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**The Effectiveness of Some Reading Comprehension  
Strategies in Teaching Geography Units on the First Stage  
of Basic Education Pupils Achievement and – Their  
Attitudes – Towards the Environment**

**A Thesis**

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## Study Summary

### Introduction:

Teaching and learning of social studies relies mainly on the realization and understanding of all what is written in the syllabi. Thus, it is the student's role to read and comprehend the facts, concepts, geographical and historical relationships, etc. included in social studies textbooks.

Social studies in fact is a field of study that includes plenty of facts. Points of view, causes and reasons. Main and sub ideas, various concepts, maps and terms that could not be dealt with as images but as a mixture of colours and codes that signify different ideas. In this way, a student is enabled to imagine or form mental pictures of the reality without being obliged to speculate it. Social studies also deals with pictures, graphs, shapes and diagrams that require a special ability of the reader to understand and use them later on to overcome the subject difficulties and abstraction. Accordingly, learning social studies is closely related to and dependent on the learners' reading abilities and reading comprehension. Teaching and learning social studies, in this way, should focus on developing the reading skill of learners in respect to understanding the content through the in-depth analysis of reading processes used by the students of different backgrounds and skill levels.

However, Hoge (١٩٩٨) argues that learners of social studies face a few difficulties that diminish their ability to comprehend the social studies topics such as, lack of expertise, content complexity as it includes various facts, events, incidents and abstract conceptions, in addition to the difficulty of understanding ideas related to the time and place dimensions. So, paying special attention to reading comprehension skills,

focusing on main ideas, concepts' learning and clarifying their implications should be the main interest of social studies teacher.

Listram declares that reading comprehension is underestimated in teaching social studies as in most cases; teachers assume that learners studying social studies are already aware of the procedures to be followed to read a text and become able to comprehend it. He also assures that reading comprehension has become a major problem- causing factor in social studies learning as those students who have reading difficulties are considered slow learners. Thus, O'Connor urges social studies teachers to accept the idea that the skills needed for social studies learning are in fact reading skills and that the acquisition of such skills require a goal. Oriented teaching and real practice opportunities.

Reading as a skill is major for primary stage students as it is the first stage of learning and the most important one we estimate the success or failure of such schools according to the reading ability of its students. It will not on exaggeration if we state that the primary school signifies or directs its students future, specifies their abilities and potentials and defines the future possibilities of nations. Since the Arab countries face the dilemma of dropping out of school after the primary stage education, developing students reading skill has become one of the major aims of those schools.

Unfortunately, it could be easily noticed that a significant percentage of primary school students fail to reach a satisfying reading ability level as many of them finish their studies at that stage without acquiring the ability to read with comprehension. So, it could be easily assumed that lack or weakness of reading comprehension is one of the contemporary educational problems faced nowadays in nearly all types of schools and all around the

world. Following, reading skill and reading comprehension specifically should receive its due attention, not only by Arabic language teachers but by teachers of all subjects as reading is the base of advance in variant fields.

### **Study problem:**

It is evident that the usually-used methods of teaching are not as effective as required having a negative impact on students' achievement in social studies

So, in light of what preceded we could state that the study problem is concerned with students' weakness in reading comprehension. It attempts to find an answer for the following main question:

What is the effectiveness of some reading comprehension strategies in geography teaching on the first cycle of basic education pupils achievement and their attitude towards the environment?

The following sub-questions could be derived:

- ١- What are the theoretical bases of reading comprehension strategies?
- ٢- What is the effect of using the main ideas strategy on the achievement of fifth grade pupils of some geography units?
- ٣- What is the effectiveness of using SQ3R strategy on the achievement of fifth grade pupils of some geography units?
- ٤- How effective are the main ideas and SQ3R strategies on the achievement of fifth grade pupils?
- ٥- What is the effectiveness of the main ideas and SQ3R strategies on fifth grade pupils' attitude towards the environment?

