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## The Role of Using Self-Management Strategists in Developing EFL Iraqi Students' Reading Comprehension

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**ABSTRACT**

The current study aims at exploring the role of self-management strategies in developing Iraqi students' reading comprehension. In order to conduct the study, the researcher chose a sample for the study to consist of 30 first-year students. This sample was divided into two groups. Fifteen students were selected as the control group and fifteen were chosen to be the experimental group. The control group were taught using the traditional methods. On the other hand, the experimental group received instructions of self-management strategies. The outcomes of the study shows that the reading comprehension performance of the students in the experimental group is much higher than the control group performance. Furthermore, there was a significant increase in experimental group use of self-management strategies on the post- administration of the reading comprehension strategies survey. Thus, the results of this research proves there is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups. Therefore, it can be said that using self-management strategies can improve students' reading comprehension, and it is recommended to make this strategies part of the reading comprehension courses.

## The Problem of the Study

The present study tries to solve the problems faced by Iraqi students when they try to read subjects in the foreign language. Reading is considered to be one of the language receptive skills. According to Ismini [1] the process of reading subjects written in foreign language is a difficult a problem and requires a huge knowledge of vocabularies. Furthermore, it is also hard to get and understand the idea of the text, and this results in failure in comprehending the text.

## The Aims of the Study

a) Investigating the role of using self-management strategies in developing EFL Iraqi students' performance in reading comprehension.
b) Exploring whether there are any the statistical differences between the use of self- management strategies and the traditional methods in developing students' performance in reading comprehension.

## The Hypotheses of the Study

The study hypothesizes the following:
a) There is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group who used the self-management strategies and that of the control group who used the traditional methods in reading comprehension performance.
b) There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the students' performance of the experimental group in the pre and post- tests.

## Limits of the Study:

The current study limitation is thirty Iraqi EFL students in their first year at College of Education in Missan University during the academic year (2020-2021).

## The Significance of the Study

The study is excepted to be beneficial and useful for Iraqi EFL college students. Furthermore, it could also help instructors or teachers to use better strategies to develop their students reading comprehension and help them overcome their difficulties in reading comprehension.

## The Procedures of the Study

In order to accomplish the aims of the study, the researcher followed the following procedures:

a) A reading comprehension test is conducted on the experimental and the control group before the experiment.
b) Conduct a reading comprehension survey on the both groups before the experiment.
c) Ask the experimental group to apply the self-management strategies to read the subjects in the foreign language. While the control group will read using the traditional methods.

## INTRODUCTION:

One of the teaching goals is to create effective readers. In order to achieve this goal, the students' vocabularies need to be extended as well as their knowledge of the world. Furthermore, the teacher and instructor duty is to improve and extend the students' English grammar knowledge along with their decoding skills. Consequently, the fluency of their reading will be improved along with the ability to understand what they read and view from the literal level to the inferential and critical levels [2].
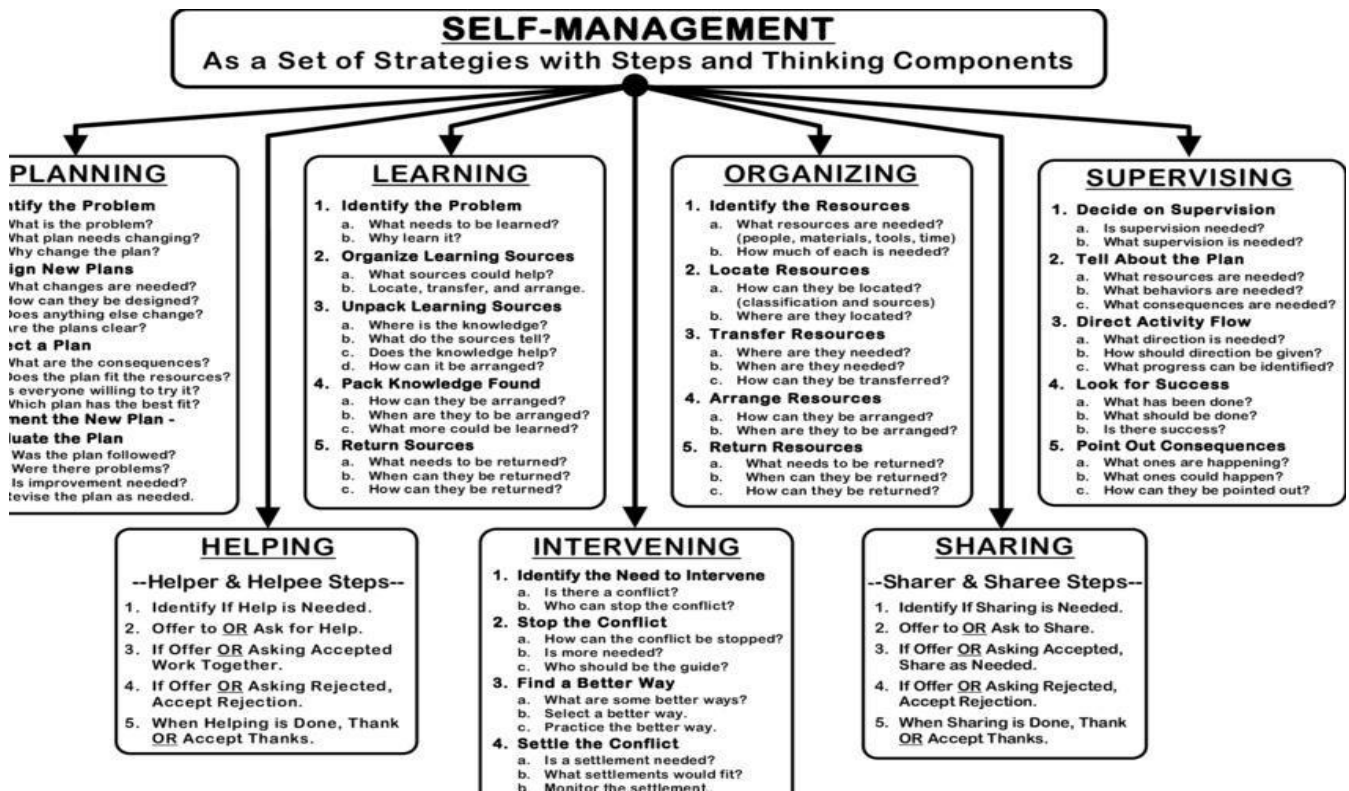
According to Harmer [3] what constitutes the central part of the human experience are Language and communication. The main purpose behind the desire to learn a new language is to gain proficiency and fluency in English. In addition to that, the importance of studying of foreign language can be seen clearly when the students get involved in situations where the learning a foreign language is taking place most successfully when learners are put in communicative situations in the target language. Thus, the instructors and teachers kept trying to find new methods to motivate students to achieve this goal [4].

