AVID Strategies

The following is a list of instructional strategies that AVID encourages teachers to incorporate in their lessons. These strategies may be adapted to any subject. They also support the methodologies of the AVID instructional program: WICR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Reading).

Carousel Brainstorming
With Carousel Brainstorming, ideas can be gathered quickly. First, topics should be written as headings on chart paper posted around the room. After students have been divided into groups and given different colored markers, they should move clockwise from chart to chart to brainstorm ideas for each topic. After all groups have written on each chart, they should do a gallery walk to see the ideas that were added after they wrote. This activity could serve as a precursor to a formal essay. *(Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration)*

Concept Mapping
Concept mapping allows both the student and the teacher to make connections between new concepts and prior knowledge. Students should be given a list of related concepts and asked to make connections between them. Students can also be asked to create their own lists. Concept mapping can be used to assess what students already know, to pull meaning from texts, to interpret lab reports, and to gain understanding when reading articles in newspapers, magazines, and journals, etc. Students may complete this activity individually or in small groups. *(Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Reading)*

Consultants
This activity is designed for discussing several topics during a class period. Students divide into groups according to particular topics and serve as consultants to each other. They can be instructed to report out briefly at the end of the activity to share what was discussed and to solicit additional short feedback from the entire class. *(Inquiry, Collaboration)*

Cornell Notes
With Cornell Notes, students take detailed notes from class lectures and texts in a wide right-hand margin and develop clarifying ideas or questions regarding these notes in a narrow left-hand margin. This helps students develop long-term retention and a deeper understanding of the material studied. *(Writing, Reading)*

Dialectical Journal
Dialectical Journals allow students to record their thoughts in preparation for a discussion with a partner, small group, or the entire class. The following is a list of activities that students may do to interact with lecture notes, text, or video. With each activity students should divide their paper in half and place notes on the right side. They should then be instructed to respond to these notes on the left side in one or more of the following ways. *(Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Reading)*

- Create a graphic organizer(s) to visually represent the major ideas.
- Write a one-sentence summary to capture the main idea.
- Explain the significance of a particular piece of information.
- Make an inference in terms of what a fact suggests about the time period, event, etc.
- Create an analogy to show similarity between relationships.
- Develop a "what if" statement that speculates what might have happened if an event had not occurred or had occurred differently.
- Make a connection to a similar event which may have occurred recently or in the past.
- Turn the title, heading, or subheading into questions.
- Create new titles, headings, and subheadings for each section.
- Write a simile or metaphor for an idea, event, or person.

Field Trips

Cultural field trips help students to develop an appreciation for the arts. The experience is even more enriching if students prepare notes and give brief presentations based on their discoveries or if they participate in student-guided discussions on their findings. *(Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration)*

Fishbowl Discussion

To participate in a Fishbowl Discussion, students first read and respond to a leading question. Then a group of four to eight students gathers in the middle of the room while the remainder of the class forms an outside circle around them. The group in the middle discusses the topic while the outside observers write comments about the discussion to share during the debriefing session. Students then write a journal entry on the topic, summarizing their feelings and/or insights from the discussion. *(Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Reading)*

Four-Corner Discussion

In this activity, students should take a position and then share their ideas with others with similar and opposing views. To do this, students must read a text or watch a video about a particular topic and respond to a specific statement related to the topic by walking to one of four corners of the room labeled as *strongly agree*, *somewhat agree*, *strongly disagree,* and *somewhat disagree*. After a discussion, the groups will decide on a position statement and develop reasoning to be presented to the whole class. After the groups present their viewpoints, a class discussion may ensue in which students ask questions of another group. Students may change corners if they are influenced by the logic presented. Ultimately students should write a reflection about the ideas that influenced their position. *(Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Reading)*

Interview

 This practice may be done as mock classroom interviews as well as interviews with school personnel and representatives from the business community. Students may prepare practice questions in small groups. *(Inquiry, Collaboration)*

Jigsaw

When discussion of new information is desired, but time is limited, this technique is useful. Students should divide into groups of four *home groups*. Each member of the home group should be assigned a number one through four. Students should then form new groups with students sharing the same number assignment. These new groups are called *expert groups*. Each expert group should be given the same article to read and discuss before returning to their home groups and sharing. *(Inquiry, Collaboration, Reading)*

Learning Logs

The Learning Log is a journal in which students make regular entries of their thoughts and reflections on what they are learning in class. In their logs, students may address questions such as *What did I do in class today? What did I learn? What did I find interesting? What questions do I have about what I learned? What was the point of today's lesson? What connections did I make to previous ideas or lessons?* Learning Logs can also be used as a starting point for a collaborative session. *(Writing)*

The Listening Game

After hearing student presentations, the class is divided into five or six groups to discuss their notes. Then one student at a time from each group is called to the front of the room to answer questions based on the presentations. As each team member answers correctly, s/he receives a point for the team for that round. After a set time, these students are replaced at the front of the room by one new student from each team to begin the second round. The process is continued until all team members have participated. *(Inquiry, Collaboration)*

