**GIST**

**Background**

GIST summaries require students to pare down information into a 20-word summary. The

process helps students better comprehend content material. Frey, Fisher, and Hernandez (2003),

offer this strategy for creating GIST summaries.

GIST summaries do not require special reading materials and consequently enables teachers to use the reading material of their choice. This offers teachers flexibility for incorporating the strategy into various content areas. GIST summaries provide direct opportunities for a teacher to circulate in the class, observe students, and offer individual remediation.

**Create and use the strategy**

Choose the assigned reading and introduce the text to the students. Then create pairs within the classroom by identifying which children require help on specific skills and who the most appropriate children are to help other children learn those skills. Model the activity to ensure that students understand how to use the strategy.

A suggestion to ***initially model*** the GIST summarization strategy is to use a format that combines the *Journalists’ Questions* with the 20-word GIST. ***Before asking students to create their own GIST summaries, model the process detailed below.***

**1.** Select content-related newspaper articles for students to read. Allow students to work in pairs as they learn the strategy.

**2.** Students read the article and identify the 5 Ws and an H on the GIST template (who, what, when, where, why, and how).

**3.** Using the 5 Ws and an H as a reference, students write 20-word summaries (GISTs).

**4.** Once students have mastered writing a GIST using articles, the strategy is then applied to content area texts to support comprehension and summarizing skills.

After the initial modeling of this process, the GIST strategy can be transferred to other content area reading material. During this process teachers should:

**1.** Distribute a short piece of text that is divided into four or five sections. Sections should

mark logical summarizing spots. The end of each section should be identified with the word STOP.

**2.** Explain the GIST format—Read a portion of the text, stop, write a summarizing statement for each portion so that at the end of the reading, students should have a concise summary.

**3.** Introduce the text by connecting with students’ prior knowledge. Identify key vocabulary words.

**4.** Read aloud the first passage.

**5.** Lead class discussion and make note of key ideas.

**6.** Craft a GIST statement. Students write the sentence in notebooks or journals.

**7.** Read aloud the remaining passages and complete the above sequence for each section.

**8.** Combine the GIST statements into a concise summary of the material.

Teachers should provide support to those students who are struggling to summarize the material. Ensure that students adhere to the 20-word rule, and that their summaries capture the main idea of the reading selection.