

## TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH PLOT RELATIONSHIPS CHART STRATEGY

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### ABSTRACT

This article elaborates with teach reading comprehension through Plot Relationships Chart Strategy. Plot Relationships Chart Strategy helps students identify the major parts of a story and improves their comprehension. Comprehension is the main goal in reading process. Reading Comprehension is a process of making sense of written ideas through meaningful interpretation and interaction with language. This strategy provides students with a chart to help them comprehend the relationship among characters, goals, problems, and solutions. The chart has four columns; the first column is for the name of the characters, the second column is for the goals of the characters, the third column is for the problems or challenges that the characters faced, and the last column is for the solution of the problems. At last, this strategy helps students comprehend what they have read.

**Keywords:** plot relationships chart strategy, reading comprehension

### ABSTRAK

*Artikel ini memaarkan tentang mengajar pemahaman membaca melalui Strategi Plot Relationship Chart. Plot Relationship Chart Strategi membantu siswa mengidentifikasi bagian utama dari sebuah cerita dan meningkatkan pemahaman mereka. Pemahaman adalah tujuan utama dalam proses membaca. Pemahaman membaca adalah sebuah proses memahami ide yang tertulis melalui interpretasi yang bermakna dan interaksi dengan bahasa. Strategi ini menyediakan diagram yang membantu siswa memahami hubungan diantara karakter, tujuan, masalah, dan penyelesaiannya. Diagram ini memiliki empat kolom; kolom pertama berisi tentang nama-nama karakter, kolom kedua berisi tentang tujuan dari si karakter, kolom ketiga berisi tentang masalah atau tantangan yang di hadapi karakter, dan kolom terakhir berisi tentang cara penyelesaian dari masalah. Pada akhirnya, strategi ini membantu siswa memahami apa yang telah mereka baca.*

**Kata kunci :** strategi plot relationships chart, pemahaman membaca

### A. Introduction

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the four skills in language learning. Among others, reading is a basic skill for language learners, because when reading skill improve, other skills improve too. Reading is a complex cognitive process in which a reader needs more concentration and practices. As Burhan (2012:9) says reading is a physic and mental activity to reveal the meaning of the written texts, while in that activity there is a process of

knowing letters. It says a physic activity because the parts of the body, our eyes particularly, do it. It says mental activity because perception and memory as parts of thought are involved in it.

In addition, Cline et.al (2006:2) states that reading is decoding and understanding written texts. Decoding requires translating the symbols of writing system (including Braille) into the spoken words which they represent. Understanding is determined by the purposes for reading, the context, the nature of the text, and the reader's strategies

and knowledge. Furthermore, Grabe and Stoller (2002:9) state reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret the information appropriately.

In a conclusion, reading is a number of interactive processes between reader and text, in which readers use their knowledge to build, to create, and to construct meaning. The reader constructs meaning based partly on the knowledge drawn from the text and partly from the existing knowledge that the reader has. That's why reading is no meaning when a reader only read words on a page from left to right while sounding them out without knowing the meaning of the words and comprehends information that the writer is trying to convey. A reader does not only read the written symbols but also must be able to interpret what s/he reads, because the goal of reading is to derive some understanding and utilizing of information or ideas gained through an interaction between reader and writer.

Burhan (2012:9) states that the main goal of reading is a process of comprehending written texts. A process in which a reader understand the meaning of written language, actively relate the ideas represented in print to the reader's own knowledge and experiences and construct mental representations in memory. In line with that, Larsen (1986) says reading comprehension is the process of understanding and construction meaning from a piece of text. Comprehension involves understanding in vocabulary by seeing the relationships among words and concepts, organizing ideas, recognizing the writer's purpose, making judgments and evaluation.

