**STELLAR COMPREHENSION IDEAS**

August, 2016

These “stellar” (meaning outstanding) ideas for comprehension instruction were collected from participating MN STAR administrators and teachers during 2009-2012. *Note: Some of the contributors’ original wording was reduced or revised for clarity and consistency.*

**Sentence Understanding**

**Jeanne Plack, Metro South-Bloomington**

While working with my STAR ABE group, I began to realize how important sentence level comprehension is for lower-level readers. As I listened to them read aloud, I took note of what I call “fluency friction” that was not lexical in nature. Students might slow down, back up and re-read, or simply appear puzzled by a phrase, clause or sentence that included no challenging words. The students appeared to be struggling with “the grammar of reading."

As you listen to your lower-level students read, take note of the sentence constructions that give them the most trouble (for example: passives, inverted word order, subject clauses) and create simple exercises to familiarize them with those constructions.

**Curriculum**

**Kathy Lundquist, Metro North-ATC**

As you teach different comprehension strategies, have students practice the strategies at their comprehension level by using *STARS* from Curriculum Associates at <http://www.curriculumassociates.com/products/detail.aspx?title=stars>

**Literature Circles**

**Erin Parker, Robbinsdale**

After teaching, learning, and practicing the comprehension strategies of summarizing and questioning, my STAR students and I read novels in literature circles. Students summarize each chapter and come up with questions to ask their group members. The questions start with factual/find-in-text and progress to text-to-self or text-to-world connections.

I also use the same novels for fluency practice and Read & Respond vocabulary application. An example of a good novel for literature circles: *Island of the Blue Dolphins*.

**Text Marking**

**Nancy Benson, Cass Lake-Bena**

1. Fold a sheet of notebook or printer paper into 3 columns lengthwise.
2. Then fold the sheet in half and quarters so that each column has four sections or quadrants.
3. Have students put the page number of what they are reading at the top of one column.
4. Have students align the column next to the text on the page.
5. As students read, they can code the sentences or paragraphs with the following:
* I knew this before.

 **!**  This is new for me.

**?**  I am not sure what this means.

1. Then they write a short explanation for their coding in the quadrant.
2. They use a new column for each page, folding the previous column back as they move through the text.
3. Have students share their coding and explanations in a group discussion of the text.

**Text Structures**

**Tammy Twiggs, Hubbs Center**

1. Select a reading passage.
2. Complete a graphic organizer for the passage together.
3. Discuss and evaluate the text structure of the passage.
4. Select another topic and have students write about the topic duplicating the same text structure as the sample passage. (For example: the cause/effect passage and graphic organizer leads to writing another cause/effect paragraph.)
5. Share the new paragraphs.

**Summarizing Graphic Organizer**

**Hillary Frazey, DOC-Shakopee**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Passage: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The Topic of the Paragraph | **What the Author Says About the Topic** |
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**Detail Graphic Organizer**

**Heather Hoffer, SouthWest Metro**

I use the graphic organizer below to help my students focus on what they are reading. I do not have them write complete sentences in each section. We usually fill out the “Main Idea” line after we have completed the rest of the organizer. When finished, this organizer can also be used as a skeleton for writing a summary of what they have read.

TITLE OF THE ARTICLE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**WHO?**

**WHAT?**

**WHEN?**

**WHERE?**

**WHY?**

**HOW?**