

## **Reader's Handbook, Grades 9-12, Research Base**

by April D. Nauman, Ph.D.

It is commonly believed that once students reach high school, they can or should be able to read their assignments without additional help. Recently, however, many educators and researchers have challenged this assumption. Vacca (1998) points out that “literacy use becomes increasingly more complex and demanding” in adolescence (p. 606). High school students must read, comprehend, and remember information in a variety of high-level content area textbooks, which are packed with new concepts and vocabulary. In addition, high school students are expected to read and analyze canonized adult literature, much of which contains unfamiliar language and complex structures, characters, and themes. These expectations occur at a time when students’ motivation to read tends to decline (Bintz, 1997; McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1996). For all these reasons, many educators have advocated for systematic literacy instruction at the high school level (Avery & Avery, 1996; Bintz, 1997; Gauthier & Smith, 1993; International Reading Association, 1999; Vacca, 1998; Vacca & Vacca, 2002). The *Reader's Handbook* for grades 9–12 provides teachers with a tool for such instruction.

The *Reader's Handbook* is based in current research on reading. Such research has established that good reading is a strategic process: successful readers use a variety of strategies to construct the meaning of the text (Pearson, Roehler, Dole, & Duffy, 1992). These strategies include connecting what is read to prior knowledge, monitoring understanding, distinguishing important from less important information, self-questioning, and making inferences during and after reading. Less successful readers often lack knowledge of or control over such strategies, not quite understanding when or how to use them to learn from text (Vacca & Vacca, 2002). Fortunately, research also shows that less capable readers can be taught these strategies, resulting in improved reading comprehension (e.g., Pressley, 2000).

The *Reader's Handbook* for grades 9–12 is a student resource full of reading and study strategies endorsed by researchers, teacher educators, and classroom teachers. Some of these strategies have been used successfully for years; others are new, ground-breaking approaches that enhance critical reading and student engagement in text. The strategies are applied to a wide range of genres, from textbooks to popular media to literature. Because it can be used without continuous teacher guidance, the *Reader's Handbook* promotes student independence and responsibility for gaining control of the reading and study strategies needed to succeed academically.

Avery, C.W., & Avery, B.F. (1996). On the road to school reform: Mapping a route into secondary reading programs. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 40, 214-217.

Bintz, W.P. (1997). Exploring reading nightmares of middle and secondary school teachers. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 41, 12-24.

Gauthier, M.G., & Smith, E.L. (1993). Whole school supplemental reading program. *Journal of Reading*, 37, 135-139.

International Reading Association (1999). Adolescent literacy comes of age. *Reading Today*, 17(1), 1, 22.

McKenna, M.C., Kear, D.J., & Ellsworth, R.A. (1995). Children's attitudes toward reading: A national survey. *Research Reading Quarterly*, 30, 934-955.

- Pearson, P. D., Roehler, L. R., Dole, J. A., & Duffy, G. G. (1992). Developing expertise in reading comprehension. In S. J. Samuels and A. E. Farstrup (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Pressley, M. (2000). Comprehension instruction in elementary school: A quarter-century of research progress. In B. M. Taylor, F. F. Graves, and P. van den Broek (Eds.), *Reading for meaning: Fostering comprehension in the middle grades*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Vacca, R.T. (1998). Let's not marginalize adolescent literacy. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 41, 604-609.
- Vacca, R. T., & Vacca, J. L. (2002). *Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum* (7th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

## Introduction

Chapter 1 introduces students to the reading process, emphasizing what reading is and why it's important. The chapter defines reading in ways that high school students may not have thought about before: Reading is a set of habits and abilities, reading is thinking, and reading is power. Successful reading also requires tools, which are provided in the *Reader's Handbook*.

The chapter also explains the purposes for reading, including academic, personal, for the workplace, and to function in society. High school students need to understand that reading is not just something adults make them do, but an essential life skill they will need when they become adults themselves (Vacca & Vacca, 2002).

