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#### DIRECTED READING-THINKING ACTIVITY

When implementing a directed reading-thinking activity (DRTA), the teacher must view the DRTA as part of a larger instructional framework containing the following components.

- I. Developing readiness to read (or listen to) the selection
- II. DRTA (or DLTA) cycle:
  - A. Students set purposes, make predictions
  - B. Silent reading (or listening if a DLTA)
  - C. Students verify predictions, prove set purposes
- III. Comprehension check
- IV. Rereading the selection for purposes specified by the teacher
- V. Evaluation
- VI. Enrichment activities

Procedures (Note: These procedural steps do not constitute the entire lesson plan. The teacher will still need to state purposes, goals, assumptions about learners, and objectives for the lesson. This handout only assists in the preparation of the Procedures section of a lesson plan. See the pre-planning sheet for help with additional parts of the lesson plan.)

#### I. Developing Readiness to Read the Selection

In this first step, the teacher is concerned with: (1) building a rich conceptual background and/or activating schemata for the selection; (2) identifying and presenting any crucial vocabulary items (one or two words) in context, and (3) helping students establish some purpose(s) for reading the selection.

A. The teacher can build a rich conceptual background in a number of different ways:

1. Letting the students share related experiences
2. Telling of his/her own experiences
3. Using visual aids such as pictures, slides, maps, objects
4. Relating new material to current happenings in room, city, nation, etc.
5. Oral reading, or telling of related material by teacher
6. Locating the setting of the story
7. Identifying the characters
8. Anticipating incidents
9. Predicting outcomes

B. Words peculiar to the selection that represent unfamiliar concepts that are necessary to the understanding of the selection should be presented in context *before* the selection is read. However, the skillful teacher does not allow interest in the selection to wane because of

excessive attention to new words before the selection is read. Some activities for vocabulary building follow:

1. Recognizing synonyms, homonyms, antonyms
2. Using context clues to derive meanings
3. Interpreting words with multiple meanings
4. Using the dictionary to choose the correct definition to fit the context
5. Recognizing the effect of accent on word meanings

## II. The DRTA (or DLTA) Cycle

### Components

- A. Students set purposes, make predictions
- B. Silent reading (or listening if a DLTA)
- C. Students verify predictions, prove set purposes

### Description

A DRTA is a method of teaching a reading lesson used with a group of from five to twelve students who have the same fundamental reading abilities, and who read the same "fresh" material at the same time. The teacher directs the activity so that the students have a question to be answered or a doubt to be satisfied. Thus, in reality, the students are reading to satisfy the purposes they set individually (i.e., to answer the question(s) raised). In doing so, each student tests and retests ideas, orders and reorders purposes, reasons and judges in an effort to answer questions, insuring active participation in the reading and thus increasing comprehension. The students report their findings to the group and prove them by reading the appropriate passages. The students employ word identification skills in the context of their reading. The teacher, however, is always ready to aid with word identification or comprehension. The members of the group are responsible to one another for proving predictions, offering one another suggestions or generally maintaining a self-respect for each member of the group.

There is a predict-read-prove cycle used in the DRTA. This cycle is usually completed several times during the reading of a single selection. When planning a DRTA lesson, the teacher must locate logical places in the selection to begin and end the predict-read-prove cycle.

The specific strategy for the DRTA is as follows (II A through II C):

## II. A. Students Set Purposes, Make Predictions

**Key Questions:** "What do you think this story (passage, chapter, selection) is going to be about? What do you think a story (chapter, section) with a title like this may be about? What do you think might happen in this story? What do you think you might read about in this chapter (section)?"

1. The group, at random, predicts considering all the possibilities.
2. "Of all these possibilities, which one do you choose?" In

response to this question, individuals commit themselves. This commitment is important in the psychology of learning. The learner is now involved. He/she is a committed learner. Also, he/she is interested in finding out if the prediction chosen is right or wrong. To do so, the material must be read! These self-declared purposes (1) avoid pitfalls of assigned purposes and the artificiality of ready-made questions, and (2) make the reader attend to what is being read, rather than be concerned with recitation.

#### Thinking Involved in Predicting:

1. Divergent thinking - Early in the story, with little information, many conjectures are possible.
2. Convergent thinking - Later, when more of the story has been read, predicting is limited.

II. B. Guided Silent Reading of the Selection (This step is omitted in the case of a Directed Listening-Thinking Activity as the teacher will be reading aloud to students. All other steps can, and should, be maintained.)

