Preparing Students For Standardized Tests

"Test practice
is not test preparation."
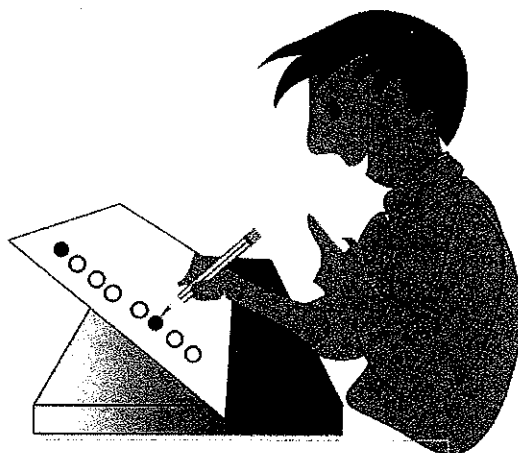
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www.knoxeducation.com

"I think it is arguable that *nothing* in the school day matters more to a child's education than time for children to read, with the teacher there to instruct and coach. If children become readers, if they develop the habit of gulping down lots and lots of texts, they end up having a wider knowledge of history, science, vocabulary...and so on. Reading truly is a magic carpet that can take our students anywhere."
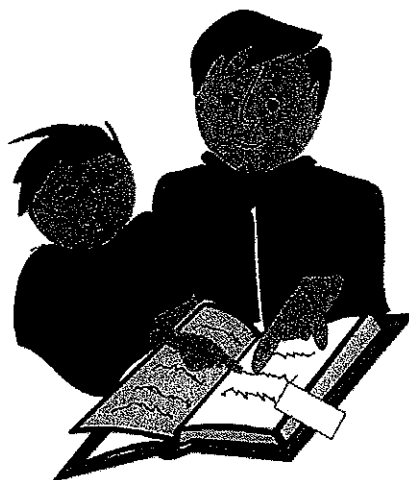
Calkins, Montgomery and Santman (1998)
A Teacher's Guide to Standardized Reading Tests. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, page 52.

Findings on the Power of Independent Reading
from Stephen Krashen: (Independent Reading is termed Free Voluntary Reading-FVR)

- Among all the ways children spent their time, reading books was the best predictor of success on several **measures of reading achievement.** (p.5)

- Elementary school children acquire from 8-14 new vocabulary words per day. The majority of these words are picked up incidentally through reading. It is argued that word meanings are picked up ten times faster through reading than direct vocabulary instruction. (p.15)

- Students who read 1 million words per year (about 20-30 minutes per day) acquire 3-5000 new vocabulary words for free! These words are understood and remembered through the rich context of reading texts that interest students.

- More reading is associated with better performance on tests of reading comprehension, but more workbook exercises are not. (p.19)

Source: Krashen, S. (1993) *The Power of Reading.* Englewood, CO Libraries Unlimited, Inc.

Procedures for Setting Up an Independent Reading Program

1. **Students must have access to as a wide a range of reading materials possible.**

   *A classroom library for elementary school should include:*

   - Reading material which represents the reading level range of your students
   - A wide range of genres (multicultural, folk & fairy tales, poetry etc.)
   - Nonfiction material on a variety of topics interesting to the students
   - Magazines, newspapers and comic books
   - Dictionaries usable by students

2. **Reading material needs to be organized in such a way that students can select and return books easily.**

Ideas for Book Organization

→ Establish **ground rules** for independent reading time through role play, teacher modeling, clearly posted rules and procedures, and consistent consequences for students who do not follow the ground rules.

→ Provide additional **support** to foster independence for students as needed. This may include help with selecting appropriate books, buddy reading of more difficult material, and review of strategies used to handle unknown words.

→ During independent reading time allow students to **choose** what they would like to read. If the goal of any literacy program is to produce independent readers and writers who choose to read what interests them and fulfills their needs, then we must allow a time for this to occur on a daily basis. Providing choice gives students the opportunity to develop their own tastes and preferences as readers.

→ Many teachers choose to hold **book talks** during independent reading time once per week. Students sign up to share their opinions about the books they are reading with their peers. This process generates much student interest in reading a wide range of material.
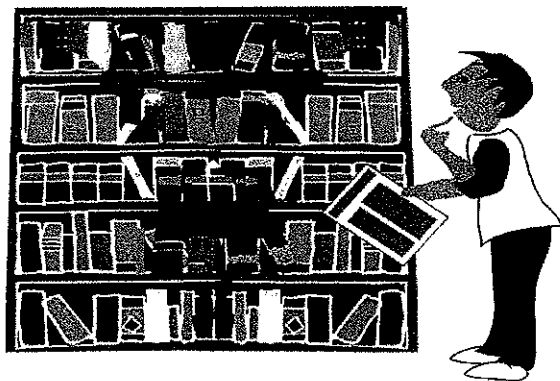
Repeated Reading of Familiar Books for Beginning Readers

Children need to have access to copies of books they are familiar with through guided and shared reading experiences in order to:

- Practice effective strategies on easy material
- Read with fluency and expression
- Experience the pleasure of revisiting favorites
- Become more familiar with story structure and vocabulary
- Problem solve independently

Give children easy access to these familiar books by placing book baskets containing recent guided reading selections around the room. Create a designated area for recent shared reading texts in large or small format so that students can reread the material.

Adapted from p. 31 Apprenticeship in Literacy (See Chapter 3 for more information)

"When readers are allowed to reread familiar material, they are being allowed to learn to be readers, to read in ways that draw on all their language resources and knowledge of the work. The orchestration of these complex behaviors cannot be achieved on a hard book."

p. 184 Clay (1991) *Becoming Literate.* Heinemann

Informal Reading Assessment with Reading Conferences

Independent reading time (SSR) is the ideal time to monitor individual reading strategies, levels, and habits. Ask one or two students to read with you daily for a few minutes during this period and check for:

- **Reading level:** can they accurately read 90% or more of the words with ease?
- **Reading fluency:** does their oral reading include smooth phrasing and adequate speed?
- **Reading Comprehension:** can they answer both literal and interpretive questions such as:

| **Literal**	**Inferential**
Right there in the text sample questions:	*Between the lines* sample questions:
Who are the main characters?	• Why do you think _____ did _____?
What was _____ doing in the beginning of the story?	• What is the character like?
How did _____ do _____?	• How did the author feel about _____ ?
• What happened after _____?	• What was the most important thing the story told you about _____ ?
	• What do you think about the way _____ solved the problem in the story? Why?

Supporting Wide Reading

Standardized reading tests require students to be able to read a wide variety of text types including:

Functional Text types:

- Procedural passages with a question
- Lists of Rules
- Informal Flyer (i.e., Walkathon: who can participate, sign up, dates, etc.)
- Recipes
- Informational Flyer (i.e., Museum: hours, facility, activities, etc.)
- Directions (i.e., Seed Packet)
- Directions (i.e., How-To project & Game)
- Instructions for submitting writing to a magazine
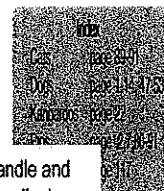- Coupon advertisement with order form
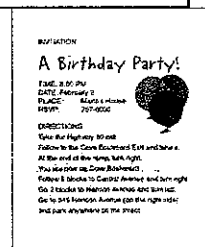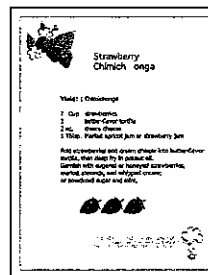
Expository Text types:

- Informative short essays
- Biography
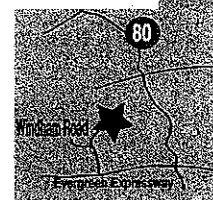- Persuasive editorials
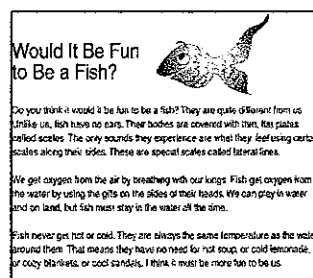
Other: Tables, charts and graphs

- Dictionary- guide words, entry (syllable division & definition), pronunciation guide
- Table of Contents and The Index
- Semantic Web
- Card Catalog, call #, Author, Title, Publishing Information
- Maps

Narrative Text types:

- Stories
- Poems
- Riddles Letters
- Mysteries
- Fables
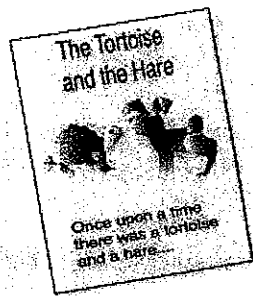
Reading Stamina *Table Talk*

- How much time do you spend on reading and reading instruction per day?
- How much of that time are students actually reading?
- What is the longest amount of time that your students sustain reading?

