FOR-PD's Reading Strategy of the Month

INSERT
November/December 2009

RATIONALE

Many students are experience difficulties engaging with and forming meaning from text. The INSERT strategy is a text coding strategy that can help students interact with text without taking extensive notes. The Interactive Notation System for Effective Reading and Thinking, or INSERT for short, was originally created by Vaughn and Estes (1986); it uses symbols or notations such as a check mark or a plus sign as a way for the reader to respond to the text while reading. This strategy can help students to activate background knowledge by relating what they know to new information found in the text. It also helps them to identify what they don't know or are confused about during reading. The notations can be designated in two ways; either previously designed by the teacher and posted in the room for reference purposes or as a collaborative effort between the teacher and students.

HOW TO USE THE STRATEGY

Begin by explaining to students what the INSERT strategy symbols mean and how they can use them to mark/code text while reading. Take time to note the purpose of this strategy and how it can help students with developing meaning from text. The symbols that are used can either be written on the page margin (if it is their own book or handout) or on post-its.

Modeling to the class through an overhead projector is recommended but other modeling options work as well. Start reading the passage and use a think aloud, including statements like " I don' t understand what they are saying here so I will put a question mark (?)" or " I already knew that so I will put a plus (+) sign next to this sentence". These think aloud statements will help students to learn when to use the notations.

It is useful to note that every line in a passage may not receive a notation, especially in more dense text. In such situations, it would be recommended to use one notation for a few sentences or for general ideas such as a paragraph (Center of Excellence for Adolescent Literacy and Learning). Examples of INSERT symbols include the following:

Examples of symbols include:

+	Something new I did not know
-	I don't agree, or thought differently about
?	I am confused
*	I knew that!

Once you decide that students have had sufficient practice with text coding using the INSERT strategy, there are a few different ways students can practice text coding independently. One way is to have students work in pairs and ask them to discuss their responses

to text using the INSERT strategy. Another way is to have students read and add notations on their own and then get into small groups to share what they thought about the INSERT strategy, how it helped them to interact with text, and what questions or responses they might have as a result.

For more advanced students, charts can be incorporated with the notations. After reading and adding the notations, they can write down the page number, a quote from text, and what symbols they used to text code. This approach can be helpful when students are reading independently and have questions that might be answered further in the text. There are many variations to the charts which can run from a few simple notations to more advanced, depending on the grade level.

See the following templates and examples for how to use the strategy in your classroom.

INSERT Organizer

Blank Template Elemenatry

Elementary Example

Blank Template Secondary

Secondary Example

ASSESSMENT

Assessment of this strategy can be done during or after a reading or activity. By observing the students during reading and text coding, teachers can discuss student choices of text coding symbols and how it helped them to understand the text. Informal assessment of strategy use can be done through small group discussions of their notations and responses or by reviewing student work.

RESOURCES

READ WRITE THINK
http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson230/insert.pdf

This is a brief handout explaining the use of the symbols and what they mean.

INSERT Marking System
www.wku.edu/~pamela.petty/IMS.doc
The INSERT strategy is a good way for students to connect their background knowledge to the information in the text. An example is given in addition to a blank worksheet to print out and use which may be better suited for the older grades.

During Reading
http://facultyweb.benton.dsc.k12.ar.us/mmills/CodingText.pdf
The INSERT strategy is way for students to be conscious of their thinking in response to the text they are reading.

Guided Comprehension: Monitoring Using the INSERT Technique
http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=230
This site details how to introduce and use the INSERT strategy to students through a lesson plan.

REFERENCES

PASS Leadership Team. (2006). *During reading: INSERT notes.* Retrieved September 9th, 2009, from
http://www.meade.k12.sd.us/PASS/Pass%20Adobe%20Files/Leadership%20Project/DuringReadingInsertNotes.pdf

Center of Excellence for Adolescent Literacy and Learning. (2006). *INSERT: Interactive notating system for effective reading and thinking.* Retrieved September 9th, 2009, from
http://itcenter.clemson.edu/ceall/index2.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=58&Itemid=39.

Searby, L. (n.d.). *Text coding: An elementary reading strategy grows up and goes to college.* Retrieved November 12th, 2009, from http://www.ed.uab.edu/lsearby/docs/text_coding.pdf

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