

English as an Additional Language

Comprehension strategies for non-fiction

Before reading

- *Word Prediction*

This involves the children in vocabulary and meaning exploration, for example, based on the title, children predict words that they think may come up in the text. The teacher makes a list of these words and the meanings are explored. These words are then referred to throughout the reading.

- *Give One – Get one*

The teacher introduces the topic. The children are required to fold a piece of paper horizontally and to write 4 things about this topic on one side. They then circulate the room and exchange information with the other children. On the other side of the paper they write 4 different facts that they heard and the names of the children who gave them these facts.

- *Locating Cues*

Children are taught to locate cues in the text, for example, the use of italics, bold, headings, bullet points, conclusions, summaries, illustrations and diagrams.

- *KWL Chart*

This accesses prior knowledge and can be done at whole-class, group, pair or individual level. The children fill in 2 sections of the chart before reading, for example, *what do I know?* and *what do I want to know?*. The final section, *what have I learned?*, is completed after reading the text. The children with little or no English language proficiency can have the option of filling out the chart through drawing or using their first language.

During reading

- *Coding*

The children, in consultation with the teacher, devise symbols for highlighting aspects of the text, for example,

* I already knew this

? I have a question about this

! Wow!

+ I agree / - disagree

The children read the text and mark it appropriately.

- *VIPs:*

The children underline (or mark with a post-it) the very important points in a text.

- *Generating Questions*

This involves the children using post-its, or a pencil, to highlight places in the text where they have a question. This question can be about a fact or an event. It can be to clarify a point or to gain further information about a topic. This activity can be done at whole-class, group, pair or individual level.

- *Read and re-tell*

The children are encouraged to summarise the text while they are reading. This can be at pre-determined points in the text, for example, at the end of each paragraph, or alternatively, whenever the child feels there is sufficient information to summarise.

- *Re-read*

This requires the children to re-read sections of the text to clarify the meaning.

- *SQ3R*

This involves the child taking a 5-step approach to reading the text, that is, survey, question, read, recite and review. Firstly, the child surveys the text and creates questions about it, for example, by turning each sub-heading into a question. The child then reads the text and, after reading, attempts to answer the questions. The child can then use the text to check whether or not the answers are correct.

After reading

- *Fact or Fib*

After reading a piece of text, the teacher calls out 3 facts and 1 fib which the children have to identify by giving the thumbs up or the thumbs down. This is a very quick form of assessment for the teacher. Children can, alternatively, work in pairs or groups to create their own facts and fibs which they can test on each other.

Test your partner to see if he/she can identify the fib.

- *Selecting VIPs*

This is a follow-on from the 'during reading' VIPs activity. The children prioritise or eliminate VIPs so that they will be left with 2 or 3 main points about the text.