

The K-W-H-L Strategy

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

This strategy is designed to help initiate active engagement in the reading or learning task. By creating an instructional framework, the students list (1) what they already know, (2) what they want to find out, (3) how they plan to find new information, and (4) recording what they have learned or still want to learn. This activity is designed to be used individually, in small groups, or with whole class activities. This strategy helps students to share what they learn with others, learn that there are numerous information sources, and to summarize their findings.

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Introduce the strategy – introduce the K-W-H-L strategy with a new topic.**
Place the K-W-H-L strategy on the board or overhead for the class to see. Explain to the students that before we study a new topic or read a book, we need to find out what we know about a topic. When we organize what we know, we can generate questions to help us focus our reading on what exactly we want to find out. Inform students that if they have questions while they are reading that they can write them down on the chart also.
- 2. List what is known – question the students to help create a list on the chart.**
Brainstorm with the class to see what the students already know about the topic. Record all responses whether correct or incorrect. This encourages risk-taking behavior and increases variety in the students' statements. Tell the students that they will return to this chart after reading to confirm facts.
- 3. List what the students want to learn – create a list of student questions.**
Ask the class "What do you want to learn more about?" or "What questions do you have about this topic?" List all responses that are given on your chart. Use probing to help students come up with questions until you think the list is complete.
- 4. Students generate their own question – allow time for students to work alone or in small groups.** Pass out individual charts to the students. Leave the chart you began with the class on the board or overhead as an example. Each student will decide what questions they want to research personally. Give students additional time to think of more questions they want to research.
- 5. Discuss how to find answers to questions.** As a class, list some possible sources where they can find answers to the questions that were generated. Guide students to sources other than a primary text or encyclopedia.
- 6. Read to find out.** Allow time to read the selection or to do more research to find answers to as many of the questions as possible. Inform the students that some of

their questions many not have answers that are easy to find. Encourage students to note on their charts any further topics that find interesting during their reading.

7. **Share answers.** Encourage students to share what they found and record this information on the chart. Inform the students that real-life learning is occurring as they participate in this activity. Invite students to share any further questions or comments they have or want to learn about the topic.
8. **Follow-up activities.** Use the K-W-H-L results to create further learning activities including graphic organizers, maps, outlines, learning logs, written summaries, and reports.

ASSESSMENT

This strategy helps the teacher pre-access what students already know about a certain topic. This helps teachers know what needs to be taught during the unit. At the conclusion of the K-W-H-L activity, the teacher can assess what was learned and what still needs to be taught. Post the chart in the classroom so that students can add information to it during following weeks. This helps students understand that learning is an ongoing and continual process.

