

Reading Comprehension Strategies

Researchers have confirmed what teachers of reading may have observed in themselves and in their students, namely that thoughtful, active, proficient readers are metacognitive, they think about their own thinking during reading.

As readers, we frequently use the following cognitive strategies. We...

- *Activate relevant, prior knowledge (schema)** before, during and after reading text. Proficient readers "use prior knowledge to evaluate the adequacy of the model of meaning they have developed" and to connect new information with what they already know. (Pearson et. al., 1992)
- *Determine the most important ideas and themes in a text.** Proficient readers use their conclusions about important ideas to focus their reading and to exclude unimportant details from memory. (Afflerbach and Johnston, 1986).
- *Ask questions** of ourselves, the authors and the texts we read. Proficient readers use their questions to clarify and to focus their reading. (Brown and Palinscar, 1985).
- *Create visual and other sensory images from the text** during and after reading. These images may include visual, auditory and other sensory connections to the text. These images deepen understanding.
- *Draw inferences from text.** Proficient readers use their schema and textual information to draw conclusions, make critical judgments, and form unique interpretations from text. Inferences may occur in the form of conclusions, predictions, or new ideas. (Anderson and Pearson, 1984).
- *Synthesize information.** Proficient readers attend to the most important information and to the clarity of the synthesis itself. Readers synthesize in order to better understand what they have read. (Brown and Day, 1983).
- *Utilize a variety of "fix-up strategies"** to repair comprehension when it breaks down. Proficient readers select appropriate fix-up strategies from one of the six language systems (pragmatic, schematic, semantic, syntactic, lexical, or grapho-phonetic) to best solve a given problem in a given reading situation (i.e. skip ahead or re-read, use the context and syntax, or sound it out) (Garner, 1987).