5

DEVELOPING READING SKILL

DEVELOPING CRITICAL READING SKILLS

Previously, in unit-II we have dealt with critical reading as a type of reading elaborately. Here we will focus on how to develop this skill. By this time we know that critical reading means reading a text to draw inferences, evaluate, arrive at conclusions, and look at the text from different perspectives (for example, author's point of view).

We know that reading is a communicative activity. Current approaches to texts in diverse disciplines stress the interactive nature of what Cicourel calls "interpretative procedures". These approaches assume that meaning is created through the interaction of text and the reader.

Literary theorists, too, have noted that authorial intent can never be completely recovered by a reader. Nor can authors completely represent their intents (due to several reasons, one important reason being the inadequacy of language). Thus readers have the task of recovering a message (as much as possible) that has been incompletely coded. This issue of intention and meaning is central in critical reading comprehension.

Critical reading skill is very useful for academic purpose related to any discipline. But it is especially useful in literature and social sciences like sociology, political science and anthropology or any other subject where interpretation matters.

Strategies for Critical Reading

Ask Question About	For example
1. Reader's purpose of reading	Why am I reading it?
2. Context of text	Why is the author writing it?
	How relevant?
	Where & when ?
3. Structure of text	Do the parts fit together logically?
	Is there a clear argument structure?
4. The arguments	Are the arguments fair?
	Do they leave out certain perspectives ?
5. The evidence used	Is evidence given to support the point of view?

Generally, initial reading is followed by a more careful reading. For thorough understanding of the text more detailed reading is necessary. For this purpose we start with reading between the lines, paraphrasing, skimming and then we go further.We scan, looking for specific words or phrases (which we previously recognized automatically) that would support our arguments. It is here we need to develop critical reading. Through critical reading we draw inferences and recognize implicit relationships, which allow us finally to create a meaningful discourse. We again return to the text using different strategies to achieve comprehension. Only through this multiple approach meaning does emerge. We exhibit our comprehension in terms of this critical (and multiple) approach to texts.

Now three popular techniques for developing critical reading are discussed here.

(i) SQ3R Technique (Robinson)

SQ3R stands for the initial letters of the five steps in studying a text

(i) Survey
(ii) Question
(iii) Read
(iv) Recall or Recite
(v) Review

Survey: Survey refers to a quick glance through or skim through the title page, preface, chapters, headings, etc. of a text. By surveying a text, a student will be able to gauge the main ideas in a text. Besides the author's name, date, and place of publication, the title page can give a student an idea of the general subject area and the level of focus in that particular text.

The table of contents, preface or foreword in a book would give the reader an idea of the themes dealt with in the text and how they are organized. A survey of the index or a survey of the bibliography tells someone immediately whether the text contains what he wants. Here survey is a global activity.

Question: The text that has been read by us raises some questions in our mind. We should try hard to get or find out answers to our questions that crop up from our critical mind.

Read: We read to get answers to those critical questions that come to our mind. The text has to be read twice or thrice or even more to understand the relevant points. The reader has to note down those points so that he can recall these points whenever he needs them.

Recall: We need to recall what we read from time to time. We need to develop in our learners the skill of connecting what they read to their previous knowledge and also for relating the text to their future lessons. In other words, we should develop the skill of connecting information with the pre-reading and post-reading. While interpreting a text, drawing inferences, and learning to read between the lines to extract implied meanings, the learners will benefit if they share their experiences in reading with each other. If they recall what they have read in classroom, it will provide a chance to remedy misinterpretations, if there is any. It will also give them an opportunity for re-active reading, for raising problems. Robinson (1979) used the term **recite** instead of **recall**. The student are asked to look away from the book and try to recite the answer to their question.

Review: Reviewing refers to the act of examining a book critically against the background of current thoughts and ideas. The purpose of reviewing in the final stage of reading is to check the validity of all the steps: whether we have made a proper survey, asked the right questions, read critically and recalled most relevant issues. Therefore, at the review stage, we need to repeat the last four steps : survey, question, read, and recall.

(ii) SCROL Procedure

Another good example of a procedure designed to help students with the different stages of approaching a text is the SCROL procedure (Grant 1993).

Summary of the SCROL procedure

Here are the steps to be included in the SCROL procedure for using text headings to help understand, remember, and locate information. One has to conduct step 3-5 for one heading segment (the heading and the text that follows it) at a time. Then move to the next heading segment.

1. **Survey the headings:** In the assigned text, read each heading and its sub-headings. For each heading and sub-heading, try to answer the following questions: 'What do I already know about this topic? What information might the writer present?
2. **Connect:** After reading all of the headings and sub-headings in the selection, ask yourself 'How do the headings relate to one another?' Write down key words from the headings that might provide connections between the headings.
3. **Read the text:** Now go back to the first heading segment and begin reading the text. Remember that headings may provide clues to important information in the text. As you read each segment, look for words and phrases that express important information about the heading. As you read, feel free to mark the text (underline, highlight, make notes in the margin) to point out important ideas and details. Before moving to the next heading segment, *stop* to *make sure* that you understand the major ideas and supporting details. If you do not understand, read again.
4. **Outline:** Using indentation to reflect structure, outline the major ideas and supporting details in the heading segment. Write the heading and then try to outline each heading segment without looking back to the text.
5. **Look back:** Now, look back to the text and check the accuracy of the major ideas and details you wrote. Correct any inaccurate information in your outline. If you marked the text as you read, use this information to help you verify the accuracy of your outline. (Grant 1993)

The first two stages aim at developing skimming in order to preview the content and are as relevant to second language readers as they are to the first language readers.

(iii) Think-aloud techniques in critical reading

When we are to train students in reading at the higher level, we have to consider reading as an integrated ability, whose components should not be separated.

If we need to develop the critical faculties of our learners while they read, we should get them introspect about internal processes in their mind as they read through 'think aloud' techniques instead of reading tests. As they read, they may evaluate the logic of reasoning represented in the material they are reading. They may consider the relevance, authenticity, and utility of factual details in a text. If they read a novel, they may comment on a character's behaviour based on their own experiences of encountering such characters in real life or in other's works. All these comments could be recorded through 'think aloud' techniques and then be discussed.

(iv) Structure-Proposition-Evaluation (SPE) Method:

Mortimer Adler popularized this method in his book How to Read a Book, mainly for non-fiction treatise, in which one reads a text in three phases: (i) for the structure of the work, (ii) for the logical propositions or progression made, (iii) for evaluation of the merits of the arguments and conclusions. This method demands suspended judgement of the work or its arguments of the judgement until they are fully understood.

(v) Multiple Intelligences-based Method:

This method draws upon the reader's various ways of thinking and comprehending to enrich his appreciation of the text. Reading is primarily a linguistic activity. Most readers use several intelligences, such as auditory, visual, and logical intelligences while reading and making a habit of doing so in a more disciplined manner, i.e. constantly or after every paragraph of the text, which results in a more vivid and memorable experience.

DEVELOPING REFLECTIVE SKILLS

Reflection as a skill is expected to enhance the quality of one's learning and thinking. As a cognitive process, reflection is something more than just decoding and reading of a text (reading the lines). It encompasses several levels of comprehension

(interpretative level, critical level, creative level, etc.). It goes beyond the text (reading beyond the lines) to think and reflect to have a deeper understanding of the message conveyed. It is important to remember that reflection is a dynamic mental process. It is never passive; on the contrary, it involves an active engagement with knowledge and experience of the learner. So, by reflecting, we are able to construct new and deeper knowledge. In the process of reflection, there arises a conflict between theoretical knowledge and practical experience of the learner. His theoretical knowledge is challenged by reality of experience, where such things as diversity, value, background knowledge, cultural norms, etc. raise questions and accept the content of the text after judging it against some criteria.

