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The Role of Reading Strategies in Middle School Reading Comprehension: A Classroom-Based Action Research Project

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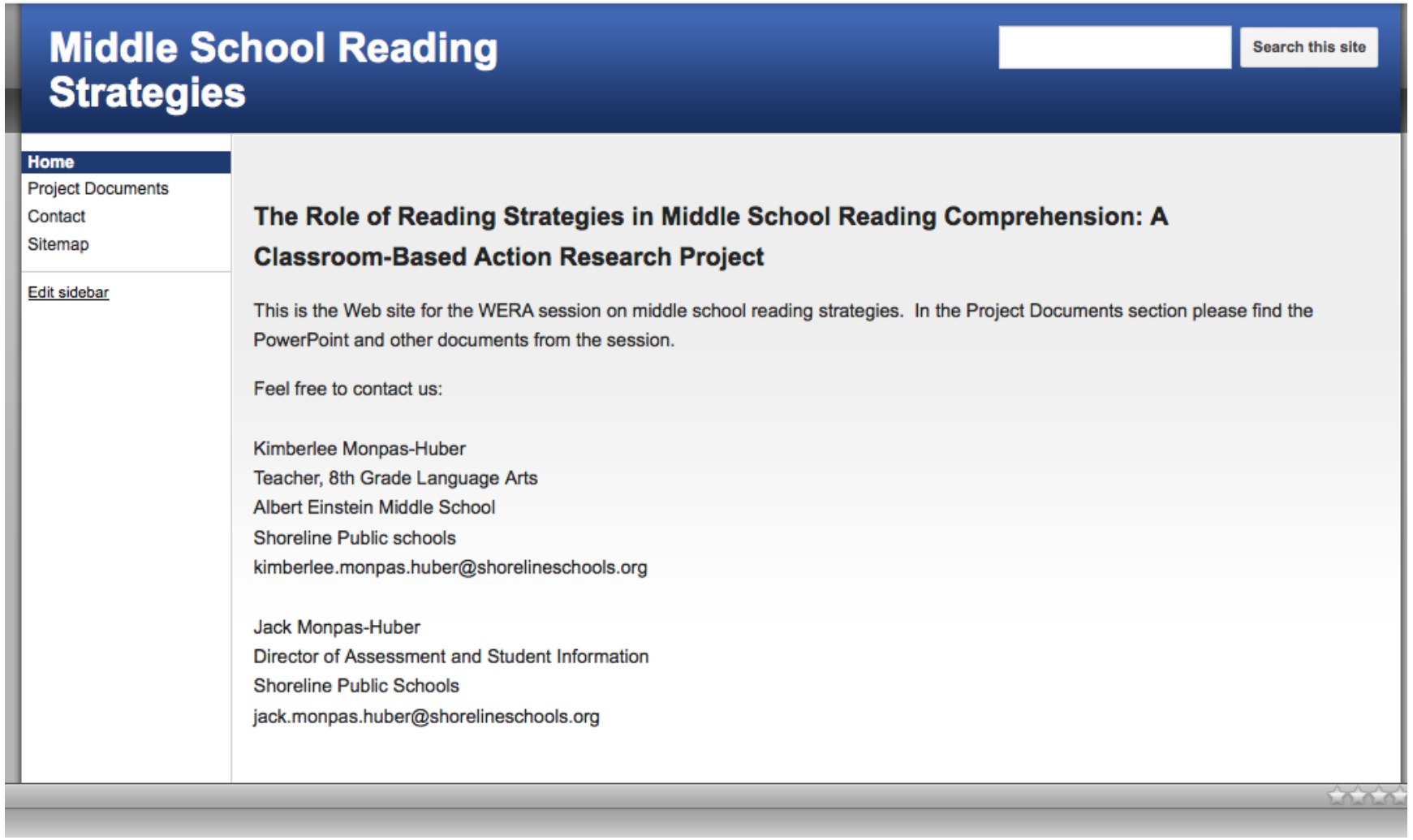
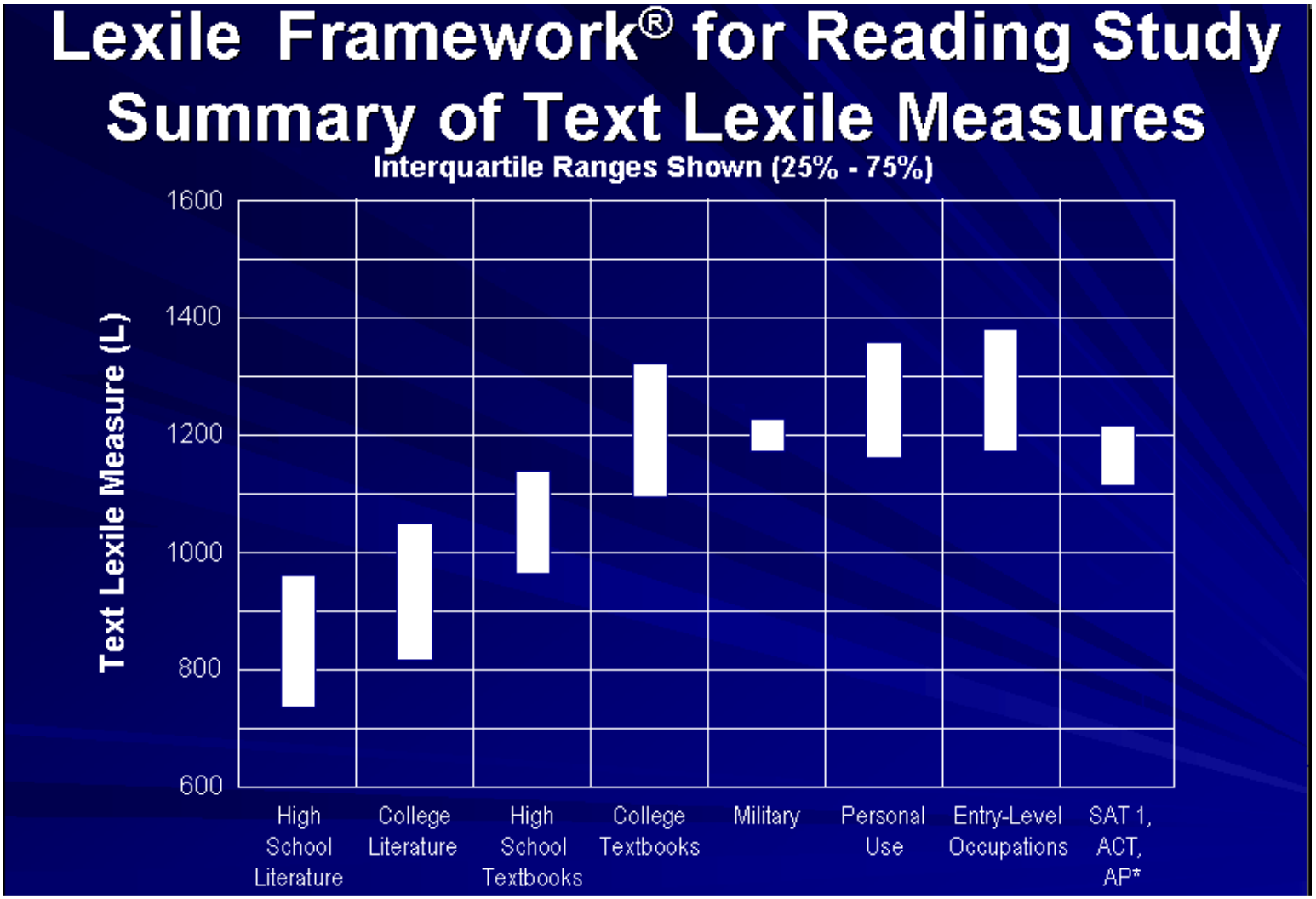
Session Web site

https://sites.google.com/a/k12.shorelineschools.org/middle-school-reading-strategies/



