

TITLE PAGE

TITLE: How to become a 'studier' of Principles of Business--:The Teaching of
Content Literacy and Comprehension Strategies to a Form Four class
using the textbook.

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on teaching content literacy and comprehension strategies to a Form Four Class of students who can be classified as struggling learners and poor readers. Students' inability to understand their text results in low motivation and academic performance.

Based on research literature, a multiple strategy instruction approach was used that involved: Question Answer Relationships, visual aids (e.g.: mental imagery and graphic organizers), text structure, learning logs, peer collaboration, comprehension monitoring, note taking and summarization. The aim was to model what good readers do when they read and then guide students to adopt these strategies when they read their textbook.

The two main tools of collecting and assessing the data were qualitative and quantitative: a cloze test, a summative exercise and learning logs and observation journals.

The research questions were not adequately answered and the analysis of the data did not show significant improvement in academic performance or that students fully employed the strategies when they read.

The study concludes that students' attitude and the teacher's scaffolding ability can influence the effectiveness of the strategy instruction; therefore, strategies should be taught on an ongoing basis so students and teachers can become masterful when applying them in the classroom setting.

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I would like to thank my tutor, Dr. Sam Lochan and the members of my curriculum group for the great insights into the world of teaching beyond the walls of my classrooms.

I also extend my appreciation to all the persons who gave me the encouragement and strength to persevere such as my colleagues, my family and my boyfriend.

I say thanks to my students as they kept me focused on my goal to become a better teacher/researcher.

Finally, I affirm my faith in God who makes all things possible. Thanks to Him for his guidance.

Chapter One

Introduction

Background to the Problem

Over the years I had relegated the text book to the position of non-essential resource in my classroom. As the teacher, I channeled information to my students via a steady stream of assorted notes compiled from various texts. This meant that my students relied on me as the official source of knowledge in the classroom and so were not empowered to independently use their textbook. I was teaching them to be passive not active learners.

I observed that some of my students lacked competency in reading and comprehension and this resulted in an aversion for the textbook. Students would (i) leave the textbook home (ii) refuse to do assignments (iii) avoid reading aloud in class. They would say, 'miss, the book is confusing or miss, that information is not in the book.' All of these issues affected students' independence as learners, their ability to study and adequately prepare for their examinations.

I made several attempts to cover the content matter while still trying to engage students with the text. Strategies I adopted were--1) my reading the text in class, 2) calling on students to read, 3) assigning readings of chapters and asking students to make brief notes on the chapters in class or at home. I would then test their understanding by --: (i) assigning open book tests or exercises, (ii) setting homework assignments based on end of chapter exercises and (iii) asking questions. These tasks did not help to solve the difficulty I and my students faced. I realized that more was needed to assist students to use the textbook.

My reluctance to teach content literacy stemmed from the opinion that—

- (i) my job was not to teach English but Principles of Business and
- (ii) I was not a reading specialist as I had no training in comprehension strategy instruction.

I was missing a rich opportunity to—

- (i) teach my students critical skills of analysis, independent study skills and higher order thinking skills
as well as
- (ii) expand my repertoire of teaching techniques.

Content literacy refers to the reading, writing and understanding of subject specific content whilst Comprehension strategies refer to techniques that support students' ability to make sense of their reading e.g.: summarizing, questioning, previewing, etc.

With the Ministry of Education's (MOE's) textbook rental programme, the policy focus was on textbook instruction as part of a quality education. Some of the benefits of providing each student with a textbook are—

1. a personal text can be taken home and so facilitate parental involvement in teaching and learning
2. encourages individual study (student can work at his own pace)
3. provides an independent source of authoritative information

(Hurd, 2003, p 17).

However, these benefits are undermined by the inability of many students to read and understand their texts, as they are entering secondary school from the primary level without the necessary reading and comprehension skills. This is a major stumbling block that teachers are often unable to overcome in their various content areas. As a result teachers may resist the teaching of content literacy because they 'feel inadequate to handle reading problems' (McKenna & Robinson, 2001 p 12). Consequently 'students who struggle with school work without receiving *effective instruction* often drop out of school and ...have increasingly dire employment prospects (emphasis mine)(Scherer, 2006).

Setting of the school environment

A culture of reading or study does not exist in my school because of the under-equipped library and the absence of a librarian. Remedial teachers in Mathematics and English Language were assigned as a result of Special Form Ones being introduced to the school as part of the Education for All policy six years ago. At that time the School did not implement any special curriculum to teach these students according to their academic needs. Therefore, many of the current students are mainly weak and struggling readers who lack the strategies to comprehend their textbooks and complete their assignments.

Teachers are constantly reprimanding students for poor work, no work or no text. Both teachers and students are frustrated by the poor academic performance and the silent hope is that the situation will improve. Unfortunately, little has been done to address the problem, teachers continue to teach as usual and no whole school intervention has been initiated to assist these weak students to better cope with the demands of content related writing and reading at the secondary level.

The school, a five year Composite, was established in 1983. It is situated on the Eastern Main Road in Laventille where it is surrounded by (i) several manufacturing companies and a quarry operated by Readymix, (ii) a pan side and (iii) a squatting community.