In the contxt of reading, *reflective reading* involves episodes of reading the text and then pausing to reflect and backtrack. For example, when a reader wants to check whether a new line of argument in a political text is consistent with opinions expressed earlier in the same article, he is reading reflectively. Here, we have to keep it in mind that reflecting is a mental process which is not product-oriented. That is, it is not always externally manifested. When we answer questions related to our personal opinion about a character or event we show signs of reflection. Our reflective reading is an internal process that requires a synthesizing skill. Synthesizing involves taking important information from different texts and creating a new text after assimilating the information of the previous texts. It is very close to *creative thinking skill* and is often manifested in the form of a new interpretation of a text. To put it differently, reflective reading skill leads to *first, interpretative, then critical* and finally to *creative reading.*

In order to understand reflective reading, it is better to know the phases of comprehension. A text can be understood at several levels, i.e. from surface-level comprehension to deeper-level comprehension (sometimes leading to comprehend the unexpressed meaning) to critical, judgemental and finally to creative comprehension. Readers generally pass through several phases of comprehension. These are:

(i) descriptive phase,
(ii) interpretative phase,
(iii) critical analysis phase, and
(iv) creative phase.

In the ***descriptive phase,*** the reader's focus is on the information contained in the text. The questions asked here include what happened, when and how and also who did it or even why. Most of such answers can be found in the text and arriving at these answers represents the surface level comprehension where reading is largely an act of receiving.

In the ***interpretative*** phase readers relate the information in the text to their own background knowledge, experiences and feelings. The questions asked here include 'Have I seen or felt or experienced something similar ?' 'How did I feel on reading it? 'Did I like or dislike or hate or love reading it?' and so on. Their main value lies in the understanding that 'true learning occurs only when the information received is analyzed in the light of one's own experiences and emotions'.

In the ***critical analysis*** phase readers relate the text to broader social issues and may draw conclusions from it. The questions asked at this stage may include: 'Is it (always or sometimes) valid?'; 'Does it benefit some or all or a few people?'; 'Are there alternatives to it that serve other people or purposes?' and so on. The main focus of this activity is to involve pupils in higher-order thinking processes to deepen their comprehension of events and to explore their larger social implications.

In the ***creative*** phase readers go beyond the text and generate new ideas and insight about the content of the text. It requires the ability of prediction, invention, imagination and generalization on the part of the reader. Creative reading uses *divergent thinking skills* to go beyond the literal level and to move on to the interpretational and critical reading level. In this stage, the reader is now in a position to argue with the author or suggest an alternative solution / interpretation to a particular problem.

DEVELOPING METACOGNITION IN READING

Educators have realized that teachers cannot possibly teach students everything they need to know in life. Thus, a major goal of education systems has been to prepare students for a lifetime learning. To this end, a large part of the educational endeavour involves teaching general skills and strategies that can be applied to a variety of problems and learning situations.

Although strategy instruction improves learning, knowledge of strategies may not be sufficient to produce higher levels of learing. Young children may have knowledge of strategy but they fail to use them. Strategy instruction should therefore provide students information about the utility of the strategy and when & how to use it. To put it differently, strategy instruction should also include a metacognitive component.

Metacognition, broadly defined, is the knowledge that a person has of his own cognitive processes. In other words, it is thinking about thinking. Metacognitive strategies are therefore strategies used by learners to plan, regulate, and monitor their learning. In 1979 John H. Flavell proposed that metacognitive knowledge consists of three components:

(1) knowledge of self (e.g., knowing that one learns better when studying in a quiet setting than in front of the television);
(2) knowledge of task (e.g., knowing that it's easier to prepare for a multiple-choice test than an essay test; and
(3) knowledge of strategies (e.g., when and how to use them).

A fourth component, 'plans and goals' has been added later.

1. **Self knowledge:** perception or understandings of oneself as a learner or thinker
2. **Task knowledge:** understanding of the cognitive demands of a task
3. **Strategic knowledge:** knowledge of processes that are effortful, planned, and consciously invoked to facilitate the acquisition and utilization of knowledge. This includes both cognitive strategies, those that contribute directly to the solution of problem, and meta-cognitive strategies, those that evaluate and monitor how well the selected cognitive strategy works.
4. **Plans and goals:** knowledge of the goals that may be established and the general plans that may be invoked.

Table: Flavell's sub-components of metacognitive skill

There is a relation between learning outcomes and knowledge of specific strategies. Research results show that test performance is greater for children with more knowledge of the strategy than for children with less knowledge of strategy. Thus, knowing about a strategy is important. It is also important to know when to use one strategy versus another.

- Understanding the conditions under which one learns best
- Analyzing the problem at hand
- Allocating attention
- Indentifying which important aspects of a message apply to the task at hand
- Separating important information from less important information
- Understanding explicit and implicit task demands
- Determining what performance components are important for the particular task
- Determine how to strategically proceed
- Monitoring to track attention and comprehension
- Internal checking to determine success of achieving goals
- Reversing, modifying, or terminating activities strategically
- Determining what internal and external feedback to explore
- Initiating and maintaining repair.

Table: Common metacognitive skills

Ideally, children should be able to monitor the effectiveness of a particular strategy in a given situation and change strategies if necessary. To do this, they must accurately monitor their own learning. Models of self-regulated learning provide a theoretical framework for understanding the role of metacognition in learning. These models suggest that a person begins study by setting a learning goal (desired state of learning). As a person starts studying, he monitors how well the material has been learned. If this monitoring indicates that the goal has been reached, the person will terminate study. By contrast, if the learning goal has not been reached, the person will adjust his study (e.g., selecting a different study strategy or allocating more study time to the material).

According to this framework, accurate metacognitive monitoring is necessary for effective regulation of study, and these together contribute to more optimal learning. Thus, if a person does not accurately monitor his current state of learning, the person may fail to regulate his study effectively. For instance, if a person inaccurately assesses progress toward a learning goal, he may prematurely stop studying or may continue using a less-effective strategy when another would be more effective. Therefore, accurately monitoring in learning is critical.

1. Reading
2. Selectively reading
3. Imaging (i.e., having a picture in mind)
4. Adjusting speed
5. Assimilating with personal experiences
6. Concentrating (i.e., thinking about the story and keeping it in mind)
7. Assimilating with passage events (thinking about some event that happened earlier in the story) or thinking about previous events.
8. Noting/searching for salient details (i.e., remembering specific details, that were different).
9. Summarizing
10. Predicting outcomes (i.e., trying to guess what will happen next in the story).
11. Self-generated questions (i.e., a questioning comment about the story).
12. Students perceptions of teacher expectations (i.e., reading in anticipation of questions the teacher might ask)
13. Rehearsal.

Table: Metacognitive strategies

A number of factors affect how accurately learning is monitored and how well this information is used to regulate study. Age-related differences are perhaps most relevant to educators. The capability to monitor the effectiveness of one strategy versus another develops with age. Adults discover the utility of a strategy spontaneously by using the strategy and through experiences with tests, and they will use this information to regulate subsequent study by selecting more effective strategies. Older children, although less accurate than adults,

also monitor the utility of a particular strategy by using it and gaining feedback through tests. However, they fail to use this information to regulate study without explicit feedback regarding test performance.

In some cases, adults quite accurately monitor their own learning (e.g., when monitoring associative learning after a delay). That is, in these situations adults accurately discriminate better-learned material from less-learned material. However, in other cases, such as attempting to monitor comprehension of texts, even adult's monitoring accuracy is less than remarkable. Nonetheless, adults use this monitoring to guide subsequent study, typically opting to re-study material perceived as less well learned over material perceived as better learned. Moreover, monitoring accuracy is related to learning – higher accuracy is associated with greater test performance.

