READING COMPREHENSION HANDBOOK
FOR TEACHERS OF
PRIMARY-AGED STUDENTS,

MASTER'S PROJECT

Submitted to the School of Education
University of Dayton, in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

by

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April 1992
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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my husband for all his patience and support throughout my masters studies and to my advisor, Dr. Fuchs for his guidance and help in preparing this project.

A special thank you to Shannan Yazel for typing this project.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

"About 27 million adults in the U.S. cannot complete a job application or read this magazine (----, Changing Times, 1990, p. 82)." This is an alarming statistic because many students lack the ability to comprehend what they have read.

Duffy and Roehler (1989a p. 465) defined comprehension as the process of making sense of an author's or speaker's message by reconstructing an author's message for recreational or functional purposes. Being able to comprehend is necessary to carry out common daily tasks such as reading traffic signs, grocery lists, and food menus. Comprehension is a valuable skill for processing new information such as reading labels and directions on medication; legal documents; and current events and news articles.

Are students unable to comprehend what they read due to the fact that little reading comprehension is taught? Durkin revealed (1978-79b) that almost no comprehension instruction was used in grades one through six when teaching reading and social studies.

The writer is concerned that students cannot apply
reading comprehension skills in other content areas. Frequently, the writer encounters students (usually the majority of the class) who could read a given story in a basal text and complete the assigned workbook pages successfully, but the same students could not read for meaning in other subject areas. For example, in the reading program the students satisfactorily complete assignments of reading and following directions on their own. Yet the same students could not complete a spelling workbook page or English grammar task which requires the same skills. Another example is that the students correctly complete workbook pages focused on reading for details, locating the main idea, and sequencing with the reading series. Once again these students could not read a social studies article and correctly respond to the review questions following it.

Because many students lack the ability to comprehend what they have read, the writer created a handbook for primary teachers for use in teaching reading comprehension.

Statement of the Problem
The purpose of this paper was to create a handbook containing reading comprehension activities for teachers to use with primary-aged students.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Instructional Methods

Directed reading activity (DRA) is one method used to teach reading comprehension. According to Tierney, Readence, & Dishner (1985) DRA contains the following components: readiness; directed silent reading; comprehension check and discussion; oral reading; and follow up activities. The readiness stage involves getting students ready to read by relating the story selection to their past experiences, developing their interest in the reading selection, and setting their purposes for reading the selection. During the directed silent reading stage the students read the selection silently to seek answers to the purpose-questions the teacher has set. The comprehension check and discussion stage involves the teacher stressing and developing understanding of the story selection. Next the students reread the selection aloud. Follow up activities are used to enrich and/or extend the students' comprehension of the selection.

Another method employed to instruct reading comprehension was outlined by Baumann & Schmitt (1986). Steps based on
questions are used in this method. They are: (1) What is the reading skill? (2) Why is the reading skill important? (3) How does one use the reading skill? (4) When should the reading skill be used? In step one, the teacher directly tells the students what the specific reading skill is that is being taught. In step two, the teacher explains the nature and importance of the reading skill being taught. The teacher tells, shows, models, or demonstrates how the reading skill operates in step three. During step four the teacher tells under what conditions the skill is used.

Cushenbery (1985) described a third method used to teach reading comprehension. His five step approach includes the following: readiness stage; question or purpose stage; silent reading stage; discussion stage; and culminating activity stage. The teacher asks the students to survey the text and examine major and minor headings during the first step. Next the teacher poses questions regarding the reading assignment and states the purpose of reading the selection. In step three after the questions have been presented, the students read silently to locate answers to the questions. During the discussion stage, the questions and purposes from stage two are discussed. In the culminating activity stage a class activity is constructed which brings together the major pieces presented in the reading selection.

A fourth instructional method, identified by Baumann (1983) as the generic comprehension instructional strategy, can be used for instructing reading comprehension.
Specifically the procedure consists of five steps: introduction, example, directed instruction, teacher directed application, and independent practice. A direct statement of what skill is to be taught and why the learning of the skill will make the student a better reader is given in the introduction step. The example step is an extension of the introduction. Here the student is presented with a concrete example of the skill being taught. In the direct instruction step, the teacher tells, models, shows, or demonstrates the skill to be learned. The teacher still initiates the activities, but the students puzzle out texts which contain the target skill during the teacher-directed application step. Independent practice completes the transfer of learning from the teacher to the student. Paper pencil tasks, games, exercises are used to promote practice activities.

The various instructional methods and variations of methods employed were discussed above. Presented below are techniques one can use to improve reading comprehension.

Techniques for Improving Reading Comprehension

The writer of this paper addressed what she considered to be the ten major techniques one can use to improve reading comprehension at the primary level. They are as follows: guided reading procedure (GRP), semantic webbing, expectation outline, request procedure, story mapping, story frames, story grammars, cloze procedures, prep technique, and retelling stories.
According to Manzo (1975) guided reading procedure ameliorates reading comprehension. The teacher briefly establishes appropriate readiness and sets a specific content purpose for reading. The student is told to read and remember all that he can about the selection. After reading the selection, the selection is placed face down and the class is asked to tell what they recall from their reading. The teacher records all the responses on the chalkboard for the class to see. After the students have recalled all that they can, they go back and review the article to add information and correct inconsistencies to the class list. Next the recorded information is re-written into an outline or sequence pattern of events. The teacher raises questions that are necessary for full comprehension and transfer of learning. Finally a short diagnostic test which focuses on the reading selection is administered.

