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Two New Strategies

The Visual Imagery and Self-Questioning Strategies

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Two new comprehension strategies have joined the other reading strategies within the **Learning Strategies Curriculum**: the *Visual Imagery Strategy* and the *Self-Questioning Strategy*. Both strategies have been designed to help students deal more effectively with the complex reading demands of their educational settings. Both strategies were developed for elementary through post-secondary students. The instruction associated with the two strategies was field-tested during the early years of the Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities (Clark, Deshler, Schumaker, Alley, & Warner, 1984).

Together with the *Paraphrasing Strategy*, these strategies form a package that should help students comprehend and remember the information they encounter in any type of reading material. Thus, teaching the three strategies in sequence and helping students to use the three strategies in combination and as the need arises is highly recommended.

The *Visual Imagery Strategy* and the *Self-Questioning Strategy* are best taught after the *Word Identification Strategy* has been taught. (The *Visual Imagery Strategy* is probably the easiest of the two since it is concretely based.) The *Paraphrasing Strategy* is probably best taught after the other two comprehension strategies because it is the most conceptually difficult and abstract of the three strategies. In addition, the skills of visual imaging and self-questioning facilitate the student's ability to paraphrase reading material.

The Visual Imagery Strategy

The *Visual Imagery Strategy* was designed to enable students to recall specific facts and sequences within narrative text (e.g., short stories, novels). Our research showed that students' comprehension and retention scores increased in proportion to the quality and quantity of the visual images they made while reading a narrative passage. The *Visual Imagery Strategy* requires students to make pictures in their minds as they read each sentence in a passage. Students are told to make a movie in their minds complete with the scenery, characters, and action.

To perform the strategy, students begin the first step by simultaneously reading and looking for picture words. (Picture words are those words for which they can immediately create a picture in their minds.) They determine which picture words enable them to visualize the scenery and which enable them to visualize the characters and action. In the second step of the strategy, students visualize the backdrop or scene for their movie (the movie set). In the third step of the strategy, they enter all the details (the characters and action) into the scene. For the fourth step, they name all the parts of their visual image, and for the fifth step, they evaluate their image to determine whether it contains the most important elements triggered by the picture words. The five strategy steps are recycled as the reader continues to read small chunks of the passage (one to three sentences, depending on the reader) and use the strategy. A mnemonic device called "SCENE" was

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developed to help students remember the five strategy steps.

Thus, the *Visual Imagery Strategy* is a comprehensive strategy system that enables students to use a variety of cognitive strategies. First, it includes a discrimination strategy needed for determining which words are the picture words, which picture words are aids for visualizing the scene (the movie set) and which are aids for visualizing the details (the characters and action). Second, it includes a visualization strategy for creating mental pictures. Third, it includes a simple form of a paraphrasing strategy for talking to oneself about the visual images. Finally, it includes a monitoring strategy for checking one's work.

The Self-Questioning Strategy

The *Self-Questioning Strategy* requires students to create questions in their minds and search for the

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answers to those questions as they read each passage. It was designed to be used by students to improve their understanding and recall of information in both narrative and expository text. Our research has shown that students' comprehension and retention scores increase in proportion to the quality and quantity of the questions they ask themselves while reading a passage (Clark et al., 1984).

The *Self-Questioning Strategy* has five steps. In the first step, students attend to clues as they read. (The clues are words that make them

wonder.) For example, if a student reads a sentence like, "Unloading the cargo required three hours of hard work," she might choose the word "cargo" as a word that makes her wonder. Once a clue has been found, the student asks a question about the word. For example, the student might ask, "What is the cargo?" The student forms the question from a menu of seven question types. In the third step of the strategy, the student makes a prediction that answers the question. In the fourth step, the student reads on to identify the answer to the question. In the fifth step, the student talks to herself about the answer to the question. Several of the steps can be done simultaneously and recycled continuously; that is, students can be looking for answers to previous questions as well as looking for new clues and asking new questions at the same time. The mnemonic device that has been designed to help students remember the steps of the *Self-Questioning Strategy* is "ASK IT."