These findings regarding the importance of monitoring lead to the question of how educators can improve monitoring accuracy. First, they can encourage students to assess their own learning. Strategy-monitoring training involves giving students practice at monitoring the effectiveness of strategies. With practice, students also become more accurate at discriminating better-learned material from less-learner material. Second, they can frequently test students' learning and provide explicit feedback on performance. Tests and feedback related to performance help at least older students monitor the effectiveness of strategies.

However, reading fails due to the failures of metacognition for the following reasons:

1. Readers lack linguistic or topic knowledge necessary to monitor or control sources of dissonance.
2. Readers process necessary linguistic or topic knowledge but lack monitoring or control strategies.
3. Readers possess strategies but lack meta-cognitive understanding about where and when to apply them.
4. Comprehension and/or control are too demanding of the reader's resources, thereby hindering his or her ability to control reading.
5. The standards of evaluation used by the readers are inappropriate for the levels of text representation that need to be monitored.

6. Sources of dissonance are resolved by the incorrect inferences readers make during the comprehension process.
7. Comprehension and /or monitoring are too demanding of the reader's resources thereby hindering his or her ability to monitor reading.
8. Although not specifically noted in the model, but implicit in all controlled cognitive process, readers lack motivation to monitor or control their reading.

Thus, reading to learn requires that students should accurately monitor the effectiveness of their study and problem-solving behaviour. It has been shown by research result that higher-achieving students are engaged in more self-assessment than lower-achieving students. By encouraging self-assessment and developing monitoring skills in students, teachers can provide students with skills that will help them well after they leave the classroom. These metacognitive skills are developed by employing strategic instructions such as reciprocal teaching, predicting, clarifying, summarizing, questioning, etc.

ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPING READING SKILLS

Several activities are employed to develop reading skill of our learners. Some of these these activities are mentioned here below:

Type of Reading Comprehension Activity

Read and supply (words, phrases)
Read and eliminate (words, phrases and sentences)
Read and select (multiple choice, alternative type questions)
Read and draw (diagrams, pictures, flowcharts, graphs)
Read and act (role play, actions, gestures)
Read and match (actions, pictures, phrases, sentences)
Read and label (diagrams, pictures)
Read and rearrange (words, sentences, flash cards, pictures)
Read and describe (situations, events, people, places, procedures)

Different Forms of Reading Activities

- ***Using signpost questions/pre-questions:*** A general question is given to the learners before the reading is taken up by them. This helps the learners focus their attention on the text while looking for some important information in it.
- ***Suggest a title:*** The reader is required to suggest a title for a passage or give a paragraph heading. This helps the learners understand the theme of a text.
- ***Summarize:*** Summarizing helps learners to understand the text structure and sequence of ideas/relationship, etc.
- ***Prediction:*** Learners try to predict what will happen next or how a story might have ended.
- ***Gapped text:*** Gaps in the text (also known as cloze text) (not simply of words but chunks of text) help learners make meaningful guesses.
- ***Comparison:*** Two texts on a similar topic can be used to draw comparisons, e.g. Newspaper reports from two different papers on the same topic, event, etc.
- ***Personal response:*** A thought provoking text can be used to draw a personal response through discussions or writing.
- ***Transfer of Information (re-presentation of content):*** Learners present the information in a text by representing it in a drawing, figure, chart, diagram, table, map, etc. The idea is to transfer it in a different graphic medium.

Comprehension Exercises

Comprehension is an internal cognitive process. As teachers we need some ways of making sure what is taking place in the students' mind between the time he opens the pages of the text and the end of his reading. But information of this kind is extremely hard to get because we can never quite see the students' mind at work.

The most usual practice, or course, is to ask questions to check comprehension. But this traditional practice has been modified to a certain extent in current teaching practice. Traditional questions were usually designed to find out whether the students had understood rather than to produce understanding. In other words, according to Nuttall (1982), they are devices for testing rather than teaching.

How can we find a connection between answering questions and developing understanding?

The answer lies in giving students such questions and activities that would:

- make them work at the text and struggle with meaning.
- contribute actively to the process of making sense rather than expect understanding just to happen.
- stimulate them to productive thinking.

Here the key word is 'struggle'. The questions should force the students to concentrate on the text, interact with it and actively engage in the negotiation of potential meaning. They should be led to the higher levels of cognitive activity – from simple locating and recognition to interpretation and evaluation. Finally, these questions develop a sense of personal response, an awareness of reflection and contemplation. Thus the aim of comprehension exercises is to stimulate the process of understanding.

Before we begin our discussion on the different kinds of comprehension exercises, let us mention a few general observation on those exercises:

- The exercises should be suited to the texts. An exercise should never be imposed on a text. It is better to allow the test to suggest what exercises are most appropriate to it.
- Task must be suited to one's reasons for reading or purpose of reading.
- The activities should be varied:
  (a) to sustain interest in the lesson
  (b) to prevent anticipating the question type and thus prevent rote learning.
  (c) to cater to different levels of students in a heterogeneous class.

However, there should not be a plethora of tasks. Too many exercises might spoil the pleasure of reading. A balance should be struck between leaving the students without any task on one hand, and on the other, too many exercises 'to squeeze the text dry'.

Students should see and read the questions they are going to answer before reading the text. If they do this, it will be possible for them to read in a required way. They should employ the right kind of method (skim / scan, etc.) while reading the text only to extract the information the questions demand.

Types of Comprehension Exercises

There are two main kinds of comprehension exercises:

(a) different kinds of questions;
(b) tasks and activities.

First we shall consider questions in the comprehension class.

Questions

Questions may be classified according to their forms. They are:

(i) *Fixed Response* items, and
(ii) *Free Response* items.

(i) Fixed Response Items

In such items response is limited. The common fixed response items are multiple-choice questions, true-false statements, matching exercises, etc.

Multiple-choice questions (Recall type): These consist of a stem which poses the problem followed by four or five options, one of which is the correct or the best answer. The alternatives are known as *detractors.* They are plausible answers designed to deceive the weaker students. The stem may be in the form of direct questions, incomplete statement or a word or a phrase.

True-false statements (Recognition type): Here the student is presented with a statement. He has to decide whether it is true or false in accordance with the text. If the answer is not available explicitly, it requires inference and deduction. Often a 'false' statement requires the student to provide the correct answer. In this way guess work may be avoided.

Matching exercise (Matching type): A matching exercise involves two columns of words or statements. The items in the first column do not correspond with those in the second column. The student's job is to match them.

(ii) Free Response Items

These include the traditional "who" "how" and "why" questions as well as questions beginning with auxiliary verbs. The expected response may be a short answer or a long answer. Wh –questions are most effective for testing reading. But recently there has been a swing away from Wh-questions to other kinds of activities.

The reason is that the response to wh-questions require substantial oral or written productive competence. For this reason, activities like ticking, chart-filling or true-false exercises are preferred because they require minimum language production and at the same time allow the student to demonstrate understanding of the text.

But how can we distinguish between good and bad question? For that we have to know the features of good questions. According to Nuttall (1982), good questions have one or more of the following features:

1. Firstly, there should be a repertoire of questions which will cover the full potential of the text. Questions should be beyond simple recall and recognition type and will lead to the higher levels of cognitive activity. Thus a reading programme should begin with questions which establish the purpose of reading and then demand information to be verified from the text. These should be followed by the more inference type of questions, requiring abstract thinking and judgement. In other words, questions may be graded in order of complexity. We will briefly discuss the grading of wh-questions:

(a) ***Questions of literal comprehension:*** These are questions whose answers are directly and explicitly available in the text. Questions of this type may be answered in the words of the text itself, though this is not desirable. Such questions are essential preliminaries to serious work on the text, because unless the learner has grasped the plain meaning of the text, there is no point in attempting more sophisticated exercises.

(b) ***Questions of inference:*** These questions make the students to read between the lines, to consider what is implied, but not stated explicitly. These are more difficult than the previous type (questions of literal comprehension) because they require the students to understand the text well enough to work out its implications. The difficulty lies in the intellectual level rather than linguistic level in most cases. Sometimes they require the student to put together in his mind the pieces of information that are scattered in the text so that their implications can be recognized.

