

Friends
come with
all types of



TOPIC: Strategies – We All Need Them!

Help your students explore the value of using strategies to learn and remember information for all learners, whether they have disabilities or not.

GRADE: 5

TIME: 30 minutes (or can be divided into two 15-minute segments over two days)

OBJECTIVES: To help students understand that to be successful in school we *all* use strategies to compensate for weaknesses. People with disabilities and those without are all helped by strategies because we all have challenges as well as strengths.

MATERIALS:

- Pictures of students using strategies (see accompanying photos)
- Paper and pencils for small groups.
- Interactive whiteboard, if available

ACTIVITY

Part 1 (15 minutes)

1. Review with students the Cromwell Center classroom program exercise “Strategies make it easier to learn” that they participated in recently. Remind them that:
 - Strategies are used by people to help them understand information and solve problems.
 - A learning strategy is a person's approach to learning and using information.
2. Ask students, “Does anyone remember some of the strategies that we talked about during the Cromwell Center program?” If you choose, you can write answers on the board.
3. Divide students into small groups of 3-4.
4. Hand each group a piece of paper and pencil and designate someone as a “recorder.”
5. Tell students: “Now I am going to show you some pictures. Please look at the pictures and think about what strategies you see being used in the pictures.” (Photos can be projected on an interactive whiteboard if available.)
6. While students are discussing each picture, write the following on the board:
 - *Remembering information*
 - *Understanding what you are reading*

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- *Thinking of/brainstorming ideas to write about*

7. After showing each picture, ask students to chat with one another about what strategies they see being used and have the recorder write down the ideas. Then have each group take turns sharing a strategy that they see until no more ideas are given. Show how the next picture and repeat the process.
 8. After talking about strategies in the photos, tell students to each share with their small group about strategies they find most helpful in school for:
 - Remembering information
 - Understanding what you are reading
 - Thinking of/brainstorming ideas to write about
 9. Ask students to share with the class a few strategies that help them remember or understand. Tell them that we all use strategies to help us learn and that sometimes children with disabilities need extra strategies. However, there are many strategies that we all benefit from, such as those in the photos (calculator, graphic organizers, mnemonic devices for remembering reading comprehension strategies, etc.)
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Part 2 (15 minutes)

1. Tell students that they will be doing an activity to help them learn some strategies to remember information. Write the words “*Mnemonic device*” on the board and ask if anyone has an idea what this means.
2. Solicit a few responses. Tell students that a mnemonic device is a technique that helps people remember information. The word mnemonic is Greek for “memory”. There are many different types of mnemonic devices and today we will practice two of them.
3. VISUALIZATION:
 - Write the word “visualization” on the board.
 - Ask students, “What does this word make you think of?” (Responses should include picturing something or visual = seeing).
 - Explain that most people remember images better than things they hear or read. Explain that sometimes in school, students have to memorize information, especially for tests. Using visualization to help remember tricky information can help you remember it better later on. For example, often students need to learn state capitals.
 - Ask, “Who can tell me the capital of Kentucky?” See if anyone knows it is Frankfort. Ask students, “Raise your hand if you have studied state capitals before.” Point out that many of them have, but not too many remember that the capital of Kentucky is Frankfort. However, visualization can help you remember tricky capitals longer and better than just repeating it over and over when studying.
 - Write *Frankfort, Kentucky* on the board.

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4. VISUALIZATION IN ACTION

Explain that you will help them memorize this state capital by using visualization.

- Explain that the first step is to remembering Frankfort, Kentucky is to picture a word that sounds like Frankfort. “To me, the word Frankfort makes me picture hot dogs, like frankfurters. So I picture a hot dog, or even better, lots of hot dogs. The more of something, the more memorable it will be.”
- “When I think of the word Kentucky. It sort of sounds like “King Tut” with an e sound, so I picture King Tut.” [Here images could be projected on the white board of a hot dog and King Tut].
- Then, to make it more memorable, we have to link the two in a silly way, the sillier the better. “I picture King Tut stuffing hot dogs into his mouth, his pockets, and his Egyptian pyramid. Whatever makes you think of King Tut!
- Erase the board.

Explain that visualization can also help you remember tricky spelling words.

- Ask students, “How do you spell *cemetery*?” Call a couple of students to come up and write it on the board. It is likely that a student will misspell the word as “cemetary.” “Are you all sure it’s correct? Did you know that this word actually ends with *ery*?”
- Ask students to picture a creepy scene with a cemetery. Ask them to picture a child who finds cemeteries very scary and yells “Eeeeeeeee! Whenever he/she sees one. [On a white board, you could project a graphic of a girl by a cemetery with a speech bubble yelling “Eeeeeee!”]
- Tell students, “If you picture this boy or girl yelling “Eeeeeee”, then you can remember that the ending of cemetery has an *e* and not an *a*. Do you think this will help you remember that?

5. ACROSTIC:

- Write the word *acrostic* on the board. Ask students if they have any idea what this means. Students may remember writing acrostic poems using their names. Explain that an acrostic is a poem or sentence created using the first letters of something you want to remember.
- Ask, “Who can tell us the planets in order?” Generally this may be difficult for students unless they recently studied it. (Answer is: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune).
- Say, “If you were being tested on the planets, it may help you to remember them in order by using an acrostic.”
- On the board write: *My Very Eager Mother Just Served Us Nachos*. Explain that the first letter of each word stands for a planet name. You can underline the capital letters for reinforcement. “For example, the M in My stands for Mercury.” Call on students fill in each the rest of the planet names and write them under each letter.
- Ask students,
 - Do you think these memory techniques make it easier to remember this info if you are studying for a test?

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- Do you think some people need more strategies to remember or learn things than others? Is that good or bad?
- Is there anything wrong with needing to use strategies to succeed in school or a job?
- Do you think we *all* can benefit from using strategies to make tasks easier? Does it mean we have a disability if we need to use them? If not, why not?

AN IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE CROMWELL CENTER

Dear Teacher or Guidance Counselor:

Your brief feedback on this or on any of our other lesson plans is very important. It will enable us to share results with our grant funders and help obtain future funding, and any suggestions for improvements will help us fine tune the activities to best meet your needs.

To provide this valuable feedback, please go to the form on the bottom of this page on our website: <http://cromwellcenter.org/teacher-resources/>.

Or, if you prefer, you can e-mail your comments to sgreenwood@cromwellcenter.org.

Thank you!