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READING AS AN IMPORTANT SKILLS FOR STUDENTS

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Introduction

Language is a very essential instrument in communication. According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English, language is “(1)The system of sounds and words used by humans to express their thoughts and feelings, (2) the particular language system used by a people or nation” (Hornby, 1995). It means people can express their ideas, thoughts, feelings, and desires by language.

People have to learn language and master four basic language skills. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The four basic language skills are divided into two media for language communication: 1) receiving the message, i.e., reading and listening, 2) and sending the message, i.e., speaking and writing. These skills are used for completing communication when people learn about language.

Nowadays, the ability to comprehend English is necessary for people and also to understanding English. People have to be able to communicate English and also be able to read many kinds of English text. The ability to read is crucial in contemporary society. People find many texts written in English, from holiday brochures to academic books, newspaper, advertisements, etc. Therefore, the ability to read English text in any form will give a great deal of advantages in our lives.

Harry Madox said that “reading is the most important single in study” (Madox, 1963). And the curriculum stated that out of the four skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, the main emphasis is on reading skill because it is believed that acquisition of reading in a second or foreign language is priority (Kurikulum 1994).

Reading is good thing in life because it is a factor of great importance in the individual development and the most important activity in school. It is needed in every level of field of study. Particularly in cases when students have to read English materials for their own special subject.

Discussion

In this article the writer wants to explain definition of reading in order to understand a language. So, the learners have to understand the definition of reading first. It is difficult to make one definition of reading. So, the writer tries to take it from some references.

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Reading knowledge is broadened and well-informed by reading. Reading is really crucial our knowledge is usually broadened and informed by reading activity, and the activity of reading can be found in the internet, book, etc.

Students should practice their reading more and more so that their reading ability and their reading experience will be improved. They may find difficulty and frustrating, but if they keep practicing, they will have a good sense of English and will help them to grasp the total meaning of the words. Another thing should be remembered in reading that students should not open a dictionary too often because it will slow down their reading rate and can make them bored. If they find new words, they should try to guess the meanings by trying to find out any clue words according to the context in the passages.

There are a lot of definitions of reading. Linguists give definitions about reading, their opinions about reading vary. Some of them say reading is the process to get, to understand, to catch the content of the reading. And also reading is a process to understand a written text which means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible. According to Walter R. Hill, reading is “what the reader does to get the meaning he needs from textual sources ” (Hill, 1979). Meanwhile Guy L. Bond and Eva Bond Wagner explained the meaning of reading as the process of acquiring and author’s meaning and of interpreting, evaluating, and effecting upon those meanings (Wagner & Bond, 1969).

According to Grabe (1997), reading is “ an interaction between reader and text” (Duarte, 20011). Grabe claims that reading requires efficient knowledge of world and a given topic also an efficient knowledge of the language. As it is stated, reading requires a rich background, and also some ability to comprehend the texts. On the other hand Rebecca & Sadow (1986) claim

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that reading is related to language and it requires being efficient in target language (Dubin et.al, 1986).

Diane Henry Leipzig (2001) stated “Reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation” (Leipzig, 2001). Learn how readers integrate these facets to make meaning from print. It is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols for the intention of constructing or deriving meaning (reading comprehension). It is the mastery of basic cognitive processes to the point where they are automatic so that attention is freed for the analysis of meaning. Reading is making meaning from print. It requires that we:

- a. Identify the words in print – a process called word recognition.
- b. Construct an understanding from them – a process called comprehension.
- c. Coordinate identifying words and making meaning so that reading is automatic and accurate – an achievement called fluency.

Reading is very important, based on Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, & Kolstad’s investigation in 1993 revealed that 40 to 44 million Americans had only the most basic reading and writing skills. Another 50 million Americans not only lacked the skills to function successfully in a literate society, but also were not aware of their inadequacies. These statistics make it obvious that we have to look for new approaches to prepare students for the millennium, especially in light of current job market trends (Smith, 1999).

Hay & Roberts said that the job market now demands a workforce that is more highly educated than ever. For example, assembly line workers must interpret manuals in addition to

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operating machinery. These workers must be able to read, write, analyze, interpret, and synthesize information.

