



Guided Viewing Principles and Practices (Hebert, 2006)

According to an article in the *Gifted Child Today* journal, authors Thomas Hébert and Daniel Hammond asserted that guided viewing is a tool that can be used to help teachers and counselors guide students towards problem solving and self-understanding. While the authors discussed the concept of guided viewing within the confines of social-emotional development, the practice can be used in other curriculum areas for young children since PBS television programming for children ages 8 and under typically involves characters and storylines that students can follow.

In a broad sense, the objective of guided viewing is to "...have students identify with the characters, reflect on that identification, make connections with the issues faced by the characters in the film [or television program], and experience emotional growth as a result." (Hebert, 2006). However, as families use television time as a learning tool incorporating the practice of guided viewing can also produce academic gains. Guided viewing happens in four stages while the parent and child are watching television together.

The first stage of guided viewing is identification. During this stage, parents help children to recognize similarities between the characters in the program and themselves. For example, when watching *SuperWhy!* the parent might make statements like, "Princess Presto is a girl just like you!" or, "She is learning to read just like you," at the onset of the program. This practice also helps to build interest in the program for the subsequent stages.

The next stage, catharsis, is when the child starts to vicariously experience emotional reactions similar to the characters in the program. For example, the child suddenly displays a sad facial expression when the Princess Presto character experiences a problem that makes her sad during the program. At that point the parent might ask the child to explain why Princess Presto became sad. To extend the conversation to the insight stage, the parent might ask the child if they have ever experienced a similar problem and then instruct the child to pay attention to how Princess Presto solves the problem.

In the final stage, application, when the child is engaged in independent work (such as school work) parents will examine how the child is operating to determine if they are using the strategies from the television program. An example would be if the child is attempting to "sound out" a word when reading, are they doing it like Princess Presto did? If not, then the parent would ask the child to recount how Princess Presto figured out how to read words in the program and encourage them to employ the strategy.

Following the four stages, the parent might extend the learning by discussing other topics presented in the program by other characters. Through the post-program discussion, the strategies of other characters can be introduced to offer cross-curricular learning support.