

## **READING COMPREHENSION: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS**

**Rule out problems at more basic levels of reading, such as phonological awareness and decoding.** Reading comprehension is likely to be difficult if a student has trouble processing words in isolation. If a problem exists with phonological awareness or decoding, target these skills before focusing on comprehension.

**Before assigning readings, ensure that students have the proper background knowledge to make sense of the text.** Spend a few moments highlighting important background concepts and vocabulary words.

**Provide focus to readings, especially those that are long in length.** Highlight key points for students to look out for.

**Consider using the following adaptation of the modified SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review) strategy to help improve students' reading comprehension.** The following example illustrates this method.

### **Survey**

Have students become familiar with the organization and overall contents of the reading material. After they read the title and introduction, have students ask themselves the following questions:

How much do I already know about the topic?

How does this topic relate to what I have studied?

Is this topic controversial?

What can I learn from the author about the topic?

Are there biases about the topic?

What do I wish to learn about the topic?

After reading the introduction or first paragraph, have the students read the summary or the last paragraph.

As students read the boldface headings, ask them to list them in an outline format.

### **Question**

Have students brainstorm questions related to the first part of a selection. It is very important that teachers participate in this process and model good questioning.

Then ask students to formulate similar questions for the next part.

### **Read**

Have students predict possible answers to the possible questions using their background knowledge and thinking abilities.

Direct students to read the text to confirm their predictions.

Have students engage in a question and answer activity similar to the television game show Jeopardy! For this activity, ask students to write questions in their notebooks related to the information presented in each paragraph of the textual material.

### **Recite**

Encourage students to enhance their understanding of the text through writing and paraphrasing the answers to the question in the previous step.

### **Review**

Have students go back to each heading and try to recall the questions and answers. Have students write a summary that ties together all of the ideas that have gathered.

**Try other versions of the SQ3R strategy.** These include: K-W-L (KNOW, WANT to learn, did LEARN), POSSE (predict, organize, search/summarize, evaluate), story mapping, and brainstorming before readings.

**Provide students with a variety of opportunities to review what they have read.** Try story maps, or story re-telling.

**Encourage students to make connections between the reading passage and their worlds.** Connection charts can be set up where students are encouraged to link what they learned to their experiences and world knowledge.

**Use cooperative learning activities.** Assign each student a part of the reading they are responsible for teaching to other group members. This provides the opportunity for students to paraphrase what they have read, which may help commit the information to memory.

**Encourage students to re-read passages.** They will be able to read with increased speed and fluency, which will allow them to extract more knowledge from what they read.

**Allow students to demonstrate their understanding of readings in a variety of ways.** Students may like to draw pictures, make charts, write a poem, write a play, etc.

### **Additional Resources:**

- Balajthy, E. (2003). *Struggling readers: Assessment and instruction in grades K-6*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Lyons, C. (2003). *Teaching struggling readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- McCormick, S. (1995). *Instructing students who have literacy problems*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Simon & Schuster.
- Myerson, M. (2002). *Strategies for struggling readers: Step by step*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

<http://specialed.about.com/cs/literacy/a/readers.htm>: Help for Struggling Readers.  
[www.scholastic.com/familymatters/read/](http://www.scholastic.com/familymatters/read/): All About Reading.

**Contributor:**  
Matthew Dailey