(c) ***Questions of evaluation:*** Evaluative questions involve the reader in making a judgement about the text in terms of what the writer is trying to say and how far he has achieved it. These are very sophisticated questions and include questions on literary application. They must be employed very cautiously, keeping in mind the level of the students. These are more appropriate at the undergraduate level. However, we may tone down the difficulty of these questions and use them judiciously at the advanced levels. Through these questions we must ensure that the reader does not respond only but also analyzes his response and measures it against the presumed intention of the writer.

(d) ***Questions of personal response:*** Of all the types of questions the answer to this type depends upon the reader and least on the writer. Responses to these questions must be based on textual evidences-- both internal and external.

2. Secondly, good questions should be like ***signposts***. A signpost stands at the crossroads to show the way. Its function is to direct travellers along the right road, making the journey quicker and save them from getting lost. A ***signpost question*** (SPQ) is a direction for discovering where the meaning is to be found. The purpose is to guide the students while they read, directing attention to the important parts in the text, preventing them from going off to a false track. To set SPQs, the teacher must scan the text and predict stumbling blocks to assess their importance. If stumbling block is not likely to interfere with adequate interpretation, it may be left alone. The remaining problems are appropriate learning points. A SPQ will draw attention to that learning point and stimulate thought and exploration in reading.

3. Thirdly, good questions should stimulate interpretation. A subjective response usually results in alternative judgement. If questions generate discussion, stimulate the students' mental skills, lead to defense of arguments or constructive criticism on the basis of textual evidence, much of the teacher's job is achieved. These questions, which raise the level of complexity of the pupils' reactions, ensure that the understanding of the text will develop.

4. Fourthly, good questions, above all, should help the students in their process of understanding. Thus questions should promote an active struggle with the text and this is the key ingredient in the development of interpretative skills. Questions must probe the evidences that students use to arrive at the answer. A wrong answer is an opportunity for learning. Paradoxically, it is when the students give a wrong answer (due to a mis-reading of the text) that the real work of developing understanding can begin. Thus comprehension questions must be followed by process questions like "How do you know?", "Which word/expression helps you understand?" etc. In this way questions can direct the students to the correct procedure of understanding.

5. Fifthly, and finally, it must be pointed out that although a student must learn to react appropriately to all questions, these questions are but a means to an end. The main aim of asking questions is to stimulate the reader to think and probe. From the earliest stages, children should be encouraged to ask question as they read. Such training is useful in teaching them how to study in general.

Examples:

Now, at the end, five simple texts (poems and prose) are given below along with some reading questions and reading activities. These texts are prescribed for Class/Grade VII & VIII.

1. Going Downhill on a Bicycle

With lifted feet, hands still,
I am posed, and down the hill
Dart, with heedful mind;
The air goes by in a window.
Swifter and yet more swifter,
Till the heart with the mighty lift
Makes the lungs laugh, the throat cry:
'O bird, see; see, bird, I fly.
'Is this, is this your joy?
O bird, then I, though a boy,
For a golden moment share
Your feathery life in air!
Say, heart, is there aught like this

In a world that is full of bliss?
'Tis more than skating, bound
Steel-shod to the level ground.
Speed slackens now, I float
Awhile in my airy boat;
Till, when the wheels scarce crawl,
My feet to the treadles fall.
Alas, that the longest hill
Must end in a vale; but still,
Who climbs with toil, wheresoe'er,
Shall find wings waiting there.

Henry Charles Beeching

1. The narrator considers his act of riding a bicycle downhill:
   (a) a common, everyday experience
   (b) a frightening experience
   (c) an exhilarating, breathlessly exciting experience
   (d) an exhausting experience
2. Quote two lines from the poem which suggest the speed at which the narrator travels on his bicycle down the hill.
3. The narrator feels that his experience of riding a bicycle downhill is not as pleasurable as skating. Is this statement true? Justify your answer and quote relevant lines from the poem to support your point of view.
4. 'Speed slackens now'. This means that the speed of his bicycle:
   (a) increases (b) decreases (c) remains the same.
5. What does the word 'Alas' in the last stanza suggest about the reaction of the narrator? Why does he feel this way?
6. Do you think the poet is referring only to the act of riding a bicycle in the last three lines of the poem, or does he have a wider message to convey? Explain the last two lines of the poem.
7. Is this, is this your joy?
   O bird, then I though a boy,
   For a golden moment share

Your feathery life in air!

(a) To whom is the narrator speaking? What does he say in the line immediately preceding the extract?

(b) The poet repeats the word 'this' twice in the first line of the extract. What is 'this'? What effect does the repetition of the word have?

(c) What exactly does the narrator wish to know when he says: "Is this your joy" ?

(d) In what way does the narrator share 'your feathery life in air'?

(e) The poet refers to his experience as a 'golden moment'. In what way is it 'golden'?

(f) What is the narrator's mood at this point of the poem?

8. Speed slackens now, I float
While in my airy boat;
Till, when the wheels scarce crawl,
My feet to the treadles fall.

(a) Why does the speed slaken now? How does the narrator describe his speed in the first two stanzas of the poem? In what way was his situation different at that time?

2. In Time of Silver Rain

In time of silver rain
The earth puts forth new life again,
Green grasses grow
And flowers lift their heads,
And over all the plain
The wonder spreads
Of Life,
Of LIfe,
Of life!
In time of silver rain
The butterflies lift silken wings
To catch a rainbow cry,
And trees put forth new leaves to sing
In joy beneath the sky
As down the roadway

Passing boys and girls
Go singing, too,
In time of silver rain
When spring
And life
Are new.

1. The 'time of silver rain' is
   (a) the end of winter.
   (b) the onset of spring
   (c) a time to rejoice and celebrate.
   (d) a time of loss and melancholy.
   (e) a time of death
   (f) a time for new birth.
2. The narrator's use of the word 'silver' to describe the rain suggests that rain is
   (a) white in colour.
   (b) icy and cold.
   (c) precious and valuable.
   (d) warm.
3. The 'wonder' that spreads is because
   (a) of the rain.
   (b) spring has come.
   (c) life has been renewed.
   (d) children are singing.
4. According to the poem, children go down the road singing because
   (a) they are happy that winter is over.
   (b) they are happy that spring has come.
   (c) they feel joy at the songs of renewed life all around them.
   (d) they enjoy rain that has begun to fall.
5. What do the leaves of the trees and the passing children have in common?
6. The poem is filled with beautiful word-pictures created by the poet. Which of the pictures appeals to you the most and why?
7. Why do you think the poet repeats the phrase 'Of life' three times?

3. Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To which his woods fill up with snow.
My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.
He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.
The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep.
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Robert Foster

1. Where does the narrator of the poem live?
2. Why has narrator stopped? What time is it?
3. Do you think the narrator enjoys being in the woods? Quote lines from the text to support your answer.
4. Why can the narrator not stay in the woods?
5. Why do you think the poet repeats the sentence 'And miles to go before I sleep' at the end of the poem?
6. My little horse must think it queer
   To stop without a farmhouse near
   Between the woods and frozen lake
   The darkest evening of the year.
   (a) Is the poet's decision to stop an unusual one? Why do you think so?
   (b) What does the narrator tell us about the woods earlier in the poem?
   (c) What time of year does this incident take place? Give three examples from the poem as evidence of this.

7. The only other sound's the sweep
   Of easy wind and downy flake.
   The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
   But I have promises to keep,
   And miles to go before I sleep
   And miles to go before I sleep.
   (a) What other sound does the poet refer to, a little earlier in the poem? Why, according to the poet, does this sound occur?
   (b) What does the poet tell us about the woods mentioned in this extract? Refer to something he says earlier in the poem as well as this extract.
   (c) What do you think the poet is tempted to do? Does he do so? Why?
   (d) What do you learn about the character of the poet from the way the poem ends?

