



Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program

Volume 4, Issue 6
February 2008

The LeafLIT

A Literacy Publication

Asking Questions

Lara Hooser



Bill Hanlon, Director

RPDP Literacy Team:

Adine Sibley
East Region
799-7510

Shan Cannon
Northwest Region
799-4558 x5337

Rosemary Holmes-Gull
Writing/UNLV
895-3247

Kathryn Kinnaird
Southeast Region
799-0880

Hattie Leday
Northeast Region
799-1719 x5322

Holly Lee
Southwest Region
799-2658 x5322

Elizabeth Mattson
Nye County
775-727-7767

Sherrilyn Rakestraw
Lincoln, Esmeralda,
Nye Counties
775-513-6794



Children from the moment they are born are curious about their world and all of their surroundings. There is a constant flood of questions beginning in their minds and finally emerging from their lips when they learn to speak. They use each of their senses to explore the answers to their questions and to solve the problems they encounter. During the first few years of our lives, we are constantly problem solving and questioning. As teachers, we need to find this curiousness in our students, and nurture it until it grows on its own. We need to model wonder and excitement, and the ability to tackle new experiences with all of our senses again.

When we are asking questions during reading, we are trying to solve a problem that we have come up with through interacting with a text. Good readers monitor their comprehension and ask questions when the comprehension breaks down. This does not come naturally for all children. As the facilitator, we need to model asking questions. Debbie Miller (2002) has a wonderful method for visually demonstrating this with students. She closes the book and holds it in her lap when she is asking a question. This shows the children that her question is not a part of the text. She also demonstrates charting the questions and revisiting them during and after reading when the answers are found (or not) and the encountered problems are solved. For students who are reading a book independently, they can use sticky notes to write their questions on and then come back and code the questions when the time arises. The returning to the questions is important for closure or solving the problem. The ability to ask good questions leads to the ability to solve problems. In *Strategies That Work*, Harvey and Goudvis introduce thick and thin questions as an aid to reading and comprehending science textbooks. Thick questions being global questions and thin questions being smaller clarification questions.

Asking questions and problem solving are memory aid techniques. To transfer information into our long-term memory, we need to use that information, interact with it and build on it. We need to use all of our senses and interact with the information. Other memory techniques include practicing the new information and organizing it in our own way. Some experts believe that we use less than 10 percent of our brain... that leaves a lot of room for our new experiences.



www.rpdp.net



Closing a Lesson

By: Lara Hooser

The bell rings and it is time to go to lunch or a specialist, but you haven't done a closure activity yet. What can you do? Here are a few quick closure activities that can either be done either before leaving the room or when coming back in.

- **3-2-1** Give each student an index card and have him or her write 3 items they found interesting from the lesson, 2 items they learned and 1 item they still have a question about.
- **Timeline** Plot out the events of the lesson.
- **3 Questions** What did we learn today? Why is it important? How can the new information be applied?
- **Think-Pair-Share or Buddy Up** Tell the person next to you 2 or 3 things you learned from the lesson. You could in turn have them share 1 or 2 things with you as they are walking out the door. If only one person had time to talk, you might have the other person tell you either their thoughts, or their partners.
- **Sentence Starters** that could be posted in the room, or on a PowerPoint. This can be used for either verbal or written response. Written response could be done on sticky notes and placed on the door or white board before leaving the room. When the students come back in, they could take another persons sticky note and respond. Then discuss. This could be done while everyone is getting settled back into the room.

I was surprised to learn...

I am still curious about...

I would like to know more about...

I have a question about...

I feel, think, or wonder...

Today I learned...

I was fascinated by...

This lesson was valuable to my learning because...

I do not understand...

I am beginning to understand...

I now understand...

Pick one activity and try it out today.