On staff are sixty teachers, two remedial teachers, two safety officers and a Guidance Officer. The student population numbers eight hundred to one thousand. Class sizes are relatively large between thirty to forty one students. There are five classes at each form level from Form one to Form five. The curriculum consists of predominately academic subjects but technical vocational subjects such as Woodwork, Technical Drawing and Typing to name a few are also offered.

The Statement of the Problem

Form Four E have a history of underperforming since their entrance into secondary school (an overview of their end of term averages since form one to present day have been under fifty percent: see Appendix A). In the September-December 2005 end of term exams only one child out of a class of twenty seven passed Principles of Business with fifty percent.

Many of these students can be classified as struggling learners. This has resulted in their lack of motivation and poor academic performance e.g.: home work assignments not completed, the quality of notes and students' notebooks is unsatisfactory, complaints that the class is boring and use of the textbook is limited as students encounter difficulty with comprehension.

I believe that one of the problems is that they have not been taught the content related strategies that would allow them to successfully 'read and write to learn' and so understand their textbooks.

The Aim of the Study

To design and implement nine lessons around a Principles of Business unit so that a Form Four Class can apply content literacy and comprehension strategies when they read the textbook. Students should be able to --:

- (i) better answer questions
- (ii) write their own notes (summarizing)
- (iii) use the text to locate information and answer questions
- (iv) participate in class and monitor their comprehension

Research questions

Two questions that the study will attempt to answer are--:

- (i) will there be any change in students' responses (written and verbal) as a result of a focus on comprehension skills i.e.: greater analysis and synthesis of ideas in the textbook.
- (ii) will student motivation (participation) increase with knowledge of how to read and write using the textbook (content literacy)

The Significance of the Study

This study has significance for—

1. Me--: As the teacher as it will allow me to develop strategies to maximize my students' learning and my teaching with the prescribed text.
2. The students--: They will have more control over their learning as they will acquire the skills to become strategic readers.
3. Future research--: The government can initiate a study on the effectiveness of introducing a programme to educate teachers on comprehension strategies instruction in secondary schools.
4. My school--: It can benefit by adopting a whole school approach to ensure that comprehension strategies are taught across the curriculum. There could be an improvement in the performance of at risk students in their end of term exams and all students in general across all subject areas.

Organisation

The study is organized in Chapters from one to five: Chapter One--the Introduction: Background to the Problem, Chapter Two--Literature Review, Chapter Three--The Methodology, Chapter Four--Findings and Chapter Five--Conclusions.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

According to the National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000), comprehension of text is now considered essential to reading and learning. On entering secondary school, students are required to carry out academic tasks that are more difficult and demanding. These tasks are usually focused around reading and the textbook. The text book is the main tool used in the classroom to deliver the curriculum. Schoenbach et al (1999) estimates that in the United States, thousands of middle and high school students are unable to cope with their academic texts. This has led to poor performances in the various content areas. At home, there is a serious concern for student achievement at the Secondary Entrance Assessment Exam and then at the Caribbean Examination Council Exams.

The assumption made by most teachers is that students entering secondary school already possess comprehension skills. However, once students encounter difficulty in reading or understanding their texts there is no comprehension instruction provided by teachers (Durkin, 1978/79; Pressley, 2002). Given this lack of support is it any wonder that several students become 'at-risk'? Vacca (1990) refers to the academically vulnerable who have a 'learned helplessness' when it comes to reading and literacy. These students may drop out of or become alienated within the system.

There is enough evidence based research to suggest that comprehension strategies can be taught and that they assist in improving the reading and understanding of students in the classroom (Neufeld, 2005/06, p 302; Flood et al, 1990, p 491; Kincade, 1996, p 273). 'Considerable success has been found in improving comprehension by instructing students on the use of more than one strategy during the course of reading. Skilled reading involves an ongoing adaptation of multiple cognitive processes. Through instruction of text comprehension, 'at risk' and able students can become independent, self-regulated and thinking readers' (Brown et al., 1996).

Comprehension strategies

The NRP traced the development of research on reading comprehension skills over the past thirty years and identified three dominant themes on text comprehension instruction in the classroom--(1) the teaching of individual strategies such as identifying the main ideas (2) effective use of particular strategies and (3) combinations of different strategies to improve comprehension (NRP, 2000). Currently multiple strategy instruction is considered an effective intervention in the class room. It involves the flexible and active use of individual research based strategies (NRP).

Comprehension strategies are the plans that students implement when they are reading (Duffy, 2003). Poor readers encounter difficulties when they read and are usually not aware of what they can do to fix any breakdown in their understanding of the text i.e.: lack metacognition skills (Kincade, 1996, p273). They need to learn what it takes to become a good reader in a class. No one skill or strategy is suitable for all situations so students should be taught a variety by teachers who should also model and explain how and where the skill is to be used and provide the opportunity for practice. This takes an initial investment in time.