To abet reading comprehension, Spiegel (1981) identifies the technique of semantic webbing. In semantic webbing the teacher identifies an aspect of the story that the students are to think clearly about. This question is recorded on the chalkboard inside a circle. This is called the core question. Next students' hypotheses are recorded as web strands branching out from the core question circle. Justifications for each hypothesis are given and recorded on another set of branches stemming from the hypothesis. These are called strand supports. Next strand ties are drawn between strands that relate to each other. Finally, the students read the
selection to find answers to the core question and to determine if any of their supporting reasons are correct.

The expectation outline technique facilitates reading comprehension (Spiegel, 1981). Students are asked to tell what they expect to learn in a given factual story. The teacher records and groups related questions on the chalkboard without commenting on students' statements. After all questions are recorded and categorized, the teacher selects one group of questions at a time and asks the class to make up a title or heading for those questions. After all categories are titled, the class reads the selection to locate answers to those questions. Individual students are called upon to cite and orally read the proof. Unanswered questions may be posted to stimulate extended reading from other sources.

The request procedure, as maintained by Spiegel (1981), aids reading comprehension. In request, both students and teacher read the title, first sentence of a story, and examine the picture on the page. Students ask the teacher anything they wish about the sentence. The teacher answers all questions. The teacher poses additional questions. After reading just the second sentence of the selection, the teacher asks questions and then the students ask questions. The teacher and students alternate asking questions about successive sentences until the students can no longer wait to read the selection.

Story mapping techniques promote better reading com-
prehension (Bergenske, 1987). After reading a selection, students search for and list on paper all the necessary components of a reading selection. The necessary components are identified as follows: title, setting, character(s), problem, goal, episodes, and resolution. An interesting way to keep the students interested is to record this information on the legs of a caterpillar or the petals of a flower or be creative and allow the students to create their own diagrams. The diagrams containing the story elements may be checked orally together as a group or turned in for the teacher to examine.

Cudd and Roberts (1987) discuss story frames as a means to improve reading comprehension. In a story frame the key phrases or clauses are left out of a paragraph that summarizes the story or stresses an important aspect of the story. This technique is similar to the cloze procedure, except phrases not words are omitted. To develop a story frame, the teacher must ask himself/herself a series of questions as the basal story is read. Some possible questions may include: Is there a problem? Why is it a problem? Is there a relevant sequence of events that lead to the solution of the problem? What is that sequence? How is the problem solved? How does the story end? After these questions are answered, the teacher looks over to the basic frame of the story to see if it will fit the story. If the frame does not fit, the teacher should add or delete words to correct the problem. The teacher then reproduces the frame for the students to complete.
Story grammars are used to aid reading comprehension (Tierney, Readence, & Dishner, 1985). Story grammars are designed to increase student awareness of the structure of the story. This technique is very similar to story mapping which was discussed earlier. On the chalkboard or on paper or both, the class fills in the given chart with responses that relate to the reading selection. An example of a chart follows:

**STORY**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Plot</th>
<th>Resolution</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.location</td>
<td>1.goal of</td>
<td>1.subgoal</td>
<td>1.does the main</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.time</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>2.attempt to</td>
<td>character</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.characters</td>
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<td>accomplish</td>
<td>accomplish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>subgoal</td>
<td>goal? Explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.outcome of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>attempt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depending on the ability and class' background knowledge, the teacher may need to discuss each part of the chart with the class and do some examples together.

Another technique used to improve reading comprehension is the cloze procedure (Tierney, Readence, & Dishner, 1985). The cloze procedure forces the student to use the context of the sentence to suggest replacements for omitted words. Materials that are selected are at the students independent reading level. Cloze materials are easily made from basal text selections. After photocopying the selection, one word in a sentence is deleted and two choices are provided for the blank in the sentence. Before assigning a cloze activity, the teacher should demonstrate examples for the class on the
overhead projector.

Reading comprehension is furthered by using the prep technique (Tierney, Readence, & Dishner, 1985). This technique helps students to access what they know about a topic before reading it. This technique has two components: (1) engaging students in group discussion around the key concepts and (2) analyzing the nature of student responses. Prior to this activity the teacher must determine what the key concepts are that will be discussed. In step one the teacher stimulates the students to brainstorm and make associations regarding the concept. In step two the teacher decides from the information the students give whether or not the students have a firm grasp of the concept. If not, more concrete experiences and examples are provided before reading the selection. If the students have sufficient background knowledge, then the selection is assigned to be read.

A study by Morrow (1985) claims that retelling stories orally improves students' reading comprehension. The teacher guides students' retelling of stories with emphasis on story structure: setting, theme, plot episodes, and resolution. The teacher does not expect complete recall and helps the students by posing questions such as "What next?" when a student needs help.

The writer selected and discussed instructional methods and techniques available to teach and improve reading comprehension at the primary level.
CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Journals

To begin the researching process, a problem statement was generated. Next the Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE) was used to examine the topic—reading comprehension skills at the primary level. The writer decided by title and synopsis which journal articles to review. The writer of this paper also investigated the journal articles' bibliographies and inspected other related cross-referenced articles. The Reading Teacher, Journal of Reading, and Reading World were the most beneficial journals. After locating, reading, and photocopying the related articles, the writer organized folders (by topic) of the related literature.