Strategic Schooling Checklist: Independent Reading Campaign

Reading Campaign Process	Action to date	Next steps
TARGET SET for QUANTITY Words, minutes, pages, etc.		
SCHOOLWIDE PROMOTION: Assembly, banners, parent involvement, book fairs, celebrations of progress, etc.		
CLASSROOM LIBRARIES: Student-friendly organization, check-out system, wide variety levels/genres, appealing to students.		
FOCUS on CHOICE and STUDENT INTEREST: Book talks, visits to library, interest surveys, book clubs, etc.		
READING LOGS: To mark progress and respond to reading: weekly/monthly, reading response journal, class checklist, school checklist by grade level or classroom.		
QUALITY READ ALOUDS: To model the process and peak student interest in authors, genres, topics.		
WORD STUDIES: "Grow lists" of semantic (thematic), and structural (spelling and phonics patterns) up in classrooms and added to throughout the week.		
INFORMAL READING CONFERENCES: One-on-one meetings with 1-2 students daily to check comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and reading interests.		

For a comprehensive guide to supporting a school-wide Independent Reading Campaign see on our website:
http://www.knoxeducation.com/backwards-planning-success-writing/independent-reading-campaign-handbook

Reading Strategies to Teach Throughout the Day
Coach your students in strategies for reading diverse texts.

Use enlarged texts (charts/posters),
OR Projected texts from computer or document camera to show explicitly:

Model Monitoring Comprehension as you Read:

- Read chunks then pause and **say something** about what you just read.
- Reread **aloud**.
- Reread with your **finger** or a **marker**.
- Read and say, "So this is mainly saying that...".
- Write **key words, facts**, etc. in margin of test book or on **post-its**.

Provide Guided Practice with Monitoring:

- Have students highlight the key words in the question and find them in the text.
- Write comprehension questions on the board, have students read them, then give students a post-it to place in the text where they locate the answer.
- Do collaborative retellings of short passages.
- Use shared writing techniques to chart retellings.
- Use shared writing techniques to list questions prior to reading.

Any response activities to reading need to <u>bring the reader back into the text</u>:

- Draw a picture of something described in a book and refer back to it to make sure all the details in the text are included.
- Sketch a family tree of characters in order to understand relationships in a story.
- Use graphic organizers to help students retain the information they are learning as they read.

Reading Discussions <u>Need to</u>:

- Begin with retelling.
- Include re-reading aloud the section you want to comment about.
- Ask for evidence directly in the text for their comments/opinions.

Any protocol for learning how to take tests should have a variety of educational benefits for students by providing them things such as...

- Test Familiarity
- Test-Taking Strategies
- Test Insights
- Higher-Order Thinking & Reasoning
- Subject Matter Knowledge
- Minimal Encroachment Upon Instructional Time
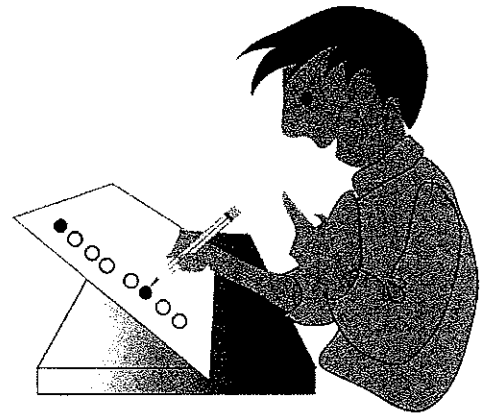
Test Prep: Deconstructing One Item at a Time

Most test items have at least _2_ **arguably correct answers**

AND most test items require **inferential thinking,**
preparing students to be successful test takers requires teaching them to
THINK, not just choose the answer they like best!
So...

Help students <u>deconstruct one test question at a time</u>:
This should take from **15-30 minutes for each item**.

Therefore, do only **one or two items a day,** preferably every Friday, starting at the beginning of the school year. Connect this item to a standard taught that week where possible.

Have students...

- "Warm up" the test item by boxing key academic words and skimming text and graphics
- Work together to determine what they think is the correct answer and **why,**
- Determine why the incorrect answers are incorrect, discussing which are the most and least incorrect, and
- Discuss **why** the test maker chose those particular incorrect answers.

Conduct a class-wide discussion to:

- Debrief their thinking
- Help them clarify fuzzy or faulty thinking

The goal is to...

- ✓ Help them learn how test items are designed: to **develop an intuition** for the "best answer," and to **build confidence**.

> **Thoughtful Test Taking:**
> # The Four Whys
> # Plus One!
>
> 1. **Why Right?**
> 2. **Why Wrong?**
> 3. **Why Wrong?**
> 4. **Why Wrong?**
>   *and*
> ❖ **Why did the test maker choose those particular wrong answers?**
>
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II. THE THINKING PERSON'S TEST PREP

Test Prep Observation Sheet

Teacher Name _____ Date _____

Observer's Name _____

	Observed	Notes
Basic Lesson Sequence		
Display the item and determine which standard is being tested.	☐	
Demonstrate how to read the item and determine what the question is asking.	☐	
Box key test vocabulary terms in the directions or question.	☐	
Have students work in pairs or alone to select one correct and at least two incorrect answers.	☐	
Have students display their answer choices (white boards/thumbs up/down, signal cards with letters).	☐	
Debrief the class on each answer to determine WHY a particular choice is right or wrong.	☐	
Add to chart of **"Test Taking Strategies."**	☐	
Add to list of **Test Vocabulary** terms if any new words come up.	☐	

Use strategies to make it interactive

- Students lead the discussion/guide at screen.
- Use of signals to show answer.
- Pair share/group talk.
- Add to chart for test taking strategies/vocabulary.
- Game show format with points, teams, and bell signal.

Comments:

Test Prep: Reading Strategies

1. Read the title... Think about what it means. Ask yourself: "What's this all about?"

2. Look at the graphics!
- ✓ What are the parts?
- ✓ How do they fit?
- ✓ What do they tell me?

3. Look for features on both the reading and the questions.
- ✓ **Bold-Face Type**
- ✓ CAPITALS
- ✓ *Italics*
- ✓ Underlines
- ✓ Boxes □□□
- ✓ "Quotes"
- ✓ Numbers...1,2,3,4,5...

4. Skim the...
- ✓ **First line** of small paragraphs,
- ✓ The **first** and **last line** of big paragraphs, *and*
- ✓ **All quotes.**

5. Check out the **Questions**.
- • Box key academic words in the question.
- • Where do I need to go to read?
- • Use the **words** in the question to find where the **answer** is in the passage.
- • Think about whether you have to read the **whole** passage.

