Three Ingredients to Successful Reading Comprehension

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Reading Strategies of Christmas Past

- Generic
- Bring metacognitive strategies to the forefront
- Study skills
Reading Instruction of Christmas Present

- Discipline-specific materials
- Discipline-specific strategies

Making a case for a blend of reading comprehension strategies & discipline-specific strategies

- Summarizes findings from National Reading Panel's study of 481 published studies (1980-1998) of reading strategies
  - Of these studies, 205 met the established criteria and were analyzed

- Of 16 strategies commonly covered in Reading Christmas Past instruction, only 8 showed "evidence of effectiveness," while the other 8 were deemed "inconclusive"
### National Reading Panel's Study of Reading Strategies: Results

#### Evidence of Effectiveness:
- Comprehension monitoring
- Graphic organizers
- Question generation
- Question answering
- Summarization
- Cooperative learning
- Story structure
- Multiple strategy instruction

#### Inconclusive:
- Listening actively
- Mental imagery
- Prior knowledge
- Vocabulary/comprehension relationship
- Curriculum
- Mnemonics
- Psycholinguistic
- Teacher preparation
Don't worry, reading specialists!

- NRP and Willingham are not dismissing the benefits of the "inconclusive" 8
- Research shows these strategies are a useful "bag of tricks"
- No illustrated benefits of sustained time spent on them
Analysis of Study

Willingham's analysis of NRP's study:
- Monitoring comprehension
- Relating sentences to one another
- Relating sentences to things you already know

What to teach, then?
- Monitoring comprehension
- Expanding vocabulary base
- Expanding prior knowledge/recognizing prior knowledge deficits
Developmental student survey results

- >25% felt prepared for college reading
- No to minimal reading in high school
- College reading homework = huge!
- Comprehension and motivation are limiting factors
- Learned best when interested/repeat exposure
- Math and English/reading two areas students reported as deficits
Monitoring Comprehension

Reading Class
- Annotating
  - Summarizing
  - Commentary
- Fluency factors
  - Inflection
  - Speed
  - Accuracy

Discipline
- Annotating
- Textbook features: headings
  - Is it enough to be able to process/repeat the info?
  - Do you want your students to do more? What?
Building a Solid Vocabulary Base

In Reading Class
- Academic vocabulary
- Using context for nonessential-vocabulary
- Reading vocabulary:
  - Metacognition
  - Reading process
  - Decoding
  - Comprehension
  - Vocabulary
  - Motivation
  - Fluency

Within a Discipline
- Necessary vocabulary: vocab terms
  - Memrise
  - Quizlet
  - Vocabulary.com
  - Word sorts
  - Word pictures
Lifelong Wellness

- Acute
- Chronic
- Innervate
- Statistical significance
- Hypothesis
- Placebo
- Placebo effect
- Double-blind
- Bioenergetic

- Aerobic
- Anaerobic
- Acclimation
- Bradycardia
- Tachycardia
- Deconditioning
- Systole
- Diastole
Art

- Color
- Hue
- Pigment
- Dye

"Used colloquially, these can be interchangeable, but have very different, specific meanings in context."
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Rethinking "Prior Knowledge"

Christmas Past
- "Activate prior knowledge/schema"
  - What if they don’t have it?

Christmas Future
- Expanding prior knowledge
- Recognizing prior knowledge deficits
  - Use your thumbs to remedy!
Relevant Prior Knowledge

Within a Reading Class
- Need to have read before
- Need to have struggled with it
- Need the reading/academic vocabulary as a base—but must instruct

Within a Discipline
- Concepts
  - Prior knowledge list/prereq package
  - List of prior knowledge resources
    - Youtube videos, tutorials, info from other courses, etc.
    - Cliff notes of previous courses
Art

- The difference between newsprint and drawing paper
- The difference between charcoal and graphite pencils
- The difference between oil, acrylic, and tempera paint
- The difference between artist paint and craft paint
Art history

- I assume everyone has read Julius Caesar by Shakespeare
- I assume everyone knows (or at least has heard of) Chaucer and his Canterbury Tales
Psychology

- It is more problematic that students think they know what psychology is, when they actually don't.
- They believe "it is the study of people, and I am a person, and I know people, so this will be a breeze."
- Has to work to "undo" the "prior knowledge" students think they have.
- Explain that their own experiences are not comprehensive or typical.
Instructor says she assumes they "know/remember nothing"

A tribute the type of instructor this colleague is, because she starts from the ground up

Critical terms:
- Heterotrophic
- Autotrophic
- Eukaryotic
- Prokaryotic
- Osmosis
Call for action

- More comprehensive, conclusive, non-biased studies showing impact of specific reading intervention or instruction
- Publish!
Questions, comments, criticisms and/or witticisms?
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