Textbooks

As the writer continued to investigate the topic of primary reading comprehension, she examined the Ohio State University card catalogue for texts in the topic area. The most useful manuals included: Improving Reading Skills In The Content Area, by Donald Cushebery; Improving Classroom Reading Instruction, by Gerald Duffy & Laura Roehler; and
Other

In addition to reviewing research articles and books, the writer sought advice from the instructor. For guidance in structure and form, the writer looked at previously published handbooks from the University of Dayton.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS—THE HANDBOOK

Introduction to the Handbook

The result of this study is a reading comprehension handbook designed for primary teachers to use with primary-aged students. It is intended to be a resource tool for teachers to use as they teach and/or reteach and improve reading comprehension skills. It is designed to be used as an alternative to basic basal workbook drill pages and black line reproducible pages.

The following reading comprehension skill areas are included in the handbook: locating the main idea, following directions, drawing conclusions, and sequencing events. Each of these skill areas is further divided into learning centers, activities, and games. A list of references is also included.
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MAIN IDEA
Learning Centers

Materials:
1. Selections from textbooks
2. Tagboard
3. Glue
4. Art supplies
5. Writing paper
6. Marking pens

Directions:
Reading selections can be taken from old textbooks and glued to tagboard. Selections can also be typed right on the tagboard. The selections should be of only one paragraph at first; the length of the selections may be increased as students learn to identify the main idea. The following are additional activities that may be placed in the Main Idea Activity Book.

Instructions to Students:
1. Select a task card.
2. Read the selection.
3. Decide what the main idea of the selection is.
4. Select one of the activities to show the main idea from the Main Idea Activity Book.
5. Follow the instructions for that activity.
6. Clean up any mess you have made.
7. Replace the task card.
The student may develop a television commercial that would depict the main idea of the selection that he has read.

The student may write a short poem that states the main idea of the selection that he has read.
The student may make a poster advertising the book that he has read. The poster would contain the main idea of the story or selection that the student has read.

The student may make a book jacket for a reading selection. The title of the book jacket would show the main idea of the selection he has read.

(Greff & Askov, 1974)
MAIN IDEA
Learning Centers

Materials:
1. Tagboard
2. Magazines
3. Marking pens
4. Writing paper

Directions:
The easier task card sets can be pictures with a single action. The task cards can become more difficult as the actions of the picture increase in complexity. The teacher may glue the pictures to the tagboard for permanency. For an additional activity the student can cut out his own pictures, glue them to paper and write a title for the picture. Magazines can be left at the Center for student use.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Take a sheet of paper.
2. Select a task card set.
3. Look at each picture carefully.
4. Decide on the best title for each picture.
5. Write your title for each picture on your sheet of paper.
6. Place your finished work in the completed work envelope.
7. Return the task cards.

(Greff & Askov, 1974)
Today my grandma and Harry are getting married. They are having a dance too. We are going to the dance after the wedding. My cousin Tim and my uncle Ned will also be at the wedding.

**Materials:**
1. Tagboard
2. Duplication masters
3. Student writing
4. Writing paper
5. Marking pens

**Directions:**
Select some of the students' writings. Make any necessary spelling and grammatical corrections, delete the title, and glue each writing to tagboard. This approach can be used to identify the main idea of a single paragraph or more than one paragraph.

**Instructions to Students:**
1. Take some paper.
2. Select a task card set.
3. Read each task card.
4. Decide on the best title for each story.
5. Write your titles on your paper.
6. Place your finished work in the completed work envelope.
7. Return the task cards.

(Greff & Askov, 1974)
The cat is a hunter.

Materials:
1. 12 x 18" oaktag or index paper
2. Additional oaktag for playing answer cards
3. Hole punch
4. Staples, glue or brass fasteners to secure pockets
5. Magic markers

Directions:
Fold the oaktag or index paper to create a pocket folder measuring approximately 7 1/2 x 18" in size. Mark pocket divisions using a magic marker. Print the desired "quiz items" on the front of each pocket section. Laminate and use a razor blade to open the card-insertion areas. Use brass fasteners or staples to secure and separate the pockets. Next, punch holes in the areas above each pocket section making sure that the holes are placed in a different location for each section (this is essential to self-correction). Cut a set of answer cards which are 1/2 to 1/4" smaller in width than the pockets. The length should be 2 to 4" longer than the depth of the pocket. Insert an answer card into each pocket and print the desired answers on each card. Turn the pocket folder over to the reverse side as indicated by the arrow above. Use a red magic marker to color in the area indicated on the back of each playing card by the punched hole. Self-correction is achieved after play by having the child turn the folder to the reverse side--if red dots show up in each punched area, the child knows his answers are correct.

(Keith, 1976)
NEWS_FLASH

Preparation:
1. Cut articles out of newspapers and separate the headings from the articles.
2. Place the articles and headings in a large envelope and print the following instruction on the outside of the envelope: Match each heading with the correct article.

Procedure:
1. Place the envelope on a reading table for students to use independently or in small groups as a planned or free time activity.
2. Ask the students to follow the instruction on the outside of the envelope to complete the activity.