6. Think about the **Answer.**
- • Ask why is the correct answer **correct**?
- • Ask why is the incorrect answer **incorrect**?
- • Ask why did the test maker choose **those** wrong answers?
- • **Bounce back** to find more information, but only if **necessary.**
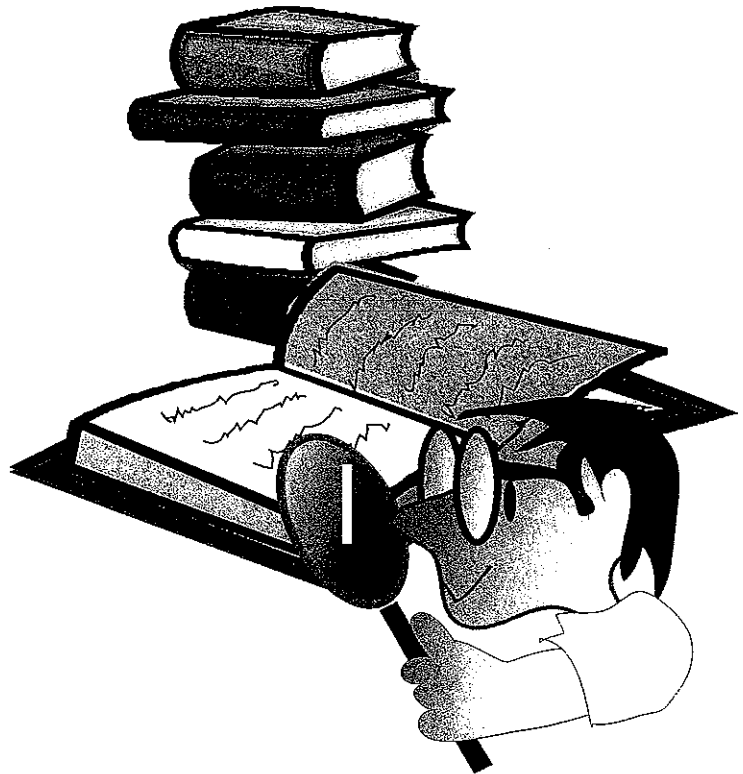
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Testing Posters:

Here are smaller samples of the test prep posters we have developed for reading. These 8.5x11 posters are available for downloading from our website at www.knoxeducation.com.

Knox Education
knoxeducation.com

Step 1 — Becoming an Expert Test Taker — Warm It Up

Read the title...THINK

Spotted Cats

Step 2 — Becoming an Expert Test Taker — Warm It Up

LOOK at the GRAPHICS

Look at all the parts...

How do they fit?

What do they tell me?

Spotted Cats

Step 3 — Becoming an Expert Test Taker — Warm It Up

LOOK for FEATURES

boldface type
numbers
quotes
underlines
boxes
CAPS (words that are all in CAPITAL letters)
italics
parentheses

SKIM the Questions

Step 4 — Becoming an Expert Test Taker

SKIM, STOP, and THINK

Read the first line on the skinny paragraphs.

FIRST line on the SKINNIES

Read the first and the last lines on the fat paragraphs.

FIRST and LAST on the FATS

Step 5 — Becoming an Expert Test Taker

ANSWER - BOUNCE
but ONLY if you HAVE to...

Try to answer, but BOUNCE BACK to READING if you have to FIND the answer, or you aren't SURE of the answer.

A. FIND the KEY WORDS to the question

B. PLUG and PLAY the KEY WORDS with every answer
Which one seems RIGHT?

C. The 4 WHYs

Think of WHY the RIGHT answer is RIGHT
WHY the first WRONG answer is WRONG
WHY the next WRONG answer is WRONG
WHY the last WRONG answer is WRONG and
WHY did the test makers CHOOSE those particular WRONG ANSWERS?

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Test Strategy Icons

These icons are also available on our website, as single page posters, at www.knoxeducation.com.

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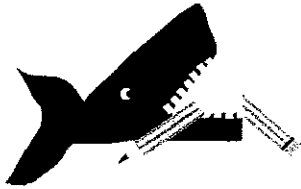
Don't get Caught in a Trap	Mark the Trick	Mark the Stinker
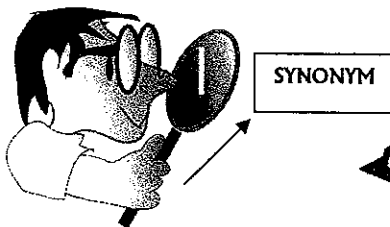
Box Key Words	Reread	Read the Directions

SYNONYM
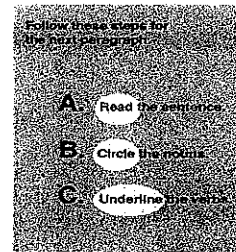
Underline the Text	Read the Questions	Plug and Play

underline

who?
WHAT...? ?
WHY?
? WHERE...?
?
WHEN...?
?
HOW...?
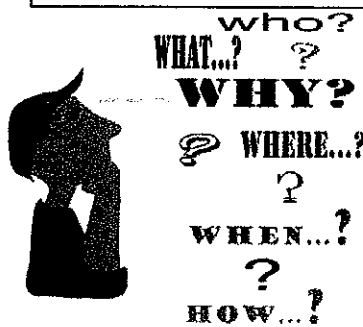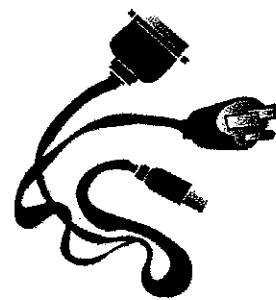
Strategy Descriptions for Test Strategy Icons

Don't get Caught in a Trap: Watch out for answers that are trying to distract you from the right answer.

Mark the Trick: Find the answers that are trying to trick you but are wrong.

Mark the Stinker: Find the silly answers that are easy to eliminate.
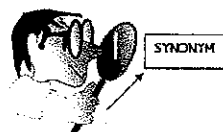
Box the Key Words: Draw a box around academic words in the test item or question such as "synonym," or "punctuate."

Reread: Always a good idea!

Read the Directions: Pay close attention when reading directions, think about what they are telling you to do.

Underline: Underline words and phrases that help you locate answers in the text.
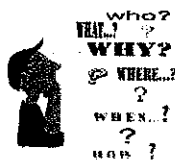
Read the Questions: Always read questions carefully and ask yourself what they are directing you to do with the test item.

Plug and Play: Plug each answer choice into the question stem to "hear" if the answer sounds right. This works especially well with vocabulary items.

TEST PREP: Writing

What do the students need to know and be able to do on the CST writing items?

Look at your released test questions for your grade level:

- **What words and phrases do the students need to know?**

- **What do they need to know about the format of the items?**

- **How do these items connect to "real" writing I a doing with my students?**

Sample Released Test Question

70.	If the students add a concluding paragraph at the end of the report, it should
A	list the sources used to write the report.
B	explain how pets bring enjoyment into people's lives.
C	summarize the main points from the report.
D	mention other interesting details about ancient Egypt.

Adds, concluding paragraph, end, report, sources, explain, summarize, main points, details

Using White Boards to Teach Writing Conventions:

Dictation

Procedure:

- Use white boards or plain writing paper.

- Create a set of sentences that contain the written conventions tested for your grade level and any conventions in general that your students struggle with. Count the capitals and punctuation points and have students create a **target** on their white boards before you start the dictation.

- Dictate a sentence or short paragraph to your students. Speak slowly and repeat as needed. Build into your dictation the skills you want to check for such as spelling, vocabulary, punctuation etc. Make sure to check your grade level standards blueprints to cover the specific skills expected for your grade level.

Benefits:

- Use dictation to learn about your students while watching them "encode". You can see immediately what they are able to do, and what still confuses them. Walk around and observe while students are taking the dictation.

- Take time to use the "teachable moments" that will no doubt appear as you see where students are confused. You may want to stop the dictation and teach the skill right then so that all students are successful. For example, *"I am noticing that many of you were having trouble with _____, let's go back and remember the rule for _____."*

Sample of white board response

Mrs. Knox said,
"Do you like to go
to San Francisco,
California?"

