

7

SUMMARIZING AND NOTE TAKING

Though there has historically been a great deal of emphasis on learning strategies, too few ELLs receive instruction in the use of thinking skills essential to summarizing and note taking (Padrón, 1992). Many teachers mistakenly believe that these higher-level skills cannot be taught to students until they have full mastery of English (Garcia & Pearson, 1991). In fact, a 1992 study by Padrón found that ELLs can benefit from learning cognitive strategies.

Summarizing

Summarizing as a learning strategy permeates Chamot and O'Malley's (1994) Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach, which includes explicit instructions for mainstreamed ELL students. According to Short (1994), when ELLs are taught to understand text patterns (e.g., chronological and cause-and-effect patterns in history books) and recognize the signal words accompanying them, reading and writing skills improve.

Generalizations from *Classroom Instruction That Works*

Three generalizations can be gleaned from the research on summarizing in *Classroom Instruction That Works*.

1. To effectively summarize, students must keep, delete, and substitute information. To enable this process, students should be taught steps or an explicit set of rules that help them develop a summary. While teaching this process, you will need to accompany the steps with nonlinguistic representations, so that each step will hold meaning for Preproduction and Early Production students. Other students will benefit from the nonlinguistic representations as well.

2. To effectively keep, delete, and substitute information, students must analyze the information at a fairly deep level. You will have already adapted the keep-delete-substitute strategy for Preproduction and Early Production students when you substitute common, frequently used vocabulary terms for unknown vocabulary terms. To help Speech Emergence and Intermediate and Advanced Fluency students analyze information at a deeper level, point out what is important and what is not.

3. Being aware of the explicit structure of information is an aid when summarizing. Text is usually presented according to certain structures or patterns. Being able to understand and then locate these structures and patterns will greatly aid the summarization process.

Teaching text structure requires a fairly sophisticated lesson. You will need to expose Preproduction and Early Production students to explicit structures. In order to make text structures more understandable, you can offer visual examples of text patterns (graphic organizers) and use eye contact, body movements, pantomime, facial expressions, gestures, clear expression, and clear articulation when explaining. Speech Emergence and Intermediate and Advanced Fluency students will be able to use the text patterns to summarize.

Classroom Recommendations

Classroom Instruction That Works offers three recommendations for incorporating summarization into the classroom.

1. Teach students the rule-based summarizing strategy. A particular set of steps is followed to produce a summary (e.g., keeping, deleting, and substituting information). Students will need to see this strategy modeled again and again. Attaching a nonlinguistic representation to

Summarizing does not mean showing off your memory and telling the whole story—some students can do that almost verbatim. A summary is only picking out the most important parts. So when the student tells the whole story, I say, "Let's go back and pick out the most important parts."

One of the things that I have found that is really successful for narratives is doing it comic-book style: "Here are six boxes. You need to pick out the six things in the story, and you can write in part of the box and draw a picture in part of the box." It can be all pictures for ELLs in the early stages. Most of the kids will write some and draw a picture so it looks like a little story. But since they have these six boxes, they need to pick out the six most important things; they need to be organized and in order, like you are reading a comic. That seems to work well.

—E. B.

A lot of our ELLs' parents don't speak much English, so I use this as an example of summarizing: "Let's pretend that I only speak a little bit of English. So, you have to tell me in only three sentences—and you have to keep it short so I can understand it—the three most important things so that I could understand the story even if I can't read it." I think that helps them; if they can relate it to something that is going on in their lives, then they are more able to make it more concise.

—L. M.

the rules will benefit early-stage ELLs (see the classroom example in Chapter 2).

2. Use summary frames. There are six types of summary frames (see Appendix B): narrative, topic-restriction-illustration, argumentation, problem/solution, conversation, and definition (see below). All summary frames have a set of questions that extract important elements from the text. The answers to the questions are then used to summarize the text.

Each style of summary frame captures the basic structure of a different type of text. For example, let's take a look at a definition frame. The purpose of a definition frame is to define a particular concept and identify other related concepts. There are four elements of a definition frame:

1. **Term:** the subject being defined
2. **Set:** the general category to which the term belongs
3. **Gross characteristics:** the characteristics that separate the term from other elements in the set
4. **Minute differences:** the different classes of objects that fall directly beneath the term

There are also four guiding questions for use when completing a definition frame:

1. What is being defined?
2. To which general category does the item belong?
3. What characteristics separate the item from the other items in the general category?
4. What are some types of classes of the item being defined?

