

Building Comprehension Through Reflective Reading Practice



Deborah Brown

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👤 User since 2015



The Challenge



When Deborah Brown began teaching reading comprehension to adult learners—some as young as 18, others in their seventies—she needed more than a digital tool. She needed a platform that empowered students who had long been underestimated or underserved by traditional systems. Her classroom was filled with diverse learners: ESL graduates, students reading at a 4th–8th grade level, and individuals who hadn’t heard of italics, synonyms, or even rows and columns.

Her goal wasn’t just comprehension—it was confidence, agency, and self-reflection. Enter ReadTheory. But it didn’t start with a training or a mandate—it started with a student. Deborah says, “An ESL student brought it to me. She said, ‘Ms. Brown, I found this program, and I think you’d like it.’ And she was right.”

That student’s dedication to using ReadTheory daily paid off, and she quickly tested out of Deborah’s class. Inspired, Deborah began using it with all her learners—and it transformed her classroom culture.



The Solution

Deborah brought ReadTheory into her classroom with a clear goal: to turn every quiz into a learning opportunity. She created a “ReadTheory Checkup” form to help students track not just their answers, but the reasons behind their mistakes.

Instead of focusing on correct answers, she emphasized learning from errors—helping students recognize whether their mistakes were due to habits like rushing or gaps in knowledge. This self-reflection led to stronger reading strategies and greater confidence.

When COVID hit, her class didn’t miss a beat. Already using ReadTheory, her students stayed on track while others paused.

She later refined her approach—shifting from three daily quizzes to one focused attempt with review—and began tracking each student’s monthly progress: number of quizzes, average score, and highest score at or above 80%. This gave her deeper insight into their growth and effort.



Common Reading Errors Identified Through Student Self-Reflection

Mistake Category	Description	Example
Rushing / Skimming	Reading too quickly, skipping details	Missed a key word in the passage
Misreading Key Words	Overlooking words like “not,” “best,” or “mainly”	Chose the opposite of what was asked
Guessing Without Understanding	Selecting answers without reading explanations	No strategy used
Lack of Background Knowledge	Confused by literary terms or academic vocabulary	Didn’t understand “metaphor” or “tone”

The Impact

Deborah’s use of ReadTheory extended beyond her classroom. Many students introduced the program to their own children, with impressive results. One learner’s 7-year-old daughter, motivated by her mother’s example, quickly advanced to a 5th-grade reading level and was the only student in her class who continued reading during spring break.

Her adult students also embraced the challenge. They began analyzing their mistakes, thinking critically about their choices, and even questioning answer explanations—showing a growing sense of ownership over their learning.

Deborah encourages broader adoption of ReadTheory, recommending it to colleagues and suggesting that waitlisted students begin early to show readiness and commitment. She regularly collaborates with teachers like [Kevin Jordan](#) to share strategies and best practices.

She also brings a personal touch to her teaching, often sharing her own missteps to normalize learning through mistakes. In one example, she recalled accidentally ordering 12 pounds of carrots instead of 12 individual carrots during a rushed online grocery order—a relatable reminder to slow down and pay attention to details, both in reading and in life.

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“The reason that I like ReadTheory so much is that it gives my students agency. It’s not just about the right answer—it’s about why they got it wrong. And once they understand that, they’re in control of their learning.”