

An Article Review on “Reading Comprehension Strategy Instruction in a First-Year Course: An Instructor’s Self-Study”

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to provide insight for others who wish to do a self-study, discussing emerging themes related to student learning and strategy instruction at the post-secondary level. This study reviews a research article written by Parr & Woloshyn (2013), entitled “Reading Comprehension Strategies Instruction in a First-Year Course: An Instructor’s Self-Study.” Results of the review include observations on how the related article doesn’t adequately deliver objectives but is excellent at analyzing the previous literature, and the design of the research will make readers understand generally. The contents of this article are valid with all references used accurately. It concisely discussed reading comprehension and strategy instruction. Also, it used a robust theoretical framework that provides an opportunity to reflect the challenges and limitations associated with the application of explicit strategy instruction. Ultimately, this present study looks at independent learning instruction as a strategy in delivering a repertoire of evidence-based understanding strategies designed to introduce students to the conventions of reading and writing academics. This study especially entices educators, because this study can be a benchmark for lecturers to provide reading comprehension strategy in a first years course, especially reading skill.

1. Introduction

As 2013 nears the end, two instructors from Georgian College and Brock University namely Cynthia Parr and Vera Woloshyn published a research article 21-page comprehension strategy titled “Reading Comprehension Strategy Instruction in a First-Year Course: An Instructor’s Self-Study.” This article aims to document the experience of professors who provide a repertoire of evidence-based strategies in the context of the first year of the university’s English language study program which is intended to introduce students to academic reading and writing. First, the authors provide information about students to a post-secondary environment, where first-year students face many obstacles when they move from secondary to post-secondary settings (Francis & Simpson, 2009; Pawan & Honeyford, 2009). Then the author reviews the related literature by giving understanding instructions to the selected group of postsecondary students.

In particular, Pawan & Honeyford (2009) wrote that first-year student or called older teens are expected to meet the standards of adult learning environments based on text. Regardless of the success of their secondary school, many first-year students are shocked by the critical parts played by the text in specialized disciplinary studies and show little experience in reading them widely (Freebody & Freiberg, 2011). Although many professors might wish students to

develop metacognitive abilities, the students might develop cognitively (Alexander & Fox, 2011). The students can benefit from the direction and support in meeting this new reading challenge (Alexander, 2005; Alvarez & Risko, 2009; Pawan & Honeyford, 2009). This study illustrates the efforts of professors to integrate understanding instruction in limited postsecondary settings; the authors believe that this description will be unique to researchers and educators. This review looks at research articles as analyzes or academic works intended to determine whether this research article is worthy of being copied or not.

2. Method

This article is carried out with qualitative methods that use the principles of independent learning and action research (Bullogh & Pinnegar, 2001; Yin, 2009) (p. 3). Tidwell and Fitzgerald’s (2004) compared independent learning with teaching, which is done as a process of planning, action, observation, and evaluation, which is an integral part of implementation integration. The cyclic research process also corresponded with the description of Creswell’s action research (2012) as a focused, practical, collaborative and dynamic activity. The practice is done by integrating the strategy of understanding instructions in available courses as manifested through reflective practice and critical discussion (Costa & Kallick, 1993).

This research was directed with regards to the first year, the English language undergrad program, which is housed in a little multidisciplinary program with 1,400 understudies selected. Elective courses, finished mostly by first-year understudies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, present shows on scholarly perusing and writing to enable understudies to explore through their college ponders. This course is held in the fall semester and comprises of 12, three-hour week after week classes. The authors combine nine presentation classes and mix of instructional procedures to comprehend the substance of different courses. At the same time, the rest of the sessions are committed to the presentation of courses, audit of courses, and test readiness (p. 3). All through the course, understudies have doled out readings from *The Active Reader: Strategies for Reading and Academic Writing* (Henderson, 2008). Reading passages extend from 1,900 to 5,300 words (average length 3,322 words), speak to different composition organizations and writers, and are utilized to give correct settings to understudy guidance procedures and trials. Learning targets of this course incorporate dynamic and compelling perusing for an assortment of scholarly purposes while utilizing a collection of getting techniques; use accentuation and sentence structure viably; plan and compose reactions and necessary investigation, and show a comprehension of essential research aptitudes and standards. Understudy learning is surveyed dependent on short activities, reflections, composed assignments, tests, finishing of online research modules, and last examinations (p. 4).

