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## **THE EFFECTIVENES OF MOTIVATION THROUGH POSSE STRATEGY ON IMPROVING THE EFL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS**

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### **Abstract**

Reading motivation is seen as the most vital element that affects reading comprehension skills. It is also viewed as one of the main factors for foreign language students that assists them to read more effectively. Researchers have found that teaching reading strategies is the key in developing the students' comprehension. The POSSE is one of the interesting strategies used in reading. It refers to the activity in which POSSE activates their prior knowledge about the topic and connect it with the information contained in the text (Englert & Marriage in Westwood, 2008: 45). This action research paper aims to investigate the effect of motivation through POSSE strategy on comprehending English texts. It concentrates on reading comprehension mainly because reading is one of the four basic skills in English as a foreign language (EFL). This study used a descriptive analytical approach to examine how motivation through POSSE strategy affects the students' reading comprehension skills among the second semester students of English department faculty of letters at Universitas Pamulang (UNPAM). The data were collected by means of questionnaires and tests from 60 participants, and they were analyzed by using  $t_{\text{-test}}$  to find out the effect of motivation through POSSE strategy on the students' reading comprehension. This study leads to the findings that: POSSE is one of the motivational techniques which improves the EFL intrinsic motivation to read, motivation affects on EFL learners' reading comprehension skills, and different techniques of teaching reading comprehension are helpful in comprehending English texts. Further, the study revealed that the motivation gave significant effect on the students' reading comprehension skills. Finally, the writer recommends that the different reading strategies should be taught to EFL students to improve the students' motivation to read and understand the reading texts.

*Keywords: reading comprehension, EFL students, motivation, POSSE,*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, it cannot be argued that English holds an important role in the globalization era. English is used as a mean of international communication in practically all fields of life: economics and business, the media, and even education. Thus, the urge to learn and master English has become a must. Since English language learning is one of the important factors that affects international communication activities, it is very essential for EFL students to master the English language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing for their communication purposes. Particularly the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester students of English Department faculty of letters at Universitas Pamulang have some problems in reading comprehension. Mostly, the students have lack of reading motivation, vocabulary,

grammar, and many other problems in the difficulties of the reading skill itself. As a result, this group of learners are not good enough at reading comprehension.

As a foreign language, reading probably is seen as the most important way to get knowledge and information from around the world because reading exposes students to new vocabulary and even new cultures. While reading a text, a reader creates an understanding of the material that is being read. Aebersold & Field (1997) stated that reading involves the reader, the text and the interaction between reader and text. Moreover, Grabe & Stoller (2002) mentioned that reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately. Therefore, it can be said that reading is a very crucial activity to do in order to get closer to the world.

Comprehension is the purpose and the goal of reading, but comprehension depends on students being able to access the texts. Reading comprehension is the process of understanding a reading piece (Snow, 2002). It is the ability to understand, remember, and communicate meaning from what has been read. However, reading comprehension among language learners may be different from each other. Related to this, Brantmeier (2003) said that processing the texts similarly or differently, students may have non-identical interpretation of the texts. It means that, language learners may process the text in similar ways but comprehend differently, or process the texts in a different way but comprehend similarly.

Reading comprehension is a difficult process because students should be able to read the written words and decode the vocabularies and recognize the meanings of the texts (Ahmadi & Hairul: 2012). English language learning showed that reading comprehension is the main factor which should be focused on English language teaching. Therefore, Reading comprehension is one of the main important elements in English language learning for all students because it provides the basis for a substantial amount of learning in education.

In addition to this, since reading comprehension is so critical in terms of academic success, it can be argued that motivating a student to read is equally crucial. The motivation to learn is something that is inherent in all people. Guthrie et al (1999) defined motivation "in terms of characteristics of individuals, such as their goals, competence-related beliefs, and needs that influence their achievement and activities". Moreover, motivated students devote more time to reading; as students read more, both their reading skills and their reading comprehension also improve (Capen: 2010). Therefore, it can be stated that motivation is the key to becoming a skilled reader.

