



How to: Help Students to Self-Monitor Reading Comprehension: Delayed Keyword Generation

Self-initiated study is essential for middle- and high-school students to learn course content and do well on tests. However, study effort alone may not be sufficient to master academic material--especially when that study includes challenging course readings. A common problem is that readers in general are notoriously inaccurate in judging whether they comprehend and retain the main points of a particular text just read (Nelson & Leonesio, 1988). Because of this distorted judgment, student readers may invest too much time studying texts whose key points they have already adequately memorized while failing to put sufficient time into reviewing texts whose content they do not yet fully grasp. As a result, students can 'labor in vain' (Nelson & Leonesio, 1988), clocking plenty of study hours but not seeing the positive results on quizzes and tests.

Students can therefore benefit greatly from learning the self-regulation skill of identifying with accuracy which assigned or outside readings require more intensive study (Thiede & Anderson, 2003). The 'delayed keyword-generation' strategy below (Thiede, Anderson & Therriault, 2003) delivers two positive outcomes: (1) increasing student comprehension of assigned reading (through keyword generation) while also (2) improving the accuracy of student judgment about which readings require additional study (through short delay and use of comprehension rating scale).

Here are the 5 steps of delayed keyword-generation:

1. The student reads the text.
2. If only a single text is assigned, the student takes a 15-20 minute break from the text. (During this break, the student can engage in other study activities or any other activity of his or her choosing.) If the student is reading multiple texts in the same session, the student immediately reads the next text, continuing until all readings are completed.
3. After the brief break or after reading all assigned texts, the student writes down the title of the first completed reading assignment. Beneath the title, the student generates 5 keywords that represent important ideas, facts, and concepts presented in the reading.
4. The student then makes a judgment about how well he or she comprehends the text, using a scale ranging from 1 (very poorly) to 7 (very well). The student targets for additional study any reading receiving a comprehension rating of 5 or below.
5. The student repeats this process (title, 5 keywords, rating of comprehension) for each additional reading from the session.

References

Nelson, T. O., & Leonesio, R. J. (1988). Allocation of self-paced study time and the "labor-in-vain" effect. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 14, 676-686.

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Thiede, K. W., Anderson, M. C. M., & Therriault, D. (2003). Accuracy of metacognitive monitoring affects learning of texts. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95, 66-73.