The Main Idea Strategy: Student Practice Lessons

Name

Passage #15

**Your Teen Brain**

Date

Have you ever noticed that teachers make you work in a different way in high school than in elementary school? This is because your brain works differently in high school than in elementary school. Looking into how we learn shows that you really do think differently as a teenager than you did as an elementary kid. As a teenager, the way you think and process information is changing. Researchers say, “You are in a new stage of development.”

You no longer depend on a teacher, peer or another adult to evaluate your work. Instead, you can now look at a project and analyze how well you did. You are able to think about the grade earned. You are also able to pick out the best parts of what you did on the project. You can see ways in which you could do better. Isn’t it nice to be able to think more independently than younger students?

Creating your own report or project is also more possible for you now than in fourth grade. Why? You are now more reflective. You can look beyond information that you are given. This allows you to come up with cool ideas of your own. At this stage, you should be able to use teacher directions to develop your own ideas for projects. For example, a teacher should not have to give you a number of choices for a project about the favorite part of a book. You can now come up with your own ideas rather than relying on the teacher.

Students at this stage are better at thinking in another way also. You can look at situations and ask “if-then” type of questions about a problem. Think about when you see someone that you think is popular. You think that “*if*” “you acted or dressed like that person, “*then*” you would also be popular. This is called drawing conclusions.

In addition, rather than deciding that you also could be popular if you wore a red shirt like the “cool kid”, you can now use logical reasoning to find out why that person is popular. This should be helpful. That is, you should have better reasoning to figure out that the kid is well liked because he is friendly, not because he wears a red shirt. Doesn’t that make more sense?

Adapted from: Carin, A. A., & Sund, R. B. (1980). *Teaching Modern Science* (3rd ed.). Columbus: Merrill. Used by permission.

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