Forte & MacKenzie, 1989

TITLE TIME

Preparation:
1. Cut paragraphs from old textbooks (readers, social studies, science, etc.) and paste them on construction paper.
2. Print titles from the paragraphs on index cards or paper strips.
3. Make a scrapbook by stapling sheets of plain paper together.
4. Place the paragraphs and titles in a shoe box. Paste the following instructions for completing the activity on the inside of the box lid:
   a. Choose a paragraph from the box.
   b. Find its corresponding title.
   c. Paste the paragraph and the title on a page in the scrap book.
   d. Write a paragraph of your own and a title supporting the main idea of the paragraph on two separate sheets of paper. Contribute these to the box.

Procedure:
1. Instruct students to use the "Title Time" box as a free-time activity or as a group assignment.
2. As new ideas are contributed, the project may retain meaning and student interest for several weeks.

Forte & MacKenzie, 1989
MAIN IDEA
Activities

PICK THE MAIN IDEA PICTURE

Procedure:
After listening to a story, the student can be asked to select, from choices, a picture that expresses the main idea of the story.

(Mueser, 1975)

DRAW THE MAIN IDEA

Procedure:
After listening to a story, the student can be asked to draw a picture illustrating the main idea of the story.

(Mueser, 1975)

SELECT A TITLE

Procedure:
Read a story to a group. Afterwards, ask the group for suggestions of possible titles for the story. List each reasonable suggestion on the board. Discuss these and the group decides on one or two titles that seem most appropriate.

(Spache, 1976)

THE UNKNOWN TITLE

Procedure:
Tape a paper cover over the title of a new book and cover the title on the title page or fasten it to the cover with a paper clip. Leave the book out so it is available to students. Those who read it must write a possible title on the paper cover. Students enjoy reading others' titles.

(Spache, 1976)

CREATE A TITLE

Procedure:
Collect newspaper and magazine articles. Cut them apart and delete the title. Ask students to create a title and write it on an index card. Staple the card to the article.
MAIN IDEA
Games

Materials:
1. Oaktag or index cards
2. Scissors
3. Magic markers
4. Laminator

Directions:
Cut a set of 20-30 playing cards for each game approximately 1 1/2 x 4" to 3 x 6" or use index cards. Draw a heavy line down the center of each playing card. Next, hold two playing cards so that the right side of the card overlaps the left side of the second card and cut a curved or jagged line. Place the cards on the table so that the cut lines will fit together or couple up as in a puzzle. Write the desired skill information on the cards as shown in the example above. Next, pick up a new card and overlap it over the second card to cut a new couple up. Write on the next item and continue to complete the set of cards. Self-correction is inherent since only correct answers will match up.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Deal out the playing cards and place the "title" card out to start play.
2. Players place answer cards as soon as they find corresponding answers. The first player to use up all of his cards is the winner.

(Keith, 1976)
"What's the MAIN IDEA?"

MAIN IDEA
Games
Materials:
1. 22 x 28" poster board
2. 4" spinner
3. Brass fastener
4. 40-60 2 x 4" oaktag cards
5. Buttons for markers

Directions:
Sketch the game board as illustrated above, laminate it for durability. Attach the spinner using a brass fastener. On each of the 2 x 4" cards either write a paragraph or cut paragraphs from newspapers and glue them to the cards. On the back side of each card provide a self-correction device by giving the main idea.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Place the cards in a stack, paragraph-side-up on the lion’s mane.
2. In turn the players read the paragraph aloud and tell the main idea.
3. The student flips the card to the back; if they were basically correct, the student spins the arrow and moves his marker that many spaces toward win.

(Keith, 1976)
FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS
Learning Centers

Materials:
1. Grid paper
2. Index cards for tasks
3. Tagboard
4. Marking pens

Directions:
The tasks may be arranged in varying degrees of difficulty. Interest will be added if the student draws a meaningful object by following directions.

Sample task card:
1. Start at the star.
2. Move three blocks to the left.
3. Move two blocks toward the bottom of the grid sheet.
4. Move three blocks to the right.
5. Move two blocks toward the bottom of the grid sheet.
6. Move three blocks to the left.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Take a sheet of grid paper.
2. Select a task card.
3. Follow the directions on the task card.
4. Check your sheet using the answer key.

(Greff & Askov, 1974)
FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS
Learning Centers

Materials:
1. Flannel board
2. Variety of objects to be glued to flannel or felt
3. Tagboard
4. Marking pens

Directions:
The task cards can be varied so that many different pictures are possible. A simulated picture frame can be permanently mounted onto the flannel board. The objects are glued to flannel or felt. The objects and task cards could be varied.
Sample task card:
1. Place the house in the center of the picture.
2. Place the tree to the right of the house.
3. Place the car in the lower left hand corner.
4. Place the man to the left of the car.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Find someone to work with you.
2. Select a task card.
3. Follow the directions on the task card.
4. After you have completed your picture, have your partner check your work for you.
5. Replace the objects on the flannel board.
6. Have your partner try one. Check his work.

(Greff & Askov, 1974)
FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS
Learning Centers

Materials:
1. Tagboard for bones and anatomical parts
2. Marking pens
3. Envelopes

Directions:
A number of envelopes, each containing different objects, should be provided. The task cards call for certain envelopes.

Sample task card:
1. Select these envelopes: Bones #3, Misc. #4.
2. Connect the hip bone to the skull.
3. Connect the finger bone to the top of the skull.
4. Connect the neck bone at the bottom of the hip bone.
5. Join the eyeball to the top of the finger bone.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Find someone to work with you.
2. Select a task card.
3. Take the crazy animal parts... by labeled envelope.
4. Follow the directions on the task card.
5. Have your partner check your work.
6. Replace all the parts after you have completed your task.
7. Ask your partner to try to build a crazy animal. Check his work.