Now let's look at an example of how a definition frame can be used with ELLs at different stages of language acquisition. Students in Mr. Tate's 3rd grade life science class are studying grasshoppers. Today, he is showing them a film. To guide their viewing, Mr. Tate presents the students with the four guiding definition frame questions listed above. For ELLs, he includes the chart depicted in Figure 7.1, with the frame questions accompanied by visuals.

Mr. Tate explains that answers to the frame questions can be found in the film. Students then watch the film with an eye toward answering the questions. When the film is over, Mr. Tate organizes the students into groups, where they compare their answers and construct a summary statement about grasshoppers.

3. Instruct students in reciprocal teaching as an aid to understanding expository text. Reciprocal teaching is a type of dialogue that

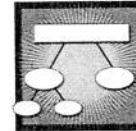
Figure 7.1
Definition Frame Chart

The definition frame tells:

1. What



2. General Category



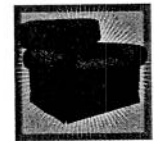
3. Characteristics



4. Differences



vs.



students use to create meaning from text (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). When reviewing effective instructional programs for ELLs in elementary and middle schools, Fashola, Slavin, Calderón, and Durán (1997) reported that reciprocal teaching contributed to an improvement in reading comprehension. *In the Classroom: A Toolkit for Effective Instruction of English Learners*—available through the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (n.d.b)—offers sample lessons and activities for reciprocal teaching and emphasizes the importance of modeling each step with ELLs.

Reciprocal teaching involves four components: summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting. For ELLs, it is critical to model each step and check for student understanding. Once the four components are learned, students can use them to monitor their reading for better comprehension.

The following is an adaptation involving the four components of reciprocal teaching that can be used as a whole-class activity or in small groups.

- **Step 1: Summarizing.** After students have silently or orally read a short section of a passage, a single student acting as teacher (i.e., the student leader) summarizes what has been

I made bookmarks for everyone to encourage them to use summary frames.

—Sandra Dreschler,
Berry Creek Middle School,
Edwards, Colorado

I've really loved the reciprocal teaching. We made a simile for each of the different roles, so students had a pictorial representation to cue them for what those roles were. A clarifier looks at things like a magnifying glass, a summarizer wraps things up like a ball of yarn, a predictor sees into the future like a fortune-teller, and a questioner is like a detective. So I would hold up a ball of string, and they would kind of know, "Oh, I'm going to wrap things up, I'm going to summarize it."

I really liked [using reciprocal teaching] with all my kids, and my ELL kids in particular have absolutely thrived with that. They have taken to asking higher-level questions, and they are really digging deep into the text. We've talked about how you can be a reciprocal member and even work on your own, so that some of the students go through the different roles when they read things by themselves now as a method to understand and summarize the text for themselves.

—E. S.

read. Other students, with guidance from the student leader, may add to the summary. If students have difficulty summarizing, the teacher might point out clues (important items or obvious topic sentences) that aid in the construction of good summaries.

- **Step 2: Questioning.** The student leader asks some questions to which the class responds. The questions are designed to help students identify important information in the passage. For example, the student leader might look back over the selection and ask questions about specific pieces of information. The other students then try to answer these questions based on their recollection of the information.
- **Step 3: Clarifying.** The student leader tries to clarify confusing points in the passage. He might point these out or ask other students to point them out. For example, the student leader might say, "The part about why the dog ran into the car was confusing to me. Can anyone explain this?" Or the student leader might direct students to ask clarification questions. The group then attempts to clear up the confusing parts, which might involve rereading parts of the passage.
- **Step 4: Predicting.** The student leader asks for predictions about what will happen in the next segment of the text. The leader can write the predictions on the blackboard or on an overhead, or students can write them down.

