Read, Imagine, Decide, and Do (RIDD)

Why Is This Strategy Useful?

The aim of this strategy is to promote reading instructions of math word problems skills of students with disabilities in elementary and secondary schools. The acronym is decoded as R – Read the Problem; I – Imagine the Problem; D – Decide What to Do; and D – Do the Work. The RIDD tactic uses imagery to help students transform new information into meaningful visual, auditory, and kinesthetic units. This strategy allows students to experience success and some fun, while learning. RIDD is designed to aid students that struggle in reading math word problems across grade levels.

Description of Strategy

Read the Problem. Students who are struggling in math tend to read a single line of text or a phrase suggestive or one operation and then stop rather than finish at the punctuation mark. Further, these students will also sometimes stop at an unknown word in the text, and this leads to incomplete understanding and incorrect answers. Consequently, this tactic involves teaching students to substitute a simple word, name, or nonsense word for the difficult word, and then to keep on reading. Teaching students to substitute their designated word for unknown words aids in the release of memory processing resources and allows students to continue their process of constructing meaning from text. Such substitutions should even be made for long numbers in the text on the first reading. Then the student should be encouraged to read the problem again. In teaching this tactic, teachers should read a problem aloud using several substitutions and thus model the strategy. Students must be aware of why the teacher is substituting words.

Imagine the Problem. The imagery process activates various areas of the child’s brain and involves more cognitive resources in problem solution. The new conceptual material in the problem is then readily stored in the students’ own knowledge base. The Imagine step has two purposes. First, it helps students focus on concepts on operations in the problem. Second, it aids students in monitoring their performance with the problem.

Decide What to Do. Students decide what to do to solve a problem by mentally reviewing what they comprehend from the text and the visual imagery they created for the problem. For young learners, the Decide step may be facilitated by the teacher questioning to guide students in deciding what procedures to choose to solve the problem. This tactic pulls together many highly effective teaching tactics into one overall strategy, making this an excellent choice for many students.

Do the Work. Many students who struggle with word problems have a habit of reading through the problem only until they encounter the first suggested operation, and they then stop reading and begin the operation. Of course, this leads to errors, so the RIDD tactic emphasizes planning in several steps prior to doing any work. When beginning this final step, students use what they have already visualized and decisions they have already made about solving the problem in order to complete the work.

Research Evidence

At least one quasi-experimental study supports the use of this strategy. This study provided RIDD training for two teachers in two rural classrooms. Twenty secondary school students with
learning disabilities were chosen to participate. The participants took math exams before and after the training. Their scores showed a significant positive change after three weeks of instruction. The teachers also noted increased student interest and motivation.

**Sample Studies Supporting this Strategy**


If rural communities are to remain viable, rural schools must seek ways to allow all students to learn, especially those "at risk" or with mild learning disabilities. Research has shown that many children with mild learning disabilities have faulty reading strategies and academic behaviors that interfere with reading comprehension and the solution of math word problems. With continuing failure, such students lose self-esteem and avoid reading. Aimed at providing students with better reading strategies, RIDD (Read, Imagine, Decide, and Do) consists of four steps: (1) read the passage from the first capital to the last end mark without stopping (in order to promote more efficient decoding); (2) imagine, or make a mental picture of what you have read (in order to focus on the concept and self-monitor comprehension); (3) decide what to do; and (4) do the work. Two resource room teachers taught the RIDD strategy to 20 rural secondary students with learning disabilities or mild mental retardation. After 3 weeks, the students in one classroom showed a significant improvement in academic performance. The teachers also reported increased student interest and motivation.

**Additional Resources**