Using Graphic Organizers to Aid Comprehension — Grade Two

Ohio Standards Connections

Reading Process: Concepts of Print, Comprehension Strategies and Self-Monitoring Strategies

Benchmark A
Establish a purpose for reading and use a range of reading comprehension strategies to understand literary passages and text.
(Grades Pre-Kindergarten - 3)

Indicator 5
Create and use graphic organizers, such as Venn diagrams or webs, to demonstrate comprehension.
(Grade 2)

Benchmark C
Draw conclusions from information in the text.
(Grades Pre-Kindergarten - 3)

Indicator 4
Summarize text by recalling main ideas and some supporting details.
(Grade 2)

Lesson Summary:
Students will use a graphic organizer to demonstrate comprehension of informational text.

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes.

Commentary:

Several of the teachers who pilot tested this lesson offered the same recommendation. They said this lesson would translate into greater success for children if sufficient time were given to prepare or prime them for what lay ahead. They recommended teachers start with the entire class and walk through several examples of how one kind of graphic organizer can be effectively used. Show how the organizer can filter out the main idea(s) and the details that support those main ideas from a passage of nonfiction. Show also how the organizer helps reveal relevant and irrelevant information. This preliminary work provides students with the practice they will need to become familiar with one graphic organizer at a time. It also will help make essential distinctions between terms like the "main idea" and the "title" of text or distinctions between terms like "key words" and "facts" found in text. Clarification of such terms prior to the development of summarizing and organizational skills central to this lesson will go far in laying a foundation of success for the children. In support of this lesson and a teacher's effort to "prime" his or her students for it, it is important to show examples of good summaries. It is also important to show how key words and main ideas were gleaned from a passage of nonfiction and organized using a graphic organizer.

Pre-Assessment:

The teacher reads aloud or students read independently from a short non-fiction selection at their instructional level. The students are then instructed to fill out a graphic organizer that shows how the information read can be divided between what is important and unimportant.

Scoring Guidelines:

3 = consistently organizes information with accuracy using a graphic organizer.

2 = irregularly organizes information with accuracy using a graphic organizer.

1 = minimally organizes information with accuracy using a graphic organizer.

0 = unable to organize information using a graphic organizer.

Post-Assessment:

- Students read a non-fiction text at their instructional level and fill out a cluster map (see Figure 1) summarizing the information read, citing the main ideas and the details supporting them.
- (Optional) Students draw a picture at the center of the cluster map, illustrating their summaries.

Scoring Guidelines:

3 = consistently organizes information with accuracy using a cluster map.

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0 = unable to organize information using a cluster map.

Instructional Procedures:

1. Read aloud an informational text related to a topic of study. Topics of study may be drawn from instructional units, interdisciplinary projects, or school activities. For example, if studying weather, you may choose a text about storms to read aloud. Point out key words and important facts as you read the book aloud.

2. At the conclusion of the oral reading, ask the students to state some important facts. Guide students in rephrasing their responses into statements of important facts. Write student responses on sticky notes or note cards and randomly post or tape them on chart paper or a chalkboard.

3. Display an enlarged drawing of a cluster map. With the students, determine where the sticky notes should be sorted and place them on the cluster map in the appropriate places. Once all of the sticky notes have been placed, discuss the process you used to identify key ideas and to group related sticky notes.

4. Organize students into small groups of three to four. Distribute an enlarged copy of the cluster map to each small group of students. Tell the students that they are going to read an informational text and write down main ideas, key words and important facts on sticky notes. Tell them they also will group related ideas on their cluster maps.

5. Distribute non-fiction texts and a set of sticky notes to each group.

6. Monitor groups of students as they work, providing assistance as needed (e.g., provide nonfiction text appropriate to students' instructional level).

7. Students may later use the completed cluster map when making a class presentation or writing a report.

Differentiated Instructional Support:
Instruction is differentiated according to learner needs, to help all learners either meet the intent of the specified indicator(s) or, if the indicator is already met, to advance beyond the specified indicator(s).
- Allow students who are unable to organize information using a graphic organizer to dictate information to a scribe. The scribe in turn writes it on sticky notes and then shows students where the notes should be placed on the graphic organizer.
- Assign students, who are unable to organize information using a graphic organizer, to a team as observers.
- Pair students who are unable to organize information using a graphic organizer with other students who are able and have them work together.
- Instruct students who are quick to grasp the use of a cluster map on the use of a more complex graphic organizer called a Spider Map (see Figure 2).

Extension:
This idea is for all students to continue learning on this topic - in or outside of class.

- Have students use a different graphic organizer but their same sticky notes. This will extend their knowledge about arranging and organizing research data collected.

Homework Options and Home Connections:
Students can practice organizing information using a graphic organizer in a variety of ways.

- Students can gather information from their teachers and classmates about their favorite food, color and animal and complete a hierarchy chart (see Figure 3).
- Students, with the help of their parents and/or other family members can make a Family Tree. Provide students with a copy of Figure 4: Family Tree; Blackline Master 1: Family Tree Worksheet; Blackline Master 2: Family Tree Labels and Blackline Master 3: Tree. The students and their family members can complete the graphic organizer worksheets modifying them to reflect the composition of the family.

Interdisciplinary Connections:
One science academic content standard, Scientific Ways of Knowing, has a Benchmark (C) for the kindergarten through second grade band that states children must, "Recognize that diverse groups of people contribute to our understanding of the natural world." A social studies academic content standard, People and Societies, has a Benchmark (B) for the kindergarten through second grade band that states children must, "Identify ways that different cultures within the U.S. and the world have shaped our national heritage." These two benchmarks share a key concept of "diversity" and performance expectations that diversity can be recognized and identified. Both of these performance expectations can be demonstrated through the use of graphic organizers.

Technology Connections:
Teachers and students can also use concept-mapping software for this lesson. Doing so provides an environment that enables learners to continually reflect on and reconsider the relationships that they depict in their diagrams. Teachers and students can easily add concepts and links to a map, move these elements around within that diagram and delete components of the map as they revise their understandings of concepts and the relationships that exist between them.

- This software can be used to complete graphic organizers as a class - the computer attached to a projector can enable the entire class to view the screen - or by indiviual students.
- Support students who are just learning to use the software using a variety of strategies. For example, use the software first with the class until students become familiar with its functions. Provide students with templates to which they add information, or pair students with others more comfortable with the software.

Materials/Resources Needed:

For the teacher: A pencil, an enlarged drawing of a graphic organizer (e.g., Figures 1 and 2), an informational text related to a topic or unit of study and a collection of non-fiction texts at varying reading levels.

For the students: Pencils, copies of graphic organizers, sticky notes and informational text.

General Tips:
- Create a learning center in your classroom devoted to graphic organizers so children might use the tool for other investigations and assignments.
- Use three-dimensional items to build and manipulate a graphic organizer: colored yarn, hula hoops, steps, crocheted web, etc.

Attachments:
- Cluster Map
- Spider Map
- Hierarchy Diagram
- Family Tree Diagram
- Blackline Master #1
- Blackline Master #2
- Blackline Master #3