4. Daffodils

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at one I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of the bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my hear with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

WilliamWordsworth

1. What do you think this poem is about? Choose the statement that expresses the poet's main idea most precisely:
   (a) The beauty of Nature.
   (b) The effect of the beauty of Nature on the poet.
   (c) Daffodils
   (d) The pleasure the poet gets from looking at the daffodils.
   (e) The pleasure the poet gets not only from looking at the daffodils but also from thinking about the scene later on.
   (f) The poet's loneliness.
   (g) The poet's love for Nature.
2. Where was the poet at the time he saw the daffodils? What was he doing there?
3. Do you think the poet was expecting to come across the scene he describes in the poem, or did it take him by surprise?
4. Quote words/phrases used by the poet to suggest that there were many daffodils to be seen.
5. Was it a still day or is there any suggestion that there is a gentle breeze blowing?
6. Looking at the daffodils, how does the poet feel?
   (i) depressed, (ii) cheerful, (iii) indifferent
   What is it that influences the poet's mood?
7. *'I gazed—and gazed—but little thought*
   What wealth the show to me had brought:'
   This means that:
   (a) The poet couldn't stop looking at the beautiful scene of the daffodils.

   (b) The poet enjoyed the daffodils so much that he couldn't think of anything else.
   (c) The poet looked at the daffodils but could not appreciate their beauty fully.
   (d) The poet enjoyed the scene but he didn't realize at the time the full value of the experience.
8. *'I gazed—and gazed—but little thought*
   What wealth the show to me had brought:
   For oft, when on my couch I lie
   In vacant or in pensive mood,
   They flash upon that inward eye
   Which is the bliss of solitude:'
   (a) What was the poet gazing at? How did he react to the scene when he gazed at it?
   (b) Is the poet in the same place in the last four lines of the extract? What does he mean by 'in vacant or in pensive mood'?
   (c) What is he referring to by 'they' in the fifth line of the extract?
   (d) What is the 'inward eye' and why is it described by the poet as 'the bliss of solitude'?
   (e) What does the poet go on to say in next two lines which end the poem?

5. Birth of a White Seal

—Rudyard Kipling

Most animals have their own habitat but some make incredible journeys from one region to another. These journeys are called migrations and they take place at particular seasons of the year. Birds are the best known migrants but many fishes, insects and mammals also migrate to and from breeding grounds and seasonal feeding grounds. They know by instinct which way to go. They are also guided by the sun, the stars and the earth's magnetic field.

Nobody comes to Novastoshnah except on business, and the only people who have regular business there are the seals. They come in the summer months by hundreds

and hundreds of thousands out of the cold grey sea; for Novastoshnah Beach has finest accommodation for seals of any place in all the world.

Sea Catch knew that, and every spring would swim from whatever place he happened to be in—would swim like a torpedo-boat straight for Novastoshnah, and spend a month fighting with his companions for a food place on the rocks as close to the sea as possible. Sea Catch was fifteen years old, a huge grey fur-seal with almost a mane on his shoulders, and long, wicked dog-teeth. He was scarred all over with the marks of savage fights, but he was always ready for just one fight more.

Yet Sea Catch never chased a beaten seal, for that was against the Rules of the Beach. He only wanted room by the sea for his nursery; but as there were forty or fifty thousand other seals hunting for the same thing each spring, the whistling, bellowing, roaring, and blowing on the beach were something frightful.

From a little hill called Hutchinson's Hill you could look over three and a half miles of ground covered with fighting seals; and the surf was dotted all over with the heads of seals hurrying to land and begin their share of the fighting. They fought in the breakers, they fought in the sand, and they fought on the smooth-worn basalt rocks of the nurseries; for they were just as stupid and unaccommodating as men.

Sea Catch had just finished his forty-fifth fight one spring when Matkah, his soft, sleek, gentle-eyed wife, came up out of the sea. She saw that he was scratched and was bleeding in many places; one eye was almost blind, and his sides were torn to ribbons.

'Oh you men, you men!' Matkah said, fanning herself with her hind flipper. "Why can't you be sensible and settle your places quietly?"

"I haven't been doing anything but fight since the middle of May. The beach is disgracefully crowded this season."

Now that all the seals and their wives were on the land, you could hear their clamour miles out to sea above the loudest gales.

Kotick, Matkah's baby, was born in the middle of that confusion, and he was all head and shoulders, with pale, watery-blue eyes, as tiny seals must be; but there was something about his coat that made his mother look at him very closely.

'Sea Catch.' she said at last, 'our baby's going to be white!'

'Empty clam-shells and dry seaweed!' snorted Sea Catch. 'There never has been such a thing in the world as a white seal.'

The little one paddled and scrambled about by his mother's side, and learned to scuffle out of the way when his father was fighting with another seal, and the two rolled and roared up and down the slippery rocks. Matkah used to go to sea to get things to eat, and the baby was fed only once in two days; but then he ate all he could, and throve upon it.

The first thing he did was to crawl inland, and there he met tens of thousands of babies of his own age, and they played together like puppies, went to sleep on the clean sand, and played again.

[An extract from Rudyard Kipling's story "The white Seal"]

Comprehension

Ex. 1. Answer the following questions:

(a) When and how do the seals come to Novastoshnah?
(b) Who is Sea Catch and how did he swim to Novastoshnah?
(c) Pick out the words used to describe Sea Catch.
(d) Why was he scarred all over?
(e) What was the "Rule of the Beach"?
(f) What could be seen from "Hutchison's Hill"?
(g) Were the seals to be heard only on land?
(i) Why were Matkah and Sea Catch surprised?
(j) What was the first activity of the baby seal?

Ex. 2.

- Pick out some of the words used to describe the sea.
- Pick out all the sounds that were frightful on the beach.

- Two marine objects are mentioned by Sea Catch when Matkah tells him about the birth of the White Seal. What are they? What kind of a sentence is it?
- List all the verbs used to describe the activities of the baby seal in the last two paragraphs.
- Pick out the sentence where the author has compared seals to human beings.

