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The Effects of Instruction in Prereading Strategies

on Reading Comprehension

By

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A Thesis submitted to the
Department of Education and Human Development
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Education

Degree Awarded:
Spring Semester, 2003

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the effects of instruction in prereading strategies on reading comprehension. Through using Running Reading Records as an assessment tool, I compared reading growth over an eight week period without prereading instruction against reading growth over an eight week period with prereading instruction.

This study consisted of 12 students over a sixteen week period. Running Reading Records were initially given in order to find each student's instructional reading level. Over the course of eight weeks, I instructed the students, in small groups according to their ability level, in guided reading groups. After eight weeks, Running Reading Records were given in order to determine each child's reading growth over a period of eight weeks used as a pretest. After that, I continued with another eight weeks of reading instruction, but this time I used prereading strategies in the small groups. After eight weeks, Running Reading Records were evaluated again as a posttest.

The results were evaluated quantitatively using a t test, as I compared the reading growth from the first set of eight weeks with the reading growth from the second time period. The findings strongly favored the treatment group although it did not show statistical significance.

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CHAPTER I

Statement of Problem

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of instruction in prereading strategies on comprehension.

Introduction

Along with many researchers, I was intrigued by strategies that could enhance reading comprehension. Prereading strategies interested me, as I considered possible determinants of comprehension. Usen (1993) defines a prereading strategy as a technique used to encourage students to call upon background knowledge, to foster predictions, and to ascertain the level of knowledge to close the gap between prior knowledge and new information. Shenkman's (1982) belief that prereading strategies that help students connect schemata in their head with the information on the page is an important component of reading instruction.

The current view of reading has shifted from that of a simple process of lifting the message from the text to that of an active, complex process in which

the reader draws on information from several sources concurrently to construct a representation of a text's message (McKeown, Beck, Sinatra, & Loxterman, 1992). Reading is no longer thought of as passive; it is an active, constructive process in which a reader utilizes all available resources to construct meaning (Usen, 1993). Due to this shift, looking into prereading strategies is important.

Since not all readers possess strategic reading skills, teachers need to provide support to reading through prereading strategies that strategic readers already utilize (Wade, Schraw, Buxton, & Hayes, 1993). According to Wade, et al. (1993), strategic reading is defined as planful, conscious, and flexible, as it involves actions intended to achieve a particular goal or purpose. Many actions that a strategic reader engages in are designed to help the reader comprehend, evaluate, and remember the information in a text and to control attention and anxiety (Wade, Schraw, Buxton, & Hayes, 1993). Reading is a higher-level process that requires readers to go beyond the text presented. In order to achieve this, teachers and readers must work together towards comprehension utilizing prereading strategies. Reading comprehension occurs when readers build relationships between the text, their knowledge, and their experience (Gambrell & Jawitz, 1993).

This review of research investigated several prereading strategies along with the effectiveness of the activities. In all cases the researchers found that

prereading activities positively correlate with reading comprehension. Although not one strategy was found to be superior to another, it was noted that a combination of prereading strategies, along with variation, would be most effective upon reading comprehension.

In primary grade levels, Guided Reading is used in order to introduce some of the prereading strategies. Guided Reading allows teachers to show children how to read, as it also allows for support to the reader (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Need for the Study

Students come to school with diverse background knowledge and experience. Research shows that prior knowledge is a determinate of reading comprehension. Building prereading strategies in young learners should build background knowledge therefore influencing comprehension. The exposure to prereading strategies will enhance and activate existing prior knowledge. In doing this, comprehension will benefit.

As educators it is our job to provide essential building blocks to our students' education. By teaching prereading strategies at the primary level, students will internalize and utilize effective strategies to increase

comprehension. If our goal is to help the children become better readers, it is important that we take advantage of information that students already possess. Building on familiar information and interests will provide the students with a foundation for reading and a path to success. Teaching prereading strategies would enhance student achievement.

Limitations

Although all subjects showed significant growth after instruction in prereading strategies, this study is based on a small sample size: 12. Looking at a larger sample could yield significant results.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

<u>Purpose</u>

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of instruction in prereading strategies on comprehension.

Guided Reading

The purpose of Guided Reading is to engage and enable students to develop reading strategies and to begin to use the strategies independently (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Fountas and Pinnell (2001) also state that the purpose of Guided Reading is to meet the varying instructional needs of all of the students in the class. Guided reading allows the teacher to gain information on the reading cues which the students are using. The rationale for Guided Reading is that readers need ongoing instruction even after they understand reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

According to Gallagher (2001), Guided Reading is characterized by students reading independently, teachers extending the child's development, and teacher support. Guided Reading is a group approach to learning, as long as all of the students are at similar instructional levels (The Wright Group,

1995). A student's instructional level is when a student can read the text with 90% - 94% accuracy (O'Flahaven, 2001). At the instructional level, the text allows for the students to try reading strategies, problem solve, and allows for the students to be fairly successful in their attempts (O'Flahaven, 2001). Along with careful text selection, Guided Reading strategies are significantly important.

Guided Reading may include discussing concepts in texts, exploring vocabulary, and discussing reading strategies (Wright Group, 1995). Rereading is another important characteristic of Guided Reading, as it provides the learner with opportunities for success. Guided Reading is an important part of a balanced reading program, which includes: reading aloud, shared reading, Guided Reading, paired reading, independent reading, language exploration, and writing and reading connections (Wright Group, 1995). The three reading cues are the semantic cue system (meaning), syntactic cue system (structure), and the graphophonic cue system (visual) (Wright Group, 1995). A typical Guided Reading lesson follows a standard format. First a story introduction takes place, followed by a picture walk, first read, second read, discussion, mini language lesson, and an independent practice or follow-up activity (Wright Group, 1995).

