POSSE Strategy

Purpose of teaching the POSSE strategy:

The Posse strategy (Englert & Mariage 1991) is a reading comprehension strategy that incorporates reading and learning practices that effective readers and learners use automatically. Students discuss their reading and use the strategies of predicting, organising, searching, summarising and evaluating to comprehend informational or expository text. The strategy activates prior knowledge, but also encourages students to organise their existing knowledge and then summarise and elaborate on the connections between what they already knew and what they have learned.

Explicitly teaching the POSSE strategy:

Step 1

Provide students with POSSE strategy sheet and explain how the sheet highlights each step in the strategy and includes concept or thinking maps to help them organise their thoughts. Show students that the strategy sheet is divided into two activities to complete before reading (predict and organise background knowledge) and three activities to complete during and after reading (search, summarise and evaluate).

Step 2

Predict: Students activate background knowledge by brainstorming what the text will be about using text clues such as the title, headings, pictures/diagrams or initial paragraphs, etc. Help students by asking questions like ‘What does this text feature tell you...’

Step 3

Organise: Students organise their background knowledge or brainstorming predications into a semantic or concept map. Discuss with students what new ideas they have learned about the topic. Provide students with a POSSE cue card and explain that the cue card is used to guide their group discussions in the following steps of the strategy.

Step 4

Search: Students read the text to confirm their predictions and to find the main ideas.
Step 5

**Summarise:** Students state what each paragraph is mainly about.

Step 6

**Evaluate:** This includes four processes – *question, compare, clarify and predict*.

*Question:* Have students turn the paragraph summaries into questions or ask ‘teacher like’ questions about the main ideas in the paragraph (they can also do this at step 5 as part of summarising the paragraph). A question matrix or question stems can also be provided to help students develop questions about the main idea. Students then answer these questions.

*Compare:* Students compare the concept maps or graphic organisers they prepared before reading, with the maps they prepared as part of the discussion (i.e. Step 4).

*Clarify:* Students ask questions about any unfamiliar vocabulary terms and any information not provided by the text. Assist students in clarifying any misunderstandings.

*Predict:* Students now predict what the next section of text will be about.

Step 7

Finally, students summarise the entire reading section by reviewing their strategy sheet.

Step 8

When using the POSSE strategy continue to guide and prompt students through all the steps.

Englert and Mariage stress that the successful application of POSSE is dependent upon effective dialogue and student leadership in the dialogue. While Pesa and Somers (2007) research found that if not prompted students do not properly implement all steps of the POSSE strategy, which in turn means that they are not able to properly identify the main ideas of the passages because they do not take the time to familiarise themselves with the text before reading or take time to organise the information.

* The NBSS Summarising Maps handout contains organisers that can be used with this strategy.
**POSSE Strategy Poster**

**P = PREDICT**
Predict what information/ideas will be in the text. Use the clues provided by the text features and your prior knowledge. *I predict that... We predict...*

**O = ORGANISE**
Organise your predictions and thoughts using a concept map or graphic organiser.

**S = SEARCH**
Search to see if your predications are correct and to find the main ideas in the text.

**S = SUMMARISE**
Summarise the main idea of each paragraph and ask ‘teacher like’ questions about the main idea.

**E = EVALUATE**
In your group answer the questions. Then...

- Compare your concept maps or graphic organisers.
- Write down keywords and phrases that need to be explained further.
- Predict what the next section/paragraph will be about.
POSSE Strategy Sheet

**P**redict what ideas are in the text.

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**O**rganise your thoughts (use your ideas from above and then organise them into this concept map).

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**SEARCH** for the **main idea and confirmation of your predications** (after reading the paragraph or section complete the main ideas graphic organiser).
SUMMARISE  the main idea in 1 or 2 sentences. Ask “teacher-like” questions about the main idea.

Main idea sentence, questions and answers:

EVALUATE: compare maps - clarify any new words - predict what you will read about next.

POSSE Cue Card

Predict

I predict that . . .
I’m remembering . . .

Search/Summarise

I think the main idea is . . .
My question about the main idea is ‘What if...’

Evaluate

‘Compare the ideas in this map...with the after reading concept map or organiser...’
Are there any further explanations of new words needed?
I predict the next part will be about . . .
Predict: What will you be finding out about? (use the headings, pictures, diagrams, etc. as well as what you know already know to help you predict).

Organise your thoughts. Group your predications into categories.
Search and note the main ideas.
Summarise the main ideas in a sentence. Then ask and answer ‘teacher like’ questions.

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Some of our questions and answers:

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_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
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_________________________________________________________________________________________
Evaluate: compare maps - clarify any new words - predict what you will read about next.

New words or phrases and their meaning:

Predictions for next section:

**POSSE Cue Card**

**Predict**
I predict that . . .
I’m remembering . . .

**Search/Summarise**
I think the main idea is . . .
My question about the main idea is ‘*What if*...’

**Evaluate**
Compare the ideas in this map...with the after reading concept map...
Are there any further explanations of new words needed?
I predict the next part will be about . . .
POSSE Strategy Sheet

Predict: What will you be finding out about?

Organise:

A. List and group similar ideas about what you think you will find out below.

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B. Link your predications to categories based on shared features. Draw a line from the category label in this box to the related words in box A.

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Search for the main ideas and complete the organizer:
**POSSE Strategy**

**Summarise** the main ideas in a few sentences:

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**Some of our Questions and Answers:**

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**Evaluate**: compare maps - meaning any new words - predict what you will read about next.

New Words: | Predications

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**Predict**
- I predict that . . .
- I’m remembering . . .

**Search/Summarise**
- I think the main idea is . . .
- My question about the main idea is ‘What if...’

**Evaluate**
- Compare the ideas in this map... with the after reading concept map...
- Are there any further explanations of new words needed?
- I predict the next part will be about . . .
POSSE Cue card

**Predict**
- I predict that . . .
- I’m remembering . . .

**Search/Summarise**
- I think the main idea is . . .
- My question about the main idea is *What if* . . .*

**Evaluate**
- Compare the ideas in this map . . . with the after reading concept map . . .
- Are there any further explanations of new words needed?
- I predict the next part will be about . . .
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