Textbooks and their features

Textbooks are considered expository or informational texts and differ from narrative texts in that students are less familiar with their underlying organization and structures. Narrative texts tell a story while expository texts inform. Text structures refer to patterns of arranging ideas and provide a map that guides students through the text (Moss, 2004 pg 712). Expository text structures include: description, sequence, comparison and contrast, cause and effect and problem and solution. (Barton et al, 2001, pp 3-27).

Text presentation consists of the physical layout of information, textual cues such as headings, italics, bold face print, etc, can help or hinder comprehension (Barton & et al., 2001, p23). These visual cues help readers to locate inform and teach students to recognize organizational patterns which can influence their understanding of content material (Barton et al, 2001, pg 20). Text features can be used as a skeleton to develop summaries and assist students to focus not only on the reading of the text but on comprehension strategies such as predicting, clarifying, etc (Spencer, 2003).

Use of visual aids

Visual images and graphic organizers can be used to improve comprehension of struggling readers. Students live in a digital age where they are bombarded by visual imagery however they may lack the skills to interpret text. While proficient readers can create internal images that support comprehension, poor readers are unable to do so as a result of a breakdown in their understanding of text. Teachers can enhance their learning by creating connections between words and images by providing external images (Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003, McConnell, 1993)

Graphic organizers can help students to comprehend, summarize and synthesize complex ideas. They are visual illustrations of verbal statements: students can construct various graphic outlines of text material that they read (Jones, Pierce & Hunter, 1989). Graphic organizers can be used for 1) studying as they help to improve student retention, 2) self-testing and 3) evaluation after a reading assignment (Crawley et al, 1995, pg 145). Graphic organizers can be used to make reading purposeful through out the reading process as well as help students to make connections with the text materials.

Question-Answer Relationships (QAR)

The QAR is a procedure for teaching students how to locate and answer comprehension questions' (Crawley et al, 1995, pg 111). QAR can be used as a framework to promote higher level thinking and improve students' comprehension (Raphael & Pearson, 1985; Raphael & Wonnacott, 1985; Benito, Foley, Lewis & Prescott, 1993). It can be used across subject areas and grade levels and it combines different strategies that students can use to analyze questions and formulate good answers (Raphael & Au, 2005, pg 206)

With the QAR, students are taught that there are two sources of information. This allows them to make the distinction between and the connection with text based and knowledge based information and so engage in self questioning (Helfeldt & Henk, 1990). The application of this strategy can make students more accountable for their academic performance (Rengers, 2005)).

Writing to Learn

Learning logs assist students to practice the metacognitive skills of monitoring their learning i.e.: a means of reflecting on what students know, what remains confusing, what they learn and what they think they will be learning. Learning logs can be used to inform instruction as they provide useful feed back to students and teachers (Santa & Havens, 1991 in Barton et al, pg 36). Learning logs trace the growth of students and establish records of their reactions to the learning process. They build 'critical consciousness' as they function as a stimulus for students to synthesise, reason and make connections on their own (Fulwiler, 1986; Sanford, 1988).

Summarizing and Note taking

Instruction of summarization succeeds in that readers improve on the quality of their summaries of text, mainly identifying the main idea but also in removing redundancy. It is a good method of integrating ideas and generalizing from the text essential information that students can develop into notes for examinations/reviews (Crawley et al, 1995, Anderson et al, 1989).

Why Teach Content Literacy and Comprehension

Content literacy is 'the ability to use reading and writing for the acquisition of new content in a given discipline' (McKenna & Robinson, 1990). The research literature refers to this as 'reading to learn' and 'writing to learn' (Chall, 1983). Whilst comprehension is the 'essence of reading' (Durkin, 1993); a means of understanding something from a text (Jacobs, 2002, p 58), it is the main goal of content-based instruction at the secondary school level and the teacher is the facilitator of the process (Gunning, 2003, p3).

By combining writing and reading activities the teacher enhances students' comprehension as students proceed from understanding to demonstrating their understanding (Jacobs, 2002). These content literacy skills are transferable to the workplace especially in today's information driven economy where workers need to have portable skills that they can apply from career to career.

The Role of the Teacher and Student Motivation

Struggling readers tend to have poor attitudes toward reading and so lose interest in academic subjects as they do not have confidence in their competence to comprehend their text and so they do not persevere when they encounter difficulty when reading (Vacca, 2006). Consequently, students are given fewer opportunities for self expression because of a dominance of teacher-centred approaches (Oldfather, 1995). Therein may lie the decline in student motivation for content reading and writing (Halloway, 1999).

Essentially, teachers have a very important role to play in teaching comprehension strategies in their content classrooms in the absence of reading specialists or remedial teachers. Through scaffolding, teachers must ensure that low ability readers are provided with the assistance they need to bridge the gap between their limited skills and the meaning of the text.

Chapter Three

Design Methodology

This study is designed to focus on the teaching of content literacy skills and comprehension strategies to a tech voc class of Form Four students and so provide these academically weak students with the tools to better understand their Principles of Business textbook.

Target population

There are five Form Four classes in the school. The sample chosen for this action study is Form Four E. There are twenty seven students in the class: fifteen boys and twelve girls. Their ages range from sixteen to eighteen (See Appendix). The students come from mainly low income families where parents are labourers, vendors, carpenters, machine operators, security officers or bank or office workers.