Oral reading is a significant portion of Guided Reading. Oral Reading is used in order to grab the students' attention, to share or perform, to help

beginning readers understand the relationship between speaking and reading, and to develop listening comprehension and vocabulary. It is also used to assist students with skills relating to reading, to promote language learning for ESL students, to develop confidence, and to further develop comprehension. Oral Reading also helps to determine strategies used during reading, to share reading progress with self and others, to allow for additional reading time for growth, and to addresses reading and language arts standards (Opitz & Rasinski, 1998). Read alouds are an important section of Guided Reading as long as they are done correctly. A read aloud must hold the teacher's and students' attention, stimulate discussion, lead to additional readings, involve dilemmas whose solutions are open ended, and last between 20 - 30 minutes (Erickson, 2000). These factors lead to risk taking, which can also promote comprehension.

Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, and Johnston (2000) state the importance of language activities, which can be used during Guided Reading. Through using word sorts according to numerous word characteristics, the reader can learn new words and develop strategies to decode unknown words (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2000). Students learn to figure out unknown words based on the idea of chunking, which directs the students' attention to a portion(s) of the word with which they are familiar (Gunning, 2002). These

strategies can be rehearsed during a Guided Reading lesson in order to expand the students' vocabulary, which links to reading comprehension.

Guided Reading growth can be detected using Running Reading Records (RRR). RRR provide for a way of comparing a child's performance over a period of time, and results will summarize where children are in written language (Clay, 1993).

Overall, Guided Reading is designed to assist early readers develop their inner-control to utilize strategies. Prereading could be integrated into Guided Reading groups in order to foster making predictions, activating prior knowledge, relating material to self, utilizing background knowledge, etc.

Prior Knowledge:

Prior knowledge has been investigated in many studies. Prior knowledge could be accumulated from sources such as reading, television, and discussions (McKeown, Beck, Sinatra, & Loxterman, 1992). If a reader is totally unfamiliar with a text, he/she will fail to understand it, thus teachers must enrich the student's background knowledge prior to reading so that comprehension could be achieved (Usen, 1993). All reading presupposes that the reader has some degree of background knowledge on a subject (Usen, 1993). According to Henk,

Stahl, and Melnick, (1993), it is almost universally accepted that prior topical knowledge exerts a significant impact on reading comprehension and the retention process. Langer (1980) agrees with these findings as she states that prior knowledge is an exceptionally important determiner of reading comprehension. Alvarez and Risko (1989) suggest that prior knowledge can enhance a reader's interaction with the text, as comprehension occurs when a reader is able to use prior knowledge and experience to interpret the text's message. Readers make use of their schema when they can relate what they already know about a topic to the facts and ideas appearing in the text (Alvarez & Risko, 1989). Ultimately, the richer the schema for a given topic, the better a reader will be able to understand a given topic.

Symons and Pressley (1993) elaborate on the effect of prior knowledge on reading comprehension. They found that students consistently recalled more information from passages about familiar topics than from passages from unfamiliar topics. This investigation supports incorporating prior knowledge into lessons in the classroom. Usen (1993) proposed that the words on the page do not foster comprehension, but instead the reader hooks these words to a network or prior knowledge that is stored in the reader's head. Teachers must build on prior knowledge in the classroom.

More specifically, Symons and Pressley (1989) found that high-

knowledge subjects recognized main ideas more accurately through presented scenarios among distracters than low knowledge subjects. Symons and Pressley's study proposed the importance of prior knowledge, as it positively correlated with comprehension. Information consistent with background knowledge is selected out of incoming information and has a storage advantage over information inconsistent with prior knowledge (Symons & Pressley, 1989). Two explanations are offered for this occurrence. The structural explanation suggests that incoming information fills slots in the activated schema and is processed more easily than is incidental information that does not fit the schema. The attentional process suggests attention is directed to information considered relevant and important and consistent with prior knowledge (Symons & Pressley, 1993). Since texts are seldom explicit, according to Alvarez and Risko (1989), readers must rely on preexisting schemata in order to provide a reasonable interpretation. According to several researchers, the role of prior knowledge is not only important to reading comprehension, but it is essential. The teacher's role is to provide students with opportunities to apply prior knowledge in the classroom. Teachers can also provide students with positive experiences by allowing the students to select a text which interests them. This will enable students to relate to the text, which ultimately leads to increased comprehension.

Think Alouds are used in order to activate prior knowledge and tie new information in with existing schema during the read (Opitz & Rasinski, 1998). Think Alouds can be used as an instructional technique due to the substance of a Think Aloud. By demonstrating the thinking process, making predictions, summarizing a story, using context to figure out a hard word, or using any part of the reading or writing process allow the teacher to model the thought process (Gunning, 2002). Think Alouds are a way for a reader to understand that reading is comprehending, and that a variety of strategies can be used to increase comprehension (Opitz & Rasinski, 1998). During a Think Aloud, the reader verbalizes his/her thoughts while reading in order to show what experienced readers do in order to comprehend (Opitz & Rasinski, 1998).

Mental Imagery is another method which has been identified for enhancing reading comprehension through the use of prior knowledge (Gambrell & Jawitz, 1993). Opitz and Rasinski (1998), also stress the importance of imagery, as the ability to form mental images is an effective reading strategy. It helps students remember by creating images, which enhances students' ability to construct inferences and make predictions (Opitz & Rasinski, 1998). "Imaging allows students to create visual, auditory, or other sensory-based mental representations of characters, objects, events, or other elements in a selection," (Gunning, 2002, p. 371).

Gambrell and Jawitz found that the construction of mental images enhances readers' abilities to construct inferences, make predictions, and remember what was read (1993). This study focused on the effects of strategy instruction that directed the students to use Mental Imagery and Illustrations. The students were split into four groups: induced mental imagery and attention to text illustrations, induced mental imagery, attention to text illustrations, and general memory. The findings of this study were that although the first three groups produced better results than the general memory group, the first groups (induced mental imagery and attention to text illustrations) results were significant (Gambrell & Jawitz, 1993).

A body of research shows that there is a positive interaction between mental images and text illustrations, as the combination enhances both the quality and quantity of what the children comprehend and recall about stories by building on prior knowledge (Gambrell & Jawitz, 1993). Research shows that by using imaging, comprehension increases (Gunning, 2002).