Comprehending a text is not easy for students. So, teacher should be able to create or improve the strategy in teaching reading comprehension. One of the strategies in teaching reading comprehension is by using Plot Relationships Chart. Plot Relationships Chart helps students focus on the problems and the solutions in a story (Macon, et.al.1991). The students make a summary or pull out the key parts of the story plot and write them on the chart organizer. The chart has four columns, the first column is the

character (Somebody), the second column is the characters want (Wanted), the third column is the obstacles (But), and the fourth column is the solution (So). After the fourth column of Plot Relationships Chart has been completed by the students, then they write summary based on the information in the chart. Through this strategy the students can comprehend any materials in reading easier

## **B. Discussion**

Plot is a literary term defined as the events that make up a story, particularly as they relate to one another in a pattern, in a sequence, through cause and effect how the reader views the story, or simply by coincidence. One is generally interested in how well this pattern of events accomplishes some artistic or emotional effect. An intricate, complicated plot is called an imbroglio, but even the simplest statements of plot may include multiple inferences, as in traditional.

The Plot Relationships Chart (Schmidt & Buckley, 1991) helps students identify the major parts of a story. This strategy provides students with a structure to help them understand the relationships among characters, goals, problems, and solutions. In addition, Macon (1991) says Plot Relationship Chart Strategy helps students focus on the problems and the solutions in a story. The chart helps the students understand the relationships among characters, their goals, the problems they had and the solutions of these problems. The chart has four columns. In the first column, ask the students to write the name of the characters being discussed. In the second column, ask the students to explain what the characters wanted. In the third column, ask the students to make a list the obstacles that stood in the characters' way. And in the fourth column, ask the students to write a conclusion or solutions of the story.

Once the Plot Relationships Chart has been completed, the students can write summary based on the information in the chart. The following is examples of a Plot Relationships Chart of Cinderella and Stone Fox story and summary of the story.

**Table 1. Plot Relationships Chart of Cinderella Story**

Plot Relationships Chart			
Somebody	Wanted	But	So
Cinderella	To be loved by her family, and find her true love.	Her step mother and sisters hate her, ask her to do some housework and try to hinder her to find her true love.	A fairy comes to help her to get her true love and makes her happy ever after.
<p><b>Summary:</b> Cinderella wanted to be loved by her family and find her true love. But, her step mother and sisters hate her, ask her to do some housework and try to hinder her to find her true love. So, a fairy comes to help her to get her true love and makes her happy ever after.</p>			

**Table 2. Plot Relationships Chart of Stone Fox Story**

Plot Relationships Chart			
Somebody	Wanted	But	So
Little Willy	To win the dogsled race and earn the first prize of \$500, so he could pay the back taxes on Grandpa's farm.	Stone Fox, a Shoshone Indian, enters the race with his dog team of Samoyeds so he can win the \$500 prize and buy back the lands his tribe has lost.	Little Willy and Stone Fox race, and close to the finish line when they are neck-and neck. Willy's dog, Searchlight drops dead from exhaustion. Stone Fox lets Willy carry Searchlight across the finish line and win the \$500 prize.
<p><b>Summary:</b> Little Willy wanted to win the dogsled race and earn first prize of \$500, so he could pay the back taxes on Grandpa's farm. But Stone Fox, a Shoshone Indian, enters the race with his dog team of Samoyeds so he can win the \$500 prize and buy back the lands his tribe has lost. So, Little Willy and Stone Fox race, and close to the finish line when they are neck-and neck. Willy's dog, Searchlight drops dead from exhaustion. Stone Fox lets Willy carry Searchlight across the finish line and win the \$500 prize.</p>			

The Procedures of Teaching Reading Comprehension through Plot Relationships Chart Strategy

1. Introduce the strategy

Asks a question for each guide word and writes the students' response in the appropriate column. For example: Who is the main character in the story? (Somebody). What was his or her goal? (Wanted). What was the problem? (But). What happened? (So).

2. Demonstrate the strategy

Read the responses on the chart so the students can see the relationships of the elements (character, goal, problem, and solution). Asks the students to visualize what happened in the story as they read. For example, when discussing a *Cinderella*, the teacher asks the students to create an image

on their mind of the kindness of Cinderella and her step mother and sisters.