(Greff & Askov, 1974)
FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS
Activities

JENNIFER JO and SAMMY SQUIRREL

Procedure:
Type or print the following information on a 3 x 5” card. Have the students follow the directions. Other instructions can be designed and written on cards for variety.
Jennifer Jo is six years old.
She is not very fat, and she is not very tall.
She has brown hair, green eyes, and a small nose.
She wears a red coat, black shoes, and a blue hat.
Draw Jennifer Jo.

Sammy Squirrel is a pretty animal.
His fur is red with a spot of white.
He has a long, bushy tail and tiny eyes.
His ears are pointed, and his claws are strong.
Sammy lives in the woods where he eats nuts and berries.
Draw Sammy Squirrel and color your picture.

SIMON SAYS

Procedure:
Give students oral directions to follow, preceded by the statement "Simon Says". Occasionally skip the term "Simon Says". If the student follows the direction, have him sit out. Continue until only one or a few students are still participating.

OBSTACLE COURSE

Procedure:
This activity may be played inside or outside. Mark off an area about four feet wide and ten feet long. Within this area form an obstacle course by placing objects such as a trash can, books, balls, rulers, etc. there. One person is blindfolded and tries to walk through the obstacle course by listening to directions from one student at a time.

(Forte, 1982)
FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS
Activities

"EGG"CEPTIONAL DIRECTIONS

Procedure:
Instruct pupils to write interesting action directions on strips of stiff paper. Collect the strips and place them in a plastic egg. Shake the egg and allow students to draw one strip of paper at a time and follow that direction.

(Mpache, 1976)

MIX UP-FIX UP

Preparation:
Write sets of directions such as those below:
1. Take a sheet of drawing paper from the table in the back of the room.
2. Fold the paper into three sections.
3. Number the sections 1, 2, and 3.
4. Draw a black pony in section 1.
5. Draw a red barn in section 2.
6. Draw two brown dogs in section 3.
7. Cut the sections apart with scissors.
Also write each step of the directions on a card and place the cards in an envelope.

Procedure:
Distribute the envelopes to the students and have them arrange the cards in the correct order. Instruct the students to follow the directions on the cards.

(Forte & Mackenzie, 1989)
SHAPE_UP!

Preparation:
Make a folder or use a manila folder. Print these simple directions on the inside of one half of the folder:

1. Put the ball in the red □.
2. Put the doll in the green ○.
3. Put the shoe in the blue △.
4. Put the hat in the yellow □.
5. Put the coat in the brown △.
6. Put the candy in the black ○.

Reproduce the following pictures. Cut out the pictures and paste each one on a small card. Place the picture cards in an envelope and tape the envelope beneath the directions inside the folder. Reproduce the following shapes. Cut out the shapes and paste them on the inside of the other half of the folder. Color the shapes according to the directions.

Procedure:
1. For independent activity, have a student follow the directions to place the pictures in the correct shapes.
2. After completing the activity, each student should return the pictures to the envelope to prepare the activity for the next student.

(Fortes & MacKenzie, 1989)
FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

ACTIVITY
FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS
Activity
FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS
Activities

CODE CRACKING

Procedure:
Explain and post the code for all students to see. The number code is as follows: A B C D E F G H I J K L M etc. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 etc. Each number corresponds to a letter of the alphabet. Give the students a daily message in number code to solve. To extend this activity have the students write and exchange codes of their own.

Sample:
8-5-12-12-15=HELLO

Begin with simple one word messages and advance to phrases and sentences.

Experiments and Recipes:
Both experiments and recipes allow students to follow directions in a concrete fashion and arrive with an end product. These are both great ways to practice following written directions. Next invite students to write their own experiments and recipes. Test these and see if they work.
FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS
Games

MAKE BELIEVE

Give each student a card with written directions on it. Each student in turn has to follow the directions on his card using pantomime only—no talking out loud. The others have to guess what he is trying to do. For example: Pretend that you are a door-to-door salesperson. Make believe you are trying to sell a can of roach spray to a person. You may wish to divide the class into two teams and tally points for correct guesses.

(Mueser, 1975)

CARDS

On index cards print such words as these:

\begin{verbatim}
bill  fat  hail  free  fight
still sat  ball  see  sight
fill  bat  fall  he  height
hill  hat  stall  bee  bite
\end{verbatim}

Print FREE on several cards. Shuffle all the cards together. Deal five cards to each player, and place the rest of the deck on the table, face down. Instruct the first child to lay down a card and name the word; the next player lays down a card that rhymes or that begins with the same letter as the first word, for example: If the first player laid down "hill", the second might play "still" or "hat". When a player cannot play from the cards in his hand, he draws from the deck until he can play or until he has drawn three cards. If he has a FREE card he may use that card for any word in his hand. The first player to get rid of all his cards wins the game. Vary the words and skill instructions to meet the current needs of students.

(Spache, 1976)
Materials:
1. Tagboard
2. Riddles
3. Marking pens
4. Writing paper

Directions:
If riddles are not readily available, a series of "What is..." questions can also be used to guide the student around the Riddle Ranch. Answers can be written on the back of the task cards.

