
THE USE OF SKILLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND DEVELOPING A BASIS FOR READING, LEARNING, COMPREHENSION AND CRITICAL THINKING

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Abstract: This theme:” The Use of Skills and particularly Developing a Basis for Reading and Learning, Comprehension and Critical thinking is very broad, interesting, challenging and very useful at the same time. It is very useful for teachers and students during lectorial exercises. Lectorial exercises are fundamental and an essential part of learning and improving English Language for foreign and domestic learners by implementing and using the four main skills of listening, reading, communication and writing. And in order to be more efficient and flexible to explain more thoroughly a given text, teachers or instructors along with students encounter the use of other subjects an interweave of syntax, morphology, grammar, as well as theory of literature and general knowledge of different field of social life and fields of professions. In order to learn and improve the terminology or use of vocabulary of a particular field as (medical, history, psychology,) and many others that will enable learners to communicate and understand a given terminology of a particular field.

Initially in my previous work of the basis of reading and learning according to my class experiences and after reading the work of Kathleen T McWhorter the eight edition of Efficient & Flexible Reading have motivated me to try to demonstrate the use of skill of reading, how to prepare a learner, what to expect from a reader during reading in order to be more efficient and flexible. What are the advantages and disadvantages according to the type of learning, which are divided into conceptual learners or applied learners or whether a spatial or verbal learner, social or independent learner, I have used Kathleen T Worter’s charts and diagrams which specify very thoroughly how to become efficient and flexible and now the phase of comprehension and critical thinking. Developing reading flexibility, assessing difficulty according to important characteristics of the material’s content and organization such as: format, graphics, visual material, typographical aids, language features, subject matter, length and organization. Assessing difficulty is required pre-reading. Pre-reading reveals how well organized a material is and give the reader the feeling for the difficulty of language and content.

Comprehension and monitoring comprehension is elaborated in the following paper and Critical thinking. Critical thinking not in the negative connotation of the word but means increasing a learner’s curiosity and questionnaire of a particular material and an open mind. To achieve the goal of comprehension and critical thinking is to enable learners to read actively and think critically.

To achieve this strategic objective in order to provide a positive learner’s experience and to enhance the learner’s or student’s engagement.

Keywords: Efficient, active, retention, thinking, content.

Lectorial. Lectorials are, as the name suggests, a combination of lecture and tutorial teaching modes designed to improve opportunities for student engagement in larger cohorts. The strategic objective is:

- To provide a positive student experience
- Enhance student engagement

Generally, large lectures are teacher centered and didactic with students’ passive recipients of information, resulting in low levels of engagement and superficial approaches to learning literature indicated that shifting the emphasis to active student- centered learning had significant outcomes in terms of increasing student engagement, problem solving ability and positive learning outcomes. To support teaching approaches that foster collaboration, engagement and student- centered learning. Opportunities for integrating students’ mobile technologies in the classroom environment are also supported by wireless networking and power/ data access. Today’s classrooms are designed to improve opportunities for student engagement in large classes and the equipment and technology and layout of the rooms allows a traditional teacher- centered lecture model of delivery to be integrated with student- centered and collaborative elements of “tutorial”- resulting in an approach that has been dubbed a “lectorial”. Lectorial teaching requires alternations to curriculum, assessment and delivery in order to make use of new learning space design. During classes learners should develop reflective practice and self-awareness. Either the whole class or divided in groups or individually by facilitating an online discussion or some kind to create a single instance of activity rather

then recreate each and every goal. Lectorials, referred to as ‘flipped classroom’ seeks to build higher levels of student participation and ultimately, achievement by subverting the traditional classroom model.¹⁵

Efficiency refers to the ability to perform with minimum amount of effort, expense or waste. Efficiency involves the effective use of time or resources to accomplish a specific task. **Efficient reading** is accomplished through:

1. **To analyze your reading efficiency and flexibility**
2. **To assess your reading style**
3. **The factors that affect rate and comprehension**
4. **The basic principles that governs efficiency and flexibility**

These points were elaborated in the previous paper of Learning & Flexible Reading according to the book Efficient & Flexible Reading by Kathleen T. McWorter. Once again, efficient reading means to get more done in less time. Many think that efficient reading means to read faster. They believe that slow reading is poor reading. This is not true; “How” you read is more important than how fast you read. Efficient reading involves adequate comprehension and recall within a reasonable time. Adequate comprehension and recall within a reasonable time frame. Reading efficiency increases as you build techniques that develop your comprehension and retention which will enable the reader to use time economically.

College instructors expect their students to read actively and to think critically. Most readers approach reading as a single- step process. Research shows that reading is not a single-step process but a complex set of skills involving activities before, during, and after reading. Partial list of these skills:

Before Reading

- **Determine the subject of the material.**
- **Determine how the material is organized.**
- Decide what you need to remember from the material.
- Define your purpose of reading.

During Reading

- Identify what is important.
- Determine how key ideas are supported.
- Identify patterns of thought.
- Draw connections between ideas.
- Anticipate what is to come next.
- Relate Ideas to what you already know.

During and After Reading

- Identify the author’s purpose of writing.
- Analyze the author’s technique and language
- Evaluate the author’s competence or authority.
- Ask critical questions.
- Evaluate the nature and type of supporting evidence.

On the following is presented a Table 2.1 lists (T. Mc Whorter Kathleen, Efficient & Flexible Reading, page 34.) Here are additional examples of successful reading strategies and contrasts them with passive (unsuccessful) approaches.

Table 2.1 Active Versus Passive Reading

| Active Readers..... | Passive Readers..... |
|--|---|
| Read each assignment differently | Read all assignments the same way |
| Analyze the purpose of the assignment | Read the assignment because it was assigned |
| Adjust their speed to suit their purpose | Read everything at the same speed |
| Question ideas | Accept whatever is in print as true |
| Compare and connect textbook readings with lecture content | Study each separately |
| Find out what an assignment is before reading it | Check the length of an assignment before reading it |
| Keep track of their level of comprehension and | Read until the assignment is completed |
| Read with pencil in hand, highlighting, | Read jotting notes, and marking key vocabulary |

- (T. Mc Whorter Kathleen, Efficient & Flexible Reading, Longman, USA 2008, p. 34)

Thinking Critically

¹⁵ <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Lectorial>, accessed on November 17, 2019,

Active reading requires critical thinking. To be an active reader, you must think beyond a factual, literal level. After reading is expected to understand ideas, but also is expected that the reader to apply, analyze, and evaluate information to create new ideas. On the next Table 2.2 is described a progression of academic thinking skills ranging from basic to more complex. During lectoral exercises while assigning papers, questions of exams, or conduct class discussions, often is required to do more than just remember and understand. Awareness of these levels of thinking help students or readers move beyond factual learning and focus their study on applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

| Level | Examples |
|---|--|
| Remembering: Recalling information; repeating inf. | Repeating definitions; memorizing dates |
| Understanding: Understanding ideas; using rules and follow directions | Explaining a theory, recognizing what is important |
| Applying: Applying knowledge to a new situation | Using knowledge of formulas to solve a new problem |
| Analyzing: Seeing relationships; breaking information into parts; | Comparing two essays by the same author analyzing how things work |
| Evaluating: Making judgments; assessing value of worth of information | Evaluating the effectiveness of an argument opposing |
| Creating: Putting ideas and information together in a unique way; | Designing a new computer program creating something new |

As mentioned above critical thinking should not be understood on a negative connotation, it means having a curious questioning and an open mind. Developing critical thinking skills is the main goal to be achieved in order to read, understand and recall a given material, and to interpret and evaluate a given material as well. To obtain a better sense of what critical thinking and reading involves and to assess the current level of critical thinking and reading skills, on the following will be elaborated how to achieve the main goal of comprehension.

Monitoring Comprehension

Readers or students read an assignment only to realize later, perhaps much later during an exam, that they did not really understand the given material. Readers /students also after reading several pages or more, and still discover later that have understood very little. In order to overcome these problems should be developed a very important and useful skill. This skill is known as COGNITIVE MONITORING, and it means keeping track or being aware of what is happening mentally as a reader reads. In cognitive monitoring the reader will stay aware of their level of understanding by picking up clues or signals that indicate whether or not the reader understands what he/she is reading. Experience tells us that there is a difference according to the type of material. Easy to understand a simple text compared with how one feels dealing with a more complicated material that is difficult to understand. On the first case everything seems to fit and make sense and on the second (difficult) one, the sense of sense and fit is noticeably absent.

The contrast between an easy or familiar text and a difficult or unfamiliar text is that, on the first case everything seems to fit together and make sense. Ideas led from one to another; easily can be followed the author’s train of thought. While reading the second one, a reader/student experiences difficulty and confusion. The reader realizes that ideas are not making sense. Unfamiliar terms are used and unfamiliar concepts are discussed; consequently, the flow of ideas could not be seen. In order to overcome this problem, readers should learn to recognize comprehension signals.

