Focusing on content area reading in elementary education, this annotated bibliography contains references to 29 articles and papers in the ERIC database, dating from 1987 to 1989. The citations include articles discussing content area reading research, reading material selection, and teaching strategies for content area reading at the elementary level. (MM)
Content Area Reading in Elementary Education

by Mary Morgan

Overview


Notes the sources of difficulty in understanding demanding text, and asserts that teachers should spend more time preparing students to read in these formats.


Articles in this eighth yearbook of the American Reading Forum address the dilemmas of teaching reading. Includes "Reading and Writing as Tools for Independent Learning: The Content Area Classroom at the Crossroads" by K. Ford.


Describes how an excerpt from an electronics magazine challenged the author to examine problems in reading comprehension.


Criticizes the "project" approach to reading instruction, where beginning reading students are supposed to learn the skills it takes to find out information for themselves by reading from sources.

Research


Examines the extent to which reading research supports the comprehension and vocabulary strategies recommended in content reading methods texts. Concludes that more of the research finds the strategies to be effective than finds them ineffective.

Examines the role of metadiscourse characteristics and level of sixth-grade students’ anxiety as they affect learning from social studies textbooks. Finds that high anxious students showed their best performance with first person voice and no attitudinal metadiscourse while low anxious students showed the opposite effect.


Provides results of a survey of how 90 elementary and secondary teachers used their content area and English textbooks. Reports that both elementary and secondary teachers use textbooks primarily to supplement instruction, but that secondary content area teachers could benefit from inservice education to assist in flexible use of textbooks.


Reports on a survey of 77 “recognized” middle schools and 83 randomly chosen schools, which indicates that most schools require reading instruction, especially in grade 6. Finds that many offer remedial programs, but that practice has not responded to theoretics’ advocacy for reading in content areas.

Readence, John E; Baldwin, R. Scott, eds. Dialogues in Literacy Research. Thirty-Seventh Yearbook of the National Reading Conference. Proceedings of the 57th Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference, 1987. 382 p. [CS 009 381]

Contains 33 articles from the proceedings of the thirty-seventh National Reading Conference, covering the politics of literacy, emergent and early literacy, vocabulary, comprehension, content area reading, writing, and teacher effectiveness. Contains articles on sixth graders’ use of mnemonic imagery in recalling content material, and on the development of teacher explanations during content area reading lessons.


Describes specific problems that students encounter when they begin the transition into content area studies. Examines a recent research summary on study skills for suggestions about how to address these problems.


Studies preservice teachers’ attitudes toward content area reading. Concludes that although misconceptions about content reading instruction are prevalent among preservice teachers entering a content area teaching course, research showed that most students no longer exhibited these misconceptions when they left the course.


Presents the origins of action books, selection guidelines for use in the classroom, advantages and limitations, and an annotated list of science and social studies action books.


This categorized 124-item annotated bibliography should prove useful to teachers in each of the content areas. The books listed are children’s choices and are guaranteed to be informational and entertaining as students study math, health, science, social studies, and the language arts.

Teaching Strategies


Suggests ways to adapt basal reading instruction to content area reading instruction. Includes adaptations of three common basal procedures: 1) setting the purpose; 2) developing a vocabulary; and 3) discussing the selection.


Presents a thematic approach to content area reading that builds the learner’s background for the text by giving real experiences which capture the child’s interest in learning, facilitate independence in learning and active involvement, and provide well written texts. Suggests a variety of materials and activities to develop skills, strategies, and interest in reading, including charts, poems, recipes, and games.


Suggests ways in which to use literature to teach science, with examples of reading materials for teaching about spiders and eyeglasses. Lists selected books about seasons, nature, and other scientific themes.


Describes the Inferential Training Technique (ITT), a modified cloze procedure and self-monitoring checklist focusing on the inferential process. Notes that this strategy improves reading comprehension and inferring skills, and can be applied to content area reading. Provides a sample cloze passage, inferential questions, and worksheet guide for the ITT.

Culver, Richard C. “Reading and Mathematics Go Hand in Hand,” Reading Improvement, v25 n3 p189-95 Fall 1988.

Suggests that math and reading are related, and that strategies common to reading sometimes can be applied in math. Presents instructional strategies and independent study techniques for five areas: basic sight words; vocabulary meanings; other specialized vocabulary; basic skills; and problem solving.

Devine, Thomas G. Teaching Reading in the Elementary School: From Theory to Practice. Allyn and Bacon, Inc., Boston, MA. 363 p. [CS 009 499]

The purpose of this book on reading instruction in the elementary school is twofold: 1) to share with colleagues some of the significant works of research and theory that suggest answers to important questions in reading instruction; and 2) to describe specific teaching strategies implied by these answers. Chapter Six discusses reading in the content areas.
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Suggests that teachers should approach the content areas using a total lesson approach by adapting the directed reading activity method to content area instruction. Includes a brief discussion of the adaptation of the directed reading activity method and an explanation of each of the six steps as they might apply to the content area.

Provides suggestions for using literature to supplement content area study, particularly in social studies and science. Emphasizes literature for grades five through eight.

Intended to be a practical guide to prereading activities applicable in the classroom, this book emphasizes students' independence by shifting the focus of instruction to student-centered applications. Chapters of the book cover such topics as: 1) preparing students to read in the content areas; 2) asking and answering questions before reading; 3) forecasting passages; 4) understanding vocabulary; 5) graphically representing information; and 6) writing before reading. Each chapter contains a statement of purpose and a list of teaching strategies.

O'Bruba, William S. "Reading through the Creative Arts," Reading Horizons, v27 n3 p170-77 Apr 1987.
Describes four major areas of creative arts that can be used in the reading classroom to enrich and enhance the reading program: music, graphic arts, puppetry, and poetry.

Describes the use of microcomputers to enhance vocabulary instruction in content teaching. Reviews the types of software available.

Discusses ways to get teachers involved in the process of evaluating and changing their methods of instruction—using the example of teaching content material through round robin reading and discussion.

Discusses challenges in teaching critical reading in the content areas. Presents an effective method for teaching critical reading which emphasizes preparation for and guidance during reading rather than postreading activities.

Suggests that many reading problems may be caused by insufficient background knowledge rather than lack of reading skills. Provides suggestions about how teachers can integrate concepts and materials from social studies into their reading lessons to build students' background knowledge.

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