In order to make students' reading comprehension improved, it is very essential to give reading motivation on students. Hairul et al (2012) stated that one of the most important factors which help learners read more is reading motivation and it has an important impact on reading comprehension. They continued that reading motivation impacts all aspects of motivation and reading comprehension strategies in different

conditions. They also emphasized that students' motivation absolutely affects their reading; it means that students with stronger reading motivation can be expected to read more in wider range. This idea is also supported by Morgan & Fuchs (2007), they explained in their study that there was a strong relationship between motivation and reading comprehension proficiency. The results of their study indicated that reading motivation relates to all aspects of motivation and is related to reading comprehension and facilitated reading in different levels of students. Moreover, Cox & Guthrie (2001) pointed out that students' motivation positively affects their readings. Therefore, it means that motivation has strong positive effects for students to comprehend the texts and helps them to get their maximum achievement.

Furthermore, Dornyei (1990) carried out a research and found that there is a strong impact of motivation on reading comprehension proficiency. The researcher demonstrated that motivation relates to all features of motivation and affected on reading comprehension and facilitated reading in different levels of learners. This ideas is also supported by Ahmadi, et al (2013), they examined the relation between students' reading motivation and reading comprehension in Malaysian context. In their study they included multiple components of motivation as the investigation. Using qualitative research, they found out that reading motivation has a positive impact on reading comprehension. Based on the previous studies above, it can be inferred that students with higher motivation can score higher in reading comprehension tests.

On the other hand, based on the writer's observation in teaching reading course, it can be seen that the students presented lack of motivation in reading, they were not able to re-explain what they have read before, and the students also have lack of vocabulary. As result, the students meet some difficulties in comprehending the reading texts.

Motivation can be enhanced by the teacher or lecturer by applying the suitable strategies. Reading motivation involves self-efficacy, reading goals, social motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic influences (Aarnoutse & Schellings, 2003). These influences stimulate and help guide reading behavior. However, not

all students are motivated in the same way (Gambrell, 2011). There are four types of motivation. They are integrative, instrumental, intrinsic, and extrinsic motivation. Integrative motivation is defined as the desire to be a part of significant members of the community (Saville-Troike (2006). This type of motivation depends on the interest of students to learn a new language because the students want to learn the language to become the part of the community. Saville-Troike (2005) supported that students with integrative motivation are also interested in learning the culture of target language they learn. Another type of motivation is instrumental motivation. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), instrumental motivation is defined as wanting to learn a language for the need of gaining some actual aims such as an occupation, promotion, or the ability to read academic materials. It means that the students learn the language because of practical purposes.

Moreover, intrinsic motivation is learning itself that has its own reward (Arnold: 2000). The students have internal desire to learn and they do not have the need for external results. Such motivation relates to the perceived value, worth, or enjoyment of the activity. Self-motivation leads the students to go beyond the requirements of an educational course because they are looking for learning about

the subject not just performing a restricted number of requirements. Gottfried (1990) carried out a study and indicated that reading comprehension was positively related to intrinsic motivation for reading. While extrinsic motivation is a desire to obtain a reward and stop punishment (Arnold: 2000). Extrinsically motivated students will engage in a specific activity to achieve a reward or to escape being reprimanded. Extrinsic motivation refers to the motivation that comes from outside rewards such as money or grades. Harmer (1991) stated when these rewards are taken away and there isn't any punishment for the learners, they will not show any eagerness to take part in their classes and will not be certainly able to learn more. Therefore, it is crucial that teachers or lecturers work with students to facilitate their acquisition of the necessary skills to achieve success throughout their academic careers and beyond.

One well-established procedure that can further influenced intrinsic motivation in teaching reading is EFL learners' use of reading strategies. Reading strategy has as strong connection to the students' reading comprehension (Afflerbach et al: 2008). Reading strategies have been defined as plans and behaviors for solving problems when faced in constructing meaning (Janzen: 2003). Further, Block (1986) stated that reading strategies help learners to finish a task identifying with textual signs they have to focus on, to measure how to make sense of what they read, and to know what to do when they have problems in understanding the text. It means that reading strategy is a way to help students understand the reading texts better. By choosing the right strategy, the students' reading motivation will be improved. Basically, there are many useful strategies can be used to improve the students' reading motivation. In this study, the writer takes the POSSE (Predict- Organize- Search-Summarize- Evaluate) strategy as the main core.