The Prereading Plan (PReP) is a lesson based method of using and analyzing students' prior knowledge (Readence, Moore, & Rickman, 2000). The first phase, which occurs in three steps, involves engaging students in a discussion of the key concepts relating to the topic. According to Readence, et al. (2000), the three steps are: initial associations with the concepts (teachers

encourage students to elaborate on prior knowledge), reflecting on initial associations (students reflect and elaborate on ideas from step 1), and reformulate knowledge (the teacher asks the students if they have any new insights into the topic based on discussions from step 1 and step 2). In the second phase the teacher analyzes the responses of individual students to assess the extent of individual knowledge related to the topic (this is designed to allow the teacher to determine the best way to teach the material) (Readence, et al, 2000). According to Usen (1993), using PReP enables teachers to help students make connections between new and the known to form new ideas. In addition, although the PReP is mainly teacher directed, the concepts are easily transferred to student control.

Brainstorming is another technique that teachers can introduce prior to reading the text. Teachers give the students a topic and allow the students to call out whatever comes to mind, thus calling upon prior knowledge (Usen, 1993). The teacher could record the student responses on an overhead projector, chart paper, or a black board in order to determine the accurate and inaccurate ideas brainstormed during the process.

Usen also investigated a questioning technique that stimulates the student's curiosity about a passage by activating prior knowledge (1993). During guided reading this approach could be used as long as the questions

suggest a significant amount of inference, and as long as the questions evoke prior knowledge and engage predictions (Usen, 1993).

In contrast to the support of prior knowledge, Maria and MacGinite (1987) refutes its importance. This study highlights that most research conducted on prior knowledge was concerned with situations in which the relationships between the text and prior knowledge is one of similarity, and the reader is assumed to assimilate the new information into previously held schemata. It is important to consider the accuracy of prior knowledge about the topic of the text because many young learners not only lack information, they have inaccurate information or misconceptions about a topic (Maria & MacGinitie, 1987). When the prior knowledge of a reader does not coincide with the new information presented, the reader's schemata must restructure through accommodation. Accommodating information into one's schema could be difficult for students as the information does not fit with information they already know. Hence, comprehension could be impeded. Although prior knowledge is an effective prereading strategy for readers, Maria and MacGinitie (1987) state that poor readers rely too heavily on prior knowledge when trying to comprehend. This factor could also have a negative effect on reading comprehension because the poor readers cannot connect the new information into information learned previously. If they try to accommodate the new information with inaccurate

information, comprehension will be skewed due to the inaccuracies.

Prior knowledge is important to reading comprehension. It is essential that teachers activate prior knowledge through a variety of prereading activities while being careful to discuss inaccuracies in order to clear up misconceptions.

Interest

Interest and involvement are also factors that affect reading comprehension. If we could find ways to make texts more interesting, students will learn more, as interest is a predictor of both short-term and long-term recall (Wade, Buxton, & Kelly, 1999). Although a student may have little prior knowledge of a subject, the student could be keenly interested in the topic, thus enhancing comprehension (Henk, Stahl, & Melnick, 1993). Since interesting information is usually emotionally involving, vivid, dramatic, suspenseful, and/or personalized, it may not require much effort to learn; at the same time, interest may attract a good deal of the reader's attention (Wade, Schraw, Buxton, & Hayes, 1993). In fact, interesting information was recalled better than uninteresting information, according to Wade et al., but important uninteresting information was least memorable (1993). One could conclude that when teaching reading based on interest, it is important not to have too many seductive, insignificant details in the text, as they interfere with comprehension.

In contrast, Henk, Stahl, and Melnick (1993) express that although readers may possess high domain of topics, if they find it uninteresting or undesirable, they may not comprehend as well as those students whose interest surpasses knowledge. Through an ambiguous passage presented to athletes (tennis, golf, and baseball) interest was measured. Henk et al. (1993) determined that the passage was interpreted based in reference to the sport in which the athlete was involved. Each athlete read the same passage. The terminology used throughout the short passage was ambiguous about the sport to which it was referring. This study suggested comprehension was obtained in reference to their group membership (tennis players answered multiple choice questions in reference to tennis, golf players to golf, and baseball players to baseball) (Henk et al., 1993).

In two experiments, Wade, Buxton, and Kelly (1999) established interest as a factor that enhances comprehension as well. Experiment one used think alouds during reading and retrospective verbal reports after reading to gather information as to what readers found, and experiment two gathered rating-free writing and written recall data from equivalent groups of participants (Wade, Buxton, & Kelly, 1999). This study found interest to be directly related to comprehension ability. Thus it is important to consider the effects of interest and involvement when evaluating comprehension. One could speculate that the

more experience a person has with a topic or an activity, the greater degree of comprehension he/she could draw from that activity and/or experience.

Rinehart, Gerlach, Wisell, and Welker (1998), investigated the effects of the cover clues including the Back-of-Book Strategy on comprehension (BOB). The BOB summary on the back cover of a text summarizes the text. This study evaluated junior high students' ability to choose a recreational reading book based on the cover alone. It was determined that the information in the BOB summaries does enhance the self-selection of recreational reading (Rinehart et al., 1998). Interest stimulated by the illustration on the cover and the BOB summary was an accurate predictor of the student's liking for the text in almost all cases in the study.

Although interest is significant in comprehension, seductive details do not facilitate comprehension, and these unnecessary details could interfere with learning the important information (Wade, Schraw, Buxton, & Hayes, 1993).

Predicting Strategies

Predicting is a strategy which activates prior knowledge, thus leading to reading comprehension. Prediction strategies are based on what we know, and predictions can determine the purpose of reading (Gunning, 2002). An important aspect which Gunning points out about predicting is the idea that the

reader must adjust his/her predictions based on new information in order to make accurate predictions.

Anticipation Guides are studied in reference to comprehension. Anticipation Guides enhance reading comprehension by activating prior knowledge. The reader asses what he/she already knows and makes predictions based on this information. From there, the reader engages in reading and reevaluates the questions after the reading (Gunning, 2002).

