

Intervention

Answering Comprehension Questions

Story Mapping

Story mapping has been demonstrated to improve reading comprehension for elementary students with and without disabilities, middle school students with disabilities, and low-performing secondary level students.

In story mapping, students learn to use a graphic framework that focuses their attention on key elements to help them organize and interpret information. Attending to the structural elements helps students to think about the content and relate it to prior knowledge, leading to better comprehension. The intervention involves filling out 'story map' to help the student organize pertinent information as they come across it. The map for primary grades gives helpful clues about what information should go in each section of the map. First model how to fill out the story map. Second, let the students work on completing their own maps as a part of guided practice. Review their maps and go over what should belong in each section. Next, independent practice of the story mapping is done. Following independent practice, the students should be able to answer comprehension questions first with the use of their story maps. Later on, they should be able to do it without.

Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies

1. Partner Reading with Retell

Two students partner up and read the same passage. First, partner one reads for five minutes, with partner two following along. Next, partner two reads for five minutes with partner one following along. After both students have read the same passage, partner two retells in sequence what has been read for 1-2 minutes. If the partner has trouble recalling information, partner one prompts by asking, "What did you learn first?" and "What did you learn next?" If partner two is unable to remember, partner one provides the information.

Variation: Have student partners take turns asking each other five comprehension questions (Who?, What?, When?, Where? and Why?) about the reading selection.

2. Paragraph Shrinking

Paragraph shrinking is designed to enhance comprehension through summarization and main idea identification. Partners take turns reading new text (rather than the same text as above). The listening partner asks the reader: (a) "Who or what was the paragraph mainly about?" and (b) "Tell the most

important thing about the who or what.” The reader must summarize this information in 10 or fewer words. If the listener decides that the reader has made a paragraph summary error, he or she directs the reader to skim the paragraph and try again. If they still don’t have the answer, the listener provides it. If the error involves using more than 10 words, the listener says, “Shrink it.” Partners switch roles after five minutes.

References

Rathvon, Natalie (2008). *Effective School Intervention: Evidence-Based Strategies for Improving Student Outcomes*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.