WHAT IS READING?

Reading is much more than simple decoding of words. Reading is a complex process that involves predictions, references, knowledge, and experiences. Reading is also problem solving; it is an active process of making meaning of text, by considering purpose, structure, and voice of author.   The best, and easiest way, to help students become better readers is to demonstrate for them what goes on behind the curtain of expert reading. Teachers, as expert readers, need to model their own reading processes for the class. They then need to encourage students to employ similar strategies of relating and questioning to help them gain insight into their own reading processes. Finally they need to teach them a repertoire of cognitive problem-solving strategies. This packet is designed to help you start this process.

I.   **Think- aloud process:** The objective is to SHOW students HOW readers tackle text by modeling the reading process. This involves teachers, as expert readers, thinking aloud while reading a complex text. Think-Alouds aim at helping make the ordinarily invisible process of reading more visible. This is a powerful strategy that should be modified to suit the teachers' needs and experiences.

II.   **Outlining:** A good way to start students using an outline is to have them scan their textbooks and write the headings and subheadings in advance. As they read, they can fill in the details.

III.   **DRTA or KWL:** These are easy and effective strategies to teach students how to predict, read with purpose, and summarize. The **DRTA** works well with material for which the students have little prior knowledge. It helps them gather information BEFORE the read, take notes while they read, and summarize what they have read. The **KWL** works in the same way; however, for this strategy students need some prior knowledge of the topic.

IV.   **SQ3R:** Intended to guide students before, during, and after reading. Although this is one of the oldest strategies around, it works best when students are allowed to develop their own variations; 1. **Survey** the text by skimming, noting the headings, sub-headings, illustrations; 2. Ask **questions** about what you are to read by converting the headings into questions; 3. **Read** the text; 4. **Recite** by answering questions; 5. **Review** by going over your questions and answers and filling in details.

V.   **CORNELL NOTE-TAKING:** This strategy is much like the outlining, but it allows for review. It is useful when students have no prior knowledge about a topic and there are few print variations to preview. This strategy also works well for vocabulary.

NOTE: These strategies work best when modeled for the whole class using the Think-Aloud Process. Students should initially practice using them in small groups, with time allowed for group reflection and discussion. Eventually, students should be able to use them independently as each strategy becomes part of their "tools for learning."

Ideas and activities taken from a variety of sources including, Cziko, Greenleaf, Hurwitz, Schoenback, (1997), *Reading for Understanding;* Globe Fearon, *Language Arts—Reading Stategies*; Ruddell, (1993), *Teaching Content Reading and Writing*