Designing an English Instructional Program Based on Semantic Mapping and Questioning Reading Strategies and Measuring its Effect on Hashemite University Students' Reading Comprehension

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Abstract


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This study aimed at investigating the effects of two reading strategies (semantic mapping and questioning strategies) on Hashemite university students' reading comprehension and engagement in English. It attempted to answer the following questions:

1-What is the effect of the English instructional program based on semantic mapping and questioning strategies on Hashemite University students' reading comprehension in understanding, critical thinking and the quality of schema?

2-What is the effect of the English instructional program based on semantic mapping and questioning strategies on Hashemite University students' engagement in English reading classes?

The population of the study consisted of all the female and male students studying the New Head Way Plus series at Hashemite University in the academic year 2009/2010. The sample of the study was purposefully chosen from this population and consisted of three sections with a total of 302 students.
These sections were randomly assigned to the three groups of the study. The quasi-experimental design was used for this study. This design had three groups: two experimental groups and one control group with a pre-post-test and a pre-post questionnaire.

Seven reading texts were chosen by the researcher from the *New Head Way Plus* textbook. This material was redesigned by the researcher according to the two reading strategies. To establish the validity of the redesigned material, it was given to a jury of ten specialists.

The instruments of the study were a schema-based reading test and a reading engagement questionnaire. The researcher adapted the schema-based reading test similar to the one done by Lewin (1992). She reconstructed the test on the basis of the three selected skills: understanding, critical thinking, and the quality of schema that were taught through the redesigned material. The questionnaire was also adapted and modified to achieve the main objectives of the study. The original version of the questionnaire was done by Treagust, Duit, and Fraser (1996).

To establish the validity for the instruments of the study, they were given to a jury of ten specialists. The reliability of the test was computed statistically by using Cronbach's Alpha formula. The result was found to be (0.83). The inter-rater reliability for the test was also computed. The overall result was (0.93). Regarding the reliability of the engagement questionnaire, it was computed using Cronbach's Alpha. The result was found to be (0.88).
After establishing the validity and reliability of the instruments of the study, they were used as pre-test and pre-questionnaire. The instruments of the study were also used after implementing the program so as to check the improvement of students' reading comprehension and engagement.

The findings of the study were as follows:

1-There was a statistically significant difference at (α=.05) between the two experimental groups and the control group on the schema-based reading test in the three sub-skills: understanding, critical thinking, and the quality of schema in favor of the two experimental groups.

2-The multiple comparisons between the two experimental groups on the test indicated a statistically significant difference at α=.05 only between the questioning group and the semantic mapping group in critical thinking sub-skill in favor of the questioning group.

3-There was a statistically significant difference at α=.05 between the two experimental groups and the control group on the reading engagement questionnaire in favor of the two experimental groups.

On the basis of the results of the study, it is highly recommended for other researchers to conduct similar studies on other metacognitive strategies on students' reading comprehension and engagement of both narrative and expository texts taking into consideration students' proficiency levels (high and low). It is also recommended to investigate both students' and instructors' perceptions of using the two metacognitive strategies in teaching the three selected sub-skills related to schema theory.