

Engaging High School Students In The Learning Process

Pre-reading/Pre-learning Activities

State what will be learned in the activity.

The following list may be used at any point in the “pre” session of learning or reading. All pre-reading or pre-reading activities are designed to help students develop levels of curiosity before they learn new material.

Anticipation guide: This can be in the form of a quiz or some other activity. The purpose is to lead students into the reading or learning by creating some questions in the students’ minds.

Bold print guess: The teacher asks students to select a set number of bold print section headers or words found in the material. For each bold print word or section that the students find, the students write a one sentence prediction of what they think will be discussed in that section or with the term.

GoFind: The teacher assigns students to find an internet article that details a specific concept or process that students are going to do within the next two weeks. The teacher must assign specific details that are to be found within the article. For example, a teacher might assign students to find an article about how greenhouse concrete slabs are constructed. The teacher will say the article must include some specifics like the correct way to structure corners of the concrete slab. We suggest that the teacher require three specific expectations within the article so students must read it. Give students at least two weeks prior to studying the specific technical content to be applied.

Journal/magazine stimulation: Students read a short journal or magazine article about the subject to be studied. The students use the information from the article as a stimulator to help them make connections as they read the curriculum material. The teacher must assign specific concepts to be found within the article.

K-W-L: the “What do I Know”, “What do I Want to Know”, and “What Have I Learned” chart is designed to help students establish what they already know and what they want to learn as they read. The teacher can use any method including the scan or the “look at” to stimulate comments about what students know. A teacher could even just say “What do you know about ...?” Then, the teacher would ask for responses.

After the list of what is known is completed. Students then offer a list of what they want to know. The questions are listed in the middle section of the K-W-L chart shown below. Sometimes students are reluctant to ask questions so teachers may want to be creative with getting students to pose questions. For example, one technique is to have students look at all the pictures and then have the students list the “what do I want to know” first.

(SEE A MODEL ON THE NEXT PAGE)

I know	What do I want to know?	What have I learned?

After the reading, the students complete this chart by listing what they know in the third column.

Look for unknown words: The teacher tells students to look at the pages and to write down any word that they do not know. The teacher gives students a brief amount of time because the intent is that students “look for” words and not read. The teacher then asks students to list words that they found. All words are placed on the board. The teacher tells students the meaning of some words. In the case of other words, the teacher tells students that there are ways to find the meaning as they read if they use context clues.

Picture questioning: The teacher shows a set of pictures that are found in the material to be learned or a set of pictures that relate to the material to be learned. When the teacher flashes each picture, students write a question that they have about the picture. The questions are then used for directed reading activities.

Picture story: The teacher assigns students to find a picture on some concept that will be taught. Students are required to bring the picture to class and tell a story about the picture prior to the class reading or studying the concept.

Picture walk: Have students look through pages of what they are reading and tell students to write questions that they have about pictures. These questions could be used as part of a K-W-L chart or the questions could be used for the directed reading while students read.

Quick look: The students are given a set amount of time and then are told to look at each page that they will read. The students are reminded not to read, but to *look at* the pages. When finished, the teacher tells students to close all material so they cannot see it. The teacher then asks students to give quick “gut responses” to what they saw. The teacher lists the responses on a board or paper in front of the class.

Read the questions at the end of the chapter: Prior to any reading, the students go to questions at the end of a chapter. The students read the questions to help stimulate their thinking about material in the reading material.

Read the summary information first: The teacher directs the students to the summary. The students read the summary and respond. They may be asked to develop questions or compose statements of their thoughts about the summary.

Scan the lines: Have students place a straight edge under words and slide through all the material to be read. A time limit should be established so that students recognize the need

to scan as opposed to read. After the scan, the students should close the reading material and the teacher asks students to quickly respond with concepts that they see.

Scavenger hunt: The teacher develops a hunt for pictures, specific areas of the material, important words. The teacher then has the students find the information requested as part of the hunt. This activity helps students search through material prior to reading.

Vocabulary by accident: The teacher places new vocabulary words in open sight in the room. The words are not discussed and the students are not told to do anything with the words. Instead, the teacher may or may not remind students of these words and may or may not pronounce the words or have students say the words aloud. If the students ask about the words, the teacher simply says, “*We will study those words in a couple of weeks. Just become familiar with them and know they exist.*” The teacher makes a point not give definitions or ask for them. Let the students process a familiarity with the word itself.

Vocabulary illumination: The teacher identifies words that students may not know in an upcoming lesson or module. The teacher either lists the words and tells students what the words mean or the teacher mentions the words and tells students what the words mean.

During-reading/During-learning Activities

Just prior to the student engaged activity state what will be learned.

The following list may be used at any point in the “during” session of reading or learning. All during-reading or during-learning activities are designed to help students search for information, connect information, and be engaged in processing while reading or learning.

