

Strategy: Imagery Training

Content: Helping children with comprehension problems through imagery training

Title: Imagination Please!

Time Required: Imagery training takes place on three different days with sessions lasting 20-30 minutes

Number of participants: Children are seen in small groups of 4 or 5

Target Audience: a randomly selected group of 11 poor and good comprehenders at age 9 or 10. This lesson is ideally for children with poor reading comprehension

Goal of Activity: To teach children with poor reading comprehension a more effective way to read.

Purpose of Script: To teach children to 'think in pictures' as they read to help them to answer questions about the story.

Learning Outcome(s), Gagnes Taxonomy: Verbal Information, Intellectual Skills

Learning Outcome(s), HEO Taxonomy: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis

Learner Characteristics: Students between 9 and 10 with reading comprehension difficulties

Entry Skills: Be able to read and follow directions

Setting: Classroom

Media: live instruction

Process:

The imagery training takes place in small groups (of 4 or 5 children) over three sessions, on different days. The first session lasts for 30 minutes, and the second and third for 20 minutes each.

The children are told that they would be learning to 'think in pictures' as they read stories, to help them to answer questions about the stories.

Session 1:

The children read one of the stories and the experimenter then produces two drawings; one a cartoon-like sequence of four pictures which represents the sequence of events in the story. The other is a single picture, depicting the main event in the story. The children are shown how each of the pictures relate to the story. They are also told that the drawing used to illustrate the main point is called a representational drawing because it represents the information in the story. They are then told to imagine that the pictures are in their minds, and that they are to use them to help them to answer some questions about the story. The stories and pictures are taken away before the questions are presented. The children are then given a second story to read, and are told to try to form mental pictures as they read it, and to formulate a picture of what they thought was the main event of the story. After the children had attempted to answer the questions with the aid of their 'mental pictures' the experimenter asked each child to describe the images they had used and gave feedback and suggestions for improving their images.

Session 2:

Both representational and transformational drawings are used. The children are told that the transformational drawings are specifically designed to help them to remember details from the stories, and the way in which this could be achieved and explained. The children are then told that they should try to form three different types of image as they read through a new story: a cartoon sequence with four frames to represent the sequence of events in the story, a representational image of the main event, and a transformational image to help them remember specific details. When they had completed the task and answered the questions, their images were discussed with them as in the first session.

Session 3:

The children are not shown any drawings. The imagery procedure is reiterated, and the children read and answer questions about a new story and a final discussion of their 'mental pictures' takes place, as in the first two sessions.

Strategy Assessment:

The children are tested in small groups. The stories and questions are presented in a booklet with stories and questions on separate pages and the questions are read aloud to the children. The children are reminded to form mental images as they read the stories and to use their pictures to help them to answer the questions.

Authors: Jane Oakhill and Sima Patel-Journal of Research in Reading (1991), 14(2), 106-115.

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