

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE TASK COMPLETION AND METACOGNITION

Elaine Fine, Ed.; LDT-C

The Learning Strategies Model was developed at the Center for Research on Learning, University of Kansas, Lawrence and has been validated over the last 30 years

What Are Learning Strategies?

The concept of learning strategies emerged from cognitive psychology. Simply put, an individual's approach to a task is called a strategy when it includes how a person thinks and acts when planning, executing, and evaluating performance on the task and its outcomes. More specifically, a learning strategy is an individual's way of organizing and using a particular set of skills in order to learn content or accomplish other tasks more effectively and efficiently.

Learning strategies promote independence, reflection, organization, recall, analysis of information, generalization, application, and active learning.

What are the elements of strategy instruction?

- specific steps for accomplishing a given task that utilize cognitive strategies – (i.e., organizing, transforming, checking, remembering, prioritizing)
- a memory device of a word where each letter of the word stands for a step in the strategy
- metacognitive steps (how an individual selects, monitors, and uses the cognitive strategies that he or she possesses)
- instructional model that includes giving a rationale for the strategy, step-by-step teaching of the strategy steps, modeling the strategy, controlled practice, real-life practice, and instructing for generalization

CLICK AND CLUNK: A STRATEGY FOR READING COMPREHENSION

Issue each child a red card (stop, I don't understand) and a green card (go, I understand).

This strategy is for non-fiction.

The strategy is taught in 3 sections

Learning to monitor one's comprehension

1. Stop at the end of a short section, paragraph, sentence, page.
2. Ask yourself, "Is it a click or a clunk?"
3. Turn over the click card or the clunk card.

It is essential to help students understand that everyone gets a clunk sometimes, even the teacher. It is okay to get a clunk, but it is not okay to do nothing with the clunk.

Learning to fix understanding when you get a clunk card

1. If you turned over a clunk card, ask yourself, "What can I do to change my clunk to a click?"
 - Read it again slower.
 - Sound out words you are not sure you said correctly
 - Look up a word that you do not know the meaning of.
 - Make up a question.
 - Go on and then come back
 - Ask someone (only after you try other fix-ups)
 2. Ask yourself again if it is a click or a clunk.
-

Learning to recall the information when you get a click

1. If you turned over a click card, close your eyes and make a picture in your mind of what you read about.
2. Now tell yourself what the paragraph, sentence, or page was about, the main idea and details.

RAP

RAP is a reading comprehension strategy for non-fiction

R = Read one paragraph. As you read, think of information you know about the topic and ask yourself specific questions that you think you should be able to answer after reading that paragraph.

A = Ask yourself what is the main idea and what are 2 major details.

Answer the questions you made up.

To find the main idea ask yourself these two questions:

1. What is this paragraph about? (answer in one or two words; this is not the main idea).
2. What is the main thing the author says about _____

(Insert the answer from question 1 and answer this question in a complete sentence; this is the main idea).

P = Put the main idea and the details in your own words – 3 sentences

Strategy developed at the Center for Research on Learning, University of Kansas

PLAN and WRITE strategy for writing a composition/essay

PLAN

P – Pay attention to the prompt

Ask yourself what are you to write about

Ask yourself if there are specific requirements for what to include or length

Decide if you are writing to persuade, explain, describe, or compare

Brainstorm to think of all that you know about the topic

L – List main ideas

Ask yourself what are the main ideas about the topic – try to list 3

A – Add supporting ideas for each main idea

Ask yourself if there are reasons, details, examples, facts that tell more about each main idea

N – Number your ideas

Decide which main idea you want to discuss first, second, third

Number the details under each main idea in the order you want to discuss them

WRITE

W – Work from your plan to develop main idea/thesis statement; this is the topic sentence

This tells what you are writing about and your point of view

This gives an overview

R – Remember your goals

What is the purpose of your writing (to persuade, explain, describe, compare, etc.)

Who is your audience

I – Include transition words for each paragraph

The first paragraph that includes the thesis statement and an overview

Next, there should be one paragraph for each main idea

Transition words connect one paragraph to the next paragraph

Transition to a final paragraph, which offers a summary, a conclusion, and/or an idea to think about

T – Try to use different kinds of sentences

Simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences

Don't forget to punctuate each sentence correctly

E – Exciting, interesting, \$100,000 words make your writing more interesting

Developed by K. Harris and S. Graham

SOLVE: A STRATEGY FOR SOLVING WORD PROBLEMS IN MATH

S = Study the problem. Ask yourself what is the question?

- Underline the question.
- Rewrite the question.
- Draw a picture.
- Create a model

O = Organize the facts. Ask yourself what are the needed facts?

- Underline the facts.
- Make a list of the facts.
- Cross out unnecessary facts.
- Find the facts in a table.
- Find the facts on a graph.

L = Line up the plan. Ask yourself what is the plan?

- Substitute easier numbers
- Find a constant pattern.
- Work backwards.
- Put the facts in order.
- Decide if this is a one-step problem or if it has more than one step.

V = Verify your plan with computation. What is the answer?

- Do the math.
- Find what's left.
- Find the total.
- Find part of the total.
- Write an equation.

E = Examine your answer. Ask yourself if the answer matches the question?

- Check your computation.
- Write your answer in a sentence.
- Match your answer to the question.

FORCE: A Strategy for Studying for a Test

F = FIND OUT Your teacher announces a test. Ask yourself if you have all of the information that you need. If not, ask questions. For example, "What will the test cover?" "What types of questions will be used?"