6 capital letters,
6 punctuation points
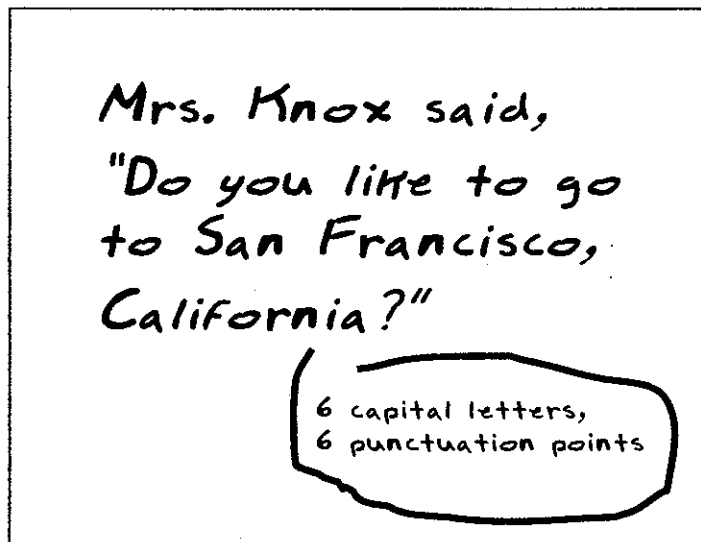
Using White Boards to Teach Writing Strategies:

Nearly any writing strategy or skill that you are teaching can be given a "jumpstart" through the use of white boards. Here's how:

1. Explain the strategy or skill to the students. Take the time to connect this to something they already know about writing.

2. Model how to use the strategy or skill in writing in front of the students on chart paper or the large white board. Think out loud as you do this so that the students can "hear" your thinking as you make all of the many decisions writers make as they write.

3. List the procedure for using this strategy or skill in simple terms on the white board.

4. Have students work in pairs or individually to "have a go" with this skill.

5. Once at least half of the students are finished, ask them to show their boards and read aloud their writing. Tell the students that when we are practicing on white boards, we can "steal" ideas from each other and easily change what we have written before we share.

6. Make sure to hear from all of the students and give corrective feedback as needed. Students can also trade boards and read and respond to each other's writing to save time. You circulate and give corrective feedback.

Writing Strategies Standards particularly suited to this include:

- Writing topic sentences
- Writing concluding sentences
- Summarizing
- Using vivid verbs
- Adding description to a sentence or paragraph
- Brainstorming ideas for topics
- Sentence combining
- Sentence constructions of all kinds

Using White Boards to Pre-teach for the Writing Strategies CST items

Many CST items ask students to choose the BEST sentence to conclude a paragraph, summarize, add detail, provide a transition, or be used as a topic sentence. You can use white boards to pre-teach the writing task indicated on a Released Test Question item BEFORE you have the students look at the four possible answer choices to select the best sentence.

Follow these steps:

1. Look at the item and decide what writing task is indicated.
2. Show the students the related passage from which they will work.
3. "Warm up" the passage by looking at the title, skimming, and discussing what it is about.
4. Ask the students to write a sentence by themselves based on the writing task.
5. Have students display their sentences and discuss which possible sentences are BEST given the task at hand.
6. Have students look at the four answer choices and select the BEST sentence. Discuss why it is best and why the others are not.

Released Test Question:

The following questions are not about a Story. Read and answer each question.

70 **Eve wrote some sentences about her little brother.**

_____

First he holds on to the table. Then he lets go. Then he takes three steps before he falls down. He smiles when he falls because he likes learning to walk.

Which sentence should be put in the blank?

A. I have a brother who is one year old.

B. My brother is learning to walk.

C. My brother's name is Alex.

D. I help take care of my brother.

My little brother tries to walk.

Test Prep - Math

1. Read the question...at least twice!
- ✓ Change symbols to words or words to symbols
- ✓ Pick out the most relevant information

2. Look at the graphics!
- ✓ What are the parts?
- ✓ How do they fit?
- ✓ What do they tell me?

3. "Guesstimate" the answer if possible.

4. Work the problem...
- ✓ Mathematically, if you know how, or any other way!
- ✓ Ask yourself why is the correct answer **correct**?
- ✓ Ask why is the incorrect answer **incorrect**?
- ✓ Ask why did the test maker choose **those** wrong answers?
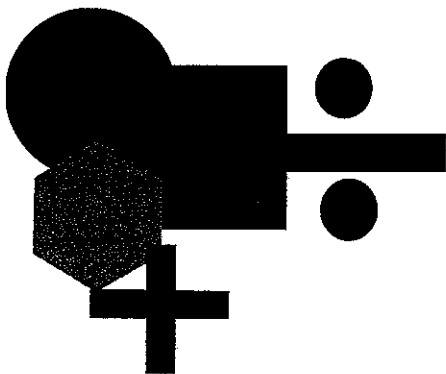
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Three Steps to Math Proficiency...
one Problem at a Time

STEP #1

The teacher does the sample test problem with the students, highlighting _key words_ in the problem, looking for _patterns_, and doing the _"4 why's + 1"_ (why right, why wrong, why wrong, why wrong, and why did the test writer choose those wrong answers).

STEP #2

The teacher _changes one element in the problem_ and the class does it again. Repeat this 4-5 more times.

STEP #3

Students form teams and _generate one more problem_ just like the one they've been working on with the teacher. Each team sends a representative to the board to put their problem up for the rest of the class to solve. They _include 3 wrong answers_ in imitation of the sample that they've just analyzed.

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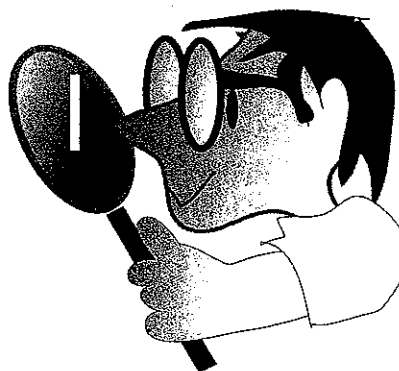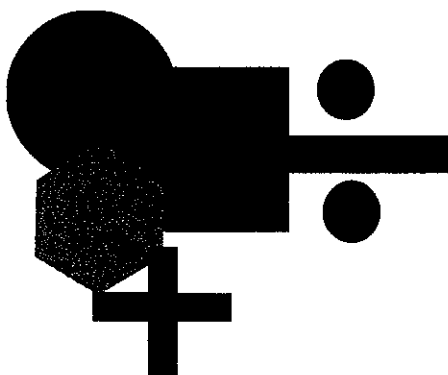
Sample Math Word Problem Process:

From the Grade 3 CST Released Test Questions:

> **Third-grade students went to a concert in 8 buses.**
> **Each bus took 45 students. How many students went**
> **to the concert?**
>
> A 320
>
> B 360
>
> C 380
>
> D 3240

Step 1: Box key words and figure out how to do the math in the problem. Look at all of the answers to find the correct one and determine why the test maker put those wrong answers in the item. What math mistakes were they counting on you making?

Step 2: Change one or more elements and repeat the math problem 4-5 times. For example, "The third grade students went to a park in 6 buses and 32 students were on each bus"

Step 3: Students in teams or pairs create another similar problem using the frame from the problem above. Students generate one right answer and 3 incorrect answers which contain common mathematical errors to try to trick their classmates. Students display their math problems for the whole class to work out. Teachers can assemble these into class books for other classrooms to try. Teachers can organize these by math type. The item above is a multiplication item. There are also items for division, percentages, area and perimeter, etc. depending on grade level standards.

Frame for the item above:

> _____(people) went to _____(place) in _____
> (form of transportation). Each _____(form of
> transportation) took _____(number)_____(people).
> How many _____(people) went to the _____(place)?
>
> A_____
>
> B_____
>
> C_____
>
> D_____

Reading and Math Bookmarks
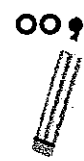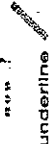
Reading Test Taking Strategies

1. Read the title/subtitles. Predict (guess) what the passage will be about.

2. Carefully study any charts, graphs, diagrams, and pictures.

3. Read the questions and BOX the key words. MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THE QUESTION IS ASKING.