Importance of adolescent literacy

Preparing students for college and career level reading



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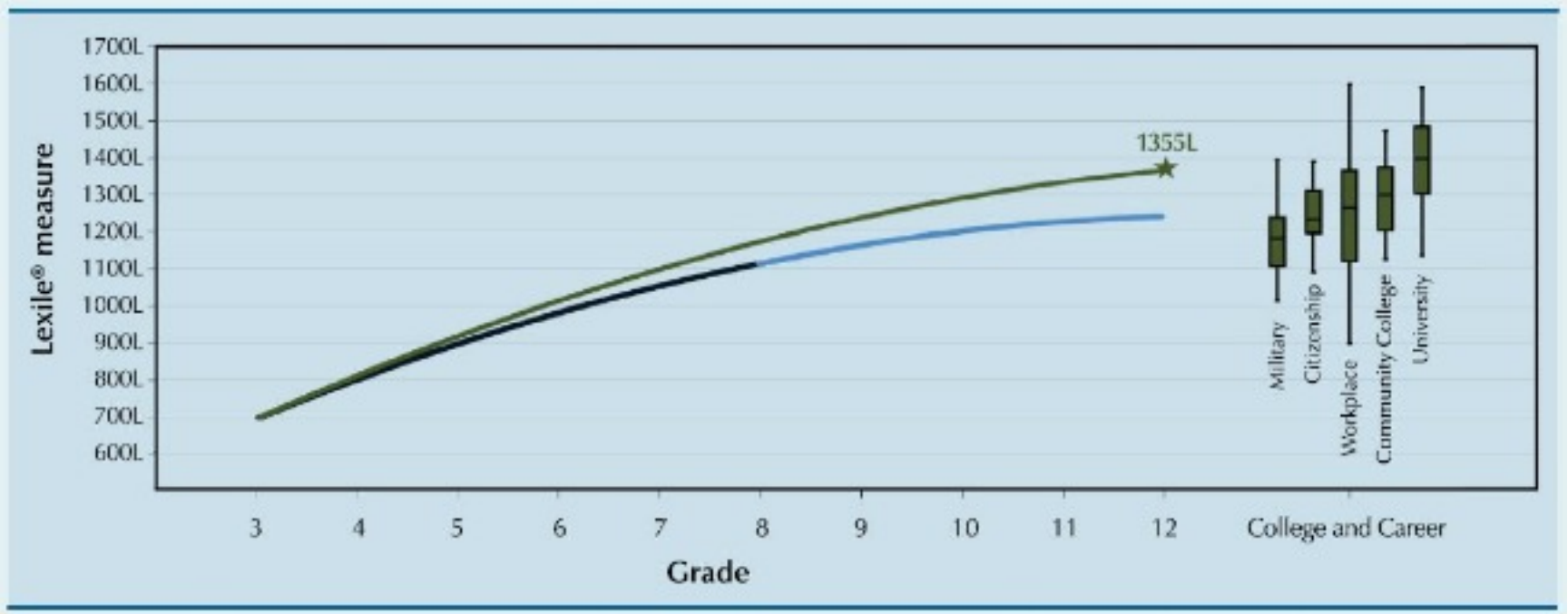
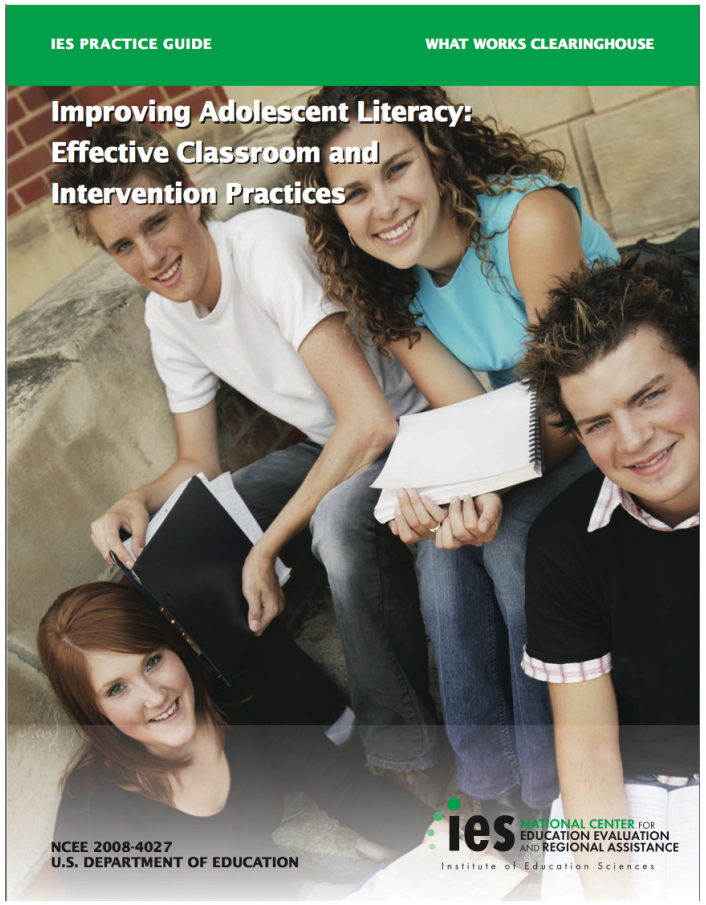


Growth in reading comprehension (Lexile), North Carolina (Williamson, Thompson, & Baker, 2006, quoted in Smith, 2011)

Importance of reading comprehension strategies

Research supports **explicit instruction** of reading comprehension strategies at middle school (Kamil et al., 2008)