O = ORGANIZE Ask yourself if you have all necessary materials for studying for the test. For example, notes, study guide, books, and so forth.

R = REVIEW Do the general review necessary to study for this test. For example, skim chapters, charts, maps, summaries, questions, or vocabulary; highlight notes; review old tests and assignments.

C = CONCENTRATE Ask yourself what information you do not know. Concentrate on this information by making a study sheet (cue sheet) by putting important information in question/answer form.

E = EARLY EXAM Practice the test by pre-testing. For example, take turns asking questions with a partner (study buddy); have your parents or other adults help you drill from your study sheet; take your own test from your study sheet. Now review those weak spots until you are certain of what you know. There may be a few items you want to review right before the test.

Practice by making flash cards with the question on one side and answer on the other side. Have only one fact per card. Now study 3 cards by going from the question to the answer and the answer to the question until you know these facts. This can also be used for vocabulary by putting the word on one side and the definition on the other side. Now study the next 3 cards in the same way. When you know these, study all 6 together. Then the next 3, then all 9, and so on until all are studied. Studying small amounts of information at once is more effective than studying everything all at once.

From: May the Force Be With You: A Test Preparation Strategy; L. Wehrung-Schaffer;

Academic Therapy, Jan. 1990, pp. 291-300

LISTEN: A Strategy for Improving Attention in Class

- L** = **L**ook. When you enter the room, ask yourself what you are supposed to look at in the beginning of class and look for that; for example, look for your homework if it is to be handed in, look at the assignment on the board if you have to copy it, look for your folder, look for your notebook or section of notebook for the subject, or look at the work that was done yesterday to review.
- I** = **I**dle your motor. Remind yourself to sit in your seat properly and to stop playing with objects, etc.
- S** = **S**it up straight to be ready to learn.
- T** = **T**urn to the person speaking, the teacher or your classmates.
- E** = **E**ngage your brain. Stop thinking about other things such as what happened in the class before, what you want to do after this class, something your friend said to you, or anything else not related to this class. Think about the topic learned yesterday in this class or what you are working on here. Review notes, your homework, or the text for this class while waiting for the teacher to start.
- N** = **N**ow. Do all of the above things now, not later in the class period, and keep reminding yourself to do them throughout the class period.

ADAPT

To help me remember to bring things that I need for studying and homework.

A - At the end of each class, make a list of what you need to take home.

- In the homework section of your notebook or in your planner, make a list of what you need to take home for studying and homework for each class.
- Think ahead by including things on your list that you will need to complete for an assignment that is due in a few days.

D - Decide what you need to take home from your list at the end of the day.

- Look at the list and see what work you finished at school and see what needs to be taken home.
- Check off the items on the list as you put them in your book bag.
- Check the list to determine if you need to ask your teacher about a specific assignment.

A - Ask your teacher to answer questions you have about homework or studying.

- After reviewing your list, ask your teacher for clarification.
- After the teacher answers the questions, make sure you have the necessary materials to take home.

P - Pause right before you walk out of school and ask yourself, "Do I have everything I need?"

- Even if you checked your list, make sure you check it one more time before leaving school because once you're out of school, you won't be able to get the materials you need.

T - Try not to give up even if you discover at home that you have forgotten something.

- If you need something, call a friend to try to borrow the material you need.
- If available, call a homework hotline or check a school homework website.
- If the teacher approves, call the teacher for help.
- If you cannot get help from anyone, complete the assignment the best that you can. Do not leave the assignment undone just because you forgot something.

Always try to do the best that you can!

S2TOP

To help stay focused when I study.

S - Set a timer and sit down to study.

- Use your watch or a kitchen timer and set it for a certain period of time that you plan to study.

S - See if you are off task.

- When you notice that your mind has drifted off task, tell yourself that you are not studying and that you have to go back to studying.

T - Touch the circle.

- Draw a circle on a piece of scratch paper.
- Every time you become aware that you are daydreaming, make a mark inside the circle.

O - Organize your thoughts.

- After you make a mark in the circle, take a few seconds to organize your thoughts.
- Shut your eyes and tell yourself to get back to studying.

P - Proceed again.

- Once you have organized your thoughts, begin to study again.
- Once your study session is over, count the number of marks you made in the circle.
- Your goal is to decrease the number of marks you make in a circle the next time you study. Try to reach a point where you can study without making any marks in a circle. Then you will have overcome your problems with daydreaming.

SELECTED REFERENCES

On-line resources

Center for Research on Learning, University of Kansas: www.ku-crl.org/sim

The Learning Toolbox: coe.jmu.edu/LearningToolbox

The IRIS Center: <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu>

Reading Quest: <http://www.readingquest.org>

Books

Dawson, P. & Guare, R. (2011). *Executive skills in children and adolescents: A practical guide to assessment and intervention*, 2nd ed.. New York: Guilford Press.

Deshler, D.D., Ellis, E.S., and Lenz, B.K. (1996). *Teaching adolescents with learning disabilities: Strategies and methods*, 2nd ed. Denver, CO; Love Pub. Co.

Harris, K. and Graham, S. (2008). *Powerful writing strategies for all students*. Baltimore, Md.: Paul H. Brookes Pub.

Meltzer, L. (2010). *Promoting executive function in the classroom: What works for special-needs learners*. New York: Guilford Press.

Reid, R. , Ortiz, T., and Hagaman, J. (2013). *Strategy instruction for students with learning disabilities: What works for special needs learners*. New York: Guilford Press..

Vaughn, S. and Bos, C.. (2011). *Strategies for teaching students with learning and behavior problems*, 8th ed. Boston, MA: Pearson.