4. Read the passage carefully. Visualize what is being read.

5. Read the first question and answer choices to get an idea of what the answer may be.

6. Return to the passage and underline the clues that support the answer.

7. Return to the question and eliminate the wrong answers.

8. Plug and play answer choices to try them out.

9. Bubble in the best answer.
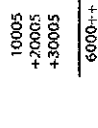
Math Test Taking Strategies

1. Read the problem at least twice.

2. Pick out what's relevant. Change symbols to words and words to symbols.

3. Carefully study any charts, graphs, diagrams, and pictures.

4. Guesstimate the answer if possible.

5. Work the problem mathematically – if you know how – and any other way.

6. Eliminate the wrong answers.

7. Return to the problem and ask yourself why the correct answer is correct.

8. Plug and play answer choices to try them out.

9. Bubble in the best answer.

Active Test Proctoring

Maximizing Student Performance on State Tests

It's best to proctor students you know.

If you're proctoring students you don't teach – and if time permits– take a few minutes to introduce yourself and get to know them before beginning. Set a positive, supportive, do-your-best tone.

Walk among students frequently during the test.

It helps students take the test seriously and stay on task.

Alert students to any problems they may be having:

Extraneous marks near bubbled answers, bubbles not filled in completely, misalignment in booklet and answer sheet numbers, mindless bubbling, etc.

Encourage students to work effectively:

> "Pace yourself." "don't panic."
>
> "Take a breather."
>
> "Keep going."
>
> "Keep up the good work."
>
> "15 minutes to go."
>
> "10 minutes to go."
>
> "5 minutes to go."
>
> etc.

Tests are designed to reflect what students do or do not know, not their anxiety, fatigue or ineffective work habits. Active test proctoring can ensure that scores will be as valid as possible.

Dennis Parker: dp1018@gmail.com

Children's Literature About Taking Tests

Cohen, Miriam (2006). *First Grade Takes a Test.* NY: Star Bright Books.

Finchler, Judy (2000). *Testing Miss Malarkey.* NY: Walker & Company.

Dr. Suess (1998). *Horray for Diffendoofer Day!* NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

III. ACADEMIC VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

Academic Vocabulary Instruction

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antonym (opposite)
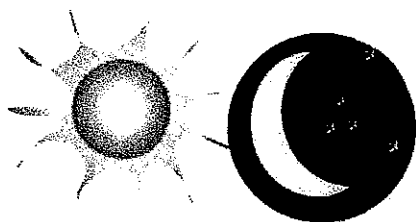
Day	Night
Hard	Soft
Difficult	Easy
Messy	Neat

What is it?

The methods used to teach new vocabulary essential to academic success.

Why is it so important?

"Vocabulary reflects the amount of academic background knowledge you possess. There is a positive correlation between academic background knowledge and academic achievement."
Robert J. Marzano, 2004

"Children who grow up in homes impacted by poverty often enter school with far fewer words in their receptive and expressive vocabulary."
Hart and Risley, 1995

For full set of vocabulary word cards for testing and how to use them, see our website and our book: "Talking Walls: Building Classroom Environments to Support Student Achievement, 2009, by Michelle Karns and Charlotte Knox. A CD with all word cards and other classroom materials is **included with the book**. Here's the link to the word cards our website:
http://www.knoxeducation.com/testing-preparation-document/testing-word-cards

KnoxEducation
knoxeducation.com

How does it apply in the classroom?

Effective vocabulary instruction requires careful planning.

- Select key terms that are aligned with standards
- Make agreements with grade level teams about coverage
- Design routines that can be built into the daily/weekly schedule

Six Steps to Effective Vocabulary Instruction

That means..

Use   Illustrations   Restate   Demonstrate   Explain
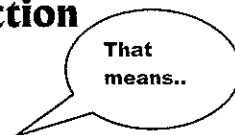
1. **The teacher provides a description, explanation, or example of the new term.**
   - Use the illustrations in the story and additional visuals as needed to teach students the new concepts and words in English.
   - Encourage lots of choral response as you do this.
   - Don't assume that if one or two students know what something is, that the others get it.
   - Use 'Strategies for Comprehensible Input'.

2. **Students restate the explanation of the new term in their own words.**
   - Encourage group/paired discussion.
   - Use white boards.
   - Provide corrective feedback when students give incorrect explanation.

3. **Students create a nonlinguistic representation of the term.**
   - Illustrations may be: actual drawings, symbols, examples, or dramatizations of the term.
   - Model this process for students with your own doodles.
   - Use white boards so all students can get ideas from each other for ways to represent the term.
   - Encourage other nonlinguistic representations such as gestures, pantomime, and voice tone.
   - Students may also use the internet to search for additional graphics for the term.

4. Students periodically do activities that help them add to their knowledge of vocabulary terms.

- Find synonyms or antonyms.
- Engage in word webbing activities with pairs or small groups to add connections to the term.
- Learn the word in the students' primary language.
- Highlight a root, prefix, or suffix to help them remember the meaning of the term and relate that to other words they know with that chunk.

5. Periodically students are asked to discuss the terms with one another.

- Use "think-pair-share" techniques to have students review meanings, find agreements/disagreements, explain new information related to the term, etc.
- Have students revisit academic notebooks to find a word based on clues, and/or guess a word based on a graphic or brief definition.

6. Periodically students are involved in games that allow them to play with the terms.

Pictionary: provide teams with a common list of terms for review. Have teams assign an illustrator for their group. Have the illustrator pick a term at random to illustrate. The illustrator's team gets a set amount of time to guess the term as their teammate is drawing. If the team doesn't guess the correct team, the alternate team gets to guess and scores the point for that round. It is particularly effective to have teams use the class overhead for this.

Guess my Group: pairs take a list of terms and group them into categories of their own choosing. They cover these lists so that the other groups cannot see them. Next they begin reading their list until the others correctly name the category they were using for the group of terms. If the group cannot guess the category, then the team has to keep adding other words (not necessarily from the class list) to their group of words until the class names the category.

Vocabulary Charades: teams are given lists of words to act out and identify. The actor randomly draws one of the terms and acts out the word until his or her team guesses the term. You may want to keep score by counting how many terms they accurately identify in a set amount of time (1-5 minutes).

Word Wizards: challenge students to find the words you are focusing on in their independent reading, listen for them in conversations or on the TV, use them in their writing. Award points for each word documented with a source. Set a goal for 'Wizard' status and add an incentive to get there.

Marzano, R.J. (2004) *Building background knowledge for academic achievement: Research on what works in schools.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD, pp. 91-103.

Games to Play with the Academic Vocabulary of the CST

These word games provide a fun-filled way to review the essential terms relating to each grade level's blueprint standards terms that show up in the question stems of the STAR test. When students are enjoying themselves learning is accelerated and attitude towards preparing for the CST is improved. Not to mention, while students are reviewing the terms on lists they are attaining fluency and automaticity with decoding and understanding the words themselves as they scan for the right word.

The lists of words by grade level and subject can be found on our website: in the each grade level's Standards Toolkit. They have been created for each CST test grades 2-8, all subjects.

KnoxEducation
knoxeducation.com

Go to Teacher Resources → Standards Toolkits →
Grade Level → Testing Preparation Document →
Academic Word Lists

BEFORE you play these games:

1. Make sure the students have learned the meaning of the words during your regular instruction. Build the habit of having the students box key terms on test items, or worksheets. Use them during class note-taking, post them during teaching and on your daily schedule. You may want them to keep a running list of academic terms for their grade level in their standards check-off folders.

