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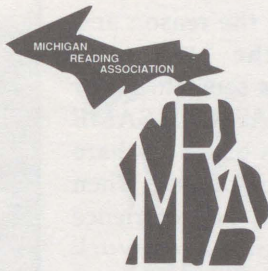
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Beyond the Formal Teaching of Strategies

by Hazel Cox

Strategies! I guess I've taught my share: QAR's, predicting, Reciprocal Teaching, KWL, Think-alouds. SQ3R, and fix-up strategies to name a few.

After a detailed teaching of a strategy I sometimes learned more than the students did. I learned more about the process of learning than they did because I had to become very familiar with the strategy in order to teach it. I learned a great deal from their responses and reactions to my teaching. I also learned a great deal from observing them use the strategy or reject it in their own way. Yes, some students learned the strategy quite well and enjoyed it. Others were glad when the study was over. Of course, little did they know that it wasn't over -- that the strategy should have become part of their learning style!

Well, it was time to begin another strategy. So we did. Then, another. Then, another. Then another. Somehow, this procedure didn't seem quite right.

Perhaps after all of this teaching I'm beginning to notice a more effective way to share strategies. I usually include a part of KWL with all activities we do: "What do you know about...?" before we begin. Then, most students are able to activate their prior knowledge and are ready to approach the topic with motivation. Recently, during the Reciprocal Teaching question generating time, a student asked a question that required reading several

paragraphs in order to find the answer. Automatically I said, "*That question sure is a good 'Search and Think' question.*" Since these children had not heard of QAR's, I took a few minutes to share that idea with them and showed them the process of answering that type question. What a nice way to demonstrate when a strategy should be used.

Another example might be when I often stop in the middle of whatever we're reading (no matter which strategy or activity is being emphasized) and say, "*You know, that reminds me of. . .*" Of course that comment can be labeled a "think-aloud". Or when my students "interrupt" the lesson with a personal thought, I try to connect their comment with the lesson at hand, indicating they had just offered a "think-aloud". This approach keeps them on task in a positive manner, as well as offers the opportunity to indicate when a strategy should be used.

There might also be some thought for indirectly teaching a strategy. I help a group of second graders with short attention spans who would not be able to tolerate a lot of formal instruction. So, I'm "sneaking" in Reciprocal Teaching: "*Let's ask each other some questions about what we just read.*" (question generating), "*The paragraph we just read is about. . .*" (summarizing), "*What does 'ancestors' mean?*" (clarifying) or "*What do you think we'll*

read about next?" (predicting). It's also hard for these students to remain on any one paragraph for any length of time. So, we don't do all of our activities of Reciprocal Teaching for every paragraph. However, over a period of time I'll be sure that we cover all of them well. Then, maybe some day I'll let them know that we have been doing a fancy strategy called "Reciprocal Teaching" and maybe I won't. Who knows?

During this time of educational change it seems highly beneficial to directly teach the strategies that promote the interactive model of reading because this teaching allows an understanding of the process, es-

pecially after realizing the reason and research base for the strategies. However, it also makes sense to know how to use them all AT THE SAME TIME "so to speak" in order to share them naturally with our students. Then students may clearly see and experience how all of these approaches work together to make them better and efficient learners who will be able to function well in our ever-changing society.

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Reading Update

by Bill Struck

Last spring it was offered
It was sure to be great.
The fourth, last, and best
Class of Reading Update.

We telephone Sue,
Got our name on the list,
This was one super session
That couldn't be missed.

As the summer grew shorter
We questioned within,
The wisdom of spending
Our time at this session.

Registration is over.
We'd never have guessed
That each day we'd be given
the pre and post test.

We talked of the new
Definition of reading
Excited by **learning**
To which it was leading.

Then thinking aloud
Helped us model each thought,

In words that each youngster
Could have easily caught.

On Tuesday each person
Took a definite position,
That each reader must
understand
METACOGNITION!

We assessed prior knowledge,
So important a chore.
Everybody had some,
But we wish we had more.

All about genre
We sat and we learned.
Then to literature types
Every person's mind turned.

To basal or not?
What a question to ask.
Use either or both
To accomplish the task.

Each text holds a treasure
If they just find the key.
We'll help them to claim it
With each new strategy.

Reciprocal teaching
Had us going around.
But this may be the very
Best concept we've found.

In writing development
There are several stages.
So accept what they put
On those wonderful pages.

We found the connection:
Reading and writing!
For these to be wed
Is really exciting.

We sit and we fidget.
Our poort brain is tired.
But with all this great
knowledge
For the school year we're fired!

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