One of the basic premises in the teaching of reading is that silent reading should always precede oral reading except for diagnostic purposes. It is during this first silent reading of the selection that the teacher gives further help in eliminating word difficulties. However, before a student asks for help, the student should have gone through certain steps in attempting to recognize a word he/she did not know instantly. First, the reader reads to the end of the sentence in which the unrecognized word appears. The reader knows from experience that getting the idea proves to be effective. Attention is focused on comprehension. Second, the reader looks at the letters/letter combinations and tries to pronounce the word. If pronounced correctly, the reader may recognize the word as one in his/her listening/speaking vocabulary. Lastly, the reader turns to the teacher or a fellow student for help. This is the mark of a scholar since all known skills have been tried, and the word is still unknown, so the reader must turn to someone more skilled.

#### II. C. Students Verify Predictions, Prove Set Purposes

1. Key questions: "Did you find the answer to your question? Did you find support for what you thought would happen/what you thought this text would be about?"
2. Oral reading to prove a point: "Read the line that proves it." Or "Read the lines that gave you this idea." Students must be continually required to produce evidence from the

material read to prove or support their predictions, or to give a reason why they should alter conjectures. (There is a difference between producing evidence and simply reproducing the sequential facts of a story.)

3. Redefining purposes - Key questions: 'What do you think now? What do you think will happen next?' Reading **is** a continuous process. Readers must continuously adjust their thinking, redefine their purposes and adjust their rates. These three steps of a directed reading-thinking activity should be repeated several times during one DRTA or DLTA.

### III. Comprehension Check

The silent reading, or listening, of the selection should also be followed by discussion of material read. The aim of the discussion period is to help to interpret the material. Students are led to discuss related concepts, and to consider the content of the selection in light of their own experiences. This should be relative to the purposes set, and done informally. Later, questions could be formulated that require written responses to include:

- a. factual questions which develop the habit of accurate, careful reading
- b. thought questions which involve sequence of events
- c. judgment of a character's behavior
- d. understanding inferences
- e. drawing conclusions
- f. making generalizations
- g. interpreting feelings and attitudes of the characters and of the author
- h. personal feelings toward characters
- i. comparisons and contrasts

After the selection has been read silently and word recognition and comprehension difficulties have been reduced, as in the case of the DRTA, it should be reread, at least in part (for a worthwhile content purpose, see Teacher Purpose).

### IV. Rereading the Selection for Purposes Specified by the Teacher

Rereading for specific purposes may be done either silently or orally, but the purpose must be different from the purpose(s) for the first silent reading. Some acceptable purposes for rereading are:

- a. following written directions
- b. finding main ideas in paragraphs

- c. finding supporting details to main ideas
- d. writing summarizing sentences or paragraphs
- e. proving accuracy of statements
- f. suggesting titles for story parts
- g. rearranging events in proper sequence, outlining, or mapping
- h. interpreting attitudes of characters
- i. appreciating humor, literary quality, imagery, style, and colloquial expressions
- j. seeing cause and effect relationship(s)
- k. skimming to find clues to word meanings; facts; proof for an answer; unusual expressions; or amusing parts
- l. preparing for reading to an audience
- m. preparing for dramatization (e.g., Readers Theatre)
- n. search for clues to suggest the kind of person a character is
- o. identify facts from opinions

Choose selections that are rich in content and are closely related to pupils' experiences. Much independent reading can be motivated by extending the interest of the class in finding out more about certain topics introduced in the original selection. Have a large selection of books that includes paperbacks, current releases, and magazines. (In addition, needed word identification skills may be further developed during rereading.)

#### V. Evaluation

In order to document the effectiveness of the lesson for each student, some form of evaluation activity should be provided. This might be a written response or an art activity. The important point is that *each* student, on his/her own, has a chance to demonstrate what was gained/learned from the material. The evaluation activity should match the content purpose of the lesson.

#### VI. Enrichment/Extension Activities

Follow-up activities can do much to encourage further reading, and help to establish the habit of being a life-long reader/learner. Such activities may include:

- a. additional vocabulary exercises
- b. practice in phonics and/or structural analysis of words
- c. use of the dictionary/thesaurus
- d. use of book parts (e.g., index, glossary)
- e. use of the Internet or the library
- f. reading related materials (comparing and contrasting)
- g. oral reading activities (e.g., choral reading)
- h. dramatization (e.g., Readers Theater), or storytelling
- i. making posters, or creating a cartoon comic strip
- j. oral and written reports, or creating a classroom newsletter
- k. writing original poems
- l. memorizing poems
- m. adapting material for radio broadcast