In a special section on "Reading as a Process," the *Reader's Handbook* clearly elucidates what effective readers do before, during, and after reading. These characteristics of effective reading are based in current reading research. For example, effective readers establish a purpose and make predictions before reading (Heilman, Blair, & Rupley, 2002; Pearson, Roehler, Dole, & Duffy, 1992). During reading, effective readers check their understanding and make connections between the text and their own experiences (Ruddell & Rudell, 1994; Wilhelm, 1997). After reading, effective readers re-check their understanding, ask themselves if they met their initial reading purposes, and review the text (Anderson and Armbruster, 1984; Heilman, et al., 2002).

Finally, to help students fully grasp the concept of reading as a process, Chapter 1 likens it to the writing process. The writing process approach is currently one of the most common ways of teaching writing in high schools. Popularized by Donald Graves (1991, 1994), Lucy Calkins (1994), and others (e.g., Hillocks, 1987), this approach is endorsed by virtually all major teacher educators and researchers (e.g., Cooper, 2000). The writing process approach enables students to gain control of the complex task of writing by identifying the stages that expert writers go through while working. The complex task of reading can be simplified in much the same way.

- Anderson, T. H., & Armbruster, B. B. (1984). Studying. In P. D. Pearson, R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, & P. Mosenthal (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (pp. 657-679). New York: Longman.
- Calkins, L. M. (1994). *The art of teaching writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

- Cooper, J. D. (2000). *Literacy: Helping children construct meaning* (4th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Graves, D. H. (1991). *Build a literate classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Graves, D. H. (1994). *A fresh look at writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Heilman, A. W., Blair, T. R., & Rupley, W. H. (2002). *Principles and practices of teaching reading* (10th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Hillocks, G., Jr. (1987). Synthesis of research on teaching writing. *Educational Leadership*, 44, 71-82.
- Pearson, P. D., Roehler, L. R., Dole, J. A., & Duffy, G. G. (1992). Developing expertise in reading comprehension. In S. J. Samuels and A. E. Farstrup (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Ruddell, R. B., & Ruddell, M. R. (1994). Language acquisition and literacy process. In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (4th ed., pp. 448-468). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Wilhelm, J. (1997). *"You gotta BE the book": Teaching engaged and reflective reading with adolescents*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Vacca, R. T., & Vacca, J. L. (2002). *Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum* (7th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

## The Reading Process

In Chapter 2 of the *Reader's Handbook*, the reading process is explained step by step. Before reading, students are to set a purpose, preview, and plan. During reading, students read with a purpose and connect with the text. After reading, students pause and reflect, reread, and remember.

Research shows that purpose setting and previewing a text before reading can help less capable readers become skilled, strategic readers (Heilman, Blair, & Rupley, 2002; Paris, Lipson, & Wilson, 1994). Purpose setting, previewing, and planning enable students to better apply reading strategies during and after reading (Heilman, et al., 2002). For example, the student who determines his or her purpose before reading can then use that purpose to identify and focus on the most important information in the text.

Connecting with text during reading, promotes student engagement with the material. Successful adolescent readers connect with or relate to texts in a variety of ways, whereas less capable readers do not (Wilhelm, 1997). Making connections between the text and personal experiences, other texts, and other subjects is the route to activating prior knowledge, and comprehension relies on linking what is read to what is already known (Ruddell & Ruddell, 1994.)

After reading, students are to pause and reflect, reread, and remember. Educators and researchers have long recognized the need for students to look back at the text to reread or review what they did not understand during reading (Heilman, Blair, & Rupley, 2002). Rereading is especially important for learning from content area textbooks (Anderson & Armbruster, 1984) and for struggling readers (Vacca & Vacca, 2002). The pause-and-reflect step of the after-reading process is integral to comprehension and strategic reading, as students must consider whether they met their purpose for reading. Students also identify parts of the text that were confusing and need to be reread.

- Anderson, T. H., & Armbruster, B. B. (1984). Studying. In P. D. Pearson, R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, & P. Mosenthal (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (pp. 657-679). New York: Longman.
- Heilman, A. W., Blair, T. R., & Rupley, W. H. (2002). *Principles and practices of teaching reading* (10th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Paris, S. G., Lipson, M. Y., & Wilson, K. K. (1994). Becoming a strategic reader. In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (4th ed., pp. 788-810). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Ruddell, R. B., & Ruddell, M. R. (1994). Language acquisition and literacy process. In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (4th ed., pp. 448-468). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Vacca, R. T., & Vacca, J. L. (2002). *Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum* (7th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Wilhelm, J. (1997). *"You gotta BE the book": Teaching engaged and reflective reading with adolescents*. New York: Teachers College Press.

