CRISS for Parent Educators

Overview

Project CRISS® (**CR**eating **I**ndependence through **S**tudent-owned **S**trategies) provides professional development workshops to educators on ways to help their students learn and comprehend content information. Training is provided to teachers at all grade levels and in all curricular areas. The research-based learning principles and strategies are being used by teachers, administrators, and students across the United States.

Recently, CRISS was selected to take part in two major research studies funded by the federal government. The first, by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., will study the effectiveness of four reading comprehension interventions. The study will focus on how the various interventions improve reading comprehension for fifth grade Title I students in science and social studies. The second study, through the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, will focus on ninth grade teachers and students from rural and small town high schools. This study will look at the effectiveness of CRISS in improving reading comprehension.

In addition to training teachers and administrators, CRISS has developed a middle school learning strategies curriculum for students that supports teachers using the CRISS principles and strategies in their classrooms. CRISS also produces support materials for administrators, teachers, and parents with the ultimate goal of a coordinated support system for students learning HOW to learn at school.

CRISS for Parent Educators is a new venture for Project CRISS. It is a booklet for parents and their children that introduces them to the Project CRISS principles and some of the learning strategies. In the booklet, parents will find practical suggestions and examples of ways to help their children learn and remember information. On the following pages, we have provided a listing of the content topics, the introduction to the booklet, a sample page from the "Principles of Learning" chapter, and a sample page from the "Note-taking Strategies" chapter.

To see more information about Project CRISS, its research base, a calendar of training events, the *Comments from CRISS* newsletter, and lots more, visit www.projectcriss.com.

Content Topics for Project CRISS for Parent Educators

Introduction
- Project History
- Components of CRISS

Chapter 1: Setting Your Child Up for Success
- Tools for Learning
- A Place and Time

Chapter 2: Principles of Learning
- Metacognition
- Background Knowledge
- Knowing the Purpose
- Active Involvement
- Discussion & Writing
- Organization
- Practice
- Creating a Framework for Learning: The CRISS Learning Plan

Chapter 3: Note-Taking Strategies
- Power Notes
- Two-Column Notes
- Mapping
- Content Frames

Chapter 4: Writing Strategies
- RAFT
- Power Paragraphs
- Spool Paper
- Conclusion–Support
- Problem–Solution

Chapter 5: Vocabulary Strategies
- Vocabulary Maps
- Writing & Talking Strategies

Project CRISS for Parent Educators
Introduction

Teachers in the Kalispell School District, Kalispell, Montana, designed Project CRISS (**CR**eating **I**ndependence through **S**tudent-owned **S**trategies) to help students learn more effectively throughout the curriculum. The project focuses on teaching students how to learn through reading, writing, talking, and listening. As they learn, students apply the CRISS principles of learning and strategies in all subject areas and at all grade levels.

Although many educators see Project CRISS as a "strategies" program, in reality, CRISS is a learning theory program. If students are to become independent learners, they must know and be able to apply the Project CRISS principles of learning. Because it is not always easy to figure out how to apply *metacognition* or to bring out one's *background knowledge*, CRISS provides a variety of strategies to use as a means of activating the learning theory.

We encourage parent educators to attend a two- or three-day Project CRISS Level I workshop, since that is the best way to learn about our project. In this booklet, we offer a sampling of our huge selection of strategies. At our workshop, you will receive a copy of our training manual (not sold without training) which includes a more complete explanation of our CRISS Principles and Philosophy and a large variety of reading, writing, discussion, organizing, and vocabulary strategies. A calendar of training dates and locations along with lots of other resources, can be found at the Project CRISS Web site: www.projectcriss.com, or you may contact the CRISS office at 1-877-502-7477 (toll free). In the mean time, we hope you find this booklet useful and that it will help you support your child's learning at home.

Project History

The CRISS program was developed in the Kalispell School District in 1979. A team of teachers wrote the program under the direction of Dr. Carol Santa, District Reading Coordinator. The program became a state-validated demonstration site in 1982 and a nationally-validated project for grades 10 through 12 in 1985. In 1993, the validation was expanded to include grades 4-12. Many teachers in districts throughout the country have readily adapted ideas from CRISS in their classrooms. We frequently hear from teachers using the CRISS principles and strategies with students ranging from pre-school to the college level.

Components of CRISS®

The CRISS Level I training, designed for teachers of all grade levels and of all curricular areas, is composed of the following elements:

- ✪ Learning theory
- ✪ Identifying the author's craft
- ✪ Discussion strategies
- ✪ Organizing strategies
- ✪ Writing strategies
- ✪ Vocabulary strategies
- ✪ Assessment

Chapter 1
The Principles of Learning

1. Metacognition

Good readers are **metacognitive**. This means they monitor their understanding. They are constantly asking themselves, "Does this make sense?" "Am I getting this?" And, if they do not understand, they know what to do to gain understanding. For example: Ashley is a good reader. While reading a science text, she comes across a vocabulary concept she doesn't understand. Here are some of the things she knows to do to help her understand. First, she rereads the sentence containing the term. Then she rereads the whole paragraph and even skims through the whole section. She looks at pictures and diagrams to see if they help with the concept. She creates her own diagram or picture from the information in the text. She looks in the glossary of the text, a dictionary, an encyclopedia, a science book in her home library. She asks her older brother or sister and/or her parents. Ashley knows eleven strategies for helping with difficult vocabulary.

