Abstract

This study revealed readers' metacognitive identities using readers' written "thinking" responses to informational text and elucidated the ways in which higher level literacy skills are employed during reading and interpreting academic text. Primary goals of the study were (a) to examine readers' cognitive processes during reading; the interaction of reader, text, and activity; as well as the effect of metacognitive awareness on that interaction; (b) to examine the relationship between students' reported awareness about reading and their actual reading comprehension skills; and (c) to determine relationships among the level of metacognitive awareness, reader stance, use of self-selected strategies, and level of understanding of academic text.

A sampling of 59 subjects was drawn from sixth-grade middle school students with a range of reading abilities. The subjects participated in a two-part study. Part 1 consisted of general reading and metacognitive awareness measures collected as part of classroom routine. Part 2 utilized a written protocol in response to a grade-level academic social studies passage and a traditional comprehension test. Written protocols formed the basis of intertextuality data analysis in areas of metacognition, stance, and level of understanding.

The results revealed distinct tools: (1) developmental characteristics and identified stages of development for metacognitive awareness and for metacognitive usage; (2) a preliminary test of reliability of the Metacognitive Strategy Use (MSU) rubric, which evaluates students' metacognition and comprehension of academic text; (3) and a rich description of three metacognitive identities: identifiers, expanders, and connectors.

This study identified a pathway for exploring metacognitive processes. In measuring students' metacognitive awareness and metacognitive strategy use, the role of readers' stance was found to be highly influential. Additionally, the MSU rubric could be easily implemented within a classroom environment as a formative assessment tool. Furthermore, as educators find the need for classroom-based measures that match authentic learning environments, they may determine that written protocol analysis using the MSU rubric is practical for measuring students' growth and development in the areas of metacognitive awareness, metacognitive usage, reader stance, and level of understanding. As such, this methodology can inform responsive instruction.