## Reading Know-how

Chapter 3, "Reading Know-How," explains key skills that students need to construct meaning effectively while reading. Making inferences, reading actively, predicting, and asking questions are essential to comprehension (e.g., Cooper, 2000).

Research shows that readers must have inferential and reasoning skills to connect information in the text to relevant prior knowledge (van den Broek & Kremer, 2000). Prior knowledge alone is not enough; students must be able to infer—to use their prior knowledge to "fill in the gaps" in the text. Instruction in the process of inference enhances reading comprehension among high school students (e.g., Vacca & Vacca, 2002).

Making inferences is only one component of active reading. The handbook suggests six ways to read actively: marking up or highlighting the text, asking questions, clarifying, connecting to the reading, visualizing, and predicting. These are some important strategies used by expert readers (Pearson, Roehler, Dole, & Duffy, 1992). Making predictions during reading is especially important for adolescents, because it keeps them interested and engaged in increasingly difficult texts. Predicting is one of a set of strategies and activities recommended for adolescent students who struggle with reading (Dana, 1989). Questioning during reading also promotes engagement with the text and improves meaning construction (Davey & McBride, 1986; Singer & Donlan, 1982). Questioning and predicting while reading enable students to make essential connections to prior knowledge.

"Reading Know-how" also includes the important skill of identifying important information, or finding the main idea. Research shows that knowledge of text structure helps students identify important information in a reading (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991). Almost all educators recognize the value of teaching text structure to improve comprehension and retention (e.g., Cooper, 2000). Accordingly, the *Reader's Handbook* defines and gives examples of different paragraph and text structures, which will help students develop an awareness of text patterns (Horowitz, 1985). This, in turn, will enhance their ability to identify important information and improve their comprehension.

- Cooper, J. D. (2000). *Literacy: Helping children construct meaning* (4th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Dana, C. (1989). Strategy families for disabled readers. *Journal of Reading*, 33, 30-35.
- Davey, B., & McBride, S. (1986). Effects of question generating training on reading comprehension. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 78, 256-262.
- Dole, J. A., Duffy, G. G., Roehler, L. R., & Pearson, P. D. (1991). Moving from the old to the new: Research on reading comprehension instruction. *Review of Educational Research*, 61, 239-264.
- Horowitz, R. (1985). Text patterns. *Journal of Reading*, 28, 448-454.
- Pearson, P. D., Roehler, L. R., Dole, J. A., & Duffy, G. G. (1992). Developing expertise in reading comprehension. In S. J. Samuels and A. E. Farstrup (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Singer, H., & Donlan, D. (1982). Active comprehension: Problem-solving schema with question generation for comprehension of complex short stories. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 17, 166-186.
- Vacca, R. T., & Vacca, J. L. (2002). *Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum* (7th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- van den Broek, P., & Kremer, K. E. (2000). The mind in action: What it means to comprehend during reading. In B. M. Taylor, M. F. Graves, & P. van den Broek (Eds.), *Reading for meaning: Fostering comprehension in the middle grades* (pp. 1-31). New York: Teachers College Press.

## Reading Textbooks

High school-level textbooks tend to be very challenging, containing difficult concepts and vocabulary. Chapter 4, “Reading Textbooks,” provides important strategies for students to effectively learn from these books.

Research shows that most students’ difficulty with textbooks results from a lack of knowledge about expository text structure (Cheek, Flippo, & Lindsey, 1997). Expository text structure varies more widely than narrative text structure (Cooper, 2000). A student’s general reading ability does not necessarily indicate how well he or she will comprehend texts in the content areas (Leal & Moss, 1999). According to Heilman and colleagues (2002), learning from textbooks requires specific skills and strategies for reading in different subjects; study skills; and skills and strategies for collecting, analyzing, and evaluating data.

