MODULE 7

Content Learning

LEARNING TO ACHIEVE

Objective and Guiding Questions

★ Objective
  ▪ Identify instructional approaches that can help adults with learning disabilities (LD) learn content from written materials

★ Guiding Questions
  1. What is content learning?
  2. What are content learning challenges that adults with LD may face?
  3. How can explicit instruction support content learning for adults with LD?
  4. What role can graphic organizers play in content instruction and learning?

Guiding Question 1

What is content learning?

Content Learning

★ Content learning is the acquisition of information from written material

★ Examples of content learning include:
- Studying for an exam
- Preparation for a degree or credential
- Citizenship tests
- Employment manuals

How Is Content Learned?

★ Content learning involves higher order thinking skills, such as:
- Comparing and contrasting
- Differentiating between facts and opinions
- Making inferences
- Elaborating on content
- Summarizing
- Interpreting
- Using knowledge of genre characteristics

Guiding Question 2

What are content learning challenges that adults with LD may face?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Challenges

★ Characteristics of text

★ Characteristics of individuals

The quick brown fox

jumps over the lazy dog.

Characteristics of Text

1. Amount of information
2. Organization of information
3. Difficulty of concepts
4. Difficulty of vocabulary
5. Text structure

The quick brown fox

jumps over the lazy dog.

Text Example

Relativistic Jets are linear features originating very close to the super massive black hole (SMBH) at the center of some quasars and radio galaxies. The commonly accepted model consists of two oppositely directed jets, although in many cases only one side is easily detected. There is still some uncertainty as to their basic composition; all we really know is that they act as conduits for transporting energy over intergalactic distances which in some cases exceeds a million light years.
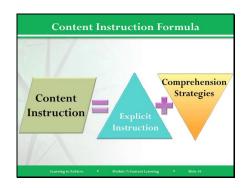
http://www.cfa.harvard.edu/hea/ea/blazars.html

Characteristics of Individuals

1. Reading comprehension
2. Listening comprehension
3. Working memory

Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, & Barnes, 2007

Characteristics of Individuals (continued)

4. Higher order processes
   - Inferring
   - Comprehension monitoring
   - Genre sensitivity

Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, & Barnes, 2007

The Desired Result

Working memory

Higher order processes

Listening comprehension

Reading comprehension

1. Amount of information
2. Organization of information
3. Difficulty of concepts
4. Difficulty of vocabulary
5. Text structure

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Guiding Question 3

What instructional principles
support content learning?

Content Instruction Formula

Content Instruction = Explicit Instruction + Comprehension Strategies

Explicit Instruction Overview

1. Provide clear explanations
2. Model the learning process (I DO)
3. Engage in scaffolded practice (WE DO and YOU DO)
4. Provide elaborated feedback

Hock, 2009; Swanson, 2009

Provide Clear Explanations

1. **Provide clear explanations**
   a. **Introduce the strategy and its steps**
   b. **Make sure the student has notes about the new strategy**
   c. **Discuss rationale**
   d. **Use learner-friendly language**
   e. **Connect with previous learning**
2. Model the learning process (I DO)
3. Engage in scaffolded practice (WE DO)
   Engage in scaffolded practice (YOU DO)
4. Provide elaborated feedback that is immediate, positive and corrective throughout

Model the Learning Process

1. Provide clear explanations
2. **Model the learning process (I DO)**
   a. **Model the skill by doing – correctly, clearly, concisely**
   b. **Model using 'think aloud'**
3. Engage in scaffolded practice (WE DO)
   Engage in scaffolded practice (YOU DO)
4. Provide elaborated feedback that is immediate, positive and corrective throughout

Engage in Scaffolded Practice

1. Provide clear explanations
2. Model the learning process (I DO)
3. **Engage in scaffolded practice (WE DO)**
   a. **Guide practice with feedback**
   b. **Check on understanding and use of skills**
   c. **Engage in short practice exercises with feedback**
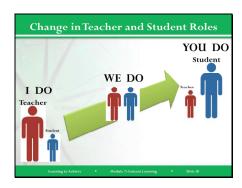   d. **Implement co-operative learning practices when appropriate**
   Engage in scaffolded practice (YOU DO)
   a. **Allow independent practice**
4. Provide elaborated feedback that is immediate, positive and corrective throughout
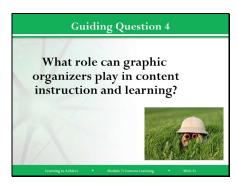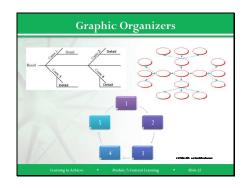
Provide Elaborated Feedback
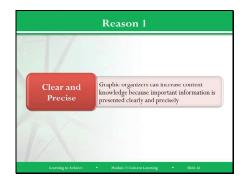
1. Provide clear explanations
2. Model the learning process (I DO)
3. Engage in scaffolded practice (WE DO)
   Engage in scaffolded practice (YOU DO)
4. **Provide elaborated feedback that is immediate, positive and corrective throughout**

