Scientific Research-Based Strategies:

Comprehension Strategies
**Anticipation Guides**

ANTICIPATION GUIDES - series of statements to which students respond individually before reading text. After completing exercise, the teacher initiates discussion but remains nondirective as students respond and support their responses.

**Procedures:**

1. Analyze material to be read. Select implicit and explicit major ideas with which students will interact.

2. Write the ideas in short, clear declarative statements, avoiding abstractions.

3. Put statements in a format that will elicit anticipation and prediction.

4. Discuss students’ anticipations and predictions before they read the text.

5. Assign the text selection. After reading, students evaluate the statements relative to the author’s intent and purpose.

6. Readers’ contrast their initial predictions with the author’s intended meaning.

**Anticipation/Reaction Guide**

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<th>Before Reading</th>
<th>Statements</th>
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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
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ABC Brainstorm

The ABC Brainstorm activates students’ prior knowledge about a major topic. The students try to think of a word or phrase associated with the topic, matched to each letter of the alphabet.

Procedure:

1. Have students list all the letters of the alphabet down a sheet of paper, leaving room beside each letter to write out the rest of a word or phrase.
2. Have students work individually thinking of as many words as they can associated with the topic.
3. After a few minutes, let the students pair up or work in small groups to fill in blank letters they have not yet completed.
4. Allow students to share with the entire class possible terms for the different letters of the alphabet.
Preview and Predict

Preview and Predict is a comprehension strategy that causes the reader to activate prior knowledge by using clues about the content.

1. Preview the text in a short period of time (3 to 5 minutes) by viewing and discussing various aspects of the text such as:

   Narrative Text
   Title, title page
   Front and back cover
   Author, illustrator information
   Pictures
   Chapter titles
   Opening paragraph

   Expository Text
   Table of contents
   Index
   Chapter title, headings, and subheadings
   Captions
   Charts, graphs, and tables
   Typographic features

2. Encourage students to predict what the text may be about. When working with the whole class, the teacher can write students’ predictions on an overhead transparency or on the chalk/white board.

3. Students should be able to justify how aspects of the preview supported their predictions.

4. Students then read a portion of the text, stopping at critical points to discuss whether their predictions were or were not confirmed by the text or story. If predictions were supported by the text, students make new predictions and read on. If predictions were not supported by the text, the predictions should be modified or changed to reflect the text.

5. When using chapter books or expository texts the preview may also include summarizing previous chapters. The first paragraph may be read for additional clues about what will happen next.
Back Words
(developed by Dee Dee Jones, Karen Carr, and Candy Williams)

Write vocabulary words on sticky notes. Place a note on each student’s back without the student seeing the word. Everyone stands up and turns around at the same time. After everyone has a word, each student goes to the other students in the class and gets a clue about his word. Students do not guess their words until they are back in their seats. Then they write down all of their clues and make a guess. Then they share their clues and their guesses with the class. If someone has problems, the class orally provides more clues until the student can guess correctly.

Vocabulary Genie
(developed by Candy Williams)

Write one word clues for a vocabulary word on sticky notes. Place the notes under the desks before the students enter the room. Each student removes his note. The students discuss their clues in small groups. The group then tries to name the vocabulary word.

Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy

This strategy is very effective to use with cooperative learning groups.

1. Divide the class into nominating teams of two to five students. The team decides which word to select for emphasis in the text selection.
2. Present the word each team has selected to the entire class. The team spokesperson identifies the word and responds to the following:
   • Where is the word found in the text? Passage is read and context in which word is used is described.
   • What do the team members think the word means? Context clues and reference materials may be used.
   • Why does the team think the class should learn the word?
3. Prepare a writing activity using the vocabulary words selected by the class.

Five Word Prediction

Preview the lesson (expository text) and select 5 vocabulary words. List these in order and ask students to write a paragraph predicting the theme of the lesson using all of these words in the paragraph. Take up the paragraphs and redistribute after studying the lesson. Ask the students to use the same words and write a summary paragraph using the same vocabulary words.
Quick Write and Final Word Strategies

Quick Write

Purpose:
A quick write is used to introduce a concept and connect this concept with prior knowledge or experiences. It is also an opportunity for students to discuss and learn from each other.

Directions:
A single word or phrase is introduced to the class. Students copy the concept on a note card. They are given 2 minutes to write whatever comes to their mind relative to the concept. They may write freely meaning single words phrases, sentences, poetry form, etc. To ensure students are given uninterrupted time with their thoughts, the class should remain quiet with no talking or questions. After the time is called, students may volunteer to share their personal thoughts on the subject. Others may take additional notes on their card if desired.

Final Word

Purpose:
The final word activity is a scaffolding procedure for small group discussion. It is very structured and allows students to share their thoughts and opinions and at the same time ensures that others are listening.

Directions:
Students are given an article to read. They are to highlight at least 2 ideas from the article that are of particular interest to them. They are then placed in groups of 4 or 5 students. One student begins the discussion by reading and discussing one of his/her ideas. The student has 3 minutes or less of uninterrupted discussion time. The discussion then moves around the circle with each student being given 1 minute or less to respond to the idea. Once again the students are given their time without interruption. The discussion moves back to the student who introduced the discussion and he/she has 1 minute or less to express a “final word.” Then another student in the group may have his/her 3 minutes to read and discuss the highlighted idea. The procedure is repeated.

