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## **The Efficiency of Differentiated Teaching Strategy in Developing Reading Comprehension Skills**

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**Abstract:** This article explores the relationship between reading strategies and reading comprehension, highlighting the significance of employing diverse techniques to improve understanding and retention of textual information. It reviews various reading strategies, including active reading, annotation, summarization, and questioning, emphasizing how these methods can aid learners in constructing meaning from texts. Additionally, it discusses the role of teachers in facilitating the development of these strategies among students, providing practical recommendations for integrating them into classroom instruction. By fostering a strategic approach to reading, educators can enhance students' engagement and proficiency in comprehension, ultimately leading to improved academic performance.

**Keywords:** Reading strategies, reading comprehension, active reading, education, teaching methods.

Comprehension, or extracting meaning from what you read, is the ultimate goal of reading. Experienced readers take this for granted and may not appreciate the reading comprehension skills required. The process of comprehension is both interactive and strategic. Rather than passively reading text, readers must analyze it, internalize it and make it their own. In order to read with comprehension, developing readers must be able to read with some proficiency and then receive explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies (Tierney, 1982).

The process of comprehending text begins before children can read, when someone reads a picture book to them. They listen to the words, see the pictures in the book, and may start to associate the words on the page with the words they are hearing and the ideas they represent. In order to learn comprehension strategies, students need modeling, practice, and feedback. The key comprehension strategies are described below.

When students preview text, they tap into what they already know that will help them to understand the text they are about to read. This provides a framework for any new information they read.

When students make predictions about the text they are about to read, it sets up expectations based on their prior knowledge about similar topics. As they read, they may mentally revise their prediction as they gain more information.

Identifying the main idea and summarizing requires that students determine what is important and then put it in their own words. Implicit in this process is trying to understand the author's purpose in writing the text.

Asking and answering questions about text is another strategy that helps students focus on the meaning of text. Teachers can help by modeling both the process of asking good questions and strategies for finding the answers in the text.

In order to make inferences about something that is not explicitly stated in the text, students must learn to draw on prior knowledge and recognize clues in the text itself.

Studies have shown that students who visualize while reading have better recall than those who do not (Pressley, 1977). Readers can take advantage of illustrations that are embedded in the text or create their own mental images or drawings when reading text without illustrations.

Narrative text tells a story, either a true story or a fictional story. There are a number of strategies that will help students understand narrative text.

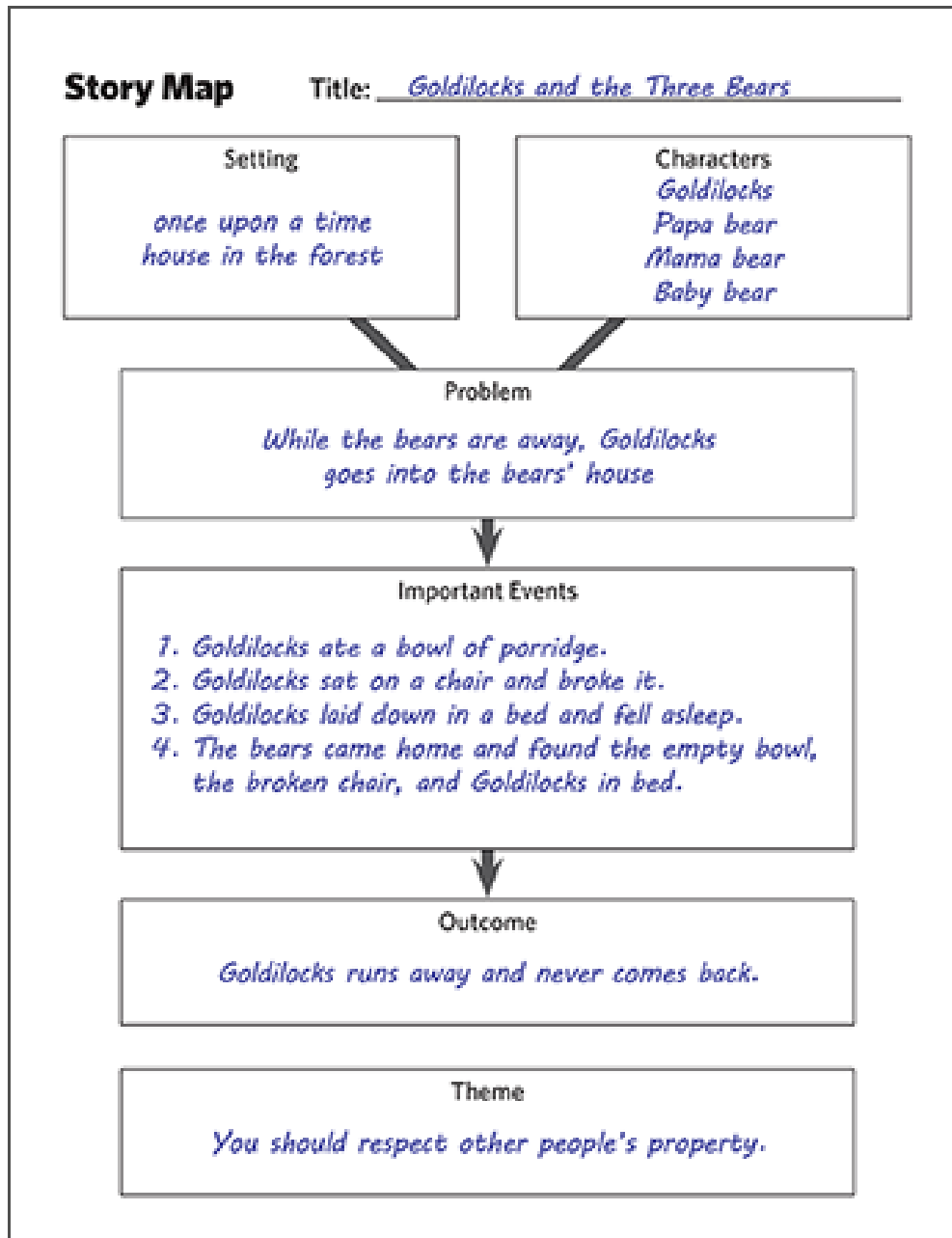
Teachers can have students diagram the *story grammar* of the text to raise their awareness of the elements the author uses to construct the story. Story grammar includes:

**Setting:** When and where the story takes place (which can change over the course of the story).

**Characters:** The people or animals in the story, including the protagonist (main character), whose motivations and actions drive the story.

**Plot:** The story line, which typically includes one or more problems or conflicts that the protagonist must address and ultimately resolve.

**Theme:** The overriding lesson or main idea that the author wants readers to glean from the story. It could be explicitly stated as in Aesop's Fables or inferred by the reader (more common).



Asking students to retell a story in their own words forces them to analyze the content to determine what is important. Teachers can encourage students to go beyond literally recounting the story to drawing their own conclusions about it.

Teachers can ask readers to make a prediction about a story based on the title and any other clues that are available, such as illustrations. Teachers can later ask students to find text that supports or contradicts their predictions.

Asking students different types of questions requires that they find the answers in different ways, for example, by finding literal answers in the text itself or by drawing on prior knowledge and then inferring answers based on clues in the text.

Expository text explains facts and concepts in order to inform, persuade, or explain. Expository text is typically structured with visual cues such as headings and subheadings that provide clear cues as to the structure of the information. The first sentence in a paragraph is also typically a topic sentence that clearly states what the paragraph is about. Expository text also often uses one of five common text structures as an organizing principle:

- Cause and effect
- Problem and solution
- Compare and contrast
- Description

Teaching these structures can help students recognize relationships between ideas and the overall intent of the text.

A summary briefly captures the main idea of the text and the key details that support the main idea. Students must understand the text in order to write a good summary that is more than a repetition of the text itself.

There are three steps in the K-W-L process (Ogle, 1986):

1. **What I Know:** Before students read the text, ask them as a group to identify what they already know about the topic. Students write this list in the “K” column of their K-W-L forms.
2. **What I Want to Know:** Ask students to write questions about what they want to learn from reading the text in the “W” column of their K-W-L forms. For example, students may wonder if some of the “facts” offered in the “K” column are true.

3. **What I Learned:** As they read the text, students should look for answers to the questions listed in the “W” column and write their answers in the “L” column along with anything else they learn.

After all of the students have read the text, the teacher leads a discussion of the questions and answers.

<b>K-W-L Chart</b>		Title: <u>Stonehenge</u>
<p><b>K</b> What I Know</p> <p><i>Stonehenge is big. It's a monument made of stone. The stones are arranged in a circle. The stones line up with something. Some of the stones are curved.</i></p>	<p><b>W</b> What I Want to Know</p> <p><i>Where is Stonehenge? Who built Stonehenge? When was Stonehenge built? Why was Stonehenge built? What do the stones line up with?</i></p>	<p><b>L</b> What I Learned</p> <p><i>Stonehenge is in southern England. Nobody is sure who built Stonehenge. Stonehenge was built thousands of years ago. Stonehenge may have been a place for healing the sick and injured or a shrine to the dead. Stonehenge lines up with the path of the sun on the longest and shortest days of the year.</i></p>
<p><b>Categories of Information I Expect to Use:</b></p> <p><i>The purpose of Stonehenge The history of Stonehenge The structure of Stonehenge</i></p>		

In conclusion, effective reading strategies play a crucial role in enhancing reading comprehension. By employing techniques such as active reading, summarization, questioning, and visualization, readers can engage more deeply with the text and improve their understanding. Additionally, fostering a growth mindset towards reading can encourage individuals to explore diverse genres and topics, further enriching their comprehension skills. As educators and learners alike recognize the importance of these strategies, they pave the way for a more literate society where individuals can critically analyze information and develop a lifelong love for reading. Ultimately, by integrating these approaches into daily practice, we can empower readers to navigate complex texts with confidence and clarity.

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