Strategies and shoes - can we ever have enough? Teaching and using reading comprehension strategies
Today’s talk: How to help students use strategies – and shoes – effectively

1. Strategies & Shoes
   – Brevik (2015)

2. Three myths about poor readers
   – Brevik, Olsen & Hellekjær (2016)
   – Brevik & Hellekjær (in progress)
   – Brevik (2016)
Norwegian School Context

- Upper secondary school (16-18 years)
- Lower secondary school (13-15 years)
- Primary school (6-12 years)

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Europe 2020 strategy for education

18-24 years old
- Europe 2020 strategy target on education: reduce ESL to less than 10%

15 years old
- In 2012 about one fifth of 15 year olds showed insufficient abilities in reading
- Students who perform poorly at age 15 face a high risk of dropping out of school
Education at a Glance

How many students graduate from upper secondary school?

General (academic) studies
• OECD & EU average 98%
• RECIPE countries: 96-100%

Vocational studies
• OECD & EU average 80-85%
• Portugal, Greece: 88-90%
• Ireland, Denmark, Norway: 44-59%
RECIPE case studies

- Problem-solving & reading
- Teachers’ problem-solving
- Students’ interests
- Relations, practical & individual approaches
- Problem-solving & relations

Countries:
- Denmark
- Ireland
- Portugal
- Norway
- Greece

RECIPE 2016 |
So what about strategies & shoes?
What the text says

“A great book should leave you with many experiences, and slightly exhausted at the end. You live several lives while reading it.”

- William Styron
What the text means

"No two persons ever read the same book."

-Edmund Wilson

RECIPE 2016 | Kintsch (1998); Myhre (2014); Pearson (2013)
What the text means to the reader
Three myths

1. «Students in vocational studies are poorer readers than students in general (academic) studies»

2. «Poor readers do not use reading strategies»

3. «The students’ out-of-school interests are not relevant for school»
National reading tests

• 10,331 students in upper secondary school (16 years old)
• Reading test in Norwegian (L1)
• Reading test in English (L2)
General
76%
79%

Vocational
64%
56%

Norwegian
English
Some students are both poor and good readers

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Brevik, Olsen & Hellekjær (2016); Brevik & Hellekjær (forthcoming)
The majority: Boys in vocational studies

- Boys GEN: 26%
- Girls GEN: 16%
- Girls VOC: 18%
- Boys VOC: 40%

(RECIPE 2016 | Brevik, Olsen & Hellekjær (2016); Brevik & Hellekjær (forthcoming))
Changing focus

• We need to find the students’ strengths
• Instead of focusing on what they DO NOT master
Three myths

1. «Students in vocational studies are poorer readers than students in general (academic) studies»
2. «The students in vocational studies do not use reading strategies»
3. «The students’ out-of-school interests are not relevant for school»
Prior strategy research

- Strategy instruction improves reading comprehension
- Little evidence exists of strategy instruction in classrooms
- Implicit rather than explicit strategy instruction

RECIPE 2016 | Brevik (2014, 2015); Duke et al. (2011); Pressley (2008)
Strategies were taught and used

- Discuss with peers
- Relate to study
- Preview and predict
- Prior knowledge
- SPECIFIC FOCUS
- Making inferences
- Active listening
- Careful reading
- Skimming/Scanning
- NOTE-TAKING
- Summarising
- Visualising
- Key words
What did the students say?

- Students in *general studies* used the strategies because their teacher told them to

- Students in *vocational studies* used the strategies for personal purposes – because it helped them understand what they read
Vocational students

*Researcher:* Do you use strategies when the teacher *does not* ask you to?

*Student 1:* Yes.

*Student 2:* Yes. It depends on which task I am going to do, and then I choose reading strategies myself. If we get a task where I need to find a year, then I search until I find it.

*Researcher:* And you do this without the teacher asking you to do so?

*Student 2:* Yes. Then I don’t have to read five pages.

*Student 3:* I make questions. And then have others ask me questions. I read until I find something that I think is important in a text. Then I stop and then I ask another one a question about it. And see if they remember it. And then the opposite; they ask me about what they find important.
Film: Strategy instruction

• Use of strategies («how to»)
• Modelling
• From «knowledge» to «involvement»?
Three myths

1. «Students in vocational studies are poorer readers than students in general (academic) studies»

2. «The students in vocational studies do not use reading strategies»

3. «The students’ out-of-school interests are not relevant for school»
What do you read out of school?

- Novels & cartoons
- News
- Facebook
- Music & lyrics
- TV series and films
- Online games

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Paradox

• These students are good in English, but do not say anything in class. Why?
• Students’ personal purposes
• Being in control
Film Frida

• How to give a task that is based on interest
• Motivation to do well (recording several times)
Teachers need to address their students’ personal purposes for reading in and out of school
Students’ personal purposes?

WANNA FINISH!
WANNA FINISH!
WANNA FINISH!
DON’T WANNA BE FINISHED!

FACEBOOK: NEMI.NO
Students’ personal purposes?

RECIPE 2016 | Myhre (2013)
Reading comprehension

"Books are a uniquely portable magic."

- Stephen King
Strategies or shoes – can we ever have enough?

- You need a few pair of shoes – for different situations

- The students also need a few strategies
  – for different students
  – for different situations
  – BUT in different combinations
References


Thank you for listening!

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