Readence, Moore, and Rickman (2000) propose that the purpose of Anticipation Guides is to enhance comprehension by encouraging students to focus attention on concepts that will be covered by the text. Throughout his strategy, readers must rely on predicting (Usen, 1993). During this activity, misconceptions about the topic become the center of discussion and debate, forcing students to justify, modify, or delete prior knowledge (Readence et al., 2000). The goal of this guide is to have students create their own questions.

Usen (1993) recommended a technique known as Story Impressions, as they do not give away large amounts of information, but they go beyond activating prior knowledge and they influence the process by which the readers use their knowledge. Students must use their impressions of how they think the words fit together prior to reading (Readence et al., 2000). A story impression uses prediction and prewriting, as, "Good reading is similar to good writing,"

(Usen, 1993). Since writing and reading utilize similar processes, it makes sense that writing could be used as a prereading strategy. The teacher presents the students with a list of the key words that they will encounter from the story. Then the students compose a story expressing their predictions or guesses (Usen, 1993). Readence, Moore, and Rickman (2000) proposed the goal of story impressions is not to correctly guess how a story will unfold, but to compare how each student's predictions are organized and compare to the author's version. This strategy prepares the students in advance as they predict the meaning of words by putting them in context.

Possible Sentences is another strategy similar to Story Impressions. Readence et al., support the importance of possible sentences when unfamiliar vocabulary is mixed with familiar terminology so the students can attempt to associate new information with known information (2000). During this activity, the teacher gives the students a list of words, and the students must try to write a sentence using a couple of the words presented. This strategy allows the students to predict and rely on prior knowledge as they create context for the words. Once the student finds out the actual definition, the sentences need to be reevaluated and possibly recreated. Baumgart recommended that understanding the writing is an integral part of teaching students to read, even if their teacher needed to select the topic for the students (1989).

Graphic representations and organizers are visual illustrations of verbal statements used to spatially display interrelationships among concepts (Usen, 1999). There are three purposes of graphic representations: to pre-teach difficult vocabulary, to present the students with an idea framework designed to show conceptual relationships between content vocabulary, and to help the teachers modify and clarify their teaching goals (Usen, 1999). Constructing a story map activated prior knowledge, as it also visually represented the information so that it helped the students to remember and understand more (Baumgart, 1998). Creating a story map based on a story heard previously activated prior knowledge throughout its completion.

CHAPTER III

Design of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of instruction in prereading strategies on comprehension.

Research Question

What are the effects of instruction in prereading strategies on reading comprehension of second graders?

Methodology

Subjects:

The subjects of this study were 12 second-grade students in a suburban school district. The class under study was an inclusion class consisting of seven males and eight females. Four of the students had IEP's in place. Six of the 12

students received additional reading services.

Materials:

The materials included several ability-appropriate reading texts (leveled books and trade books) and Running Reading Records.

Procedures:

This study began with evaluating the students' independent reading levels (determined through Running Reading Records). Once the reading levels were established, the students received reading instruction in guided reading groups for eight weeks. After the eight weeks, Running Reading Records were administered again in order to measure the growth in each student over the course of eight weeks. The students then spent the next eight weeks participating in guided reading groups, and in addition to reading strategies used in the first set of eight weeks, they also received instruction in prereading strategies. The focus over the duration of this study incorporated several prereading strategies such as: reading books of interest, activating prior knowledge, building background knowledge through teaching a mini-lesson prior to reading the text, reading the back of the book (BOB) summaries, building on personal experiences, making predictions, creating self-connections, and

extending vocabulary through super sentences. Following the eight week

period, the Running Reading Record score was administered and evaluated

again.

Analysis of Data

The Running Reading Record scores will be used as a means to detect

comprehension growth.   Since a Running Reading Record will be administered

after the first set of eight weeks and again after the second set of eight weeks,

which includes instruction in prereading strategies, the growth between the

students' initial independent reading level and the first time period level could be

compared against the growth after the prereading instruction. At that time, one

could measure the effects of prereading strategies on reading comprehension.

CHAPTER IV

Results of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of instruction in prereading strategies on comprehension.

Analysis of Data

The results of the study involving instruction in prereading strategies, substantially affect reading comprehension. The information is analyzed by a two sample $\underline{t}$ test assuming equal variances based on Marie Clay's Running Reading Records (1993).

Mean score averages were calculated from pretest and posttest data from Marie Clay's Running Reading Records. The results strongly favored the treatment group, although it was not statistically significant. It did not reject the null hypothesis. A mean score of 17.83 followed the pretest, and a mean score of 22.33 followed the posttest. The level of significance yielded 0.I, which meant that 9 chances out of 10 reading comprehension growth was the result of the reading activity. See table 1 for reference.

Table 1

Pretest and Posttest Scores

Test	d.f.	Mean raw scores	P(T<=t)	Obtained t
Pretest	22	17.83	0.11	
				1.25
Posttest	22	22.33	0.11	

Critical t = 1.72

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Implications

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of instruction in prereading strategies on comprehension.

Conclusion

Instruction in prereading strategies strongly impacted reading comprehension despite its statistical insignificance according to a t test. The level of significance obtained through the t test was 0.1, which reflects a 90% chance that the reading strategies impacted comprehension, which is not statistically significant.

After the pretest, the mean growth was +1.75 levels based on Marie Clay's Running Reading Records. After the posttest, the growth was +4.58 levels, which is a mean growth of +2.67 levels. I would attribute this growth to the instruction in prereading strategies.

In addition to these results, 11 out of 12 students showed an individual increase. One student did not show growth, yet I would speculate my findings based on the learning needs of the student. Although this student did not show

greater growth with the prereading strategies, she maintained comprehension gaining +2 levels again, which is successful for this student, as she has a low IQ. I attribute her consistent gain to the reading strategies involved.

Not only did the students learn prereading strategies, but they were eager to apply the strategies. The students often came to reading group eager to find the Super Sentence on the board or to find a connection to a new book. The students' effort during the instruction in prereading strategies was observably more apparent.