Directed reading or learning questions: These are questions designed to lead students directly to information that the teacher wants the students to find. The questions are also designed to lead students to think about certain connections as they read or learn. The questions should be read orally prior to starting the reading or learning. Students may answer questions as they read or learn, or the students may answer after reading or learning.

Jigsaw reading: The teachers assigns chunks of reading to a small group. The group reads then makes a list of what they have learned. Then the teacher leads each group in reporting to the class what they have learned. When all reports are completed, the students write a summary of what was included in the total reading.

Naming the symbols and numbers: Teachers require students to provide names of symbols of terms or numbers when they are found. For example when reading a stated math or science formula, the student must use words to say what the number represents or

the symbol represents. Instead of saying $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$, the student says the distance along the one end wall is squared then added to the square of the distance of the side wall.

Oral reading: Oral reading is used very selectively in this model. Students are told to read aloud to themselves if they are having difficulty understanding what they read, but they are seldom if ever told to read orally to the class. On the other hand, the teacher may read select brief passages orally. As soon as they have been read, the students are directed to write questions or to write a summary.

Process finding: Students are given a graphic organizer with numbered steps like the one below.

Step 1	
Step 2	
Step 3	
Step 4	
Step 5	

After each step of the process that students are learning, the students write the name of the step. This could be enhanced by having students write some detail about each step.

Questioning while reading: Teachers ask students to develop questions as they read. The teachers may present graphic organizers that provide organization for the questions. A sample of a question form is shown below.

Question	Page where you thought of question

The teacher can also give students sticky tabs and ask students to write questions on the tabs. After the questions are written on the tabs, the students can place them in the book on the appropriate pages or on a certain spot on the wall in the classroom.

Question aloud: The teacher must model this concept. As the student reads, hears, or sees information, the student says out loud about what they think. In other words, students are given permission to talk to themselves while learning.

Read then predict: Students read a passage then stop to make a prediction about what they will read.

Reciprocal Teaching: The teacher assigns students particular roles when reading or learning. Examples of what happens could include one student being asked specifically to find information on one concept or set of facts. Another student is asked specifically to define a process found in the information. Another student may be asked to find unfamiliar words and report those words with definitions. Later the three different concepts are reported out to the entire class.

Sticky tab notes: The teacher provides students with sticky tabs note sheets. As students read, the students write notes on the sticky tabs and place them in the reading material in direct reference to the area where the note was found.

Sticky tab questions: The teacher provides students with sticky tabs note sheets. As students read, listen to a lecture, watch a video, or review some graphic information, the students write a question that they have on the sticky note. At the end of class, they place the sticky notes on a board at the classroom door. The teacher then uses the questions to start the next lesson.

Think aloud: This strategy clearly must be modeled by the teacher. As the student reads, hears, or sees information, the student says out loud about what they think. Obviously, there must be a structure established with students as to how loudly they can talk.

Using graphic organizers for notes: This model exposes students to varied graphic organizers that can help students develop notes and organized thinking while reading, listening, or watching.

Post-reading/Post-learning Activities

State what will be learned prior to any activity.

The following list may be used at any point in the “post” session of reading or learning. All post-reading or post-reading activities are designed to help students develop levels of comprehension after they discover new material.

Checklist of facts: Present students a checklist of facts from the reading or lesson. Have the students check those items that they are sure they could explain the next day.

Develop tomorrow’s quiz: Students write several questions that the teacher uses in a quiz the next day.

Demonstrate what was learned: Students are taken to a station and asked to demonstrate what they have learned immediately following reading, listening, or viewing. The students may use written notes as they perform.

Exit slips of learning: Students list three things that they learned and hand them to teacher as they leave the classroom.

Exit slips of questions: Students list two questions about what they do not understand and hand them to the teacher when leaving the room.

Fill in the process steps: The teacher gives students a graphic organizer that has steps written in certain areas. The students are asked to fill in the other blank steps.

Process listing: Students list the steps of a process that has been included in the lesson. The students are told not to be concerned with exact order or the total steps. Instead, students are told to list what they can remember.

Step defining: Students are given a graphic organizer to list steps as they remember them in the order that they think they should happen. An example is shown below.

Step 1	
Step 2	
Step 3	
Step 4	
Step 5	

Sticky tab board: During the lesson students write out questions on sticky tabs. At the end of class, they place the questions on a board placed in the room.

Summary statements: Students write a summary of what they have learned. The teacher can help student early in the year with graphic organizers like the one below.

Today, we read about _____ . The reading presented three points that are essential to the concept. The first point was_____ . The second point emphasized how _____ . The third essential point explained that_____ .

Test question list: At the end of the experience, each student writes three questions that may appear on a test.

What are three things that you learned?: The students write three sentences that state something they have learned in the reading or instruction.