READING
COMPREHENSION
INSTRUCTION

A Brief Introduction
EXACTLY WHAT IS READING COMPREHENSION?

- Defining / Understanding Reading Comprehension
- Factors that Influence Reading Comprehension
- Interferences to Reading Comprehension
What is reading comprehension?

• Comprehension is an active and purposeful process that leads to understanding and remembering what was read.

  • **Active** because it requires a reader to interact with the text; using experiences and knowledge of the world, knowledge of vocabulary and language structure, and knowledge of comprehension strategies to make sense of what is being read; recognizing problems when they occur during reading and how to resolve them.

  • **Purposeful** because the essence of reading is to construct meaning. One reads to learn, to locate information, for entertainment and for pleasure.
Factors that Influence Reading Comprehension

- Reader’s system of meaning overlaps sufficiently with author’s system of meaning.
- Reader’s system of language overlaps sufficiently with author’s system of language.
- The reader reads words accurately.
- The reader automatically recognizes words.
- The reader reads fluently.
- The reader engages with the printed material.
Interferences to Reading Comprehension

- Reader’s system of meaning does not overlap sufficiently with author’s system of meaning.
- Reader’s system of language (i.e. syntax, vocabulary, idioms) does not overlap sufficiently with author’s system of language.
- Reader lacks the immediate power to say what each word requires (accuracy)
- The reader’s word recognition is cumbersome and does not instantly identify words (automaticity)
- The reader fails to read with ease, appropriate speed, and phrasing, and, therefore, is unable to devote sufficient attention to building meaning (fluency)
- The reader does not attend to the text to a degree necessary to build meaning (attention, motivation, disposition).
READING COMPREHENSION: STRATEGIES, MONITORING AND INSTRUCTION

An Overview and an Explanation
Comprehension Strategies

- Comprehension strategies are specific actions that readers use as they attempt to make sense of text.
- These strategies can be thought of as thinking strategies – ways of thinking about what has been read that help readers go beyond understanding the surface meaning of text.
- The following comprehension strategies are grounded in scientific basis.
  - Comprehension Monitoring
  - Making Connections
  - Questioning
  - Determining Importance
  - Visualizing
  - Inferring
  - Synthesizing
Comprehension Monitoring

• Comprehension monitoring is being aware of what is and what is not understood when engaging with text.
• Skillful, successful readers known when they understand what they read and when they do not understand.
• Skillful, successful readers know when they need to activate “fix-it” strategies when problems occur at the word or text level.
• The “fix-it” process involves the use of other problem solving strategies such as rereading, reading ahead, using other resources and asking for help.
Comprehension Instruction

- Comprehension instruction is anything that an instructor does to help students interact thoughtfully with text.
- Comprehension instruction should be grounded in research and best practices.
- Comprehension instruction should be effective in teaching students how to interact with text without permanent assistance.
- Effective comprehension instruction promotes the reader’s use of research-based comprehension strategies.
- Comprehension instruction should be explicit; readers need to be taught to flexibly use a variety of strategies when interacting with text.
SUMMARY

Why should instructors focus on student reading comprehension and when and how should instructors implement reading comprehension strategies?
Why should instructors focus on student reading comprehension

- Comprehension is the ultimate reason for reading – why read if not to construct meaning?
- Comprehension improves among students when instructors provide explicit instruction in the use of comprehension strategies.
- Improved comprehension increases opportunities for increased academic success for students.
- Many students will not learn to actively and purposefully engage with text without explicit instruction in comprehension strategies.
When and how should instructors implement reading comprehension strategies?

- Comprehension strategy instruction should occur before, during, and after reading.
- Comprehension strategy should be provided when students read varies genres.
- Comprehension instruction should be provided when reading aloud to students, guiding or assisting students as they engage with text, and when students interact with various forms of multimedia.
- Comprehension instruction should occur across the disciplines of knowledge and throughout academic experiences – it should not be isolated to one content area.
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