The POSSE strategy can effectively increase the students' reading comprehension skills because this strategy helps students to improve their motivation to read. It activates their prior knowledge about the topic and connect it with the information contained in the text (Englert & Marriage in Westwood, 2008: 45). In addition to this, Freville & Collen (2006:21) stated that the POSSE encourages the students to organize their existing knowledge and then summarize and elaborate on the connections between what they have already knew and what they have learned. As one of the motivational strategies in reading, POSSE teaches the students to make prediction while reading the texts. Further, POSSE helps the students get the key ideas from the texts easily, so that automatically the students could increase their motivation in reading. The five letters in the acronym of POSSE strategy stands for Predict, Organize, Search, Summarize, Evaluate. It means the students first *predict* the ideas of the text or what the text will be about based on the existing knowledge they have, then *organize* the ideas in the text. After that, the students *search* the structure of the text, then *summarize* the main ideas of the text in their own words. Finally, they *evaluate* their

understanding. Therefore, it can be inferred that by applying POSSE strategy the students will be guided through pre-reading, during reading and post-reading activities designed to facilitate comprehension by activating the students' basic knowledge and combining the existing information with the new information contained in the text simultaneously.

#### **Procedure of POSSE Strategy**

Mastropieri and Scruggs in Freville Ben (2006:21) mentioned that there are five steps in POSSE strategy as the following;

a. Predict

Predict is the brainstorming activity for students to make prediction about the text. In this step, the teacher or lecturer first ask the students to predict what ideas will be in the text by using the text clues, such as the title, headings, pictures, initial paragraph, and many more. The teachers can also assist the students in this step by asking questions like "What do you think this going to be about" or "What clues from the text helped you make your prediction."

b. Organize

In this step the students organize or arrange their brainstormed ideas in the prediction step into their first concept map. The teachers or lecturers can discuss with students about what new ideas they have learned about the topic. Further, this concept mapping activity aims to introduce key terms, activate prior knowledge, and as a pre-assessment.

c. Search

Search is the activity when students start reading the text and confirm their predictions to find the main ideas in each paragraph. Moreover, the students also search for the text structure and unfamiliar vocabulary.

d. Summarize

Summarize is the process when the students identify the main ideas of the text and state what each paragraph is mainly about, then join them to form acceptable summary of the whole text. Further, in this step both teachers and students make

discussion and find the second concept map.

e. Evaluate

This is the final step in POSSE strategy. Evaluate includes three processes; compare, clarify and predict. In comparing, the students compare the concept maps they prepared before reading with the maps prepared as part of the discussion. While in the clarifying process, the students ask questions about some unfamiliar vocabulary and unclear information that is not provided in the text. The teacher assists the students in clarifying any misunderstandings. Finally, in the predicting, students predict what the next section of the text will be about. Then, the students summarize the reading text by reviewing the POSSE strategy sheet (appendix 2).

Some related studies were conducted to investigate the effectiveness of POSSE in improving the students' motivation in reading, later the POSSE strategy improves the students' reading comprehension skills. Aprilia (2015) in the findings revealed that POSSE has allowed the students to predict the text, organize the prediction, search the main ideas, maximizing vocabulary successfully. The students became more independent in comprehending the text because of the increasing motivation in reading and later their reading comprehension skill is also improved. Moreover, it is also supported by Yunetri (2014). The study investigated the effect of POSSE and Picture walk strategies on improving students' reading comprehension. The participants were from senior high school. After collecting the data by having pre and post-tests, the findings revealed that POSSE strategy activates students' reading abilities. Therefore, it can be seen that POSSE is one of the interesting reading strategies that can be applied in order to increase the students' intrinsic motivation in reading, later it also improves the students' reading comprehension skills.

However, the objective of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of motivation through POSSE strategy as one of the motivational strategies in reading on the



students' reading comprehension, particularly the second semester students of English department faculty of letters. Proceeding from this purpose, this study puts to empirical test the following research questions:

1. Can motivational technique POSSE improve the EFL intrinsic motivation to read?
2. Is there any effect of motivation on the EFL learners' reading comprehension skills?

## **METHOD**

This study was conducted in Universitas Pamulang (UNPAM) which is located on Jalan Surya Kencana West Pamulang, South Tangerang from April to June 2018. The writer used the descriptive analytical approach to examine how motivation affects the students' reading comprehension skills among the second semester students of English department faculty of letters at Universitas Pamulang. Sixty participants of the second semester students of English Department faculty of letters were chosen for the population of this study. The writer took two different classes from the evening class consisting of 30 students per class. Moreover, several instruments were used in conducting this study. Initially, the students were given pre-test and post-test of reading comprehension using POSSE strategy. Moreover, the writer also distributed the questionnaires to find out the students' perspective toward the implementation of POSSE strategy in reading class.

