the next class—or provide three minutes for them to jot one when they arrive. Without grading these in detail, skim through them to observe what kids do or don't get

Teaching Students How to Identify Analytical Questions and Information

Make clear to the class that a factual question has one correct answer, such as "Who was the first president of the United States?" Then explain that analytical questions compare data, apply information to a problem, or use it to make connections. Using the same topic, an analytical question might be posed as "Why was George Washington chosen to be our first president?"

Help students to see that the answers to analytical questions are not written in a text. Such questions require students to make comparisons, connections, and inferences. Teach students that the representative list below signifies that questions are to be analytical:

Compare Design Contrast Categorize Evaluate Examine

Judge Why Connect Analyze Create solutions

Design a model

Have students recognize these words when presented in questions or in text to identify the type of material being presented.

Empowering Students through Negotiable Contracting to Draft Rubrics for Authentic Assessment

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What would happen if students were invited to help decide how their work should be evaluated? Would they exploit the opportunity, designing standards so ridiculously low as to guarantee a glut of effortless good grades?

Surprisingly, the answer is no. Experience at Robert Wagner Middle School in Manhattan shows that students who are given a role in the assessment process can and do rise to the occasion. Given the appropriate direction by their teachers, youngsters are able to accurately evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and pinpoint where to focus their efforts to get the most out of what they're learning. As a result, students view assessment not as an arbitrary form of reward or humiliation (a common perception, but as a positive tool for personal growth.

This article examines "negotiable contracting," a new approach to involving students in the assessment process that currently is being implemented in some schools in the New York City area. Negotiable contracting is adaptable to both arts and science curriculum and is flexible enough to accommodate multi-modal forms of learning. Like any assessment, it ensures that the teacher remains squarely in charge of the classroom and, ultimately, responsible for assuring that grading is appropriate.

Empowering Students

The art of negotiable contracting consists of giving students shared ownership in their own learning (Wiggins 1993). Although he is ultimately responsible for grading, the teacher functions not as an all-powerful judge of students' work but as a facilitator of discussion on the assessment process (Seeley 1994). Before the teacher presents his or her own expectations of the work, (s)he asks students their opinion of what **they** think would constitute quality work. Across the "negotiating table," teacher and class arrive at a consensus that is mutually acceptable. The result is that students feel like valued participants in the assessment process. Thus, they are motivated to strive toward those criteria-based standards.

The contract process can be used **independently** of a formal evaluation and can serve a variety of purposes. Some lessons do not call for formal assessment. However, the teacher still wants to set short-term goals by establishing criteria for high-quality work. Negotiable contracting is ideal for such a lesson. For example, if students are to work together in groups, negotiable contracting is helpful in setting up expectations such as cooperative roles, research materials and formats for charts and graphs.

Creating the Rubric

The rubric is an important element of using negotiable contracting for formal assessment. (Pate, Homestead, and McGinnis 1993). A rubric is a carefully designed ratings chart that is drawn up **jointly** by teacher and students. Along one side of the rubric are listed the criteria that the teacher and students decide are the most important ideas to be mastered in the lesson. Across the top of the rubric are listed the rankings that will be used to assess how well students understand each of those criterion. The rubric also indicates how much importance should be given to each criterion, based on its importance to the overall lesson. Within each ranking, there also may be numerical gradations, depending on whether a student performs on the higher or lower level of that category. Unlike a traditionally assigned, generalized number or letter grade, the rubric serves as an in-depth "report card" for a lesson, unit, or project.

Let's take as an example a social studies teacher at Robert Wagner Middle School. Mrs. Martha Polin, who assigned her students the task of creating a mural for a geography lesson. Before they began any work on the murals, she arranged the class in cooperative learning groups and asked them to consider, "If you were me, what qualities would **you** look for in deciding how to grade each mural? Come up with six criteria that you would look for." After allowing time for discussion, Mrs. Polin asked each group to rank the qualities they had selected in order of importance, from most important to least important.