Implications for the Classroom

After a thorough investigation of research, many classroom applications are apparent and necessary in order to enhance reading comprehension.

Prior knowledge could be used across all subject areas in the classroom. Before beginning a new topic in science, the students could construct a KWL chart. In reading there are many opportunities for incorporating prior knowledge. Before starting a new book or chapter, the teacher could read the title and ask the students to brainstorm everything they know about that topic. Then throughout reading the story, the teacher and the students could continually

revisit their prior knowledge as they accumulate new information.

Since writing influences reading ability, authentic writing assignments could be used in the classroom along with story writing. Some authentic assessments include writing friendly letters, party invitations, thank you notes, keeping a journal, making a shopping list, and writing a recipe. As the students write, they are constantly reading and rereading. This reinforces writing attributes as well as reading attributes. After all, good readers read.

Interest could be incorporated through all subject areas. Instead of selecting the topic of the paper for the students, select the theme. For example, select animals. Then allow the students to begin to think about what they already know and consider if they want to know more about an animal or if they would like to learn about an animal which they know little about. This works for books as well. Instead of selecting the book title, select the genre. By selecting the theme instead of the book, the students have the opportunity to explore an area that interests them specifically. According to research, this interest will allow the students to perform better than if they had to do an assignment without the choice.

Predicting strategies could be used in reading experiences throughout the school day. Before reading a new book, have the children record in their journal what they think the book will be about based on the cover and the *back of book*

(BOB) summary. During a guided reading lesson, allowing the students to take a picture walk gives the students the opportunity to make predictions. As the students read the text, they can constantly reevaluate their predictions and create new predictions based on new information.

Vocabulary exercises could be used prior to reading the text. An exciting way to introduce new vocabulary in the classroom is to give the students a list of new words. Have each student pick two words and write a sentence with those words, without knowing the definition. Once the sentences have been created, the teacher gives the definitions, and the students reread their sentences replacing the new word with its meaning. Most likely the sentences will be funny based on the meaning of the words. The students then rewrite a sentence correctly using the new word. This game-like strategy helps the students learn new vocabulary, which enhances reading comprehension. Super Sentences are also a good strategy to use when teaching vocabulary. The teacher selects a sentence out of a book, and replaces a few words from the sentence with words from a thesaurus. The students will read carefully to find the sentence in the text that resembles the super sentence. Once the sentence is identified, the students figure out the new words introduced.

Prereading strategies significantly impact comprehension in the classroom. Making activities exciting can grab a child's attention and engage

the child in the lesson. Prereading strategies set the students up for a successful read.

Implications for Further Research

After researching prereading strategies, there seemed to be areas that require further investigation. Since the results of this study were statistically significant, a similar study could be conducted using a larger population in order to determine statistical significance.

Almost all sources supported that prior knowledge is a determinant of reading comprehension. Since all students do not come to school with the same experiences, schemata vary. Perhaps a study could be conducted that build schema in a classroom setting, and then a reading experience could be done after the learning so that students could build connections with the text as they do not only have their schema, but they have a common schema available which they created together.

One of the research articles began to challenge the effects of prior knowledge versus interest and involvement. The study, using an ambiguous article, clearly stated the effect of actual interest and involvement outweighs

prior knowledge. A further investigation is necessary focusing on the differences in interest and involvement and prior knowledge in order to determine if prior knowledge actually is one of the largest predictors, or if interest and involvement are intertwined in the category. Perhaps it is the combination of prior knowledge, interest, and involvement that actually fosters reading comprehension.

Many methods were evaluated in terms of reading comprehension. Although all proved to be effective under certain conditions and constraints, it would be intriguing to determine which methods of prereading strategies should be used under which conditions. Since we know predicting is a comprehension-building activity, which subjects or situations does it produce the best results for? Especially when working with students with special needs, do some of the rereading strategies prohibit growth or distract the reader? Each strategy or combination of strategies should be closely evaluated to show which strategies are effective under different conditions/circumstances.

Interest was a prereading strategy that enhanced reading comprehension. Knowing this, as teachers it is our goal to make reading interesting. What could be done in the classroom to enhance the interest of the material? Will prodding the interest in reading produce increased reading comprehension? Research in this area will be informative and beneficial.

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Rip-Roaring Russell
By Johanna Hurwitz

Chapter 1 - Lost and Found
Pre- Have you ever lost anything? What? How do you feel when you lose something?

Vocab/Characters- Russell Michaels (7), Nora Resnick (8), Teddy Resnick (8), Eugene Spencer Eastman (8), Elisa Michaels (8), insisted (10), frightening (14), Mrs. Lane , Mrs., Michaels, relieved (16), insisted (19), reassuring (19), Germy/Jeremy (20), admiring (20), radiator (21)

S.S.- Dramatizing with his friends was invariably amusing for Russell.
      Playing with his friends was always fun for Russell. (8)

Post- 1. List three negative experiences that Russell had at school.
1. How did Russell and Jeremy become friends?
2. Do you think Russell likes school? Explain.

Chapter 2- Columbus Day
Pre- Russell doesn't think that it's fair that they can't go to the parade in the rain because of his sister. What is something that you find unfair?

Vocab/Characters- scowled (24), insisted (28), Mrs. Resnick (28), regardless (29), Mr. Michaels (38)

S.S. - The subsequent thing he knew, he was spiraling over on his mattress.
      The next thing he knew, he was turning over on his bed. (34)

Post- 1. How is love different from cookies and candy? (p.36)
    What did Russell's dad give him?
    How would you feel if you were Russell at the end of the chapter?
    Explain.

Chapter 3- Chinese Dinner
Pre- Do you know any riddles?

Vocab/Characters- Herman (44), appetite (45), maneuvers (49)

S.S.- "The premium way to eat is with your phalanges," said Teddy.
       "The very best way to eat is with your fingers," said Teddy. (52)

Post- 1. Why doesn't Russell want to be a grown up? (p. 54)
1. Do you think Russell had fun at the restaurant? Why?

Chapter 4- Why Russell was Late
Pre- Would you want to be a baby again? Why or why not?

