

# Demonstrating Reading Comprehension



Students who struggle with demonstrating reading comprehension often exhibit individual strengths and weaknesses in a variety of cognitive processes. Some of these weaknesses deal with internally processing information in ways that support higher order thinking skills. Some of these weaknesses deal with being able to express or demonstrate what is understood. The following are some areas to consider.

Taken from the NICHY Reading & Learning Disabilities Briefing Paper:

<http://www.nichcy.org/informationresources/documents/nichcy%20pubs/fs17.pdf>  
<http://www.nichcy.org>

**Input** – the process of recording information from the senses in the brain



- *Visual perception problems*: could include differentiating foreground and background, impact of colors
- *Difficulties with size, shape, and placement*: could include letter reversals/rotations, skipping words/lines of text, rereading the same text
- *Auditory perception problems*: may confuse subtle differences in sounds and confuse words and phrases that sound alike

**Integration** – the process of interpreting information



- *Sequencing*: may recount a story by starting in the middle, may reverse the order of letters in a word, may change the order of words in a phrase, may have problems with the order of any sequence of individual units/bits of information
- *Abstraction*: may have problems inferring meaning, problems generalizing information from a story or article, problems understanding jokes, puns, or idioms
- *Organization*: may have problems moving from related bits of information to a coherent concept, may have problems processing facts to answer general questions

**Memory** – the process of mentally storing/recording information for later retrieval



- *Short-term memory*: can include difficulty maintaining initial memory long enough to move the information into long-term memory
- *Long-term memory*: long-term memory may be easily “depressed” or weakened through processing new related memories (see section on long-term potentiation and long-term depression)

**Output** – the process of expressive (and written) language



- *Spontaneous language*: self-selected topics generally demonstrate those subjects/topics the student has organized their thoughts around and selected the appropriate words to use; often resulting in a coherent conversation or report but not on assigned topics or relevant curricular information
- *Demand language*: when a student is faced with an assignment or requirement to discuss or write on a topic that is not already internally organized they may pause, ask for clarification or more information, give confusing responses or answers, or have problems finding the right words to use

Instructional strategies can point to instructional scaffolds, accommodations, and even assistive technology needs. If a student requires an instructional strategy, such as advanced organizers, and eventually becomes successful without that strategy then the student has internalized the process. But if a student always requires a particular strategy, such as an advanced organizer, to be successful then that strategy may point to the need for an ongoing accommodation. If this is the case then it is important to teach the student how to become independent in selecting and using that strategy and any related technology tools, for example, teaching the student strategies and tools to visually mark or highlight portions of text, create concept maps, develop conversation guides, etc.

Study Guides Strategies - <http://www.studygs.net/> . extensive collection of study and learning



### **Input Accommodations / Strategies**

- Text adjustment (alter font, font size, serif vs. sans serif, spacing between words, spacing between lines)
- Color coding (adjust background/foreground colors, use color overlays)
- Visually marking/highlighting sections of text
- Reading Guides
- Alternative media (text-to-speech, graphic clues)
- Audio files EQ'd for clarity



### **Integration Accommodations / Strategies**

- Graphic Organizers (including advanced organizers)
- Concept Maps / Mind Maps
- Timelines
- Outlines
- Illustrations
- Plays / Comics / Role Play



### **Memory Accommodations / Strategies**

- Journals
- Illustrations / Graphics / Audio
- Image Albums
- Repeated Processing Activities
- Simulations / Interactive media



### **Output Accommodations / Strategies**

- Graphic Organizers
- Guided Discussion
- Report/Conversation Guides
- Extended Time
- Plays / Comics / Role Play