This particular Form is a Tech-Voc class based on their subject grouping of Woodwork, Technical Drawing, Clothing and Textile and Food and Nutrition. An informal poll of the students revealed that many of them did not choose Principle of Business but they were unable to get their first choice so motivational levels are low.

The class is considered weak academically (see Appendix A). Students encounter difficulty using the textbook and understanding the subject matter. Some of the areas of concern are: (i) note taking skills, (ii) using the textbook to locate information, (iii) reading and writing strategies to answer higher order questions

Research design

Veronika Kalmus (2004, p 476) suggests --:

1. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to better gather enriched and interpretive data that is valid and reliable.

Data collection and analysis

Mainly qualitative assessments were employed as it was felt that given the short period of time for students to become proficient in the strategies that recording how students grappled with the techniques and tried to implement them in a non competitive climate would be more beneficial e.g.: students' learning logs were not graded but coded.

The quantitative assessment of the cloze test was done where the mean and standard deviation were used.

Qualitative methods used--:

1. A student learning log where students record their reactions (comments and questions) to the strategies employed in the classroom (Fulwiler, 1986, Sandford, 1988) (Appendix E).
2. A teacher journal to capture the feelings, challenges and experiences that unfold through the implementation and progression of the curriculum study (Appendix F).
3. Classroom observation to monitor student interest/motivation, use of strategies and the frequency of on task versus off task behaviour.

Quantitative methods used--:

1. A pre test at the beginning of the unit to measure students' prior knowledge and comprehension ability in order to plan for strategies to be used in the lessons as well as to monitor student progress e.g.: a cloze test and a written assignment.

Limitations

The high absenteeism meant that not all students benefited from the teaching of strategies. There were disruptions such as Mock Exams, Food and Nutrition Labs and Career Day. Other challenges were the poor attitude of some of the members of the class and the short duration of the research made it difficult for students to fully master the strategies.

Procedure

The unit chosen was Management and Industrial Relations from the Caribbean Examination Council's Principles of Business syllabus and found in the MOE's recommended text book 'Essential Principles of Business for CXC' by A Whitcomb and S Hamil (Chapter Three, pgs 30-34).

The study consisted of nine lessons and was conducted for three weeks in March of term two in the academic year 2005 to 2006. The number of periods allotted per week was six. The classes consisted of two double periods and two single periods. A period is forty minutes. The lessons were conducted in the Form room and once in the Library for a change in setting.

The seating arrangement in the class was re-structured to establish pairs: 1 boy alone and 13 boy-girl (dyad) (Appendix A). This use of **peer collaboration** can foster a climate in the classroom that deemphasizes competition and builds on sharing knowledge. Partners can interact over the use of reading strategies which leads to an increase in both the learning of the strategies and reading comprehension (Jacobson, 1990).

Each individual wrote a paragraph on the topic to measure any prior knowledge and answered a reading awareness inventory (Miholic, 1994) to determine their level of meta-comprehension.

Each dyad completed a diagnostic cloze test to evaluate students reading level competence as well as match with the text book (Taylor, 1953/56, Jacobson, 1990) (Appendix B).

In order to generate student ownership of learning activities and so develop a community of learners (Oldfather, 1995), as well as to overcome students' unwillingness to bring their text books, each dyad was given a manila folder with folder pages to use for the learning logs and exercises as well as to keep photocopies of the text material. An overhead projector was used for the teaching of some of the reading strategies (Appendix C & D).

The stages of the reading cycle were—

- (1) Pre-reading--stimulating reading readiness where students' prior knowledge is activated and connections made and the purpose for reading the text is established.
- (2) During reading--building students' comprehension of the text.
- (3) Post reading—practicing retention and extension of learning.

Description of lessons

The procedure for each lesson --:

Pre-reading stage—

- (a) teacher introduces skill or strategy to be acquired
- (b) teacher models or scaffolds skill or strategy

During reading stage—

- (a) students given opportunity to apply skill or strategy independently or with guidance from teacher individually or in groups

Post-reading stage—

- (a) students given opportunity to evaluate their use of the skill or strategy.

Intervention strategies to answer the research questions:

1. will there be any change in students' responses (written and verbal) as a result of a focus on comprehension skills i.e.: greater analysis and synthesis of ideas in the textbook?.. Data was collected from assessing learning logs, teacher observation and students' work in class. A summative exercise was given at the end of the nine lessons that assessed students' ability to apply strategies.
2. will student motivation (participation) increase with knowledge of how to read and write using the textbook (content literacy)? Data was sourced from teacher observation as well as assessment of learning logs.

Skills to be developed are--: 1. study skills, 2. note taking (writing) skills and 3. reading and comprehension skills

Lesson one

Students will identify the parts/features of the textbook and use them to locate information in various content texts

Lesson two

Students will use the reading strategies of preview, predict and visualize with the aid of newspaper articles. Newspapers are 'life's textbook' and provide an opportunity for struggling students to attempt tasks related to their interests and background and so ensure that they are motivated. They also demonstrate the relevance of reading and information to content area learning (secondary perspectives, 1990) (Appendix D).