Note-taking is widely acknowledged as a valuable way to learn from textbooks (e.g., Vacca & Vacca, 2002). The handbook’s “structured note” techniques, which require students to take notes using different graphic organizers, enable students to identify important ideas and organize the information (Smith & Tompkins, 1988). Structured note-taking techniques are more effective than simply jotting down isolated facts, because students must think about the text and decide what information and ideas are most important (Alvermann & Moore, 1991; Anderson & Armbruster, 1984).

- Alvermann, D. E., & Moore, D. W. (1991). Secondary schools. In R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 2, pp. 951-983). New York: Longman.
- Anderson, T. H., & Armbruster, B. B. (1984). Studying. In P. D. Pearson (Ed.), *Handbook of reading research* (pp. 657-679). New York: Longman.
- Cheek, E. H., Flippo, R. F., & Lindsey, J. D. (1997). *Reading for success in elementary schools*. Dubuque, IA: Brown & Benchmark.

- Cooper, J. D. (2000). *Literacy: Helping children construct meaning* (4th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Heilman, A. W., Blair, T. R., & Rupley, W. H. (2002). *Principles and practices of teaching reading* (10th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Leal, D., & Moss, B. (1999). Encounters with information text: Perceptions and insights from four gifted readers. *Reading Horizons*, 40, 15-22.
- Smith, P. L., & Tompkins, G. E. (1988). Structured notetaking: A new strategy for content area readers. *Journal of Reading*, 32, 46-53.
- Vacca, R. T., & Vacca, J. L. (2002). *Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum* (7th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

## Reading Nonfiction

Chapter 5 presents strategies for understanding other nonfiction, such as essays, editorials, news stories, biographies, memoirs, and speeches. The strategies defined and illustrated include structured note-taking, summarizing, reading critically, and questioning the author.”

Summarizing requires readers to reduce a text to its main ideas, which necessitates reflection on and interaction with the text. Readers who can summarize are able to differentiate important from less important information (Heilman, Blair, & Rupley, 2002). Summarizing is an important strategy for students at all grade levels and is especially recommended for struggling adolescent readers (Dana, 1989). Less capable readers can learn this strategy and improve their comprehension (Brown & Day, 1983).

Critical reading involves reflecting on what is being read, suspending judgment, reading with an open mind, and then deciding what to believe or do (Ennis, 1989). Critical readers can identify the author’s purpose and point of view as well as distinguish fact from opinion (Roe, Stodt, & Burns, 1998). Critical reading raises students’ awareness that all texts are written by ordinary people with their own attitudes and understandings of the world. This empowers students to question and challenge the author and deepens engagement in the text.

Question the author also raises students’ awareness of the writer behind the text. Using this approach, students continually ask themselves, “What does the author mean?” (Beck, McKeown, Hamilton, & Kucan, 1997; Beck, McKeown, Worthy, Sandora, & Kucan, 1996). Readers update their hypotheses about the text as they progress. The interactions that occur between students and text enhance engagement and comprehension.

- Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., Worthy J., Sandora, C. A., & Kucan, L. (1996). Questioning the author: A yearlong classroom implementation to engage students with text. *Elementary School Journal*, 96, 385-414.
- Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., Hamilton, R., & Kucan, L. (1997). *Questioning the author: An approach for enhancing student engagement with text*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association
- Brown, A. L., & Day, J. D. (1983). Macrorules for summarizing texts: The development of expertise. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 22, 1-14.

- Dana, C. (1989). Strategy families for disabled readers. *Journal of Reading*, 33, 30-35.
- Ennis, R. (1989). Critical thinking and subject specificity: Clarification and needed research. *Educational Researcher*, 18, 4-10.
- Heilman, A. W., Blair, T. R., & Rupley, W. H. (2002). *Principles and practices of teaching reading* (10th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Roe, B. D., Stoodt, B. D., & Burns, P. C. (1998). *The content areas: Secondary school literacy instruction* (6th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

## Reading Fiction

Chapter 6 provides strategies for reading literature that can help adolescents make the transition from children’s and young adult literature to the more demanding study of canonized adult literature. To be successful comprehenders of such literature, students need a good grasp of theme, characterization, setting, and plot.

Understanding the basic form and variations of plot structure enables students to comprehend and recall stories. Traditional plots include exposition, rising action, a climax, falling action, and a resolution. When readers use their knowledge of story structure, they are better able to retain information in their memory until it makes sense and to add information as they read (Gordon & Braun, 1983).