Reading Comprehension Signals

In the above-mentioned contrasts of the easy/familiar text and the difficult/unfamiliar text, were quite clear-cut: In one case understanding was easy; in the other it was difficult. In many situations, however, the distinction between understanding and the lack of it is not as clear. Comprehension depends on numerous factors; it may vary from high to low even with a single piece of material. In these kinds of cases readers have to pick up more subtle clues or signals. The following Table 2.4 lists and compares some common signals that may assist readers in monitoring their comprehension. Not all signals must appear at the same time, and not all signals work for everyone.

| Table 2.4 Comprehension Signals | |
|---|--|
| Positive Signals | Negative Signals |
| Everything seems to fit and make sense; ideas flow logically from one to another You are able to see where the author is leading | Some pieces do not seem to belong; the material seems disjointed |
| You are able to make connections and see patterns of thought developing relationships; the organization | You feel as if you are struggling to stay with the author and are unable to think ahead You are unable to detect |
| You read at regular pace without slowing down or rereading. You understand why the material was assigned - You feel comfortable and have some knowledge about the topic - You recognize most of the words or can figure them out of context - You can express the main ideas in your own words- | You need to read frequently and you make frequent regressions You do not know why the material was assigned and cannot explain why it is important The topic is unfamiliar, yet the author assumes you understand it Many words are unfamiliar You must reread and use the author's language to explain the idea You often slow down or reread Nothing or everything seems important |
| You read at a regular, comfortable pace - You understand what is important - | |

Correcting Incomplete Comprehension

Once are recognized clues that signal your level of understanding, a reader will find situations in which does not comprehend as well as he/she should. The following should be done in these situations:

1. **To analyze the time and place in which one is reading.** If reading or studying for several hours, mental fatigue may be the source of the problem. If reading is done in a place with numerous distractions or interruptions, result lack of concentration and contributes to comprehension loss.
2. **Rephrase each paragraph in your own words.** A reader might approach extremely complicated material sentence- by- sentence, expressing each in your own words.
3. **Read aloud sentences or sections that are particularly difficult.** Oral reading often provides auditory feedback signals that aid comprehension.
4. **Write a brief outline of the major points of the article.** This will help a reader to see the overall organization and progression of ideas in the material.
5. **Not hesitate to reread difficult or complicated sections.** In fact, at times several rereading is appropriate and necessary.
6. **To highlight important ideas.** After reading a section to go back and highlight what is important, and highlighting forces a reader to sort out what is important. This sorting process facilitates overall comprehension and recall.
7. **Slow down your reading rate if you'r beginning to lose comprehension.** On occasion simply reading more slowly will provide the needed boost in comprehension.
8. **Summarize.** Test your recall by summarizing each section after reading it.

If none of these suggestions are effective, then, probably a reader may be lacking background knowledge that a particular writer assumes the reader has. If a reader feels lack of knowledge in a particular discipline or a particular topic, is suggested:

1. To obtain a more basic text from the library that reviews basic principles and concepts.
2. To review encyclopedia entries or other reference sources to obtain an overview of the subject.
Based on the type of learners, if one is considered an applied learner, he/she can improve comprehension by thinking of real-life situations that illustrate ideas in the material. And, the Conceptual learners can improve comprehension by asking questions.

Reading and learning actively means becoming engaged to the material that you are reading and studying. It includes the activities of reading, thinking, predicting, connecting, focusing your concentration, and assessing one's performance. Active reading is a process of staying focused on the material that you're reading before, during and after reading. It means participating consciously and directly in the reading process. A reader /student is expected to function to possess six different levels of thinking. To be able to work with ideas that involve: Remembering-

recalling information or facts; Understanding- grasping the meaning of facts; Applying- using knowledge in new situations; Analyzing- seeing relationships among ideas and how things work; Evaluating- making judgments about ideas and last, Creating- putting ideas together to form something new.

Developing the above mention a reader /student needs to improve concentration, by controlling external distractions. The purpose of comprehension monitoring, is that it helps a reader to track their comprehension while reading. By recognizing positive and negative signals in order to be aware of their level of comprehension and will be able to correct incomplete comprehension.

Prereading, allows a reader to become familiar with organization and content of the material before reading it, it is like providing a “road map” to guide a reader through the material, Prereading helps to discover what the reader already knows about a topic and to connect this with the material o be read.

To accomplish efficiency guide questions are helpful. Guide questions enable a reader to establish purposes for reading. They focus a reader’s attention and improve a reader’s retention. Most frequent questions are: What does a writer expect the reader to understand or believe after reading? What does the writer lead up to? What kind of evidence, facts and arguments does he offer? Why is it important? How does this information fit with other things of learning? And, how can it be used?

Learning actively involves awareness of the reader’s level of concentration and, of the reader’s learning style.

This is a very broad subject, and further studies of such, include more and further classifications and methods of use in order to comprehend a given material. Same as lectorical classes that require an interweave of many subjects and disciplines, along with general knowledge, in order to give answers at given questions, Comprehension as well requires further classifications such as patterns, comparison- contrast, connection and so on. But this depending from the type of learner, because all elements do not occur at the same time and this does not work for everyone.

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