READING COMPREHENSION

by:
Cristina R. De Dios
Master Teacher I, Wakas Elementary School

Comprehension is a complex process that has been examined in different ways and presented through a variety of models. Yoakom describes comprehension as follows: Comprehending reading matter involves the correct association of meanings with word symbols, the evaluation of meanings which are suggested in context, the selection of the correct meaning, the organization of the idea as they are read, the retention of these ideas, and their use in some present or future activity.

On the other hand, Salazar states that comprehension encompasses all the reading skills. It begins with word perception, recognition and understanding and makes use of study or locational research skills. Comprehension is the means by which appreciation skills are gained.

Understanding the reader and the nature of the reading task are not easy. The teacher’s primary goal is to be patient, sympathetic and understanding.

“Construction of meanings is attained through the transaction between the readers and the text” Rosenblatt, (1979) cited. At the same time that the reader brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the actual reading task, several text features the readers connect with allow meaning to surface from the literacy event.

Each reader brings a unique repertoire of characteristics, experiences and knowledge as he or she interacts with text. The depth and breadth of the reader’s background knowledge or schema will most likely influence the meaning that is derived.
from the text, Pardo (2004). It is for this reason that a child whose prior schema has been activated will be drawn to a

selection with more interest. Likewise, focus on specific content characteristics in a story is considered as one future of an engaging selection. If a story’s theme concedes with a child’s own experiences and context, he or she will gain a better, if not deeper understanding of the material.

Moreover, the reader’s social and cultural background provides aide in the appreciation and comprehension of particular text. It was observed that students who are familiar with European folk tales such as Jack and the Beanstalk read a leveled text fluently and with comprehension as checked through questions after reading the selection, Dzaldor and Peterson, (2005) stated. In contrast, immigrant students in Canada who are not familiar with such texts exhibited difficulty in understanding the same passages.

References:

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

