Comprehension Strategies for the Student of Any Age Who Decodes Well but Still Doesn’t Understand

presented by
Linda Farrell
lindafarrell@me.com
571-213-1800

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Sue Grisko
suegrisko@readersall.com

Symbols

oral language

written language

HOTS
Or Reasoning

L/R
• Main Idea
• Inference
• Conclusion
• Prediction
• Evaluation

Visual Image

Reading = Joy

"Visualizing brings joy to reading. When we visualize, we create pictures in our minds that belong to us and no one else."

Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis (Harvey, 2000, p. 97)
The Problem & the Solution

The Problem:
Words go in one ear and out the other.

The Solution
Words turn into an image that stays in the brain.

Visualizing for Comprehension

• The Problem
  • Comprehension of basic oral and written language is a basis for . . .
  • difficulty with main idea and higher order thinking skills.

Symptoms of poor language comprehension pp. 29—31

• weak critical, logical, abstract thinking and problem solving
• weak oral language comprehension
• weak oral language expression
• weak written language expression
• difficulty following directions
• difficulty interpreting social situations
• weak sense of humor
• difficulty with mental mapping

Comprehension

Orthographic Memory
(sight words, various spellings for sounds)

Phonological Awareness
(phonetic processing)

Language Comprehension
(oral vocabulary, syntax, context cues, etc.)
Overview of Steps
OUR FOCUS TODAY

1) Picture to Picture
   - goal: to verbalize from a given picture
2) Word Imaging
   - goal: to visualize/verbalize from generated image
3) Single Sentence Imaging
4) Sentence by Sentence Imaging
   - begin gestalt processing

Overview of Steps (Cont.)
NOT COVERED TODAY

6) Sentence by Sentence Imaging with HOTS
   - begin critical thinking from the gestalt
7) Multiple Sentence Imaging with HOTS
8) Whole Paragraph Imaging with HOTS
   - application to paragraph writing
9) Paragraph by Paragraph with HOTS
   - application to content and study skills
10) Page Imaging with HOTS
    - application to content, study skill, and problem solving

Introduce Students to the Process

Tell students you will be working together to make pictures in our minds.

Draw or show 2 halves of the brain. The right hemisphere is linked to visualizing, the left to talking and reading. Show how both sides work together. Introduce the phrase or "picturing and talking about."

Picture to Picture

Goal: To verbalize from a given picture

Teacher Language:

“What should I see for the ….”

Question to the image
### Picture to Picture

1. Student(s) describes a given picture
   - be sure the picture is simple
2. Teacher questions with choice and contrast
   - student verbalizes

3. Student checks through the “structure words”
   - student verbalizes again by quickly going through each structure word. “Yes, I told you the boy had on green pants, with a purple shirt, and he had red hair.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>what</th>
<th>size</th>
<th>color</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>number</td>
<td>shape</td>
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<td>movement</td>
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<td>perspective</td>
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<td>sound</td>
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1. Start

2. Student sees picture

3. Teacher has no image

“I see a...”

3. Teacher forms picture based on student’s description; asks clarifying questions.

4. Student describes picture to the teacher

“I see a...”

“I see a choice and contrast...”
Picture to Picture

4. Teacher summarizes
   - “Your words made me picture...”

5. Teacher sees the picture and you discuss any changes by saying,
   “You know what, I didn’t picture that...”

Questioning Tips

- Avoid Yes or No Questions
- Give Choice and Contrast
  “What do you picture the girl wearing...a dress or a bathing suit?”
- Question to the student’s response
- Question to the whole image
- Ask Higher Level Thinking Skills Questions after they are introduced at the Sentence x Sentence step

Your Turn

- Pair up with someone at your table.
- Student looks at the picture
- Teacher cannot look at the picture
- Follow the steps
- Switch roles
Word Imaging

Goal: To verbalize from a generated image

Teacher Language:

“What do you see for the…”

Personal images to KNOWN NOUN

Word Imaging

3. Student verbalizes “structure words”
   - student verbalizes again by quickly going through each structure word. “Yes, I told you I saw a clown and he was real fat and had very big shoes.”

4. Teacher summarizes
   *May choose to just verbalize a word without using a picture

Single Sentence Imaging

Objective: The student will be able to visualize and oral describe the visualization for a sentence using the known noun just visualized within the sentence.

1. Teacher creates a simple sentence using the noun just imaged
2. Student verbalizes a detailed image of the sentence
3. Teacher questions with choice and contrast
4. Student checks structure words
5. Teacher summarizes: “Your words make me picture…..”
Single Sentence Imaging
Optional Activity:
Underlining image words
1. Student underlines image words while reading the sentence orally
2. Do not teach a grammar lesson

In 1920, two hundred people sailed from Italy to New York.

Sentence by Sentence Imaging
Objective:
The student will be able
• to image a paragraph gestalt by visualizing and verbalizing each sentence of a paragraph
• then verbalizing a picture summary and word summary of the paragraph
Sentence by Sentence Summary

1. Student visualizes each sentence to blend into a visual image of the paragraph.

2. Teacher interacts by questioning using choice and contrast. “What do these words make you picture?”

3. Structure Words are checked through for the first sentence only to develop detailed imagery for the topic sentence.

4. Student gives a picture summary - touches each felt and says: “Here I saw…”

Sentence by Sentence Summary (Cont.)

5. Student gives a word summary - in his own words, using his images to help formulate his verbalization - and says: “This paragraph (or story, or article) is about…”

Sentences build on one another rather than being separate parts. Make connections!

Watch out for memorizing or paraphrasing rather than imaging.

Sentence by Sentence Summary

Begin receptively - you read to the student.
Begin to diagnose for automatic imaging.
Initially, use low-level material regardless of students’ ages.
Increase difficulty as students’ proficiency develops.
As process continues, present materials in all three modes:

1. Teacher reads each sentence to the student (receptive)
2. Student reads each sentence aloud (expressive)
3. Student reads to self, silently

Sentence by Sentence Summary

Reread a sentence or part of a sentence to clarify a specific image
Correct picture summaries by cueing the student with a part of the image
Correct word summaries by using the phrase: “Was that in your pictures or in the words in the paragraph?”
Practice vigorously - sentence by sentence level is critical
Language Comprehension Skills

- Locating and remembering facts
- Getting the main idea
- Making an inference
- Drawing a conclusion
- Predicting/extending
- Evaluating

HOTS or Reasoning

Sentence by Sentence Imaging with HOTS

1. Student(s) visualize and orally describes each sentence, placing colored squares
2. Teacher continues to question with choice/contrast but also questions to the meaning of the paragraph
3. Student(s) checks through the structure words for the first sentence only, developing detailed imagery

4. Student(s) gives picture summary by touching each colored square and saying “Here I saw….”
5. Student(s) gives word summary. Teacher collects the colored squares and the student(s) paraphrases the paragraph, using his own images for sequence
6. Ask main idea and higher order thinking skills questions based on the student’s imagery

Question to Access Visual Imagery

- What was in most of your pictures? (this is the topic)
- What about the topic….what was important? (MI)
- Using your pictures, why do you think…..
- Using your images, what do you think will happen next?
- Using everything you pictured we can conclude that……
- Thinking about all of your images, if……..then what can we predict?
Higher Order Thinking Skills (H.O.T.S.)

Locate and Remember
- What did the author say?
- What were the names?
- What were the dates?

Main Idea
- Who?
- What?
- What happened?

Inference
- Why did...

Conclusion
- So what do you know about…?

Prediction
- What will probably happen next?

Evaluation
- What did the author think?
- Do you agree?
- Why or why not?

Describe the Process

Picture
Word
Sentence

Proceed only if the student is obviously proficient

Sentence x Sentence
Multi-sentence x Multi-sentence
Whole Paragraph
Paragraph x Paragraph
Whole Page

Pacing

3 Sliding Scales:
1. Amount of language
2. Complexity of materials
3. Concrete to abstract

Quotes
“I can read a story or article and remember almost all of the information in the story or article. I use better vocabulary while I’m talking to somebody. At work I can follow directions easier than I could before. I work a lot with a computer, and this class helped a lot. By picturing, my memory also improved.”

Michael

“I can comprehend what I read. Also I have a better understanding of what I read. My attention span and remembrance is much better.”

Barb

“I can read with more speed and at the same time have a picture of what I read in my mind. I also have a better variety and definition and more words. I am very impressed with school and I did learn a lot. Thanks. Thank you Sharon and Sherry. School has broadened my ability to learn. Thanks for believing in me enough so that I could pass the BAT-B.”

Elzenia
Quotes

“This reading program is the best thing that ever happened to me in my life. When I went to school, no one ever took the time to explain reading to me. All my life I thought I was stupid. Now all sorts of things have opened up in my life.”

Myra

“I was explaining this school to another friend. The difference in this school is: First they teach you how to learn. Then they teach you to learn. It’s true. They’ve taught me how to use my mind.”

Jane

I noticed that on my job now they can send me anywhere, and I know I can do it. It feels like I’m using my brain. It was asleep and now I’m using it.”

Coco

Quotes

“When I just came to work here I was told not to think, ‘just do what you are told.’ Now they want me to think!”

George

“I can understand much better than before when someone explains something to me.”

Ligia

“After this class, I can follow directions, give directions, and learn on my own.”

Zofia

After Visual Imaging Tutoring

“I used to think that I was a bad listener… or that I was dumb. When people talked, I often just couldn’t follow what they were saying. Now I simply turn on the images in my head and I can understand everything. I feel smarter! When I notice that I am not understanding what I am reading, I know what to do. I VISUALIZE.

Movies that could fill in History gaps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movie</th>
<th>History Gaps</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All’s Quiet on the Western Front</td>
<td>The Crucible</td>
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<td>Anne of a Thousand Days</td>
<td>The Last Emperor</td>
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<td>Becket</td>
<td>The Mission</td>
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<td>Ben Hur</td>
<td>The Scarlet Letter</td>
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<td>Bridge on the River Kwai</td>
<td>White Fang</td>
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<td>Camerlot</td>
<td>Wuthering Heights</td>
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<td>Cleopatra</td>
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<td>Diary of Ann Frank</td>
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<td>Empire of the Sun</td>
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<td>Ghandi</td>
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<td>Glory</td>
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<td>Good Morning Vietnam</td>
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<td>Grapes of Wrath</td>
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<td>Hope and Glory</td>
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<td>Johnny Tremainine</td>
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<td>Mr. Roberts</td>
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<td>The Name of the Rose</td>
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<td>Quest for Fire</td>
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<td>Room with a View</td>
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<td>Sands of Iwagema</td>
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<td>Sergeant York</td>
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<td>Shogun</td>
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<td>Sophie’s Choice</td>
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<td>Spartacus</td>
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<td>A Tale of Two Cities</td>
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<td>Revolution</td>
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<td>Ten Commandments</td>
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Oral Directions

Give a set of directions
Student pictures themselves doing them
Tells you what they are going to do
Student does it

Start with physical directions
Move to paper and pencil directions

Sources:
- The Nancibell® Visualizing and Verbalizing for Language Comprehension and Thinking®
- www.nancymargulies.com
- Mapping Inner Space, 2nd Edition by Nancy Margulies
- Visual Thinking, Tools for Mapping your Ideas, by Nancy Margulies and Christine Valenza
- Map It! by Nancy Margulies
  - Dynamic comic book designed to help students practice their skills

For More Information:
- http://www.imindmap.com
  - Mind Mapping software by creator Tony Buzan
- www.inspiration.com
  - Inspiration software (Grades 4-12)
  - Kidspiration software Grades K-3
- Easy Reading...Finding Joy and Meaning in Words by Laura Rose
  - (http://zephyrpress.com)
- Free Clip Art
  - http://school.discovery.com
  - http://www.school-clip-art.com
  - http://www.awesomeclipartforschool.com