Adapting the Keep-Delete-Substitute Strategy to the Stages of Language Acquisition

You can model the keep-delete-substitute strategy for summarizing by emphasizing the following steps:

1. Keep important information
2. Delete trivial material that is unnecessary to understanding
3. Delete redundant material
4. Substitute subordinate terms for more specific terms (e.g., use *fish* for *rainbow trout*, *salmon*, and *halibut*)
5. Select a topic sentence or invent one if it is missing

Preproduction

Students will benefit from the use of gestures every time you say "keep," "delete," or "substitute." "Keep" can be represented nonlinguistically with a quick gesture by crossing both arms over your chest. "Delete" can be shown by having one hand grab something from the other and then throw it away. For "substitute," you can place both fists in front of your chest and then move the right fist up and over the left.

Early Production

Students will need to have the substitute rule reinforced with demonstrations of how to substitute common-frequency vocabulary words (vocabulary they may already know) for low-frequency vocabulary words (vocabulary that may be new). For example, you can let these students know that Mercury, Venus, and Mars can be replaced with the word "planets."

Speech Emergence

Students have good comprehension and can follow your modeling of the keep-delete-substitute rule for summarizing, particularly with gestures, a slower rate of speech, clear and concise sentences, and demonstrations.

Intermediate and Advanced Fluency

Students will have excellent comprehension of this rule, particularly when provided with all of the above suggestions.

Adapting Summary Frames to the Stages of Language Acquisition

Mrs. Mason used the narrative frame to help her 1st graders summarize *Jack and the Beanstalk*. First, she introduced some of the following frame questions and told the students to think about them as she read the story aloud:

1. Who are the main characters? What are their characteristics?
2. When and where did the story take place? What were the circumstances?
3. What prompted the action in the story?
4. How do the main characters react emotionally to what happens at the start of the story?
5. What did the main characters decide to do? Did they set a goal? What was it?
6. How did the main characters try to accomplish their goals?
7. How does the story turn out? Did the main characters accomplish their goals?

Next, Mrs. Mason read the story again. This time, however, she occasionally stopped to let students answer the questions as a class. Finally, Mrs. Mason and the students used their answers to write a summary together.

For students with little or no English proficiency, you must create circumstances and conditions that support engagement in interpretive discussions of stories. This can be achieved through the use of tiered questions.

For reciprocal teaching, I have students prepare for all jobs initially, so they don't know what their job is going to be. Then, once they find out what their job is, they get to meet with all the summarizers, they get to meet with all the clarifiers, etc., so that if they didn't get a word or they weren't clear on something, they have another chance before they have to go back and perform that role as individuals. That's a good strategy to make it safer for ELLs so they get to do it by themselves and think by themselves first and then get paired up with a similar activity group. Then they get to perform their role individually with the rest of their team.

—D. H.

Preproduction

Students can be asked questions that start with "Show me . . .," "Point to the . . .," "Where is . . .," and "Who has the . . ." (e.g., "Show me Jack," "Point to mother," "Where is the beanstalk?" "Who has the harp?"). Remember to begin asking these students questions from the Early Production stage in order to scaffold language development.

Early Production

Students can answer yes/no questions, either/or questions, and questions requiring a one- or two-word response. Appropriate queries include who, what, when, and where questions (e.g., "Who is in this story?" "What is Jack doing now?" "When did Jack find the beanstalk—in the morning or evening?" "Where is Jack going?"). In addition to these questions, be sure to include some from the next stage.

Speech Emergence

Students can answer with short sentences. Ask them why and how questions or prompt them with "Explain . . ." and "Tell me about . . ." (e.g., "Why is Jack's mother upset?" "How do you think Jack and his mother felt?" "Explain how Jack got the gold coins," "Tell me about what Jack decided to do"). Move into the next stage of questions as well.

Intermediate and Advanced Fluency

Students can be asked any of the questions in the narrative frame. Intermediates will have a few grammatical errors in their answers, and Advanced students will sound almost like their English-dominant peers.

Adapting Reciprocal Teaching to the Stages of Language Acquisition

There are four steps to reciprocal teaching. Initially, a teacher can focus on one individual strategy at a time without adding another strategy to the repertoire until students are fairly proficient with the previous strategy. At the end of the teacher's modeling, students should be able to perform all four steps for reciprocal teaching.

- **Step 1: Generating questions.** When teaching this step to ELLs, everyone needs to learn what types of questions match the different levels of language acquisition.
- **Step 2: Summarizing.** Keep the following tips in mind when teaching this skill to students at different levels of language acquisition.