3. Results & Discussion

The article reflects the content of the title, the title and the abstract reflects the contents and need new goals. The title is quite confusing with the self-study of an instructor. While punctuation suggests rather than defines (Mulvey, 2016), the colon in the title is intended to emphasize and introduce research lists and articles to be clear in their purpose rather than relying on the reader's intelligence quickly. The title is synchronized well with the abstract, which is written as a perfect summary of the entire article.

The abstract captures the number of readers of the information they should have skimmed, and the abstract of the article describes the research methodology, including the description of the teaching program provided. After the author's abstract explains reading comprehension and strategy instruction, the authors identify some important strategies that have been shown to encourage students' reading comprehension including but are not limited to activating prior knowledge, identifying key ideas, questioning, and summarizing (p. 1). There is less investigation of the reconciliation of perusing understanding guidance as a significant aspect of a particular disciplinary substance course went for first-year understudies.

Notwithstanding when such investigations exist, they are frequently constrained to the utilization of explicit understanding methodologies as opposed to advancing an extensive collection. For instance, Smith, Holliday, and Austin (2010) energize first-year understudies tried out science courses to utilize elaborative cross-examination (the inquiry 'why') when perusing topic, reporting improvement in understudy learning results adhering to directions

The authors include a theoretical framework that explains the teaching experience and the various interests in the process of reading and making students experience meaning (p. 2). The authors adopted the social constructivist framework to realize the accentuation for the co-development of dependent learning (Schwandt, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). This research article allowed us the chance to consider the idea of guidance understanding and the difficulties and constraints related to actualizing clear methodology directions in the first-year class. Specifically, we give a diagram of writer's endeavours to apply key perusing understanding guidance with regards to her first-year English language course. At the same time, Vera assumed a job as an essential companion, counsel, and individual partner. Creators at that point investigate these encounters as reported through the creator's instructional reflection and extra understudy information, laying out the criteria creators accept required for fruitful execution at the postsecondary level (p. 3).

In the methodology, design and context of the study, the author has included the method he used for this study, namely a qualitative case study that refers to the principles of independent study and action research (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001) (p. 3). Here the author is apparent in listing: a) who is the participant in the study, b) when this research was conducted, c) how many participants were involved in the study, d) what participants will do in the study, and e) how the author conducted his research. The author provides how this student learning will be assessed, student learning is assessed based on short exercises, reflections, written assignments, quizzes, completion of online research modules, and final examinations (p. 3).

On comprehension strategies instruction, the author gives the steps he uses for research (p. 4). At this point, the writer is good at giving a table in the steps he will take for research so that the reader is easy to read and understand. It is also very clear here that the cognitive process/instructional prompts are made in such a way. Throughout the course, cognitive skills monitoring meaning, analyzing the features/structure of the text, questions, paraphrasing, concluding, summarizing, and synthesizing are presented as cumulative processes (p. 4). Teaching sessions follow the same format as the authors introducing sequential understanding strategies. The author explains what he did while the research process lasted until the end.

In data collection and analysis, the author maintains field notes and weekly reflections when he plans and delivers instructions, measuring student responses (p. 6). Authors conduct biweekly conversations intended to deconstruct Cynthia's teaching experience further, relate it to literature, and develop further lessons. This discussion was recorded and transcribed for further analysis. Using line-by-line analysis and coding of contrasts, the author independently reviews and encodes reflections, transcribes our discussion, and student questionnaires and thoughtful comments (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007; Creswell, 2012). We then met to share our emerging code and negotiate convergent themes across data sources. Four main themes emerge from this process: (a) teaching flexibility, (b) student learning, (c) efficiency and effort, and (d) repurposing knew strategies and promoting strategy repertoires (p. 6).