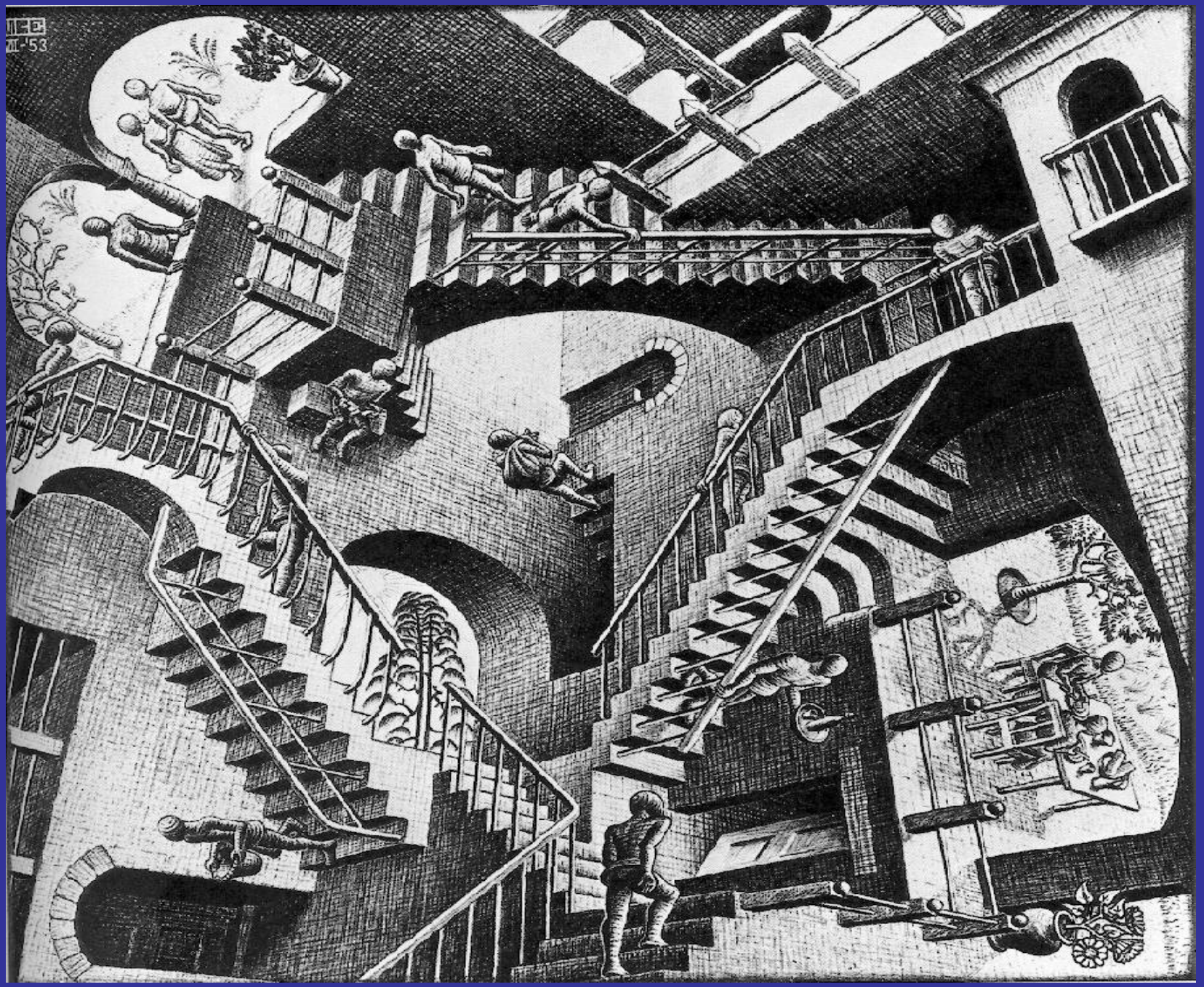
What are the reading strategies?

This is how I begin to introduce reading strategies to students in my classroom . . . .


All Those Words!

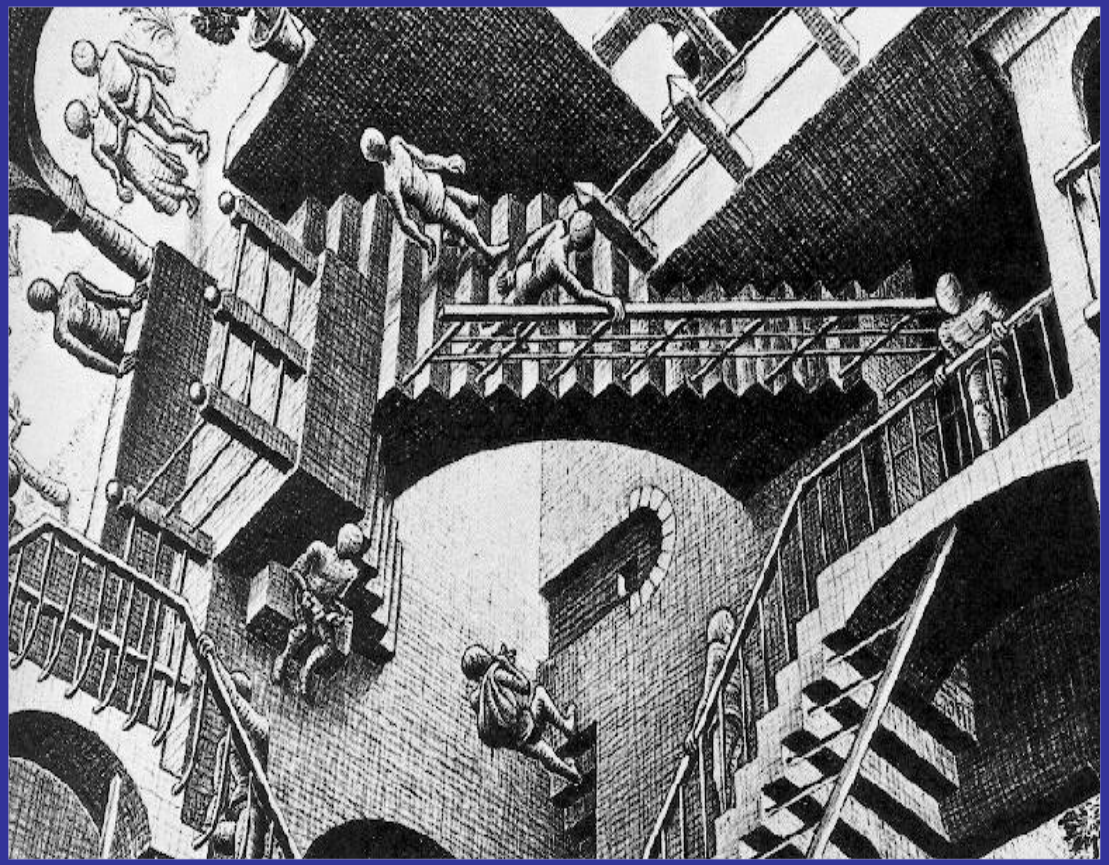
What is your FIRST reaction?

CONFUSION OF THE BRAIN?



Finding A Way In…

- Where to start?
- Where to end?
- Up or Down?



Escher

The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way, and then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down what seemed to be a very deep well. Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her, and to wonder what was going to happen next.

--Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

Seven Reading Strategies

The strategies I'm going to teach you are like a toolbox for you. You can pull out the 'tools' when and as you need them. Keep in mind that which tools (strategies) work best for you may be different depending on the specific reading and/or on your personal situation.

