Developing Higher Order Thinking Skills of Learners Through Reading Strategies

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Many students can answer literal questions asked by teachers at the end of a reading selection. Questions that begin with What, Who, When and Where are easily answered by them. But when asked to answer questions beginning with How and Why, they easily stammer and seem to run out of words and sentences.

There are some strategies that will help students to think creatively and critically; hence, higher order thinking skills will be developed. Some of them according to Billmeyer and Barlon (1998) are the following:

1. Writing-to-learn – a strategy that can (and should) be incorporated across the curriculum. This approach helps students personalize learning so that they understand their course work better and retain what they have learned longer. It also encourages high-level thinking skills. Writing-to-learn activities can be used to help students reflect on and explore ideas and concepts they are reading about in class, thereby helping students to construct meaning.

2. Reflective Questioning – because questioning helps readers think about what they read, it is helpful to have a framework for developing and asking questions. It is also a tool that transfers the control of the questioning process from teacher to students. QAR or Question/Answer Relationship is a strategy that is not only an effective framework for developing critical thinking.

3. Concept Question Chain – the Concept Question Chain (CQC) is similar to QAR in that both require students to use higher order thinking skills when they formulate responses to questions about what they have read. As such it is a valuable tool for in-class independent reading. The Concept Question Chain consists of three levels of questioning: literal, interpretive, and applied. All questions are designed to help the students grasp the meaning of the text-based concept or theme and apply it to another situation.

4. Think-aloud – is a strategy that helps students understand the kind of thinking required by a specific task. The teacher models the thinking process by verbalizing the thoughts as she reads, processes information, or perform some learning tasks. Students see how the teacher attempts to construct meaning for unfamiliar vocabulary, engages in dialogue with the author, or recognizes when she doesn’t comprehend and selects a fix-up strategy that addresses a problem she is having.

5. Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review (SQ3R) – SQ3R is a versatile study strategy because it engages students during each phase of the reading process. Students preview the text material to develop predictions and set a purpose for reading by generating questions about the topic; they read actively, searching for answers to those questions; they monitor their comprehension through review activities.

Citations:

Billmeyer, R. & Barlon, M.L. (1998) Teaching Reading in the Content Areas: If Not Me, Then Who, Aurora Colorado USA


