Reading Strategies for the Secondary Classroom

Pre-reading

1. Adjunct Displays:
Various graphic organizers, either blank or with keywords or phrases filled in. The connection to the lesson and expectations for use are explained to the students. Students read and complete the organizer, assisting each other to adjust understandings. The information is reviewed and segued to the lesson or reading.

2. Admit Slips:
At the beginning of class, students jot quick responses to a prompt tied to the topic. These should not be graded. They are to help you assess what students know and guide instruction.

3. Anticipation Guides:
Students are presented with short, attention grabbing statements. Students decide whether or not they agree with the statements, pair up, and share their responses. Volunteers are asked to share whether or not they agreed. Students are asked to determine if their opinions matched the information in the text as they read. Share amended responses after the reading.

4. Assigned Questions:
Assigned questions are those prepared by the teacher to be answered by individuals or small groups of students. Students discuss their responses among one another or with the teacher. Particular positions or points-of-view should be supported by evidence. In some instances, it may be desirable for students to generate their own set of questions.

5. Bloom's Revised Planning Sheet
A graphic organizer for lesson planning that ties specific activities to Bloom's Taxonomy.

6. Brainstorming:
Brainstorming is a large or small group activity which encourages children to focus on a topic and contribute to the free flow of ideas. The teacher may begin by posing a question or a problem, or by introducing a topic. Students then express possible answers, relevant words and ideas. Contributions are accepted without criticism or judgment. Initially, some students may be reluctant to speak out in a group setting but brainstorming is an open sharing activity which encourages all children to participate. By expressing ideas and listening to what others say, students adjust their previous knowledge or understanding, accommodate new information and increase their levels of awareness.

7. Clustering
Teacher identifies a *nucleus* word. Students work separately and then together to think of words and ideas that connect to the word, writing them around the circled word and drawing lines to connect them.

8. Concept Attainment:
Concept Attainment is an indirect instructional strategy that uses a structured inquiry process. It is based on the work of Jerome Bruner. In concept attainment, students figure out the attributes of a group or category that has already been formed by the teacher. To do so, students compare and contrast examples that contain the attributes of the concept with examples that do not contain those attributes. They then separate them into two groups. Concept attainment, then, is the search for and identification of attributes that can be used to distinguish examples of a given group or category from non-examples.

9. Gallery Walk
Before the reading, the teacher posts pictures, posters, or statements around the room along with a question for students to answer. Students circulate around the gallery and choose one picture to respond to. Allow time to share their responses in either small or full group before doing the reading.

10. Interest Surveys, Questionnaires, and Interviews:
Early in the year, semester, or unit, the teacher administers a survey of student interests of knowledge in support of the content/topic.

11. KWL/KWHL:
K-W-L is an introductory strategy using a basic organizer that provides a structure for recalling what students know about a topic, noting what students want to know, and finally listing what has been learned and is yet to be learned.

12. List-Group-Label
The students work in small groups to develop a list of 20-25 words that apply to the topic. After reading, the same groups should discuss what they learned about words on the list.

13. Make up mnemonics
Teacher models how to create and use mnemonics. Students practice developing their own mnemonics.

14. Morphemic Analysis
Morphemic Analysis involves selecting words, identifying the parts of that word, defining the parts, identifying words in the text with that morpheme, and relating it to words in general usage. It is particularly useful in Math and Science.

15. Pattern Guide
Pattern Guides are visual representations of the structure of a passage. Students are given the individual pieces of the guide in an envelope as part of the discussion. They will assemble them during the reading.

16. PReP
PReP had three phases: Initial Associations, in which students brainstorm what they know about the topic or key vocabulary terms; Reflections on Initial Associations; and Reformulation of Knowledge, in which students verbalize how their Initial Associations have changed.

17. Pre-Text Reading
Teacher provides a selection of more easily comprehended texts on the topic of the reading. Students read and discuss before reading the lesson text.

18. Probable Passage
Choose 8-15 key words from the reading. Model for the students labeling the words into categories. Explain what they will be expected to do with the words when the reading is complete. Return to the category lists after reading.

19. Read-Alouds
Teacher chooses an appropriate passage and models by reading it aloud. Students then read the passage aloud to themselves or a partner. Teacher should preview and practice the text, establish a purpose for reading, model fluent reading, facilitate a discussion of the text, and follow up with independent reading.

20. Re-reading
Teacher models slowing down and re-reading a section for comprehension.

21. RWPS-Read-Write-Pair-Share
Students read silently or aloud, write a quick impression of the text, pair up with a partner to discuss, and share the discussion with the large group.

