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Sincerely,
Karen Haag

7 Proficient Comprehension Strategies and Skills*

Literacy Units

Reading strategies are deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify the reader's efforts to decode text, understand words, and construct meanings of text.

Reading skills are automatic actions that result in decoding and comprehension with speed, efficiency, and fluency and usually occur without awareness of the components or control involved. Indeed, a hallmark of strategic readers is the flexibility and adaptability of their actions as they read. In contrast, reading skills operate without the reader's deliberate control or conscious awareness.

---"Clarifying Differences Between Reading Skills and Reading Strategies,"
Peter Afflerbach, P. David Pearson, Scott G, Paris, *The Reading Teacher*, 2008.

Strategy - generalization	Skills ... automatic, differentiated
<p>1. Fix Up or Monitoring Comprehension Children use a variety of monitoring comprehension strategies to make sure they understand texts. Students learn to pronounce words, determine meanings in context, and figure out words using knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes, among other strategies. They learn to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words by figuring out how to pronounce words and inferring from context.</p>	<p>Sound out unfamiliar words (letter-sound relationship) Take big words apart (Spot and Dot is one way). Use context clues. Read ahead and then come back. Reread. Try a word you think is a synonym (structure of the language). Use a dictionary, thesaurus or help online like www.m-w.com. Think of where you've seen the word before (prior knowledge). Find the root word or the derivation of the word (meaning). Use self-talk (Stop and Think). Consider the purpose to help you figure out the meaning. Author Language: Word choice, sentence length.</p>
<p>2. Connect By learning to explain how connections help readers understand texts, comprehension improves. Children deepen their understanding by accessing their prior knowledge before reading a selection. Students practice thinking about what is misunderstood and applying what they know to repair meaning. They learn to apply connections to get meaning from a selection that was originally confusing. Students begin to dissect and discuss author's literary elements - like metaphors - to deepen their comprehension even further. A big part of learning to use connections is learning to compare.</p>	<p>When meaning breaks down, think about what you know to help you get unstuck. Compare what you're reading to what you know. Look for metaphors and analogies. Put yourself in the place of the characters or subject. Think about what you know about this text based on what you have read in the past. How does what I know about the series, the author, or the genre help me understand the text? Author Language: Metaphors, double-entry journals</p>

*This chart of skills and strategies matches my 5th grade curriculum in North Carolina.

<p>3. Question Students ask questions before, during and after reading and to seek answers to deepen their understanding of the text. By discussing their own questions in small groups, students examine what they don't know and get help in comprehending.</p>	<p>Ask questions before, during, and after the reading. Record your questions in some way. Bring questions to others to discuss. Learn to reference the text when asking questions. Bring questions about words. Bring questions to clarify meaning about plot, character, setting, topic, main ideas, themes, what's coming next, author's purpose, and even questions that can't be answered. Bring questions about your wonderings (i.e.; is this foreshadowing here?) Learn how to discuss in different reading-group (comprehension-group) formats: Book Clubs, Question the Author, Socratic Seminars, Reciprocal Teaching, Jigsaw, Inquiry Groups, etc.</p>
<p>4. Visualize Students use all sensory images to help them better understand what they read. Students learn to visualize the details and inferences of a text. Visualizing helps when learning vocabulary. Students visualize to connect and dramatize to write.</p>	<p>Visualize in your head. Draw. Mind map. Create a graphic organizer. Author Language Descriptive language Dialogue</p>
<p>5. Infer Inferring is a strategy used before, during and after reading. Predicting is a part of inferring. Students learn to base inferences on references in the text mixed with background knowledge.</p>	<p>Predict and confirm or disconfirm predictions. Use personal experience to infer. Reference the text. Hypothesize and confirm. Draw conclusions based on evidence. Separate opinion from fact as well as opinion you think is fact and fact you think is opinion. Read as an author. Look for the clues planted in the text. Infer settings, answers to questions, meaning of pronouns, characterization, fact vs. opinion, main ideas and themes. Author Language Foreshadowing and other literary elements</p>
<p>6. Determine What Is Important Students discriminate what is important from what is not. Readers use this information to determine main ideas and themes of texts. Separating our what is important from what is not is at the heart of comprehension.</p>	<p>Select the very important points (VIP). Sift important from unimportant details and ideas. Highlight or underline appropriately. Outline. Determine main ideas and themes. Combine new information with background information. Author Skill: Outlining, Planning</p>
<p>7. Synthesize Students stop often while reading to synthesize the information gained from texts to form opinions, cite evidence to support their conclusions, change perspectives, develop new ideas, and, in general, enhance a personal understanding of the concepts presented in a text.</p>	<p>Retell. Paraphrase. Summarize. Back theories with evidence. Develop new ideas. Form opinions. Change perspectives. Generate a personal understanding. Apply knowledge to new situations. Transfer what you've learned about reading to taking tests.</p>