

*“The explicit teaching of ‘what questions to ask’
(self questioning strategies’) before reading fictional text,
improves the oral reading comprehension and reading accuracy
for Grade 3 students.”*

Procedure

All six students were individually administered the pre and post tests. The three intervention students were taken as a small group during literacy block for the ten sessions. They were removed from the classroom and the teaching sessions were conducted in an adjacent empty classroom. The teaching session followed a similar pattern and consisted of 25 - 30 minutes’ duration. They began with explicit modeling of self-questioning in lessons one and two and slowly the students were encouraged by lesson eight to independently use the strategy of self-questioning and then, by lesson ten, be confident in their oral ability to display their knowledge. The Gradual Release of Responsibility model (Litweller Lloyd 2004) was followed using read aloud (to) and Guided reading,(Literature circles are used in the classroom), Appendix A. Careful scaffolding of the students learning and to be effective “scaffolding requires clearly articulated goals and learning activities which are structured in ways that enable learners to extend their existing levels of understanding.” Hammond & Gibbons(2001) Initially, it was my intention to explicitly teach the students the language needed for this strategy but after the pilot research study (where the students found it difficult to use my language) it was decided to involve the students and use their language to develop the expressive oral language skills necessary for self-questioning before reading a text. Each session incorporated oral discussion of: knowledge and strategies focusing on the previous day’s text, reinforcement of skills needed and implementing these

through reading fictional texts. Each teaching session ended with reflecting on success at using the strategies and recapping knowledge learnt. To reinforce the students' learning, they took home a story with post-it notes reminding them of strategies to use before reading. Questions focused on 'the getting ready or orienting stage' of reading. Questions examples, taken from the dispositional, topic and conceptual levels of text processing (John Munro 2005 Lecture Notes) were used in the initial stages of each lesson and built upon as students became competent at using the self-questioning strategies. Questions focused on using metacognitive strategies. At the dispositional level: focus on purposes for reading; topic level: focus on the link with what the reader knows by using title and pictures; conceptual level: focus on linking ideas in text with what you know, use mapping, networking (John Munro 2005 Lecture Notes).

Teaching Sequence Ten Lessons (refer to Appendix B)

1. Explicit teaching of strategy "Today we will learn how to...."
2. Discussion of the skills needed for literal comprehension
3. Applying skills to fictional text
4. Shared prose reading of fictional text
5. Reflection of 'use of skills in comprehension'
6. Readers orally express questions they could ask before beginning to read
7. Home reinforcement (Session 3 onwards)

Appendix A

Gradual Release of Responsibilities model (text only, graphs unavailable for reproduction) Litwiller Lloyd, Susan (2004) Using comprehension strategies as a springboard for student talk. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. 48, (2) pgs.114-125 Adapted from Baker, Dube, and Wilhelm (2001)

Read Aloud

Student's Responsibility 20%: Listens and enjoys text. Begins to use the demonstrated comprehension strategy.

Teacher's Responsibility 80%: Chooses the text. Activates prior knowledge. Reads text aloud. Models fluent and flexible reading behaviours. Focuses students on comprehension strategy through demonstration.

Guided Reading

Student's Responsibility 40%: Reads the text with minimal support. Practices the comprehension strategy with support from teacher and peers. Self-monitors reading and identifies text challenges.

Teacher's Responsibility 60%: Chooses text at instructional level. Guides students practice of comprehension strategy. Provides opportunity for practice of the strategy. Monitors student use of reading strategies and assesses student understanding.

Literature Circles

Student's Responsibility 80 %: Chooses text. Reads text independently. Negotiates the pages to be read before each discussion. Independently uses comprehension strategy in preparation for discussion. Actively participates in literature circle, having read the material and recorded questions to discuss.

Teacher's Responsibility 20%: Provides a selection of text for student choice. Monitors discussions and use of strategy for future instruction.