2. Create a randomized list of 10-30 ELA, science, or Math words for each time you play a game. Ask students to draw picture icons and/or list words or phrases defining each word on their game list before they begin playing. This makes a good partner activity to increase ways of interacting with the words and discussing the meanings.
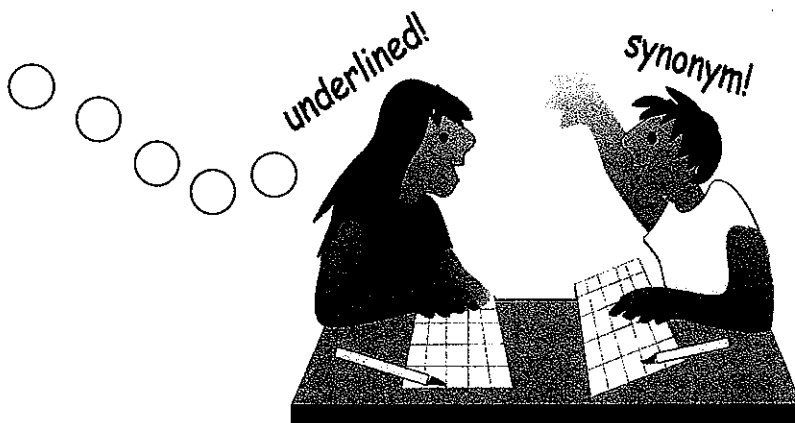
Games to Play with the Academic Vocabulary of the CST
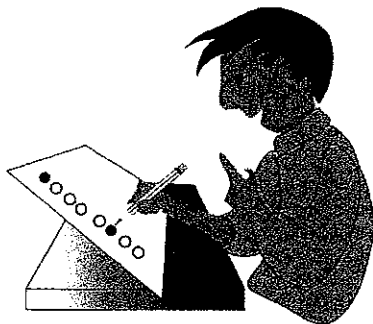
Don't Forget the TESTING Word Cards

TESTING Word Cards are an excellent supplemental resource for helping struggling learners to understand state tests.

These 89 WORD CARDS were developed using the actual testing language on the CST. The cards provide teachers with accurate visual prompts for language used in state tests that may be unfamiliar for students. These cards are aligned with current scientific research for the value of non-linguistic representations (NLRs) in teaching, Marzano (2005).

Used as NLRs, these WORD CARDS especially serve **new readers, slow decoders,** and **English language learners.**

In any testing situation, the teacher wants to help the students understand the tests they are taking. These cards will help.

They can be used...

- **to enhance the understanding of testing language;**
- **as simple flash cards for words students need to remember in any context;**
- **as either sorted or categorized and for small or large groups.**
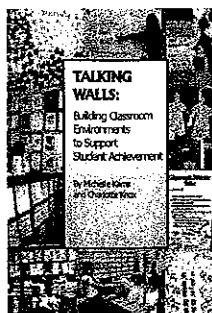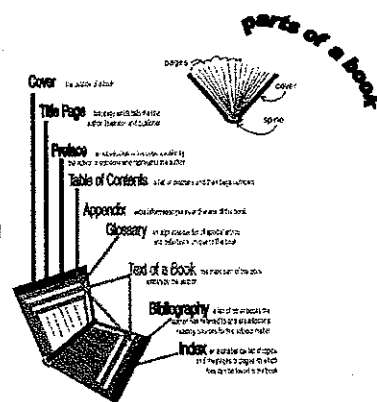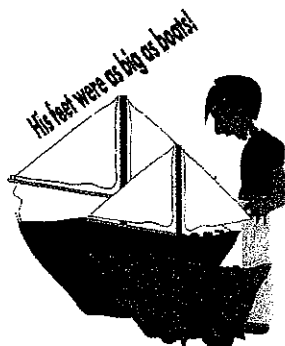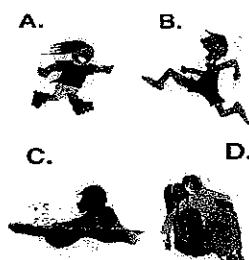
Cards designed and written by
mskarns@pacbell.net These cards
are included with the resources CD
which comes with the book Talking
Walls by Charlotte Knox and
Michelle Karns.
They are also on our website.→

KnoxEducation
knoxeducation.com

Located on our website:
Go to Teacher Resources → Standards Toolkits →
Grade Level → Testing Preparation Document →
Testing Word Cards

Games to Play with the Academic Vocabulary of the CST

Race to the Top!

synonym

antonym

suffix

supporting detail

main idea

Students can play this rapid-fire game in pairs or as a small group.

List about 5 terms on a chart or on the white board behind the players.

Have one player turn so that he/she cannot see the words.

The player's partner then starts at the bottom of the list and gives clues for what each word means until the player guesses the word.

The first team to get all of the words correct wins a point.

BEFORE you play:

Provide students with the list of terms you are going to be selecting from. Students can copy these from a chapter in a text book, for example you may say:

"Today we are playing with math terms from Unit 4: Algebraic Functions."

Then have the students list these words and their definitions on paper to get ready to play. Or you can type a list of words to play with and give students time to study before the game starts.

Games to Play with the Academic Vocabulary of the CST

Pictionary!

1. Provide students with a list of CST words ahead of time.

2. Have them get ready to play be drawing icons or pictures to go with each word.

3. Let students work in pairs or small groups to get ideas from each other for the graphics.

4. Write the words from the list you are playing with on cards and place in a basket.

5. Have each team that is playing elect an artist to start. The artist comes up to the basket, selects a word, and then has a moment or two to think about how they will draw that word. You may also provide help if the student is stuck for an idea. They can bring their prepared sheet of words with them as well.

6. Start a timer and have the student start drawing the word.

7. Team mates try to guess which word it is and write the word on their whiteboards to check.

8. Stop the timer when a team member gets the word.

9. You can make it harder by insisting that every team member write the word *before* the timer is stopped.

10. Keep track of the time needed to guess the word for each team. **The team that uses the least amount of time for a given set of words wins.**

11. Rotate artists after each word and take turns back and forth between the teams.

Antonym
opposite

world book
Atlas

Kind of word
action word
Verb

Follow
the...
Steps!

1.
2.
3.
4.
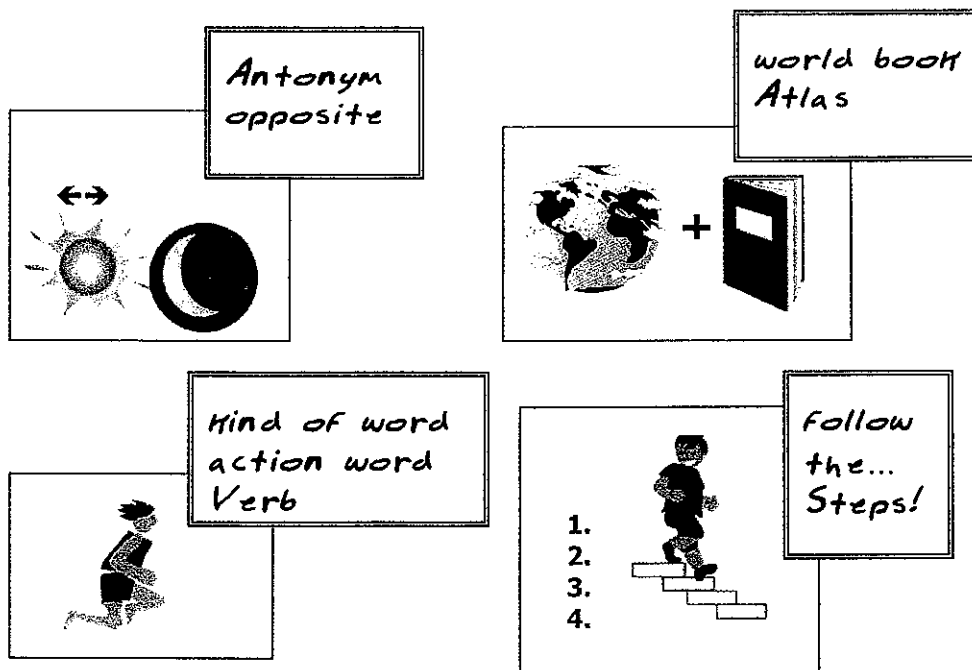
III. ACADEMIC VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

Matching Definitions:

Divvy out 1-3 words per student, have them write the word clearly on one index card and a simple definition + picture if possible on another (you can use the glossary in the back of Houghton Mifflin or Open Court for this). Have students use these cards to walk around and match up words and definitions with their classmates. You could also use the pairs of cards for playing concentration.