Variation: Save the Last Word for Me
X Marks the Spot

This strategy promotes active reading by giving the student a concrete symbol to represent his/her thinking.

Procedure:

1. Teacher models the procedure for students to follow while doing independent reading.
2. Students practice using the procedure during independent reading.

Post-it Notes work best.

\(X=\) key point
\(!=\) I get it! I can explain this!
\(?=\) I don’t understand this.

Margin Notes

Margin notes reinforce active reading. They give students a place to record thinking as they read or as they work problems.

Procedure:

1. Provide students with strips of paper like bookmarks.
2. Have students place the bookmarks in their books.
3. Model the procedure by writing notes as you read.
4. Have students write margin notes as they read independently.

You may want students to turn these in for homework. They may be used as study notes for a test. They may be used for bonus points. They may record the important points from charts or information from a glossary or for re-reading.
Three-Minute Pause
(Jay McTighe)

The Three-Minute Pause provides a chance for students to stop, reflect on concepts and ideas that have been introduced, make connections to prior knowledge or experience, and seek clarification.

Procedure:
1. Students work in groups of 3-5.
2. Have students read a portion of the text and stop when they reach a designated stopping point.
3. Students have three minutes to:
   • Summarize key points so far. (Are they getting the main ideas?)
   • Add their own thoughts (What connections can be made? What does this remind you of? What can you add?)
   • Pose clarifying questions (Are there things that are not clear?)
4. After three minutes, the students continue reading until the next designated stopping point and repeat the process.
Think Aloud

Definition: The think-aloud strategy is an approach in which teachers verbalize their own thought processes while reading orally to students. In this way teachers model for students the cognitive and meta-cognitive processes that good readers use to construct meaning and monitor comprehension.

Goals
1. Give students the opportunity to see the kinds of strategies a skilled reader uses to construct meaning and cope with comprehension problems.
2. Develop students’ ability to monitor their reading and take corrective action when needed.
3. Provide an opportunity for students to experience effective reading and problem solving and to transfer these strategies to their independent reading.

Preparation
1. Select a passage that contains points of difficulty, ambiguities, or unknown words in preparation for oral reading.
2. Preview the passage and imagine that you are reading it for the first time as one of your students would.
3. Use a copy of the passage to make note of the comments and questions to model for students.

Procedure
1. Read the passage aloud, telling students to follow along silently and listen to how you construct meaning and think through trouble spots. The following are examples of thought processes you might model for your students:
   a. Make predictions. (Show how to develop hypotheses.)
   b. Describe any pictures forming in your head while you read. (Show how to develop images during reading.)
   c. Share an analogy. (Show how to link prior knowledge with new information in the reading selection.)
   d. Verbalize a confusing point. (Show how you monitor your ongoing comprehension and become aware of problems.)
   e. Demonstrate fix-up strategies. (Show how you address problems.)

2. Select a logical stopping point, and have students use some of those strategies during a silent reading of the passage.
3. Model several experiences, then have students work with partners to practice “think alouds” by taking turns in reading orally and sharing thoughts. For struggling readers, move from carefully developed materials with obvious problems to school materials of various types and lengths.
Reciprocal Teaching

Definition: Reciprocal teaching refers to an instructional activity that takes place in the form of a dialogue between teachers and students regarding segments of text. The dialogue is structured by the use of four strategies: summarizing, question generating, clarifying, and predicting.

Purpose: The purpose of reciprocal teaching is to facilitate a group effort between teacher and students as well as among students in the task of bringing meaning to the text.

Components

- **Summarizing** provides the opportunity to identify and integrate the most important information in the text. Text can be summarized across sentences, across paragraphs, and across the passage as a whole.

- **Question generating** reinforces the summarizing strategy and carries the learner one more step along in the comprehension activity. When students generate questions, they first identify the kind of information that is significant enough to provide the substance for a question. They then pose this information in question form and self-test to ascertain that they can indeed answer their own question.

- **Clarifying** calls the student’s attention to the fact that there may be many reasons why text is difficult to understand (e.g., new vocabulary, unclear reference words, and unfamiliar and perhaps difficult concepts).

- **Predicting** occurs when students hypothesize what the author will discuss next in the text. The students have a purpose for reading: to confirm or disprove their hypotheses.

Procedure

1. Put students in groups of four.
2. Distribute one notecard to each member of the group identifying each person’s unique role.
   a. summarizer
   b. questioner
   c. clarifier
   d. predictor
3. Have students read a few paragraphs of the assigned text selection. Encourage them to use note-taking strategies such as selective underlining or sticky-notes to help them better prepare for their role in the discussion.
4. At the given stopping point, the Summarizer will highlight the key ideas up to this point in the reading.
5. The Questioner will then pose questions about the selection:
   - unclear parts
   - puzzling information
   - connections to other concepts already learned.
GIST
Generating Interactions Between Reader and Text
(Cunningham, 1982)

1. Select a short passage that has an important main idea; a 3-5 paragraph passage is best. Place on a transparency.

2. On an overhead, display the first paragraph and cover the other paragraphs. Put 20 blanks on the board, and ask students to write a summary of 20 words or less.