### Definition of Reading Comprehension

The reading process can be defined as "the process of recognition and perception of the written or printed material". To put it in the other way, reading is the process of comprehending the written subjects meaning and learn the strategies that can make the students achieve better understanding. Thus, we can say that reading is a process of dealing with the form of language. On the other hand, comprehension can be defined as is about understanding language and its meanings [5]. Harris and Hodges [6] define reading comprehension is as "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing the meaning of a written communication through a reciprocal, holistic interchange of ideas between the interpreter and the message". Therefore, it can be said that comprehension is the reader and the text mission which happens in much extended context [7].

### Management Strategies: A Range of Techniques

Management strategies involve a set of strategies that can be used to help students manage their materials and subjects. Among these strategies are self evaluation, self-monitoring, self- instruction, and goal setting. In addition to that, there are a combination of other strategies that are called self-regulation strategies [8]. The management strategies will be explained below in a brief way:



**SELF-MANAGEMENT**
As a Set of Strategies with Steps and Thinking Components

**PLANNING**
itify the Problem
What is the problem?
What plan needs changing?
Why change the plan?
ign New Plans
What changes are needed?
How can they be designed?
Does anything else change?
Are the plans clear?
ct a Plan
What are the consequences?
Does the plan fit the resources?
s everyone willing to try it?
Which plan has the best fit?
nent the New Plan -
luate the Plan
Was the plan followed?
Were there problems?
Is improvement needed?
evise the plan as needed.

**LEARNING**
1. Identify the Problem
   a. What needs to be learned?
   b. Why learn it?
2. Organize Learning Sources
   a. What sources could help?
   b. Locate, transfer, and arrange.
3. Unpack Learning Sources
   a. Where is the knowledge?
   b. What do the sources tell?
   c. Does the knowledge help?
   d. How can it be arranged?
4. Pack Knowledge Found
   a. How can they be arranged?
   b. When are they to be arranged?
   c. What more could be learned?
5. Return Sources
   a. What needs to be returned?
   b. When can they be returned?
   c. How can they be returned?

**ORGANIZING**
1. Identify the Resources
   a. What resources are needed? (people, materials, tools, time)
   b. How much of each is needed?
2. Locate Resources
   a. How can they be located? (classification and sources)
   b. Where are they located?
3. Transfer Resources
   a. Where are they needed?
   b. When are they needed?
   c. How can they be transferred?
4. Arrange Resources
   a. How can they be arranged?
   b. When are they to be arranged?
5. Return Resources
   a. What needs to be returned?
   b. When can they be returned?
   c. How can they be returned?

