Literacy connects

A Content Literacy Newsletter from Regional Professional Development Program-Issue II

CONCEPT BUILDING—Helping students define and expand on one topic

This strategy works well for social studies, math and science selections, in which understanding concepts is crucial to understanding the next topic

Concept	Definition or Formula	Evidence or Steps	Review or Examples

Procedure:
1. Explain to students that a concept is an idea or general term. This strategy is useful whenever reading centers on explaining one topic because it requires a definition of the term, and examples or an explanation of the process identified by the term.
2. First have students look for clues to identify the concept by previewing to find words in bold type, in a numbered list, in a box, and in illustrations. Write in Concept box.
3. Define the concept in the Definition or Formula box.
4. Write the evidence or details that explain the concept in the Evidence or Steps box.
5. In the Review or Examples box, summarize the concept or work out problems to demonstrate understanding.

Modeling:
Using the Think-aloud method, model the strategy for the class. Verbalize how you would go about finding the concept, the clues you use (bold type, illustrations, lists...). Show where you would usually find the definition of a concept (after the bold word) and then how you would select the details. Read the chapter aloud with your students, walking them through this process several times. Students can practice this strategy at home and then discuss their charts in small groups before working independently.

The following graphic demonstrates how the Concept Building strategy might work for a math selection on the commutative property of multiplication.

Concept	Definition/formula	Evidence/steps	Examples
Commutative Property of multiplication	The product of 2 or more numbers will always be the same, no matter the order multiplied	1. change the order of numbers you are multiplying. 2. Notice the answer is still the same	3 X 7 = 21; 7 X 3 + 21 153 X 11 + 1,683; 11 X 153 + 1,683