Samples:
- What is brown, has a roof, and a chimney? (a ranch house)
- What has four legs, a mane, and gallops? (a horse)

Instructions to the Students:
1. Select a set of task cards.
2. Take a sheet of paper.
3. Read each task card.
4. Write the answers on your paper.
5. Check your answers by looking at the backs of the task cards.
6. Return the task cards.

(Greff & Askov, 1974)
Materials:
1. Short reading selections
2. Writing paper
3. Tagboard
4. Marking pens
5. Large envelopes

Directions:
Each reading selection would have three possible endings. Initial activities may have only three different sentences from which to choose. Later activities could involve several sentences or perhaps paragraphs. To draw on student's personal experiences, they could also have the option of writing their own endings.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Select a task card.
2. Read the selection on the task card.
3. Look at the three endings.
4. Decide which ending you feel is the best.
5. Write on paper why you selected that ending.
6. Replace the task card.
7. Place your finished work in the completed work envelope.

(Greff & Askov, 1974)
Materials:
1. Tagboard
2. Magazines
3. Marking pens

Directions:
All of the items on the pictures, except one, would be of a specific nature. The odd picture would not fit with the rest. The pictures could be drawn or cut from magazines. The task cards could be made progressively more difficult.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Find a partner.
2. Select a set of task cards.
3. Look at the pictures on the task cards.
4. Find the item or items that do not belong with the rest.
5. Show those item(s) to your partner to see if he agrees.
6. Return the task cards.

(Greff & Askov, 1974)
Materials:
1. Cloth for a bag
2. Variety of objects
3. Tagboard
4. Marking pens
5. Writing paper

Directions:
The objects should be such that a definite conclusion can be drawn once the object has been handled.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Take the Guess Bag.
2. Take a sheet of paper.
3. Put your hand into the Guess Bag.
4. Feel one object at a time.
5. Guess what the object is.
6. Write down the name of the object.
7. Follow the same directions and write down the names of other objects in the Guess Bag.
8. Open up the Guess Bag and check your answers.

(Greff & Askov, 1974)
Drawing Conclusions
Learning Centers

Materials:
1. 12” diameter oaktag, index or poster board circles
2. 11” diameter oaktag, index or poster board circles
3. Magic markers
4. Clear contact paper
5. Ruler
6. Glue

Directions:
Each shape-up game will require one 12” diameter circle and one 11” diameter circle. Rule off both circles into eight of sixteen sections as illustrated. You may wish to use a pencil compass to lightly indicate a smaller circular area in the center of the 11” circle. Using a magic marker, scallop or zig zag an irregular design along the area indicated by the penciled circle. Print the desired skill information on the inside “pie-shaped” areas and their corresponding answers on the outside “pie-shaped” areas of the 11” circle. Next, cut along one of the lines to reach the inner circular area and cut along the scalloped or zig zag outline. Glue this “center section” to the larger 12” circle and then cover the playing circle with clear contact paper. Next, cover the playing cards with clear contact paper and cut them apart.

Instructions to the Students:
Instruct students to play by placing answer cards next to the appropriate items on the playing board. When any answer is placed, self-correction is evident: if the answer card fits the design, the answer is correct.

(Keith, 1976)
CHANGE THE STORY

Activities

Preparation:
Collect short reading selections from basals, teacher skill manuals, or duplicating books. Reproduce the reading selection create "What if..." questions and situations. Mount on tagboard and use as task cards.

Procedure:
Allow students to use these task cards independently or in pairs. They will need paper to write their responses on. These task cards could also be used in small groups. Read the selection orally and discuss the "What if..." questions or situations. Encourage students to make up their own "What if..." questions and share them with the group.

(Forte, 1982)

DRAW THE END

Procedure:
Give the student a set of two situational pictures. Have him draw and ending to the picture story.

Samples:

Pictures for situational stories could be found in sequencing blackline reproducible books and basal workbooks.

(Forte, 1979)
THINK TANK

Preparation:
Gather a game board, 24 2'x5' index cards, a timer, and a felt pen. Enlarge the game board on the next page. Prepare two sets of cards, 12 to each set. On one card in each pair, write a "Think Tank" sentence. On the other, write a logical conclusion for that sentence. Mark each pair of cards with numbers, dots or any symbols to make this activity self-checking. Place the game board in a free-time area in the classroom, and arrange the "Think Tank" cards face up around the board. Stack the conclusion cards inside the "Tank" in the center of the board.

Samples:

1. A clap of thunder followed the lightning.
   2. The house seemed to explode in flames.
   3. The baby laughed and laughed.
   4. The spinning top spun faster and faster.

1. The happy princess smiled.
   2. Even royal people enjoy birthdays.
   3. The boy cried all the way home.
   4. Seeing a dog hit by a car is upsetting.

Directions to the Students:
1. Two players take turns drawing one card at a time and trying to match it with the proper "Think Tank" card on the board. The timer should be used, and if the card is not matched in a specified time, the player must put the card drawn on the bottom of the stack and forfeit that turn. If the card can be matched in the given time, the player picks up the "Think Tank" card and keeps the pair.
2. The game continues until all cards have been paired. The player with more pairs wins the game.

(Forte, 1979)
**DRAWING CONCLUSIONS**

**Games**

**Preparation:**
Gather a fishing bowl or other container, paper squares or index cards, and felt pens. On each index card, write an open-ended situation that would be of interest to the students.