In the findings and discussion, the authors divided the discussion into 4, namely instructional flexibility, student learning, efficiency and effort, and the last was repurposing familiar strategies and promoting strategy repertoires (p. 6-12). First, on instructional flexibility, the author found that, in part, instructional success depends on being able to be responsive to the abilities, needs, and interests of his students and being flexible about the delivery of strategies (p. 6). In student learning, the author divides students with each task and writes the way he evaluates each student (p. 7-11). Here the author has outlined a questionnaire that he gave to his students one by one. In the efficiency and effort, the authors assume that he believes efficiency is the dominant consideration in students' initial responses to understanding instructions (p. 12). Here the author has described in detail what counts as an obstacle when teaching during the research process.

Then, some relate their reading difficulties to the use of difficult language by the author, unclear structure or inability to engage the reader. Finally, in repurposing familiar strategies and strategy repertoires, the authors conclude that strategies to question, paraphrase, summarize, and synthesize appear to be very relevant to high-level thinking across disciplines (Donald, 2002) and very useful in the context of reading, writing, and learning in university level (p. 15).

In the introduction, the authors do not include the definition of strategic learning (p. 1), "strategic learning is that individuals use to help them comprehend, external, or retain new information" (O'Malley et al., 1985) as a beginning before the reader find out what reading comprehension is. Hardan (2013) claimed that "language learning strategies are defined as the ways or steps employed by students to obtain the target in learning languages influencing the information in deriving, storing or employing it to achieve the students' purposes." Bidabadi & Yamat (2013) said, "in English teaching and learning process, those strategies have an important role in getting students to be competence in using English."

Furthermore, learning strategies play an important role for learners during teaching and learning process of English.

In reading comprehension and strategy instruction, the author does not add terms related to reading comprehension strategy (p. 1). O'Malley et al. (1985) divided learning strategies into six types; they are memory strategies, cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive, compensation strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Saricoban (2002) divided reading strategies into two kinds, namely direct strategies and indirect strategies. Further, the direct strategy was separated into cognitive strategies where students deliver direct actions in solving the problem such as direct analysis, transformation, and synthesis of learning material, and meta-cognitive strategies where students use self-directed strategy in learning, such as planning, setting goals, and managing self-management. Meanwhile, indirect strategies are used in communication when the speakers get problems with their interlocutor in a conversation.

In methodology, the author seems to need to add a case study research is research through which the researcher comprehensively explores a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2007). Adherence to this principle ensures that people will not be used simply as a means to achieve research objectives (Patton, 1990). In qualitative research, the trustworthiness features consist of authenticity and credibility. Validity does not carry the same connotation as it does in quantitative research; neither is a companion of reliability. Validity is seen as a strong factor, and it is used to determine whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants, or the readers of an account (Creswell, 1994).

In the article's findings and discussion section, there are Instructional Flexibility, Student Learning, Efficiency and Effort, and the last is Repurposing Familiar Strategies and Promoting Strategy Repertoires, the author does not distinguish the writings he made with the writings he comments from his students, so readers are confused which results from the comments of his students with the writings he analyzes (p. 6). If it is distinguished like giving italic writing to comment and given it like a quotation mark, the reader will be able to distinguish it. Here too is lacking, adding a better student post questionnaire comment if the author makes a pre and post-induction reduction table, it will make it easier for the reader to understand. In this findings and discussion section, especially on the Repurposing Familiar Strategies and Promoting Strategy Repertoires, the author is very dry writing down the conversations he has done with his friends (p. 14). Do not know what the purpose and objectives are, but at the end of this point, the author wrote that, the direct involvement of students with integrated multi-functional understanding strategies is very encouraging. The strategy of questioning, paraphrasing, summarizing, and synthesizing seems very relevant to high-level thinking across disciplines (Donald,

2002) and is very useful in the context of reading, writing, and studying at the university level. Developing the presentation of an 'umbrella' strategy like this is also in line with the postsecondary literature that addresses the complementary functions of 'reading to write' and 'writing to read' (Jackson, 2009). This means that the author engages students to integrate multi-functional understanding strategies (p. 15).