Graphic organizers are widely used to reinforce students’ comprehension of basic story structure as well as help them analyze particular stories (e.g., Cooper, 2000). As with expository texts, using graphic organizers focuses students’ attention on the most important aspects of narratives. Simple graphic organizers, such as the Story String or Storyboard, help students sort and organize key events. Other popular graphic organizers for literature are the Character Map, Fiction Organizer, Setting Chart, Plot Diagram, and Topic and Theme Organizer.

Synthesizing is another essential strategy for reading literature successfully at the high school level. Synthesizing involves gathering the important parts of a work of literature and fitting them together, like a puzzle, to show the “big picture.” Synthesizing enables students to make reasonable hypotheses about themes in literature, which is a skill that becomes increasingly important in higher level literature classes (Phelan, 1989).

- Cooper, J. D. (2000). *Literacy: Helping children construct meaning* (4th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Gordon, C. J., & Braun, C. (1983). Using story schema as an aid to reading and writing. *The Reading Teacher*, 2, 116-121.
- Phelan, J. (1989). *Reading people, reading plots: Character, progression, and the interpretation of narrative*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

## Reading Poetry

Many high school students have difficulty reading and interpreting poetry. As in the preceding chapter, the strategies in Chapter 7 are designed to facilitate students’ transition to the more demanding study of poetry in the higher grades.

Poetry, like other forms of literature, is meant to evoke personal feelings and thoughts in readers. Valuing students' personal responses to poetry and other literature is essential for fostering an appreciation of and interest in literature. Reader response theory, especially as elaborated by Louise Rosenblatt (1978), has legitimized the role of individual, subjective thoughts and feelings in the study of poetry and literature.

Though the reader's subjective responses are an essential part of literary interpretation (Rosenblatt, 1978), this does not mean "anything goes." Careful attention to the words, images, patterns, and structure of a poem is also essential. The *Reader's Handbook* presents the strategy of close reading to scaffold students' careful readings of a poem. Students are instructed not only to read "word by word and line by line," but also to read the poem multiple times to facilitate close reading.

The handbook unites reader response and close reading in the Double-entry Journal tool (Berthoff, 1981). In this organizer, a notebook page is divided into two columns, and students record quotations from the poem in the first column and their personal thoughts and feelings about the quotations in the second. Double-entry Journals have been found to be effective with all students, including those at risk (Coley & Hoffman, 1990).

Paraphrasing is another useful strategy that helps adolescents better understand poetry. When students rewrite lines of a poem in their own words, students begin to see action and characterization. Paraphrasing encourages active reading and student response to literature (Roe, Stoodt, & Burns, 1998).

Berthoff, A. E. (1981). *The making of meaning*. Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.

Coley, J. D., & Hoffman, D. M. (1990). Overcoming learned helplessness in at-risk readers. *Journal of Reading*, 33, 497-502.

Roe, B. D., Stoodt, B. D., & Burns, P. C. (1998). *The content areas: Secondary school literacy instruction* (6th ed.), Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1978). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

## Reading Drama

Reading drama may also be difficult for adolescents. Drama has several features that make it different from other literary forms and difficult to read (Roe, Stoodt, and Burns, 1998). For example, plays include no detailed narrative descriptions of characters or setting. The story is conveyed solely through dialogue. Also unique in plays is the stage direction—all in italics and parentheses—which must be read and comprehended to understand character motivation and plot. Chapter 8 provides strategies and tools that help high school students read and understand drama.

Summarizing while reading a play enables students to keep track of the characters and action. Summarizing involves pulling together the main elements in a text and is a key strategy of effective readers (Cooper, 2000). Providing guidelines can help students develop this strategy (Brown & Day, 1983). The Magnet Summary graphic organizer presented in the handbook provides the structure necessary for students to develop or improve their summarizing abilities.

