

Junior Achievement and CRISS®: *A Natural Partnership*



From left to right are: Jim Feimster, world geographer teacher; Wes Hall, JA graduate; and Glenna Kyker, JA volunteer and CRISS Trainer

By Glenna Kyker, Ph.D.

There is only one school district in the world that requires every student to learn about international business and economics through Junior Achievement (JA)—Katy ISD, a district of 48,000 students sixteen miles west of downtown Houston, Texas. Good for them, but how does that relate to CRISS?

Last year, my first year as a JA volunteer at two high schools and a junior high, I routinely implemented CRISS strategies to activate students' background knowledge prior to reading and we used Two-Column Notes. In several lessons, I used Think-Pair-Share, Concept of Definition Maps, and One-Sentence Summary Frames, even though they weren't in the volunteer's guide. What a joy it was to open the new guide and to see those familiar CRISS strategies and more on page 5!

How did they get there? Sally Farr and Ginny Garvic, two of the district's social studies curriculum specialists, are also CRISS trainers. While revising sixth and ninth grade JA material to fit Katy ISD curriculum, they incorporated CRISS strategies into KISD's JA Guide for Consultants and Teachers.

At the ninth grade level, the one I teach as a volunteer, Two-Column Notes and at least one of the following—RAFT, Picture Maps, Think-Pair-Share, or Concept of Definition Maps—are part of each lesson. Of course, I always introduce new concepts by eliciting the students' background knowledge.

Examples of CRISS implementation from JA lessons

"Model Two-Column Notes for concepts in the shaded boxes, i.e., market, goods and services, trade, exports, imports."

"Use Think-Pair-Share for students to identify one thing they export from their households to earn money or 'raise revenue,' e.g., time, expertise, or work performed."

"...create a RAFT convincing travelers to visit their selected country because of, or in spite of, the [currency] exchange rates."

"Complete the Concept of Definition Map for Special Economic Zones, helping students fill in the areas using the transparency."

These strategies are extremely helpful to consultant volunteers, predominantly business professionals who have not been in a classroom since they graduated from college. Another plus for busy professionals is knowing that what they try will work! The guesswork is removed. The volunteers appear to appreciate the recommended CRISS strategies for teaching the Junior Achievement curriculum. I know I do!

Bill Land is coordinator of Junior Achievement for Katy ISD. Sally Farr is Social Studies Curriculum Specialist for grades 8-12. Ginny Garvic, Social Studies Curriculum Specialist K-7, is responsible for CRISS strategies in the sixth grade "Day with JA."

To learn more about Junior Achievement, please visit their Web site. <http://www.ja.org/>.

About the Author-Dr. Glenna Kyker was a CRISS trainer in Florida before moving to Texas. While in Florida, she gave CRISS workshops in prisons training inmates how to effectively use CRISS strategies. She retired in 2004 from public education in Katy, Texas, where she has a tutoring service, encouraging her staff to attend CRISS workshops. Also, Glenna gives each parent client a copy of *Project CRISS for Parents*.

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