Crossword Puzzles:

Here are a couple of websites that will let you create crossword puzzles. You may be able to get older students to create these for younger students based on the definitions they write up. I would AVOID USING WORD SEARCHES EXCEPT FOR WITH SPELLING ACTIVITIES--these do not encourage the student to think about the meanings of words. The students are just looking for spelling patterns.

http://www.puzzle-maker.com/CW/index.htm
http://thinks.com/webguide/crosswords.htm

Guess my Group:

Pass out a list of academic terms that is not organized in any particular order. List 3 or more terms on the white board and ask students to work in teams to figure out what the words share in common with each other. For example you may list: *period, comma, apostrophe, quotation mark* (punctuation marks). Have each team or pair write the category on a white board and display all team responses at the same time. Teams with correct responses get a point. Teams may get additional points by adding another term that can fit the category. For example, to the above list they may add *exclamation point.* Review each term and why it fits in that category after each cycle. There will be varied responses to this. You can decide to give a point or not to the responses. For example, "about writing" may be too general when you were looking for "terms that explain how to revise." You can also have students create their own lists of words that go together in a category and have the class guess their intended category. Finally, you could provide a randomized list and a number of given categories and have students sort the words under the categories you determine.

Link Words:

Have student choose two terms that are related from the list. They write one on one side of their white board, the other on the other side and indicate in the middle how they are related. For example *adverb and adjective* are parts of speech that describe another word.

Jeopardy:

There are many templates available for creating jeopardy games on-line. You can also just use the index cards the students created for the matching definitions game above in a pocket chart.

http://www.techteachers.com/jeopardytemplates.htm
http://teach.fcps.net/trt10/PowerPoint.htm

Bingo:

Have students make a game board with the terms. You give the definition and students have to find the word on their board. There are pre-made bingo games for ELA for second and third grade on the website in the testing preparation folder of those standards toolkits.

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Located on our website:
Go to Teacher Resources → Standards Toolkits →
**Grade Level → Testing Preparation Document →
Games to Play with CST Academic Language**

III. ACADEMIC VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

English/Language Arts

The Word *ABC...*	Your Definition (What does the word mean?)	Your picture or symbol to help you remember

Math

The Word ABC...	Your Definition (What does the word mean?)	Your picture or symbol to help you remember

IV. FEEBACK: STUDENT TEACHER TEST CHATS

1. **Explain "Grade Level" or "Proficient" using a graphic:**
   - A bell curve (for the CAT6)
   - A rubric (for the state Writing Assessment in grades 4 & 7)
   - Bars or bands (for the California Standards Test and the CELDT)

2. **Review student's CAT6 and Standards data and identify outcomes in terms of:**
   - Grade Level (+/- 50th percentile or +/- "Proficient")
   - Highest and lowest scores within content clusters or domains in Reading, Language, Math, Spelling, etc.

3. **Review the student's gains or losses over the past 2-4 ears and discuss reasons for such results:**
   - Was the student a "gainer," "sticker," or "slider?" In which areas?
   - Note: the same percentile score or scale score two years in a row reflects one year's growth (e.g., 345 scale score in 2007 and 345 scale score in 2008= about one year's growth).

4. **Set achievement targets for the upcoming test:**
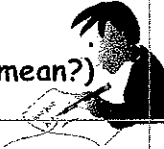   - Levels gain on the California Standards Test or CELDT
   - Gain in percent correct on the district benchmark exams

5. **Set content targets to support the achievement targets:**
   - Areas the student is going to work harder on to improve scores on the assessments: writing, homework, punctuation and grammar, word problems, multiplication tables, vocabulary, etc.

6. **Discuss "Why try":**
   - To learn and get credit for what you learned.
   - To practice for future high-stakes tests (driver's license, college, CPA, the BAR, the MCAT, the CBEST, etc.).
   - "By the work, know the workman" = personal pride, develop a good track record in your "cum" file.
   - Help your school

Dennis Parker: dp1018@gmail.com

PASSPORT *to Success*

English Language Arts
Grade 4
PASSPORT TO SUCCESS

CST			
Advanced 394-600			
Proficient 350-393			
Basic 300-349			
Below Basic 268-299			
Far Below Basic 150-267			
Year	2008	2009	Goal for 2010

DISTRICT BENCHMARK TESTS					
71-100% Advanced	Test 100	1	2	3	4
70% Proficient	90 80				
40%-69% Strategic	70 60 50				
0-40% Intensive	40 30				
	20 10				

MY GOALS FOR ELA

1. _____

2. _____

How will I achieve my goals?

 •

During class time:

 •

After School:

 •

At Home:

 •

For more examples of test chat forms, see our website knoxeducation.com.   KnoxEducation
knoxeducation.com
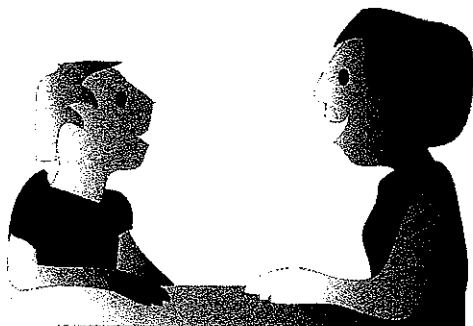
**Target Students:
Helping Students Move from
"Basic" to "Proficient"**

1. SMILE AT THE STUDENT DAILY MORE FREQUENTLY THAN USUAL.

2. TALK ABOUT SOMETHING DAILY NOT RELATED TO SCHOOL.

3. ASK EXTRA ACADEMIC QUESTIONS DAILY OF THE STUDENT, INCLUDING WAIT-TIME AND DELVING.

4. CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING AT LEAST ONCE AN HOUR.

5. STAND CLOSE TO THE STUDENT AT LEAST ONCE AN HOUR FOR AT LEAST A "THREE COUNT."

6. PROVIDE AT LEAST ONE POSITIVE COMMENT TO THE STUDENT EACH HOUR EMPHASIZING EFFORT, PRODUCTION, OR OUTCOMES.

7. PROVIDE NEGATIVE FEEDBACK WHEN NECESSARY, ALWAYS FOLLOWED BY A MESSAGE OF "YOU CAN DO BETTER," "TRY THIS," OR "I'LL HELP."

8. ASSIGN A JOB OR DUTY TO HELP YOU IN CLASS.

9. MAKE THE STUDENT A CROSS-AGE TUTOR (3-5 TIMES A WEEK) FOR STUDENTS IN A LOWER GRADE.

10. CALL HOME AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK WITH A POSITIVE COMMENT.

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Motivating Best Possible performance on the CST:

(More examples and art can be found on the website, knoxeducation.com at
http://www.knoxeducation.com/celebrate-achievement/2012-cst-performance-award-powerpoint)

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Awards Assembly:

Conduct an awards assembly for previous year CST/CELDT performance which provides recognition for the following categories:

"Hall of Fame"

- All students scoring proficient or advanced.
- All students redesignated.
- Group these by categories: 350 and up, 400 club, 500 club, perfect 600 score.
- Consider trophies or a perpetual plaque for the students scoring a perfect 600.

"Rising Stars"

- All students with a scale score gain of 20 or more points (you can set the criteria)
- All students with a gain in a proficiency level (for example: below basic to basic)
- All students with a gain in CELDT level

Some tips from the field for making this work:

Consider providing medals or wrist bands for recognition instead of paper certificates. Encourage students to wear their medals or bands on special school spirit days or during the testing week.

Post the award winner names in a public place such as the front office or multipurpose room. Students and parents alike will enjoy seeing their names in print!

Invite parents and even the press to your ceremony. Add to the excitement with balloons, music, and photographs. A motivational guest speaker from the community may also build pride and encourage strong performance and effort.

In large schools, you may want to consider creating a PowerPoint® presentation of the names so that you may display the names quickly and have all students whose names appear on the screen simply stand for applause. They can receive their certificates or medals back in their individual classrooms.

