

READING ACTIVITY

Directed Reading-Thinking Activity* (DRTA) – An Effective Strategy

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Objective : To enable readers to enhance their comprehension skill by activating their schema and making them predict, verify and reflect to modify.

Participation : Individual

Material : Any text – For example, ‘Global climate change: A definitive essay on the primary causes of global warming’ by Cosmic Convergence Research Group: [<http://cosmicconvergence.org/?p=7707>]

Preparation : Attempting consciously to include all the four aspects of the objective while reading any material.

Procedure

- Start with looking at the title of the essay, “Global climate change: A definitive essay on the primary causes of global warming”, and pause to ask what one knows about the main causes for climate change. And, flip through the article paying attention to all the subtitles, tables, pictures, graphs, and so on, and quickly recall whatever they know about the topic and their views on the topic. For instance, besides some of the facts known to all related to climate change, there are certain controversies surrounding the topic. Some believe that they are essentially man-made and hence changes can be arrested by lifestyle changes, whereas others believe that the changes are a natural process and nothing can be done except to adapt ourselves to the changes. Yet another controversy is the pace of climate change as some believe that this is not a cause of concern at all. A thinking reader should consider all these aspects in detail and predict what he is likely to read in the text.
- While reading, one has to verify whether the predictions made have turned out to be correct or not. In this case, most of the predictions could be accurate, but what comes as a jolt is the role of the Sun in climate change. This essay establishes that more than the other factors, the Sun is primarily responsible for the changes occurring on planet earth. It states, “... it is ultimately the Sun which governs virtually every earth movement and every major event. It is the same Sun which influences the shifting of the Earth on its axis, as well as the slow migration of the North Pole toward Siberia.” In the light of the additional information, a reader has to modify his understanding.
- Several other additional details contained in the essay could lead the readers to reflect on how such critical information regarding the Sun had hitherto been unknown to him and decide to gather more factual details on the role of the Sun in affecting the climate change and thereby has a modified understanding of the causes of global warming.

Learning outcomes:

- 1) Learners realize that they should not plunge into reading a text mechanically but to begin with predictions, taking cues from the cover of the book to looking at all the highlighted parts of the essay.
- 2) Learners recognize that they should check while reading whether their predictions are along the lines of the writer's views or diverging from them. Even if they are different, it is heartening to note that they are able to generate ideas and compare them with the writer's perceptions.

Further reading: Reading any text with an explicit focus on the four aspects of the strategy without leaving out any of them.

***Directed Reading-Thinking Activity:** This reading strategy has *four* aspects to it:

- a) Exploring the schema (what one already knows about the subject),
- b) Predicting by looking at the title, subtitles, pictures and the author's name,
- c) Reading either to prove or disprove the predictions, and
- d) Reflecting over how far the predictions were correct, or how they were modified. This strategy encourages students to be actively engaged with the text that they are reading and makes them thoughtful readers.

Conundrum of comprehension

Comprehension is rarely taught, as it is assumed that when learners are able to answer the questions given at the end of a text they have comprehended it. But the questions often aim at testing factual information, so the wealth of information that lies beneath a text remains untapped.

Comprehension is categorized into two kinds – *shallow comprehension* and *deep comprehension*, or *literal* and *inferential comprehension*. To enable readers to move from a shallow level to a deeper level of comprehension, certain strategies have to be consciously taught. Some of the practical strategies are:

- Making inferences;
- Planning and monitoring;
- Asking questions;
- Determining importance;
- Visualizing;
- Synthesizing; and
- Making Connections

[**Source:** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reading_comprehension]