



RESEARCH ARTICLE



ENHANCING READING ABILITY USING EFFICIENT READING TECHNIQUES

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ABSTRACT

In the realm of education, it's evident that imparting reading strategies holds the key to enhancing student comprehension. However, the shortfall lies in equipping educators with a robust foundation for teaching these strategies effectively. This study delves into the realm of action research. The present paper focuses on the efficient reading strategies like prediction, making connections, visualizing, inferential, questioning, and summarizing.



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INTRODUCTION

Reading, an enduring skillfulness woven into the fabric of our lives, is hailed by Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson as a fundamental life skill—an indispensable cornerstone for academic triumph and lifelong success. The stakes are high, as articulated by Anderson in 1985: a deficiency in reading proficiency not only jeopardizes success in school but also forecloses avenues to personal fulfillment and professional achievement. In the educational landscape, the challenge of nurturing effective readers persists, exacerbated by the escalating demand for heightened literacy in our tech-driven society (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

The intricate interplay of students' attitudes towards reading purposes further influences their reading prowess. The quest for extracting maximum value from assigned materials hinges on cultivating critical and analytical reading skills. Teele underscores this pursuit, asserting that the essence of reading lies in unveiling the invisible sheet or layer—the underlying meaning. In navigating the textual landscape, readers confront two realities: the visible and the concealed. Thus, the purpose of reading crystallizes into making the unseen, the profound meaning, discernible and lucid (p. 92, Teele 2004). Research underscores that adept readers enthusiastically engage with manuscript, cognizant of the processes employed to unravel its meaning. Teachers, armed with this insight, become catalysts for enhancing comprehension through strategic instruction. The arsenal of predictive, connective, visualizing, inferential, questioning, and summarizing strategies, illuminated by Block & Israel in 2005,

emerges as a beacon. Importantly, the pedagogical approach advocated by Duke & Pearson in 2005 emphasizes not only naming and explicating these strategies but also modeling through think-aloud processes, facilitating group and partner practice, and ultimately empowering students to autonomously wield these comprehension-enhancing tools.

PREDICTION

Setting a purpose for reading is crucial for effective comprehension. Research indicates that skilled readers enhance understanding by predicting, drawing upon their experiences and knowledge (Block & Israel, 2005). Engaging in prediction not only fosters student interaction but also elevates interest and comprehension (Oczkus, 2003). It's vital to compare predictions with the actual text, driving learners to refine their understanding (Duke & Pearson, 2005). Various strategies, such as teacher modeling and using graphic organizers, can be employed to teach prediction, ensuring a comprehensive approach to reading improvement.

VISUALIZING

Skilled readers enhance their comprehension through visualization, a strategy involving the construction of mental images based on the text (Adler, 2001). These images serve as memory representations, reflecting the reader's analysis of the content (National Reading Panel, 2000). Encouraging students to picture settings, characters, and actions fosters engagement, and prompting them to articulate or draw their mental images enhances their connection with the text.



MAKING CONNECTIONS

Establishing connections is a nuanced strategy integral to the reading process. By forging these connections, learners activate their preexisting knowledge, intertwining textual concepts with their personal experiences. Reading achieves profound meaning when readers correlate text ideas with their own beliefs and the unfolding events in the broader world. Employing Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, and Text-to-World connections is paramount. Students can articulate Text-to-Self connections through intricate methods such as drawing, creating charts, or engaging in expressive writing. Teachers, in guiding the process, may prompt students to draw parallels between their own experiences and the events within the text. Text-to-Text connections, enriched through drawing, charting, writing, and structured graphic organizers, delve into the relationships among characters or the thematic resonance between stories. Students can explore Text-to-World connections through artful expressions, charting, writing, or utilizing graphic organizers. Comparisons between characters in a narrative and contemporary figures or aligning text content with the current world context exemplify Text-to-World connections (Teele, 2004). Facilitating students in uncovering these connections not only enhances their comprehension but also fosters a profound engagement with the textual ideas.

SUMMARIZING

Summarization, as a cognitive process, mandates the reader to discern the essence of significance within the text and articulate it in one's own

language (Adler, 2001). In the meticulous act of summarizing, students are tasked with discriminating between primary concepts and ancillary details, thereby honing their capacity for discernment. A pivotal facet of the summarization process involves segregating pertinent knowledge from extraneous information, contributing significantly to the enhancement of a student's textual comprehension. This strategic approach to summarizing not only facilitates the organization of ideas but also proves invaluable in navigating through extensive reading passages, often perceived as formidable challenges by students.