Exercise

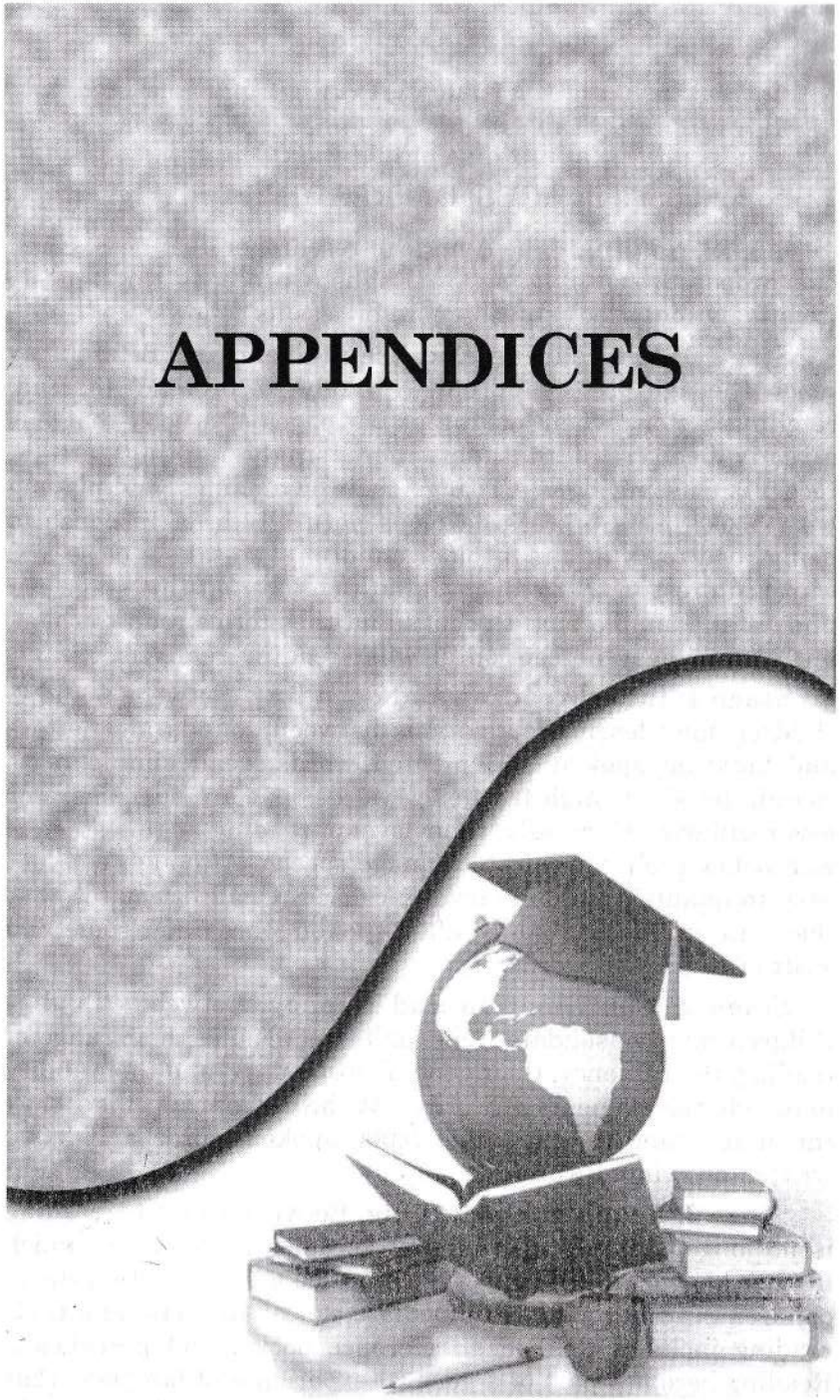
1. Objective / Very short type questions (for 2 marks)

(a) What is critical reading?
(b) What is reflective reading?
(c) What is metacognitive skill?
(d) What is SQ3R technique?
(e) What is SCROL technique?
(f) What is think aloud technique in reading?
(g) What is gapped text/cloze text?
(h) What is SPQ?
(i) What is free response type item?
(j) What is fixed response type item?
(k) State two components of critical reading.
(l) State two components of metacognitive skill.
(m) What is evaluative question?

2. Short type questions (for 5 marks)

(a) Explain the process of critical reading.
(b) What is reflective reading? Discuss with example.
(c) What are the components of critical reading skill?
(d) What are the components of metacognitive skill?
(e) Discuss the SQ3R technique.
(f) Discuss the SCROL technique.
(g) Discuss the think aloud technique in reading.
(h) Mention different types of reading activities.
(i) Mention different types of reading questions.
(j) Mention different types of fixed response items.
(k) Mention different types of free response items.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX-1

STAGES OF READING

Stages of reading: The American researcher Jeanne S. Chall has proposed that reading (in English) proceeds through six (relatively idealized) stages, more or less as follows:

Stage 0: Pre-reading and pseudo-reading. Before they reach the age of 6, children are likely to 'pretend' to read, retelling a story when looking at the pages of a book that has already been read to them, increasingly naming letters, recognizing some signs, writing their own names, and playing with books. This process develops naturally as a response to being read to by adults or older children who take a close and warm interest in that response. Most children at this stage can understand simple picture books and the stories read to them, but have a hazy perception of what reading really is.

Stage 1: Initial reading and decoding. Between 6 and 7, children may learn the relations between sounds and letters and between spoken and printed words, read simple texts containing short, high frequency words that are spelt more or less regularly. Generally, their level of reading at this stage is well below their capacity to manage speech. Although it is not easy to quantify words known and used, Chall estimates that they can understand some 4,000 spoken words and some 600 written or printed words.

Stage 2: Confirmation and fluency. Between 7 and 8, children may consolidate their skills, increasing their range of reading, their fluency, their general vocabulary, and their ability to decode the elements of words. At the end of this stage, they can understand an estimated 9,000 spoken words and 3,000 written or printed words.

Stage 3: Reading for learning. Between 9 and 14, reading is no longer an end in itself but becomes a means by which further knowledge and experience can be gained. At this stage, children read beyond the immediate school subjects and their reading includes textbooks, reference books, and periodicals. Reading becomes part of a general experience of language that is likely to include explicit discussion of language skills, especially

writing and spelling. At the beginning of the stage, listening comprehension of the same material is more effective than reading comprehension, but by the end, the said two skills are roughly equal. For some young students, reading seem easier than listening.

Stage 4: Multiplicity and complexity. From 14 to 17, if every thing is alright, students are reading widely from a range of increasingly complex materials, both narrative and expository, and varied in viewpoint. Such materials are both technical and non-technical, literary and non-literary, and may involve a parallel study of words and their elements. For poorer performers, listening and reading comprehension are almost the same, but for stronger performers reading comprehension is better than listening comprehension, especially in technical subjects.

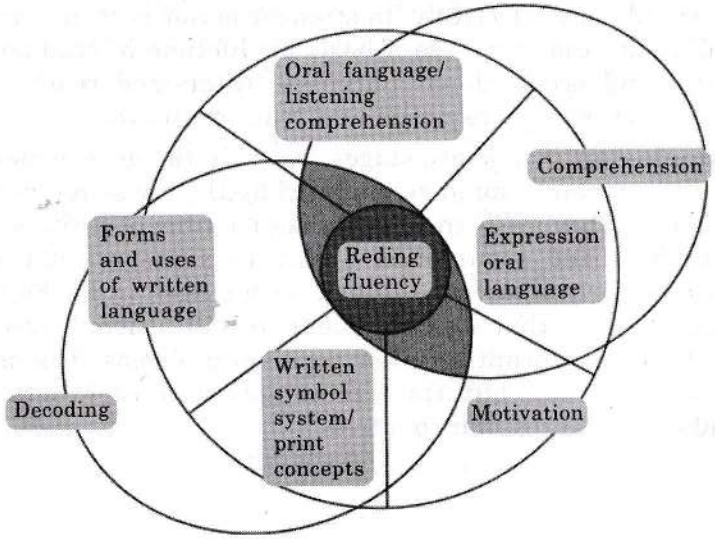
Stage 5: Construction and reconstruction. Beyond 18 young students should have developed the capacity to read for their own purposes, using their skill to integrate their own knowledge with that of others and to assimilate their experience of the world more effectively. In stronger performers, it is rapid and efficient, and serves as a basis for lifetime of reading for personal and occupational purposes. Interested readers go beyond their immediate needs and read extensively.

Conclusion. The above stages resemble the developmental phases of the child's mind as proposed by the Swiss researcher Jean Piaget. They are both a generalization from objective study and an idealized assumption about an average child who progresses fairly smoothly through such stages in an English speaking-society that has an adequate educational system, without any significant social or personal problems. The order may be universal, but the age ranges will vary between individuals, cultures and countries.

APPENDIX-2

READING FLUENCY

Fluency is dependent upon and coordinated with all the previous mentioned aspects of reading as well as decoding and comprehension and is emphasized in instruction at all reading levels using various levels of text difficulty. Prosody, using emphasis and variations in intonation, pausing, etc., is a feature of reading that is observed in fluent readers. To achieve prosody, readers employ their knowledge of syntactic information and processing as they use meaningful phrasing and punctuation in the text being read. Morphology and phonology play important roles in achieving decoding automaticity. Prior knowledge, vocabulary, and strategic processing are central in comprehension. These processes overlap with each other and with the essential underpinnings of language and literacy. Listening comprehension and motivation explain variance in fluency.