Lesson three

Student will learn about effective and ineffective use of reading strategies by filling out a reading awareness inventory and discussing their choices to build on comprehension monitoring

Lesson four

Students will identify text features such as headings, bullets and bold face type and use them to identify important and relevant information and so make an outline or overview of the text.

Lesson five

Students will apply reading strategies and text features to select and organize the main ideas and supporting details (summary) of a passage in the text and so make a note in their own words (paraphrase).

Lesson six

Students will use visual aids and graphic organizers to organize and interpret information and so summarize and make a note from the text.

Lesson seven

Students will explain what an expository text is and identify the five text patterns and determine the pattern/s from the text.

Lesson eight

Students will apply QAR comprehension strategies—(1) In the Book: (a) Right There and (b) Think & Search to answer and generate questions from the text.

Lesson nine

Students will apply QAR comprehension strategies—(2) In My Head: (a) Author & Me and (b) On My Own to answer and generate questions from the text.

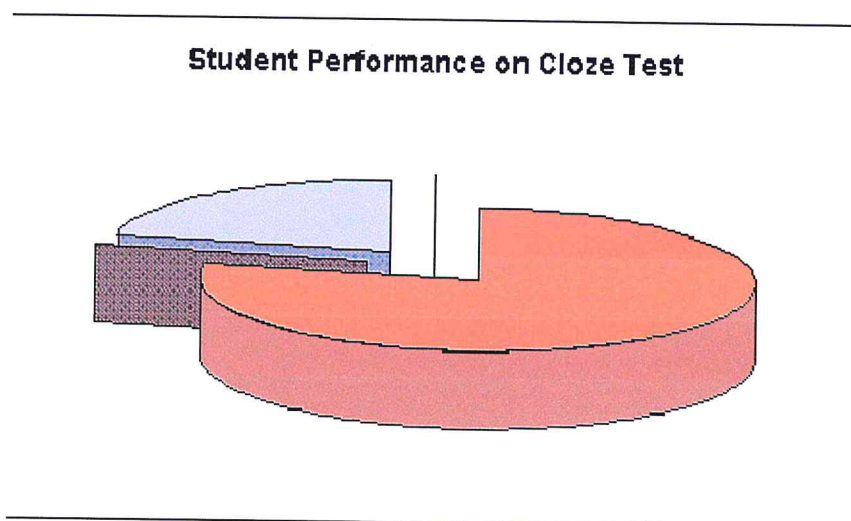
Chapter Four

Data Analysis and Presentation of Findings

Quantitative

I. Analysis of cloze test

Student Performance	Student	Scores
	No.#	%
Students reading at Frustration Level	21	78
Students reading at Instructional Level	6	22
Students reading at Independent Level	0	0



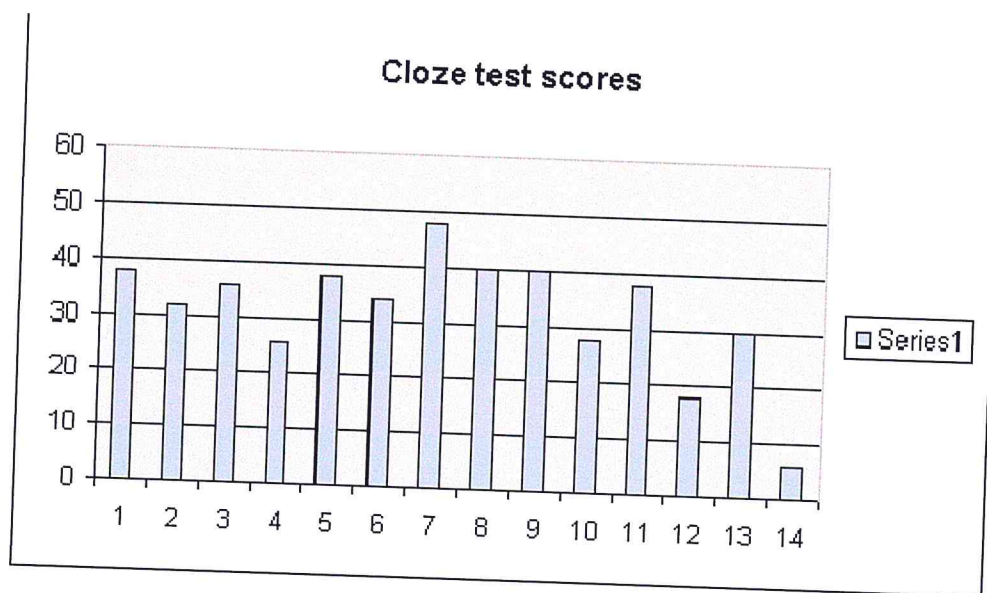
Scoring of cloze test

Material too easy	Independent level	60% and above
Material is about right	Instructional level	40-60 %
Material is too difficult	Frustration Level	under 40%

