Inquiry Mini-Lessons

Using Graphic Organizers to Organize Information

This lesson introduces students to the use of graphic organizers as a way of organizing and thinking about their specific inquiry. Students can use organizers such as the R.A.N. (Reading and Analyzing Non-fiction) Chart, the TLReT–Q Chart, or the KWHLAQ Chart.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials:

- enlarged version of a graphic organizer (e.g., R.A.N. Chart, TLReT–Q Chart, or KWHLAQ Chart)
- large sticky notes and markers (if using chart paper)
- related inquiry reading materials from *Animals in Our Lives, Water Works!,* or *Inside a Story*

Grouping: whole class

Procedure:

1. Tell students that an important part of their research into their inquiry questions is organizing the information they know and have found to shape their thinking, and to help them explore ideas they may need to research further.
2. Remind students of the purpose of different organizers, for example, the R.A.N. Chart, TLReT–Q Chart, and KWHLAQ Chart. Display copies of the organizers and review the different columns.

> *Here are some different organizers that you can use to jot down what you know about your topic, information that you find in your research, and questions to research further. Let's look at the R.A.N. Chart. It's a great organizer to use for researching non-fiction texts.*

3. Display an enlarged copy of the R.A.N Chart and tell students that they are going to use the chart to find out what they already know about their inquiry topic and connect it to their research findings and new learning. For example, if you've just finished the *Water Works!* unit, you might say, some of us were interested in finding out what the water cycle is and why it is important."
4. Provide students with sticky notes and invite them to jot down one fact they know about the water cycle and place it under the "What I Think I Know" column.

> *Before we start an inquiry, we need to think about what we already know about the topic. By jotting down our thinking we have a good starting point to launch the inquiry. What do you know about the water cycle?*

Teaching Tip: As students place their sticky notes on the chart, organize the notes into common ideas. Discuss with students that many of them have similar ideas.

5. Explain to students that as they research their inquiry topic, their sticky notes will either be confirmed and moved to the "What I Know Is True" column or will be moved to the "I Don't Think This Anymore" column.

As you research, what you find may reveal misunderstandings, so you'll want to move that idea or fact to the "I Don't Think This Anymore" column.

6. Read aloud "The Water Cycle" on pages 14 and 15 of the *Explore! Magazine*. After reading a part of the text, stop and have students summarize the information they heard.

7. Decide with the students what action should be taken with their sticky notes:
   - Move a prior knowledge sticky note to "What I know Is True" column or "I Don't Think This Anymore" column.
   - Write a new fact on a sticky note and place it under the "New Facts" column.

8. Continue to the end of page 15 in this fashion to model for students how you confirm, discard prior knowledge, or add new information to their inquiry.

Now that I know some new information about the water cycle, it makes me wonder where pollution can enter the water cycle and what kind of pollution can affect the water cycle. I think I'll write these questions down and place them under the "Wonderings" column so I won't forget my questions.

Teaching Tip: If students are researching in small groups, pairs, or individually, provide them with copies of the R.A.N. Chart, TLReT–Q Chart, or KWHLAQ Chart. Support students as needed as they use the graphic organizers in their investigations.