Engaging Comprehension Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities

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Our Goal:

- Our goal is to help our students comprehend text by increasing active engagement before, during, and after reading through listening, thinking, talking, reflecting, responding, and writing. We need to hold our students accountable for their learning. Failure is not an option!
Think-Write-Pair-Share

- Think about ways you engage students in the reading process and challenges that you encounter.

- You will have 2 minutes to list these on a sticky.

- When cued by the facilitator, you will have one minute to turn to your shoulder partner and share. (You will need to teach your students how to do this.)

- The facilitator will select 2 volunteers to share with the group.

- You will have one minute to strengthen and add to your written response.
Barriers to Reading Comprehension

- Poor decoding and fluency skills causing inaccurate reading and too much brain power taken away from processing the meaning
- Lack of vocabulary knowledge or academic language
- Difficulty transferring oral language to print
- Language based disability
- Lack of background knowledge connected to text topic
- Lack of endurance and experience with reading longer and difficult text
- Lack of opportunities to engage in text during instruction
What does the research tell us about reading comprehension?

- Students with disabilities can learn isolated skills and strategies but need support with generalizing.

- Teach comprehension skills through read alouds, think alouds, and oral language to provide students with weak decoding skills access to higher levels of language and content.

- Teach vocabulary of frequently encountered words as well as content area vocabulary.

- Provide students with a diverse range of text structures to read and process. This will improve vocabulary and background knowledge.

- Teach students to self monitor when they read by asking if the text makes sense and if they can remember what they read.

- The three most highly researched types of strategy instruction for students with disabilities are question answering, text structure, and multiple strategy instruction such as Reciprocal Teaching and Collaborative Strategic Reading.
BRAIN BREAK!!

Retention of information can be increased from 30-40% to a range of 70-90% by allowing the students to take a Writing Break every 10-20 minutes. Depending on the needs of your students, it may be more effective every 6-7 minutes.

- On your sticky, you will have 2 minutes to write about which piece of information we talked about so far stands out in your mind and why. Be prepared to share with your partner.

- This activity can be geared to any question the teacher feels necessary for the lesson in any subject.

- Writing time can be adjusted to student needs.
Splash

This activity enables the teacher to assess background knowledge, provides the students with a focus, and encourages them to use key words to write quality summaries. Students learn that vocabulary words in content area reading are very important with helping them understand the meaning of the text.

- Read the words below.
  
  calve
  glacier
  iceberg
  keel
  sail

- Think-Pair-Share
  1. Do you know what any of these words mean?
  2. How are the words connected or related?
  3. What do you think we are going to read about?

- Preview the the article, Icebergs, on pages 18-23 including the vocabulary word wise.
- Once students are finished reading the article, have them use the words to write a summary using all of the key vocabulary words. This process must be modeled and practiced before students can do it independently.
- Select students to share summaries with the group.
Partners A and B

Teachers who chunk information and allow students to process also enable them to transfer information into long term memory.

- Read the text on page 20 of the article, Icebergs.
- Show me thumbs up when you are finished.
- Partner A will talk about any of the information read in the text or connections for one minute. Partner B must listen quietly. (If a partner gets stuck, he or she can refer back to the text.)
- When the minute is up, Partner B will talk for one minute about any information or connections that Partner A has not mentioned.
- Time can be varied from 30 seconds to 2 minutes depending on your student needs.
- Students will need lots of practices with this activity but it is well worth the effort because it builds active listening, skills necessary for cooperative learning, and engages all students.
Sketch to Stretch

Students need the opportunity to use different mediums for communication and learning.

- Listen while I read the section Tragedy at Sea. I want you to visualize by making a picture in your mind as I read.

- I want you to think about what this section means to you and draw a sketch. You will have 2 minutes. (This should be modeled by the teacher first.)

- Turn to your partner and talk about your sketch. Partner A will talk first.

- I will call on one volunteer to share with the whole group.

- As a variation, the teacher can reread the text to the students a 2\textsuperscript{nd} time and have them sketch and label what is being described. Students can apply this same activity during guided or independent reading.
Reciprocal questioning is a useful strategy to help students formulate questions about text. It assists children with moving beyond low-level questions to higher order thinking. The research shows that questioning strategies have high positive effect on comprehension.

- Read the section, Keeping Ships Safe on page 22.
- Think about the important information and facts.
- Write a question about something important the reader should know on your index card.
- Trade questions with your partner. Write the answer on the card using support from the text.
- Share your answer with your partner and check for accuracy.
- This activity can be tied to QAR and requires teacher modeling of question generation.
- Some routines for ReQuest recommend having the students answer questions from memory. But our goal is to get students referring back to the text rather than guessing at answers.
Students need to read technical text more than once to be able to gain information and summarize what they know, and add to their bank of knowledge.

- On a sheet of paper, draw 3 columns and label each 1, 2, and 3.
- Write everything you learned from reading the article the first time in column 1.
- Read the article a second time, and write anything new that you learned in column 2.
- Repeat again a third time and write your response in column 3.
- Turn to your partner and share.
- This can also be done with chunks or portions of text.
Two More Strategies!

When students have difficulty responding to text and answering questions try:

• **Focus Question:** Chunk the text and provide students with a question they will be expected to answer after reading by using the phrase “Read to find out__”. Students can answer orally, use sticky notes to take marginal notes, or underline/highlight the text if applicable.

• **Non-Stop Write:** During or after reading, provide students with a prompt related to the topic. The prompt can be a specific question or an open-ended question. Give the students a pre-determined amount of time necessary to write a clear response with a range of 3-5 minutes. In the beginning, you may need to start as low as 1 minute. To alleviate writer’s block, give the students 1-2 minutes to brainstorm ideas or talk with a partner. Then require them to write for the pre-determined amount of time. Tell them if their writing will be collected and read by the teacher, read aloud to the whole group, or shared with a partner.
Carousel Brainstorming

Students have the opportunity to work with a group of students to respond to three or four different prompts on a topic.

- Prepare 3 or 4 questions on a topic that help your students focus on the key learning points or reflection.

- Write each question on a different piece of chart paper and hang the chart paper around the room.

- Break students up into groups.

- Start each group at a different question.

- The students will have 2 minutes to read, discuss, and write their responses on the chart paper in their own designated color marker. Group members can take turns being the scribe.

- When the timer goes off, the group moves to the next question and repeats the process. Do not rewrite the same response that another group has recorded.

- When a group is back at their home chart, have them share the information with the class. Have them select the 3 most important ideas written about their question.
References


Thank you!!