SCORES OF DIAGNOSTIC CLOZE TEST

NAMES OF PAIRED STUDENTS		% Score	Raw Score
1	CAIN & BLACKMAN	38	19
2	CHARLES & N CADORE	32	16
3	COLLINS	36	18
4	EDWARDS & Z CADORE	26	13
5	GORDON & MATTHIAS	38	19
6	IFILL & LEWIS	34	17
7	LEWIS & PACHECO	48	24
8	MCDONALD & HILL	40	20
9	MCLEAN & GRANT	40	20
10	MIGUEL & PETERS	28	14
11	PERU & DUNCAN	38	19
12	ROSS & PRENTICE	18	9
13	SYLVESTER & MCDONALD	30	15
14	TOUSSAINT & SANDY	6	3

The number of students: 27(13 pairs and one student working alone).



The raw score is the number of words correct
The range of % scores is 6 to 48 out of a possible 100 = 42
The mean is $452/14=32.2$

II. Analysis of summative exercise

This was poorly done 90% of the assignments were incomplete and only superficially applied the strategies. Both boys and girls failed to adequately use the guided assignment.

Qualitative

I. Analysis of Lessons based on teacher's observations from journal according to criteria—

- (i) student on task vs off task behaviour
- (ii) effectiveness of teacher instruction
- (iii) level of student interest
- (iv) use of strategies

(i). Student on task behavior is high for lessons Two and Six compared with the other lessons. Clearly the majority of the boys and a few of the girls think they don't need this intervention, as generally they exhibit more off task behaviour, I believe I'm not making the strategies seem useful enough.

(ii) My most effective lessons were lesson Two and Five where I introduced the comprehension strategies using the text and summarizing. I have improved in the use of the overhead projector and I have become more aware of how to model aloud the thinking behind the strategies.

My least effective lesson was lesson One and I have not left enough time for reflection and writing in the learning logs after each of the lessons. The students needed more writing activities. Student resistance is high as they spend more time complaining than writing or reading.

(iii) Out of the nine lessons, students' interest and participation are high for only three. Significantly these are the one's where the text and reading is not central. Students enjoy the cloze test, the use of the newspaper clippings and the use of visual aids to represent their learning from the text. I think they saw these lessons as more fun than learning.

(iv) use of the strategies are limited by students. They needed more time for individual guidance than the study permitted to apply them. I had to coax many to at least attempt the exercises whilst frequently they wanted to know if the activity was for marks

II. Analysis of Lessons based on students' comments from learning logs according to criteria—

- (i) what I learnt
- (ii) what I liked/disliked about the lesson
- (iii) how did I work in my group
- (iv) what could be improved

(i) Although I indicated what types of comments students were to write, their logs did not explore in any depth the learning in the sessions. Students did not follow most of my instructions. I believe some students wrote what they thought I wanted them to write.

Comments about what was learnt was mixed with some students expressing confusion about the lessons, while others said that the lessons were beneficial. . The cloze test was seen as a brain teaser. There was little or no evidence that students grasped the reading strategies as they were not mentioned. In fact, students did not say how the strategies benefited them. It seems only the lesson on parts of the book made an impression.

(ii) Interesting, easy, boring, exciting and hard were some of the descriptions of the lessons. One student wrote that she was becoming a 'studier' of POB

(iii) Feelings about working with someone were mixed: some liked the cooperation while others felt their partner was not productive.

(iv) The logs were insightful in that they revealed that comprehension difficulty may lie in vocabulary, syntax, spelling and decoding of words; several students could barely write a sentence. Unfamiliarity with writing and expressing themselves was evident. Two students expressed concern about the off task behaviour.

III. Analysis of note making skills using visual aids/imagery and graphic organizers and summarizing

Very few students tried to make notes independently after I modeled the strategy, again text avoidance is high and students do not feel they can make notes on their own.

IV. Analysis of teaching video

With the teacher centred approach student off task behaviour is less; once it is time for guided and then independent practice students lose focus. General boredom on most faces. I need to walk around more and offer assistance. Students may act as if 'I know this already' but do they?

Chapter Five

Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary of Conclusions

The results reinforced what I already knew that --:

- 1) my students were weak academically and consequently engaged in text avoidance behavior which was clearly demonstrated in their attitude and participation in the study. The boys especially are at risk because of their refusal to read.
- 2) I need to improve my instruction skills and my confidence if I am to make an effective intervention to assist the reading challenged.
- 3) text comprehension instruction has the potential to be successful once the right combination of strategies are employed

Discussion of Conclusions

The research questions were valid what was needed was to focus on an individual strategy for the research period instead of the multiple strategy approach.

This would have given me more time to develop students' ability to use the one strategy independently.

The results indicated that I need to spend more time planning the instruction for these lessons and thinking about how I can woo the boys to adopt them as practical means of learning.

Evidence of lack of interest and off task behaviour indicates that my exercises were not sufficiently authentic and did not engage the students at their level.

I believe in the value of these strategies and I was encouraged by some of the comments, however after years of devising coping methods to avoid reading I have to breakdown students' 'learned helplessness' if I want to continue teaching with these strategies.