**SUPERVISING**
1. Decide on Supervision
   a. Is supervision needed?
   b. What supervision is needed?
2. Tell About the Plan
   a. What resources are needed?
   b. What behaviors are needed?
   c. What consequences are needed?
3. Direct Activity Flow
   a. What direction is needed?
   b. How should direction be given?
   c. What progress can be identified?
4. Look for Success
   a. What has been done?
   b. What should be done?
   b. Is there success?
5. Point Out Consequences
   a. What ones are happening?
   b. What ones could happen?
   c. How can they be pointed out?

**HELPING**
--Helper & Helpee Steps--
1. Identify If Help is Needed.
2. Offer to OR Ask for Help.
3. If Offer OR Asking Accepted Work Together.
4. If Offer OR Asking Rejected, Accept Rejection.
5. When Helping is Done, Thank OR Accept Thanks.

**INTERVENING**
1. Identify the Need to Intervene
   a. Is there a conflict?
   b. Who can stop the conflict?
2. Stop the Conflict
   a. How can the conflict be stopped?
   b. Is more needed?
   c. Who should be the guide?
3. Find a Better Way
   a. What are some better ways?
   b. Select a better way.
   c. Practice the better way.
4. Settle the Conflict
   a. Is a settlement needed?
   b. What settlements would fit?
   b. Monitor the settlement.

**SHARING**
--Sharer & Sharee Steps--
1. Identify If Sharing is Needed.
2. Offer to OR Ask to Share.
3. If Offer OR Asking Accepted, Share as Needed.
4. If Offer OR Asking Rejected, Accept Rejection.
5. When Sharing is Done, Thank OR Accept Thanks.

**Self-Monitoring**

The Self-monitoring strategy can be defined as a process that consists of two stages the first one is the observing and the second one is recording. The role of the students is to identify whether the wanted behaviour appeared or not. After that, features of the target language will be the self-recorded by the students [9].

**Self-Evaluation**

Self-evaluation is not only about the behaviour recording but go beyond that to the evaluation of performance. This strategy includes the student do a comparison between his performance by relating it to a number of standard criteria (e.g., completing 10 word problems with at least 90% accuracy). The standard characteristics can be put forward by the students himself or the teacher.

**Self-Instruction**

This strategy can be defined as "the use of self-talk to bolster performance". To pit in other words, the self-statements is used by students to control their beautiful such as "This is a long assignment, but I can finish this work by breaking it into smaller chunks" [10].

Self – instruction can be performed by students whispering or telling themselves statements that can motivate them to finish their tasks. Fish and Mendola [11] for example employed self-instruction training for the purpose of raising the rate in which three students at the elementary school finish their homework.

**Goal Setting**

This strategy involves a behavioural target that is put forward by students such as when they put a goal like "writing an essay". Then, the effort of the students is structured. The teacher or instructor can help students to achieve their goal by providing them with the information about how to proceed with the goal so that they can be motivated to achieve their goals [12].
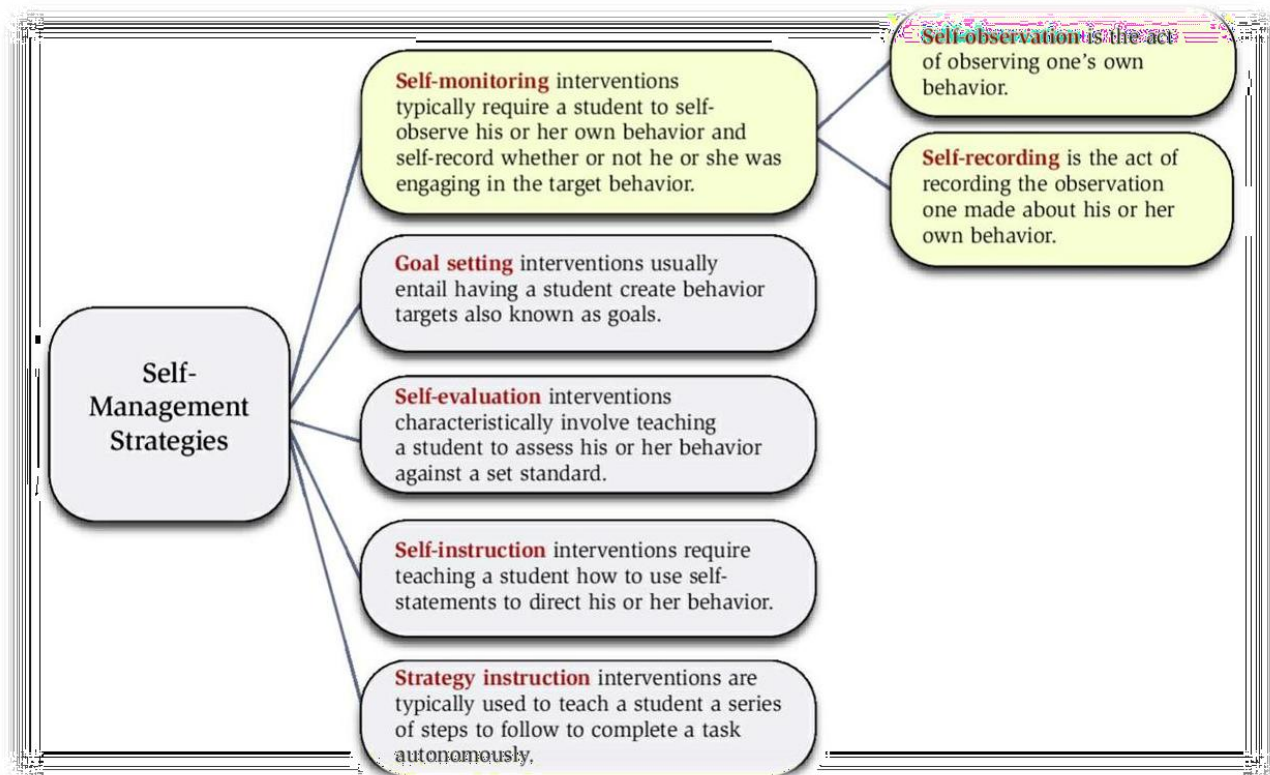


