



GIST

Strategy

What is GIST? Summaries are brief statements that contain the main ideas from longer passages. Although it does not sound difficult, writing a summary is not a simple task. Not only must students must decide which details are important enough to include and which ones should be eliminated, they must also organize the material into a readable, coherent piece of writing. The **GIST**, "Generating Interactions between Schemata and Text," (Cunningham 1982) is a strategy that helps students accomplish this task.

Why use it—expected outcomes? GIST improves both comprehension and summary writing skills by sharpening students' abilities to analyze and synthesize content area readings. In order to effectively summarize text, student must use analysis and synthesis. Additionally, students learn to eliminate trivial information, determine main ideas, and use their own words to make generalizations when they restrict the length of their summaries. These three strategies have been identified as critical to good comprehension and retention of key ideas (Kintch & Van Dijk 1978).

When to use it? After reading.

How to use it? Students may do this individually or in small groups. The success of this strategy depends on teacher modeling to steer students through the procedure and sufficient guided practice before students can be released to independently use the strategy.

Procedures

- From your text, choose a three to five paragraph passage that contains an important concept. Reproduce