Creating Connections

Creating Connections

- Text-to-self

Connections between the text and past experiences or knowledge

- Text-to-Text

Connections between text and other written material

- Text-to-World

Connection between text and bigger issues, events, or concerns

Questioning

To ask…

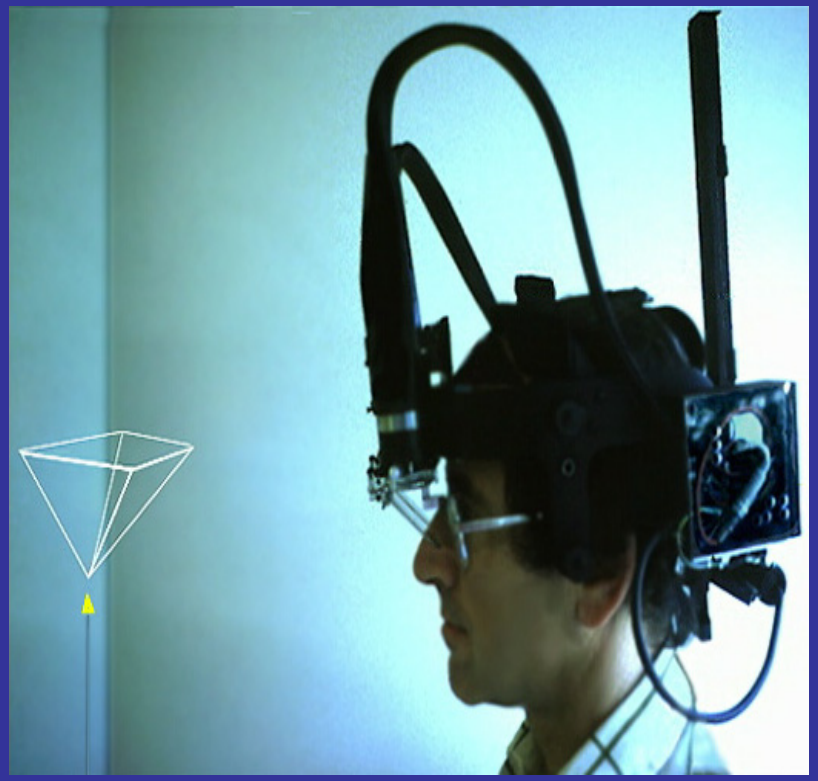
Or to ponder?

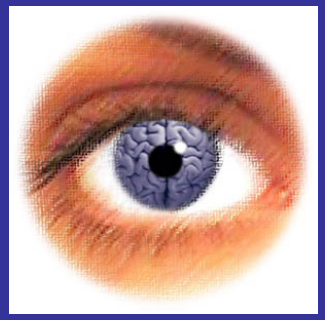
Questioning

"Reader is propelled forward"

- Construct Meaning
- Enhance Understanding
- Find Answers
- Solve Problems
- Find Specific Information
- Acquire a body of knowledge
- Discover new information
- Propel research
- Clarify confusion

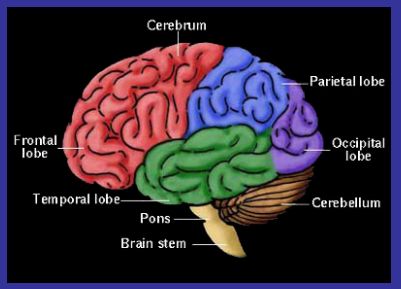
Visualizing





Visualizing

Becoming “wordstruck”



- Creates mental image
- Enhances meaning with mental image
- Links experiences to words/ideas
- Enables readers to place themselves in story
- Strengthens reader’s relationship to text
- Stimulates imaginative thinking
- Heightens engagement with text
- Brings joy to reading

Making Inferences

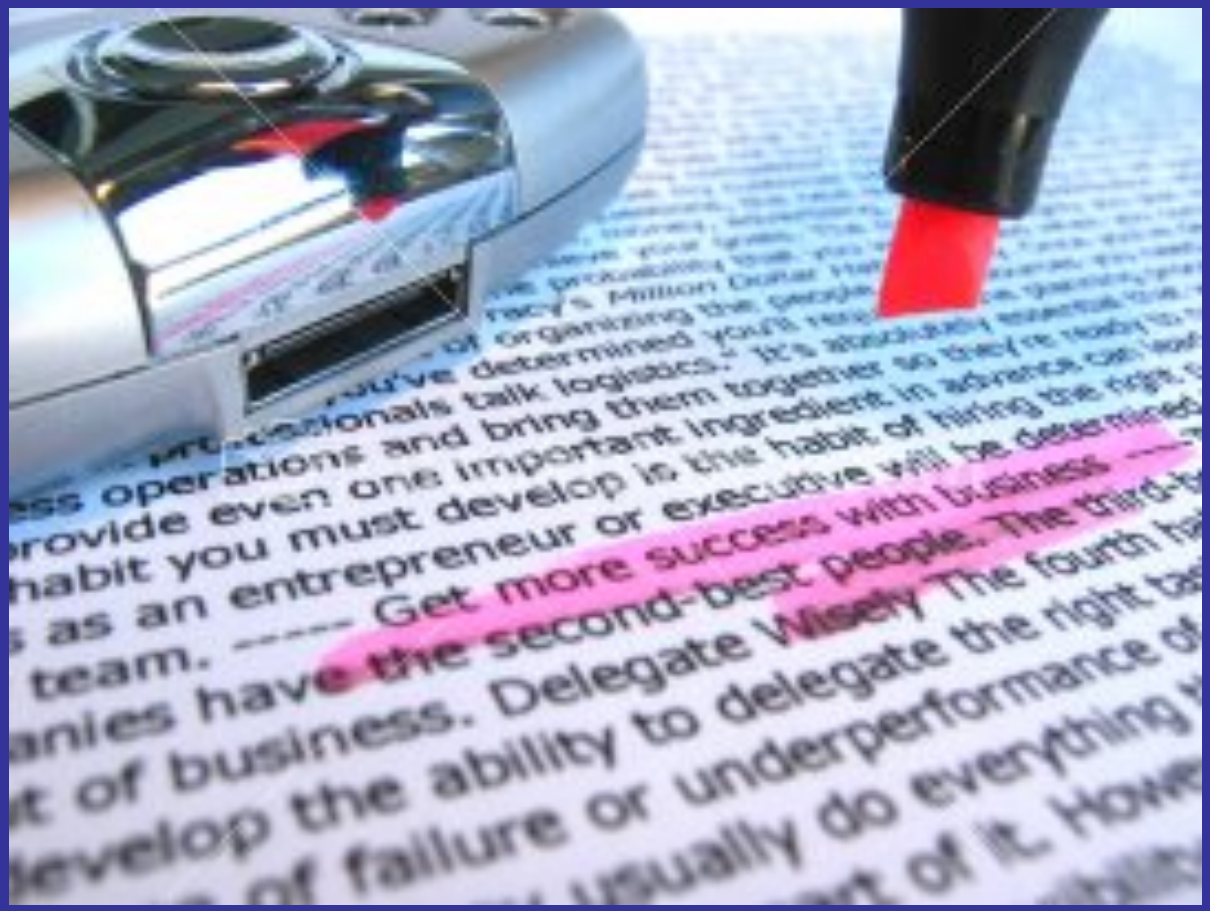
Making Inferences

"Reading Between the Lines"

r/e/a/d/i/n/g

- Draw conclusions based on clues in the text
- Make predictions before and during reading
- Identify underlying themes
- Use implicit information from the text to create meaning during and after reading
- Use the pictures to gain meaning

