

CT Reading Institute Newsletter

September 2010



I hope all teachers are returning to school energized and ready to tackle the task at hand: a classroom full of students excited to take the next step on their way to a new or better job, to continue their education or to meet their own personal goals. For many of us, this time of year often brings back memories of the anticipation of that first day back after a long, lazy summer spent reading and relaxing. So this issue of the newsletter focuses on reading comprehension, that critical reading skill all of our students need and many do not have (yet). Try some of the strategies, check out the websites and encourage all of your students to READ!

- Aileen Halloran
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Improving Reading Comprehension

The purpose of reading is to connect the ideas on the page to what the reader already knows. If you don't know anything about a subject, then pouring words of text into your mind is like pouring water into your hand; not much will be retained. Reading comprehension requires motivation, background knowledge, concentration and good study techniques. Here are some suggestions for ways to help your students become better readers.

Develop a broad background

Broaden students' background knowledge by having them read newspapers, magazines and books on a variety of topics. Discuss local events and world news, favorite books and sports to develop interest and vocabulary.

Anticipate and predict

Teach students to anticipate the author's intent and predict future ideas and questions by previewing material and asking questions.

Look for the method of organization

Different types of materials can be organized in very different manners. Is the material organized chronologically, serially, logically, or by function?

Pay attention to supporting cues

Encourage learners to study pictures, graphs and headings. Read the first and last paragraph in a chapter, or the first sentence in each section to get a "feel" for the content.

Highlight, summarize and review

To develop a deeper understanding, teach students to highlight, summarize and review important ideas. Rereading several times is often necessary.

Use Graphic Organizers

Spend time teaching students to use a variety of Graphic Organizers. They help students to organize material into a visual format which helps them to remember important information.

Build a good vocabulary

Encourage students to keep a list of new words in a notebook to review frequently. Focus on new words in texts and teach roots, prefixes and endings which help to build vocabulary for all levels of learners.

Why should society feel responsible only for the education of children, and not for the education of all adults of every age? ~Erich Fromm

Graphic organizers

Graphic organizers are instructional tools that help students construct meaning and retain it. They increase understanding of what is read by “chunking” content and organizing it in a visual format. Random facts are quickly lost unless they can be “connected” to another known fact. Since the brain likes to chunk information, the graphic organizer complements the way the brain naturally works. A Venn diagram can be used to compare and contrast; a storyboard can be used to order or sequence events; and a thematic web can connect main ideas to connecting ideas. Check out free graphic organizers at <http://freeology.com/graphicorgs> and <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer>

Websites

Education Oasis has many free graphic organizers to print as well as lesson plans. http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/graphic_organizers.htm

Marshall Adult Education has reading stories for adults on grade levels 1-8, with audio and comprehension questions. www.marshalladulthoodeducation.org

Important Dates

International Literacy Day September 8

Literacy remains an elusive target as some 759 million adults (1 in 5) lack minimum literacy skills and 72 million children are out-of-school, attend irregularly or drop out completely.

Adult Education and Family Literacy Week September 13 – 19

See suggestions to celebrate and raise awareness about adult and family literacy issues in your area. Ideas for program directors, instructors, and partners. <http://national-coalition-literacy.org/advocacy/aefl.html>

World Teachers' Day October 5

In our rapidly changing and interdependent world, teachers not only have to ensure that students acquire solid skills in basic subjects, but also that they become responsible local and global citizens, at ease with new technologies and able to make informed decisions about health, the environment and other challenges.

I like a teacher who gives you something to take home to think about besides homework.

~Lily Tomlin as "Edith Ann"

CT Reading Institute Update

Using Evidence-based Reading Research (EBRI) and the STAR model, (www.startoolkit.org), the CT Reading Institute offers a series of six workshops focusing on reading strategies. Whether you teach GED, ABE, math or social studies, you **are** teaching reading and can use these strategies to help your students. The first workshop on October 13th provides an overview of the research and explains how the four reading components combine for good reading. The series of six workshops, free to any Adult Education teacher, will be offered over the fall and spring. To see the schedule and register go to:

<http://www.crec.org/cetes/atdn>

Here's to an exciting and productive school year!