Specific instruction to achieve fluency includes a number of forms of repeated reading, both assisted by teachers and peers as well as technology, to be effective. Silent reading with no accounting for comprehension is an additional practice that has been used to increase the amount of absolute reading but results are mixed for use of this method. It seems that the bottom line

for fluency is that absolute amount of reading is the most important factor. Caution must be taken though to make sure that absolute amount of reading is defined as reading to get meaning from the text. Word calling without understanding, even if done with accuracy and expression, does not count. Fluency instruction focusing on decoding speech and accuracy and prosody can have such an impact, that is, word calling. The reader might not be reading accurately and comprehending during this time.

APPENDIX-3

LEVELS OF READING

When children are learning to read, the children's levels of reading and the difficulty of the text must be taken into account. Children's decoding and comprehension of text and their ability to read fluently are affected not only by their reading development, but also by the text they are reading. The difficulty or ease in reading a text is influenced by textual features, such as the size and placement of the text; the presence or lack of pictures; difficulty of the words; the complexity of the sentence structure; and the children's familiarity with the content of the text. Recognizing that texts will pose different levels of challenge for children as they learn to read, it is important to match texts with children in ways that foster reading development. To facilitate this process, texts are generally classified as being at children's independent, instructional, borderline instructional, or frustration level

Texts at children's independent level are ones children can read fluently without assistance. Reading texts on their independent level provides children with an opportunity to practice and apply the reading strategies and skills they already possess and improves their decoding, comprehension, and fluency. Children's reading of instructional-level texts promotes reading development when support or scaffolding is provided by a more adept reader. The use of instructional-level texts during reading instruction enables teachers to instruct within the children's zone of proximal development and optimizes the potential effects of the instruction provided. This is also true when reading materials at the borderline instructional level are read during instruction. However, texts at this level require a high level of teacher support. This is often the level used when children are working with a reading specialist or tutor who can provide more intensive instruction and scaffolding. Texts at children's frustration level require such a high level of support that children typically do not benefit from instruction. With these levels in mind, teachers can enhance reading development by providing children with opportunities to read a variety of

texts on their independent and instructional levels with appropriate levels of support and scaffolding.

Table 1: Children's levels of reading in relationship to text difficulty

Level	Word recognition	Comprehension
Independent	99-100%	90-100%
Instructional	95-98%	75-89%
Borderline instructional	90-94%	50-74%
Frustration	Below 90%	Below 50%

APPENDIX-4

A TAXONOMY FOR COMPREHENSION

Identification of exactly where the boundary between reading comprehension and some other activity occurs is, to some extent, the individual's prerogative; even experts in the field do not agree with each other.

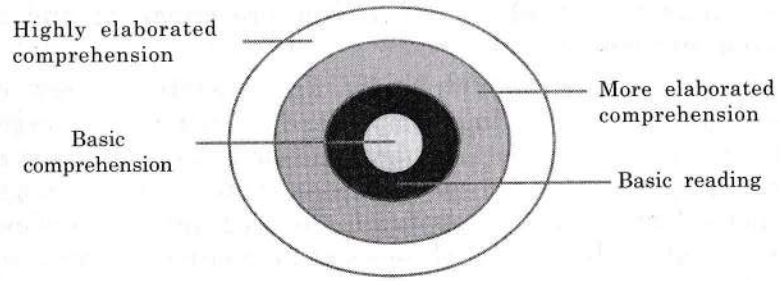
It is however useful to think of reading comprehension might be thought of, then, as located on the radius of a set of concentric circles. In the center circle are the basic reading processes that must be in place in order to access the text and form a mental representation of it: accurate word recognition, fluent access to word meaning, recognition of syntactic cues to sentence meaning, and short-term phonological memory. Variations of skill on these dimensions are clearly related to reading successful comprehension - the reader who misidentifies words, who does not know the meaning of words in the text, who cannot parse the syntax of utterances, and who forgets the first sentence in a paragraph while reading the second will have difficulty in comprehending.

The second circle can be thought of as core comprehension processes - the ability to construct a mental representation of the ideas presented textually. Core comprehension requires text memory, making text-based inferences (e.g., tracing anaphors back to referents, keeping track of the order of events, and understanding implicit causal links), and making text-world links (e.g., bringing information about real dogs to bear in understanding what is strange and funny about a talking dog). Much early comprehension instruction focuses on helping learners activate relevant background knowledge before confronting text, on the theory that even children who have the required knowledge may not automatically access it while reading or integrate it with new information in the text.

The third circle comprises more elaborated comprehension processes, the processes involved in going beyond creating an unadorned text representation to a deeper understanding of the text. Many of the comprehension strategies that are recommended as part of comprehension instruction, for example, visualization, noting questions that arise while reading, and

making text-to-text connections, are focused on these somewhat more elaborated comprehension processes. These processes also shade into ones that might be identified and taught as part of inquiry learning, such as figuring out how claims in one text relate to claims in another text, identifying the point of view a text presents, critiquing the argument in a text, and so on. In other words, rather than inquiry being a process applied to real-world phenomena, it is taken as a process to be applied to text itself.

An outer circle comprises highly elaborated comprehension processes that overlap with disciplinary studies or deep learning from text. Whereas ordinary readers might be expected to engage in moderately elaborated comprehension for purposes of understanding murder mysteries, psychological novels, columnists' political opinion pieces, or popular science articles, highly elaborated comprehension processes can only be expected of readers operating within domains where they have developed deep background knowledge and have had disciplinary training in how to read. These would encompass the processes involved, for example, in reading for purposes of literary criticism, historiography or producing a parody.



APPENDIX-5

INTERVENTION WITH STRUGGLING COMPREHENDERS

Providing intervention to help struggling comprehenders before they fall far behind is a key responsibility in light of the overwhelming evidence that poor comprehension is associated with reduced opportunities to learn vocabulary and general knowledge (Stanovich, 1986), difficulties in learning across academic areas (RRSG, 2002), and ultimately, frustration with schooling and a higher likelihood of failure to graduate from high school or to achieve access to higher education. A challenge in providing comprehension intervention is that poor comprehension can be a product of a breakdown in any of a wide variety of reader skills (word reading accuracy, fluency, vocabulary, background knowledge, text memory, deployment of appropriate strategies, and engagement in reading), and effective intervention requires identifying the challenge and responding to it. For adolescent learners struggling with comprehension because of difficulties with word reading or fluency, it is often difficult to access instructional materials that offer minimal textual challenge, but are engaging and of appropriate cognitive level.

Deshler et al. (2007) provide an extensive review of interventions for struggling comprehenders, indexed by target of the intervention as well as developmental level and type of learner (e.g., vocabulary focus for intermediate second-language learners). Unfortunately, very few of the programs they review, many of which have solid theoretical foundations, have been extensively evaluated or analyzed to determine under which circumstances and for which subgroups of learners they are most useful.

APPENDIX-6

METACOGNITION IN READING

Research on metacognition in reading began in the 1970s, shortly after the publication of Flavell's seminal studies on metamemory. Pioneers in this area of research were Ann Brown and Scott Paris. Reading is the academic domain which is most frequently studied.

Studies of metacognitive knowledge

Much of the research on metacognitive knowledge about reading uses structured interview procedures adapted from Flavell's metamemory work. In a typical study, children are interviewed about their knowledge of person, task, and strategy variables involved in reading. The pattern that has been found consistently is that younger readers have little awareness that they must attempt to make sense of text. They focus on reading as a decoding process, rather than as a meaning-getting process. Ability-related differences in knowledge about reading, like developmental differences, have been documented in countless studies, across age groups ranging from early childhood through later adulthood. Students' metacognitive knowledge about reading, whether assessed through interviews, questionnaires, or verbal reports, remains an active and important area of inquiry.