At the conclusion, the author included deficiencies in the data contained in his paper (p. 15). The author should include conclusions from all the results of his research. Then, the author conveys a sentence that in the contents of his research paper there is no use of age, but at the conclusion, the author wrote "our findings indicate that explicit but flexible age instruction can be integrated with existing course content successfully" (p. 15). This conclusion has nothing to do and makes the reader confused. In addition to the authors providing data deficiencies in the paper, the authors write the registration and interest of students in this course also underlines the importance of offering such instruction to all students versus those who are considered risky or specifically selected for developmental courses (Caverly, Nicholson, & Radcliffe, 2004), which has nothing to do with this research paper (p. 15).

The authors include pedagogically enriching explanations, the integration of understanding strategy instructions into first-year courses that have intensified requires time consideration, content coating, and pedagogical instructional persistence (p. 15). In the process of positioning strategy, developing the instructional approach and completing this independent learning, the author recognizes the value of a supportive critical friend who provides guidance and acts as a soundboard (Tidwell & Fitzgerald, 2004). Reflection and dialogue of instructors with other informants has proven to be an important component of teaching planning and continuation of independent learning, especially when the momentum, of course, requirements threatens to frustrate the latter (LaBoskey, 2004). Concern about giving "perfect" instructions is overwhelmed with reminders that all learning occurs along the continuum. Although it seems important to recognize that the presentation of several strategic processes does not guarantee transfers and generalizations for all students, it is also important to remember that learning is not always immediately visible. The literature emphasizes that educators learn to teach strategies explicitly and effectively over time (Almasi, 2003; Keene & Zimmermann, 2007) with every effort to improve the learning process for students and instructors. Providing strategy instruction also often requires the instructor to believe that students will utilize this process in the future when presented with complex and challenging tasks.

Also, the problem in this article is how the research was never justified. This is dry on the limitations associated with using student reflections for data collection. Students

are asked to reflect on the use of their strategic reading process in the context of foreign text processing for class discussions. For some students, this is a difficult task, with their initial reflections either repeating text or teaching content. Ironically, these students, like many of their peers (Colley, Bilics, & Lerch, 2012; Grossman, 2009) may have benefited from guided modeling and practice to produce deep and meaningful reflections (Woloshyn et al., 2001). We also acknowledge that this reflection, as in the case of all self-report data, may not be a true reflection of student reading behaviour, can reflect response bias, and is limited to people who agree to participate in this study (Creswell, 2012). More positively, student reflection provides some evidence that students' knowledge of evidence-based understanding strategies increases during the duration of the course and provides triangulation for perceptions of learning and growth.

4. Conclusion

This research article tries to "bite more than can be chewed" and ends up being messy in channeling the purpose and explanation. But one must praise how great it was to analyze and present the previous literature and design its research in a way that ordinary readers will understand, linking their findings with previous literature findings to provide clear seminal and contemporary contexts so that they are released from inconsistent flows. The content of this article is valid (because all references are accurate) and is well debated. Documenting the author's experience in delivering a repertoire of evidence-based understanding strategies in the context of first-year university courses makes this paper seem highly recommended to be replicated in the same context.

This study recommends the need for further research to include the use of quantitative measures such as average points and achievement scores to determine student use, transfer and generalization of strategic processes as introduced in this context and similar courses. Based on the findings revealed in the article, this article provides insights for other faculties who may wish to apply strategic understanding instruction as well as those who design and provide professional development programming at the post-secondary.

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