Constraints

Barry (2002) found challenges that teachers face in implementing reading strategies in the classroom to be--:

1. pressure to cover the required content material
2. lack of teacher confidence as a result of fear of losing control and student misbehaviour.

Some other challenges are:

3. 'It takes time, ...as much as a year for students to internalize a new study strategy' (Bean et al, 1986).
4. Teachers when they begin comprehension instruction can expect resistance from students and frustration in their own shortcomings (Mosenthal et al, 1992)

I also discovered:

5. reading avoidance by students
6. not all strategies work for poor readers
7. it is costly to make photocopies and transparencies
8. group work can be both good and bad

Recommendations

To effectively assist at risk students, reading and writing can no longer be the domain of solely the English teachers. All teachers should be mandated to take a course that focuses primarily on equipping teachers with the techniques to promote content literacy and comprehension. This will ensure a continued intervention and reinforcement by other teachers. A whole school approach that supports sustained guidance and hands on tasks will help students unlearn and retrain as strategic readers once the right environment for instruction is created.

Parents need to collaborate with teachers and make their homes reading havens so that reading strategies are reinforced in a holistic way through the child's entire life: from primary to secondary and then tertiary level and the world of work.

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Appendices

A. Example of Seating Arrangement

Student Information—Age

Achievement Scores for POB and
from Form one to present day

B. Example of Cloze Test

Sample of completed cloze tests

Example of Reading Awareness Inventory

Samples of completed reading awareness inventory

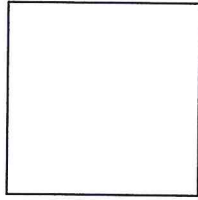
C. Lesson Plans

D. Teaching Materials used in Lessons

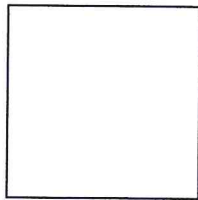
E. Samples of students' work and Samples of students' learning logs

F. Samples of teacher's journal and Example of teacher conducting a lesson

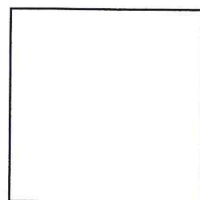
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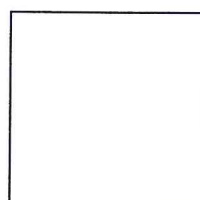
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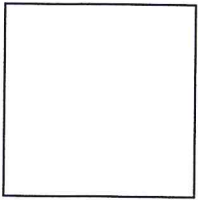
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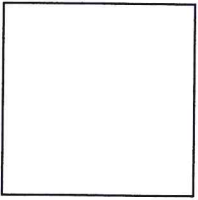
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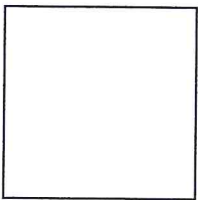
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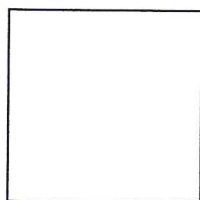
Ifill & Lewis



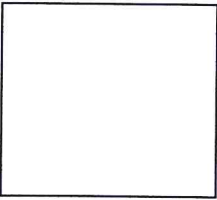
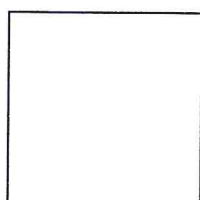
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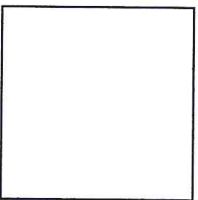
C McDonald & Grant



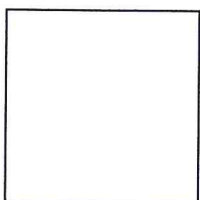
M McDonald & Hill



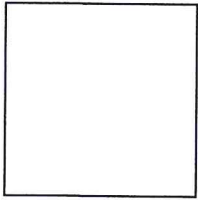
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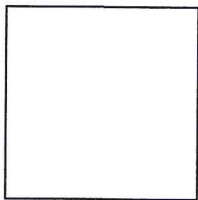
Cain & Blackman



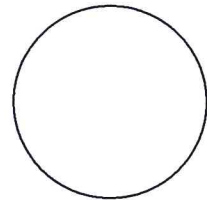
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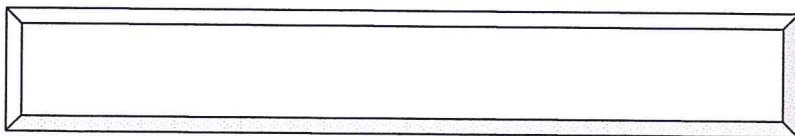
Prentice & Ross