Vocab/Characters- triumph (63), amuse (65), annoyed (65), protested (66)

S.S.- Being an infant when you're extremely tiny is extraordinary.
       Being a baby when you're very little is wonderful. (71)

Post- 1. Why didn't Russell want to go to school?
1. Why do you think Mrs. Michaels treated Russell like a baby?
2. What's "the secret?"

Chapter 5- Staying up Late
Pre- What would you do if you could stay up late?

Vocab/Characters- impress (77), convinced (79), coaxed (85), vaguely (86), episode (91)

S.S.- He decided that his intimidation had shown his mother how significant this TV program was.
       He decided that his threat had shown his mother how important this TV program was. (84)

Post- 1. Did Russell see the TV program? Why?
1. Describe what it's like to watch a movie.

Chapter 6- The Parade
Pre- Have you ever been to a parade? What's it like?

Vocab/Characters- Mrs. Wurnbrand (96), Miss Wurmbrand (99), diversion (100), aqaintances (105), Mrs. Ellsworth (105), doubtful (107)

S.S.- It was laborious to imagine that someone with so much frosty hair and so many wrinkles in her face had ever been a juvenile at all.

It was hard to imagine that someone with so much white hair and so many wrinkles in her face had ever been a child at all. (97)

Post- 1. Did anyone watch the parade?
1. Describe the picture on page 106.
2. Do you think Russell likes having a sister? Explain.

Extension-

What is something that Russell learned in the story? What is something you learned from the story?

The Kidnapped King
By Ron Roy

Chapter 1
Pre- Describe Mr. Yunker's office (or how you picture it)

Vocab/Characters- Donald D. Duncan (Dink) (1), Josh (2), Ruth Rose (2), Mr. Dillion (2), Mrs. Eagle (3), accent

S.S.   On foot down the muffled hall, Dink tried to comprehend why the principal wanted to see him.
        Walking down the quiet hall, Dink tried to figure out why the principal wanted to see him. (3)

Post-
1. "Walking down the quiet hall, Dink tries to figure out why the principal waned to see him." Explain how you would feel if this happened to you.
2. What does it mean to be shaped like a football?
3. Name two American customs that you know.
4. Who is Sammi?

Chapter 2
Pre- Would you like to host a foreign exchange student? Why?

Vocab/Characters- Mrs. Duncan (9), Loretta (10), Pal (12), beeline

S.S.- This will be impeccable!
        This will be perfect! (16)

Post-
    Who is Loretta?
    Why do you think Joan Klinker inspected Dink's house?
    Sammi said, "Who is going to dress me?" React.

Chapter 3
Pre- If you had 5 servants, what jobs would they have?

Vocab/Characters- servants

S.S.- The subsequent day I was snuck out of the alcazar and sent here so I would be secure.

The next day I was snuck out of the palace and sent here so I would be safe. (22)

Post-
2. What happened to Sammi's parents?
3. "I have no friends," Sammi said. React.

Chapter 4
Pre- If you could learn another language, what would it be? Why?

Vocab/Characters- kaleidoscope (29), encrusted (29), imitate, snazzy (31)

Post-
3. What is one thing that Dink learned during the French lesson?
4. Joan checked the locks again. Now why do you think so?

Chapter 5
Pre- What advice has Officer Brown given you about "stranger danger"?

Vocab/Characters- Officer Fallon (37), swayed (39), topple (39), Officer Keene (39)

S.S.- As Dink pulled the portal shut for an encore, his hand struck something needlelike.
       As Dink pulled the door shut again, his hand struck something sharp. (36)

Post-
2. "Someone broke it…Sammi's gone!" Describe how Dink's feeling.
3. Dink found a yellow piece of glass. Where do you think it could have came from?

Chapter 6
Pre- Have you ever played with a kaleidoscope?

Vocab/Characters- ransom money (65), bureau (45), Ron Pinkowski (49)

S.S.- He glared at his duo of friends.
       He stared at his two friends. (49)

Post-
5. What's odd about the yellow glass?
6. How do they think the kidnappers took Sammi?

Chapter 7
Pre- Why do you think Dink keeps finding yellow glass?

Vocab/Characters-

S.S.- Dink's mother stared at the kids with distress in her eyes.
    Dink's mother looked at the kids with concern in her eyes. (59)

Post-
1. Why would the kidnappers have to have used a rowboat first?
2. What does Dink, Josh, and Ruth Rose think Sammi did with the yellow glass? Do you think this is smart? Why?

Chapter 8
Pre- Describe how the kids are feeling as they are looking for Sammi.

Vocab;/Characters-   frantic, pronounced (65)

S.S- She smirked feebly at the kids, then slapdash out the back door.
    She smiled weakly at the kids, then hurried out the back door. (62)

Post-
1. Why does Dink think Joan has something to do with the kidnapping?
2. Who do you suspect as the kidnapper? Why?

Chapter 9
Pre- Usually parents worry about children. When would you worry about your parents?

Vocab/Characters- trio, dramatically (68), Mr. Linkletter (68), Ellie (68)

S.S.- Abruptly, Dink felt ailing.
    Suddenly, Dink felt sick. (71)

Post-
1."Where could she be?" How do you think Dink's feeling?

Chapter 10
Pre- Do you think it is ALWAYS necessary to follow all of the rules? Explain.

Vocab/Characters- satisfied (74), beeline (76), bolted (79), gagged (79)

S.S.- That wasn't a commendable notion.
       That wasn't a good idea. (78)

Post-
1. What is meant by the yellow piece of glass on Mr. Linkletter's shoe?
2. Mr. Linkletter said, "Oh, all right. What's one more broken rule?" Do you agree? Why or why not?
3. Why is the Ace laundry character important.

Chapter 11
Pre- How would you feel to be the one to find Sammi? Why?

Vocab/Characters- beamed, parcel, dibs (86)

S.S.- When she saw Sammi and the man on the planking, her face turned as chalky as the sheets.
       When she saw Sammi and the man on the floor, her face turned as white as the sheets. (81)

Post-
1. Does Joan have anything to do with the kidnapping? Explain.
2.What was significant about the gold tassel? How did this tip off Dink's mom?
3. Rate the ending. Would you change anything? Explain.