**Samples:**
The factory workers asked for an extra coffee break because there was no air conditioning on the assembly line. The foreman said they were turning out less work already because of the hot weather, and the company could not afford another break. What will happen next?

Mrs. Smith was very angry with Tony because he was late for school. Tony explained to her that his mother was late for work, and he had to take his baby sister to the day care center. Mrs. Smith said, "You will have to tell that to the principal." What will happen?

Betty and Sue had been friends for a long time. Their quarrel concerned a party to which Betty was invited and Sue was not. Sue felt that Betty should not go to the party, but Betty said that it had nothing to do with their friendship, and she planned to go to the party. Who is right? Why?

**Directions:**
Several students may play this game, or it may be used in a reading group.

1. Sit in a circle and pass the bowl around to each participant.
2. Each player reaches into the bowl and draws one card. Each student reads the card chosen to the group and explains what he/she thinks would be a logical conclusion.
3. The other players discuss the conclusion to determine if it is "logical", and if there are other logical conclusions.

You may wish to divide the group into two teams and award points for "logical" conclusions.

(Forte, 1979)
DRAWING CONCLUSIONS
Games

Preparation:
Enlarge the game board on tagboard. Provide a variety of task cards and change task card sets as needed. Markers are needed.

Samples:
If a horse can run, move ahead 4 spaces.
If not, move back 3 spaces.

If a calf is a baby cow, move ahead 4 spaces.
If not, move back 2 spaces.

If a dog can fly, move ahead 6 spaces.
If not, move back 1 space.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Find a partner.
2. Select a set of task cards.
3. Read the statements on each task card.
4. Move according to the statement you select.
5. Check each other's answer each time.
6. The first person's marker to the moon wins.

(Greff & Askov, 1974)
Materials:
1. Books or stories
2. Writing paper
3. Large envelope

Directions:
Encourage students to read a variety of books...scientific, historical, fictional, or nonfictional writing. There should be a joint teacher/student evaluation of the student’s work.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Select one of the stories or books.
2. Read the story or book.
3. Close the book and take some paper.
4. Write down, in order what happened, the most important parts of the story or book.
5. Place your finished work in the completed work envelope.

(Greff & Askov, 1974)
Materials:
1. Cartoon or comic strips glued to tagboard
2. Sequenced action pictures glued to tagboard
3. Tagboard
4. Writing paper
5. Glue
6. Marking pens
7. Large envelope

Directions:
Sequenced action pictures may be found in old textbooks. The pictures may be glued to tagboard and the student may write on a separate sheet of paper. Pictures may also be glued to lined paper and students could write a story relating to the pictures on the paper. A number of sequenced task cards should be provided to allow for greater choice and for decision making.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Select one of the task cards.
2. Take a sheet of writing paper.
3. Write a short story about the pictures you selected.
4. Put your finished work in the completed work envelope.

(Greff & Askov, 1974)
Materials:
1. Cardboard TV set
2. Tagboard
3. Marking pens
4. Roll of paper
5. Glue
6. Sequenced pictures from magazines or comic books

Directions:
Each of the envelopes would contain a series of sequenced pictures (which are in random order) with which the student may work. Several students could work together on this task if the sequenced pictures have more than one character. The students could also provide commercials between some of the pictures.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Select one of the envelopes containing pictures for your TV show.
2. Find some students who will work with you.
3. Take a roll of paper.
4. Glue the pictures in order on the roll.
5. Make up a story to go along with the pictures.
6. Present a TV show to some of the other students in your room.

(Greff & Askov, 1974)
SEQUENCING
Learning Centers

Materials:
1. Sequenced pictures
2. Sequenced stories
3. Paper
4. Tagboard
5. Marking pens

Directions:
The correlated picture/story sequences could range from very easy to very difficult. It would be best to use an alphabetical or numerical code for levels of difficulty. Answer keys should be provided so that the student will be able to check his work. The tasks could be made even more difficult, if several picture and story sequences were placed in the same envelope.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Select a set of task cards.
2. Take some paper.
3. Arrange the story cards in the correct order.
4. Arrange the pictures in the correct order to go along with the story.
5. Check the answer key.

(Greff & Askov, 1974)
SEQUENCING
Activities

Preparation:
Reproduce the stories on the next page. Cut the sentences apart, and place them in large envelopes. Add paper and pencils for the students to use. Make the complete stories available to students for self-checking. Write the following instructions on the front of each envelope.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Take all of the sentences out of the envelope and spread them out before you.
2. Read each one carefully. Then build the story by arranging the sentences in the correct sequence.
3. After you have arranged the sentences to tell the story, use paper and pencil to write an ending for the story. Remember to build plot and sequence, and make your ending as exciting as possible.
4. Sign your name as author and put it in the envelope for others to read.
5. You may illustrate the story in your free time.

(Forte, 1979)

DISPLAY CHART
After a field trip or guest speaker, have students make a display chart showing the sequence of events. This may include illustrations.

(Spache, 1976)

PEG STORY
Use either a commercial ring-toss peg or make one from the core of a roll of paper. Write a story on rings of stiff oaktag, one sentence per ring. Students place the rings on the peg in sequential order.

(Spache, 1976)
An Underground Adventure

Tom and Jerry are good friends. They play together almost every day.

Three of their favorite games are "wood tag," "kick the can" and "I spy."