Meeting of the Minds
With this activity, students should research diverse characters from a specific time period and then engage in a "meeting of the minds" (conversation) in small groups or in a fishbowl setting. To do this, students should choose a character from a unit of study or time period, research him or her, and then write three questions that the character would ask each of the other characters on an assigned topic. The questions should be different for each character and should be written from the assigned character's perspective. Discussing a topic from different perspectives develops critical thinking skills and allows each student to compare his/her ideas and opinions with that of classmates. *(Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Reading)*

Pair Share
This activity is helpful when it is necessary to have small group discussions of individual issues. After completing an assigned reading, students should share their responses to open-ended questions with a partner. A whole-class discussion should follow. *(Inquiry, Collaboration, Reading)*

Parking Lot
This technique assesses levels of understanding at various intervals of a lesson. In preparation for the next day's lesson, students should be provided with sticky notes on which to write questions or statements about a given topic or concept. They should place their notes on a large chart that is posted in the room. The chart should be divided into three sections and labeled with headings such as *I Don't Understand*, *I Am Starting to Understand*, and *I Completely Understand*. The teacher should take note of the questions and use them in preparing the lesson. At key points in the lesson, students should be allowed to collaborate and to move their sticky notes to the section most representing their level of understanding. The teacher is able to determine a general level of understanding among the students and to adjust the instruction accordingly. With this method, students who are hesitant to ask questions orally will have their concerns addressed. *(Inquiry, Collaboration)*

Philosophical Chairs
Philosophical Chairs is a technique that allows students to critically think, ponder, and write their beliefs. First, the chairs in the room should be arranged in the shape of a horseshoe. Then students should come to class with notes taken on an article, short story, essay, or literary selection. After being presented with a statement that will elicit thought and discussion, they should be told they will argue the merits of the statement and that their choice of seat during the discussion will illustrate their stance. For example, if they agree with the statement, they should sit on the right side of the room. If they disagree, they should sit on the left, and if they are undecided, they should sit in the back. After collaborating with their peers, students from each side should take turns arguing their stance. At designated intervals, students should be given the opportunity to change sides if they change their viewpoint. A good follow-up to this activity would be to write an argumentative essay. *(Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Reading)*

Problem-Solution Journal
In this journal students record their thinking about possible solutions to problems being investigated. This strategy assists students in making connections between problems and solutions of the past and those of today. Students should divide into groups and separate their papers into three columns. The left column should represent the problems investigated; the middle column, a brainstorming of possible ideas; and the right column, a list of realistic solutions. *(Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Reading)*

Quickspeak
This activity is the oral equivalent of the Quickwrite. A student draws a topic from a stack of index cards, thinks about it for five seconds, and then speaks before the class for a predetermined time. The topics are based on prior reading assignments. *(Reading)*

Quickwrite

This activity is the written equivalent of the Quickspeak. Students write continuously for a brief period of time on a given topic. This is an effective way to have all students think about a topic or to prepare for a collaborative session. It also encourages greater student participation and improves critical thinking. *(Writing)*

Round Robin

As an ice breaker, students should circulate the room and share one thing that they've learned and one concern or problem they have on a given topic. Sharing what they've learned gives students a chance to be positive and proud. Sharing the concern or problem opens discussion. *(Inquiry, Collaboration)*

Slips

This is a quick, anonymous, and comfortable way to gather questions in preparation for an assessment. Each student hands in questions on a 3x5 note card. These questions then serve as the catalyst for an oral discussion and review. *(Inquiry, Collaboration)*

Socratic Seminar

Socratic Seminars are teacher or student-led dialogues on specific texts that encourage participants to think for themselves. These seminars develop the ability to analyze through close and collaborative questioning of the meaning of a text, work of art or music, or a presentation. Through dialogue students explore an idea and weigh evidence while being open to different views. *(Inquiry, Collaboration, Reading)*

Speakaround

This is a group activity in which one person from the group draws a topic from a stack of index cards. Every member of the group sees the topic and has a brief time to think about it in silence. The first student then speaks on the topic and continues until s/he stalls. Any other student in the group then begins to continue speaking on the topic. The process continues until all members of the group have spoken. The topics are based on prior reading assignments. *(Inquiry, Collaboration, Reading)*

SQ3R

This technique should be used when taking textbook notes. The student should **S**urvey the entire reading selection, turn the headings into **Q**uestions, **R**ead to answer the questions, **R**ecite while reading the text, and **R**eview the entire chapter after completing the reading. *(Writing, Reading)*

Timed Writings

Timed Writings are first draft writings that assess a student's ability to develop and organize thoughts quickly. Content, organization, and focus are key to developing effective timed writings. These writings are generally based on a prior reading. *(Writing, Reading)*

Note: These strategies represent only some of those recognized by AVID. Other similar strategies should be included in curriculum guides as well.

Dearie, Kurt, Jill Halaska, and Gary Kroesch. *The Write Path II: An Advanced College Preparatory Reading and Writing Program for High Schools.* San Diego: AVID Center, 2004.

Swanson, Mary Catherine. *AVID Summer Institute 2004 Participant Materials.* San Diego: AVID Center, 2004.

Swanson, Mary Catherine, Mary Contreras, Debra Cota, and Rob Gira. *AVID: Implementing and Managing the AVID Program for High Schools.* San Diego: AVID Center, 2004.