

Comprehension Strategies

1. Build Background Knowledge. Comprehension has been defined as the process of "building bridges between the known and the new." This metaphor suggests that all readers must have a "known" – that is they must know something about the topic of the text they are reading in order to make sense of it. Teachers need to work to build students background (and interest) for a text before asking them to read and understand independently.

Methods for building background knowledge;

- Teacher presents information (lecture, etc.)
- Class Brainstorm (e.g. list group label)
 - The K in KWL
- Other resources
 - Experts
 - Media
 - Other books and texts
 - Artifacts (jackdaws)

2. Question Generation. The National Reading Panel has identified questioning as the most proven strategy for improving readers' comprehension of text. In question generation students are taught and encouraged to ask questions of the text (author) before, during, and after reading the text.

Some methods for promoting question generation:

- Make questions before reading – based on topic and background knowledge, title, or a brief introduction to the passage.
- Make questions periodically during the reading.
 - Stop and question
 - Big and little questions
 - List and sort questions
- Glossing - writing questions in the text (or with post its)
- Make questions after reading the passages.
- Write questions in a journal.
- Exit slips
- W in KWL

3. Prediction Generation. In making predictions readers use their background knowledge along with information from the text to create hypothesis about what may happen next in a passage. The predictions can then be used for further discussion after the reading has concluded.

Some methods for promoting prediction generation:

- Anticipation Guides – A set of statements that students agree or disagree with prior to the reading of a passage. After reading students return to the guide and reflect on and discuss their responses.
- Prevoke - prediction based on vocabulary.
- Prediction based on selected sentences given by the teacher before reading.
- Prediction based on illustrations from the passage.
- Prediction based on the title and headings from a passage.
- Predictions and discussion made at regular stopping points throughout the text (i.e. Directed Reading-Thinking Activity)

4. Imagery. Students create mental images during or after reading a passage. The images are normally thought to be visual images, but they can also involve auditory, kinesthetic, or other images that involve senses.

Some methods for promoting imagery in reading:

- Draw a picture/sketch while reading
- Sketch to stretch – share pictures and ask classmates to comment on and discuss sketches made by classmates.
- Discuss mental images that are made while reading
- Tableau – physical representation of content from a text.
- Create or select a song or melody that represents meaningful information from the passage

5. Written Response. Students are asked to reflect on the meaning of a passage by using writing as a means and method of reflection. In the process of writing the reader is asked to "keep thinking it over" and through that deep reflection can gain greater insight into his or her reading.

Some methods for promoting written response:

- Leaning Log/Journal. Students respond to their reading/instruction by writing about it on a regular basis. Types of entries:
 - Summary

- Troubleshoot - what am I having trouble with.
- Defining of words/concepts in my own words.
- Explaining particular processes.
- Double Entry Journals
- Dialogue Journals
- Write and Share 2
- The L in KWL

6. Summarizing and Synthesizing – putting things into one's own words helps students prioritize and recast information in language they find familiar and understandable. Summarizing involves the simple prioritizing and restating of information from a single source. Synthesizing involves summarizing across multiple sources or one extended information source.

Some methods for teaching and promoting summarizing and synthesizing.

- Process
 - Brainstorming information from passage.
 - Prioritize information.
 - Consolidate information.
 - Restate consolidated information
 - Identify main idea
 - Elaborate on main idea
 - Identify multiple main ideas (multiple sources).
 - Consolidate the multiple ideas.
- Inquiry Charts
- The S in KWL-S

7. Compare and Contrast. Readers are asked to make a connection between a text or element of a particular text and something else; and then use that something else as a basis for studying and understanding the text.

Some types and methods for doing compare contrast.

- Text to text connection
- Text to life (personal) connection
- Metaphorical and analogical connections
- Use of graphic organizers – e.g. Venn diagram

- Discussion (Debate) Web

8. **Graphic Organizers and Text Structure.** Graphic representation of texts and reflection on the organizational structure of the text helps readers to see the underlying and logical organization used by the author in constructing the meaning he or she wishes to convey to the reader.

Some types of graphic organizers:

- Narrative (linear) map
- Informational (hierarchical) map
- Herringbone map

Some types of text structure:

- Chronological
- Enumeration (listing)
- Cause–Effect
- Problem–Solution
- Compare–Contrast

9. **Cooperative Learning.** The highest form of learning happens when one teaches. Cooperative learning activities attempt to put students in the role of teacher by having them present information to others.

Some methods of cooperative learning:

- Group projects
- Student-led literature discussion groups
- Think–Pair–Share
- Jigsaw (each student takes responsibility for a particular portion of a text — to read and report to the group)

10. **Keep Thinking It Over** — Insight and understanding is sometimes achieved through long–term reflection on a particular topic, event, passage, etc. Revisiting ideas, arguments, texts, and other topics under consideration helps students continually reflect on something that is to be learned.

Some methods for helping students to "keep thinking it over:"

- Ongoing discussions

- Rereadings of texts
- Spiraled instruction

11. Re-representation of text (Linguistic and Non-linguistic). Recasting of a text into another form requires readers to return to a text and think of its content in new and different ways. In doing so readers can come to a deep understanding of a text and the meaning embedded in it.

Some methods for re-representation of text:

- Summarizing
- Poetry
- Essay
- Script
- Pantomime
- Tableau
- Music
- Visual art

12. Non-textual comprehension. Studies have found that Americans are not as prepared as people from other countries in interpreting information that is not presented in a typical prose fashion. Students need to be guided in understanding and interpreting information presented in charts, graphs, maps, tables, and other non-textual ways, and in presenting information effectively in non textual ways.

Some ways in which information can be presented in non textual ways:

- Charts and graphs
- Tables
- Gestures and body language