This study involved some procedures, all the students were firstly asked to answer the pre-test and then attended reading comprehension course. The course consisted of eight lectures, one lecture per week. In each lecture the students were first asked to read the passage, and then were instructed to answer different assignments. Further, during the learning process the writer used different ways of motivations to motivate students in order to achieve the objective of the study. It means the writer applied some reading strategies in teaching reading comprehension. At the end, the POSSE strategy was chosen as motivational learning strategy in teaching the students. The writer firstly explained what

POSSE is and how to apply it in detail by giving examples. Further, the writer also delivered the POSSE strategy Sheet (appendix 2) in order to make the students easier in applying the POSSE strategy in their reading activities. After having the course of reading comprehension, the students were given a post-test. The tests were designed to evaluate students reading comprehension skills by using motivational reading strategy.

In addition, to get the findings, the writer used the pre-test and post-test scores. Then, the data were analyzed by using independent t-test to find out the effectiveness of motivation through POSSE strategy on improving the students' reading comprehension. Further, the group statistics such as mean and standard deviation had been found to identify the variables that predict the students' reading comprehension achievement with motivational reading strategy; the POSSE strategy. These analyses had been completed by using SPSS version 17.0.

After conducting some meetings, the writer distributed the questionnaires that were adapted from Wigfield et al (1996). The questionnaires were given to the students in order to know the students' perspective in applying the POSSE strategy in reading comprehension. The students answered 15 questions which each item was accompanied with a 4-point: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree), and 4 (strongly disagree). Then, to analyze the students' responses, the writer gathered and calculated how many students who responded each item stated in questionnaire and gave the percentage on each item.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The writer analyzed the data and discussed the findings to respond to the following research questions: can motivational technique POSSE improve the EFL intrinsic motivation to read?, and is there any effect of motivation on the EFL learners' reading comprehension skills?.

### **The results of the questionnaires**

**Table 1. The Percentage of the Students' Responses toward POSSE Strategy in Reading Comprehension**

<b>No</b>	<b>The Statements</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Neutral (%)</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>
1	The POSSE really helped me to understand the texts	92	5	3
2	The POSSE made me feel interested in knowing what happened in the texts	95	0	5
3	The POSSE made reading the texts enjoyable	87	3	10
4	The POSSE made reading the texts boring because it gave away too much of the texts	14	12	74
5	The teacher/lecture r/instructor gave brief explanation how to apply the POSSE strategy	98	0	2
6	The information provided by the POSSE was not enough for me to fully understand the texts	18	8	74
7	The POSSE made me easier in predicting the text before reading it	90	6	4

8	The POSSE improved my motivation to read	88	3	9
9	The POSSE was not useful for me to learn more vocabulary	22	5	73
10	The POSSE increased my reading score	87	8	5
11	The POSSE helped me to predict the next part of the text will be about	73	15	12
12	The POSSE made me able to summarize the text	87	6	7
Total		851	71	278
Average		71 %	6%	23 %

From the table 1 above, it can be seen that the overall percentages, the students gave responses to the items in theme 1: The POSSE Strategy in Reading Comprehension. It displays that overall students agreed using the POSSE strategy as one of the motivational techniques in teaching reading comprehension. Exactly 92% of the students agreed that the POSSE strategy really helps the students to understand the texts. Moreover, 95% of the students agreed that the POSSE made the students feel interested in knowing what happened in the texts. It is supported by the response of the next statement that 87% of the students agreed that reading is enjoyable by using POSSE strategy.

From the table it was found that the POSSE made reading texts quite fun because exactly there is 74% of the students disagreed with the statement "The POSSE made reading the texts boring because it gave away too much of the texts". Further, 98% students agreed that the lecture gave clear explanation on how to apply the POSSE strategy. In the next point, at least 74% of the students disagreed that the

information provided by “The POSSE was not enough to understand the text”.

In the statement number 7, it shows that there is 90% of the students agreed that POSSE made them easier to predict the text before reading it. There is around 88% of the students agreed that the POSSE strategy is very helpful to increase the students’ motivation in reading. The POSSE strategy assists the students to learn more vocabulary, it can be seen that there is 73% of the students were in disagreement to the statement “The POSSE was not useful for me to learn more vocabulary”. Additionally, from the data above it can be seen that after having the POSSE in their reading activity, the students’ scores were increased, there is only 5% of the students disagreed with the statement “The POSSE increased my reading score”. Further, there is at least 73% of the students were in agreement that the POSSE encouraged the students to predict what will be in the texts during and after reading the text. In the last point, 87% of the students agreed that the POSSE plays a big role in helping the students summarizing the texts.