Determining Importance



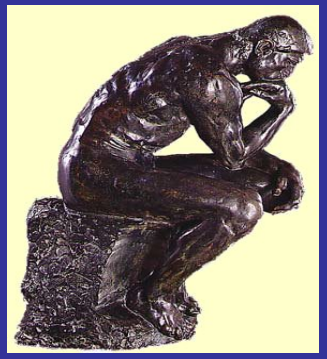
Determining Importance "Distilling the essence of a text"

- Remember important information
- Learn new information and build background knowledge
- Distinguish what's important from what's interesting
- Discern a theme, opinion, or perspective
- Answer a specific question
- Determine if the author's message is to inform, persuade, or entertain

Synthesizing Information

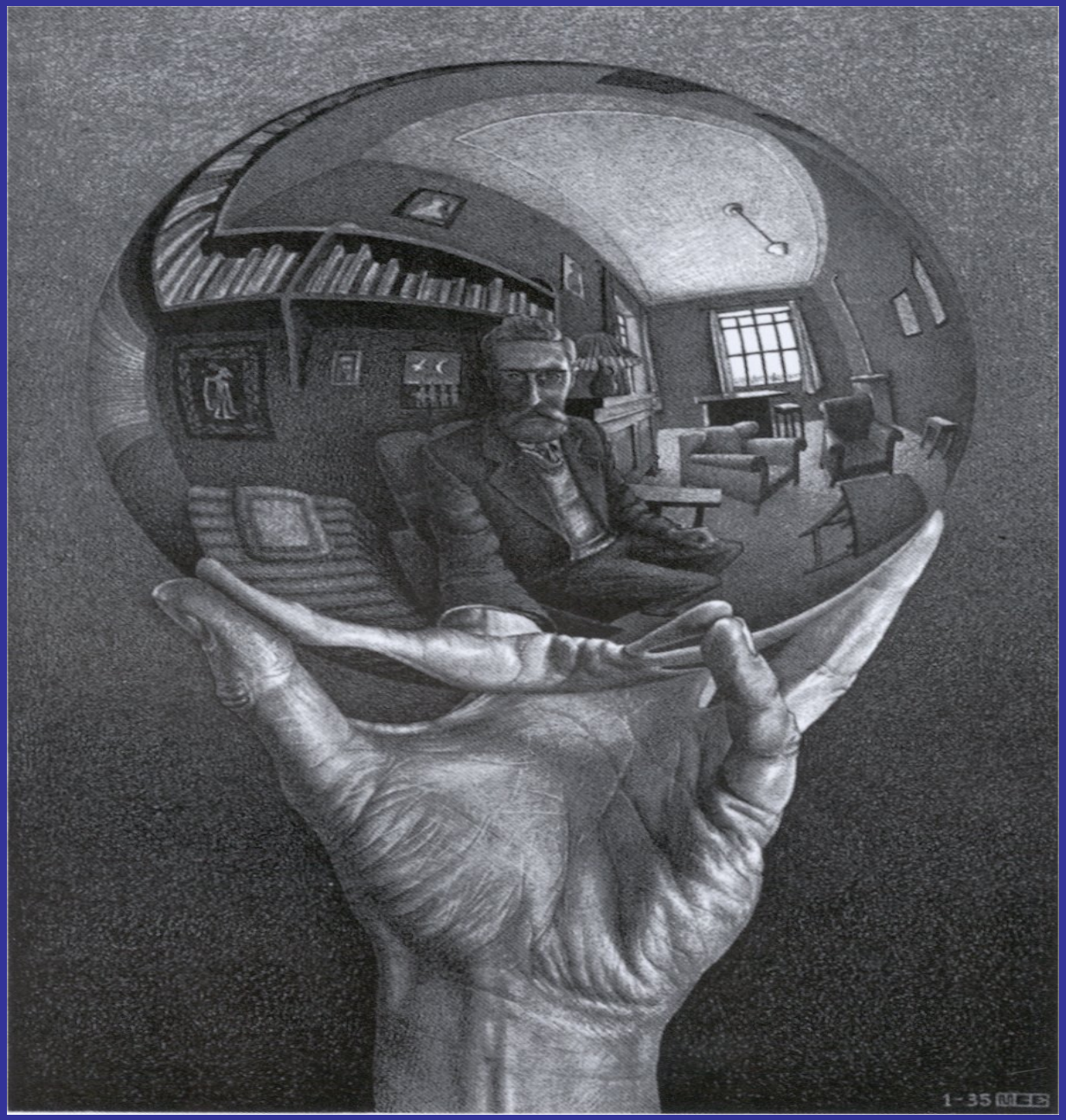
Synthesize Information

"The evolution of thought"



- Stop and collect thoughts before reading on
- Sift important ideas from the less important details
- Combine main points into a larger concept or idea
- Make generalizations
- Make judgments
- Personalize reading by integrating new information with existing knowledge to form a new idea, opinion, or perspective

Reflecting



Reflecting

"Articulates and/or applies thoughts"

- Reflecting about their thinking
- Being strategic about their thinking
- Applying strategies flexibly according to purpose
- Pondering and revising the use of strategies
- Communicating thinking verbally and/or in writing

Time to Start Reading….

How I teach reading strategies

Making the Invisible Visible

1) The explicit instruction on strategies (Tovani, 2000)
2) Modeling
3) Give practice (require them to use the strategies)
   Guided handouts -- they make their invisible thinking visible for me to assess
      *Examples of handouts

Then the hope is we remove the scaffolding structure, and they use these strategies when and as needed without being “required”
(Really what we know “strong” readers do)

But how do we know this is happening?
Part of the answer for me is to ask them….

The importance of metacognition

In order for me to ask them (and part of what I believe is an essential part of learning anything) is to make them more metacognitively aware

Example: metacognitive journals (Schoenbach et al., 1999)

Trying to teach kids to be metacognitive (aware of own thinking while reading) because I also believe that then they are more likely to own and transfer reading strategies / skills to other content areas in school and life

Reading strategies research project

How to ask them: Self-Evaluation of Reading Strategies

Context: 8th grade English, 1 Advanced, 1 Regular 2010-11

Part of my Personal-Professional Growth Goal

Research questions

1. Are they increasing their use of reading strategies?
2. Are they transferring their strategies beyond my class?

Wanted some evidence beyond usual classroom assessment data that students were using reading strategies.

