

Research Paper in
Education



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Effectiveness of Collaborative Strategic Reading and Story Mapping Strategy on
Struggling Readers

Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of collaborative strategic reading and story mapping on reading comprehension of upper primary students. In this study, pre-test & post-test experimental group design was used. Students of class VIII and IX from two schools of Chandigarh were randomly selected from different sections. In total 120 students with reading comprehension problems were selected on the basis of teachers' observation that referred those children who are having reading difficulties. Raven's Progressive Matrices (Non verbal) test was administered on the selected students. The students who's IQ were between 90 and 110 were selected for further study which were 99 in number. Test of reading comprehension by Ahuja and Ahuja (2012) was conducted on these (n=99) students. Students who fall in below average level in reading comprehension were included for the study. In total 46 students were included for study. Twenty three students were randomly assigned to 2 experimental groups. Collaborative Strategic Reading and story mapping strategy were used to enhance the reading comprehension of these students. Mean differential were worked out to see the effectiveness of these strategies. It was found that both the intervention strategies were equally effective in enhancing the reading comprehension of these students.

Keywords: *Reading Comprehension, Story Mapping, Collaborative Reading Strategy.*

Introduction

The improving number of international communication, travelling and studying in abroad, students need to learn four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing for their success. Reading is an essential skill for students not only because it is a source of pleasure and getting information but also because it helps them widen and deepen their knowledge of language. Reading in this sense is not the mere mouthing of words and decoding of every word in every sentence. It is rather the activity that enables the students to go deeper and deeper to get the meaning which is intended by the author. It is the activity that depends largely on comprehension. Accordingly, developing reading comprehension is one of the great aims of teaching English. It is reading comprehension that enables students to pursue their studies and to meet their interests in all fields of knowledge. Thus, reading comprehension should receive more emphasis throughout the teaching process.

Research shows that reading comprehension is a complex process and students usually have

difficulties in constructing meaning from writing text (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Many students have "major difficulties" with English reading comprehension even after years of learning the English language. This often results in them facing difficulties in areas such as finding employment or a better job. They can read a text but for recognizing or understanding the authors' message/messages often encounter with difficulties. Fairbanks concludes that the basic problem of the poor readers is the lack of comprehension. Thus, effective reading is not only a process in which the reader reconstructs a message put in graphic symbols by the writer, but also one of seeking the meanings beyond the surface level of the graphic symbols.

Reading Comprehension is known as an interactive mental process between a reader's linguistic knowledge, knowledge of the world, and knowledge about a given topic (Rahmai & Sadeghi, 2011). Reading comprehension is a complex process involving a combination of text and readers. It is widely reasonable that the three key types of reading are as:

- Accuracy (involves phonological and orthographic processing),
- Fluency (includes time), and
- Comprehension (Ahmadi, Hairul, & Pourhossein, 2012; NICHHD, 2000).

Research in second language reading suggests that learners use a variety of strategies to assist them with the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information (Rigney, 1978). Comprehension or reading strategies indicate how readers conceive of a task, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they do not understand. In short, such strategies are processes used by the learner to enhance reading comprehension and overcome comprehension failures. Reading comprehension refers to "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (Shanahan et al., 2010, p.5). Many students experience persistent problems in comprehending text. These difficulties may not only be rooted in word recognition skills that are not automatic, but they may also stem from limited cognitive ability or problems with working memory, locating main ideas, inference making, flexibly selecting and applying strategies, and monitoring and evaluating strategy use (Gersten, Fuchs, Williams & Baker, 2001; Palincsar, David, Winn & Stevens, 1991; Rich & Shepherd, 1993; Williams, 2004). Other factors such as insufficient prior knowledge, discrepant language experiences, or the lack of strategic skills may negatively influence comprehension (Armbruster, Anderson, & Osterlag, 1987; Winograd, 1984).

Proficient readers typically execute one or more metacognitive behaviors as they read; for example, as they read a passage, they use self-questioning techniques to monitor their understanding of the material or "look back" to locate important information and reread the section (Swanson & De La Paz, 1998). Many competent readers are not aware that these actions require metacognitive skills; rather, good readers engage in these strategic behaviors because they have proven, over time, to be useful.

Instructional Strategies for Struggling Readers

Reading comprehension strategies are an important element in helping a child become an independent and fluent reader (National Reading Panel, 2003). Various instructional strategies such as prior knowledge activation, vocabulary instruction,

strategies instruction, peer programs, repeated readings, and story grammar/structure instruction are helpful for students who struggle with reading. These explicit steps which taught through strategies help students organize their thinking and generalize their understanding to new situations. When students comprehend or understand written text, and combine their understanding with prior knowledge, they are able to perform the reading-comprehension skills:

1. Identify simple facts presented in written text (*literal comprehension*).
2. Make judgments about the written text content (*evaluative comprehension*).
3. Connect the text to other written passages and situations (*inferential comprehension*).

Objectives of the Study

- To study the effectiveness of collaborative strategic reading on reading comprehension level of VIII and IX graders studying in private English medium schools.
- To study the effectiveness of story mapping on the reading comprehension level of VIII and IX graders studying in private English medium schools.
- To compare the effectiveness of both (collaborative strategic reading and story mapping) the intervention strategies for enhancing reading comprehension level of VIII and IX graders studying in private English medium schools.