One day, they were playing in a vacant lot when they saw a big hole in the ground.

As they looked more closely at the hole, they discovered that it was actually the opening to a big, underground tunnel.

Naturally, they decided to crawl into the hole and do a bit of underground exploring.

Tom crawled in slowly, and Jerry was right behind him.

A Trip to the Zoo

The boys and girls in Mr. Jones' fifth grade class could hardly believe that the big day had finally arrived.

For weeks, they had been planning for their trip to the zoo.

As they climbed onto the big, yellow bus for the fifteen-mile ride, they were filled with excitement and expectations.

The bus driver discussed rules, and Mr. Jones gave each student a map and a booklet about the animals in the zoo.

Just as the driver called, "Let's go," and started the motor, Mrs. Goodlady, the principal, came to the door of the school and yelled "Stop! Stop where you are!"
SEQUENCING
Activities

Preparation:
Reproduce the illustrated nursery rhymes on the next three pages. Cut along the dotted lines to separate the pictures. Place each set of illustrations in an envelope labeled with the nursery rhyme title. Put the envelopes in a designated area for an independent activity.

Instructions to the Students:
1. Take the pictures from the envelopes and arrange the pictures in the proper sequence.
2. Allow student to conclude this activity by telling, writing, or acting out the nursery rhymes.

(Forte & MacKenzie, 1989)

Preparation:
Tear stories (appropriate to the students' reading level) out of magazines or old textbooks and cut them into several sections. Paste the story sections on heavy construction paper or tagboard.

Instructions:
1. Distribute the story sections to the students so that the students are not aware of who has what story section.
2. Have a student who has the beginning of a story read the story section aloud.
3. Instruct the other students to raise their hands if they think that their story sections should follow the one just read.
4. Have students read their story sections in order until the entire story has been read aloud. Then begin another story. Also feel free to use student-authored stories and encourage illustrating the sections.

(Forte & MacKenzie, 1989)
Come on! She's asleep!

This is fun!

She missed us!
Pretty stupid place to put a well....

OUCH! why me?

You too?

SLIP

SLIDE

SLURP
SOMETHING SMELLS YUMMY!

HOWDY!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER?
SEQUENCING
Games

ENDING EGG HUNT

Preparation:
Print short stories (appropriate for the students' reading level) on construction paper cut in "half-egg" shapes. Omit the endings. Place the unfinished stories in a box on a reading table. Write the endings to the stories on the matching "half-eggs". Place these egg halves in another box on the reading table.

Instructions to the Students:
Divide the class in to two teams. Give each team a paper basket. Instruct the students to match the unfinished stories with the correct endings. Have the students paper clip correctly matched egg halves together and place them in their team basket. The team with the most eggs wins the game.

(Forte & MacKenzie, 1989)

CHART GAME

Materials:
1. 22 x 28" poster board
2. 20 - 3 1/2 x 4" oaktag cards
3. Magic markers
4. Contact paper

Directions:
Illustrate the playing board on the next page, but without the 20 - 3 1/2 x 4" cards which illustrate the 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 sequence of events. Cover the board with contact paper. Illustrate the 20 cards as shown on the next page and shuffle them for play. To play, the student first sorts the cards on the top of the RESULT pictures. He then takes one stack of cards at a time and sorts them in the correct sequence on the board. The game can be made self-correcting by providing a key card hidden inside an envelope.
SEQUENCING
Games

SEQUENCE

1 2 3 4 5 Result

[Images of sequence shown in the image]
REFERENCES


CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The writer of this paper believes that reading is an essential and necessary skill to learn and develop. Reading can be undertaken for the purposes of performing common tasks, gaining new knowledge and insight, and experiencing pleasure.

"The statistics show that illiteracy is a serious problem in the U.S. (----- Changing Times, 1990, p. 82)." The reviewed research also indicates that students never see the relationship between what is done in reading groups and what students should do on their own when reading (Durkin, 1981a). The writer is concerned that there seems to be little or no reading comprehension carry over from one content area to the next. According to the literature, reading comprehension instruction is rarely found in classrooms (Durkin, 1978-79b) and there is a need for reading comprehension instruction (Duffy & Roehler, 1987b). Therefore, the writer of this paper chose to develop a handbook for teachers to use with their students to improve reading comprehension skills. The handbook is a resource tool which gives teachers various techniques and activities to use to meet the reading comprehension needs of students.
The intent of this study was to create a handbook containing reading comprehension activities for teachers to use with primary-aged students. The writer followed the listed steps in completing this project: developed a problem statement; conducted a search of related literature using the Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE); consulted bibliographies and cross-referenced materials; examined the card catalogue for texts on the topic; read, photocopied, and organized folders of the literature and activities; and wrote the project.

Results

The results of this study was a reading comprehension handbook for teachers to use with primary-aged students. The handbook consists of learning centers, activities, and games in the following comprehension areas: locating the main idea, following directions, drawing conclusions, and sequencing events. There is also a list of references following the handbook.

Conclusions

As a result of this study and paper, the writer has found many techniques that teachers can use to help develop stronger reading comprehension skills for primary-aged students.
Recommendations

The writer recommends that this handbook be used as a resource tool. It can easily be adapted to supplement any instructional method of teaching reading comprehension skills. The writer also suggests that teachers expand upon the ideas presented here and develop instructional materials that will help meet their students reading comprehension needs.
REFERENCES