Writing Extension-
Pretend you went with Dink, Josh, and Ruth Rose to visit Sammi in his palace. What would it be like? What would you do? Write a short story about your visit.

<u>Horrible Harry and the Purple People</u>
By Suzy Kline

Chapter 1- The Purple People
Pre- What's something that makes you groan? Why?

Vocab/Characters- groaned, imagination

S.S. The entire group knew Harry had a mammoth imagination.
    Everyone knew Harry had a huge imagination. (7)

Post-
1.Purple people are brave, strong, and smart. Who do you know like this?
2.Why do you think we need nonsense in our lives?

Chapter 2- The Missing Lunch Card
Pre- How do you feel if you lose something? Why?

Vocab/Characters- blurted, whispered, algae, Cheshire cat

S.S. Sidney leaped out of his perch.
    Sidney jumped out of his seat. (21)

Post-
1.Do you think purple people exist? Why?

Chapter 3- Invasion of the Purple People
Pre- Why isn't it nice to make fun of anyone?

Vocab/Characters- imagination, humongous, umpire

S.S.- What was he going to do subsequently?
    What was he going to do next? (32)

Post-
1.What were the purple people made of?
2.What do the following words all mean: hooey, hogwash, balderdash, humbug, poppycock, and hokum?

Chapter 4- Purple Monsters, Purple People, and a Floating Head
Pre- Describe what it would be like to be invisible.

Vocab/Characters- invisible, prefer, gritted, flamingo, mallet

S.S.- He leaned forward for an encore and listened to the legend.
       He leaned forward again and listened to the story. (35-36)

Post-
1.Something funny from this chapter was...

Chapter 5- Mary Meets one of the Purple People
Pre- Explain how you are a good sport.

Vocab/Characters- bulged, reluctantly

S.S.- Harry was going to be in vast difficulty.
       Harry was going to be in big trouble. (47)

Post-
1.How would you feel if you were Mary in this chapter? Why?
2.Do you think Doug's a good sport? Explain.
3.What is a purple person?

Writing Extension-
"If the purple people visited our classroom..." Explain what your day
would entail.

Tommy Trouble and the Magic Marble
By Ralph Fletcher

Chapter 1- The Crystal Mumbo Jumbo
Pre- Do you have a collection? What?

Vocab/Characters- peculiar (1), admitted (3), rarest (5), crystal bogies (6), Tommy, Spencer, Bradley

SS- Tommy was so flabbergasted he almost released it.
   Tommy was so surprised he almost dropped it. (7)

Post-
1.Name 4 things Tommy collects. What do you collect?
2.What is Tommy's favorite thing to collect?
3.Why doesn't Tommy like Spencer Ross?
4.How much is Spencer selling the "magic" marble for?
5.Use peculiar in a sentence.

Chapter 2- Flowers for Sale
Pre- How would you earn $10?

Vocab/Characters- pulverize (10), confused (14), permission (14), delighted (15), Mrs. Snickenburger, mom

S.S. She was progressing down the street and she was walking brisk.
   She was coming down the street and she was walking fast. (12)

Post-
1.What does pulverize mean? (page 10)
2.What was Tommy's plan to get 8 more dollars?
3. Was Tommy's idea a good plan? Why?

Chapter 3- The Time-out Rug
Pre- How would you earn $10?

Vocab/Characters- shined (18), promised (18), swooped (19)

SS- Instantly he realized he was heading directly towards a dim storm cloud.

   Suddenly he realized he was heading straight towards a dark storm cloud. (21)

Post-
1. Do you think that the time-out rug is a good idea? Why?
2. Tommy pretended to be three things when he was on the rug. What were they?

Chapter 4- The Snake
Pre- Name three things you share with your bother/sister.

Vocab/Characters- garter snake (24), marines (25)

SS- He rotated the box over and disposed of the snake.
   He turned the box over and dumped out the snake. (29)

Post-
1. What did Bradley find by the stream? Describe it.
2. What was the trade that Tommy and Spencer wanted to make?
3. Do you think this is a good trade? Explain why or why not.
Chapter 5- Playing with Fire
Pre- If you had $10, what would you do with it?

Vocab/Characters- wimpy (33), knelt (34), swelling (37), explode (38)

S.S. Tommy stomped into the residence, made a beeline to his bedroom, and slammed the door.
   Tommy stomped into the house, went straight to his bedroom, and slammed the door. (30)

Post-
1. Why did the bee sting Bradley?
2. On page 35 Tommy's dad said, "You play with bees and you're playing with fire." What does this mean?
3. Why do you think that Tommy had a dream that Bradley's head got bigger and bigger?

Chapter 6- The Alien

Pre- If you were Tommy, what would you do for Bradley to apologize?

Vocab/Characters- capture (41)

S.S. Tommy ran into the dwelling, pulled his satchel of marbles out from under his bed, and slapdash back outside.

Tommy ran into the house, pulled his bag of marbles out from under his bed, and   hurried back outside. (45)

Post-
1.Why is this chapter called The Alien?
2.Tommy no longer thinks the marble is magic. Why?
3.Why was Spencer mean to Bradley and Tommy at the end?
4.How would you handle the situation at the end if you were Tommy or Bradley?

Extension-
List 3 reasons why you'd want to be friends with Spencer. List 3 reasons why you wouldn't want to be friends with Spencer.

Herbie Jones and the
Birthday Showdown
By Suzy Kline

Chapter 1- Birthday Showdown
Pre- Describe a great birthday party. Include details.

Vocab/Characters- Herbie Jones (9), Ray Martin (9), John Greenweed (10), Miss Pinkham (10), beamed (11), Anabelle Louisa Hodekiss (11), victory (11), impressed (12), aisle (13)

S.S.- Ray briskly walked over and released the folded note in front of John, and then returned to gaze at the cowboy book with Herbie
Ray quickly walked over and dropped the folded note in front of John, and then returned to look at the cowboy book with Herbie (13 –14).

