Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative action-research study was to examine the effects of explicit instruction of metacognitive reading comprehension strategies for a group of third graders. The study was designed based on Vygotsky’s theory of gradual release of responsibility. It included explicit instruction through teacher thinking aloud, modeling, scaffolding and guided practice, and ultimately individual application of selected reading strategies. The strategies explored were predicting, visualizing, summarizing, self-monitoring, following inner-voice, making connections, using prior knowledge, and employing appropriate fix-up strategies. Methods of data collection included teacher observation, surveys, student conferencing, and student work.

Through the experiences of whole-group, small group, and individual discussion, students demonstrated an awareness of their own comprehension, an ability to help themselves develop understanding, and an opportunity to think more critically about what they were reading. Additionally, students demonstrated an increased improvement in responding to their reading through written responses and reflections. Students were increasingly able to express their understanding by citing evidence from the text in their written responses.