Therefore, from the data in the table, it can be concluded that the POSSE is one of the motivational strategies that can motivate the students to read and it is very helpful for the students in enhancing their reading comprehension skill.

**Table 2. The Percentage of the Students’ Responses toward the Reading Texts**

No	The Statements	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
1	The texts were interesting	90	6	4
2	The texts were difficult	22	4	74
3	The texts matched the POSSE strategy	86	6	8
Total		198	16	86
Average		66%	5%	29%

The table 2 above is about the students’ responses toward the reading texts. It

was found that exactly 90% of the students agreed that the texts given were interesting. Further, 74% of the students gave negative response to the statement “the texts were difficult”. Around 86% of the students were in agreement that the texts given matched to the POSSE strategy.

Therefore, from the data in table 2 above, it can be stated that the reading texts given by the lecturer were interesting, quite easy, and matched with the strategy applied for the students.

According to the data analysis, it can be inferred that motivational techniques could improve the EFL learners’ intrinsic motivation to read and also give some effects on the EFL learners’ reading comprehension skills. It can be seen from table 1, it stated that the implementation of POSSE strategy as one of the motivational techniques could improve the students intrinsic motivation to read and at the same time it proves that the motivation affects on the EFL learners’ reading comprehension skills.

### The Result of Pre-Test and Post-Test

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistic of Reading Comprehension tests**

#### Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair Pretest 1	69.02	60	9.900	1.278
posttest	75.40	60	12.024	1.552

From the table 3, it can be explained that the reading pre-test and post-test are related to mean and standard deviation. There were 60 students who joined the pre and post-test of reading comprehension. The result shows that the pre-test score with the mean 69.02, and the standard deviation 9.900; while, the mean of the post-test is 75.40 with the standard deviation 12.024. The table reveals that between the pre-test and the post-test; the mean of posttest was higher than the pretest ( $75.40 > 69.02$ ). Based on the result, it can be inferred that after conducting the course, there was improvement on the students’ scores in



reading comprehension. Therefore, it means that motivation through POSSE strategy gave significant effect on the students' reading comprehension skills.

**Table 4. Paired Samples Correlations**

Paired Samples Correlations			
	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair Pretest 1 & posttest	60	.000	.995

The table shows that the correlation was 0.000. The students did well both on pre-test and post-test. It reveals that there was no correlation between two variables (negative).

**Table 5. Paired Sample Test**

Paired Samples Test											
		Paired Differences								Sig. (2-tailed)	
					95 % Confidence Interval of the Difference						
						Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	
Paired Sample 1	Pretest Posttest	6.383	15.581	2.012	-10.408	-2.358	-3.173	59		.002	

From the above paired samples test table, it can be seen that there was difference

of mean value before and after applying the strategy, that is 6.386. The p value (sig) was 0.002, so that it can be stated p value (0.002) < alpha (0.05), it means that the Ho is rejected and Ha is accepted in which there was significant effect of the students' motivation on their reading achievement after having the treatment.

Moreover, the mean score had positive score 2.01. It means that there was improvement of students' motivation after the use of reading strategy; the POSSE strategy. The improvement average was about 2.01.

## CONCLUSIONS

Nowadays, there are a lot of motivational approaches and strategies in language teaching in general and teaching reading in particular. These approaches and strategies were used in this study, and at the end the writer chose the POSSE strategy to be implemented. The purpose of this study was to know the effectiveness of motivation in developing the EFL students' reading comprehension skills by conducting a motivational strategy; the POSSE strategy. For the empirical study two tools were employed. The questionnaires and the tests were used to measure the factors that influence reading comprehension abilities. The questionnaires and the tests were given to the second semester students of English Department faculty of letters at Universitas Pamulang. The result of the study could be seen through the comparison of the results of the students' pre-test and post-test scores. After the data had been achieved, the results have showed that motivation plays an important role on the students' reading comprehension achievement. The students' post-test scores by using motivational strategy; the POSSE strategy, are higher than the students' pre-test scores. Due to the result, the assumption that motivation affects students' reading comprehension achievement is seemly to be accepted.

