

## Using Cognitive Mapping to Teach Reading Comprehension

**Objective:** To use the TRAVEL cognitive mapping strategy to successfully map important components of reading passages and improve literal and/or inferential comprehension

### Setting and Materials

Setting: Middle school classroom

Materials: Passages (with at least 400 words on various topics) and the Fry Readability Graph to assign appropriate readability levels to passages

### Content Taught

#### *Cognitive Mapping Strategy*

#### TRAVEL

1. Topic: Write down the topic and circle it.
2. Read: Read the paragraph.
3. Ask: Ask what the main idea and three details are and write them down.
4. Verify: Verify the main idea by circling it and linking its details.
5. Examine: Examine the next paragraph and Ask and Verify again.
6. Link: When finished with the story, link all circles.

### Teaching Procedures

1. Talk about importance of accurately comprehending material with students. Ask students why comprehension is important and wait for student responses (e.g., “being able to understand what is going on,” “helps you know stuff for test,” “so you can remember the information for later”).
2. Describe and model the cognitive mapping strategy TRAVEL and inform them that this strategy can help improve their comprehension of material read.
3. Talk about when this strategy might be appropriate to use (e.g., “when you read the newspaper”, “when you read your history book,” “when you read magazines”).
4. Ask students to think of situations when it would not be appropriate to use this strategy and wait for student responses with supported reasons.
5. Hand out the TRAVEL strategy cue card defining main ideas and details, and sample reading passage.
6. Use the cue sheet to discuss the main idea and review how to find the main ideas and details of a paragraph.
7. Use the “think aloud” technique to model the cognitive mapping strategy with sample reading passage and embed direct instructional techniques to ensure students maintain high on-task rates and responses as you think aloud.
8. Allow students to sit quietly and study mapping strategy once you are finished modeling strategy. Tell students to study concept mapping strategy for homework.
9. Assess students on their knowledge of TRAVEL strategy when they return to school by having them independently recite the strategy.

**Evaluation**

Students should independently recite and use the concept mapping strategy (TRAVEL) with 100% accuracy in 3 out of 5 trials.

**Lesson Plan Based on:**

Boyle, J. (1996). The effects of a cognitive mapping strategy on the literal and inferential comprehension of students with mild disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 19, 86-98.