*In previous years, I had surveyed students on strategies for their own learning - increasing their metacognitive awareness (to hopefully allow them to see growth in themselves).
This was first time I collected the data to examine myself.

Collecting comprehension strategies data

How I developed the reading strategies survey

Questions from a previous reading strategies survey from Internet
Looked for survey that had questions that hit the different strategies
Reworded, added a little
Final survey: 18 items with 4-point scale (1=always, 2=sometimes, 3=seldom, 4=never)

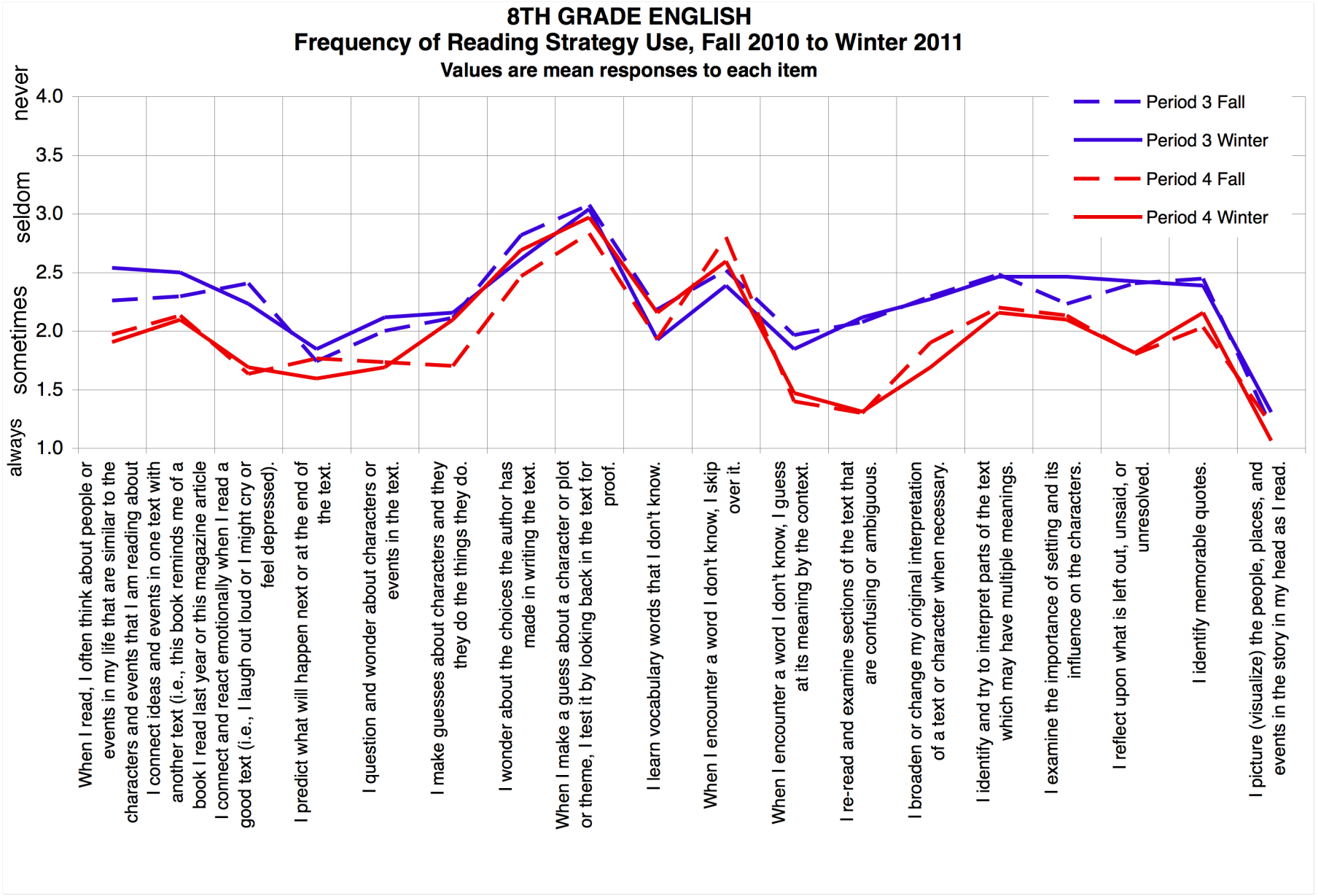
How I administered it

Explicit that asking about *any* reading (not just texts in my class)
Tried to word reading strategy items in student-friendly, nonacademic language

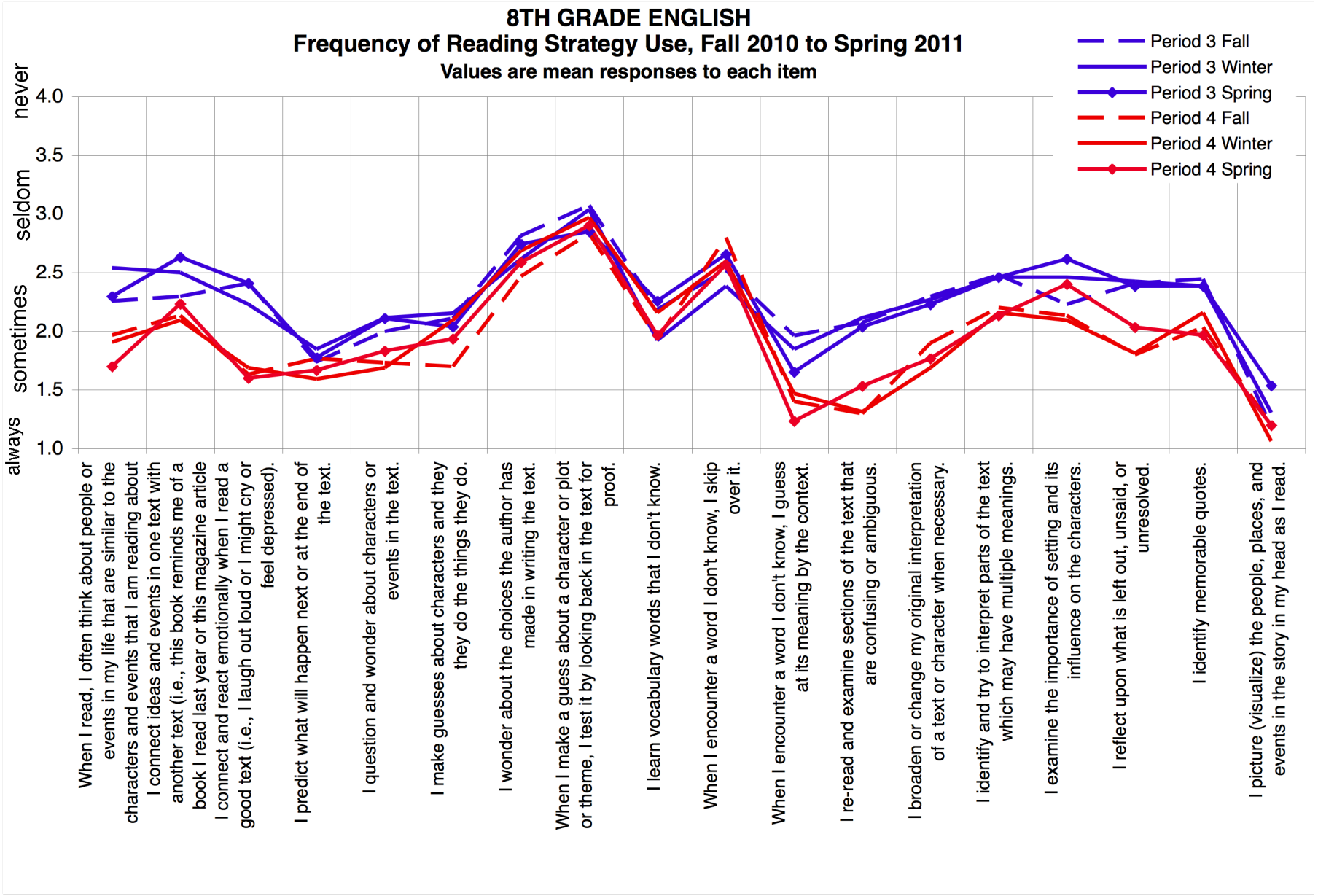
Administered paper-pencil survey three times:

- September 2010 -- within days of the start of school (baseline)
- January 2011 -- a middle measurement point (at Jack's suggestion)
- June 2011 -- end-of-year posttest to see change

Results


8TH GRADE ENGLISH
Frequency of Reading Strategy Use, Fall 2010 to Winter 2011
Values are mean responses to each item
always
sometimes
seldom
never
4.0
3.5
3.0
2.5
2.0
1.5
1.0
Period 3 Fall
Period 3 Winter
Period 4 Fall
Period 4 Winter
When I read, I often think about people or events in my life that are similar to the characters and events that I am reading about
I connect ideas and events in one text with another text (i.e., this book reminds me of a book I read last year or this magazine article
I connect and react emotionally when I read a good text (i.e., I laugh out loud or I might cry or feel depressed).
I predict what will happen next or at the end of the text.
I question and wonder about characters or events in the text.
I make guesses about characters and they they do the things they do.
I wonder about the choices the author has made in writing the text.
When I make a guess about a character or plot or theme, I test it by looking back in the text for proof.
I learn vocabulary words that I don't know.
When I encounter a word I don't know, I skip over it.
When I encounter a word I don't know, I guess at its meaning by the context.
I re-read and examine sections of the text that are confusing or ambiguous.
I broaden or change my original interpretation of a text or character when necessary.
I identify and try to interpret parts of the text which may have multiple meanings.
I examine the importance of setting and its influence on the characters.
I reflect upon what is left out, unsaid, or unresolved.
I identify memorable quotes.
I picture (visualize) the people, places, and events in the story in my head as I read.

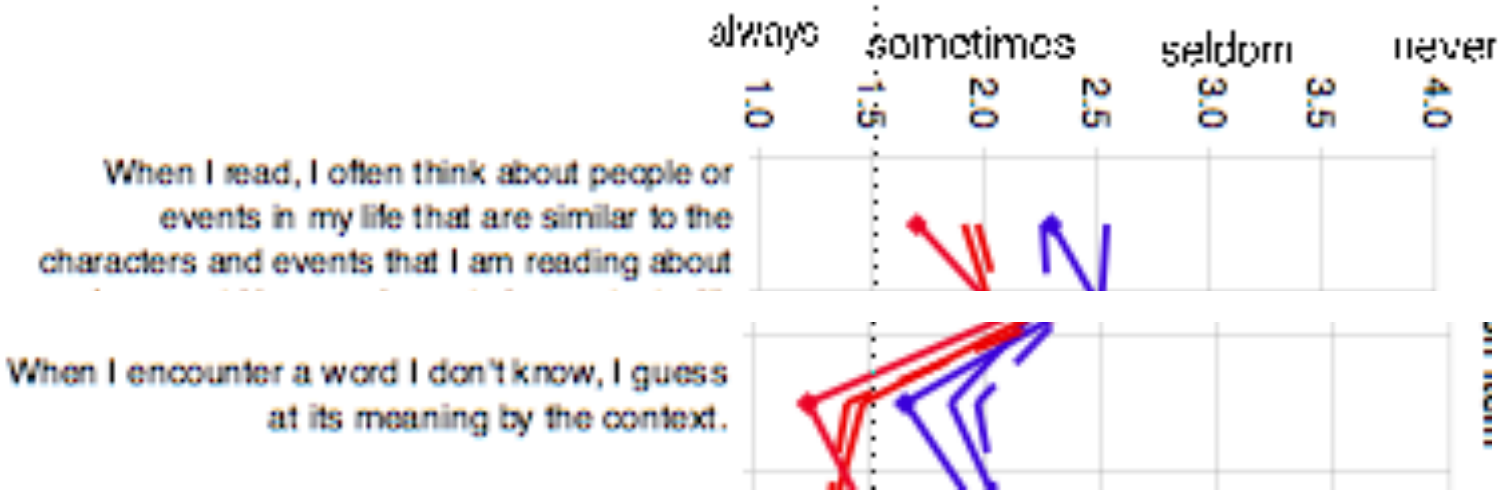
Results: Fall 2010 to Winter 2011



Back to the research questions

Are they increasing their use of reading strategies? Are they transferring their strategies beyond my class?

Mixed. Some strategies increased, but not others



Other findings

Comparisons between strategies
Most frequently used strategies: *visualizing, guessing at word meaning through context*
Least frequently used strategies: *inference (looking back in text for proof of guess), questioning*

*These have potential for informing instruction

Comparisons between students/classes
Not surprisingly, Advanced students used more strategies more often than Regular students. Findings on "react emotionally" item confirmed this.
BUT on some strategies they were remarkably similar

Change over time
Which strategies were used more as the year unfolded

Change in student achievement

Average Lexile gains, Fall 2010 to Spring 2011
8th grade Regular English

			Fall			Spring			Gain	
School	Teacher	Period	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	Mean Diff	Effect size
Einstein	Teacher A	1	23	1077	275	21	1161	224	84	0.31
		2	27	1027	206	24	1099	192	72	0.35
		4	28	1157	210	29	1227	175	70	0.33
	Monpas-Huber	**3**	**25**	**1116**	**199**	**24**	**1161**	**144**	**45**	**0.23**
	Teacher C	1	23	1162	212	20	1241	189	79	0.37
		3	24	1193	170	22	1225	173	32	0.19
		4	29	1106	185	26	1193	159	87	0.47
	Teacher D	5	19	1181	153	19	1213	197	32	0.21
Total Einstein			**198**	**1125**	**208**	**185**	**1189**	**183**	**65**	**0.31**
Kellogg	Teacher E	1	25	1207	120	25	1244	97	37	0.31
		2	27	1120	212	27	1140	216	20	0.10
	Teacher F	2	30	1103	244	29	1125	268	22	0.09
		4	24	1194	150	25	1089	257	-105	-0.70
	Teacher G	5	27	1115	164	27	1171	157	57	0.35
		6	30	1133	184	25	1162	174	29	0.16
Total Kellogg			**163**	**1143**	**187**	**158**	**1155**	**207**	**12**	**0.06**
DISTRICT			**362**	**1133**	**198**	**343**	**1173**	**195**	**41**	**0.21**