- Brown, A. L., & Day, J. D. (1983). Macrorules for summarizing texts: The development of expertise. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 22, 1-14.
- Cooper, J. D. (2000). *Literacy: Helping children construct meaning* (4th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Roe, B. D., Stoodt, B. D., & Burns, P. C. (1998). *The content areas: Secondary school literacy instruction* (6th ed.), Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

## Reading the Internet

Chapter 9 provides strategies to help students read on the Internet. Though the Internet is a valuable source of information for students (Troutner, 2000), Internet reading poses challenges that many educators do not yet fully appreciate. For example, although reading email usually does not differ greatly from reading a letter on paper, reading a website is extremely different from reading a book chapter. In website reading, the eye jumps from one spot to another, in any direction. Adolescents can easily get lost or sidetracked while reading a website.

Students who are first learning about the Internet may experience “information overload” (Hawes, 1998). Instruction in how to analyze the information found on the Internet is necessary. Hawes (1998) recommends a list of questions, including questions about the authors’ points of view, authors’ purposes, and authors’ proofs for their viewpoints, all of which promote critical reading.

Ryder and Graves (1997) concur that critical thinking is an essential skill for successful Internet use. The Internet’s vast amount of readily accessible information is an advantage but comes at the cost of being largely unrestricted. The challenge is to “make qualitative judgments as to the accuracy and reliability” of this information (Ryder & Graves, 1997).

The handbook stresses the need for critical reading of information on the Internet. Critical reading is the ability to evaluate the material for accuracy, bias, and reliability. Reflecting, suspending judgment initially, and deciding what to believe are essential components (Ennis, 1989). Students who read critically are alert to the author’s purpose and distinguish between fact and opinion (Roe, Stoodt, & Burns, 1998). The handbook scaffolds high school students’ ability to critically read Internet material.

- Ennis, R. (1989). Critical thinking and subject specificity: Clarification and needed research. *Educational Researcher*, 18, 4-10.
- Hawes, K. S. (1998). Reading the Internet: Conducting research for the virtual classroom. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 41, 563-566.
- Roe, B. D., Stoodt, B. D., & Burns, P. C. (1998). *The content areas: Secondary school literacy instruction* (6th ed.), Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Ryder, R. J., & Graves, M. F. (1997). Using the Internet to enhance students’ reading, writing, and information-gathering skills. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 40, 244-254.
- Troutner, J. (2000). Web wonders. *Teacher Librarian*, 27, 39-42.

## Reading Graphics

Helping students learn to read graphics is an important goal in literacy instruction (Fry, 1981). Content area textbooks contain a variety of graphic types (Roe, Stoodt, & Burns, 1998). Because graphics are abstract and often oversimplify or appear to distort information, deciphering them can be confusing (Roe, et al., 1998). However, the need to accurately read graphics is likely to become increasingly important. Chapter 10 provides strategies that enable high school students to read charts, graphs, tables, and diagrams in their textbooks and in other sources.

Paraphrasing is a useful strategy for reading graphics. This skill requires students to think about the information in the graphics and translate it into their own words. Research shows that paraphrasing increases students' comprehension and recall of content area material (Shugarman & Hurst, 1986). Students need support, as is provided in the handbook, to learn this skill (Roe, et al., 1998).

Fry, E. (1981). Graphical literacy. *Journal of Reading*, 24, 383-390.

Roe, B. D., Stoodt, B. D., & Burns, P. C. (1998). *The content areas: Secondary school literacy instruction*, (6th ed). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Shugarman, S. L., & Hurst, J. B. (1986). Purposeful paraphrasing: Promoting a nontrivial pursuit for meaning. *Journal of Reading*, 29, 396-399.

## Reading for the Everyday World

“Real-world” reading becomes increasingly important during adolescence. In Chapter 11, the Handbook presents lessons on reading a driver’s handbook, with focus sections on reading for work and reading instructions. The strategies presented to help students effectively read materials in the everyday world are skimming, close-reading, and visualizing and thinking aloud.

Skimming is a type of rapid reading done to get an overview or gist of the material (Roe, Stoodt, & Burns, 1998). It is one method for increasing adolescents’ reading rate and flexibility, enabling students to cover large amounts of text in the shortest time possible (Roe, et al., 1998). It also provides readers with enough information about the material to generate their own purposes for reading (Jacobowitz, 1988).