Good readers don't just read through an assignment once and know all the information. They constantly check themselves and frequently reread specific parts and look at diagrams and/or previous sections.

Here are some ways you can help your child be metacognitive:

- ✓ ***Ask questions***. Ask your child if the reading makes sense. Can he explain the reading to you? If not, try to find the spot where understanding stopped. Go back to that spot and reread. See if the text provides any aids: pictures, examples, diagrams, samples, etc.

- ✓ ***Discuss or write.*** Have your child talk or write to you about information in the reading. Children often think they understand the material, until they have to explain it.

- ✓ ***Research what works***. Have your child try different strategies and see which is most successful. (See the note-taking, writing, and vocabulary chapters of this booklet.)

- ✓ ***Stop & check***. Periodically stop your child while she is reading. Ask if she understands at that moment. If the answer is yes, check by asking a question about the content. If the answer is no, talk about ways to gain understanding.

Chapter 2
Note-taking Strategies

1. Power Notes

Power Notes help students differentiate between main ideas and details. The procedure is similar to outlining, but much easier for students to use because main ideas and details are simply assigned numbers. Main ideas are **Power 1** ideas while details are **Power 2s, 3s, 4s**, etc.

Power 1: Main idea
Power 2: Detail or support for Power 1
Power 3: Detail or support for Power 2

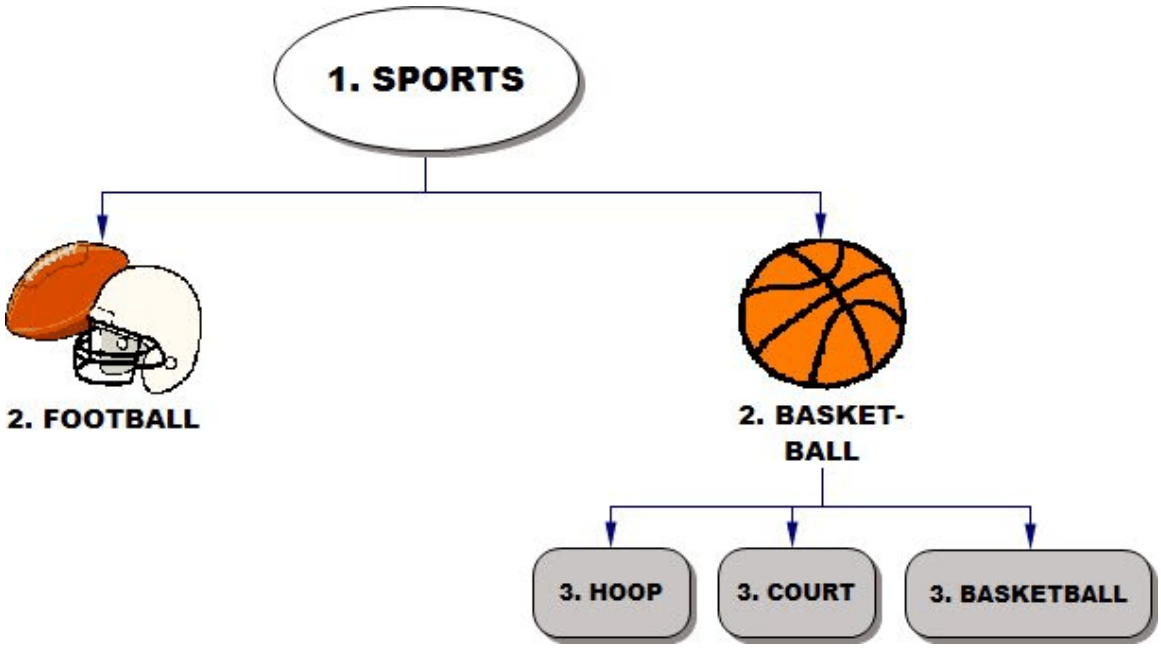
Here is a sample of Power notes using *words*.

Power 1: Animals
Power 2: Dog
Power 3: Collie
Power 4: Lassie
Power 3: German Shepherd
Power 2: Cat
Power 3: Siamese
Power 3: Calico

Practice the Power structure with your child. Pick a Power 1 on a familiar topic such as sports, food, or TV shows. Have your child give you Powers 2s, 3s, and 4s. For example, if you say:

"Power 1 is sports. What will Power 2 be?"
"Football"
"Great, now give me another Power 2."
"Basketball"
"Right, now give me Power 3s that will fit under basketball."
"Hoop, court, and ball"

As your child gives you these ideas, write them on a piece of paper. You can record the information in a way similar to the "Animal" example, which looks like outlining, or you could create a Power Map with the words, which might look something like the example below.



Notice in the diagram above, the boxes are shaped differently for the different Powers (1 and 3); they are shaded differently; and illustrations are added, as well. These are all ways your child can differentiate between the various Powers and BE CREATIVE!

When you look back at both examples, you will see that the items labeled with the same Power number have basically the same relationship to the Power number above. For example in the sports map, the two Power 2s are both *types* of team sports. The 3s under "Basketball" are all *items necessary to play* basketball. If you were to add items under "Football," the 3s would have to be items necessary to play football–a football, goal posts, a football field. In the "Animal" example, if you were to add Power 4s to the various Power 3 items, they would have to be *names* of specific dogs or cats which belong to that breed. In other words, there is a parallel structure with Power numbers.

When your child creates a Power Map, sometimes it is helpful to write on the connecting arrow the relationship between the two types of information. See the example to the right.