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SPED 5500-JC

June 21, 2002

**Title of Article:** "Teaching Expressive Writing to Students With Learning Disabilities"

**Authors:** Russell Gersten, Scott Baker, Lana Edwards

**Year of Publication:** 1999

**Reference:** *ERIC Digest* online, Retrieved 6/11/02 from  
[http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC\\_digests/ed439532.html](http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_digests/ed439532.html)

**Main Topic of the Article:** Teaching strategies that help learning disabled students to write more easily.

**Article Summary:**

This article described several practical approaches that might help learning disabled students write more easily when they are called upon to write in their classes. The authors argued that there are simple methods of teaching writing simply-not as a complicated and difficult process. These learning strategies are: adhering to a basic framework of planning, writing, and revision; explicitly teaching critical steps in the writing process; and providing feedback guided by the information specifically taught.

The first strategy, adhering to a basic framework of planning, writing, and revision, should include planning with a "think sheet" that helps the students to organize their thoughts, the production of a first draft, and using revising and editing as a tool. This would give the students the idea that the process of writing is not a one-time shot. In addition, this strategy helps to remind the student that the writing process is not linear but circular and requires revisits to previously done work.

The second strategy that was discussed involved explicitly teaching the students text structures in the writing process and giving examples of the type of writing that was required of them. This is done so that a student could actually see what a persuasive argument (an example) looked like and could more easily understand what a thesis and supporting arguments are.

The third strategy that the authors discussed was providing responses that were related to what the students were explicitly taught when the assignment was explained to them. For example, if I used this strategy, I would need to make sure that my feedback of a student's first draft was related to what we had talked about in class. If we discussed thesis statements and supporting arguments, my comments need to relate to specifically to those areas and not criticize other areas that might need some work, like punctuation or verb tenses.

**Personal Response to the Article:** I think that this article's major point is that straightforward directions with clear examples should be used when helping children with learning disabilities to write. From the limited experiences I have had working with LD students, I believe that an approach like this would work very well. It seems very easy to get distracted by the complexities of writing, but this article reminds its reader that it does not have to be that way. I think that the suggestions of this article would work well in general classes as well. People tend to respond better to simple and straightforward thinking. These writing strategies have offered some helpful ideas to me.

Wendy Simmons

SPED5500-JC

June 26, 2002

**Title of Article:** “Crossing Content: A Strategy for Students with Learning Disabilities”

**Author:** Fay Balch Jackson

**Year of Publication:** 2002

**Reference:** *Intervention in School and Clinic* 37(2002): 279-282.

**Main Topic of Article:** The R.I.D.D. learning strategy

**Article Summary:**

In this article, Jackson advocates the employment of the R.I.D.D (Read, Imagine, Decide, Do) learning strategy by students who are learning disabled. She states that this strategy is easily taught and can be used in any content area because of its systematic approach that it gives to students who may struggle with reading. She claims that this strategy’s effectiveness has been verified by several studies done in Alabama and Nebraska.

The first step in the RIDD strategy is to have the student read the assigned passage completely. This is important because students often stop at the end of a line of print, rather than the actual end of the instructions or problem. The students should be instructed to read from the first capital to the last end mark without stopping. These instructions help students to focus on the entire task instead of focusing on one line at a time. The teacher should also make students aware that even good readers do not always know all of the words that they are reading; therefore, LD students should have a pet word, like “whatever” to insert in place of an unfamiliar word as they read.

The second step in RIDD is to have the students imagine or make a mental picture of what they have just read. The author states that visual imagery has the potential for assisting students with learning disabilities because the students are able to transform new material into meaningful visual, auditory, or kinesthetic images of information that is easier to remember and relate to.

The third step of the strategy, D, stands for “decide what to do.” The author states that when students read the entire passage without stopping and have a mental image of the situation, it is easy for them to take the next step and decide what they need to do with the information at hand. The author states that this step could also involve questioning if the students do not understand the problem.

The last “D,” “Do the work,” is the step that the students use to complete the task. The author states that this step helps students to think logically about a problem and forces the readers to understand that the process of reading and writing are two separate steps since many students are inclined to immediately start writing numbers or problem solving after they read the text.

**Personal Response:**

I thought that this strategy would be very good to use in class with all levels of students, just not learning disabled students. I believe that it could be beneficial for everyone to slow down and take a close look at an assignment as this learning strategy encourages students to do. I used this strategy myself while I was reading a short story for another class. I found myself having a better understanding of the author’s meaning and the story’s literary mechanics. Also, I can remember details more easily because of the time that I took to imagine the setting and the

characters. If this strategy helped me to improve my understanding of a story, I believe that the RIDD learning strategy could be very beneficial to a struggling reader.

I think the drawback to this strategy might surround the fact that it forces the student to slow down and think carefully about what he/she was reading. Since this takes more time, a student might get bored more easily or simply feel overwhelmed by the time that has to be given to an assignment. However, I think that this drawback could be corrected by sufficient in class modeling and discussions about the effectiveness of the strategy, perhaps by an experiment of a sort in which one half of the class used the RIDD strategy and the other half didn't. A fun activity, like a classroom competition could be used to prove that the students who used RIDD had a better recollection of the story's details through a quiz or a "bowl" type game.