Gordon & Matthias



Teacher's Table



Black Board

TERM ONE 2005/2006 END OF TERM
EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR PRINCIPLES OF BUSINESS

NAME OF STUDENT
BOYS

%

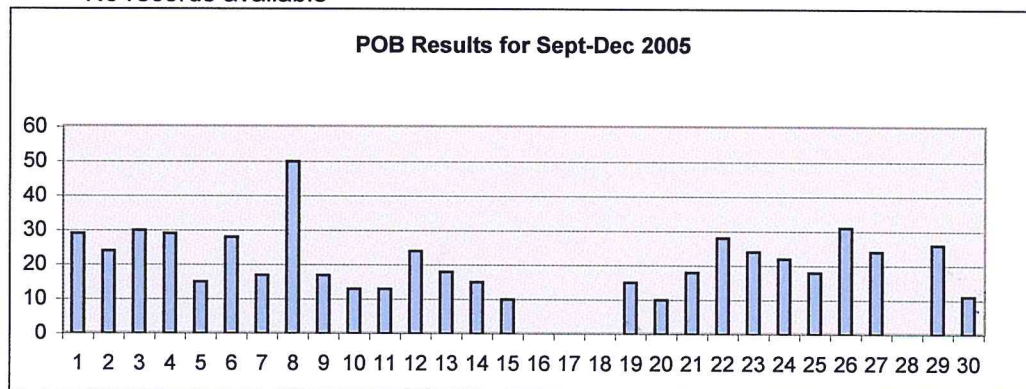
AGES AS OF 2006

1	M BLACKMAN	29	16
2	N CADORE	24	16
3	Z CADORE	30	*
4	B COLLINS	29	17
5	K DUNCAN	15	16
6	C GRANT	28	16
7	J HILL	17	17
8	A IFILL	50	16
9	B LEWIS	17	16
10	J MATTHIAS	13	*
11	M MCDONALD	13	16
12	K PACHECO	24	16
13	J PETERS	18	16
14	T PRENTICE	15	16
15	A SANDY	10	17

GIRLS

1	M CAIN	15	16
2	L CHARLES	10	17
3	T EDWARDS	18	17
4	S GORDON	28	17
5	A LEWIS	24	16
6	C MCDONALD	22	16
7	S MCLEAN	18	17
8	C MIGUEL	31	17
9	C PERU	24	16
10	R ROSS	0	18
11	D SYLVESTER	26	17
12	A TOUSSAINT	11	17

* No records available



END OF TERM PERCENTAGE AVERAGES FROM FORM ONE TO PRESENT DAY(2002 TO 2005)

NAME OF STUDENT BOYS	FORM ONE			FORM TWO			FORM THREE			FORM FOUR
	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3	T1
1 M BLACKMAN	39.6	38.1	37	33	38	30	35.3	38.7	28	23
2 N CADORE	41	*	42.2	47.1	46.3	44	46.1	54.3	26.1	*
3 Z CADORE	*	*	39.4	36	39.4	40.7	36.2	26.5	22.6	*
4 B COLLINS	31	36	30.4	33	27.3	33.9	31	36	30	25
5 K DUNCAN	36.6	*	26.9	23	28.3	25.5	25.5	14.8	12.4	*
6 C GRANT	36.5	*	33.4	47	29.8	31.5	38.1	35.1	30.7	33
7 J HILL	*	*	21.1	23	22.7	12.3	18.8	20	13.7	*
8 A IFILL	36.1	28.5	41.5	46.9	46	abs	52.2	65.2	41	53
9 B LEWIS	26.8	*	16.6	17	19.6	19.7	29.6	29	23.4	*
10 J MATTHIAS	23.2	33	31	26.6	31	34	11.3	*	13	19
11 M MCDONALD	27.8	37	27	31	30	33	30.5	33.4	26.5	24
12 K PACHECO	27.9	40	34.5	36.3	37.4	32.5	32.5	32	29.7	28
13 J PETERS	38.2	33	26.4	23.8	30.3	34.1	20.1	*	25.2	20
14 T PRENTICE	34.2	30	27.7	33.9	31.8	24	31.7	*	25.7	17
15 A SANDY	30	*	32.9	*	*	24.4	22.2	9.6	19.6	*

GIRLS

1 M CAIN	*	*	40.7	42	43	38.4	35.7	37	30.3	24
2 L CHARLES	28	27.4	30.2	27	30.6	23	24.1	32	14.5	28
3 T EDWARDS	*	*	*	37.2	29.2	33.7	34.2	31.8	28.5	*
4 S GORDON	42.2	48	45.3	45.8	43.2	46.8	43.1	40.7	35.6	38
5 A LEWIS	28	32	37	34.3	31	34.5	27.1	48.4	33.2	23
6 C MCDONALD	51	43	55	39.3	43.4	42.3	38	54.1	32.7	45
7 S MCLEAN	46	45	52	44.8	45	39.2	45.1	68	35.3	40
8 C MIGUEL	53	47.3	46.5	47.3	48.2	25	35	34.6	29.1	42
9 C PERU	45.7	*	38.7	49.8	41.5	48.5	54.1	47.2	39.6	48
10 R ROSS	28	*	34.4	29.2	*	20.3	15.3	12.4	21.6	*
11 D SYLVESTER	*	*	19.9	33	27.4	26	26.9	37.6	24.2	34
12 A TOUSSAINT	19	21	24.6	23.9	23.2	21.9	16.5	29.6	20.5	27

* records were not available