

Description, Rationale, Instructional Moves, and References for Generating Interactions between Schemata and Text (GIST)

Description

A summary is a synthesis of important ideas in a text. Summarizing requires students to determine what is important in what they are reading, to condense this information, and to put it into their own words. Instruction in summarizing helps students:

- identify or generate main ideas
- connect the main or central ideas
- eliminate redundant and unnecessary information; and
- remember what they read.

National Institute for Literacy, 2001.

GIST (Generating Interactions between Schemata and Text) is a summarizing strategy to use to assist students' comprehension and summary writing skills. Students use higher-order thinking skills to analyze and synthesize what they have read. The summary is usually limited to no more than fifteen words; therefore, the students must analyze ways to delete non-essential information and use their own words to summarize the main idea or "the gist" of the selection.

Cunningham, 1982.

Rationale

[no rationale provided]

Instructional Moves

1. Select paragraphs (each of which appears to have a gist) of three to five sentences in length at the appropriate level of difficulty for the students with whom the procedure is to be used.
2. Present the first sentence of one paragraph to the students (on a chalkboard, an overhead transparency, or a chart). On a chalkboard, put 15 blanks. Tell the students to read the sentence so that they can retell it in their own words in one statement of 15 or fewer words.
3. When the students have finished reading the sentence, cover it. Say, "I asked you to read the sentence so that you could retell it in a statement of 15 or fewer words. Who can start?" Writing one word per blank, allow the students as a group to dictate and edit the statement until it is complete. At any time that the students wish to see the original sentence, show it to them, but they must dictate and edit from memory.



4. Uncover the second sentence of the paragraph (leaving the first sentence uncovered). Erase the chalkboard and put 15 blanks. Tell the students to read the two sentences so they can retell them in their own words in one statement of 15 or fewer words.
5. When the students have finished reading the sentences, cover them. Say, "I asked you to read the sentences so that you could retell them in a statement of 15 or fewer words. Who can start?" Use the same means for leading them to construct their statement as were used in step 3.
6. Continue this procedure, adding one sentence at a time, until the students have produced a single statement of 15 or fewer words that they feel captures the essence of the paragraph. Use this strategy with as many different paragraphs as necessary until you feel the students are becoming adept at efficiently producing gist statements for paragraphs as a group. At this point, uncover the entire paragraph at the beginning of the lesson and have the group construct a gist statement for the whole paragraph without building up to it sentence-by-sentence. When the students as a group become adept at producing gist statements for paragraphs presented as wholes, then have the students individually produce GIST statements for paragraphs presented as wholes.

Cunningham, 1982.

References

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