



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?

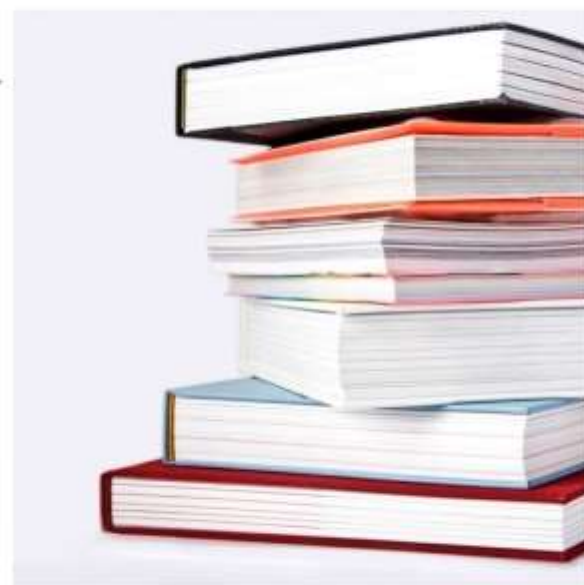
Guiding Question 1

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

*The quick brown fox
jumps over the lazy dog.*

- ★ Characteristics of individuals



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

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

Working
memory



Higher order
processes

Listening
comprehension

Reading
comprehension

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)

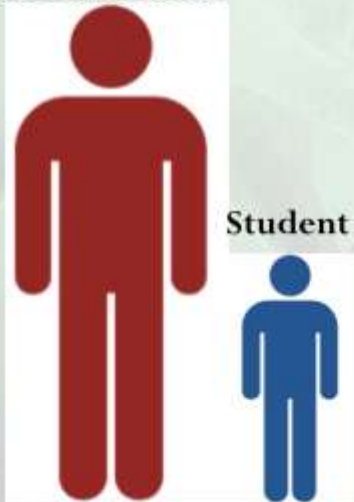
- a. **Allow independent practice**
4. Provide elaborated feedback that is immediate, positive and corrective throughout

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

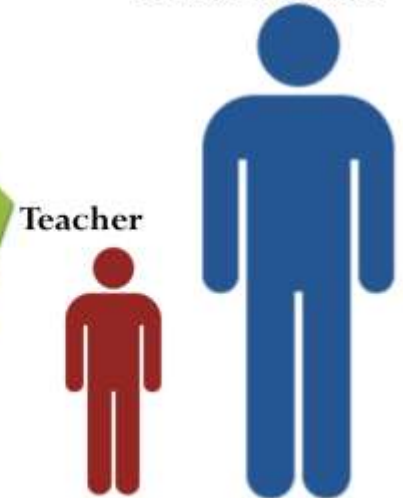
I DO
Teacher



WE DO



YOU DO
Student

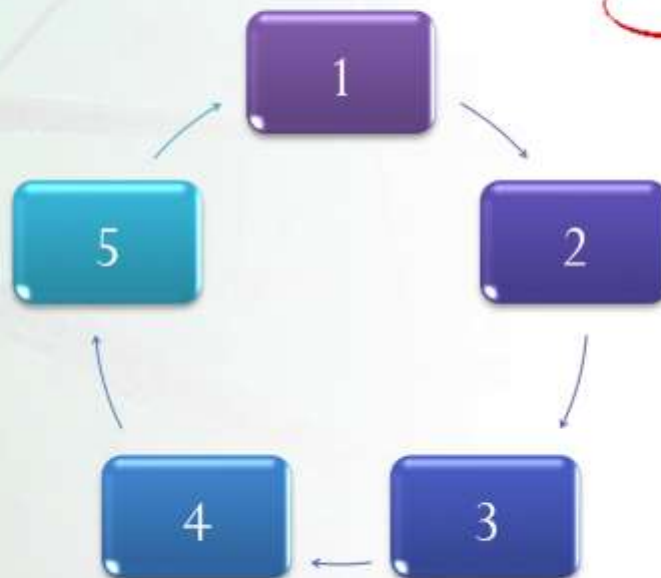
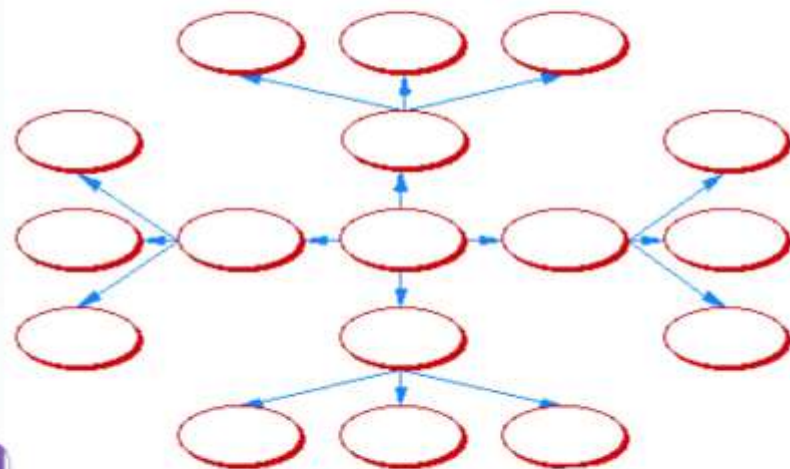
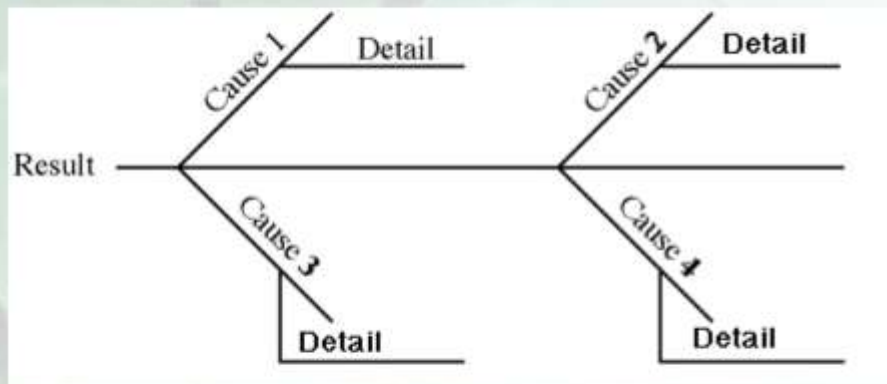