In summary, people just are not reading as much anymore and yet the need for reading, comprehension, and communication skills (verbal and written) has increased. The need is great for strengthening the following skills:

- a. Your ability to read a variety of materials (e.g. textbooks, novels, newspapers, magazines, instructional manuals).
- b. Your ability to understand and remember what you read.
- c. Your ability to effectively communicate what you've learned from your reading.

Those statements above show the various definitions of reading, they mean generally. So, the writer concludes that reading means a complex process of thinking in assigning meaning from printed materials which involve most of the readers' intellectual act such as pronunciation and comprehension in order to receive ideas or information extended by the text. It can be seen that reading is not only looking at word in the form of graphic symbols but also getting meaning from word to word or line to line to understand what we read. It means that reading is a process to understand the text content and to get information.

A.1.1.Types of Reading

Depending on the purposes of reading it also can be classified into two types of activity, intensive and extensive reading (Natal, 1986).

a. Intensive reading

Intensive reading means reading shorter texts to extract specific information. This activity is likely more to emphasize the accuracy activity involving reading for detail. The process of

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scanning takes a more prominent role here than skimming. Reader is trying to absorb all the information given, example: Reading dosage instruction for medicine.

b. Extensive reading

Reader deals with a longer text as a whole, which requires the ability to understand the component part and their contribution the overall meaning, usually for one's own pleasure. This is a fluency activity, mainly involving global understanding. Example: Reading a newspaper, article, short text or novel.

In other words F. Grellet defines that **skimming** is quickly running one's eyes over a text to get the gist of it. While, **scanning** is quickly going through a text to find a particular piece of information (Grellet, 1981).

So if a person wants to get an address, phone number, a date in a book over paragraph in order to locate a special piece of information, that activity is called scanning. but if he reads all the passage in order to know about what it deals about his reading, that is called skimming..

In skimming a reader must ask himself what the text is talked about. He must move his eyes quickly over the text, looking especially at the main title, the beginning and the end, and the first sentence of paragraph. In scanning the reader must ask himself weather or not the text contains what he is looking for and if any, he must find where is located, he moves also his eyes more or less quickly over the text for specific items.

A.1.2. Purpose of Reading

Reading with a purpose means approaching texts with a specific goal. When possible, students can be asked to read a text from a specific point of view, depending on what the text might suggest. In the classroom, students can be given reasons to read that approximate their

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purposes in a variety of real-world situations. They can read ads for apartments to find one that fits a particular set of requirements, look through movie listings and reviews to decide whether to see a particular movie, or respond to a written invitation.

There are many different purposes for reading. Sometimes you read a text to learn material, sometimes you read for pure pleasure, and sometimes you need to follow a set of directions. As a student, much of your reading will learn assigned material. You get information from everything you read and yet you don't read everything for the same reason or in the same way or at the same rate. Each purpose or reason for reading requires a different reading approach. Two things that influence how fast and how well you read are the characteristics of the text and the characteristics of you, the reader.

Characteristics of the text:

- a. Size and style of the type (font)
- b. Pictures and illustrations
- c. Author's writing style and personal perspectives
- d. Difficulty of the ideas presented

Characteristics of the reader:

- a. Background knowledge (how much you already know about the material or related concepts)
- b. Reading ability - vocabulary and comprehension
- c. Interest

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d. Attitude

A person may read for many purposes, and purpose helps to understand more what is read by people. If he is reading for pleasure or reading for pure recreation and enjoyment, he may read either quickly or slowly based on the way he likes or feels. But if reads for studying or setting information such news, science or same line, which are part of his study or assignment he does it very slowly and carefully.

Comprehension in reading is needed by the readers to get know what they read. At least, there are five main purposes for comprehensive reading. First, reading for specific information, second, reading for specific application, third, reading for pleasure and entertainment, fourth, reading for ideas, fifth, reading for understanding.

1. Reading for Specific Information

Commonly, reading for specific information is used to look for specific or limited information. For example, when the students at elementary school recognize of simple symbols, words and sentences. It means they are looking for specific information and finding it quickly. Another example such as looking up a word in the dictionary or a number in the telephone book is involving reading for specific information.

2. Reading for Application

Reading for application is used to describe a special task. Includes for this type is reading a cake recipe or following instructions to make or fix something. Read a book written by author procedurally. For example, read the instructions how to switch on the computer.

