



Comprehension- Strategy Instruction

Introduction

The Self Regulated Strategy Development model has been well validated with over 20 years of research support (Harris & Graham, 2003; Hagaman et al, 2010).

Strategy instruction should be adapted to suit the student and instruction should continue until the student has mastered the use of the strategy. That means they can consistently use the strategy correctly.

Mastery learning occurs when students are not advanced to the next level of learning until they demonstrate proficiency with the current one. This means performing the skill with greater than or equal to 80% accuracy on at least three occasions.

The Six Stages of Strategy Instruction

1. **Develop and activate teacher's background knowledge of strategy and students skills** (teacher)
 - a. Define the steps of the strategy and the skills needed to carry out each step.
 - b. Determine whether the students are able to carry out these steps through observation, assessment, asking questions.
2. **Discuss the strategy, including benefits and expectations** (class)
 - a. Sell the strategy – it will help performance – we need student 'buy in'.
 - b. Explanation of what each step is for, how it is used, where it is useful.
 - c. Monitor student understanding and adjust strategy teaching to suit students.
3. **Model the strategy** (teacher)

Use a metacognitive task breakdown:

 - a. Why am I doing this step in the task?
 - b. How did I know to do it?
 - c. What are the important actions, cues or questions?

d. What knowledge do I need?

4. **Memorize the strategy** (student)

- a. 'You can use it if you can remember it' – use cue cards, mnemonics e.g. RAP (**R**ead, **A**sk myself questions, **P**araphrase), K-W-L (What I think I **K**now, what I **W**ant to find out, What I **L**earned or games for recall
- b. Involves knowing how and understanding what is involved in each step

5. **Guided practice - Support the strategy collaboratively** (teacher & class)

In this stage the teacher and student(s) work together collaboratively and practice using the strategy until the student is able to perform the strategy effectively and independently. During this stage, teachers and students repeatedly model strategy use and discuss how, when and why to use the strategy.

One key aspect of supporting the strategy is the 'scaffolding' process. Initially, teachers perform all or most of a task while modelling and using student input. Over time, the teacher increasingly shifts responsibility for performance to the student. As students gain experience with and confidence in the use of the strategy, teacher support is gradually withdrawn until the student uses the strategy independently.

For students with reading difficulties:

- a. transfer from teacher to student is gradual,
- b. adequate time and support is required so they can master the strategy, and
- c. the teacher provides corrective feedback and modifies the strategy if necessary.

6. **Independent practice - Use the strategy independently** (student)

- a. Monitor student performance – strategy use should lead to increased academic performance
- b. Check on proper and consistent strategy use by ensuring mastery.
- c. Mastery requires that the student can correctly complete the task over a number of days. It is essential to revisit previous learnt skills to ensure they have been truly mastered.

Taken from "Strategy Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities" Robert Reid and Tori Ortiz Lienemann (page 33 – 42)

The Use of Self-Regulation

Self-regulation strategies are important for students with special needs because there is good reason to believe that the academic difficulties, including reading difficulties of these students is due, at least in part, to problems in self-regulation of organised strategic behaviours (Graham et al., 1992).

The above steps are taught alongside the following self regulation strategies:

Goal setting

Teacher and student discuss performance in an area and decide on an appropriate goal, determine a timeline for meeting a goal and establish how progress toward the goal can be monitored. It is best for the teacher to help with setting the goal to ensure it is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound as well as moderately challenging. The teacher also needs to establish procedures to help the student attain the goal.

Self instruction (self talk)

Students talk themselves through a task or activity.

Self monitoring

This occurs when an individual self assesses whether a particular behavior has occurred and self records. For example, a student self monitors strategy use by determining whether or not the steps in a strategy were performed.

Self reinforcement

This can be combined with goal setting and self monitoring. The teacher should determine the criteria for achieving the reward and the teacher should select the reinforcement. The student can be involved in this process.

References

Reid , R. & Lienemann, T.O. (2006). Strategy instruction for students with learning disabilities. Guilford Press: New York.