- ♦ *Preproduction*. Students will need to have key vocabulary pointed out to them. The students who are summarizing should be expected to select three words they think everyone is familiar with and three words they think might be new. The old and new words need to be accompanied by a pictorial representation, or the student assuming the teaching role can act out the words.
- ♦ *Early Production*. Students will benefit from key vocabulary and by hearing correct English modeled. You need to inform students that their summaries need to be clear and understandable.
- ♦ *Speech Emergence and Intermediate and Advanced Fluency*. Students will better comprehend the passage they are reading by creating a clear, concise summary.
- **Step 3: Clarifying**. In addition to clarifying any new vocabulary, you will need to clarify idioms and figures of speech for ELLs.
- **Step 4: Predicting**. This skill activates background knowledge and helps students draw connections between new information and things they already know.

Note Taking

Note taking is closely related to summarizing because it requires that students take information and synthesize it using their own words. The purpose of note taking is to help students acquire and integrate knowledge; it is a way to organize and process information. Because ELLs are extracting new knowledge in a new language, they will need explicit instruction in the art of note taking.

Generalizations from *Classroom Instruction That Works*

Classroom Instruction That Works suggests four generalizations on note taking.

1. Verbatim note taking is the least effective way to take notes.

When students write down every single word they hear, they are not engaged in synthesizing information. Trying to record everything that is said or read occupies a student's working memory and does not leave room for analyzing the incoming information.

You probably won't have to worry about early-stage ELLs taking verbatim notes, but students at all stages should be discouraged from

I think the hardest thing about note taking—and it's kind of like summarizing—is that you have to pick out what is important. A lot of times the kids will say, "I really liked that, that's interesting." I'll say, "That's interesting, but do you think that is going to be on our test?" I really have them think, "If you were the teacher, what would you pull out as being the important things?"

You have to teach kids to review their notes and how to study. You have to model that, too—walk them through how to use their notes to study. For example, "I'm going to turn to where I have fractions in my notes, and I see here that there's the numerator and there's the denominator. My teacher says that the *d* in 'denominator' is like 'downstairs.' I bet I'm going to need to know that for my fractions test."

—E. B.

doing so. As an alternative to having students take written notes, you can stop and ask them to draw what they understand after you have given part of a lesson.

2. Notes should always be considered works in progress. As students acquire and integrate content knowledge, they return to their notes and revise them to reflect their deeper understanding. Teachers need to explicitly teach and reinforce this process, and should allow time to make sure notes are appended and edited. For ELLs, additions to notes can mean finding other graphics to accompany teacher-prepared notes.

3. Notes should be used as study guides for tests. If notes are clear and synthesize the information adequately, they will serve students well during test preparation. When students review and revise notes, they are studying the content. It is important to verify that ELLs' notes contain visual representations.

4. The more notes taken, the better. This does not mean taking verbatim notes, but rather notes that elaborate on the learning objectives. A strong correlation exists between the amount of notes taken and student achievement on tests. For English language learners, the more graphics, the better.

Classroom Recommendations

Teachers can direct students on how to take good notes. *Classroom Instruction That Works* offers three recommendations on teaching good note-taking skills.

1. Give students teacher-prepared notes. This is the first step in modeling good note taking. When students see teacher-prepared notes, they have a clear example of what the teacher considers important. For ELLs, teacher-prepared notes can take written form with pictorial representations. As students progress in their language acquisition, notes can be given in written form with some of the words missing.

2. Teach students a variety of note-taking formats (see Figure 7.2). There is not one set way to take notes. Different students select different note-taking formats. It will be important to model all the different forms of note taking, along with clear, concise explanations.

One of the models students will learn, the informal outline, is characterized by indentations to indicate major ideas and their related details. Another model, webbing, can be valuable for ELLs

because it provides a visual representation. A third type of format, combination notes (see below), uses both the informal outline and the web technique.

3. Use combination notes. Combination notes combine linguistic and nonlinguistic formats. They are particularly helpful because they allow students to portray the information in a visual way. When students are taking notes, it is helpful if you stop periodically to let them make a graphic representation. This may take extra time, but it forces students to consider the information a second time. It also allows students to store the information in a different way without using words.

Figure 7.3 shows how a page of notes is divided into three parts. The left side is used for informal outlining, and the right side is reserved for a web or some variation of it. Finally, the bottom of the page is saved for a summary statement. Figure 7.4 depicts another type of combination notes that is especially useful for ELLs.

