Developing & Enhancing Reading Comprehension

Comprehension is “The Point” of Reading

“... reader's process of using prior experiences and the author's text to construct meaning that is useful to that reader for a specific purpose.” (p. 252)
That is, comprehension is an ACTIVE process.

Listening vs. Reading Comprehension

Copeland & Keefe, 2008
Teach for comprehension from the very beginning of instruction!

Teach for comprehension from the very beginning of instruction!

Model of Silent Reading Comprehension
(R. Entwistle, based on Cunningham, 1993)

- Word Identification
  - Literal
  - Mediated
- Language Comprehension
  - Knowledge of Text Structures
  - Knowledge of the World
- Print Processing
  - Eye Movement
  - Print-to-Meaning Links
  - Inner Speech
  - Integration

Theories of Comprehension

- Schema Theory
- Mental/Situation Models
Factors Affecting Comprehension

• Decoding and fluency skills
• Vocabulary
• Background knowledge
• Academic vs. conversational vocabulary
• Understanding the structure of written language
• Processing abilities
• Understanding the purpose for reading a particular text
• Cognitive abilities/skills

Research indicates that

• Reading comprehension instruction has not been widely studied among individuals with intellectual disabilities and has been studied even less often in individuals with ASD.

Research indicates

• NRP identified 13 effective strategies to teach vocabulary and reading comprehension (5 and 8 respectively)
  – Monitoring comprehension
  – Cooperative learning
  – Graphic/semantic organizers
  – Story structure
  – Question answering (e.g., wh-questions)
  – Generating questions (asking self wh questions)
  – Summarizing
  – Using multiple strategies with a text
Teachers who were excellent at facilitating comprehension:

• Built language at every opportunity
• Activated/built students’ background knowledge (schema)
• Provided a purpose for reading
  • think-alouds
• Followed up on that purpose after reading
• Taught prediction
• Continuously motivated students to read for meaning
• Taught strategies to identify the main idea

Before Reading: Activating prior knowledge/predicting

• Activating prior knowledge and learning to predict provides a context for understanding the text, enhances meaning making, and facilitates monitoring of comprehension
• Examples of activities:
  – Using webs and other graphic organizers (e.g., KWL)
  – Using “W” questions (Who, what, where, when, why) for questioning/predicting

Preteach vocabulary
Content through *modifications* to text

- **Braille**
- Highlighted texts
- Increased font size

Content through varying *mediums*

- Tape-recorded books
- Buddy-reading
- E-books
- Books on CD
- PowerPoint books
- Bookworm

Copeland & Keefe, 2008

www.academicmaterials.com/entrance.htm
During Reading

- Use strategies that encourage mental representations ("pictures") of the meaning of the text; facilitate comprehension monitoring; encourage students to reflect on the set purpose for reading this text
- Anaphoric cuing
- Adapted age-appropriate books with engagement strategies
- Read Alouds and Shared Reading are important ways to build these skills, in addition to reading independently and practicing comprehension skills

Building Comprehension: Anaphoric Cuing

The bus driver walked to his bus. He opened the door and walked up the steps.
The bus radio made a loud noise. The driver picked it up. He said, “Hello. This is Mike. What do you need?”
The radio operator said, “There is some road work on Main Street. You will need to leave soon.”

UNC’s Center for Literacy & Disability Studies

Example Adapted Age-Appropriate Book
UNC-Charlotte (Browder et al.)

http://education.uncc.edu/access/adaptedbooks.htm

Teaching comprehension through Shared Reading

- Teacher reads aloud while students are looking at text
  - Students have a hard copy, or
  - Text is projected on a screen (can enlarge print easily this way)
  - Choose a text at student’s instructional or independent reading level
- Be explicit about the purpose of the reading
- Model and teach a specific comprehension strategy (e.g., inference, text features, map reading)
- Provide a follow-up activity that allows students to practice the modeled strategy

Copeland & Keefe, 2009

During Reading: Assessing/Facilitating Reading Comprehension

- Maze:
  Jim took a trip to see his grandmother. He had to ride in a [car/book/hat] to get to her house. Jim ate lots of good [it/mud/food] at his grandmother’s house. He likes going to see his [cat/grandmother/bus].

Copeland & Keefe, 2009
Example of reading guide for expository text.

This chapter was about _____________________________.

Eyelashes keep dust out of our eyes.

• The _______ is a black circle in our eyes. It lets __________ into our eyes.

• We blink about ______ times a minute.

• The eyeball is like clear jelly. It keeps our eyes _______ and ___________________________.

Copeland & Keefe, 2008

After Reading: Assessing & Building Reading Comprehension

• Story re-telling (e.g., with picture supports)

• Acting out a story (example of using peer supports/cooperative learning activities to support learning)

• "Quick-draws"

• Story Grammar Maps (example of using visual/graphic cues to support learning)

• Answering comprehension questions (remember to ask inferential, evaluative, and main idea types of questions)

Story Grammar Questioning

1. Read the story and construct a story grammar (story map) or other graphic organizer using the elements you identified

2. Write one question for each of the major story/text structure elements.

3. Ask student to answer story grammar questions using a blank story map (Variations of this: do this individually OR orally vs. writing OR in pairs OR in small groups)
Content through Read-Alouds

• Teacher reads a selection aloud to entire class
  – Good as ‘grabbers’/hooks
  – Allow students to focus on content vs. decoding
  – May aid in memory b/c of multiple avenues of input
  – Model fluent oral reading (support language acquisition for ELL students)

Content through strategy use

RAP
Graphic Organizers
Admit-Exit Strategy
K-W-L
Question-Answer-Relationship Guide
Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA)
Say-Something Paired Reading

Comprehension Repair Strategies

• Click – Clunk
  – Read on.
  – Reread sentence.
  – Reread paragraph or section.
  – Look for information from a resource such as a dictionary or glossary.
  – Ask someone else for help.
Example of a Reading Comprehension Strategy: Read -- Ask -- Paraphrase (RAP)

- Read paragraph to yourself.
- Ask yourself what is the main idea.
- Put the paragraph into your own words and tell it to your partner.
- Switch roles.

Next Week: 11/4/09

- Read
  - C & K text: Chapter 8
  - Rueda
  - Ruiz et al.
- Examine
  - Writing instruction
  - Literacy instruction for students whose first language is not English and who have moderate/severe disabilities
- Coming Up 11/18
  - Poetry Collaboration assignment due