Corrective Reading – Comprehension

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**Abstract**

When students start school, decoding and reading fluency is what is focused on. Reading comprehension is not always showcased when students are younger. Students need to be taught decoding and reading fluency skills at the same time as reading fluency. If the main focus on reading comprehension shifts only when students start to get into older grades, they will struggle due to lacking the foundation needed to read successfully. Students need direct instruction in the area of comprehension beginning in early grades. Teachers can model reading comprehension by working on student’s listening comprehension. This is beneficial so that when they begin reading and attempting to comprehend that, they know how to do this on their own successfully.

Keywords: Comprehension, Direct instruction

**Corrective Reading – Comprehension**

**Introduction**

One major concern in education is student’s comprehension. Today, one-third of students cannot read at an advanced enough level to read grade level textbooks (McGraw Hill Education, n.d.). The ongoing problem with this is that 16% of students who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade, dropout of high school (McGraw Hill Education, n.d.).  To be a well-rounded reader, you should be able to read fluently and comprehend what you are reading.  A major concern for students in middle school is the lack of ability to comprehend what they are reading.

“Comprehension makes reading enjoyable, fun and informative. It is needed to succeed in school, work, and life in general” (Brandon, 2021). In the younger grades, most times teachers focus on decoding and reading fluency. Language comprehension is defined by Silverman and Keane as “the ability to understand and make meaning from oral or written language” (2022). One instructional tool that can be used with younger students to help develop their comprehension skills is modeling. If students aren’t taught and shown how to comprehend, it’s harder for teachers to expect them to be able to do it on their own while reading. Waiting until students have mastered how to read fluently is too late. Students are getting into harder material daily and the comprehension will also continue to be harder for them.

Corrective Reading is a published curriculum used to close the gap and help students improve their reading skills (Wallendjack, 2017).  Closing the gap between students and reading comprehension will hopefully prevent students from becoming a statistic and dropping out of school. Every good teacher’s goal is to provide students with the tools to be a successful member of society.

**Statement of the problem**

The purpose of this study is to explore how a student's comprehension can improve their performance in the classroom and on standardized testing using this direct instruction reading program. *Direct instruction* is defined as when teachers use explicit teaching techniques to teach a specific skill to students (Wallendjack, 2017). When students don’t have the necessary skills to successfully comprehend, it is hard to be a successful learner in the classroom and beyond. Reading is an everyday necessity to live and be a contributing member of society.

**Review of Related Literature**

Reading is a talent that is taken for granted. So many students struggle to read in schools across the world. Just like sports, reading needs to be modeled and practiced to master the art. Reading comprehension is one area that students either have the skill downpat or they struggle. Reading comprehension is so important in order to be able to fully read and you need to understand what the message of the words you are reading are trying to tell you. There are five components of reading: phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension. All five of these should be worked on from an early age. During kindergarten through third grade phonics, phonemic awareness and fluency are practiced more. To help develop well rounded readers, all five components should be worked on consistently. During the early grades, more language comprehension can be worked on and modeled so as the students become more fluent readers, they are able to dive into a book and comprehend for themselves what the book is saying.

This literature review will dive into the importance of reading comprehension, ways to support students who struggle with reading comprehension, supporting language comprehension, words students need, and lastly how corrective reading comprehension can help improve student’s comprehension in the classroom.

**The Importance of Reading Comprehension**

What is comprehension? Comprehension is the ability to understand written words (Brandon, 2021). If a student can’t comprehend what they are reading they are just reading random words on a page. Comprehension begins when students are able to put the words together to make thoughts and ideas (Brandon, 2021). “Comprehension makes reading enjoyable, fun and informative. It is needed to succeed in school, work, and life in general.” (Brandon, 2021). Comprehension strategies include: predicting, making connections to prior knowledge, visualizing, and summarizing and this article dives into each one. Predicting is when a student is asked to guess about what might happen. This could consist of things they hear, see, the book’s cover, title, pictures, drawings, table of contents, and headings (Brandon, 2021). When students are asked to predict, they are kept engaged in the story. This helps the students to make connections because the more they can relate to other topics, the more they will understand what they read. As children grow, they will make different connections such as: text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world before, during, or after they read (Brandon, 2021). Visualizing is important for students to put a picture together of what they are reading. Lastly, summarizing is when students have to decide what the important ideas are and put them together to explain the text (Brandon, 2021). Without comprehension, students are not able to understand the text and then in turn are not active readers because they are unable to engage with the text (Brandon, 2021).