Appendix B

Lesson format

Session 1

Duration: 25 minutes

1. Explicit teaching of strategies through modeling.
2. On whiteboard write “Today we will learn how asking questions before reading helps us understand what we read”
3. Model questions readers ask before they read fictional text “getting my knowledge ready” (Many readers need to be taught to get their knowledge ready. One aspect of this involves teaching readers to plan how they will read. Munro Lecture Notes 2005). What is the purpose for reading? What might the text tell me? How do I know? What will tell me what it could be about? What does the title / pictures tell me? Am I ready to read – do I have sufficient knowledge to begin reading? (At this stage I didn’t answer or seek answers from the children to these questions. I wanted the students to hear “my mind” working and as I modeled these questions for the students for them to experience how self-questioning moves your thinking along.)
4. ‘Read to’ students, using Big Book – (teacher reads story, students can follow text of the story.)
5. Discuss “Did they think my ‘self-questioning’ helped me understand the story? How?”
6. ‘Shared Reading’ of text. (teacher and students read story out loud)
7. Reflect on learning - Model the questions good readers ask before reading.

Session 2**Duration: 30 minutes**

1. Reread whiteboard statement from yesterday and tell students we will learn more about this today.
2. Model: Thinking 'out loud' and ask the questions again of yesterday's text. (again, no answering of questions)
3. Shared reading of text
4. Model questions as in (Lesson 1. No.3) add 'What might the main idea be? What other ideas might come up with these?' (Predicting skills) for the new text.
5. Read to : New Big Book
6. Discuss "Did they think my 'self-questioning' helped me understand the story? How?"
7. 'Shared Reading' of text. (teacher and students read story aloud)
8. Reflect on learning - Model the questions good readers ask before reading.

Session 3

Duration: 30 minutes

1. Write on whiteboard: “Today we will learn how to write our own questions to ask before we begin reading.”
2. Model: Thinking ‘out loud’ and ask the questions again of yesterday’s text. (Seek answers from students)
3. Shared reading of text
4. Use ‘shared writing’ strategy (teacher writes students contributions) to record on sentence strips “Before I start reading, what questions do I need to ask, that will help me with understanding the story?”
5. Apply the same questions to new text (Each student has an individual copy of the text).
6. Shared reading of new text. Ask “What was the main idea?”
7. Discuss “Did their ‘self-questioning’ help them understand the story? How?”
8. Reflect on learning – Read from sentence strips “The questions good readers ask before reading are.....”
9. On post-it notes write the students questions and stick these on their take home book to share with parents.

Sessions 4 – 7

Duration 30 minutes

1. Explicit teaching of strategies through shared experiences. Write on white board “Today we will learn how to use self-questioning, before we read the story, to help use understand and read correctly (The students wanted to write ‘read right’).”
2. Read our Questions list and build upon if necessary.
3. Apply these to previous day’s text.
4. Shared reading of text and discuss main ideas in story.
5. Apply these questions to new text (Each student has an individual copy of the text).
6. Shared reading of new text.
7. Discuss “Did their ‘self-questioning’ help them understand the story? How?”
8. Reflect on learning – Read from sentence strips “the questions good readers ask before reading are...?”
9. On post-it notes write the students questions and stick these on their take home book to share with parents.

Sessions 8-10

Duration 30 minutes

1. Remove sentence card props and post-it notes.
2. Explicit learning about reading: Write the sentence on the white board “The questions I ask myself before I start to read are.....” Have students respond to this statement.
3. Apply these to previous day’s text.
4. Guided reading (Student reads silently; Guided reading supported students as they began to practice the strategy of self-questioning before reading with some teacher support still available, and I was able to monitor and assess students as they did this, completing a running record on each student)
5. Distribution of text and discuss main ideas in story. (Apply these questions to new text (Each student has an individual copy of the text).
6. Shared reading of new text.
7. Discuss “Did their ‘self-questioning’ help them understand the story? How?”
8. Reflect on learning – Read from sentence strips “The questions good readers ask before reading are...?”
9. Students take home book to share with parents.

Appendix C

QUESTIONS USED IN TEACHING SESSIONS

What is the purpose for reading?

What might the text tell me?

How do I know?

What will tell me what it could be about?

What does the title / pictures tell me?

Am I ready to read – do I have sufficient
knowledge to begin reading?

We added

What might the main idea be?

What other ideas might come up with these?’

(Predicting skills) for the new text.

Appendix D

SELF EFFICACY SURVEY

Student Pre Test / Post - test	Not at all	Sometimes	Always
I enjoy reading by myself at home			
I enjoy reading by myself in class			
I enjoy reading in a group in class			
I enjoy being read to in class			
Reading is.....			
Reading is.....			

Appendix E

BEFORE READING STRATEGIES SURVEY Pre and Post Intervention

QUESTIONS

- 1. What do you do before you begin to read?**
- 2. Before I begin reading what questions can I ask myself?**

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