3. Reading for Pleasure and Entertainment

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Usually, this type purpose of reading is liked by most of the human who want to get pleasure or entertain in their reading. This includes reading popular magazine, novels, anecdotes, comics and others similar books.

4. Reading for Ideas

This type of reading concerns how to get ideas in the text, and also finding the concepts of the presented information. The reader skims through major topics, headings, illustrations and conclusion in order to get a general idea of the content.

5. Reading for Understanding

Reading for understanding is needed by the students to comprehend the relation between information and knowledge of the subject. They also understand the relation of topics to sentences, paragraphs and the main idea. For example, students reading an economic textbook must carefully compare and contrast similarities and differences of the facts and data presented in order to understand the subject. The most important for the explanation above is comprehension. It is important for the readers, because without comprehension, it is impossible to know what the readers read after.

According to Paul S. Anderson, there are seven purposes of reading, reading for details and fact, reading for main ideas, reading for sequence or organization, reading for inference, reading for classifying, reading for evaluating and reading for comparing of contest (Widyamartaya, 1992).

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- a. Reading for details and fact is reading to know what is done by the subject of the text
- b. Reading for main ideas is reading to get the problem statement
- c. Reading for sequence of organization is reading to know each part of the text
- d. Reading for inference is reading to know what is the writer meant by its text
- e. Reading for classifying is reading to find unusual things
- f. Reading for evaluating is reading to know the value of the text
- g. Reading for comparing or contest is reading to compare the way of life of the text with the way of life of the reader.

Meanwhile Lester and Alice Crow classified two general purposes. These purposes includes; Leisure-time reading and more serious reading (Crow, 1976).

- a. Leisure-time reading. It is reading for enjoyment which may vary in to follow your favorite sport, comic, article, and movie program.
- b. More serious reading. It is reading to study for a goal such as to obtain factual information and solve problems.

A.2. Reading Comprehension

Although English has been taught as a foreign language in our country, it does not mean that the result of teaching English in our school is satisfactory, despite the fact that it is taught continuously for six years at the high school, three years at SMP, and three years at SMA.

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Ramelan said that most SMA graduates are still very poor in their reading comprehension, since then, they could not read or understand articles in English dailies (Ramelan, 1992).

According to Webster's Dictionary, comprehension is "the capacity for understanding fully; the act or action of grasping with the intellect". Webster also tells us that reading is "to receive or take in the sense of (as letters or symbols) by scanning; to understand the meaning of written or printed matter; to learn from what one has seen or found in writing or printing.

The essence of reading act is comprehension: it becomes a primary challenge in teaching or learning of reading skill. In order to learn or understand the message of the author, the students are hoped to have the ability to comprehend the written textbook. Comprehension means understanding the meaning or the point of a topic, F. Dubin, D.E Eskey and W. Grabe show a more specific explanation that comprehension means relating what we do not know or new information, which is not random collection of facts but a theory of a world in each of our heads.

Reading with comprehension means to understand what has been read. Dorothy Rubin stated that reading comprehension is a complex intellectual process involving a number of abilities. The two major abilities concern word meanings and reasoning with verbal concepts (Rubin, 1982). Alderson (2000) suggested three 'operations in reading', the third of which he said had little to do with general reading ability. These are:

- a. Skimming: going through a text quickly.
- b. Reading carefully to understand main ideas and important detail.

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- c. Using knowledge of more specifically linguistic contributory skills: understanding grammatical notions (such as cause, result, purpose), syntactic structure, discourse markers, lexical and grammatical cohesion, lexis.

Reading is all about information. It's not about the number of words you read, but the amount of value you extract from them. The key to improved reading comprehension isn't moving your eyes across a page more quickly, but it's about creating a mental framework that helps you process words and ideas. With a bit of practice, anyone can read faster and more productively. There are 5 steps outlined below will help you to extract the maximum amount of information in the least amount of time.

1. The Pre-Reading Survey

Nearly all speed reading courses recommend doing a pre-reading survey. The purpose is to gain a better understanding of the content and structure of the material. You'd be amazed how often people read through an entire book, only to realize that the information they need isn't there. Pre-reading will make your reading more efficient by creating a mental map.