Adapting Teacher-Prepared Notes to the Stages of Language Acquisition

Figure 7.5 shows an example of teacher-prepared notes for mainstream students. Follow the suggestions below to use these notes with all stages of ELLs.

Preproduction

Students can participate in a whole-class discussion on teacher notes when a student completes the graphic part of the chart. You can ask these students to respond nonverbally with "Show me . . ." or "Point to . . ." For practice, these students can use the teacher-prepared notes and select words they know and do not know. You can also provide students with ways to keep track of their new words (e.g., three-ring binder, spiral notebook, or note cards).

Early Production

Students can also participate in a whole-class discussion when someone completes the graphic part of the notes. Ask yes/no questions or questions requiring one- or two-word responses, such as "Do ants have antennae?" These students can also practice familiar and unfamiliar vocabulary words.

Speech Emergence

Students can answer why, how, when, or where questions using the teacher-prepared written notes and graphics.

I think note taking starts as teacher-generated note taking. We had our little math notebooks at the beginning of the year, and I really wrote everything on the board that I wanted in their notebooks. Then slowly but surely I asked, "Well, what do you think is important? Write it in your notebook if you think it's important to remember. We have a quiz on Friday on fractions; make sure you are getting down what you need to have so you can study."

—D. H.

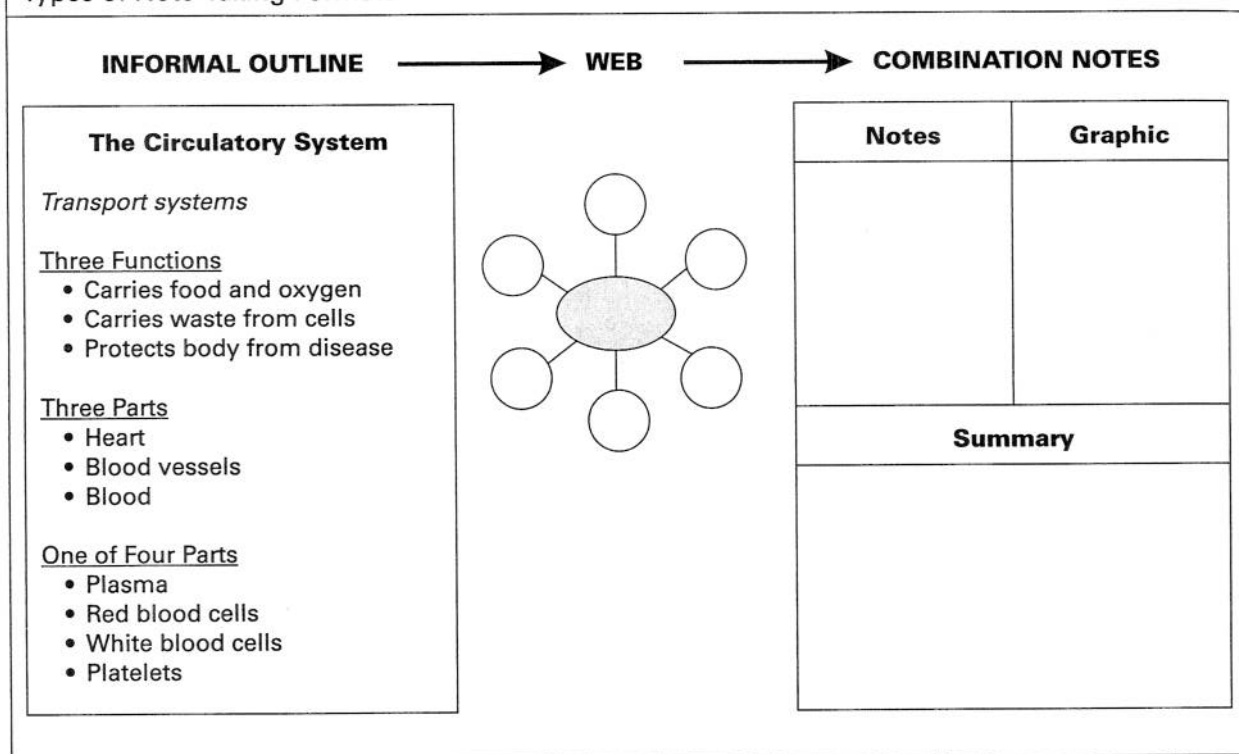
I do have to model note taking for all kids. Note taking, I think, is hard—especially for 6th graders, as they haven't done a lot of it yet. We will read something together and pick out the most important things and write those on the right. For ELLs, I've usually prewritten it myself, then I give them the notes but without some of the words. Then they will see it on the overhead, and they can fill in a few missing words on each note.