## **Study Aims:**

### **The present study aims at:**

- ١- Recognizing the effectiveness of some reading comprehension strategies on fifth grade pupils' achievement of social studies.
- ٢- Recognizing the effectiveness of some reading comprehension strategies on the pupil's attitude towards the environment.

## **Study Importance:**

### **The study is considered important as:**

- ١- It provides teachers and supervisors of social studies working at the primary stage with new reading comprehension strategies that could be implemented in teaching social studies to help in overcoming the short comings of the usually used ones.
- ٢- The Current study might help in developing primary stage pupils' reading comprehension leading to the enhancement of their general achievement.
- ٣- Developing social studies teaching by using non-systematic strategies in teaching.
- ٤- Allowing learners to become more active and positive when learning.
- ٥- Helping teachers to experience, a functional method of using some reading comprehension strategies when teaching social studies.

## **Study Limitations:**

### **The current study is limited to:**

- ١- A sample of fifth grade pupils at Fayoum Governorate.
- ٢- Two units of the social studies textbook introduced to the fifth graders namely; the desert environment unit and the coastal environment unit.

٣- some reading comprehension strategies: Main ideas strategy and SQ٣R strategy.

### **Study Instrumentations :**

١- An achievement test dealing with the content of the selected units.( Prepared by the researcher.)

٢- An attitude measure to measure fifth graders attitudes towards the environment. (Prepared by the researcher.)

٣- Teacher's guide .

### **Study Method:**

#### **The current study made use of the following methods:**

١- The descriptive method in reviewing the literature and previous studies to be used for the theoretical background of the study.

٢- The Experimental method in carrying out the study experiment. The study used three groups of pupils: the first experimental group of twenty pupils that studied the two units using the main ideas strategy , the second experimental group ( twenty pupils ) that studied the two units using the SQ٣R strategy , and the control group ( twenty pupils ) that followed the usual way in teaching and learning.

### **Study Hypotheses:**

#### **The study aimed at testing the following hypotheses:**

١- There is a statistically significant difference between means of scores of the first experimental group (using main ideas strategy) and the control one ( using the usual way in teaching and learning ) in the achievement test of the specified units in favor of the experimental group.

٢- There is a statistically significant difference between means of scores of the second experimental group (using SQ٣R strategy)

and the control one ( using the usual way in teaching and learning ) in the achievement test of the specified units in favor of the experimental group.

٣- There is no statistically significant difference between means of scores of the first and second experimental groups in the achievement test of the specified units.

٤- There is a statistically significant difference between means of scores of the first experimental group ( using main ideas strategy) and the control one ( using the usual way in teaching and learning ) in the attitude towards the environment measure in favor of the experimental group.

٥- There is a statistically significant difference between means of scores of the second experimental group (using SQ٣R strategy) and the control one in the attitude towards the environment measure in favor of the experimental group.

٦- There is no statistically significant difference between means of scores of the first and second experimental groups in the attitude towards the environment measure.

### **Study procedures:**

#### **The current study followed the following procedure:**

١- Reviewing the literature and studies related to the reading comprehension strategies and those used in teaching social studies.

٢- Defining the nature of reading comprehension strategies (Main Ideas and SQ٣R).

٣- Preparing the teacher's guide for the selected two units and reorganizing them according to the reading comprehension strategies (main ideas and SQ٣R).

٤- Selecting a random sample of fifth grade pupils and dividing them into three groups, two experimental groups to study the

units using the suggested strategies and a control one that follows the usually used method.

٥- Preparing the achievement test and judging its validity by showing it to a number of social studies curricula specialists.

٦- Preparing the attitude towards the environment measure and judging its validity by showing it to a number of social studies curricula specialists.

٧- Administering the pre-achievement test and the attitude environment scale to the study sample to obtain pre data and analyzing statistically .

٨- Teaching the two experimental groups using the selected strategies. One of the groups was taught through the use of the main ideas strategy and the other used the SQ̃R strategy while the control group was taught using the usual way of teaching .

