



Comprehension – Integrated Strategies

Introduction

Successful readers use multiple cognitive strategies in a flexible and personalised way to comprehend text. These readers also use metacognitive processes to regulate their use of strategies, monitor for comprehension breakdown and apply alternate strategies to improve their understanding. Students with disabilities and those with reading difficulties require explicit teaching to do this. The simultaneous use of multiple comprehension strategies, as we see in Reciprocal Teaching and Collaborative Strategic Reading, assists with maintenance and generalisation of the skills learned.

Reciprocal teaching

Reciprocal reading combines comprehension strategies and cooperative learning. Reciprocal teaching focuses on before, during and after reading. It is a set of procedures to assist students to learn strategies, to know when to use them and to recognise that they are using them. They are most appropriate for students who can decode text adequately but who have difficulty understanding what it means.

It is an instructional activity in which students become the leader in small group reading sessions. First teachers model the process, then the teacher helps the students learn to guide group discussions using the four strategies: predicting, clarifying, questioning and summarizing. When students have learned the process, they take turns assuming the role of teacher in leading a dialogue about what has been read.

Having taught each component strategy, the use of Reciprocal Teaching allows for review and generalisation of these strategies.

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR)

Collaborative strategic reading also combines comprehension strategies and cooperative learning. Comprehension strategies reflect the mental processes or tactics used by successful readers when interacting with text. (Programming and Strategies Handbook, 2000, p.135)

Student strategies include previewing the text; giving ongoing feedback by deciding 'click' (I get it) or 'clunk' (I don't get it) at the end of each paragraph; 'getting the gist' of the most important parts of the text; and 'wrapping up' key ideas.

Although CSR was designed to be used with non-fiction text, it can also be used with narrative text. It was developed to enhance reading comprehension skills for students with learning disabilities and students at risk

of reading difficulties. CSR has also yielded positive outcomes for average and high average achieving students (Klingner & Vaughn, 1996; Klingner, Vaughn, & Schumm, in press).

References

NSW Department of Education and Training: Student Services and Equity Programs: Disabilities and Learning Difficulties Unit , (2000). *Programming and strategies handbook*.

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/103/> - cited 13/1/12