Post-
1,Why isn't Ray excited about his birthday?
2.What does a birthday showdown mean?
   Herbie doesn't think that Ray should have his party on the dame day as John Greenweed's party. Why?

Chapter 2- Invitation Disaster
Pre- Draw the perfect birthday invitation.

Vocab/Characters- sorrow (16), sympathy (16), occasion (17), optimistic (17)

S.S. – She didn't care for when he antagonized her.
         She didn't like it when he teased her. (17)
Post-
1. What did Ray give out for invitations?
2.Would you go to Ray's party or John's party? Why?

Chapter 3- Picking Brains in the Attic
Pre- If you need help, make a list of people who you could ask.

Vocab/Characters- Hamburger Head (20), Mr. Jones (20), psyched (22), grammar (24), interferes (24), disbelief (25)

S.S- It was extensively unenclosed and the breeze felt exemplary.
      It was wide open and the breeze felt good. (21)

Post-
5. What did Ray and Herbie decide to do for the party?
6. Would you like to go to a chip factory? Why?

Chapter 4- Stormy Night
Pre- What's you favorite thing to do during a strom?

Vocab/Characters- nightshift (27), stubborn (29), Grandpa

S.S- Herbie had the notion that his stripped pajamas were fascinating.
      Herbie thought his stripped pajamas were neat. (28)

Post-
1.Why can't Herbie sleep?
2.What is a compromise?

Chapter 5- Martin House of Cards
Pre- Predict what the title could mean.

Vocab/Characters- Mrs. Martin (31), easel (32)

S.S. – Abruptly a big ebony cloud of foreordain floated into Herbie's head.
      Suddenly a big black cloud of doom floated into Herbie's head. (37)

Post-
1.What did Ray's mom make him for his birthday present?
2.What time was Ray's party going to be?
3.What time was John's party going to be?
4. What would a good compromise be so that Herbie can attend both
   parties?

Chapter 6- Compromise?
Pre- Do you think John will compromise with Ray? Explain.

Vocab/Characters- inspiration (39), wholesome (40), nutritious (40)

S.S.- Phillip preferred to make senseless noises (38).
　　　Phillip liked to make silly noises (38).

Post-
1. What suggestion did Herbie make to John so that everyone could go to both parties?
2.Why did Ray want Annabelle to come to his party?

Chapter 7- Cowgirls and Annabelle
Pre- List what you know about cowboys.

Vocab/Characters- Mrs. Reed (librarian) (44)

S.S. – Anabelle made a peewee smirk and then retracted to her seat.
　　　Anabelle made a small smile and then returned to her seat. (46)

Post-
1.What is something you learned about cowboys?

Chapter 8- Snap, Crackle, and Chew
Pre- If you had to make a treat for the class, what would it be? How would you make it? What are the ingredients?

Vocab/Characters- Mr. Martin (49), measurements (50), spigot (53), impressed (54)

S.S.- Ray got an immense pot out of the buffet
　　　Ray got a big pot out of the cupboard. (50)

Post-
1.Why was Ray worried about John's birthday treat?
2.Ray thought of a solution. What was his plan?
3. What happened to Herbie's grape gum?

Chapter 9- The Purple Treat
Pre- Describe what it would be like to be the student who gets the purple treat. Use adjectives.

Vocab/Characters- committee (55), dioramas(55), stimulated (56), snickered (60)

S.S - The thrill over the treats arouse a converstation.
        The excitement over the treats stimulated a converstation. (56)

Post-
1. Who got the bubble gum treat?
2. At the end, why did John snicker?
3. Predict whose party more children will go to. Why?

Chapter 10- Birthday Blues
Pre- What kind of icecream would you get from an icecream truck? Draw it and describe it.

Vocab/Characters- gathering (61), blues (61), loot (63)

S.S. – He just darted out to the rear the ice cream truck. (63)
        He just darted out behind the ice cream truck. (63)

Post-
1.Why was Ray sad?
2.John packed Lutz potato chips. Why wasn't this kind?

Chapter 11- Ray!
Pre- If you were Herbie, how would you feel? Why?

Vocab/Characters- ambulance (64), optimistic (65), Grandpa Jones (65), concussion (65), relieved (66), relief (67)

S.S. - For the inaugural time that night, everyone chuckled.
        For the first time that night, everyone laughed. (66)

Post-
1. Why is this chapter entitled "Ray!"?

Chapter 12- Grandpa to the Rescue
Pre- Draw a picture of your Grandparents. Include an activity that you like doing with htem.

Vocab/Characters- "dangling in midair" (70), stubborn (70), poker (73)

S.S. – Are you still distressed about your companion?
    Are you still worried about your buddy? (68)

Post-
1. How did grandpa make Herbie feel better?
2. Could you think of a time that someone made you feel better? How?

Chapter 13- Class Cards
Pre- Make a get well card for Ray.

Vocab/Characters- miracle (78), conversation (74)

S.S. – Herbie knew they were accurate, but he still thought a bruised rear
end was kind of amusing.
    Herbie knew they were right, but he stillthought a bruised rear end
was kind of funny. (79)

Post-
1.Do you think Ray will like John's card? Why?
2.How would you feel if you were Ray? Why?

Chapter 14- Grandparent's Day
Pre- What would be a nice thing to do for Grandparent's Day?

Vocab/Characters- exchanged (81)

S.S.- He longed for Raymond and distressed about him in the hospital.
    He missed Raymond and worried about him in the hospital. (82)

Post- What do you think Mrs. Martin's secret idea was?

Chapter 15- Ray's Surprise
Pre- If I were sick on my birthday, I would...

Vocab/Characters- ambled (85), educational (91)

S.S. – Ray gazed at the familiar faces and the wild west scene that was
produced in his own backyard.

Ray looked at the familiar faces and the wild west scene that was created in his own backyard. (87)

Post-

1.Why was Ray so excited?

2.The funniest part was…

Writing Extension:

Draw and label the best birthday party you could imagine.