

ABSTRACT

Using Content Area Reading Strategies to Improve Adolescent Comprehension and Motivational Skills

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This action research, mixed methodology study sought to determine whether the use of content area reading strategies in the Home Economics Department would improve the reading and motivation skills of Form 4 students at a secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago. Data were collected through professional development workshops, interviews with four teachers and five students, as well as through classroom observation. The teachers expressed strong perceptions about parental involvement, time constraints, motivation level of students, adolescent literacy instruction, professional development, and untrained teachers. They indicated mixed levels of efficacy when asked about the extent to which they felt equipped to address students' literacy needs. However, they were not prepared to locate information about strategies for content literacy instruction. Some teachers believed that their job was to help students read and understand content area printed text, and express themselves in the written word successfully. They also perceived content area literacy to be comprehension skills and vocabulary that goes specifically with the subject. They did not view their function as helping students to develop strategic content-specific reading behaviours.

Keywords: Reading research; Adolescents; Student motivation; Reading development; Teaching techniques; Secondary school students; Secondary school teachers; Struggling readers; Trinidad and Tobago