



Literacy at Hartford Public High School

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Attacking a Learning Task

from Helping Middle and High School Readers

The following list could be used to help a student learn how to attack a task. Although the activities look both complex and time consuming, in reality, much of the work—the thinking processes—is done very rapidly by effective readers.

Setting the purpose of the task: What is the purpose of this task?

- What am I supposed to do explicitly and implicitly?
- What is the objective of this task?

Task analysis: What are the parameters of this task?

- What are the complexities of this task?
- To what extent can the task be done?

Self-analysis: What do I know about the topic?

- From what I know, what could help me in this task? What obstacles could prevent the completion of this task?
- What should I do about what I do not know?

Selection of micro-strategies: What is the best strategy to accomplish the objective of this task?

- What techniques are better for this task?
- What techniques are more congruent with my personal style?

Time regulation: When is the best time for the application of the phases?

- When will I have a better performance level?
- How much time would I need to solve this task?

Evaluation and correction of the process: How will I know if I am making progress toward my objectives?

- What steps of the application process do I still have to resolve?
- What problematic issues are still in the process of being resolved?

Evaluation and analysis of the outcome: How do I know that the objectives have been attained?

- What are the most serious mistakes?

- Are they due to a lack of knowledge about the topic? Or are they due to defective and erroneous strategies used?

Remediation: How can I correct the mistakes?

- What mistakes are much easier to remediate? What are more difficult?
- Where should I start the remediation process? In what order?

Activating Prior Knowledge

Before reading:

- Preview the content-area material to be read.
- Look at the pictures, title, text.
- Discuss what students know about the above elements.
- Connect personal experiences, observations, and knowledge with new knowledge to be taught.
- Look for familiar vocabulary words.
- Examine the way the text is organized.

During reading:

- Assist students in applying their prior knowledge.
- Brainstorm ideas regarding where, how, and when students' prior knowledge can be accessed.
- Model how one's prior knowledge can be applied to unknown material to assist in learning new information and concepts.
- Encourage use of inferencing skills as students apply prior knowledge.
- Correct inaccurate prior knowledge.

After reading:

- Evaluate how effectively students are able to use their prior knowledge to make connections between what they know and what they are trying to learn.
- Have students write, create graphic organizers, or make oral presentations to demonstrate their understanding of what they have read.