Next, each group presented its top two criteria to the class. Mrs. Polin listed those criteria on the board and the class was asked to choose which ones were truly most relevant to the lesson. With the teacher's guidance, they agreed on three qualities: 1) detail and depth; 2) a clear focal point; and 3) high-quality design. They then were asked, "What should be considered "poor," "fair," "good" and "excellent" performance for each criterion?" One student suggests that a poor mural would have most of the facts wrong, and the other students readily agree. "What about if only some of the facts are wrong?" Mrs. Polin asks. "That would be a fair grade," says one boy. "I think having some of the facts wrong should still be a poor grade," argued another student. Finally, after some more discussion, a consensus is reached among the class that getting only some of the facts wrong would earn a "fair" grade. After more discussion, they also decide that getting all the facts right should earn a "good" grade while getting an exceptional amount of accurate, interesting information from unusual sources would earn a rating of excellent.

As a result of their negotiations, before they've even picked up a pencil or pen, Mrs. Polin's students are perfectly clear about what is expected in their murals. Moreover, they have the satisfaction of having had a voice in setting the objectives for the project and establishing a ratings system that they consider to be fair.

Criteria:
Accurate Detail
and Depth
Clear Focal Point
High-Quality Design

The next step in creating a rubric, is to negotiate ratings to reflect how well each of these criterion are met. Across the top of the rubric chart are listed the various rankings, in lieu of

grades or numbers. Again, those rankings may be decided during negotiations between teacher and class. There is a separate rating for each of the criteria in the rubric, since students naturally will be stronger in some aspects of their work than in others.

Choosing neutral words for each rating avoids the implication of good/bad inherent in a generalized A-F or numerical grade. In addition, the natural temptation of instructors -- as well as students -- to award a middle ranking is avoided by the use of an even number of rankings. For example, in a 1-5 ranking system, 3 tends to be used as a "neutral" grade.

Here are some examples of neutral ranking words:

Attempted	Acceptable	Admirable	Awesome
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The State of Kentucky, which uses a rubric system of assessment, utilizes four non-pejorative ratings in its rubrics. In ascending order of competence, they are Novice, Apprentice, Proficient, and Distinguished:

Novice	Apprentice	Proficient	Distinguished
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or

Novice	Apprentice	Veteran	Master
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There is no "overall" rating for the child; the terms are used separately to evaluate students' performance for **each** of the criterion in the rubric. For a social studies report, for example, the ratings might be defined as follows:

"Novice" is a student who has absorbed little of the lesson; it signals insufficient preparation, weak conclusions or organization and incorrect information.

"Apprentice" implies a beginning conceptual understanding; there is a main idea but it is presented only in broad outline with little detail and some erroneous or unclear information.

"Proficient" signals a clear conceptual understanding of the lesson; the report was well organized, logical, and focused with few errors.

"Distinguished" means outstanding work; work rich in depth and precise detail with a consistent, powerful presentation and little to no errors.

It is useful to include numeral gradations within each category. For example, a student may receive an Apprentice rating of three or four, depending on whether he performs on a higher or lower end of that category.

Let's examine how Mrs. Polin's class created the rubric for their geography mural.

MURAL	Novice	Apprentice	Veteran	Master
Accurate Detail and Depth	Incorrect or little facts, hardly any detail (1-3 pts.)	Some facts are accurate, some detail (4-6 pts.)	Substantial amount of facts, good amount of detail (7-9 pts.)	Exceptional amount of facts, vivid descriptions (10-12 pts.)
Clear Focus	Vague and unclear (1-2 pts.)	Some focus, but not organized enough (3-4 pts.)	Well organized and clearly presented (5-6 pts.)	Highly organized and easy to follow (7-8 pts.)
Design	Little to no layout and design (1-3 pts.)	Simple design, but layout could be more organized (4-6 pts.)	Attractive and invites the viewer (7-9 pts.)	Exceptional design and outstanding visual appeal (10-12 pts.)

