

## Reading to Learn

AVID incorporates strategies that can help students become more effective readers when used strategically with a rich and varied curriculum.

### How Effective Readers Read

- ▲ Expect the reading to make sense
- ▲ Make mental predictions and form good hypotheses about the text's meaning before they begin to read.
- ▲ Understand the purpose for reading and adjust their rate and techniques.
- ▲ Organize information while they read.
- ▲ Form mental pictures while they read.
- ▲ Monitor how well they comprehend as they go along and are aware when they fail to comprehend the text.
- ▲ Have the means to solve a comprehension problem when it occurs.
- ▲ Use context to determine word meanings.
- ▲ Recognize the main idea of the text
- ▲ Identify patterns in a text.
- ▲ Read ahead or reread for clarification.
- ▲ Read for global meaning (not word by word).
- ▲ Summarize/paraphrase what they have read
- ▲ Relate what they are reading to what they already know.
- ▲ Ask questions throughout the piece.

In middle school and high school, we are most often concerned with helping students read increasingly more difficult text and helping students read to learn. We must scaffold our reading instruction so students develop and become more confident with their comprehension skills. Three factors are most helpful for insuring successful comprehension:

- ▲ Connection to prior knowledge
- ▲ Understanding text structure
- ▲ Using text processing strategies (during and after reading)

### Prior Knowledge

All readers bring what they already know to the piece they are reading. Obviously, if one has some general knowledge on World War II and the Holocaust, reading an article about it is easier. Readers compare information with their own experience to assist in comprehension. When they encounter something new, they can make inferences based on their prior knowledge. Readers who have a greater range of prior knowledge will find comprehension easier than readers whose knowledge is more limited.

## **(AVID Methodologies in a Nutshell Continued)**

For struggling readers, it is essential that the teacher provide some prior knowledge with new stories or topics. Good teaching would suggest that a teacher ask questions prior to starting a piece of literature that evokes anything students might already know on the subject. Also, brainstorming as a whole class or in groups helps pool the information that students possess among themselves.

### Text Structure

Students will comprehend what they are reading better if they understand what they are reading better if they understand how the text is structured. Texts have definite structure, whether literary or information, and we must help them to identify and make sense of the structure as it relates to the content. For instance, students might create a story map as a means of determining plot sequence and conflict resolution. They can use the map to see that the writer has organized a series of events in a certain order, linked by cause and effect relationships.

Other types of writing have specific structures also: a newspaper article will look different from a textbook summary; likewise, an editorial essay will look different from a description of smoking. We help students unlock the meaning if we teach them how writers structure cause and effect, comparison and contrast, problem solution, descriptions, etc.

### Text Processing Strategies

Students who use strategies to help make sense of their reading as they go along and to synthesize their understanding at the end, will have greater comprehension of and, usually, greater satisfaction with a text. Likewise, understanding how these strategies work and becoming aware of their own mental processes during reading (metacognition) can help students make informed and purposeful choices about how they read. They become aware of how reading a “beach” novel is different from what they read a chapter in a science textbook. They recognize that what they do during reading and what they do to make sense of their understanding after they’ve read differs based on their purposes and the kind of text it is. Students also become aware that they need different processing strategies based on the difficulty or density of a text.