Studies of comprehension monitoring

Effective text comprehension requires an important metacognitive control component known as comprehension monitoring. Comprehension monitoring involves deciding whether or not we understand (evaluation) and taking appropriate steps to correct whatever comprehension problems we detect (regulation). Research has shown that students of all ages often are ineffective at monitoring their understanding of text. These difficulties are perhaps most apparent when students are asked to read information in texts, such as science and history textbooks. Failures to evaluate and regulate understanding reduce the likelihood of meaningful learning.

The majority of studies of comprehension monitoring over the years have used the error-detection paradigm. In this approach, errors or problems are deliberately introduced into

texts, and various indices are used to determine whether readers notice the problems and attempt to resolve them. For example, readers may be asked to underline or report detected errors, or online processing measures may reveal longer pauses when readers encounter problematic text. Caution is needed in interpreting these studies because of students' propensity to believe texts are true and well structured and because of their reluctance to acknowledge comprehension difficulties. Moreover, some types of errors are more likely to be reported than others; for example, younger and less-skilled readers are more likely to evaluate their understanding using a word-level criterion than an internal-consistency criterion.

Studies aimed at fostering metacognitive skills

Intervention studies began to be implemented in the 1980s, providing solid evidence that metacognitive knowledge and control could be enhanced through direct instruction. Comprehensive classroom reading interventions incorporated metacognitively oriented instruction, with the goal not of enhancing metacognition per se, but rather of promoting students' reading comprehension by increasing their metacognition. Interventions that use some variant of reciprocal teaching, in which peers collaborate to learn and apply strategies of predicting, clarifying, summarizing, and questioning, have yielded substantial effects on reading comprehension. The research base for the effectiveness of metacognitive intervention is now so strong that professional organizations and national panels recommend that metacognition be included in reading comprehension curricula.

GLOSSARY

Automaticity: This is a general term that refers to any skilled and complex behaviour that can be performed rather easily with little attention, effort, or conscious awareness. Such skills become automatic after extensive practice.

Autonomous reader: The notion of an autonomous reader is that the reader is entirely self-directed in his or her reading. It may also be used to indicate that reading is a single independent ability that exists outside a social or cultural context.

Bottom-up processing: Decoding of a text, step by step, from the smallest elements, for example, sounds or letters, gradually building up to larger units of meaning such as sentences and discourses.

Channel: The way in which information is transmitted from one person to another, usually speech or writing.

Close reading: Careful and analytical study of a text.

Cloze: A method of assessment in which words (for example every seventh, eighth or ninth word, or every verb, etc.) are systematically eliminated from a reading passage. The examinee then uses the context of the passage to determine the appropriate word for the blank.

Cognitive: To do with an individual's mental processes.

Cognitive strategies: Various mental processes the learner uses to work on, internalize, and automatize new language.

Cohesion: The way in which sentences and phrases are linked to create connected text.

Cohesive devices: Words and expressions which help to link ideas within and between sentences in written texts, and within and between utterances in spoken texts.

Comprehension strategies: Comprehension strategies are the plans or steps that readers use to make sense of text. Some strategies are productive such as skimming the text before careful reading, while others may be less successful, such as concentrating on each and every word in a text.

Content schemata : The background knowledge of a topic which a learner holds in his or her mind and which assists in the interpretation of a text.

Contextual clues: Clues in a text which a reader can use to deduce the meaning of unknown words.

Context of use: The social, psychological, and physical setting in which a communicative event takes place.

Decoding skills: The ability to analyze graphic symbols to determine the intended meaning of individual words. It involves using knowledge of the conventions of spelling-sound relationships (phonics) and knowledge about pronunciation of irregular words to produce a recognition of written words.

Discourse: A unit of speech or writing that is longer than a sentence.

Discourse competence: The ability to understand and produce contextualized stretches of language in spoken or written texts.

Discourse marker: A word or phrase used to separate sectios of discourse.

Expository text: Expository text is a text written to explain and convey information about a specific topic. It explains an event, concept, or idea using facts and examples.

Extensive reading: Reading that encourages students to read for pleasure and as widely as possible within their linguistic competence.

Formal schemata: Prior knowledge of the formal structure of different types of texts which assists readers and listeners in understanding and interpreting them.

Genre: A type of category of text marked by conventions of style, format, and/or content. Genres include narrative, exposition, poetry, science fiction, etc.

Intensive reading: Reading a short text with careful attention to detail.

Intersentential processing: Reading often requires that the reader should process text across sentences within paragraphs. This type of processing is noted as

intersentential processing, involving the use of either adjacent or distant sentences in comprehending the text message.

Logographic system: A word system, such as that used in Chinese, wherein each spoken word in the language is represented by unique symbol. It contrasts with an alphabetic system.

Long-term memory: The relatively permanent part of the memory system.

Metacognition: Metacognition is the activity of thinking. Readers reflect on how they comprehend and recognize what is successful and what is not successful.

Metacognitive strategies: Strategies used by language learners to plan, regulate, and monitor their learning.

Narrative text: Narrative text conveys a story or relates temporal events or dialogue.

Orthography: The complete writing system used by a language or set of languages. Orthography includes the alphabetic or logographic system as well as the punctuation.

Phoneme-grapheme correspondence: This is the relationship between letter's graphical form and the sound that corresponds to it. In English, this would be noting the relationship between the 's' grapheme, and the different sounds it represents in 'simple', 'division', 'ship', or 'dogs'. Many educators who support phonics see the mastery of phoneme-grapheme correspondences as essential to reading success.

Phonological control: This is the control of phoneme-grapheme relationships in the target language.

Prior knowledge: Another term for *schematic knowledge.*

Recursive reading strategies: This refers to the reading processes in which the reader reads the text in a linear fashion for a period of time, regress to a prior location in the text to re-read some portion of the text, and then moves ahead again. Reading is not a clear and constant linear activity.

Reader response: A reader's reaction, positive or negative, to a given text.

Reading comfort zone: The range of materials that learners can read easily and with confidence; the materials are well within a reader's linguistic competence.

Recognition vocabulary: Words which students can understand in context when they read them but are not able to produce independently. They are also known as **passive vocabulary**.

Referential meaning: The meaning of the word in relation to the objects, events, states, or concepts it refers to.

Scanning: Reading a text quickly to find specific information.

Scaffolding: Language support from peers, teacher, classroom set-up, or materials used to make a challenging task executable.

Schema: The reader's background knowledge on which the interpretation of a text depends. Plural = schemata or schemas.

Schematic knowledge : Knowledge (gained from experience) of the way the world is organized which is held as mental representations in the mind.

Short-term memory: The part of the memory with limited capacity which can only hold information for a short period of time. It is also known as **working memory**.

Sight vocabulary: Words that a reader recognizes automatically, accurately, and every time, regardless of context.

Skimming: Looking over a text quickly to get the general idea or a specific information. It includes both **surveying** and **scanning**.

Story or text structure: The conventions that govern different kinds of texts such as characters, plot, settings, or, in an informational text, cause-and-effect or comparison and contrast.

Syntax: The rules for constructing sentences in a language, for example, permissible word order.

Summarizing: Summarizing is a process in which a reader includes only the important ideas in a text, eliminating minor details.

Sustained silent reading (SSR): Regular classtime devoted to individual silent/ quiet reading

Synthesis: Synthesizing involves taking important information from different texts and creating a new text reflecting the information in each of the previous texts.

Systemic knowledge: Knowledge of the language system.

Think-aloud protocols: A procedure for investigating learner strategies which requires learners to report on what they are doing as they undertake learning activities. They speak their thoughts out loud and these are then transcribed and analysed by the researcher.

Third-person narrative: The telling of a story by a narrator, not by the characters themselves.

Top-down processing: This involves making sense of spoken or written language, primarily by referring to *schematic knowledge.*