3. Guide the students to apply the strategy

If appropriate, ask the students to select another character in the story, and repeats the four questions, answering them from the new character's perspective. Once again, model the use of the chart.

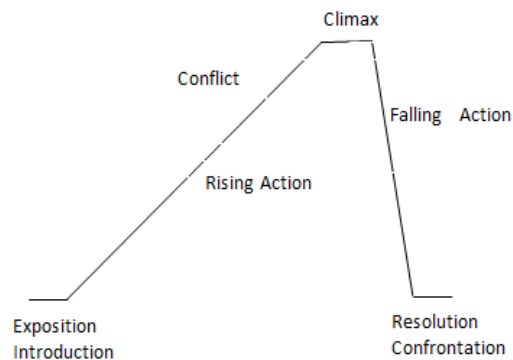
4. Practice in small groups, pairs or individually

Ask the students to discuss alternative solutions to the problem in a class. Asks the students how else the author could have solved the problem in the story presents. After the students have modeled this strategy several times, asks the students to apply the strategy in small groups, pairs or individually. The students are going to need guidance and practice with the Plot

Relationships Chart. Once they understand the structure, they can use it to share personal reading, create story ideas, and write summaries of stories.

#### The Chart of Plot Relationships Strategy

The students can learn a more sophisticated method or identifying narrative structure through chart of Plot Relationships. The organization of narrative depends on a sequence of events. The narrator or main character encounters a problem or a conflict that s/he needs to resolve. (See figure 1). The events of the plot typically move through of a period of introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. The students and advanced reader can be taught how the plot move through reading and analyze some picture books, chapter books and short stories. The chart can be seen in the following:



**Figure 1.**  
Chart of Plot Relationships/Freytag's Diagram  
(Schmidt, B and Buckley, M. 1991)

- **Exposition**  
The exposition introduces all of the main characters in the story. It shows how they relate to one another, what their goals and motivations are, and the kind of person they are.
- **Rising Action**  
Rising Action is the second phase in five-phase structure. It starts with the introduction of conflict. At a time, when all of the major characters have been introduced, their motives and allegiances have been made clear (at least for the most part), and they now begin to struggle against one another.

- **Climax**  
The point of climax is the turning point of the story, where the main character makes the single big decision that define the outcome of their story and who they are as a person. The dramatic phase in Freytag is the climax. The climax is the third of the five-phase which occupies the middle of the story, and that contains the point of climax. Thus, the climax may refer to the point of climax or to the third phase of the drama. The beginning of this phase is marked by the protagonist finally having cleared away the preliminary barriers and being ready to engage with the adversary.
- **Falling Action**  
This phase is called as “falling action” in the sense that the loose ends are being tied up. It is often the time of greatest overall tension in the play, because it is the phase in which everything goes most wrong. In this phase, the villain has the upper hand. It seems that evil will triumph. The protagonist has never been further from accomplishing the goal.
- **Resolution**  
In the final phase of this Freytag's diagram, there is a final confrontation between the protagonist and antagonist, where one or the other decisively wins. This phase is the story of that confrontation, of what leads up to it, of why it happens, the way it happens, and what its long-term consequences are.

#### C. Conclusion

The main goal of reading process comprehends. Comprehending is not easy for students. Therefore, teacher must be able to choose or create the strategy in teaching reading comprehension. One of the strategies in teaching reading comprehension is by using Plot Relationships Chart. Plot Relations Chart Strategy is a strategy in which students fill in the four columns. The first column is the character (Somebody), the second column is the characters want (Wanted), the third column is the obstacles (But), and the fourth column is the solution (So). By fill in this

columns, the students can identify the major parts of a story easily and understand the relationship among characters, their goals, the problem they had, the reason that events occurred, and the solution or resolution of these goals or problems in the story. Based on that chart, finally, the students can make a summary of the story.

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