Reading Comprehension Strategies in the ELA classroom

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Abstract
This action research project analyzes reading comprehension strategies in the English/Language Arts classroom. The comprehension strategies implemented were as follows: "Read Write Pair Share," "Student Questioning for Purposeful Learning" "Reciprocal Teaching," "Dialectical Journals," and "Exit Slips." The goal of this study was to determine which of these strategies are most effective in improving reading comprehension in the ELA classroom. Research participants were comprised of eighteen students in an English 12, Track 3 classroom. The strategies were incorporated as a component of a curriculum unit around the novel Persepolis. As students read, they completed the designated reading comprehension strategy for the particular lesson. At the end of the unit, after all of the student work was collected, strategies were compared based on student assessment results. Students also completed a survey, asking them to rank the strategies based on how well each strategy helped improve their comprehension of the novel. Based on data from both student assessment scores and survey answers, "Exit Slips" seemed to be the most helpful strategy in improving reading comprehension. Students scored the second highest on this strategy, and the "Exit Slip" was rated as the most helpful strategy in improving comprehension by the largest number of students (53%) on their surveys.

Methodology
- Students completed the reading comprehension strategies in class and turned in their work for assessment.
- Work was graded based on both completion and depth of understanding/analysis.
- Each strategy was practiced for one week, over the period of 5 weeks.
- Students completed a survey after completing each strategy, asking them to rank the strategies and identify which one helped their comprehension the most.

Results
- Out of the 5 strategies, over half of the students indicated that "Exit Slips" helped improve their reading comprehension the most.
- Student scores for each comprehension strategy were averaged, which is shown on the bar graph below.
- Students scored the highest on "Read, Write, Pair, Share," with an 85.39% average. They scored the second highest on "Exit Slips," with a 83.35%.

Reading Comprehension Strategies
Read, Write, Pair, Share
- Students read a section from the novel, respond to questions around the reading on their own, pair up with partners and share their responses, and share with the entire class.

Student Questioning for Purposeful Learning
- Instructor writes a controversial statement on the board that relates to the text. Students verbalize and record questions around the statement, and find answers to their questions in the text.

Reciprocal Teaching
- Break into groups and assign each group a task: predictor, summarizer, connector, clarifier, and questioner. Each group presents their section to the class on the following day.

Dialectical Journal
- Students first write a summary of the section, then create a T-chart, recording a meaningful quote in the left section and responding the quote in the right.

Exit Slip
- Students ask one question around the section, answer a writing prompt, and turn in before leaving the door.

Data Analysis
- The data shows that there is a correlation between student survey responses and student score averages.
- While the student survey results indicate that "Exit Slips" are the most helpful, data averages show that students scored second highest on this strategy.
- Although they scored slightly higher on "Read, Write, Pair, Share," only 17% of students expressed that this strategy was the most helpful.
- Therefore, "Exit Slips" seemed to be the most helpful reading comprehension strategy in this study.

Implications
The research results from this study may be helpful for teachers, tutors, and students. While reading comprehension strategies are especially helpful for those who struggle with language decoding, they can also be useful for all students.

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