**Ways to Support Students Who Struggle with Reading Comprehension**

When it comes to reading comprehension, needs can be hard to identify. Students can be reading fluently and sound great, but not understanding vocabulary, figurative language, inferencing, verbal reasoning, grammatical development, and oral expression is where the need of comprehension intervention comes into place (Parrish, 2020). Just because a student is fluently reading out loud, doesn’t mean they have mastered how to read. One key concept they can be missing is understanding what they are reading. To be a well-rounded reader, one should be able to read fluently and comprehend exactly what they are reading. These components hold importance because then readers can understand what they are reading and will be able to enjoy what they are doing. Students who struggle with reading comprehension tend to go unnoticed until they start to fail standardized state comprehension tests (Parrish, 2020). Ways to support students who struggle with reading comprehension are targeting overall comprehension of language, teaching vocabulary, teaching thinking strategies, and direct teaching comprehension skills (Parrish, 2020). “Students who have poor reading comprehension also often understand fewer spoken words and less of what they hear and have worse spoken grammar” (Parrish, 2020). Teaching students how to comprehend first in spoken language can help them build these valuable skills before learning to read (Parrish, 2020). Having better vocabulary skills will in turn help students understand more of what they read (Parrish, 2020). When teaching new words, this should be done through multisensory strategies like graphic organizers, pictures, and mnemonics. According to Parrish, “Students need to be directly taught comprehension skills which are sequencing, story structure using the plot mountain, how to make an inference and draw a conclusion, and different types of figurative language (2020)” This should be done first with read alouds and then students can apply this to stories they read (Parrish, 2020).

**Supporting Language Comprehension**

Comprehension skills need to be introduced at an early age. This should go hand in hand with decoding (Silverman & Keane, 2022). “In elementary school sometimes, “learning to read” is taken to mean “learning to decode.” However, “learning to read” also encompasses “learning to comprehend”” (Silverman & Keane, 2022). Language comprehension “is the ability to understand and make meaning from oral or written language” (Silverman & Keane, 2022). This is one instructional tool that can be used with younger students to help develop their comprehension skills. When decoding and comprehension skills are taught at the same time “students will be prepared to take on the challenge of reading to learn” (Silverman & Keane, 2022). One way to introduce this to students is by read-alouds. “Informational read-alouds are also beneficial because they provide exposure to words relevant to content areas such as social studies, math, and science, and can introduce children to new information” (Silverman & Keane, 2022). Read-alouds bring opportunities to access text the students might not be able to read, but are in their comprehension ability (Silverman & Keane, 2022). Another benefit of read-alouds is the background knowledge they help build for students.

**Words Students Need**

As students get older, they start to read harder and harder textbooks and instructional materials and as students enter middle school, this becomes more and more true (Lawrence, White & Snow, 2010). Students tend to struggle in the area of comprehension because they lack vocabulary to understand what the words they read actually mean (Lawrence, White & Snow, 2010). Whole-school vocabulary instruction is a great method to expose students to more vocabulary. This process doesn’t teach students common words, but looks at general academic words that they will see in multiple future classes (Lawrence, White & Snow, 2010). An example of words that should be introduced in this process would be include: distribute, capacity, assume, relevant, and generate; these are just to name a few as many more can be found on academic word lists (Lawrence, White & Snow, 2010). The dictionary definition should not be the only encounter a student has with a word. The article stated that when a student had twelve instructional encounters with a word, the student learned the target word better than students who only had four instructional encounters (Lawrence, White & Snow, 2010). With that being said, students should only have about five to seven words a week. When using the whole-school vocabulary instruction, each teacher can take a day or a lesson to give more students more practice with the word. The new words could be introduced by debate prompts, homework assignments, quizzes, and many additional ways (Lawrence, White & Snow, 2010). When grading papers, teachers can support students using new and harder vocabulary by adding a category on the rubric for word usage and including the wide range of academic language used. Teachers can then give credit to students for trying to use academic language even if the usage is only partially correct (Lawrence, White & Snow, 2010). When students understand vocabulary more soundly, they are able to analyze and understand what they are reading more accurately (Lawrence, White & Snow, 2010).