Like the *Visual Imagery Strategy*, the *Self-Questioning Strategy* is a comprehensive strategy system comprised of several cognitive strategies. Students use a discrimination strategy to find words that make them wonder and to recognize the answers to their questions. They use a self-questioning strategy to ask themselves questions and a prediction strategy to make their predictions. They use a simple paraphrasing strategy to transform the answer they have found in the passage into their own words.

The Goal Associated with Both Strategies

The goal associated with both strategies is that students use them so fluently that the steps blend together into a whole. For example,

with the *Visual Imagery Strategy*, the ultimate goal is that students make a continuous movie in their minds as they read. For the *Self-Questioning Strategy*, students should be holding questions and predictions in their minds continuously as they read.

During the instructional process, these cognitive processes may be artificially slow initially because the students will be stopping to talk about

"... the Self-Questioning Strategy promotes intrinsic motivation for reading by helping students to identify their own reasons for reading a passage."

their images or questions and predictions. As soon as possible, however, students should be allowed to function freely with the strategy. This is possible since most students learn both strategies very quickly (i.e., within a few practice trials).

The Rationale Behind Both Strategies

Learning the *Visual Imagery Strategy* and the *Self-Questioning Strategy* is advantageous for students for a number of reasons. First, both strategies require that they **actively** interact with the material rather than passively read it. Second, the division of the reading

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The Guru of Games

Karen Koskovich, Maquoketa, Iowa is not only creative, but is the **Guru of Games**. She received the award for the Most Valuable Teacher Tip for Strategram in 1992. Her "hand method" for remembering sentence parts was published in Strategram, 1992, Vol. 4, No. 4. Karen is currently a Chapter I teacher at Briggs and Sacred Heart Elementary Schools

Karen recently submitted several of her ideas to be shared with Strategram readers. These games and activities were developed during her eight years as a strategies teacher. The games presented here are used to teach prerequisite skills for the *Sentence Writing Strategy*. More specifically, the following games are for use while teaching the FANBOYS conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so and/or the helping verbs.

Game #1 - Trail Game

Materials: Colored folder, labels or stickers, 1 die or spinner.

Make trail games (like Sorry or Trouble) with colored file folders and stickers. The stickers are used to establish the trail on the file folder. Place each of the letters "F", "A", "N", "B", "O", "Y", and "S" on individual stickers with a comma before each letter. As the student rolls and land on a particular letter, the conjunction must be identified in order to move forward and finish the game. The game can be made more difficult by requiring the student to explain what the conjunction means or how it is used, and/or to give an example sentence in which the conjunction is used appropriately.

Game # 2- Tic-Tac-Toe

Materials: Poster board, pens, and scissors. Overhead projector, transparency, and transparency pens; or chalkboard and colored chalk; or paper and colored pencils

Make some cards out of poster board. Write each of the "FANBOYS" letters on a card (or on the board). Mix up the cards. Have each student draw a card and name the appropriate coordinating conjunction before marking an "X" or an "O" in Tic-Tac-Toe. Once this is mastered, have the student state an appropriate sentence containing the conjunction.

Alternatively, write each of the coordinating conjunctions and each of the helping verbs on a card or in a mixed up list on the board. Have each student draw a card (or pick a word on the list) and name whether it is a coordinating conjunction or a helping verb before marking an "X" or an "O" in Tic-Tac-Toe. To make the game more difficult, have the student state an appropriate sentence containing the word.

Game #3 - Concentration (played in groups of four or less)

Materials: Poster board, pens, and scissors.

Make some cards out of poster board. On each card, write one of the "FANBOYS" letters. Make at least two cards for each letter. Clip the right-hand corner of the card so students can identify the top/bottom of the card. Have students mix up the cards and arrange them in rows, face down on their desks or the floor. Each time a student takes a turn, she can turn over two cards. Each time a card is turned over, the student must name the appropriate coordinating conjunction. Each time a match is made, the student must state an appropriate sentence containing the conjunction in order to "claim" the cards for the "match." The student with the most matches wins.