Creative Problem Solving

Rubrics can be especially effective in assessing student's work in mathematics (Moon 1993). While rote skills such as memorizing the time tables may be best suited to traditional quizzing and grading, the majority of mathematics really involves creative problem solving in which there are several ways to arrive at a solution -- some more succinct, effective, or creative than others.

For a lesson involving word problems in fractions, for example, the "report card" for students' problem-solving might include an assessment criteria decided upon by teacher and students: Is the solution easy to follow? Does it demonstrate clear conceptual understanding? Would the answer work in real life? Do the diagrams, sentences, and number coordinate?

Similarly, rubrics can be used in any discipline-based or interdisciplinary lesson. The rubric can include opportunities for students to use journal work, projects, research studies, experiments, skits, or other vehicles to demonstrate their competence.

Good Poetry

Let's look at how a rubric would be utilized in Mrs. Janine Bartko's 8th grade Language Arts class, which is studying a unit on poetry. After discussing how poetry differs from prose and looking at various types of poetry, the students are given the assignment of writing a poem of their own. Mrs. Bartko then asks: "How can a poem-- a subjective assignment with no "correct" answer-- be fairly assessed?"

The students launch into a discussion of what constitutes "good" poetry, as they were asked to write a piece reflecting a time in history. Working in groups, they come up with a rubric, composed of four main criteria that Mrs. Bartko and the students agree are the most appropriate and fair qualities. They decide a poem should portray emotion and/or imagery; captivate the reader; use language clearly; and use punctuation purposefully. Mrs. Bartko and her students then read various examples of how those skills are applied at the various ratings levels. Finally,

before filling in the rubrics with her students as a whole group, she asks the youngsters-- sitting in cooperative work groups -- to try to evaluate the assignment and fill in the rubric on their own:

Poetry	Novice	Apprentice	Veteran	Master
Ability to Captivate the Reader	Unfocused; author seems unsure of direction (1-2 pts.)	Some focus, but lacks continuity (3-4 pts.)	Well-focused and interests reader throughout (5-6 pts.)	Captivates and involves reader deeply (7-8 pts.)
Sensory Images	Difficult to visualize image or emotion (1-3 pts.)	Some use of image, idea, or emotion (4-6 pts.)	Clear use of sensory images to portray ideas or emotions (7-9 pts.)	Vivid, detailed images and intensely felt emotion (10-12 pts.)
Use of Language	Imprecise or inappropriate choice of words (1-2 pts.)	Expresses thoughts marginally (3-4 pts.)	Appropriate choice of language (5-6 pts.)	Uses rich and imaginative language (7-8 pts.)

Punctuation	Arbitrary punctuation (1-2 pts.)	Some meaningful punctuation (3-4 pts.)	Punctuation meaningful throughout (5-6 pts.)	Punctuation enhances clarity of thoughts and images (7-8 pts.)
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In addition to the rubric itself, there is an area included for comments. In this space, Mrs. Bartko can be even more specific about strengths and weaknesses and, accentuating the positive, suggest ways for each student to stretch his or her skills and expand his or her understanding. As a result, the rubric gives the student an overall picture of his or her skill level.

At Robert Wagner Middle School, some teachers have enlarged a blank rubric and laminated it. For each project, they use a dry erase marker and fill in the quadrants with the students. They do likewise with the assessment sheet. Students are each given a blank sheet and asked to fill it out with the teacher. Here, students have their own record of what is expected of them. At the end of the project, they may be asked to assess themselves and/or their peers and hand in the assessment sheet for the teacher to grade.

Recognizing Achievements

Rubrics thus offer an important way for educators to motivate students through assessment. Giving youngsters a voice in their grading provides them with a clear understanding of what is expected of them and the assurance that their accomplishments will be recognized.

