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2st. Quarter

School Improvement Team Newsletter

DDESS-PR / AES

** May all your dreams turn into reality and all your efforts into great achievements this New Year, 2009! **

Happy Holidays from SIT

Building Academic Vocabulary

We as educators know there are student factors outside of school that have a big influence on how students succeed in school, such as home life and childhood experiences. Research has shown that understanding academic vocabulary is a strong indicator of how well students learn subject area content.

Six Steps to Teaching Academic Vocabulary based on Robert J. Marzano's work:

1. The teacher provides a description of the term.
2. The student restates the description of the term in their own words.
3. The student creates a nonlinguistic representation of the term.
4. Periodically have the students do activities that help them add to their knowledge of the term.
5. Periodically have the students discuss the terms with one another.
6. Periodically involve the students in games that allow them to play with the terms.

Book Fair
October 17—24, 2008

Background Knowledge

Research suggests that, aside from socio-economic factors, one of the best predictors of student learning is what the student already knows before studying new material, or how much background knowledge they have.

Background knowledge has been described as the key ingredient to reading comprehension. Background knowledge or prior knowledge is quite simply what someone already knows about a subject that will help him gain new information.

Children begin to develop their background knowledge long before they enter school. Their interactions with parents and other caregivers help to establish what they think about the world and the things in it, including reading, school and studying. Children who are read to about a lot of different subjects, and who are engaged in conversation on a regular basis, about a lot of different topics, tend to have higher background knowledge.

For example, if you read a book about World War I, your prior knowledge about the War will help you understand what you're reading. Even if the book introduces new concepts, it will be easier for you to understand those concepts than if you have no previous knowledge about World War I. The same is true for children. When they are introduced to new information at school, what they already know about the subject helps them to learn the new information that is being taught.

So, as a parent you may ask, "How do I build my child's background knowledge?" Well, that can be done in several ways. One way is to build the knowledge before your child needs it, by exposing him to different things, talking to him about new ideas and reading lots of different material either with him or to him on a regular basis. Another way is to give your child the background knowledge that he may be missing, prior to him learning a new concept in school. For example, if your child is going to begin a lesson about the respiratory system, you can build his/her background knowledge by helping him connect the term respiratory system with the lungs and the act of breathing, by showing him pictures of the respiratory system, or by reviewing new vocabulary words and their meanings.

In education, background knowledge and a child's ability to comprehend what is read is profound. If your child doesn't have background knowledge on a topic that is being studied, then you should do everything possible to build that knowledge. That will lead to much greater success in comprehension and school.

Resources:

http://literacytoolbelt.tripod.com/The%20Fab%20Five/build

http://www.littlecomptonschools.org/main/sit/sit.asp

AES Communities: developing successful, lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

AES SIT 3 Steps:

1. AES accomplished:

- Selected School Improvement team representative from grade levels and departments
- Organized the SIT committees according to AdvancED (Accreditation Agency for the School)
- Integrate Fourth grade teachers and staff into our School Improvement Team-SIP
- Collected spring "07-08" Math Inventory data from Pre-K to 3rd, and Developmentally Reading Assessment—DRA from K to 4th.
- Analyzed end of year 08 TerraNova Test-TNT data for reading/math for third grades
- Selected Building Academic Vocabulary (BAV) as our main vocabulary intervention
- Selected Problem Solving as our main Math intervention

2. AES working on:

- Researching and review interventions to target our Reading and Math goals
- Organizing the documentation (practices and artifacts) for each of the 7 Standards for AdvancED
- Developing/establishing common assessments for each of our goals to document results and show student growth
- Analyzing spring 08 data for DRA and Math Inventory PreK to 4th grade
- Administering SRI/DRA test in grades 1 to 4 and analyzing SRI/DRA results
- Analyzing SRI/DRA for continuous profiling
- BAV: choosing the words per grade level, and developing the interventions and steps for each grade level from PreK to 4th grade
- Refining the steps for Problem Solving

3. AES upcoming task:

- Provide results-based staff development for both interventions.
- Implementation of BAV starting January 12, 2009 for 15 weeks.
- Problem Solving develop assessments to keep track of students achievement.

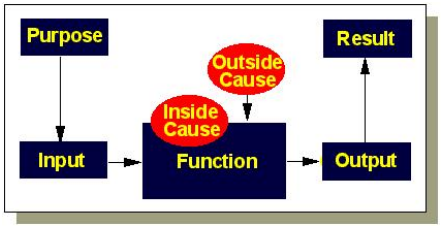
Non-Violence Silent Walk
October 27 2008

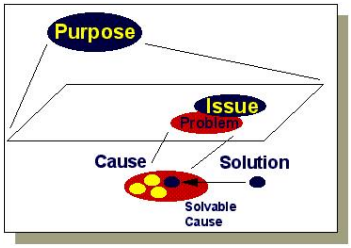
Problem Solving

Problem solving forms part of thinking. Considered the most complex of all intellectual functions, problem solving has been defined as higher-order cognitive process that requires the modulation and control of more routine or fundamental skills (Goldstein & Levin). It occurs if an organism or an artificial intelligence system does not know how to proceed from a given state to a desired goal state. It is part of the larger problem process that includes problem finding and problem shaping.

There are many approaches to problem solving, depending on the nature of the problem and the people involved in the problem. The more traditional, rational approach is typically used and involves, eg, clarifying description of the problem, analyzing causes, identifying alternatives, assessing each alternative, choosing one, implementing it, and evaluating whether the problem was solved or not.

Problem solving is an integral part of all mathematics learning. In everyday life and in the workplace, being able to solve problems can lead to great advantages. However, solving problems is not only a goal of learning mathematics but also a major means of doing so. Problem solving should not be an isolated part of the curriculum but should involve all Content Standards.





** December is when we gather families together, remember friends, and indulge in the Holidays spirit. **

AES Vision :

AES Communities Investing in the Success of All Students!

AES Mission:

"AES Communities: Developing successful, lifelong learners and responsible Citizens"

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