The result of this study supports the several research findings which found that motivation increased the level of reading comprehension achievement. This study could find the answers of the research questions posed at the beginning of the study and investigated the hypotheses presented then. The result of this study showed that the motivational learning approaches give some

positive effects on the students' motivation to read. It is suggested that the variation of the reading strategies should be used in learning reading comprehension in order to get the maximum achievement for the students.

From the results and findings of the study, it is recommended that: teaching reading should focus on topics that suit to the students' level and interest to improve reading comprehension skills. Also, reading strategies should be taught to the EFL students. Further, teachers should implement reading strategies and different techniques in teaching reading comprehension in order to get maximum achievement. The writer hopes that this study will offer suitable solutions of the difficulties in reading comprehension.

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## APPENDIX 1

### The Percentage of Students' Perception toward POSSE strategy in Reading Comprehension

NO	THE STATEMENTS	RESPONSES				
		TOTAL Y AGREE (4)	AGRE E (3)	DISAGR EE (2)	TOTAL Y DISAGR EE (1)	NO RESPONSE (0)
1.	The POSSE really helped me to understand the texts					
2.	The POSSE made me feel interested in					

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	knowing what happened in the texts					
3.	The POSSE made reading the texts enjoyable					
4.	The POSSE made reading the texts boring because it gave away too much of the texts					
5.	The teacher/lecture r/instructor gave brief explanation how to apply the POSSE strategy					
6.	The information provided by the POSSE was not enough for me to fully understand the texts					
7.	The POSSE made me easier in predicting the text before reading it					
8.	The POSSE improved my motivation to read					
9.	The POSSE was not useful for me to learn more vocabulary					
10.	The POSSE increased my reading score					
11.	The POSSE helped me to predict the next part of the text will be					

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	about					
12.	The POSSE made me able to summarize the text					
13.	The texts were interesting					
14.	The texts were difficult					
15.	The texts matched the POSSE strategy					

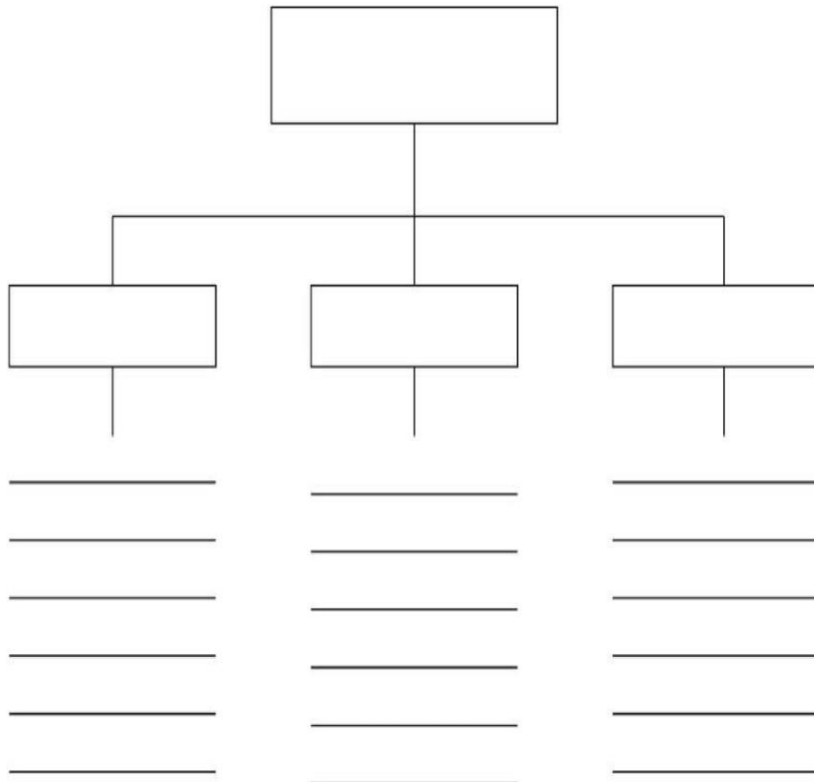
**APPENDIX 2**

## POSSE Strategy Sheet

**Predict :** what ideas are in the text.

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**Search:** Search for the main idea and confirmation of your predications (after reading the paragraph or section complete the main ideas graphic organizer).





**Summarize:** Summarize 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 organizer...’

Are there any further explanations of new words needed?

I predict the next part will be about . . .