As in other handbook lessons, the structured note-taking techniques provided enable students to identify important information (Smith & Tompkins, 1988). Because students are asked to record textual information in graphic organizers, they must identify the most important information, which improves comprehension and recall (Alvermann & Moore, 1991; Anderson & Armbruster, 1984).

Visualizing and thinking aloud are also useful comprehension strategies for high school students (Vacca & Vacca, 2002). Visualizing, which helps adolescents to connect with the text, promotes engagement (Wilhelm, 1997). Thinking aloud helps students work through problems with the text and facilitates recall of textual information (Jacobowitz, 1988).

- Alvermann, D.E., & Moore, D.W. (1991). Secondary schools. In R. Barr, M.L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal, & P.D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 2, pp. 951-983). New York: Longman.
- Anderson, T.H., & Armbruster, B.B. (1984). Studying. In P.D. Pearson (Ed.), *Handbook of reading research* (pp. 657-679). New York: Longman.
- Jacobowitz, T. (1988). Using therapy to modify practice: An illustration with SQ3R. *Journal of Reading*, 32, 126-131.
- Smith, P.L., & Tompkins, G.E. (1988). Structured notetaking: A new strategy for content area readers. *Journal of Reading*, 32, 46-53.
- Roe, B.D., Stoodt, B.D., & Burns, P.C. (1998). *The content areas: Secondary school literacy instruction*, (6th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Vacca, R.T., & Vacca, J.L. (2002). *Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum* (7th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Wilhelm, J. (1997). *"You gotta BE the book": Teaching engaged and reflective reading with adolescents*. New York: Teachers College Press.

### Reading for Tests

The reading required for tests presents a unique set of challenges for adolescents. Sometimes high school students do poorly on tests, not because they didn't study, but because they had problems comprehending test questions and directions (Roe, Stoodt, & Burns, 1998). Chapter 12 discusses how students can best prepare for tests and provides useful strategies for helping students successfully read test directions and questions.

Additional challenges to reading on tests include students' own feelings of anxiety, which are distracting and hinder comprehension. No matter what type of test the student is taking, time is limited. Students must be able to understand what the questions are asking quickly and precisely. Some tests require students to read, comprehend, and answer questions on new material. On multiple-choice tests, students must read and understand all possible answers. In addition, question types vary from one test to another, as do instructions on how to answer the questions.

The handbook presents strategies for students to succeed on standardized tests as well as on English, writing, history, math, and science tests. Using a sample from a standardized test, students practice skimming a passage to find answers to the questions that follow it. In addition, Chapter 12 discusses three basic question types—factual/recall, critical thinking, and essay. Educators have found that, when students understand the relationship between questions and answers, they tend to perform better on tests (Raphael, 1984, 1986; Vacca & Vacca, 2002).

- Raphael, T. E. (1984). Teaching learners about sources of information for answering comprehension questions. *Journal of Reading*, 27, 303-311.
- Raphael, T. E. (1986). Reaching question-answer relationships. *Reading Teacher*, 39, 516-520.
- Roe, B.D., Stoodt, B.D., & Burns, P.C. (1998). *The content areas: Secondary school literacy instruction*, (6th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Vacca, R. T., & Vacca, J. L. (2002). *Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum* (7th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

## Improving Vocabulary

Chapter 13 focuses on ways for high school students to increase their vocabulary knowledge. Knowledge of word meanings is strongly associated with reading comprehension (Anderson & Freebody, 1981; Davis, 1971). However, improving vocabulary knowledge and comprehension requires much more than simply teaching a few words from the material before a reading (Nagy, 1988).

Research on how students acquire vocabulary is extensive (Beck & McKeown, 1991). Findings show that vocabulary knowledge develops through wide reading (Fielding, Wilson, & Anderson, 1986; Nagy & Herman, 1987); that students benefit from instruction on how to use context clues to infer word meanings (Jenkins, Stein, & Wysocki, 1984; Sternberg, 1987); and that dictionary skills are needed (Schatz & Baldwin, 1986).

The handbook encourages students to become active word learners. Seven ways to learn new words are suggested: keeping a vocabulary journal, looking up new words, pronouncing words, keeping a file box, learning words every day, using new words, and creating concept Maps. The handbook also explains how to effectively use context clues, in accordance with research showing that students need a good grasp of strategies for independently inferring word meanings from context (e.g., Graves, 1987). The handbook provides authentic text examples of context clues, rather than contrived passages that can give students an unrealistic idea of how easy this process is.

