Instructor’s Guide for Writing

Topic Area: Instruction

Module: Writing

Case Study: An Old Snake Learns Some New Teaching Techniques

Summary: Hillary Adams, an eleventh grade Zoology teacher, had never worked with a student who was considered to be mildly mentally retarded (MMR). After meeting with the special education facilitator and taking a new look at an old strategy, Hillary is able to utilize a strategy that can help all of her students.

Characters and Roles:
- Hillary Adams, eleventh grade Zoology teacher
- Mia, student with an IEP for MMR (Mild Mental Retardation)
- Dwayne Johnson, special education facilitator

Tools:
- K-W-L-H+

Artifacts:
- Blank K-W-L-H+ Chart
- Completed K-W-L-H+ Chart

Glossary Terms:
- IEP
- MMR (Mild Mental Retardation)
- Primary Implementers
- K-W-L
- K-W-L-H+
- Direct Instruction

Web Sites:
- http://www.biologybrowser.org
- http://www.scilinks.org/
- http://www.sdtas.org
- http://nichcy.org
- http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/jpkf/index.html
http://www.as.wvu.edu/~scidis

Discussion Points:
- Should students with special needs be expected to take upper level courses in high school? Explain your reasoning.
- Discuss your experiences with K-W-L charts as a student and/or teacher.
- What are the pros and cons of using K-W-L charts?
- Whose responsibility is it to teach writing skills at the high school level?
- Should high school science and social studies teachers be expected to teach writing skills? Explain your reasoning.
- How can high school English teachers provide support for teachers who are trying to help students write in other classes?

Activities:
- Use a K-W-L-H+ chart to complete a writing assignment.
- Compare K-W-L-H+ charts with other writing strategies.
- Share the K-W-L-H+ strategy with colleagues at your school.
- Share samples of students’ writing that was completed with the assistance of the K-W-L-H+ strategy.

Reflective Question: Scene 4, Question 2 – What are the advantages and disadvantages of using K-W-L- charts? A K-W-L chart is an effective graphic organizer for assessing a student’s prior knowledge about a topic, determining what he/she wants to learn, and finally what knowledge was acquired as a result of instruction or research. Unfortunately, in some cases, K-W-L charts are overused when other graphic organizers would be more effective. Teachers should introduce students to a variety of graphic organizers and encourage them to be selective in the ones they choose to use for different purposes. Brain research cautions teachers about class discussions focused on what students “Know.” If students think they know something and share it, sometimes other students remember the incorrect information from the initial discussion. K-W-L charts can be effective, but teachers should consider some of the disadvantages before choosing to use them.

Connections:
- Topic Area: Instruction; Module: Instructional Accommodations