22. SQPL: Student Questions for Purposeful Learning
Make a statement about the reading topic that will generate wonder, challenge, or questioning. Students pair and generate 2-3 questions. The teacher writes the student questions on the board. After the selection is read, students discuss which questions have been answered.

23. Self-Selection
Students work in cooperative groups to go through the reading and identify words they think ought to be studied further. The meaning and importance of the words to the content are discussed in cooperative groups and shared with the whole class.

24. Shades of Meaning
Obtain paint chips in a gradation of shades. Introduce the concept of shades of meaning. Have students grade concepts, sentences or vocabulary in order. Make the connection for them to how writers write.

25. Story Impressions or Text Impressions
Select key terms from the reading and present them to the students. Have the students use the terms to guess what the reading will be about. Volunteers share their impressions. Read the text and have students compare their impressions to the actual information.

26. Symbols
Teachers review for students the common symbols, with their meanings, that are used in the content area, pointing out the equivalents in language.

27. Text Structures
Model skimming and scanning. Identify signal words. Determine the structure, identify a notetakeing tool, predict the main idea, read the text and take notes.

28. Think Alouds
Model for the students the how to question the text as you read. Let students follow along in the passage. Have students try the process in pairs and then practice on their own.

29. Visualizing or Focused Imaging:
Imaging, the process of internally visualizing an object, event, or situation, has the potential to nurture and enhance a student's creativity (Bagley & Hess, 1987). Imaging enables students to relax and allow their imaginations to take them on journeys, to "experience" situations first hand, and to respond with their senses to the mental images formed.
In the classroom, imaging exercises nurture and develop students' creative potentials. Teachers can encourage divergent thinking by asking students to transform a teacher guided image into several others of their own creation, to imagine various solutions for spatial or design problems, or to visualize a particular scene or event and then imagine what might happen next.

30. Vocabulary Knowledge (in Mathematics)
The teacher selects words in the problem to review with the students. Words are decoded, and their use within the context of the problem is recognized. The teacher guides the students through the problem, asking questions that require the students to think about what the problem is asking.

31. Vocabulary Knowledge Rating
The Knowledge Rating strategy is a pre/during/and post-reading activity. Students begin with a list of vocabulary words and corresponding columns. Before reading, students write a possible definition of each word, then skim the text to find it in context. After reading, definitions are noted in a 2nd column.

32. Vocabulary Self-Awareness
Teacher provides students with a list of targeted vocabulary for the lesson or reading. Students add words they find during the reading. Students rate words +, -, or √ according to their comfort with the terms. As they read, students add additional information about the words.

33. Word Problem Comprehension
Use a single word problem as the text. Give possible solution approaches before reading the problem. Only one solution will be correct and in the correct order. The student follows 3 steps: 1. Read the problem; 2. Examine the solutions; 3. Circle the correct answer. The strategy begins as a large group open discussion of the process and teacher modeling.

36. Word Walls:
A word wall is an organized collection of words prominently displayed in a classroom. This display is used as an interactive tool for teaching reading and spelling to children. There are many different types of word walls including high frequency words, word families, names, alphabet and "doozers".

During reading

1. Bookmarks
As students read, they write summaries, details, or ideas from the text and place the bookmark in the appropriate page. Bookmarks are used to guide discussion after the reading.

2. Compare and Contrast:
Compare and Contrast is used to highlight similarities and differences between to things. It is a process where the act of classification is practiced. It is effectively used in conjunction with indirect instructional methods, but can also be used directly to teach vocabulary signals, classification, nomenclature and key characteristics. It is often presented in either written text paragraphs or a chart. Its most common use is as a graphic organizer of content.

3. Concept Mapping:
A concept map is a special form of a web diagram for exploring knowledge and gathering and sharing information. Concept mapping is the strategy employed to develop a concept map. A concept map consists of nodes or cells that contain a concept, item or question and links. The links are labeled and denote direction with an arrow symbol. The labeled links explain the relationship between the nodes. The arrow describes the direction of the relationship and reads like a sentence.

4. DNA-directed notetaking activity/VSPP: Verbatim Split Page Procedure

A blend of notetaking procedures. Students fold the paper 60/40, jotting notes on the 40% side. Students expand notes on the 60% side for later use. Teacher models the procedure.

5. Double-Entry Journals

Similar to DNA, but students keep their notes in a journal for future writing support.

6. DR-TA

The DR-TA (Stauffer, 1969) engages students in a step-by-step process in which the teacher gives examples of how to make predictions. Students preview the passage, make and record predictions. As students read, they stop periodically to discuss and amend predictions.

7. Echo or Choral Reading

Teacher selects an appropriate passage and reads it aloud. Students then read aloud in chorus. Repeat for fluency.

