

Empower dyslexic students to read

Reading comprehension is frequently very difficult for students with dyslexia. They are challenged by word recognition as they may forget a word even though they have seen it several times. They may spend so much time and effort in sounding words out, they lose the meaning of the text or they may need to read a passage over and over to fully understand what is being said.

This skill is considered essential, not only in learning to read but also in lifelong learning as reading comprehension is listed as one of the five most important skills in developing reading.

According to specialists in the field, there are three specific themes within reading comprehension that are to be discussed:

- Vocabulary Instruction
- Text Comprehension Instruction
- Teacher Preparation and Comprehension Strategies Instruction

Vocabulary Instruction

Teaching vocabulary increases reading comprehension. The more words a student knows, the easier it is to understand what is being read. Students must also be able to decode unfamiliar words, that is, they must be able to derive the meaning of the word through knowledge or similar words or through the surrounding text or speech. For example, a student can better understand the word *truck* if they first understand the word *car* or a student can guess what the word *truck* means by looking at the rest of the sentence, such as *The farmer loaded hay in the back of his truck and drove away*. The student can assume that the truck is something you drive, thereby being like a car, but is bigger since it can hold hay.

Therefore, using a variety of methods to teach vocabulary works better than simple vocabulary lessons. Some of the successful methods include using computer and technology to aid in vocabulary instruction. Moreover, other successful methods may include repetitive exposure to words, learning vocabulary words prior to reading text, indirect learning of vocabulary, for example, using vocabulary words in a number of different contexts or learning vocabulary in both written text and oral speech.

Teachers should not rely on a single method of teaching vocabulary but instead should combine different methods to create interactive and multi-faceted vocabulary lessons that are age-appropriate for the students.

Text comprehension instruction

Text comprehension, or understanding what the printed words mean as a whole rather than understanding individual words, is the basis of reading comprehension. It is well known that "comprehension is enhanced when readers actively relate the ideas represented in print to their own knowledge and experiences and construct mental representations in memory." Furthermore, when cognitive strategies are used during reading, comprehension increases.

Some of the specific reading comprehension strategies that have proved to be effective are:

- Teaching students to monitor their understanding of the material as they read
- Having students practice reading comprehension skills as a group
- Using pictures and graphics to represent the material being learned
- Answering questions about the material
- Creating questions about the material
- Determining the structure of the story
- Summarizing the material

As with vocabulary instruction, it is relevant to mention that using a combination of reading comprehension strategies and making lessons multisensory is more effective than using a single strategy. In addition, understanding that strategies may change depending on what is being read is important. For example, reading science text may require a different strategy than reading a story. Students who are able to experiment with different strategies better equipped to determine which strategy will work for their current assignment.

Teacher Preparation and Comprehension Strategies Instruction

In order to teach reading comprehension, the teacher must, of course, be knowledgeable of all of the components of reading comprehension. Specifically, teachers should receive training in explaining the strategies to students, modeling thinking processes, encouraging students to be curious about what they are reading, keeping students interested and creating interactive reading instruction.

There are two main approaches to teaching reading comprehension strategies: direct explanation and transaction Strategy Instruction.

By using the approach of direct explanation, the teacher explains the reasoning and mental processes used to make text meaningful. Teachers can explain that reading and understanding text is a problem-solving exercise. For example, when summarizing what has been read, a student can play the part of a detective, looking for important information in the text.

The approach of transaction strategy instruction also uses direct explanations of the strategies used in reading comprehension but includes class and group discussions on the material in order to develop a deeper understanding of the material.

In conclusion, when it comes to learning disabilities in children, there is no such thing as typical. Every student with reading disabilities is different and has their own strengths and weaknesses beyond common dyslexia stereotypes. It just depends on teachers' effort and desire to build a friendly environment and find the right strategies that prove effective in improving students' reading comprehension skills.

Bibliography

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