


***Strategies for Including Students
with Disabilities and Struggling
Learners in the General
Education Classroom***


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Key Concepts of Good Instruction for Struggling Learners
(Adapted from Pearson, 1993)

1. Important to know and understand the foundations: information processing theory and stages of learning. Why are they struggling?
2. Use careful scaffolding when introducing new concepts - activate background knowledge and help students make connections.
3. Establish the importance of the content - why do I need to know this?


Monda-Amaya (2008)



Key Concepts of Good Instruction for Struggling Learners
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4. Group and regroup students based on types of errors they make and their understanding of the content.
5. Everyone needs a good set of well-thought-out, well-learned strategies. Teach strategies for pulling information from text, organizing and remembering information, and generalizing to new content or situations.
6. Adapt instruction. Help each student access the curriculum regardless of learning style.


Monda-Amaya (2008)



Differences between good readers and those having difficulty

1. Thoughtful readers monitor their comprehension throughout the reading process
 - Have awareness about how well they understand
 - Can adjust strategies for the task
2. Thoughtful readers repair their comprehension
 - More flexible in allocation of study time
 - Look back in text to resolve conflicts
 - More adaptable and flexible in use of strategies and change to meet difficult circumstances

Deschler, Ellis, & Lenz (1996)
Monda-Amaya (2008)




Differences between good readers and those having difficulty (con't)

3. Thoughtful readers are able to detect what is important in the texts they read
- Use general world knowledge and domain specific knowledge to access meaning
 - Use knowledge of text structure (summaries, surface level cues, key words)
 - Use general knowledge about author biases, intentions, and goals to help determine importance

Deshler, Ellis, & Lenz (1996)

Monda-Amaya (2008)



Differences between good readers and those having difficulty (con't)

4. Thoughtful readers synthesize information when they read

Five operations (Kintsch & VanDijk)

- Delete irrelevant information
- Delete redundant information
- Create super-ordinate label for a list of things or actions
- Try to locate topic sentences and use them in the summary
- Invent topic sentences when are unable to locate them

5. Thoughtful readers ask questions

Deshler, Ellis, & Lenz (1996)

Monda-Amaya (2008)




Key Instruction Components

- ◆ Word Identification or vocabulary

Sample: <http://www.mathwords.com/a.htm>

- ◆ Fluency
- ◆ Comprehension

Monda-Amaya (2008)



Word Identification and Vocabulary Strategies

- ◆ Effective strategies for teaching vocabulary focus on comprehension rather than just word knowledge with an emphasis on meaningful use (Nagy, 1988).
- ◆ Harmon, Hedrick, & Wood (2005) suggest that:
 - Instruction must relate newly acquired words to other words and concepts. This stresses the importance of connecting new learning with existing knowledge.

Monda-Amaya (2008)



Word Identification and Vocabulary Strategies

Harmon, Hedrick, & Wood (2005) suggest that (cont'd):

- Students need sufficient practice in using words so that the meaning can be automatically accessed during reading.
- Meaningful use is tied to the level of word processing needed to perform a task or actively use the word. Higher levels of processing lead to greater likelihood of word retention.

Monda-Amaya (2008)




Word Identification and Vocabulary Strategies

Marco (1999) suggests using terminology to signal conceptual relationships:

- be similar to
- be considered
- be different from
- be characteristic of
- arise from
- be the result of


Monda-Amaya (2008)



Best strategies for expanding the vocabulary of struggling readers

- ◆ Provide opportunities for students to engage in independent reading to expand their vocabulary.
- ◆ Have below grade level trade books available on content area topics.
- ◆ Use contextually-based approaches – highlight key vocabulary words and illustrate how they are used in different contexts.

Monda-Amaya (2008)



Best strategies for expanding the vocabulary of struggling readers (cont'd)

- ◆ Allow students to self-select words that are important to the content studied
- ◆ Teach key vocabulary explicitly.
- ◆ Provide multiple exposures to key terms
- ◆ Avoid drill and practice (fill in the blanks, seek and find, and matching are least effective for providing conceptual understanding)


Monda-Amaya (2008)



Strategies for Developing Fluency

- Teacher Reads Aloud
- Repeated Reading
- Text Perusal Strategies

Monda-Amaya (2008)



Comprehension Instruction

- **Before Reading** Activate Background Knowledge
 - Brainstorming
 - Prereading plan
 - KWL
 - Schema Activation


Monda-Amaya (2008)



Comprehension Strategies

- ◆ **During and After Reading**
 - Use multiple questioning strategies--have students generate questions
 - Encourage retell
 - Use semantic features maps or other organizational strategies

Monda-Amaya (2009)



There are at least three broad areas of comprehension:

1. **Literal**—understanding the primary, direct (literal) meanings of words, sentences, or passages
2. **Inferential**—understanding the deeper meanings that are not literally stated in the passage
3. **Critical**—passing judgment on the quality, worth, accuracy, and truth of the passage.

Monda-Amaya (2008)

Semantics Features Chart

Deshler, Ellis, & Lenz (1996)

	believed in one god	believed in 10 commandments	very strict set of religious laws to live life by	believed in prophets sent by God	believed Jesus was prophet sent by God	believed Jesus was the son of God	believed in sacrificing animals to please God	believed you went to heaven by believing in Jesus' sacrifice	believed you went to heaven by doing good or special deeds
Ancient Greeks	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	-	+
Early Judaism	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+
Early Christianity	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
Early Muslim	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+

FIGURE 3.9 SEMANTICS FEATURES CHART

Graphic Organizer for Time-Ordered Information

Deshler, Ellis, & Lenz (1996)

Form

What is this whole idea about?

What are the main things that happened?

What is important to understand about this?

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR TIME-ORDERED INFORMATION

Graphic Organizer for Reciprocal Sequence of Ideas

Deshler, Ellis, & Lenz (1996)

Form

What is this whole idea about?

What are the main things that happened?

WHAT IS THE CYCLE?

What is important to understand about this?

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR RECIPROCAL SEQUENCE OF IDEAS

Graphic Organizer for Compare/Contrast Format

Deshler, Ellis, & Lenz (1996)

Form

What is this whole thing about?

What is being compared?

How it's different

How they're similar

How it's different

Main ideas

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR COMPARE/CONTRAST FORMAT

Graphic Organizer for Cause-Effect Format

Deshler, Ellis, & Lenz (1996)

Form

What is this whole idea about?

Start with...	Add this...	Now what...																		
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What is important to understand about this?

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR CAUSE-EFFECT FORMAT

Graphic Organizer for Problem-Solution Format

Deshler, Ellis, & Lenz (1996)

Form

What is this whole idea about?

What is the problem?	What is the solution?												
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What are the main elements of the problem? What are the main elements of the solution?

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR PROBLEM-SOLUTION FORMAT

Brainstorm Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Setting: _____

Where: _____

When: _____

Action: _____

Ending: _____

Monda-Amaya (2008)

Whole-To-Part Planning Form

What? What is this whole thing about?

Main idea	Main idea	Main idea
Supporting points	Supporting points	Supporting points
Supporting points	Supporting points	Supporting points
Supporting points	Supporting points	Supporting points
Supporting points	Supporting points	Supporting points

So what? Why is this important?

WHOLE-TO-PART PLANNING FORM
Source: From "Creating 'Thought-Full' Classrooms: Fostering Cognitive Literacy via Cooperative Learning and Integrated Strategy Instruction," by E. S. Ellis and R. Feldman, 1994, in *Handbook of Cooperative Learning Methods* (pp. 117-128), edited by S. Sharan, New York: Praeger.