

ABSTRACT

Using the Visual Arts to Help Struggling Readers to Comprehend Text

Jennifer Payne

This study sought to determine the role of the visual arts in assisting struggling readers to comprehend text. Data were collected through interviews with, and observations of, three male Form 1 students of a remedial class at a secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago. Eight lessons were taught, and drawings, pictures, a poster, and concept map software were integrated, where students were allowed to create and engage in artistic activities during the lessons. An analysis of the data revealed that the students were motivated to read the text presented to them when it was augmented by a picture, or when they were given an opportunity to create a drawing, poster, or concept map. It was found that the students enjoyed reading and showed greater understanding of the text when it was accompanied by art. Further, the results of the pre-test/post-test showed a significant improvement in comprehension after the instruction. The themes emerging from the data revealed significant areas that related to the study, such as the importance of motivating students to read, the use of previous knowledge, inferences, levels of Bloom's taxonomy, mental imagery, and other factors that the visual arts were able to address in reading.

Keywords: Arts in education; Struggling readers; Visual arts; Creativity; Case studies; Reading instruction; Teaching techniques; Trinidad and Tobago