

# Exceptional Programs for Exceptional Learners Monthly Newsletter

## Get the Most Bang for Your Buck—Part 5: Comprehension

### Teacher goal for this month:

*Care about all children, even the tough ones*

### BEST PRACTICE

Joyce is the Kindergarten and Functional Special Education teacher at Eisenhower Elementary. Joyce McWherter exemplifies the goal of caring about all children, even the tough ones. Joyce's room is full of action—student's working out of work boxes and following a picture schedule, students working out of tubs independently, students working with the teacher or an aide on specific IEP goals, and students out in their general education classroom for whatever they can handle. With this busy schedule, Joyce always finds a way to laugh and enjoy her students. Joyce was USD 446's Teacher of the Month for January 2008. Way to go Joyce! Thanks for laughing

Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read describes the five big areas of reading. The KS State Standards are based off of these 5 big areas of reading. The 4 previous areas were described in past newsletters. The fifth and last big area of reading is text comprehension instruction.

Comprehension is essential—the reason for reading. Good readers are purposeful and active. The following are six strategies that have firm scientific basis for improving text comprehension:

- Monitoring Comprehension—identify difficulties, in text, restate a difficult sentence in own words, look back through text, use fix up strategies
- Using Graphic and Semantic Organizers

- Answering questions
- Generating Questions
- Recognizing Story Structure—setting, initiating events, goals
- Summarizing

Effective comprehension strategy instruction is explicit, or direct. This instruction typically includes direct explanation of the strategy, modeling how to apply the strategy (also using “thinking aloud”, guiding and assisting the student with the strategy and then finally helping the student apply the strategy until it can be applied independently.

### Text Comprehension Progress Monitoring tools are:

- Story Map
- CBA Cloze and Maze

Kansas Reading Academy Narrative Retell and Expository Summarization

*What We Know Benefits students on the Kansas Reading Assessment (and reading in general):*

- Scan text for special features
- Read the questions!
- Predict and identify purpose
- Read and Reread passage
- Identify the meaning of unfamiliar words
- Note inferences and conclusions
- Know the text type
- Know the text structure

## IEP 101

IEP documentation has continued to increase each year and along with that, so too have the compliance issues.

Tri-County provided you with an IEP checklist and PLEP Helpers at the Fall Inservice. Use those documents and a few new suggestions to keep your IEPs off the radar!

1. Don't forget to note the obvious: Parental concerns, mark how progress will be



measured, mark when progress reports will be provided, mark that parental rights were offered, get all required signatures

2. Make sure you have current vision and hearing dates and these are listed in the Health section of the PLEPs.
3. Include modifications and supplementary aids—you are talking about a student with special needs—I bet they need some modifications!
4. If you have a goal, make

sure you have baseline info about that need in the PLEP.

5. Goals should only be written for those areas that students need specialized instruction in and are below expectation in that area. If it is an age appropriate skill, then should it already be a goal?
6. The State Assessment decision of why an assessment was chosen can be: “Based on the IEP Team Decision Flow-chart and local rubric., the student will take..because..”