3. Have students generate a class summary on the board with 20 or fewer words.

4. Uncover the next paragraph and have students generate a summary of 20 or fewer words that encompasses both of the first two paragraphs.

5. Continue this procedure paragraph by paragraph until students have produced a GIST statement for the entire passage being taught. In time they will be able to generate GIST statements of text in a single step.

Semantic Feature Analysis

Similarities and differences among related concepts are depicted in chart form. A topic or category is selected. Words related to the category are listed on the left side. Features or properties are listed across the top of the grid. This activity can be used both before reading to activate prior knowledge and after reading to clarify and reformulate initial responses.

Procedures:

- Draw a grid on the chalkboard or overhead.
- Write the topic on the left side and features across the top.
- Obtain student input to complete the columns.
- After the list is completed, a plus should be placed in the box if the feature exists, a minus if it does not, and a questions mark if students don’t know or cannot agree.

After this is modeled and practiced as a whole group activity, the teacher could complete the first section with the students and then have the students complete the rest of it. Students should be encouraged to use their notes and textbooks. Follow up discussions and/or writing activities help students to analyze and synthesize the recorded information. This could be a before, during, and after reading activity.
Venn Diagram

A Venn Diagram is a visual tool for students to compare and contrast concepts such as:

- characters or other elements in the same book
- characters or elements in different books
- books with movies
- mathematical terms
- historical figures
- scientific principles
- historical events.

In a Venn Diagram two circles overlap. Each circle represents a different book, person, or concept. Unique characteristics of the two ideas being compared/contrasted are recorded in the outer of two overlapping circles. Common characteristics are recorded where the circles overlap.
T Chart

T Charts enable students to examine two sides of an issue, event, or character. In the boxes at the top of the T, students record issues, characters, or events. Below these designations, supporting ideas or examples are given. T Charts are a good way to examine cause/effect, problem/solution, pro/con, then/now, looks like/sounds like and other comparable or contrasting concepts.
Group Summaries
(Olson & Gee, 1991)

Group summaries offer individuals the support of ideas from others and allow each student to see how a summary is organized.

Procedure:

1. Before students begin reading a selection, help them preview the text to see how the information is organized. Designate and label a section of the chalkboard for each major heading of the text they are going to read.
2. After the reading – perhaps taking it one section at a time – students can suggest what information they think could go in each section of the summary. Help the students put the information into their own words and use complete sentences where possible.
3. Once the entire text is read and all summarizing ideas have been aired, the next step is to construct a class summary of the text. The summary may be made up of a series of brief paragraphs, each centered on one of the sections of text. Alternately, the summary may be a series of sentences about the various ideas encountered in the text.

3-2-1

3-2-1 gives students a chance to summarize some key ideas, rethink them in order to focus on those they find most intriguing, and then pose a question that can reveal where their understanding is still uncertain.

Procedure:

1. After reading a portion of text, students working alone or in small groups, fill out a 3-2-1 chart
   - 3 Things You Found Out
   - 2 Interesting Things
   - 1 Question You Still Have
2. Students repeat the procedure until the entire text has been read.
3. Once the entire text has been read, students can use the key ideas from their 3-2-1 charts to summarize the entire text.
KWL
What I Know, What I Want to Know, What I Learned

KWL developed by Donna Ogle (1986) is a strategy that helps students to comprehend text through active engagement with the written material. This strategy creates an instructional framework that contains three steps:

Step 1: determining what students Know about the topic;
Step 2: determining what students Want to know about the topic as they think about what they know and formulate questions about the topic.
Step 3: determining what they Learn as a result of Steps 1 and 2 and their reading.

Follow up activities to KWL can include discussion, mapping, summary writing, and other related activities designed by the teacher or available in the textbook and teacher’s manual.

How to Implement

Select a topic and introduce students to the KWL strategy. Actually explain the strategy to them by giving them an overview of it and talking about its value to learning. Students must know what their role is and why it is important to reflect upon what they know and to formulate questions relative to the topic. Model the strategy using a particular topic.

- Identify what students think they know about the topic with an activity such as brainstorming. Use the KWL format sheet to record answers or use the chalkboard, overhead, etc. Record all responses whether correct or not because we are recording what students think they know. Involvement in the process is important.

- Generate a list of student questions by asking, What do you want to know more about? Record responses.

- Anticipate the organization and structure of the text selection by having students predict how the text will be organized in order to answer the questions. To do this, ask students to focus on the questions that they generated and predict possible categories of information. Example: if you were the author, how would you organize the information in the text to answer these questions? Record responses on the strategy sheets.

- Read the text to answer the questions. In the L column of the strategy sheets, students will record answers to the questions and make notes relative to new information as they read.

- After reading, share answers. Record these on the chalkboard, etc. and discuss them.

- Engage students in post reading activities, meaningful follow-up activities to clarify and extend learning: summary writing, mapping, etc.


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