٩- Post administration of the study instruments to obtain post data.

١٠- Statistical analysis of study results.

١١- Results. recommendations and suggestions.

### **Study Results:**

**In light of the preceding procedure , the following results have been achieved :**

١- The study proved that there is a statistically significant difference between means of scores of the first experimental group (using main ideas strategy) and the control one ( using the usual way of teaching ) in the post administration of the achievement test of the specified units at (٠,٠١) in favor of the first experimental group signifying the advance of the first experimental group ( using the main ideas strategy ) over the control group ( using the usual way of teaching and learning ) , showing the effectiveness of the main ideas strategy used in



teaching the selected two units introduced to the fifth grade pupils ( the study sample ) through their social studies syllabus.

٢- The study proved that there is a statistically significant difference between means of scores of the second experimental group ( using SQ٢R strategy) and the control one ( using the usual way of teaching and learning ) in the post administration of the achievement test of the specified units at (٠,٠١) in favor of the second experimental group signifying the advance of the second experimental group over the control group , showing the effectiveness of the SQ٢R strategy used in teaching the selected two units introduced to the fifth grade pupils through their social studies syllabus.

٣- The study proved that there is no statistically significant difference between means of scores of the first and second experimental groups (using main ideas and SQ٢R strategies) in the post administration of the achievement test at ( ٠,٠٥ ) showing the similar effectiveness of the two strategies used in teaching the selected two units introduced to the fifth grade pupils through their social studies syllabus.

٤- The study proved that there is no statistically significant difference between means of scores of the first experimental group (using main ideas strategy) and the control one ( using the usual way of teaching and learning ) in the post administration of the attitude towards the environment scale at (٠,٠٥) rejecting the fourth hypothesis.

٥- The study proved that there is no statistically significant difference between means of scores of the second experimental group ( using SQ٢R strategy) and the control one in the post administration of the attitude towards the environment scale at (٠,٠٥) rejecting the fifth hypothesis.

٦- The study proved that there is no statistically significant difference between means of scores of the first and second experimental groups (using main ideas and SQ٣R strategies) in the post administration of the attitude towards the environment scale at (٠,٠٥) , therefore the sixth hypothesis has been verified .

### **Study Recommendations:**

١- Training social studies teachers in general and geography teachers specifically on using main ideas and SQ٣R strategies as they proved effective in developing pupils' achievement .

٢- Preparing teacher's guides showing the methods of teaching when using the main ideas and SQ٣R strategies in daily teaching.

٣- Using modern methods and strategies in teaching social studies as they make learners active participants in the learning process.

٤- Using main ideas and SQ٣R strategies in teaching different subjects at variant educational stages.

٥- Training student teachers on using reading comprehension strategies through their social studies methods course.

٦- Advising students to make use of main ideas and SQ٣R strategies in studying and revising social studies lessons and doing their homework.

٧- Including environmental concepts in the social studies syllabi.

### **Study Suggestions:**

١- Investigating of some reading comprehension strategies in geography teaching on developing the secondary stage reading comprehension level and critical thinking.

٢- The effectiveness of some reading comprehension strategies used in geography teaching on developing the critical reading skills of the second cycle of basic education students.

٣- The effectiveness of some reading comprehension strategies used in teaching geography on developing the second cycle of basic education pupils reading comprehension and creative thinking.

٤- The effectiveness of some reading comprehension strategies used in teaching geography on developing map reading skills of second cycle of basic education pupils.

٥- A suggested program for teacher training on using reading comprehension strategies in teaching geography .

٦- The effectiveness of some reading comprehension strategies used in geography teaching on developing the first cycle of basic education pupils' reading skills and learning retention.

٧- A suggested for teacher training on developing the environmental awareness of second cycle of basic education pupils.

٨- Carrying further research for developing first cycle of basic education social studies syllabus in light of the environment-related issues and problems .

٩- carrying similar researches in other branches of social studies.