Literacy Connects

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

Peer Reading—A Collaborative Summarizing Technique

Textbooks are so densely packed with information that many students feel overwhelmed, lost in a sea of words and disconnected ideas. *Peer Reading* is a partnering technique that teaches students how to break down a reading into manageable chunks*, use questions to focus on essential information, and distill a reading into a concise summary.

Procedure:

- Select a reading and break it into three or four smaller sections. Create questions for each section that focus student reading toward important information. Record questions on the Peer Reading Coaching Sheet (see example at bottom).
- Place students in pairs and assign each member a letter (either A or B). Both students will read each section and then alternate roles as coach and oral summarizer. Reader A will use her notes to coach Reader B to summarize the section and vice versa.
- Students will continue to reverse roles as coach and summarizer until all questions on the Peer Reading Coaching Sheet are answered.
- Once the questions have been answered, ask student pairs to summarize the entire reading using their notes and texts.
- As students become comfortable with *Peer Reading*, have them chunk* reading and write questions on their own.

The following is an example of a Peer Reading Coaching Sheet used with an Earth Science text:

Peer Reading Coaching Sheet
Section 1 questions (Reader A) 1. What is weathering? 2. Name the two types of weathering. **Section 2 questions (Reader B)** 1. What is mechanical weathering? 2. What causes mechanical weathering? **Section 3 question (Reader A)** 1. Define chemical weathering. **Section 4 question (Reader B)** 1. Describe how weather effects weathering.

*** Chunking: Breaking a large reading into smaller, related subsections**

*** This activity was taken from Reading for Academic Success by H. Silver and G.Tuculescu ***