8. Fishbowl discussions

Teacher identifies a focus for class discussion. Students take a few minutes to discuss and generate ideas in small groups. 4-5 students sit in the center of the room and discuss the topic. No one else is allowed to talk. Students wishing to add to the discussion must "tap in", releasing a student from the group. After 5-10 minutes, change all group members.

9. Generative Reading

Teacher models generating a prompt from the text. Students read the text and generate prompts. Prompts are discussed in full group.

10. GIST

GIST is helpful for teachers to use when students fail to read problems carefully before trying to solve them (Cunningham, 1982). The task is to write a summary of the problem in 12 words or less. The student identifies the 12 most important words needed to solve the problem. The words capture the "gist" of the problem. A chart may be prepared with the word problem at the top and 12 blanks below to be completed by the students.

11. It Says/I Say

Students write a statement about information in the text (it says) and respond with an inferential statement of their own (I say).

12. Jigsaw

Each student receives a portion of the materials to be introduced. Students leave their "home" groups and meet in "expert" groups. Expert groups discuss the material and brainstorm ways in which to present their understandings to the other members of their "home" group. The experts return to their "home" groups to teach their portion of the materials and to learn from the other members of their "home" group.

13. Journaling

Students use the journals to write about topics of personal interest, to note their observations, to imagine, to wonder and to connect new information with things they already know.

14. Listen-Read-Discuss

The teacher gives a short lecture on the topic while students chart question about the topic on a graphic organizer. The students then read a short selection on the topic. The topic is then discussed in full or small group and questions are addressed.

15. Pair and Paraphrase

Students pair and verbally or in writing paraphrase the passage.

16. Pair-Share

Students pair and share ideas about the text or topic.

17. Post-It Notes

Students write concise notes on a 1.5 x 2 inch post-it. They may only write on one side. Teacher should model finding main ideas and/or details.

18. Quick Writes

Students and teacher pause at pre-set points to jot 2-3 sentences about the text. Quick writes are shared in discussion.

19. Reciprocal Teaching

Teacher introduces and models summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting (only one of these per session). Students work in small groups to do the modeled procedure. Students should take turns supplying information to the group.

20. ReQuest

Text segment is read aloud or silently. Teacher answers student questions with the book closed. After sufficient practice, teacher asks students questions with their books closed.

21. Say Something

Students pause at preset points in the reading and must "say something" about the topic to their partner. The partner must respond to the statement with a related statement.

22. Scaffolding

Teacher models the desired learning strategy or task, then gradually shifts responsibility to the students. Teacher defines the task, models performance using a think aloud strategy, specifies the sequencing of activities, gives prompts, cues, etc., and fades out when appropriate.

23. SQRQCQ Survey, Question, Reread, Question, Compute, Question

Students survey the problem, question what they believe the problem is asking for, reread the problem, formulate a question about what operations to apply, compute or solve the problem, and question the correctness of their answer. Meant particularly for Math.

24. SQ3R: Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review

Students survey the chapter titles, intro paragraphs, bolded and italicized words and headings, and summary paragraphs. They then try to answer questions included in the chapter or provided by the teacher. The student then reads the chapter. Without referring to the text or notes, the student tries to answer the questions either orally or in writing. The Review step asks students to re-read parts of the text to verify answers.

25. Think-Pair-Share
Students are seated in teams of 4, have them number them from 1 to 4. Teacher announces a discussion topic or problem to solve. Give students at least 10 seconds of think time to THINK of their own answer. Using student numbers, announce discussion partners. Students PAIR with their partner to discuss the topic or solution. Teacher randomly calls on a few students to SHARE their ideas with the class.

26. Thought Web or Mind Mapping
This strategy helps students quickly relate a central word or concept. Start in the centre of the page with the main idea, and work outward in all directions, producing a growing and organised structure composed of key words and key images

27. Three Level Study Guide
Step 1: The teacher analyzes content to identify major concepts and details. Step 2: The teacher develops questions at multiple levels of understanding: Explicit, Implicit, and Experience-based; Step 3: Students are assigned to small groups to answer and discuss the questions on the study guide.

28. Vocabulary Tree
Students choose several words from a list of important words from the reading. For each word, the student draws a tree trunk. As students read, they add related words, information, and/or examples to the branches and roots of the tree.

29. Word Grids/Semantic Feature Analysis
Students participate in making a simple word grid. Teacher gives a concept or topic and asks students to suggest related terms and features in order to complete the grid. Teacher models how the grid can be used as a study tool.