Guiding Question 4

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



Graphic Organizers



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Reasons to Use Graphic Organizers

Clear and Precise

- Graphic organizers can increase content knowledge because important information is presented clearly and precisely

Decrease Literacy Demands

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

Use Flexibly

- Graphic organizers can be used flexibly

Reason 1

Clear and Precise

Graphic organizers can increase content knowledge because important information is presented clearly and precisely

Attributes Organizer

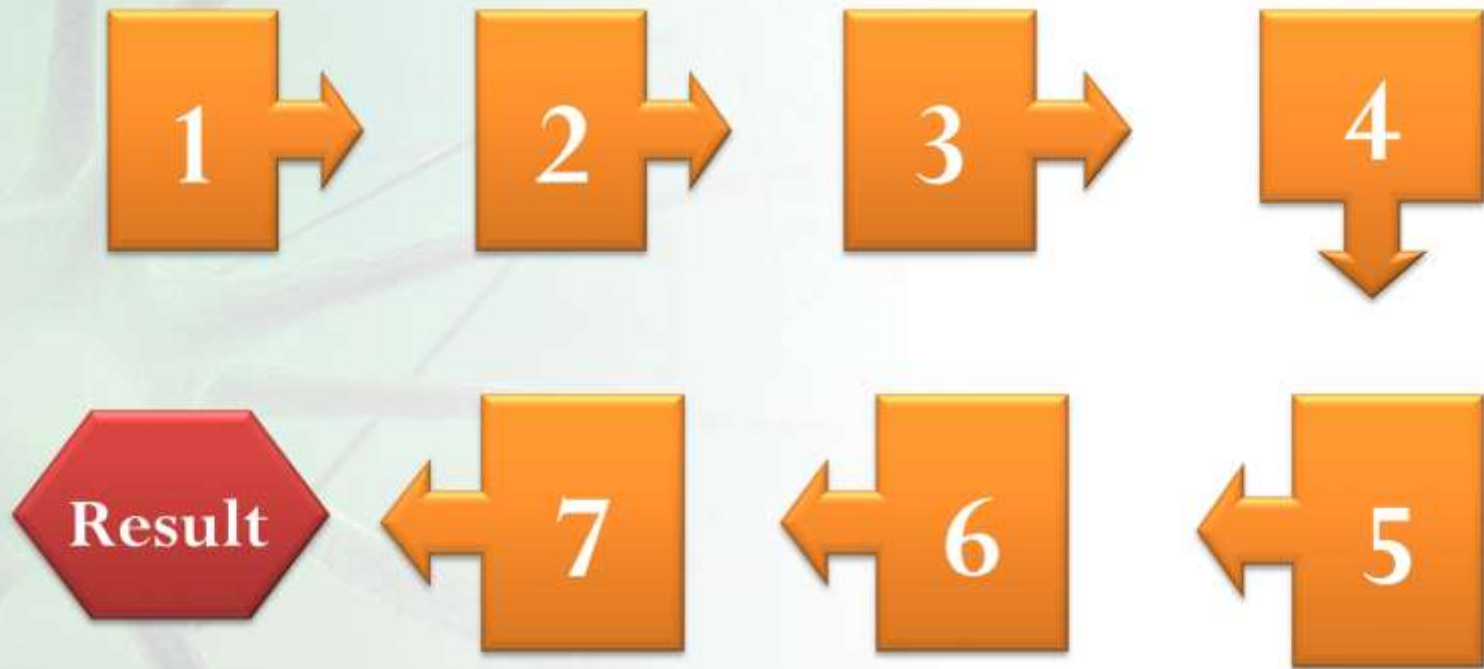


Reason 2

Decrease Literacy Demands

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

Time Sequence



Concept Map

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graph TD; A([Branches of US Government]) --- B[Legislative]; A --- C[Executive]; A --- D[Judicial];
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Branches of US Government

Legislative

Executive

Judicial

Concept Map (continued)