**Corrective Reading**

What is Corrective Reading used for in schools? Corrective Reading is a published curriculum used to close the gap and help students improve their reading skills (Wallendjack, 2017).  The Corrective Reading comprehension includes these parts: vocabulary knowledge, logical thinking skills, sentence/writing skills, and information and background knowledge (McGraw Hill Education, n.d.).  The intervention is suggested to be taught four to five days a week for forty-five minutes at a time (Wallendjack, 2017). Wallendjack stated “The Corrective Reading Comprehension program is specifically designed to change the behavior of students who struggle to understand what they read” (2017). Comprehension B1 is made up of sixty lessons. “The targeted students are poor readers in Grades 4 - Adult who have difficulty drawing conclusions, understanding contradictions, and following written directions. The outcomes to look for after using this program is cross-curricular comprehension skills for all subject areas” (McGraw Hill Education, n.d.). The outcome of a study that was written about Corrective Reading comprehension is that they couldn’t draw a definite conclusion between the effects of the study but both students and teachers felt they had improved in reading (Wallendjack, 2017).

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, studies have shown that comprehension should be taught hand in hand with reading fluency. This can be done by working on student’s listening comprehension at a young age to model, so they are ready to utilize their proficient comprehension on their own. Students need a strong vocabulary and background knowledge to connect the dots of what they are reading. It’s important to teach students across content vocabulary so they have access to vocabulary in many different areas. In the English language, words mean different things in different classes so students need to know how to use them in every class. If they don’t have the background knowledge, it’s hard for them to understand what is going on. Corrective Reading is one of many programs that helps work on reading comprehension. This program builds in vocabulary knowledge, logical thinking skills, sentence/writing skills, and information and background knowledge.

**Statement of Hypothesis**

Research shows that when students have a strong set of vocabulary knowledge, logical thinking skills, sentence/writing skills, and information and background knowledge, their reading comprehension skills are higher. Therefore, it is hypothesized that increased student vocabulary knowledge, logical thinking skills, sentence/writing skills, and information and background knowledge leads to students being able to successfully comprehend what they are reading. This will be observed by analyzing the data collected to measure the increase in the quality of classwork of the program, standardized testing scores, and the English general education class.

**Methodology**

**Participants**

The students that will be participating in this reading intervention study struggle in the area of reading and comprehension and have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The students selected need direct instruction in the area of reading. The sample of students involved were selected from St. Libory Elementary School and this was completed at random.

**Instrument**

An increase in reading comprehension will be measured by classwork of the program, the comparison of standardized testing scores, and the English general education class.

**Research Design/Variables**

For this study, the design variables are: the Correct Reading – Comprehension program and students’ ability to read comprehensively.

**Procedures**

The students will be expected to attend sessions that will take place in small group of students with Ms. Olsen leading the intervention. The reading intervention will occur five days a week for forty-five minutes per day. This will be conducted during intervention four days out of the week and the fifth instance will occur during study hall. This research will be conducted throughout the duration of the second semester.

**Data Analysis**

Data will be analyzed using the test scores and daily work scores. Furthermore, the comparison will be made between prior to experiencing the program and after experiencing the program.

**Time Schedule**

The duration of this study will take place during the entirety of the 2023 spring semester.

**Budget**

There is no budget for this study.

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