Start by reading the table of contents and the first page of the introduction. Then flip quickly through the material, reading only chapter titles, headings, and bold face print. Don't worry about remembering anything specific, it's more important to get a general impression. The entire process should take less than 5 minutes. Afterwards you'll know the layout of the book and the location of different topics. If you're only interested in one particular section, you now know where to find it.

2. Define Your Purpose

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Now that you have a general grasp of the material, you need to define a purpose. What information are you hoping to gain? This sounds like a simple question, but sometimes it isn't. Different readers can have drastically different objectives. If you don't define a purpose, it's likely you'll get bogged down by unimportant sections or ignore crucial ones. By clarifying what you need to know, you'll be able to distinguish the important from the irrelevant and allocate your attention accordingly.

3. Create Questions the Reading Should Answer

In addition to a general purpose, it's also helpful to write down specific questions. This focuses your mind on a set of objectives and gives you a way to measure comprehension. By writing down questions, you create a set of mental cues. Whenever you spot an important keyword in the text, you'll become aware of the question it relates to and your mind will start looking for an answer.

4. Take Notes or Highlight Important Concepts

One of the best ways to embed something in your memory is to write it down. When you read an important point, make a note of it on a separate piece of paper, inside the margin, or use a highlighter. This will help you remember what you read and make the important sections easy to find when you review the text.

5. The Post-Reading Review

After you finish reading, you need to determine what you learned. Did you achieve your purpose? Try to answer the questions you created beforehand. If you aren't able to answer them, go back and look for answers near your notes. This process will solidify the knowledge in your

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mind and give you better recall. You'll know what you learned, what you didn't, and whether or not you need to go deeper into the text or look for other sources.

A.2.1. Levels of Comprehension

Reading is a thinking activity. By now you have read this several times. This process involves getting meaning from the printed word or symbol. College instructors will expect that you, as a college students, will be able to read at all levels of meaning or comprehension. In this case, Levels mean different depths of understanding, different analysis of what is meant. In other words, you will be expected to read at different levels of comprehension.

There are three levels of comprehension, or sophistication of thinking, are presented in the following hierarchy from the least to the most sophisticated level of reading.

a. Stated. Level One : Literal - what is actually

The first level of comprehension can be called the literal level for the sake of wording because it is the most simple. Literal reading is the ability to follow directions and understand exact words, meanings and characters. At this level the reader or students can attempt to answer the question: *Question: What did the author say?*

At this level, the students would not have to understand the true meaning of a paragraph. However, they could memorize the information. Instructors might ask students to read a chapter dealing with dates or specific facts. At the *literal level*, students would memorize these dates and facts. However, even though they have memorized these facts, this does not mean that they necessarily understand their full meaning or see the implication of these dates and facts applied to other situations. At the *literal level*, they are looking at what was written by an author at "*face value*", little interpretation is needed.

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The abilities required in the literal comprehension are as follows:

- a. Facts and details
- b. Rote learning and memorization
- c. Surface understanding only

Tests in this category are objective tests dealing with true / false, multiple choice and fill-in-the blank questions. Common questions used to illicit this type of thinking are who, what, when, and where questions.

b. Level Two: Interpretive - what is implied or meant, rather than what is actually stated.

The second level of comprehension is called the *interpretive level*. At the interpretive level the reader or students can attempt to answer this question: *Question: What was meant by what was said?*

At this level, the students are attempting to understand what the author meant by what s/he said in the story, paragraph or textbook. It is presumed that they have already memorized certain facts at the *literal level* and now they are attempting to see the implications of the author's words. At this level, they are attempting to "read between the lines." as they say. At this level, they are attempting to understand that which they memorized at the *literal level* of comprehension.

Instead looking at the facts concerning when King Henry VIII ascended the throne of England, perhaps now they are attempting to understand the social implications and the political implications of his ascension to the throne. Perhaps a teacher might ask them,

"How did King Henry VIII wield his power as King of England?"

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This question is decidedly more complex than the previous one, where they are only asked to report what year he became King. This new question about “how” he wielded his power would force them to understand more than the date that he became a King. Interpretive comprehension focuses on understanding of ideas, information, which is not explicitly in the text.

The abilities required in the interpretive comprehension are as follows:

- a. Drawing inferences
- b. Tapping into prior knowledge / experience
- c. Attaching new learning to old information
- d. Making logical leaps and educated guesses
- e. Reading between the lines to determine what is meant by what is stated.