Because learning how to use context clues alone is not enough to build vocabulary (Schatz & Baldwin, 1986), the handbook also covers dictionary and thesaurus skills. Other approaches found to be beneficial and included in the handbook are word analysis skills (e.g., Rupley & Blair, 1988) and graphic organizers for word learning (e.g., Cooper, 2000).

- Anderson, R. C., & Freebody, P. (1981). Vocabulary knowledge. In J. T. Guthrie (Ed.), *Comprehension and teaching: Research reviews*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Beck, I. L., & McKeown, M. G. (1991). Conditions of vocabulary acquisition. In R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research*, (Vol. 2, pp. 789-814). New York: Longman.
- Cooper, J. D. (2000). *Literacy: Helping children construct meaning* (4th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Davis, F. (1971). Psychometric research in reading comprehension. In F. Davis (Ed.), *Literature of research in reading with emphasis on models*. Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Fielding, L. G., Wilson, P. T., & Anderson, R. C. (1986). A new focus on free reading: The role of tradebooks in reading instruction. In T. E. Raphael (Ed.), *Contexts of school-based literacy*, pp. 149-160. New York: Random House.
- Graves, M. F. (1987). The roles of instruction in fostering vocabulary development. In M. G. McKeown & M. E. Curtis (Eds.), *The nature of vocabulary acquisition* (pp. 165-184). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Jenkins, J. R., Stein, M., & Wysocki, K. (1984). Learning vocabulary through reading. *American Education Research Journal*, 21, 767-788.
- Nagy, W. E. (1988). *Teaching vocabulary to improve reading comprehension*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Nagy, W. E., & Herman, P. A. (1987). Breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge: Implications for acquisition and instruction. In M. G. McKeown & M. E. Curtis (Eds.), *The nature of vocabulary acquisition* (pp. 19-35). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Rupley, W. H., Logan, J. W., & Nichols, W. D. (1999). Vocabulary instruction in a balanced reading program. *The Reading Teacher*, 52, 338-347.
- Schatz, E. K., & Baldwin, R. S. (1986). Context clues are unreliable predictors of word meanings. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 21, 439-453.
- Sternberg, R. J. (1987). Most vocabulary is learned from context. In M. G. McKeown & M. E. Curtis (Eds.), *The nature of vocabulary acquisition* (pp. 89-105). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

### Reader's Almanac

The *Reader's Handbook* concludes with a “Reader's Almanac,” which reviews the strategies and their uses. With concise definitions and explanations of when to use the strategies, the Almanac serves as a useful quick reference, enabling students to independently review key strategies.

In addition to the strategy review, the Almanac provides a list and review of “reading tools”—different types of graphic organizers and note-taking techniques that scaffold students' comprehension and ability to recall the information they read. These tools include research-supported methods such as Double-entry Journals (Berthoff, 1981) and Webs (Bromley, 1996).

Research shows that good comprehenders are strategic readers who adjust their reading according to purpose and text type (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1985). Expert readers use a variety of strategies to construct meaning before, during, and after reading (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991). Students who lack knowledge of or ability to use strategies—who feel unable to overcome problems encountered while reading—are at risk for low achievement (Vacca & Padak, 1990). To succeed in reading, adolescents need a good grasp of a variety of strategies to help them learn from text. The *Reader's Handbook* puts key strategies within the reach of all high school students.

Anderson, R. C., Hiebert, E. H., Scott, J. A., & Wilkinson, I. A. G. (1985). *Becoming a nation of readers*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Education.

Berthoff, A. E. (1981). *The making of meaning*. Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.

Bromley, K. D. (1996). *Webbing with literature: Creating story maps with children's books*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Paris, S. G., Wasik, B. A., & Turner, J. C. (1991). The development of strategic readers. In R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research*, (Vol. 2, pp. 609-640). New York: Longman.

Vacca, R. T., & Padak, N. D. (1990). Who's at risk in reading? *Journal of Reading*, 33, 486-489.