Branches of US Government



Legislative






Executive



Judicial

Summarize and Compare Matrix

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

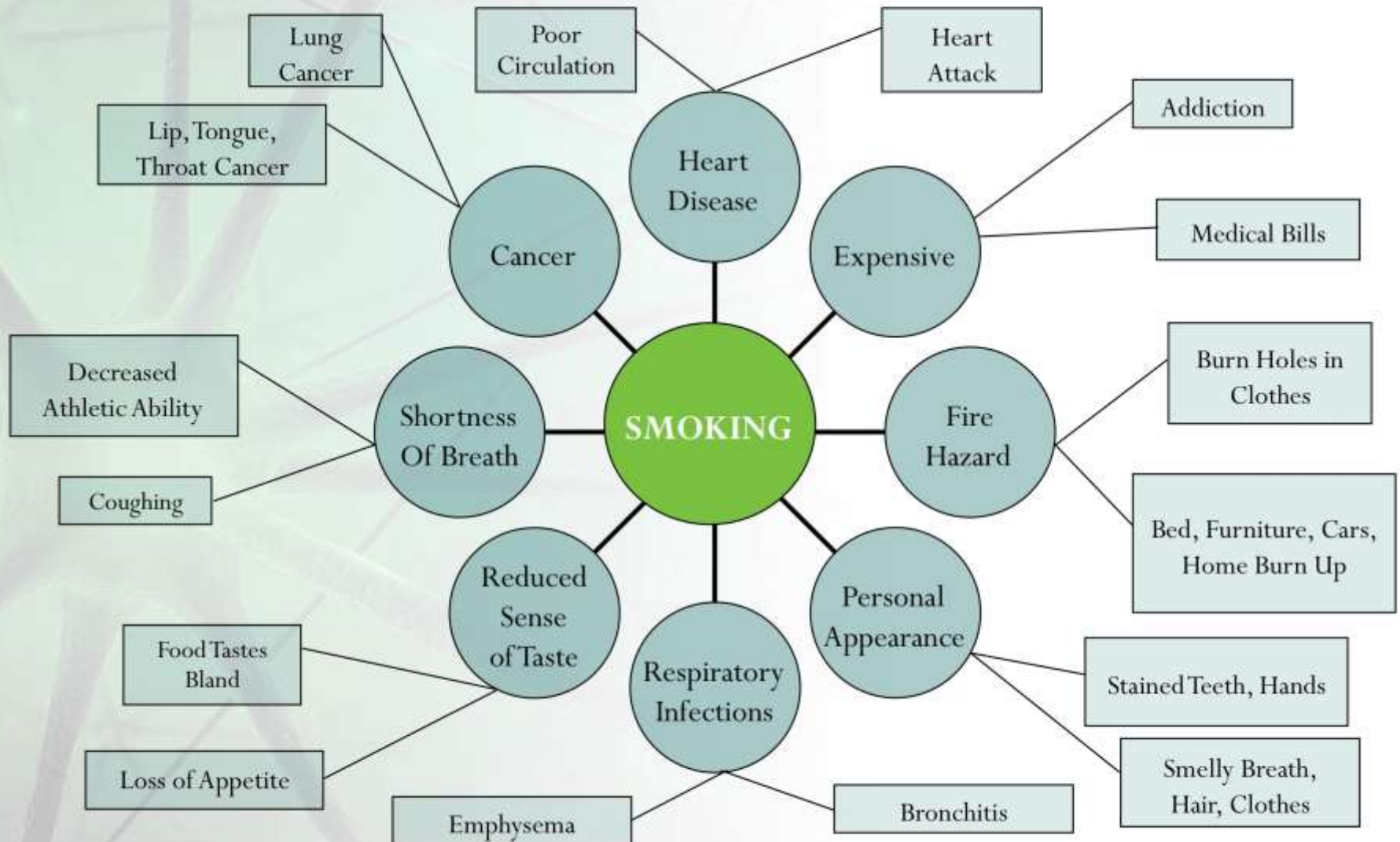
Reason 3

Use Flexibly

Graphic organizers can be used flexibly

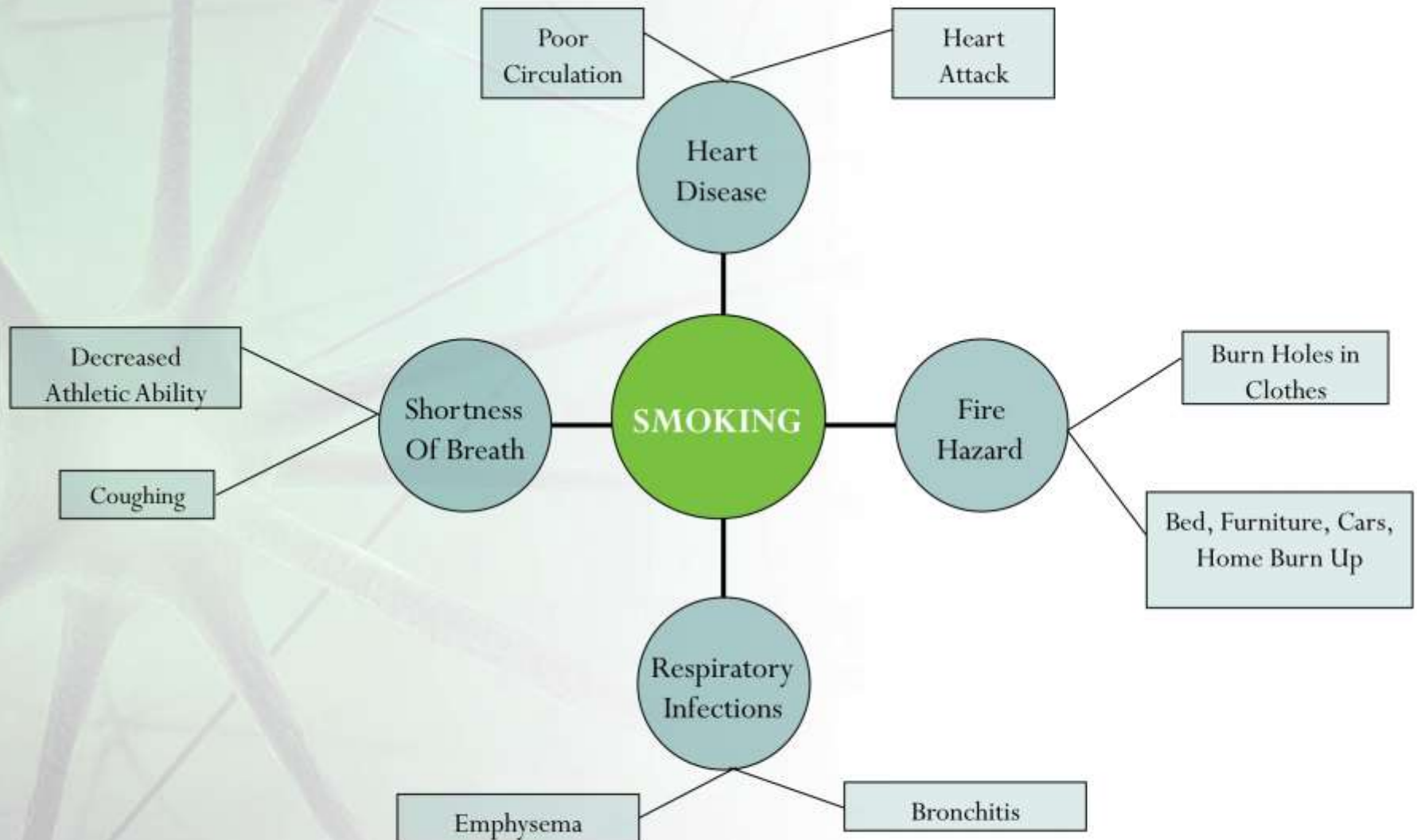
- Before reading – introduce key concepts
- During reading – to provide a focus
- After reading – to organize writing or discussions

Cause/Effect: Version 1



© 2002 Edwin S. Ellis Masterminds Publishing graphicorganizers.com

Cause/Effect: Version 2



© 2002 Edwin S. Ellis Masterminds Publishing graphicorganizers.com

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.
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- 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.
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