Tests in this category are subjective, and the types of questions asked are open-ended, thought-provoking questions like why, what if, and how.

- c. Level Three: Applied** - taking what was said (literal) and then what was meant by what was said (interpretive) and then extend (apply) the concepts or ideas beyond the situation. Applied comprehension focuses on **analyzing**, **synthesizing** and **applying** to information presented in the text.

The abilities required in the applied comprehension are as follows:

- a. Analyzing
- b. Synthesizing
- c. Applying

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In this level we are **analyzing** or **synthesizing** information and **applying** it to other information.

Reading to learn involves less well-known skills that must be learned (and can be taught) in order for individuals to be able to have the reading skills necessary to learn through reading. For instance, your comprehension would be on the highest level if you would feel comfortable responding to the below listed types of questions. (Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Outcomes are Developed by W. Jackson - 2/12/96. Listed below are the range of levels used to assess the degree of comprehension achieved by an individual.)

Level	Concept	Example/Question
Knowledge	Memorization	Recite the Pledge.
Comprehension	Understanding Meaning	Reword the Pledge.
Application	Apply ideas, principles	Demonstrate other Allegiances.
Analysis	Analyze Structure	Difference between Allegiance to the Flag or to the principles for which it stands.
Synthesis	Combine current and prior knowledge	Create a new Pledge.
Evaluation	Make judgements based on your understanding	How does Allegiance apply in today's world?

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Fig. 1. The Range of Levels Used to Assess The Degree of Comprehension Achieved by An Individual

A.2.2. Factors Affecting Comprehensions

As it has already been shown, reading comprehension need some intellectual ability to master it. There are four basic factors that influence the students. ability to comprehend written materials.

a. Background Experiences

Students who have little experience may have some difficulties in comprehending many ideas and activity with which other students are familiar before they learn in school. For an example, a students who never sees or hears about the mountain, and in some occasions dealing with it will find the text hard to follow, so he must have experiences in his background that enables him to bring personal meaning to the events an feelings if the text.

b. Intellectual Abilities

Second aspect of comprehension is the students' ability to think, it all depends on his intellectual development. Although the teacher gives the same textbooks and same purpose of reading, the result of reading maybe different. The number of ideas that they understand and the depth of their understanding will be largely dependent upon their general capacity to learn. The slow learning or dull-normal students cannot be expected to show same reaction or gain the same appreciations as the bright students when they read together for pleasure or to gain information.

c. Language Abilities

The third aspect is the students' language abilities, including semantics or word meaning and grasp of syntax. Understanding of semantics comes from experience with words in various,

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personally meaningful settings. A grasp of syntax is needed to recover the structure of the language, so the students have to master syntax which links deep and surface structure.

d. Affection

Such as personal interest, motivation, attitudes, beliefs, feelings; students will attend a better understanding to the text about a topic if they find personally interesting. The cause of greater understanding is also affected by reader's attitude and beliefs, readers could understand materials better when it matches their own attitudes and beliefs on a topic. This affection is usually linked to each other.

A.2.3. Improve Reading Comprehension

Reading is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text, resulting in comprehension. The text presents letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs that encode meaning. The reader uses knowledge, skills, and strategies to determine what that meaning is.

Reader knowledge, skills, and strategies include:

- a. Linguistic competence: the ability to recognize the elements of the writing system; knowledge of vocabulary; knowledge of how words are structured into sentences
- b. Discourse competence: knowledge of discourse markers and how they connect parts of the text to one another
- c. Sociolinguistic competence: knowledge about different types of texts and their usual structure and content

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- d. Strategic competence: the ability to use top-down strategies (see Strategies for Developing Reading Skills for descriptions), as well as knowledge of the language (a bottom-up strategy)

The purpose(s) for reading and the type of text determine the specific knowledge, skills, and strategies that readers need to apply to achieve comprehension. Reading comprehension is thus much more than decoding. Reading comprehension results when the reader knows which skills and strategies are appropriate for the type of text, and understands how to apply them to accomplish the reading purpose.

These days, teaching reading is the job of all teachers regardless of the subject area or grade level. The fact is if you want your students to do well they must be able to comprehend the material they are reading whether it is in science class, social studies, or even math. Teaching reading is no longer just the job of the language arts teacher.