Change in Teacher and Student Roles

YOU DO
Student

WE DO

I DO
Teacher

Teacher

Student

Guiding Question 4

What role can graphic organizers play in content instruction and learning?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Graphic Organizers

Reasons to Use Graphic Organizers

Reason 1

Attributes Organizer

Journal
Exercise
Time with Friends

Ways to Reduce Stress

Favorite Hobby
Read a Book

Yoga/Meditation
Nap
Watch TV

Reason 2

Decrease Literacy Demands

Graphic organizers combine showing with telling. They decrease literacy demands while structuring higher order thinking

---

Time Sequence

1 → 2 → 3 → 4 →

Result ← 7 ← 6 ← 5

Concept Map

Branches of US Government

Legislative | Executive | Judicial

Learning to Achieve • Module 7: Content Learning • Slide 28

Concept Map (continued)

Branches of US Government

Legislative | Executive | Judicial

Learning to Achieve • Module 7: Content Learning • Slide 29

Summarize and Compare Matrix

President	Party	Prior Position	Challenge Faced
Obama	Democrat	Senator	Economy
Bush	Republican	Governor	Terrorism attack
Clinton	Democrat	Governor	Impeachment trial

Learning to Achieve • Module 7: Content Learning • Slide 30

Reason 3

Use Flexibly

Graphic organizers can be used flexibly
- Before reading – introduce key concepts
- During reading – to provide a focus
- After reading – to organize writing or discussions

Cause/Effect: Version 1

Cause/Effect: Version 2

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____
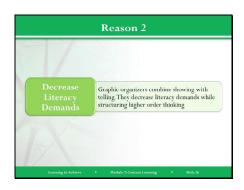
_____

_____
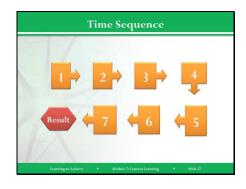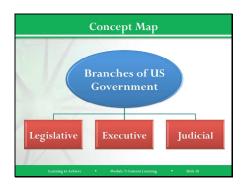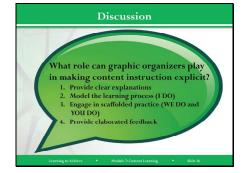
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Activity: Graphic Organizer – Part 1

Purpose

★ To practice preparing a graphic organizer

Tasks

1. Break into assigned groups.
2. Identify a group facilitator to: a) ensure equal participation, b) keep time, c) ensure that the group finishes the task.
3. Read the directions for your group and the reading passage on global warming (see appendix).
4. Work as a group to produce at least two filled in graphic organizers for the reading.
5. Identify two group members who will present and explain how you decided on the information you put in your graphic organizer.

Activity: Graphic Organizer – Part 2

Purpose

★ To share how different graphic organizers can be used in content learning

Tasks

1. Identify a representative from your table to 'send' to another table to show and explain how you developed your graphic organizer.
2. This representative will take the completed graphic organizer and move to the table identified on the chart paper.
3. When I call time the representative will have 5 minutes to explain the information on the graphic organizer and how it was developed.
4. When the representative has finished, a spokesperson for the receiving table will explain and show their table's graphic organizer to the representative.
5. After both organizers have been described, discuss the merits of each.

Discussion

What role can graphic organizers play in making content instruction explicit?

1. Provide clear explanations
2. Model the learning process (I DO)
3. Engage in scaffolded practice (WE DO and YOU DO)
4. Provide elaborated feedback

Review and Application

★ Review
  - Guiding Question 1: What is content learning?
  - Guiding Question 2: What are content learning challenges that adults with LD may face?

★ Application
  - Guiding Question 3: How can explicit instruction support content learning for adults with LD?
  - Guiding Question 4: What role can graphic organizers play in content instruction and learning?

Resources

Division on Learning Disabilities and the Division on Research of the Council for Exceptional Children (2007). A focus on graphic organizers: Power tool for teaching students with learning disabilities. *Current Practice Alerts, 13.* 1-4. www.TeachingLD.org.

Ellis, E. (2008). *Makes sense strategies 4 learning (CD).* Lillian, A.L.: Masterminds Publishing. www.graphicorganizers.com. The graphic organizers used in the activity are used with the permission of Dr. Ellis.

Fletcher, J.M., Lyon, G.R., Fuchs, L.S., & Barnes, M.A. (2007). *Learning disabilities: From identification to intervention.* New York: Guilford.

Hock, M. (2009). Teaching methods: Instructional methods and arrangements effective for adults with learning disabilities. In J.M. Taymans (Ed.), *Learning to achieve: A review of the research literature on serving adults with learning disabilities.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.

Swanson, H.L. (2009). Assessment of adults with learning disabilities: A quantitative synthesis of similarities and differences. In J.M. Taymans (Ed.), *Learning to achieve: A review of the research literature on serving adults with learning disabilities.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.