

The Effectiveness of Reading Strategies on Reading Comprehension

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Abstract. *Reading is a habit where students learn, gain knowledge, and develop new skills. This research aimed to investigate the effectiveness of reading strategies on reading comprehension. The findings were that reading strategies had a positive effect on the students' reading comprehension. The students had favourable attitudes towards skimming, scanning, making predictions and questioning and they could apply these strategies to their reading processes and they helped them to comprehend the text better.*

Key words: *reading skills, knowledge , habit , scanning , skimming , making predictions.*

Introduction.

Reading is a lifelong skill for academic learning and success in school.

However, the students face the problem of not understanding the passages of what they had read. {1} This is reflected in their poor reading scores. In reading, students need to use various strategies to help them in the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information [2]. Therefore, reading strategies are assumed to be important for students reading comprehension and the reading strategies equip the students with the skills of how to handle their reading effectively. Research reveals that good readers are actively involved with the text and they are aware of processes they use to understand while they read. Teachers can help students improve their reading comprehension through reading strategies. Reading strategies are purposeful means of comprehending the author's message [3].They are believed to influence readers in adjusting their reading behaviours to work on text difficulty, task demands and other contextual variables. Adams [4] identified the types of reading strategies as follows:

A. Skimming

Skimming is a reading technique for speed reading. The purpose of skimming is to get an overview of the organization of the text and its main idea from a passage in a book. To skim a passage, the readers read through the passage quickly and skips the details. They read the first sentence of each paragraph. Each paragraph usually contains a topic sentence which states the main idea. McWhorter [5] suggests a topic sentence can appear differently within a paragraph. The most common location of a topic sentence appears in the first sentence of the first paragraph. The second most likely place for a topic sentence is the first sentence of the last paragraph.

B. Scanning

Scanning is a reading skill that allows the reader to locate specific information quickly. With scanning you already know before you begin what sort of information you are searching for. The purpose of scanning is to get specific information. Scanning is especially important for improving your reading. Many students try to read every word when they read, so they read very slowly. Scanning can help the students learn to read and understand faster.

C. Making Predictions

Hutchinson [6] defines prediction as “A matter of using an existing knowledge of a pattern or system in order to anticipate what is likely in a novel situation”. Many researches have shown that good readers use their experiences and background knowledge to make predictions and formulate ideas as they read [7]. This strategy also allows students interaction, which increases students’ interests and improves their understanding of the text [8]. Making predictions is a strategy in which readers use information from picture, title, to make predictions about the story. The title of a text can operate memories of texts, permitting them to guess the content of a new text. During reading, successful readers can make predictions about what will occur next, or what opinions the writer will offer to support a discussion. Readers try to assess these predictions ceaselessly and change any prediction that is not approved by the reading [9].

D. Questioning

Questioning helps students monitor their comprehension and stay engaged and interested in their reading. Readers can use the questioning before, during, and after reading. The questioning process requires readers to ask questions of themselves to construct meaning, enhance understanding, find answers, solve problems, find information, and discover new information [10]. In this strategy, the students return to the text throughout the reading process to find the answers to the questions. Questioning helps students to clarify and comprehend what they are reading. In this strategy, asking appropriate questions permits successful readers to concentrate on the most important information of a text [11]. Asking questions while involving in the reading process provides students with an opportunity to think about what are they reading, be active and independent readers, and be able to appropriately reflect on their reading [12].

To become readers, students must develop both the skills and knowledge needed to read the words on the printed page (‘code-based’ skills) and to understand complex texts (‘meaning-based’ skills). As shown below, code-based skills are central to mastering what we think of as the

“mechanics” of reading—these skills include the ability to effectively, and, with practice, automatically map letters to their respective sounds in combinations, and therefore to read the words on the page. To read words effectively, the reader has mastered the relationship between 26 letters and 44 sounds and their different combinations in written words. In the context of our ultimate goal for every reader to comprehend complex text, we think of code-based skills as necessary but not sufficient. Meaning-based skills are the skills that more directly relate to comprehending text. For instance, all language skills, such as oral language, vocabulary, and listening comprehension, are considered meaning-based skills because they are needed to access and apply a text’s message.

As students advance in their language learning skills, reading comprehension becomes easier. This is because each new word, idea or reference adds to the brain’s “bank.” “Connecting new knowledge with old knowledge makes it easy to understand and remember the text later,” points out Escar. “That’s because you are activating prior knowledge and linking a piece of writing to similar writings, cultural experiences, and the world, deepening the meaning of the text and making it relatable.”

Reading comprehension is essential for language and literature, as well as developing a student’s critical thinking and memory skills focus and their ability to solve problems — all necessary for every kind of student or professional.

An advanced education degree in literacy can equip professionals with the necessary skills to help students of all ages and backgrounds build reading comprehension and literacy skills that will serve them in every area of life.

Students are encouraged to plan before reading so that reading has a clear goal or purpose, to continually monitor their understanding during reading, and to apply repair strategies when breakdowns in understanding occur. To improve self-monitoring, the teacher may model for students how to do one or all of the following:

-think about what they already know before they start reading and during reading;

- be aware of whether they understand what they are reading;
- employ strategies to identify difficult words, concepts, and ideas; ask themselves:
- “Does this make sense?”; and be aware of how a particular text is organized.

One of the most important features of explicit instruction is the teacher’s gradual release to students of responsibility for strategy use, with the goal that students apply strategies independently. However, teachers do not ask students to work on their own until the students have demonstrated that they understand a strategy and how and when to use it.

Conclusion.

The findings of this study showed that reading strategies have a great impact on the students’ reading comprehension ability. Students have revealed that skimming, scanning, making predictions and questioning strategies have helped the students’ reading comprehension. The students had positive attitudes towards these strategies. Students needed to be trained or guide on the use of different reading strategies so that they would know how to apply these strategies for successful comprehension of academic materials. Teachers will require the skills in order to teach reading strategies that will assist students in understanding and applying the appropriate strategies to become skilled readers.

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