However, if you really want to improve reading comprehension you're going to need a couple of "tricks" up your sleeve. One "trick" teachers can use to improve reading comprehension is by using a strategy known as purpose setting. Purpose setting is just as it sounds the teacher helps the students set a purpose for the reading. Setting a purpose for reading impacts what students will remember and positively effects comprehension.

One way teachers can improve reading comprehension through purpose setting is by giving students different roles/perspectives before reading and then have them write down important points from the reading based on those roles. It's fun to see the different bits of information the students pick up on based on their role. Here is an example of how to use purpose setting in content area reading:

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1. Pick a reading passage for the content you want to cover. It can be from the textbook, a novel, a primary source etc.
2. Place students in groups of 4 or 5 and assign each student a different role depending on the content. For example, a reading passage on the Civil War can include roles such as a Union soldier, Confederate soldier, a mother, father, daughter, slave, plantation owner, politician etc.
3. Make sure students do not tell each other their role.
4. Read the passage aloud to your students or have them read silently to themselves.
5. During the reading have students write a list of important points based on their role.
6. Finally, have students share their lists and try to guess each other's role.

Watch and see how much the students retain from the reading. Once you do, it is easy to see how purpose setting can greatly improve reading comprehension.

The ability to understand and remember reading material is important for success in school and everyday life. This is especially true for students with learning disabilities in reading, and language comprehension. Learn helpful tips to improve your ability and increase your success in reading and learning. Ann Logsdon stated that there are 5 tips to improve students reading comprehension.

a. Improve Reading Comprehension with Pre-Reading Tasks

Before reading the text, ask the students what they already know about its topic. Try to recall as much information as they can. Think of related ideas they have learned in the past. Make brief notes about their thoughts or discuss what they remember with others.

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b. Improve Reading Comprehension by Researching the Topic

Background information may appear on book covers and inner flaps of book jackets. Many books include an introductory section and a mini-biography about the author. Book publisher's websites may also include background information. Think about the information you read. Ask:

- a. What kind of text is this?
- b. What new information did they learn, and what do they expect to learn?
- c. Is this text informative or entertaining, fact or fiction?
- d. What interests me about this book?

c. Learn New Vocabulary Words to Improve Reading Comprehension

As they read, make a list of unfamiliar vocabulary words. Look up the meanings of the words in the dictionary, and jot definitions down by hand. Writing definitions by hand will help them remember the definition much more than by typing or by reading alone.

d. Improve Understanding by Reflecting on the Material and Asking Questions

As they read what questions come to mind. Read on to find the answers. They can think about the questions and answers or jot them down on paper. Research indicates that writing notes by hand can increase comprehension and recall among students who are not learning disabled in writing. For those who have LDs (Learning Disabilities) in writing mechanics pair the writing with discussion to improve understanding and recall.

e. Test Yourself to Determine How Well You Have Learned the Material

After they reading session, quiz themselves on the main points. What was the main idea? Who are the characters in the story? What information did you learn? Jot down their thoughts in their own words to help them remember them and give them deeper insight into the topic. If

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expressive writing is difficult for them, jot shorter notes and discuss the reading with a friend or parent.

A.2.4. Skill for Increasing Comprehension

A reading skill is a helpful tool that a student practices in order to improve reading. Skill is an one's ability to choose and perform the right techniques at the right time, successfully, regularly and with a minimum of effort. Teachers teach various skills to improve the understanding of reading. Unfortunately, many of the students while decoding do not comprehend what they are reading.

On the other hand, Hollas (2002) stated “reading strategy is a plan or way of doing something; a specific procedure one uses to perform a skill”. Grellet, F, (1981) proposed the following hints to develop reading skills.- **Teach** the students to concentrate on the text and not on the sentence. If reading comprehension is to be achieved, the structure of long units such as the paragraph or the whole text must be understood.- **Start** with global understanding and move towards detailed understanding rather than working the other way around. - **Use** authentic text whenever possible. The authentic text does not make learning more difficult. The difficulty depends on the activity which is required on the students rather than on the text itself.

