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STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ANNOTATION

Reading comprehension is a very important part of learning in primary education and plays a major role in students' academic development. Students who are able to understand what they read usually perform better in school and feel more confident during the learning process. However, many primary school students face difficulties in reading comprehension for different reasons. This study focuses on several teaching strategies that can be used to improve reading comprehension in primary school students. The study is based on a review of academic literature related to reading comprehension instruction. Strategies such as vocabulary instruction, guided reading, questioning techniques, story mapping, and reciprocal teaching are discussed. Based on the reviewed literature, these strategies appear to have a positive effect on students' reading comprehension when they are applied consistently in the classroom. The study highlights the importance of using effective teaching methods in primary education.

Keywords: *reading comprehension, primary education, teaching strategies, vocabulary instruction, guided reading, questioning techniques, graphic organizers, reciprocal teaching.*

Introduction

Reading comprehension is one of the most important skills developed during the primary school years. It is not limited to reading words correctly, but also involves understanding the meaning of a text and being able to think about what has been read. In primary education, reading is used in almost all subjects, which makes reading comprehension essential for overall academic success.

Many students experience difficulties with reading comprehension at an early stage. These difficulties may be related to limited vocabulary knowledge, lack of reading strategies, or insufficient support during instruction. If such problems are not addressed in primary school, they may continue to affect students' learning in later years. For this reason, teachers have an important responsibility in supporting students' reading development.

The purpose of this study is to examine teaching strategies that are effective in improving reading comprehension among primary school students. By reviewing existing research, this study aims to identify strategies that can be applied in primary classrooms to support students' reading comprehension skills.

The research question of this study is: What teaching strategies are effective in improving reading comprehension among primary school students?

Literature Review

1. Reading Comprehension in Primary Education

Reading comprehension is generally described as the ability to understand and interpret written texts. Snow (2002) explains that reading comprehension is a process that involves interaction between the reader, the text, and the context. In primary education, students gradually develop comprehension skills as they learn new vocabulary and become familiar with different reading strategies.

Research shows that students who struggle with reading comprehension in primary school often continue to face academic challenges in later years. Pressley

(2006) emphasizes that early reading comprehension skills are strongly related to future academic achievement. Therefore, effective reading instruction at the primary level is particularly important.

2. Vocabulary Instruction

Vocabulary knowledge is closely related to reading comprehension. When students understand the meaning of words in a text, they are more likely to understand the overall message. Duke and Pearson (2002) highlight the importance of explicit vocabulary instruction in improving reading comprehension.

In primary classrooms, vocabulary instruction often includes direct teaching of new words, repeated exposure to vocabulary through reading activities, and opportunities for students to use new words in different contexts. These practices help students develop a stronger understanding of texts and improve comprehension.

3. Guided Reading

Guided reading is a commonly used teaching strategy in primary education. It usually involves small groups of students reading texts that are appropriate for their reading level, with guidance provided by the teacher. During guided reading sessions, teachers support students by asking questions and helping them apply reading strategies.

Previous studies suggest that guided reading supports reading comprehension by improving students' fluency and understanding of texts. This approach also allows teachers to give individual support and respond to students' different learning needs.

4. Questioning Techniques

Questioning techniques are widely used to support reading comprehension in primary classrooms. Teachers may ask questions before reading to activate students' prior knowledge, during reading to encourage thinking, and after reading to check understanding. These questions help students focus on important ideas in the text.

Encouraging students to ask their own questions can also improve comprehension. This strategy helps students become more active readers and supports the development of critical thinking skills.

5. Story Mapping and Graphic Organizers

Story mapping and graphic organizers are visual tools that help students organize information from texts. Story maps usually include elements such as characters, setting, main events, and outcomes. These tools are particularly helpful for primary school students who benefit from visual support.

Research indicates that graphic organizers can improve students' comprehension and memory of texts. By visually organizing information, students are better able to understand text structure and key ideas.

6. Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal teaching is a student-centered strategy that encourages active participation in the reading process. It focuses on four main activities: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. At first, the teacher models these strategies, and later students are encouraged to apply them independently.

Studies show that reciprocal teaching can have a positive effect on reading comprehension. This strategy promotes discussion among students and helps them become more aware of how they understand texts.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research approach based on a review of existing literature. Academic books and peer-reviewed journal articles related to reading comprehension strategies in primary education were selected and analyzed. The focus was on studies that examined teaching practices used with primary school students.

The reviewed sources were analyzed to identify common strategies and key findings related to reading comprehension instruction. This approach was considered appropriate for a Master's-level study with a limited scope.

Discussion

The reviewed literature suggests that reading comprehension can be improved through the use of structured and interactive teaching strategies. Vocabulary instruction appears to be a basic but essential component, as students need to understand word meanings in order to comprehend texts.

Guided reading and questioning techniques allow teachers to support students at different reading levels while encouraging active engagement. Story mapping and graphic organizers help students organize information and understand text structure. Reciprocal teaching supports collaboration and helps students take more responsibility for their own learning.

However, the effective use of these strategies depends on factors such as teacher preparation, classroom conditions, and available resources. Teachers may face challenges when applying multiple strategies at the same time, which shows the need for careful planning in primary classrooms.

Conclusion

This study examined several teaching strategies that aim to improve reading comprehension in primary school students. Based on the reviewed literature, strategies such as vocabulary instruction, guided reading, questioning techniques, story mapping, and reciprocal teaching were found to be effective in supporting reading comprehension. In response to the research question, this study concludes that interactive and student-centered teaching approaches are particularly beneficial in primary education. Teachers are encouraged to use a combination of strategies to support different learning needs. Future research could focus on classroom-based studies to further explore the long-term effects of these strategies.

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