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Graphic Organizers Teach Elementary Students Life-long Critical-thinking Skills

COLUMBUS, OH—When test scores are down and instruction is not working, occasionally struggling students need to be taught *how* to think. Developing students' critical-thinking skills at a young age is important for life-long success. In fact, some schools are being required to use products that utilize scientifically-based research techniques, such as the use of graphic organizers. Graphic organizers provide students with a step-by-step critical-thinking and organizational process that allows a student to learn not only how to think, but how to best communicate ideas.

The use of graphic organizers also benefits educators by providing a quick and easy method to assess where a student is breaking down in his or her thought process. In addition, graphic organizers provide an opportunity for teachers to respond with appropriate lessons. Supplemental materials, like the *On Target* Series, published by Show What You Know® Publishing provides a systematic approach to teaching critical-thinking skills and provides opportunities for students to practice skills visually, using graphic organizers for reading, writing, and mathematics.

Critical-thinking skills are best learned when a student begins early in life. The ability to think critically is a key for academic success. It means not taking what you hear or read at face value, but analyzing and reasoning with the information instead. Developing effective critical-thinking skills involves breaking down information into small parts, and understanding the relationship between these parts in order to understand the whole picture.

Materials like the *On Target* series use graphic organizers to develop critical-thinking skills. *Read on Target*, which includes reading maps, focus on the steps to teach students to breakdown information and show the relationship in the text. When these skills are used daily, and in a repetitive manner, students develop consistency in the way they process and comprehend reading. *Write on Target* reviews all five communication processes and teach lessons that concentrate on how to organize thoughts clearly and efficiently when using writing. Similarly, *Math on Target* provides a systematic approach for working through any math problem and includes thinking maps to improve problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

According to Pamela Thompson, co-author of *Read on Target*, "Early Instruction that is targeted to develop and support critical-thinking skills through the use of graphic organizers helps students effectively organize information and become more successful overall."

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Information about "On Target" supplemental materials are available by calling Show What You Know® Publishing at (877) PASSING or by visiting www.passthetaks.com.