In other words, the teacher should grade exercises rather than texts. - **Link** the different activity through the different activity chosen. Focus on reading skills and learning strategies and plan comprehension exercises for each of them.- **Do not** impose your own interpretation on the learners. - **Teach** them to think by providing enough evidences for them to follow the right way. - **Do not** impose an exercise on the text. It is better to allow the text to suggest what exercises are more appropriate to it. - **Do not** use so many exercises that you might spoil the pleasure of

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reading.- **Help** the students to time themselves and increase their reading speed, little, by little.-

Use variety of procedures when controlling the students' reading activity. Self-correcting exercises are extremely useful. Practice the following skills to improve reading comprehension.

There are nine important skills for comprehension:

- a. Determining the main idea and the author's purpose.
- b. Comprehending main idea.
- c. Distinguishing between main ideas and supporting details.
- d. Recognizing supporting details.
- e. Interpreting meaning.
- f. Making inferences.
- g. Drawing conclusions.
- h. Analyzing structure.
- i. Annotating text; writing paraphrases and summaries.

In order to help students their comprehension of reading and also increase their reading ability students have to use some skill and strategies. This review of literature will define the difference between reading skills and reading strategies, and illustrate before, during, and after reading strategies.

SKILLS	STRATEGIES
Instructor decides what learner needs	Learner's needs are anticipated by instructor

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Skills are often taught in predetermined sequence	Self-direction/need is determined by learner
Skills are often practiced in isolation	Strategies are taught in a meaningful context
The emphasis is often on practice for practice's sake only	Strategies are student-centered rather than teacher-directed
An automatic response is usually expected	Activity are purposeful, interactive, and independent
Applications to meaningful contexts may not occur	Continual observation is practiced for evaluation of what is needed

Fig. 2. The Differences Between Skill and Strategy

An experiment was conducted at degree college level. Students of F Y. B.A in three different colleges were tested in reading comprehension. All students were given a comprehension test and then individually interviewed to ascertain the strategies used by them in answering. From their responses it was found that there are three different categories of students.

The breakdown is given below:

College 1: Above- average Group (30 students)

College 2: (a) Above- average Group (30 students)

(b) Average Group (60 students)

College 3: Below- average Group (60 students)

The average group students used the following strategies:

1. Skimming to get at the gist of the passage.

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2. Scanning for specific information in the passage.
3. Guessing at the meaning of difficult words on the basis of relevant sentence, the content of the passage, or from their previous encounter with this word.
4. Predicting from the title what the passage would contain.
5. Using background knowledge.
6. Classifying, analyzing and evaluating information and ideas.
7. Inferring the writer's opinion regarding information/ ideas in the passage.

In other hand the average- group students used the following strategies:

1. Reading the text several times to get the overall idea.
2. Reading the test items and attempting to understand what is demanded from them, even though they were unable to find the answer.
3. Reading the text again after reading the test items.
4. Trying to guess at the meaning of unfamiliar words or phrases, though much time was not spent on this.

The weaker- group students used the following strategies:

1. Matching words and phrases used in the question with those in the text.
2. Avoiding reading the text, and instead, proceeding directly with answering the test items.
3. Answering the question based on the assumption that the first few sentences would contain the overall idea of the text, and concluding sentences would contain the writer's opinion.

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4. Answering question in general terms, not in terms of the specific information required.

From the above analysis we can say that the weaker- group students in spite of studying the “communication skill in English” course did not seem to have been trained in the area of reading strategies and therefore found it very difficult to attempt the given tasks. On the other hand, the average- group knew how to attempt the given tasks, though more practice was required in order for them to be efficient. In contrast the average- group students are aware of the relevance and significance of the use of reading strategies and show a high level of confidence in their use of these.

We can therefore conclude that that good readers use the following strategies in reading comprehension test:

1. Skimming in order to get overall idea of the passage.
2. Scanning for specific information.
3. Predicting from the given title the content of the passage.
4. Using their background knowledge.
5. Guessing the meaning of unfamiliar from the text.
6. Classifying, analyzing and evaluating.
7. Reading the passage for the key ideas or words.
8. Using textual aids to anticipate information.
9. Paraphrasing the text.
10. Inferring the writer’s opinion regarding information/ ideas in the passage.

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CONCLUSION

Reading is one of important skills that students must be mastered. There are many types of reading text to read by students to get knowledge. To achieve this goal, besides knowing type of text, students also must know the types of reading. The procedure how to reading a text and also their purposes in reading the text.

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