Examples of awards stickers:

Tips for improving testing performance from the Lighthouse Teachers:

The Lighthouse Teachers is a group teachers who had at least 70% proficient and/or 70% of their students increase in scale scores during the 2006-7 school year. They gathered at Dennis Parker's Ranch in May of 2008 to share their ideas for success.

- Chart test taking strategies in kid friendly language with the students
- Have students make test strategy and motivational posters to decorate your room and cover up charts that need to get covered.
- Talk about the tricky test writers, beating the test, the evil test writer, read literature about taking tests, put it in perspective
- Make the test strategy lessons as fun and engaging as possible
- Create chants for the strategies with your students
- Use a game show format—students in teams ("numbered heads" assign 1,2,3,4 to answer, heterogeneous groups), use a bell to ring when ready, get an *easy* button from Staples, use white boards
- Use the same protocol for a testing environment for all tests all year such as setting up "offices", test sign on the door, breathing, dedicating the test etc.
- Props: Test prep hats, test-taking glasses to hunt for clues, etc.
- Music, prizes, bouncy ball tossed to give answers
- Categorize the type of question it is: "right there" (underline) or Synthesis (circle)
- Attitude: play like a champion, slap the wall, "step up" don't acquiesce, show your 'strong side"

Before Testing Week

- Provide a workshop for parents about how to help your child test best
- Organize healthy snacks and water to be distributed
- Create a Pep Rally/STAR Carnival, awards assembly, hit the ball out of the park --"600" club (see next page)
- K-1 students make encouraging posters for grade 2-5 classrooms "adopt a class"

During Testing

- Dedicate your test to someone you want to make proud, who cares about you—do this on a post-it or note sheet to attach to the test.
- Take it slow—provide a space for students who want to take longer to complete the test
- Take a few moments for some breathing, movement, stretching, even back rubs
- Enjoy a little gum, peppermint candy canes, lemon drops
- Use brain strategy movements, across the mid line with large arm movements
- In grades 4 and up encourage use of highlighting, underlining, use of scratch paper to support problem solving and not just guessing
- Conduct a Spirit week during testing—lucky socks day, put on your thinking cap, etc.

The Lighthouse Teachers and Charlotte Knox

Meet in Grade Level Groups to review the Standards Blueprints for Language Arts and Math. (available at www.cde.ca.gov go to the STAR portion of the website and scroll down until you see "Standards Blueprints").

Check Off Standards:

Check off standards in three categories (teachers may want to use 3 different colors of highlighters or a coding system):

1. I've taught this and most have mastered it (+)

2. I've taught this, but need to review it with all or some (√)

3. I haven't taught this yet   (leave blank and calendar this)

Work in Grade Level Teams:

- Check for calendar standards not yet addressed.

- Locate appropriate lessons/materials (Many reading series are correlated to the state standards and these documents are available on-line at the publisher's website or within the teacher's editions.)

- Plan appropriate homework assignments for review of previously taught skills.

Back in the Classroom:

- Post the standards blueprints.

- Check off standards addressed in front of the students weekly.

- Preview standards to be addressed with students periodically to make sure they understand the skill/concept contained within the standard. (*a standard = something you know or can do*).

With Parents:

Consider having a school-wide or individual grade level meeting to:

- Review the standards for the grade level.

- Make suggestions for ways to help at home.

- Discuss ways to lower stress and assure optimal performance during the testing week.

- Show them the released test items for the CST so they know what their child will encounter on test day.

VI. BACKWARDS PLANNING for the CST

Thoughtful Facilitation of Student Learning

District Pacing Guides

Unwrapping the Standards

Academic Vocabulary of the CST

Released Test Questions

Standards Tool Kit

Knox Education website
www.knoxeducation.com

or

CDE website:
www.cde.ca.gov

Choose Additional Standards

Connect, if possible, to Priority Standards

See what makes sense with the textbook

Unwrapping Additional Standards

Academic Vocabulary of CST

Released Test Questions

Standards Tool Kit

Knox Education website
www.knoxeducation.com

or

CDE website:
www.cde.ca.gov

Standards Tool Kit

or

CDE website:
www.cde.ca.gov

How are these standards taught in our textbooks?

Do we need to supplement?

New Ideas?

- Supplemental materials
- Standards Plus!©
- Best practices from professional development

Calendar, Plan, and Share Ideas

VI. BACKWARDS PLANNING for the CST

Planning Tools

Standards Blueprints ELA Math	Academic Language of the CST	Released Test Questions	Formative Assessments ELA Math	Pacing Guides
Standards Tool Kit	Standards Tool Kit	Standards Tool Kit	District Benchmark Tests	Adopted Textbook Teacher Guides
Knox Education website www.knoxeducation.com	Knox Education website www.knoxeducation.com	or	Chapter Tests	Standards Blueprint Check-Off from Classroom
or	or	CDE website: www.cde.ca.gov	Teacher Made Quizzes	
CDE website: www.cde.ca.gov	CDE website: www.cde.ca.gov		White Board Practice	
www.cde.ca.gov				
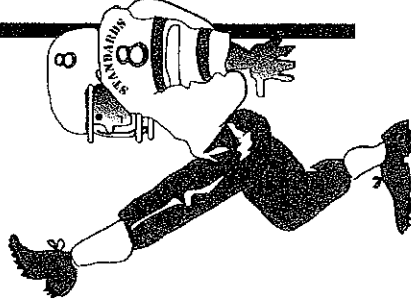
Year_____

Week of	ACTIVITIES, PRACTICE ITEMS, PREPARATION
	Staff Meeting to review Standards Blueprints
	Staff Meeting to check off Standards on Blueprints

VI. BACKWARDS PLANNING for the CST

Year_____

Week of	ACTIVITIES, PRACTICE ITEMS, PREPARATION

VI. BACKWARDS PLANNING for the CST

Year_____

Week of	ACTIVITIES, PRACTICE ITEMS, PREPARATION
	CST Testing Week
	CST Make-ups

Grade Level Shared Preparation Notes:

Team Plan:

✓ Look over the list as a team.
✓ Plan out how much time you think you will need for each discussion.
✓ Think about which aspects you would like support with from Charlotte or others.

Time needed:
 	
When?
 	
January
 	
February
 	
March
 	
Support?
	Discuss the Students:
	
	Students at Basic for moving up to proficient:
	
	How are they doing **academically** right now?
	What kinds of things are we doing to increase **feedback** to these students?
	   ☐ Test chats
	   ☐ Informal in-class comments
	   ☐ Reviewing quizzes, assignments, writing, in small groups or one-on-one
	   ☐ Other
	
	How are they doing in the **social-emotional** arena?
	What kinds of things are we doing to **support** them?
	   ☐ Mentoring
	   ☐ Buddies
	   ☐ Calls home
	   ☐ Positive feedback/appreciations
	Students at Far Below Basic/Below Basic for intervention:
	
	How are our interventions going? How do we know? Are the students who need tutoring getting it?

Time needed:
 	
When?
 	
Support?
	Discuss the Blueprint Standards:
	
	Check-off standards:
	   • We taught it and they got it (+)
	   • We taught it, but need to review (✓)
	   • We haven't taught this yet (-)
	
	Calendar standards not yet addressed:
	   • Locate appropriate lessons/materials.
	   • Look at the released STAR test items to see how the standard is tested and use that **academic language** when teaching the standard.
	   • Plan appropriate homework assignments for review of previously taught skills.

Time needed: When? Support? Demo?	**Discuss Test Strategy Lessons:** 1. **"Deconstruct"** each released test question **with the whole class using the "thinking person's test prep lesson format"** and the **4 WHY'S.** 2. **Chart testing strategies** your students are using as they come up in the context of these lessons. 3. **Chart academic terms** used for testing in ELA and Math as they come up—class charts, illustrations and kid-friendly definitions, student academic vocabulary notebooks. 4. Think about having a "mock test" 1-2 weeks before the STAR and debriefing that experience with the class.