Alternatively, make a set of Concentration Cards for the coordinating conjunctions and another set for the

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helping verbs. Have students match the words. When a match is made, require the student to state an appropriate sentence containing the conjunction or the helping verb in order to "claim" the cards. You may choose to have students play the game with fewer than all 23 helping verbs at first. As students progress, have them add more words to the game.

Game #4 - Transparency Bingo Review

Materials: Poster board and pens. Two dice per game.

Prepare a "Bingo" sheet, and write one of the coordinating conjunctions or helping verbs in each of the squares. (You might choose to put a comma in front of each of the coordinating conjunctions the first time the game is played in order to give students a helpful cue as to which words are coordinating conjunctions.) Have each student roll the dice, one at a time, to determine the space on the "Bingo" sheet. The first die indicates the number of spaces across, and the second indicates the number of spaces down on the "Bingo" sheet. Once the space is located, the student reads the word aloud, identifies it as a conjunction or a helping verb, and states a sentence in which the word is used appropriately. When a correct response is given, the space is marked with the student's or team's color pen (or marker). Winners are determined by completing a full row (across, down, or diagonal) on the "Bingo" sheet.

Game 5 Helping Verb Formula

Teach the following formula for remembering the helping verbs. Each number stands for the number of verbs beginning with that letter.

A	B	C	D	H	I	S	M	W
2	3	2	3	3	1	2	3	4

A-am, are; **B**-be, being, been; **C**-can, could; **D**-do, does, did; **H**-had, has, have; **I**-is;
S-should, shall; **M**-may, might, must.

Game 6 Rapid Fire

Having taught the helping verb formula, ask students to recite the helping verbs as quickly as possible. Each student can have an individual time goal. Graphs can be made to chart progress.

Game 7 Word Search

Materials: highlighter and newspapers.

Students use highlighters to locate all the helping verbs in a newspaper.

Game 8 Cookie Day (can be used with Word Search)

Small groups of four or less share the helping verbs by reading the sentences in which they were found. As they finish, students are given a cookie to eat while the next student shares his or her findings. This has eliminated hesitancy on the part of students to volunteer.

By using the sets of helping verb and conjunction cards, games like **Old Maid** and **"Go Fish"** can also be played. As the students make matches, the words must be identified as a helping verb or conjunction. As an additional activity, the students must name an additional helping verb beginning with the same letter.

Thank you, Karen for all your great ideas!

PUZZLE FLASH CARDS

Chris Siebenlist, a teacher and SIM Trainer in Kansas City, Kansas is proud to report on the creativity of a recent trainee, Penny Cummings, in her Learning Strategies Class for the *Paragraph Writing Strategy*. Penny created a clever and practical visual aid for enhancing the presentation of "SCRIBE" to her Learning Center students at Rosedale Middle School in Kansas City, Kansas. In response to a suggestion from one of her students, Penny enlarged the puzzle piece graphics from the cue cards and reproduced them on heavy stock paper in order to make a puzzle that would actually interlock. Penny cautions that the pieces have to be doctored a bit to fit together. On the reverse side of the puzzle pieces, Penny wrote the key items of information related to each piece. By making several puzzles, teachers can use them as a basis for a cooperative learning activity in which the students use the pieces as flash cards to quiz themselves or each other. Thanks go to Penny for her creativity and for sharing her puzzle/flash cards with everyone!