QUESTIONING

The art of questioning, when meticulously applied before, during, and after reading, represents a multifaceted cognitive endeavor. This process entails readers skillfully posing inquiries to themselves, transcending mere inquiry to construct meaning, amplify comprehension, unearth solutions, resolve problems, acquire information, and unearth novel insights (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). As part of this strategic approach, students cyclically revisit the text throughout the reading continuum to seek answers to queries posed by the teacher at various stages—before, during, and after the reading. This method not only fosters the development of discernment in students but also cultivates the ability to differentiate between questions grounded in factual information, those requiring inference, and those tapping into the reader's preexisting knowledge reservoir. Employing the student-generated questioning strategy, wherein learners actively generate queries, serves to amalgamate text segments cohesively, thereby



elevating the tapestry of reading comprehension (NRP, 2000). This intricate engagement with questioning not only enhances the interpretative depth of reading but also refines the reader's ability to navigate the complexities embedded within the text.

INFERRING

The concept of inferring transcends mere textual comprehension, delving into the nuanced art of discerning implicit meanings. It entails students harnessing their reservoir of knowledge in tandem with textual information, culminating in the extraction of their own interpretative conclusions (Serafini, 2004). This cognitive process empowers students to not only deduce outcomes and forecast future developments but also to unravel latent themes and construct significance from the textual fabric (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Equipping students with the adeptness to employ varied elements such as illustrations, graphs, images, chronological references, pertinent vocabulary, and textual titles fosters their ability to seamlessly engage in the act of inference.

ACTION RESEARCH QUESTION

This research endeavors to elevate the echelons of reading comprehension by strategically deploying nuanced reading methodologies. The erudite teacher-researcher posits that, bereft of a robust underpinning in these methodologies, students may grapple with academic and adult challenges. The researcher aspires to illuminate the corridors of reading comprehension for her students by imparting a nuanced understanding of reading strategies. It is the conjecture of the researcher that

through this pedagogical intervention, students will organically cultivate a more profound and meaningful engagement with the written word. The crux of the research inquiry crystallizes into the incisive question: "Can the implementation of reading strategies significantly enhance my students' prowess in comprehending written texts?" The overarching objective of this study hinges upon scrutinizing the perceptible enhancements in students' reading acumen subsequent to their exposure to instructional sessions on reading strategies. This analytical pursuit seeks to unravel the transformative potential inherent in the deliberate application of such pedagogical tools.

Data collection instrument and the process of the research

The erudite teacher-researcher adeptly employed six cognitive conduits: prediction, contextual connections, visualization, inference, interrogation, and summarization. These strategies underwent a pedagogical immersion lasting three weeks. Embarking on this scholarly odyssey, the teacher-researcher initiated the process with a comprehensive "Reading Awareness Survey" to discern the extant levels of cognizance among students regarding the prescribed strategies. The empirical findings unveiled a notable revelation: a staggering 9 out of the 14 students demonstrated unfamiliarity with these strategic pathways. The subsequent phases witnessed an intricate pedagogical ballet where the teacher-researcher meticulously modeled these strategies, cascading from whole-class engagements to small group dynamics and ultimately fostering independent



application. In the aftermath of this instructive interlude, the teacher-researcher judiciously administered the Meta comprehension Strategy Index (MSI) to gauge the transformative impact of the strategies on students' comprehension. This evaluative tool adeptly unraveled the intricacies of students' familiarity with reading strategies employed before, during, and after their reading ventures.

IMPLICATIONS

Future research endeavors on refined reading strategies are poised to embrace a more expansive and diverse random sample. Employing varied instruments, such as a meticulously crafted checklist, to systematically document the weekly progression of each student, with a focus on active participation and a proclivity for specific strategies, presents a promising avenue for discerning researchers. Additionally, an exploration into nuanced disparities in meta-comprehension between female and male students could be a compelling facet for subsequent investigators. Within preparatory school cohorts, a meticulous examination of students spanning disparate levels of English proficiency promises insights into discernible variations in linguistic competence. A comprehensive analysis involving a broader cohort of students is imperative for a nuanced comprehension of these distinctions. This empirical inquiry could also be bifurcated, with two distinct groups subjected to scrutiny by separate researchers, thereby facilitating a meticulous comparative analysis of the findings.

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