**METHODOLOGY:**

**The Experimental Design**

The aims and goals of this study demand a pre-test and post-tests experiment to be conducted to the control group. As it is previously mentioned, the researcher divided the sample into two groups, the first group is the control group in which the traditional methods are applied. The other group is the experimental which used the self-management strategies. A pre-test is conducted in order to assess the students' level of performance in reading comprehension before using the self -management strategies.

**Table (1)** The experimental Design

| The Sample | |
|---|---|
| **Experimental** | **Control** |
| Self- management strategies | Traditional methods |

**The Participants of the study**

The participants of the study are students in the first stage at English Department in The Colleges of Education at Missan University/the academic year (20202021). The researcher randomly selected 30 students to participate in the study.

**The Sample**

The sample that had been chosen for the current study consists of thirty students. Those students are at their first stage in the English department. In order to fulfill the aims of the study, those thirty students are divided into two groups. Fifteen of them are selected to be in the control group where they were to read subjects in the English language using the traditional strategies. The other fifteen students were selected to be in the experimental where the self- management strategies are used to read the materials in the English language. The sample of the study can be further illustrated in Table (2).

**Table (2)** The sample of the study

| Group of students | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Experimental  group** | **Control group** | **30** |
| **15** | **15** | |

**The Instruments of the Study**

The nature of the study required a pre-test and post-test to be conducted. Therefore, the researcher conducted a pre test by assessing the performance of the two groups in reading comprehension before using the self-management strategies to make a comparison between the two main scores of the groups in the pre- and post-tests. The students were tested by a set of questions to be answered after reading a subject in English language. Then, the results of the tests before and after using the self-management strategies are compared to find out whether there is any statistical difference between the two main scores.

**The Results of the Study**

The study results are analyzed based on the hypotheses of the study. As stated before, the study Hypotheses that there is statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group performance of the control group in reading comprehension. In order to test the truth of this hypothesis. T. test for Independent Sample was conducted. The results of the tests show that the calculated value (0.150), that is to say it is higher than the calculated value and the level of significance is (a= 0.05). Thus, this shows that there is indeed notable statistical differences in mean scores in the results of pre- and post- tests of the two groups, that is before and after using self-management strategies. Consider Tables (2) and (3) which explains this results clearly.

**Table (2)** Results of the pre-test

| Group | N. | Mean scores | Standard deviations | T. Value | Calculated value | Significance level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental (pre-test) | 15 | 38.6 | 3.77 | 0.025 | 0.150 | Non significance |
| Control (pre-test) | 15 | 33.8 | 6.38 | | | |

**Table (3)** Results from the post-test.

| Group | N. | Mean scores | Standard deviations | T. Value | Calculated value | Significance level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental (post-test) | 15 | 43.8 | 3.48 | 0.0202 | 0.160 | 0.05 |
| Experimental (pre-test) | 15 | 38.6 | 3.77 | | | |

## CONCLUSIONS

In the light of the results obtained, the researcher has come to the conclusion that using self- management strategies can have a positive effect on developing and improving students' reading comprehension. In other words, self-management strategies can have a better influence on their performance in reading comprehension. Therefore, self-management strategies are considered to be better than the traditional methods in developing the students reading comprehension. Furthermore, this strategy supports the students' ability to control their time and enable them to focus more on their goals. Students who successfully employ these strategies can gain an ability to find a solution for a problem he may face by thinking about the reasons why it is not working. To put it in the other way, self-management strategies can be seen as "thinking about thinking." Notably, when students face difficulties while reading, or they do not understand certain materials, they can simply move backward and reread it again, or they can rearrange the materials in the text till it can make sense.

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