**Penny's Puzzle/Flash Cards have been reproduced
on pages 6 & 7**

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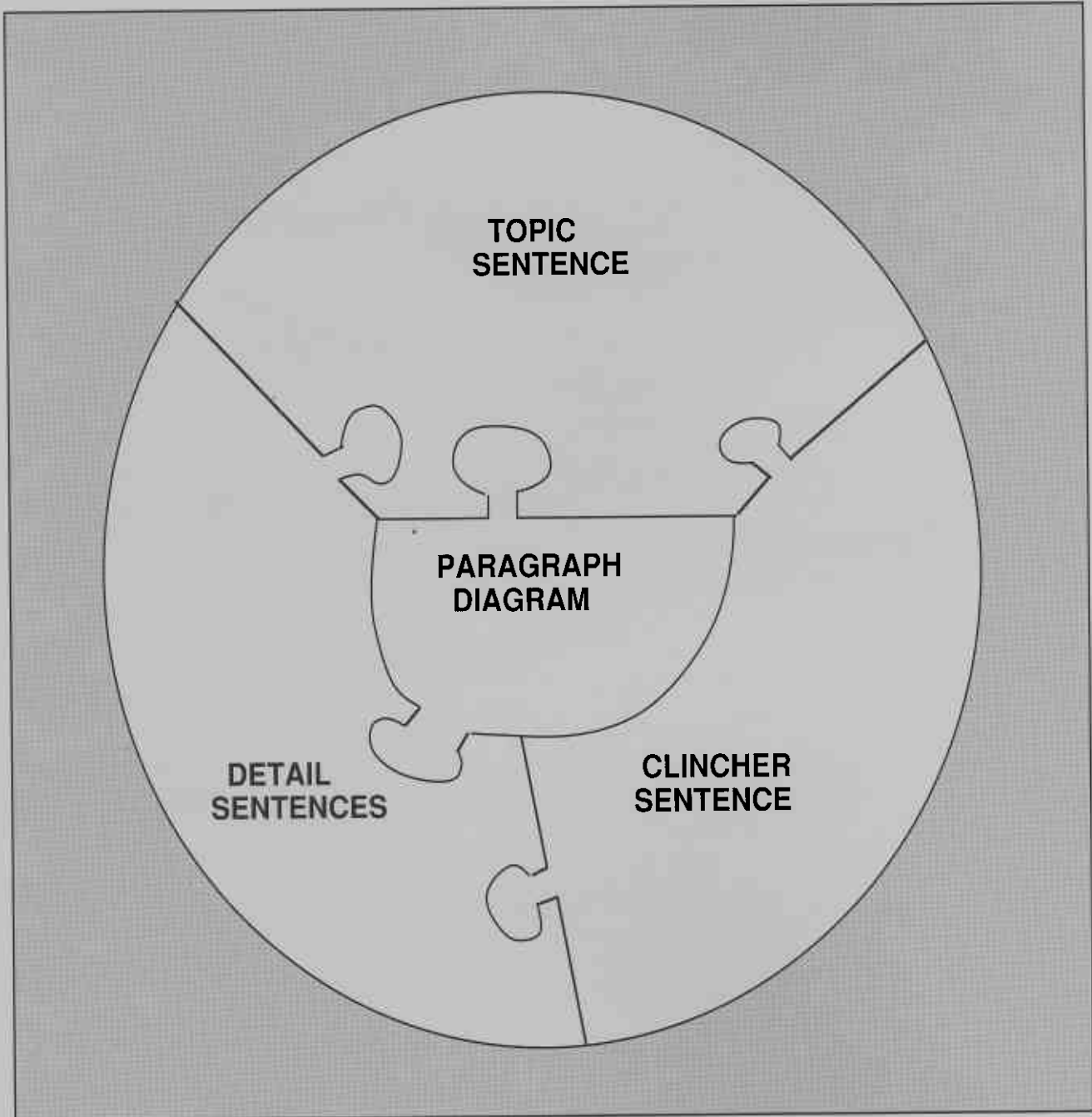
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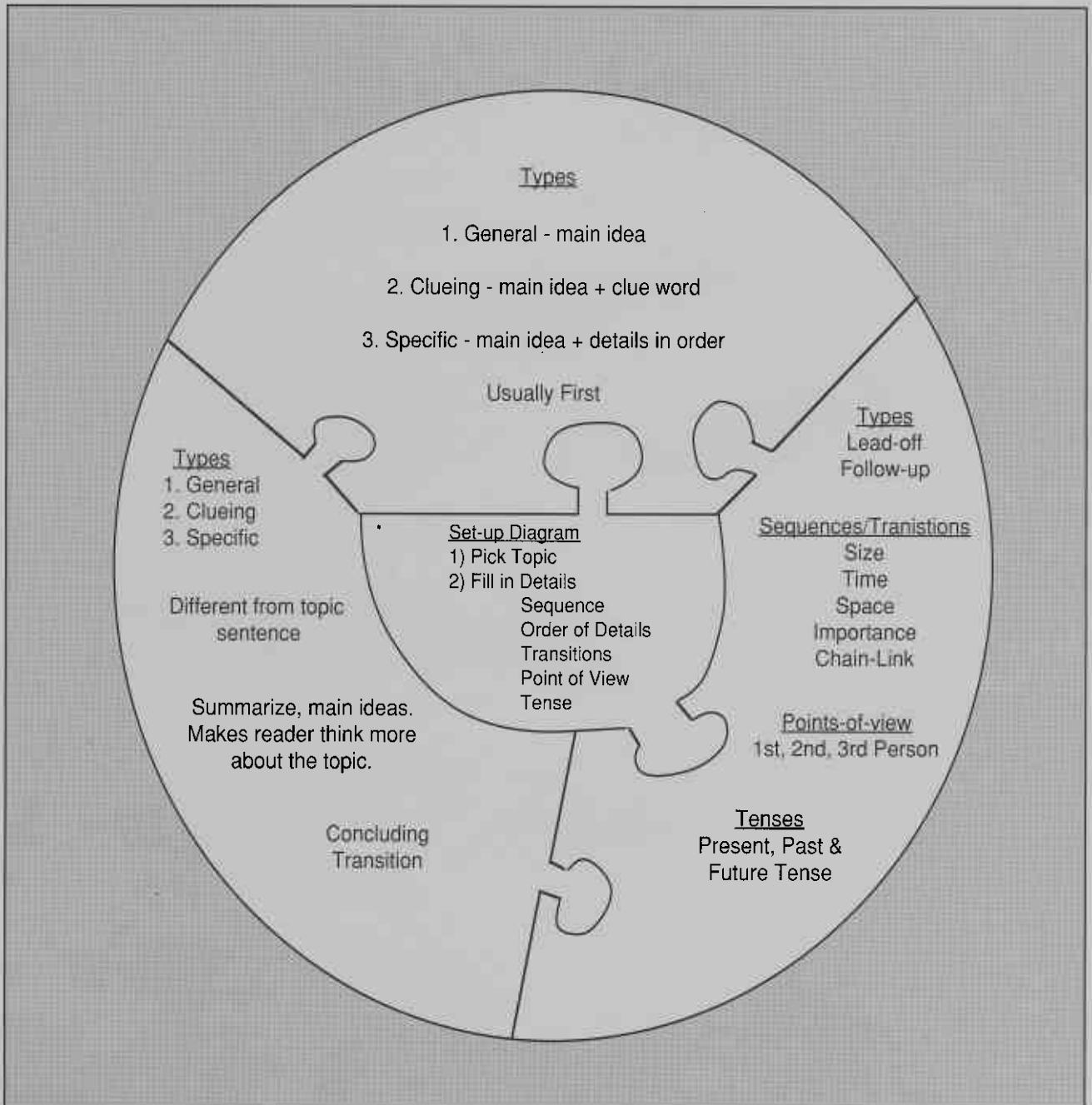
THE PARAGRAPH WRITING STRATEGY



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THE PARAGRAPH WRITING STRATEGY

(Reverse side of the puzzle)



From Penny Cummings, Kansas City, Kansas. May Be Reproduced

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passage into small units and the alternation of activities require that students maintain a high level of attention during the reading activity. Third, both strategies require that students verbalize the new information that they are learning. This is another process that can enhance understanding and recall. Finally, the *Self-Questioning Strategy* promotes intrinsic motivation for reading by helping students to identify their own reasons for reading a passage. Enhanced motivation to read can be very helpful in enhancing the mastery of information. Thus, both strategies can help students become better readers—more able to understand and remember what they read. Additionally, use of the strategies should help them become more successful in situations in which they need to gain information from the written word.

Manuals Are Available

Instructor manuals are now available from the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning. Contact your trainer for a training session so these new strategies can be added to your instructional "tool box."

References

Clark, F.L., Deshler, D.D., Schumaker, J.B., Alley, G.R., & Warner, M.M. (1984). Visual imagery and self-questioning: Strategies to improve comprehension of written material. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 17, (3), 145-149.

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