I also try to draw pictures more with my ELLs with each part of our notes. I'm not a very good artist, so they get a whole lot of laughs then. But they can draw their own pictures and put them in their notes.

—Sheri Daigler,

Berry Creek Middle School,
Edwards, Colorado

Figure 7.2
Types of Note-Taking Formats



Intermediate Fluency

Students can respond to teacher questions that start with “Why do you think”

Advanced Fluency

Students can write questions (see the third column of Figure 7.5). While you are engaging early- to mid-level ELLs in answering questions, English-dominant students and Advanced Fluency students are writing questions.

Adapting Other Note-Taking Formats to the Stages of Language Acquisition

After 3rd through 6th grade students have learned a variety of note-taking formats, develop work stations for each. Students should try each type of format before coming together for a whole-group discussion on what worked best for them.

Figure 7.3

Combination Notes









Notes	Graphic Representation
<p>Clouds</p> <p><i>Four types of clouds</i></p> <p><u>High</u></p> <p>cirrus: feathery</p> <p>cirrostratus: fine, like a white veil or a halo</p> <p>cirrocumulus: small fleecy balls and wisps</p> <p><u>Middle</u></p> <p>altostratus: thick gray or blue veil</p> <p>altocumulus: dense fleecy balls/puffs</p> <p><u>Low</u></p> <p>stratocumulus: big rolls, soft gray</p> <p><u>Vertical</u></p> <p>cumulus: shaped like a dome</p> <p>cumulonimbus: dark, heavy-looking</p>	   
<p>Summary: There are four types of clouds. They vary in shape and color.</p>	

Figure 7.4

Combination Notes for ELLs

			
<p>Big Ideas</p>	<p>Notes</p>	<p>Pictures</p>	<p>Questions</p>

Preproduction

Students will take notes that focus on words, so a fourth work station will be beneficial for them as they engage in various vocabulary activities with the words. How do you select words to be learned? Students whose native languages are based largely on Greek or Latin should be encouraged to infer the meaning of unfamiliar English words by using their knowledge of cognates—words that sound and look the same in both languages. For instance, a student who knows the meaning of the Spanish word *insectos* can infer the meaning of the English word *insects*. Most English content-area words have a Greek or Latin base and are similar in Spanish (e.g., *adición* = addition, *gravedad* = gravity, *observar* = to observe). Of course, students whose native languages differ significantly from English will not be able to use this word identification technique.

Figure 7.5
Teacher-Prepared Notes

Notes	Graphic	Questions
<p>I. The Basics</p> <p>A. Ants are part of a family of insects that have a very organized social life.</p> <p>B. Nearly 9,000 species exist.</p> <p>C. Ants are found around the world, except in the polar regions and at the highest altitudes.</p>		
<p>II. Characteristics</p> <p>A. Ants are related to wasps—have abdomen that is jointed to the thorax by a "pedicel."</p> <p>B. Have antennae with "elbows" or joints in the middle.</p> <p>C. Some ants have a stinger that is used to defend the colony or themselves.</p> <p>D. Many species secrete a type of acid that is a strong repellent.</p>		

Early Production

Students will also be concentrating on words when taking notes.

Speech Emergence

Students will work on expanding their written notes by adding essential adjectives or phrases to their notes. They are likely to need your help with this.

Intermediate and Advanced Fluency

Students will work in all different note-taking formats. You will need to find teachable moments to develop their academic language.

Summary

With appropriate modifications, both summarizing and note taking can be effective strategies for ELLs. Summarizing techniques work best when the teacher uses comprehensible input, such as visuals and kinesthetic clues, while keeping in mind the appropriate questioning strategies for each stage of language acquisition. Reciprocal teaching is a particularly effective form of summarizing when working with ELLs.