Change in student achievement

Average Lexile gains, Fall 2010 to Spring 2011
8th grade Advanced English

			Fall			Spring			Gain	
School	Teacher	Period	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	Mean Diff	Effect size
Einstein	Teacher A	3	34	1313	147	33	1336	162	23	0.16
	Monpas-Huber	**4**	**34**	**1333**	**107**	**34**	**1368**	**95**	**36**	**0.33**
	Teacher C	6	31	1354	138	31	1369	144	15	0.11
Total Einstein			99	1332	131	98	1358	136	25	0.19
Kellogg	Teacher D	6	26	1307	131	25	1314	138	7	0.06
	Teacher E	1	29	1292	151	27	1346	143	54	0.36
		4	25	1326	140	26	1328	142	2	0.01
Total Kellogg			80	1308	140	78	1330	140	22	0.16
District			179	1321	136	176	1345	138	24	0.18

Correlations to other reading measures

Correlations among 8th grade reading measures, 2010-11

	Mean	Standard deviation	Reading Strategies Score			Spring Lexile	MSP Scale Score
			Fall	Winter	Spring		
Reading Strategies Score							
Fall	37.7	7.6	1.000				
Winter	38.6	7.6	0.576***	1.000			
Spring	37.7	8.2	0.675***	0.586***	1.000		
Spring Lexile	1275.6	131.5	-0.243*	-0.223*	-0.247*	1.000	
MSP Scale Score	428.4	19.8	-0.334**	-0.302*	-0.243*	0.489***	1.000

a. Listwise N=49

* p < .05

** p < . 01

*** p < .001

Note. Values are negative because Reading Strategies Score is reverse coded -- so that higher value means less frequent strategy use

Limitations of 2010-11 study

Limitations of self-report

Questioned “seldom” on the frequency scale

Questioned order of scale (1=always … 4=never)

Questioned fit between scale and some items (i.e., “always” not always the goal for some strategies)

Originally designed for high school; some wording may have been challenging for middle school

Some strategies (i.e., synthesizing, determining importance) could be better represented

Next steps

New school year: 2011-12

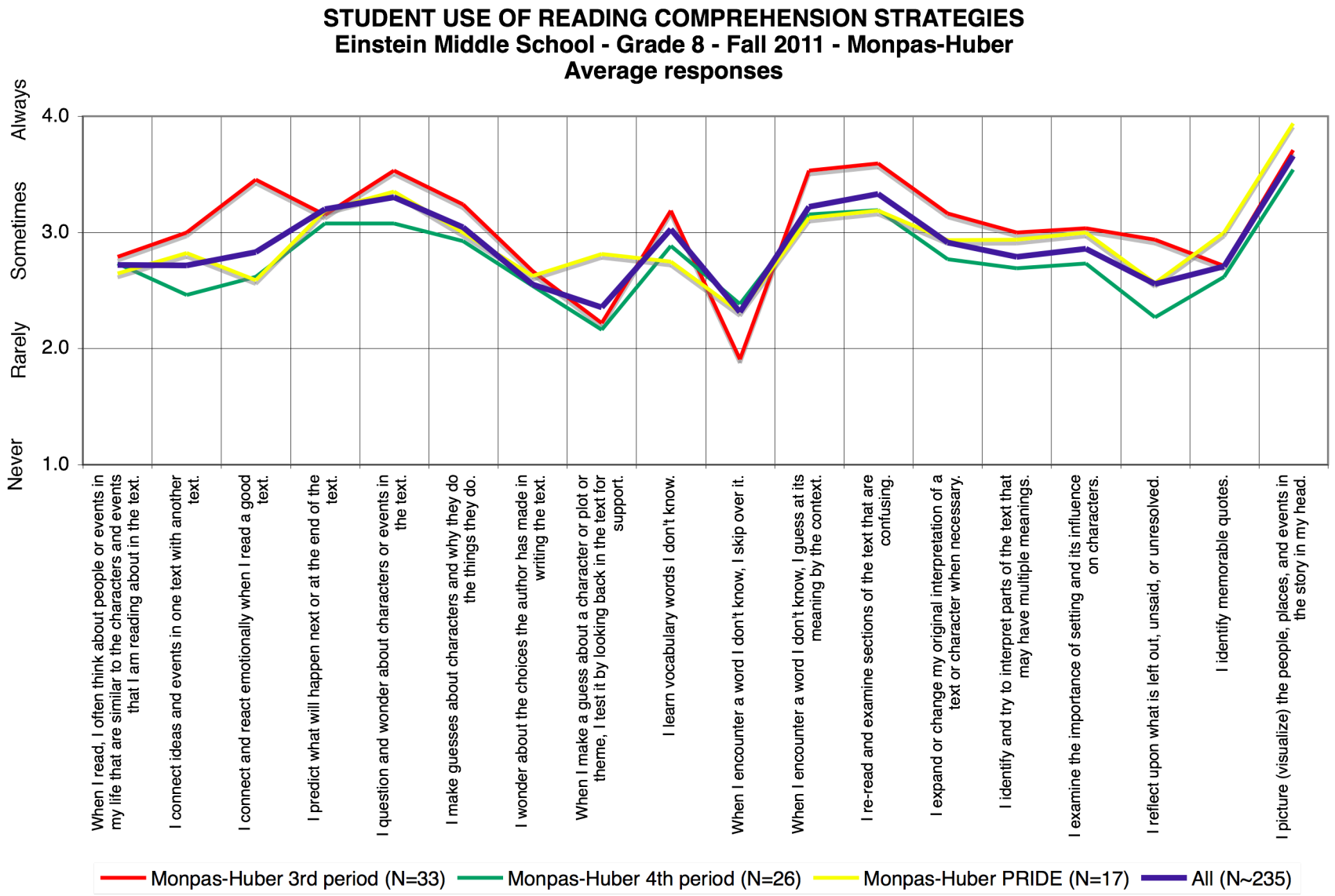
Administer to broader student population

Rescaled so that higher value = more frequent use

Online administration (Google Docs)

Most 8th grade (N ~ 235)

Fall 2011 data



New possibilities

Reading Strategies Scale

Can combine responses to items to form a Reading Strategies Scale

Range (18 - 72)

Initial psychometric work (Rasch calibration in Winsteps) suggests items (strategies) do align themselves into a meaningful, reliable scale that suggests *progression* in use of reading strategies from one strategy to the next

Scale could be useful for SMART goals, improvement planning

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