30. Word Scavenger Hunts
Identify a list of 5-10 critical terms from the content. Divide the class into teams of 3 or 4 and have them scavenge hunt for information about the terms.

31. World-Wide Vocabulary
Using a guide sheet, students access online dictionaries to discover and learn new vocabulary in content area classrooms.

After-Reading Strategies

1. Act-Out; Dramatic Role Play
    In role playing, students act out characters in a predefined "situation".

2. Cartooning
    Students create a cartoon or cartoon strip of pictures illustrating the ideas in the reading.

3. Create an Information "rap"
    Students work in small groups to write a "rap" of the ideas and concepts in the reading. Raps are presented to the full group.

4. Cubing
    Students write concepts and related ideas about the topic on the different sides of a cube.

5. Dictoglos:
Teacher chooses a passage rich in content. Students are told to listen the first time you read it and write down key words and phrases the next two times you read it. Students then work with a partner to reconstruct the text. Form groups of 4 to compare reconstructions. Share reconstructions and then re-read the original.

6. Discussion Groups
Groups of five, four, or three students work together with assigned roles to solve problems, answer questions, or accomplish tasks. The Teacher assigns the roles of facilitator, recorder, clerk, and manager. Each student has specific duties to fulfill in order to complete the assignment.

7. Discussion Webs
Graphic organizers that students fill out during and after reading to guide contributions to the class discussion.

8. Exit Slips
Students write a short, prompted response at the end of the lesson. These are not graded but should be used to direct instruction.

9. Found Poems
Students circle strong words in the passage then use the words to write a "poem", honoring the original word order as much as possible. Edit for verb tense and grammatical correctness. Title, and write a final draft.

10. Instructions
Students write an instruction manual for a defined audience, based on the information in the reading.

11. LEA: Language Experience Approach
Teacher titles a chart or whiteboard with the lesson topic. As students contribute key ideas, the teacher places them on the chart. When the chart is complete, the class reviews the chart. Toward the end of the lesson, the chart is again reviewed.

12. Opinionnaire
Give students 10 strongly worded statements about the text. Ask them to mark for agreement or disagreement and explain their reasoning. Allow time to discuss their response. Select a text that provokes thought about the opinionnaire. After reading, discuss the questions further.

13. Parking Lot
Students place post-its of ideas garnered from the reading on posters labeled with different categories.

14. Poems for Two Voices
A variation of echo reading. Students can be encouraged to write in that format.

15. Popcorn Review
After reading, 4-5 students sit in front of the class. One student stands and makes a statement about the reading. Another student stands and elaborates on or responds to the statement. Class members hold the popcorn reviewers accountable for accuracy, based on the reading.

16. Professor Know-It-All
    Small groups review the content of the text and generate 3-5 questions. Randomly bring the groups to the front as the resident experts. Class members question them using prepared questions. Students may consult before giving their answers.

17. Questioning the Author
    Choose a reading selection that will generate good conversation. Model for the students the types of questions they should ask. Discuss differences of opinion about how the authors might answer. If possible, model this by having a local author visit the class.

18. RAFT re-telling (role, audience, format, topic)
    Students are given defined RAFTs and asked to orally retell the story.

19. Reaction Guide
    Students "react" after reading to the same questions they answered in the "Anticipation Guide" before reading
    22. Reader Response Journal
    Response Journals record student feelings, responses, and reactions to reading texts. This strategy encourages students to think deeply about the materials they read and to relate this information to their prior knowledge and experiences. This interaction between reader and text extends the reading experience into the "real life" application of information.

20. Readers' Theatre
    Readers theatre is a joint dramatic reading from a text, usually with no memorization, no movement and a minimum of props. The emphasis is on oral expression of the part - rather than on acting and costumes.

21. Sketch a Diagram
    Students sketch the ideas and concepts from the reading using symbols and simple pictures. Sketches should be on larger size sheets for easy comparison with other students and to facilitate discussion. Allow students to amend after discussion.

22. Student Booktalks
    The teacher demonstrates book talks before asking students to participate. Students prepare in advance to talk about books of their choosing. Students talk about the book or briefly summarize it, read an interesting or exciting part, show illustrations, dress like one of the book's characters, talk and/or act like one character, or answer questions about the book. Listeners are encouraged to ask questions.

23. Tossed Terms
    Obtain several hand-sized boxes. Attach content information or process terms to the sides of the boxes. In small groups, give each group a box. Students toss the box to each other and respond to whatever is written on the side of the box they receive

24. What If…?
    Students write about the reading or topic using prompts which give and alternate choice to the facts presented in the reading.

25. Written Conversation or Dialogue Journals
    Students pair and write notes to each other addressing a prompt based on the reading.