

Literacy Strategies

Total Physical Response (TPR) enhances memory through association with physical movement. It is based on listening and this is linked to physical actions which are designed to reinforce understanding. For example, 'find and touch' characters in the picture, names of characters in the printed text, other words (as their word recognition improves); and / or miming words (particularly adjectives) to show understanding.

Activating background knowledge and *making connections* help pupils to engage with the text. For example, ask pupils what they know about the subject of the story or if they had similar experiences, or heard or read a story like this.

KWL (What I **k**now; What I **w**ant to know; What I've **l**earnt) charts help to elicit thinking and discussion about themes or ideas related to text.

When *observing structure of text* pupils are helped to notice the structure of the text and connect it to similarly structured texts heard or read – What do you know about fairy tales? What have you noticed that is the same about the tales we have read?

Pupils are *encouraged to form purpose for reading* by coming up with predictions or questions before reading. What do you think will happen first? Why do you think that? You already know some things about this topic. What do you want to find out about it when you start reading the book?

A *Picture Walk* through the book involves covering the print and guiding pupils in a discussion of what could be going on based on the pictures, and using as much as possible the actual book language. Unfamiliar vocabulary in connection with the pictures and the context of the story is explained.

Predicting is an important comprehension strategy that encourages pupils to observe, evaluate, think and come to a conclusion. For example, talk about features of the text and ask pupils to predict 1) what the story might be about, or 2) what might happen next; and why they think so.

Asking questions is an important strategy to use throughout a reading session. It enhances motivation and comprehension. Effective questions encourage real thinking. *Literal questions* can be answered with a single word, a phrase or a sentence, for example, 'When did the elephants come?' - in the evening / They came in the evening. Begin to encourage pupils to think and search by asking questions that require finding and linking information from several places in the story and relating one's own knowledge as well. *Inferential questions* – encourage pupils to think and to link when answering these questions. They have to think about their background knowledge of concepts presented in the text, and link different parts of the story by making connections. Pupils have to read between the lines to be able to respond to inferential questions.

Imitation involves listening, joining in and repeating through choral speaking / chanting and singing during reading. Children join in cumulative stories with repetitive pattern, anticipating key events and engaging in language play by chanting or singing the repeated story events, for example, 'Run, run as fast as you can! / You can't catch me. / I'm the Gingerbread Man.' in the favourite folktale. Reading and re-reading the same text are essential. Gradually the teacher withdraws from saying the words so that pupils internalise repetitive language, sentence patterns and rhythmic refrains.

Literacy strategies that are effective with the whole class

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Recognising words can be enhanced through the identification of key words (sight words / important vocabulary groups / repetitive words in text / rhyming words) for specific focus during word level activities. This may be linked to TPR, for example, 'Point to ...' and 'I spy with my little eye ...' language games.

A range of strategies for word identification can be modelled by showing pupils how they can read words by using: *picture / context cues* – information from pictures or from sentences surrounding the unknown word; knowledge of *initial letter and picture cues* to predict word in text; *sounding out* – moving lips and mouth to sound out the letters (phonemes) that make up a word; *onset* (the consonant or consonant cluster at the beginning, for example, /c/ in cat, /br/ in bread) and *rime* (the vowel and the final consonant or consonant cluster, for example, /at/ in 'cat', /ight/ in light); *syllabification* – the division of words into syllables, for example, clapping or tapping gar / den; *identifying little words in long words*, for example, war / d / robe; *identifying distinctive features about letters in words*, for example, dinos / au / r; *use blends*, the sound of two or more letters joined with minimal changes in those sounds, for example, str in string; *use knowledge of letter patterns*, such as -ing, -ful, -er, -ly; and *sight words* – look and say.

Teachers should model how they *monitor their understanding of text* when reading. This involves showing pupils how you use your background knowledge of vocabulary and word understanding; how you use the context of the sentence, the paragraph or the whole text to figure out what the text is about, and what would make sense; and how you use visual information, such as shapes of letters and words, directionality, voice-print match, letter-sound associations and punctuation.

Reading and *retelling a story orally in chronological order* involves identifying basic story elements and summarising the plot using 'beginning-middle-end'. Pupils participate in re-enact using pictures, puppets or props. Individuals retell stories for the group and organising events in sequence, using story language and complete sentences.

Participation in *role-play* is to be encouraged. The same story is read as a playscript and pupils are encouraged to retell the story using puppets, adapting voices for different characters.

Talk about the text – main ideas, events and characters. For example, use *hot seating* (a drama technique) to explore motives and behaviour of characters. Pupils act out characters from the story and others ask them questions and the characters have to answer them in as much detail as possible. Pupils learn what it is like to be in the shoes of chosen characters and how these behave.

Constructing images or Visualising involves the use the five senses to build images in the mind for enhancing reading comprehension

Skim and scan text for different purposes – Pupils learn how to skim a text for main ideas (e.g. What is the story about?); and how to scan a text for specific information (e.g. Where did Little Red Riding's grandmother live?)

The *cloze* procedure is used for diagnosing reading ability. Words in a passage are deleted and the reader is required to fill in the blanks.

Rhebus is a representation of words in the form of pictures or symbols, often presented as a puzzle.

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