Note taking works well when you encourage students to supplement their written notes with visual representations. Combining linguistic and nonlinguistic learning increases the likelihood that knowledge will be stored and retained.

APPENDIX B

TYPES OF SUMMARY FRAMES

The Narrative Frame

The *narrative* or *story* frame commonly contains the following elements:

- **Characters:** the characteristics of the main characters in the story
- **Setting:** the time, place, and context in which the information took place
- **Initiating event:** the event that starts the action rolling in the story
- **Internal response:** how the main characters react emotionally to the initiating event
- **Goal:** what the main characters decide to do as a reaction to the initiating event
- **Consequence:** how the main characters try to accomplish the goal
- **Resolution:** how the goal turns out

Components 3–7 are sometimes repeated to create what is called an *episode*.

Frame Questions

- Who are the main characters in the story?
- When and where did the story take place? What was the place like?
- What happened at the start of the story?
- How did the main characters react to that event?
- As a result of what happened, what did the main characters decide to do? Did they set a goal? What was it?
- What did the main characters do to try to accomplish their goal?
- How did things turn out?

The Topic-Restriction-Illustration Frame

The *topic*, *restriction*, and *illustration* (T-R-I) pattern is commonly found in expository material:

- **Topic (T):** general statement about the information to be discussed
- **Restriction (R):** statement that limits the information in some way
- **Illustration (I):** example of the topic or restriction

Here's an example:

- T: In 1981, the Braves were the best team in baseball.
- R: Their pitching staff was excellent.
- I: Larry Hutchins was 20–2 for the season.
- I: Bob Ewy had the fastest pitch in the majors.
- R: Their hitters were also excellent.
- I: Dave Wallace batted .421.
- I: Walter Zbleman hit 42 homers.

As the example illustrates, the T-R-I frame can have a number of restrictions and accompanying illustrations.

Frame Questions

- T: What is this story about in general?
- R: What information does the author give that narrows or restricts the general topic?
- I: What examples does the author present to illustrate the restriction?

The Argumentation Frame

Argumentation patterns attempt to support a claim. They contain the following elements:

- **Evidence:** information that leads to a claim (e.g., streets filled with violence)
- **Claim:** the assertion that something is true (e.g., “Our city is becoming a haven for crime”)
- **Support:** examples of or explanations for the claim (e.g., “Violent offenders infest our judicial system” [example]; “The violence is a result of poor city management” [explanation])
- **Qualifier:** a restriction on the claim or evidence counter to the claim (e.g., “However, there is a ray of hope”)

Frame Questions

- What information does the author present that leads her to make a claim?
- What claim does the author make about a problem or situation? What does she assert is so?
- What examples or explanations does the author present to support her claim?
- Does the author present a restriction on the claim?

The Problem-Solution Frame

Problem-solution patterns introduce a problem and then identify one or more solutions to the problem:

- **Problem:** There will soon be a worldwide oil shortage.
- **Solution:** One solution might be the development of solar energy.
- **Solution:** Another solution could be to conserve energy by using it less.
- **Solution:** Finally, a tactic might be to replace gasoline with ethanol-based fuel.

Frame Questions

- What is the problem?
- What is a possible solution?
- What is another possible solution?
- What is yet another possible solution?

The Conversation Frame

A *conversation* is a verbal interchange among two or more people. Conversations commonly have the following components:

- **Greeting:** some acknowledgment that the parties have not seen each other for a while
- **Inquiry:** a question about some general or specific topic
- **Discussion:** an elaboration or analysis of the topic; commonly included in the discussion are the following:
 - *Assertions:* statements of facts by the speaker
 - *Requests:* statements that solicit actions from the listener
 - *Promises:* statements that assert that the speaker will perform certain actions
 - *Demands:* statements that identify specific actions to be taken by the listener
 - *Threats:* statements that specify consequences to the listener if commands are not followed
 - *Congratulations:* statements that indicate the value the speaker puts on something done by the listener

Frame Questions

- What question or topic was brought up?
- How did the discussion progress? What facts were stated?
- What did the characters say to each other to begin the conversation?
 - Did either person make a request of the other?
 - Did either person demand a specific action from the other?
 - Did either person threaten specific consequences if a demand was not met?
 - Did either person say something that indicated that he or she valued something that the other had done?