

Direct Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA)

Why Is This Strategy Useful?

Direct Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) is a strategy that explicitly teaches students good reading habits. This strategy helps strengthen reading and critical thinking skills. DRTA can be used across all grades and learning abilities. It is designed to make students aware of their own interpretive actions during reading. The DRTA process helps students recognize predictions, judgments, and evidence verification. Research has shown that teaching meta-cognitive strategies, such as DRTA, enhances understanding and comprehension of text.

Description of Strategy

DRTA is a teaching strategy that guides students in making predictions about a text and then reading to confirm or refute their predictions. This strategy encourages students to be active and thoughtful readers, enhancing their comprehension. When implementing DRTA, teachers should follow these steps:

- **D—DIRECT:** Teachers direct and stimulate students' thinking prior to reading a passage by scanning the title, chapter headings, illustrations, and other explanatory materials. Then teachers should use open-ended questions to direct students as they make predictions about the content or perspective of the text (e.g., "Given this title, what do you think the passage will be about?"). Students should be encouraged to justify their responses and activate prior knowledge.
- **R—READING:** Teachers should have students read up to the first preselected stopping point in the text. The teacher then prompts the students with questions about specific information and asks them to evaluate their predictions and refine them if necessary. This process should be continued until students have read each section of the passage.
- **T—THINKING:** At the end of the reading, teachers should have students go back through the text and think about their predictions. Students should verify or modify the accuracy of their predictions by finding supporting statements in the text.

DRTA may be used with an individual, a small group, or a whole class. This activity can be easily adapted for a variety of subjects and reading levels.

Research Evidence

The research base includes a randomized control study that investigated the effectiveness of explicit instruction in think aloud (TA) as a means to promote 66 fourth-grade elementary students' comprehension monitoring abilities. Students were randomly assigned to one of three experimental groups: (a) 22 students to the TA group, (b) 22 students to the DRTA group, and (c) 22 students to the directed reading activity (DRA) group, an instructed control. TA and DRTA students were more skillful at comprehension monitoring than DRA students. Although TA-trained students had greater awareness of comprehension monitoring abilities, DRTA students' performance equaled or exceeded that of the TA students. Both TA and DRTA strategies were effective for enhancing students' comprehension monitoring abilities, and the combination of TA and DRTA provided the best results in students. However, additional research is needed to determine the relative effectiveness of TA and DRTA approaches.

Sample Studies Supporting This Strategy

Baumann, J. F., Seifert-Kessell, N., & Jones, L. A. (1992). Effect of think-aloud instruction on elementary students' comprehension monitoring abilities. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 24(2), 143–172.

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Sample Activity

Directed Reading Thinking Activity

Before the students begin to read, discuss the following as a group or with partners. Ask students to provide evidence for their thinking.

1. Introduction
 - What do you already know about this subject?
2. Predict
 - Looking at the title, what do you think the story is about? Why?
 - Looking at the pictures, what do you think the story will be about? Why?

After students have read part of the passage, ask them to consider with the following questions.

3. Prove or Modify Predictions
 - What are your reactions to the passage?
 - Can you prove your predictions or do you need to modify them?
 - What do you think will happen next and why?

After students have read the entire passage, discuss the following:

4. Reflect
 - What did you find in the text to prove your predictions?
 - What proof did you find in the text that made you modify your predictions?

Additional Resources

Directed Reading-Thinking Activity, <http://www.teachervision.fen.com/skill-builder/reading/48610.html>

All About Adolescent Literacy: Directed Reading Thinking Activity, <http://www.adlit.org/strategies/23356>