Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is “intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interaction between text and reader” (Harris & Hodges, 1995)

- Vocabulary development is an essential component of text comprehension

Findings of the National Reading Panel (2000):
- Comprehension is enhanced when readers relate ideas presented in the text to their own knowledge and experience (NRP, 2000)
- Explicit instruction in comprehension strategies can enhance understanding. Evidence was noted in use of instruction using the following methods:
  - Comprehension Monitoring - readers learn to become aware of their understanding of text
  - Cooperative Learning – students work together in reading strategies
  - Graphic and Semantic Organizers – readers make and use graphic representations to enhance their understanding of text
  - Question Answering - readers are asked and then answer questions related to the text
  - Question Generation – readers ask themselves questions about the text to check understanding
  - Story Structure – students are taught the structure of stories and use this structure to help them recall the facts about the stories
  - Summarization – readers are taught to bring together ideas about the text

To enhance reading comprehension: (Pressley, 2000)
- Teach decoding skills
- Teach vocabulary
- Build word knowledge
  - Establish some prior knowledge about a the topic of the text prior to reading
- Teach active comprehension strategies
The best readers are active. They think about what they read by prediction, analyzing, using imagery, asking questions, and/or summarizing.

- Encourage monitoring of comprehension
  - Teach strategies to help students check their understanding and seek help when they don’t understand

Reciprocal Teaching (Palincsar & Brown, 1984)
- Students are put in small groups (usually groups of 4)
- Each student assumes a role: summarizer, questioner, clarifier, predictor
- Students read a portion of text together and take on their role
- Roles shift and students read the next selection

http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/reciprocal_teaching/

For more information on reading comprehension instruction:
- http://www.literacy.uconn.edu/compre.htm
- http://www.readingrockets.org/atoz/reading_comprehension/
- http://literacynet.org/cnnsf/index_cnnsf.html
  - source of free high interest news articles and accompanying activities to enhance reading comprehension

References:


