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Scientifically Proven Reading Comprehension Strategies: Self Questioning

by John Schacter, Ph.D.

In my last column I addressed the comprehension conundrum occurring in American schools. I shared research that demonstrated that:

- only 30 percent of American fourth and eighth grade students' read at proficient levels;
- for the past 30 years National Reading Report Card scores have not improved;
- for every 450 hours of language arts instruction less than two hours is spent teaching students comprehension strategies.

I also introduced two scientifically proven summarizing strategies that increase students' recall of ideas, understanding of text, and ability to draw conclusions. I hope that you presented these strategies to your teachers and students. I would love to hear about your experiences. Please email me at: **schacter@teachingdoctors.com**.

In this column, I focus on a class of strategies that fall under the comprehension topic of *Self Questioning*. Socrates showed that with careful, successive questioning, learning is greatly enhanced. But who learns more? Those who ask questions, or answer them?

Experimental studies by Allison King and a review of the research by Barak Rosenshine demonstrate that when students are taught how to ask questions while they read, they perform 14 to 50 percent better on standardized comprehension tests. In addition, these students are more likely to pinpoint their misunderstandings, and develop sound inferences. As you can see, generating and answering one's own questions is an enormously successful reading comprehension strategy.

Teachers Learning Together

To learn and implement the two *Self Questioning* strategies on the following pages, I urge teachers to form study groups. Reading, discussing, and planning to teach these strategies with your peers will help you adjust them to meet your school and classroom needs.

Self Questioning Strategies

The two self-questioning strategies I introduce are:

- *Questioning Cue Cards*
- *Developing Thin & Thick Questions*

Learn 33 More Scientifically Proven Strategies

To learn 33 more scientifically proven reading comprehension strategies and view videos of master teachers demonstrating them in their classrooms visit: **www.teachingdoctors.com** and order our book and DVDs titled, ***The Master Teacher Series: Reading Comprehension***.

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