Design: In this study, pre-test, post-test experimental group design was used. The study aimed at finding out the efficacy of the two strategies, viz., Collaborative Strategic Reading and story mapping. Students of class VIII and IX from two schools of Chandigarh were randomly selected from different sections. In total 120 students were selected. Raven's Progressive Matrices test was administered on the selected students. The students who's IQ were between 90-110 were selected for further study which were 99 in number. Test of reading comprehension was conducted on these students. Students who fall in below average and low level in reading comprehension were included for the study. In total 46 students was part of the study. Out of 46, 12 students were from class VIII and 34 were from class IX. Twenty three students were randomly assigned to 2 experimental groups.

Tools: Children with problems in reading comprehension were identified with the help of English teachers' observation, achievement in English

grammar (school report cards and weekly test on reading), Standard Progressive Matrices by Raven (1999) and reading comprehension test by Ahuja and Ahuja (2012).

Procedure

Experimental Group 1: Students of experimental group 1 were provided intervention through story mapping strategy. The elements of story grammar were explicitly taught using a story map as a visual aid and an organizer for guided practice. A chart with story map was displayed and shown to the students prior to reading each story. Story grammar elements - Character, Problem, solution, outcome, Reaction and theme was taught individually. The investigator first asked students to describe what each element of the map meant and then explained the meaning of each element. Finally, the investigator and students discussed examples of each story-grammar element. After instruction, students were called upon to read parts of the passage aloud. Once the passage was read, students completed their story maps independently. The intervention continued daily with instruction on key story-grammar elements followed by new passages to be read and story maps for students to complete individually.

Experimental Group 2: Students of experimental group 2 was given intervention through collaborative reading strategy. Intervention was started with the four reading strategies - the Preview strategy, the Click and Clunk strategy, the Get the Gist strategy, and the Wrap Up strategy that students apply before, during, and after reading a passage in a group learning environment. Initially, the investigator gave new passage to the students to read. Students preview the passage by examining the headings, vocabulary given in the passage. They collaboratively brainstorm about the topic, and make predictions about the passage. The students write down their brainstorms and predictions and share them in a group. During Click and Clunk, investigator taught the students to monitor while they are reading and think about what is causing difficulties. Students write down “clunks” which are words or concepts they do not understand. “Clicks” are portions of the text they understand. Some of the strategies analyzing prefixes, suffixes, and root words were taught to the students to find the meaning of their clunks. Students write down their clunks in a group and use strategies to find its meaning in a group. If they are still not able to find

the meaning of the clunk, the group leader asks for teacher assistance. During Get the Gist, students determine the main idea of a text in their own words. Finally during Wrap Up, students were taught how to identify the most important ideas from the passage they read. Students formulate questions about the important ideas in the text. They ask these questions in a small, cooperative group and answer their classmates’ questions as well. Their discussion ends with sharing important ideas from the text.

After 20 days training to the groups, Reading comprehension test was re-administered on both the groups to see the effectiveness of remedial strategies which were given to improve their reading comprehension.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Mean Differential between Pre and Post-Test Scores of Experimental Group 1 With Regard To Reading Comprehension Level (N=23) Who Was Provided Intervention through Story Mapping

Strategy				
Test	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
Pre-Test	17.08	5.08	4.88	.01
Post-Test	24.68	4.59		

Results given in Table-1 indicates that mean differential between pre- and post-test scores of reading comprehension of experimental group 1 were statistically significant. It can be concluded that reading comprehension level of students of experimental group 1 enhanced after giving intervention through story mapping strategy.

Table 2: Mean Differential between Pre and Post-Test Scores of Experimental Group 2 With Regard To Reading Comprehension Level (N=23) Who Was Provided Intervention through Collaborative Strategic Reading

Test	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
Pre-Test	14.52	4.2	5.82	.01
Post-Test	23.82	5.95		

Results given in Table-2 indicates that mean differential between pre- and post-test score of reading comprehension of experimental group 2 were statistically significant. It can be concluded that reading comprehension level of students of experimental group 2 enhanced after giving intervention through collaborative strategic reading.

Table 3: Mean Differential between the Post-Test Scores of Experimental Group 1 and 2 With Regard To Reading Comprehension

Experimental	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of
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Group				Significance
Group 1 (N=23)	24.68182	4.595495	0.67750 7	NS
Group 2 (N=23)	23.59091	5.95256		

Table-3 shows that both the intervention strategies i.e. story mapping strategy and collaborative strategic reading is equally effective in enhancing the reading comprehension of students. These results suggest that specialized intervention strategies improve the reading comprehension skills of students and transition them from passive readers to self-directed readers who actively engage with the lecture or text to construct meaning and improve performance on classroom-based and standardized comprehension assessments.

Conclusion: Reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from words. Comprehension goes beyond simply recognizing words and sentences on a page, but instead is the ability to make connections and generate understanding from those words. The ability to comprehend written text is an essential component of learning, yet it is an area in which many students continue to struggle and fall short. Explicit reading instructions help the learning disabled children to effectively gain the comprehension skills and provide students an opportunity to practice reading and to receive immediate corrective feedback.

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