

Reading Strategies Good Readers Use

By Lisa Frase

A few years ago, educational researchers David Pearson and Nell Duke asked the question, "What kind of thinking happens when proficient readers read?" This question led to groundbreaking research results that have changed the way teachers teach children to read.

They discovered seven key strategies that good readers use during the reading process. Innovative teachers teach the strategies directly using metacognitive thinking (thinking out loud about your thinking) by modeling their own thinking out loud during the reading process. Students apply the new strategies by practicing their own thinking orally and in writing. Books like *Mosaic of Thought* by Zimmerman and Keene, *Strategies that Work* by Harvey and Goudvis, and *Reading with Meaning* by Miller explore these ideas in great depth and apply best teaching practices to teaching reading strategies.

Strategy One: Making Connections

Readers bring their own experiences and background knowledge to the text. They make personal connections, they connect one text with another, and make connections with the world. These connections enrich the text and help the reader to understand the text at a higher level of meaning. Teachers teach these connections directly: text to self connections, text to text connections, and text to world connections.

Strategy Two: Visualizing or Envisioning

Readers see pictures in their minds when they read. The best part of reading is watching the "movie in your head." Good readers experience seeing strong visual images. Children can be taught to visualize as they read. Often poor readers do not "see" when they read. We live in a visual world, yet it's the visuals that many readers lack when they read.

Strategy Three: Questioning

Readers are constantly questioning, predicting, confirming their thinking, and adjusting their thinking. Good readers have a purpose for continuing to read. The purpose lies within their ability to question and predict throughout the reading of the text. The adjustments made help readers to understand the text at a deeper level. Their basic and deeper comprehension soars when their minds are constantly making meaning through questioning.

Strategy Four: Inferring

Good readers read between the lines. The answers are not always black and white, and good readers are able to infer meaning based on background knowledge and text clues. When a reader is inferring they are thinking, predicting, adjusting, and confirming. This leads to deeper understanding of the text.

Strategy Five: Determining Importance

Good readers understand the main ideas of a text and can determine what is important. Readers are answering questions, determining key points, and stretching their thinking as they connect the important ideas with their own knowledge.

Strategy Six: Synthesizing

Good readers are able to synthesize their reading and produce their own ideas or products from their knowledge. Synthesizing is a higher order thinking skill that requires you to reach beyond basic knowledge and create new thinking.

Strategy Seven: Fix-Up Strategies

Good readers know how to tackle difficult text. If they run across a word they don't know they chunk the word and use context clues to determine the meaning. If they just finished a paragraph and don't have a clue as to what they just read, they reread the paragraph and focus on thinking about its' meaning. They identify what they don't understand and read back or ahead to try and clarify meaning. They look at pictures or other text features (like graphs or sidebars) to help them understand the concepts or ideas. Fix-up strategies can be directly taught to help students break down a piece of text and find its' meaning.

These strategies are often taught separately, but they must be integrated and automated in the reader's mind. Once students are aware of these strategies and learn to apply them during their own reading process they begin to become an automatic part of their thinking. The strategies help readers to understand text and gain meaning by applying their own background knowledge or schema, as well as understanding the author's message

Lisa Frase is a National Board Certified Teacher in Literacy. During her 14 year tenure she has earned a Masters in Reading, presented at state and national conferences, and earned the 2006 Texas Council for the Teachers of English Language Arts Elementary Teacher of the Year Award. She continues to teach, write, and maintain a website for teachers packed with free resources at <http://www.effectiveteachingsolutions.com>.

Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/1824654>