



Research-Based Reading Comprehension Strategies

Activating Prior Knowledge/ Predicting

Good readers use what they already know to help make sense of what they are reading. They also use their knowledge to make predictions about the text and then verify their predictions as they continue to read.

To activate prior knowledge teachers can: brainstorm ideas regarding the title, encourage discussions about the topic, use semantic maps prior to and during reading, develop questions to be answered during reading, and use visual aids. Help the students to make connections to their lives and past experiences.

Questioning

Good readers ask questions before, during and after reading.

To help students learn how to ask questions during reading: prompt students to ask both “surface” and “under the surface” questions. Examples of under the surface questions include: “What is the author trying to say?”

Visualizing

Good readers form mental images or pictures in their mind as they are reading the text.

Teachers can help students form mental images by: Stopping periodically at parts in a story while reading text aloud to the class to share mental images (e.g. “After reading this paragraph, I am picturing in my mind....”) . Encouraging students to draw scenes can also help students understand that making “movies in their minds” while reading helps with understanding.

Monitoring, Clarifying, and Fixing Up

Good readers know when they are struggling to understand the text and are able to apply strategies to help them understand. Good readers re-read text, restate in their own words what is happening, read sentences before and after confusing parts to help with clarification, and use context or visual cues to help them understand.

Teachers can help students learn these strategies by: While reading text aloud to students, provide a think-aloud during a part of confusing text (e.g. “um, I’m not sure what this means, I’m going to re-read...”). Having students restate sections of text in their own words and check for their own understanding of what they are reading are good strategies in improving reading comprehension.

Drawing Inferences

Good readers can “read between the lines”. They can take what is written on the page and combine it with what they know to draw conclusions about the text.

Teachers can help students learn to draw inferences by: Teaching students to identify key words and make predictions based on those words and using a “question/inference” graphic organizer.

Summarizing/Retelling

Good readers are able to identify the main idea of the text and restate it in their own words.

Teachers can help students summarize by: Providing direct modeling of how to summarize text and plenty of opportunities to practice the skill.