Enhancing Reading Comprehension for Adult Learners through Metacognitive Strategies

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Reflections

💬 *Think about this:*

Have you ever read something but realized you don't fully understand it?
What do you do when that happens?

The Problem

🤔 *What's missing?*

- Adult ESL learners struggle with reading comprehension.
- Existing methods focus on **translation** and **memorization.**
- Materials often lack **cultural relevance.**

A strategic approach!

What Are Metacognitive Strategies?

Thinking about your thinking while reading.

3 Key Strategies:

- **Plan** – Get ready before reading.
- **Monitor** – Check understanding while reading.
- **Evaluate** – Reflect after reading.

Anyone here already using these strategies?

Why Do They Work?

◆ P*lan, track, and adjust* while reading what make readers active participants.

◆ Studies show **better comprehension** with metacognitive strategies.

◆ Learners feel more in control of their understanding.

◆ Effective for **L1 & L2 learners** (Taki, 2016).

Let's see them in action!

Study Design

❑**Target Population:** Adult ESL learners (18-25, intermediate level).

❑Goals: Developing reading materials based on real-world texts

Integrated **planning, monitoring, evaluating** strategies

into lessons.

Key Elements in the Design

- Authentic Texts (real-world reading material)
- Metacognitive strategies embedded in lesson design
- Culturally relevant content to keep learners engaged

Metacognitive Reading Strategy

- Plan (Pre-reading)

- Monitor (While readding)

- Evaluate (Post-reading)

Lesson Breakdown

Step 1: Pre-Reading (Plan)

- Predict the topic

- Learn key vocabulary

Guess: What do you think this text is about? (Show title only)

Step 2: While-Reading (Monitor)

- Identify the main idea

- Spot difficult words

- Discuss in small groups

What do you do when you don't understand a word?

Step 3: Post-Reading (Evaluate)

- Rate comprehension

- Reflect on strategy use

What worked? What didn't?

Sample Activity – Try It Now!

I'll show you a short text.

o *Read the title and predict the topic.*

o Read the paper and highlight any **word/phrase** you don't fully understand.

o Try to get the main idea.

o Write a question you have about this text.

o Discuss in pairs – Can you help each other?

o Can you write in a few sentences what this text is about?

Nushu— A Secret Language

A. It is sometimes said that men and women communicate in different languages. For hundreds of years in the Jiangyong County of Hunan Province, China, this was quite literally the case. Sometime between 400 and 1,000 years ago, women defied the patriarchal norms of the time that forbade them to read or write and conceived of Nu shu — literally, * women's language * — a secretive script and language of their own. Through building informal networks of 'sworn sisters' who committed themselves to teaching the language only to other women, and by using it artistically in ways that could be passed off as artwork (such as writing characters on a decorative fan), Nushu was able to grow and spread without attracting too much suspicion.

B. Nushu has many orthographical distinctions from the standard Chinese script. Whereas standard Chinese has large, bold strokes that look as if they might have been shaped with a thick permanent marker pen, Nushu characters are thin, slanted and have a slightly 'scratchy' appearance that bears more similarity to calligraphy. Whereas standard Chinese is logographic, with characters that represent words and meanings, Nushu is completely phonetic — each character represents a sound; the meaning must be acquired from the context of what is being said. Users of Nushu developed coded meanings for various words and phrases, but it is likely that only a tiny fraction of these will ever be known. Many secrets of Nushu have gone to the grave.

C. Nushu was developed as a way to allow women to communicate with one another in confidence. To some extent, this demand came from a desire for privacy, and Nushu allowed women a forum for personal written communication in a society that was dominated by a male-orientated social culture. There was also a practical element to the

rise of Nushu, however: until the mid 20th century, women were rarely encouraged to become literate in the standard Chinese script. Nushu provided a practical and easy-to-learn alternative. Women who were separated from their families and friends by marriage could, therefore, send 'letters' to each other. Unlike traditional correspondence, however, Nushu characters were painted or embroidered onto everyday items like fans, pillowcases, and handkerchiefs and embodied in 'artwork' in order to avoid making men suspicious.

Reading Comprehension Strategies

What do you think this text is about?

Predict the topic and learn key vocabulary.

What do you do when you don't understand a word?

Identify the main idea and spot difficult words.

What worked? What didn't?

Rate comprehension and reflect on strategy use.

What This Means for Teaching

For Instructors:

- o Encourage **active** reading, not passive memorization.
- o Use **real-world texts** that matter to learners.

For Curriculum Designers:

- o Embed metacognitive strategies in TOEFL/IELTS prep.
- o Culturally relevant materials = better learning.

How do you currently teach reading?

What happens if learners use metacognitive strategies

☐ Learners engage more actively.

Better comprehension of **longer, complex texts.**

☐ Increase confidence in reading.

Wrapping Up – Key Takeaways

Metacognitive strategies = Better comprehension.

Plan, monitor, evaluate → deeper understanding.

Learners need engaging, culturally relevant materials.

What's one thing you'll take from this session?

Questions?

Thank you!

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