Using Strategy Instruction to Improve Reading Comprehension

What is the level of evidence?

This is an evidence-based practice based on 14 studies, 13 of which had strong research designs, five of which met criteria for acceptable quality group experimental studies, and one which met criteria for acceptable quality single-case study.

Where is the best place to find out how to do this practice?

The best place to find out how to implement strategy instruction is through the following research to practice lesson plan starters:

- **RAP Strategy (Lauterbach & Bender, 1995)**

With whom was it implemented?

- Students with
  - Learning disabilities (13 studies, n ≥ 380)*
  - Intellectual disability (4 studies, n ≥ 16)
  - Other health impairment (2 studies, n ≥ 18)
  - Emotional disturbance (1 studies, n ≥ 4)
  - Reading disability (1 study, n ≥ 14)
  - Other (1 study, n ≥ 6)
- Grades ranged from 6th – 9th
- Gender
  - Males (n ≥ 264)*
  - Females (n ≥ 136)*
- Ethnicity
  - African-American (n ≥ 108)*
  - White (n ≥ 131)*
  - Hispanic (n ≥ 89)*
  - American Indian (n ≥ 1)*
  - Multi-racial (n ≥ 1)*
  - Other/Not specified (n ≥ 4)*
*Not all studies disaggregated participants by the above categories. Therefore, these data reflect the number of participants from studies that disaggregated for the relevant category. All studies contributing to the level of evidence for this practice did demonstrate effects for students with disabilities.

**What is the practice?**

Strategy instruction has been defined as “a heuristic or guide that serves to support or facilitate the learner as she or he develops the internal procedures that enable them to perform the higher level operations” (Rosenshine, 1995, p. 266).


**How has the practice been implemented?**

- Using a variation of the “model-lead-test” format of instruction, strategy instruction was used to teach:
  - Paraphrasing and comprehension of texts (Lauterbach & Bender, 1995)
  - Comprehension of expository science text (Bakken, Mastropieri, & Scruggs, 1997; Boyle, 2010)
  - Theme identification in narrative text (Wilder, & Williams, 2001)
  - Comprehension of expository prose (Gajria & Salvia, 1992)
  - Reading comprehension strategies and attribution retraining (Berkeley, Mastropieri, & Scruggs, 2011)
- Following the recommendations of Schumaker and Deshler (2006), strategy instruction was used to teach students inferential reading comprehension (Fritschmann, Deshler, & Schumaker, 2007)
- Strategy instruction has been used in conjunction with self-monitoring to improve main idea identification (Jitendra, Hoppes, & Xin, 2000)
- Strategy instruction has been incorporated into a computer-assisted instruction program to improve reading comprehension (Kim et al., 2006)

**Where has it been implemented?**

- General education classroom (2 studies)
- Resource room (2 studies)
- Self-contained classroom (3 studies)
- Distance education (1 study)
- Other (e.g., library, cafeteria; 2 studies)

**How does this practice relate to Common Core Standards?**
• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL 9-10.2 - Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.Rl 9-10.2 - Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

How does this practice relate to the Common Career Technical Core?

• Career Ready Practices
  2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
  7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
  8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

• Design/Pre-construction Career Pathway (AC-DES)
  2. Use effective communication skills and strategies (listening, speaking, reading, writing and graphic communications) to work with clients and colleagues.

• Restaurants & Food/ Beverage Services Career Pathway (HT-RFB)
  10. Apply listening, reading, writing and speaking skills to enhance operations and customer service in food and beverage service facilities.

References used to establish this evidence base:


Wilder, A. A., & Williams, J. P. (2001). Students with severe learning disabilities can learn higher order comprehension skills. Journal of Educational Psychology, 93, 268.

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