

# Reading : Strategies, Mechanism and Theories

## Design of the Chapter :

- **Strategies for Effective Reading**
  - ◆ Deciding what to read
  - ◆ Deciding why to read
  - ◆ Deciding where to read
  - ◆ Deciding how to read
  - ◆ Deciding when to read
- **Mechanism for Reading**
  - ◆ Identifying letters, alpha-numeric signs and symbols of the text
  - ◆ Decoding the alpha-numeric signs and symbols
  - ◆ Grasping meaning of the text
- **Schema Theory of Reading**
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## Strategies for Effective Reading or How to Improve Reading Skills

Many readers feel difficulties and complications while reading. Some persons take much more time in reading, some other read quickly but with less comprehension. All the problems regarding reading can be eliminated with the proper pondering about reading strategies and reading skills. Some strategies or tips to ameliorate reading skills are as under—

### ❖ **Deciding What to Read**

One may select interesting story books, jokes, poems and other literary works of one's interest for developing a habit of reading. In this way, firstly this type study material can be decided and selected as reading material. After that useful material or course books can be selected for regular reading by the readers. Text books and then reference books may be read. Students must be developed a study habit by providing them interesting cartoon books, children magazines, comic books, picture books, rhyme books, talking pen and books etc.

### ❖ **Deciding Why to Read**

Aims and objectives of reading should be clear to the readers. Reader may read for time pass, for achieving some knowledge or information, for accelerating reading speed, for completing curriculum, for comprehension, or for any other sake. One may also read for improving knowledge, developing operational skill,

for learning social skills and socialization, for developing writing skill, for developing moral values and character, for preparing examination, for developing language skills, for clarifying concepts, for improving vocabulary, for preparing for competitive exams, for developing spirituality, for utilizing leisure time or time pass, and for rectifying our past beliefs and experiences.

### ❖ Deciding Where to Read

Reader must select appropriate place for reading. Following points must be kept in mind while selecting a place for reading—

- Reading place should be peaceful.
- Reading place should have proper lighting arrangement.
- Reading place should have proper sitting arrangement.
- Reading place should be lonely.
- Reading place should be natural.
- Reading place should be airy with proper cross ventilation.
- All the reference books and other relevant study material must be kept near the study place.

### ❖ Deciding How to Read

In the world of ICT, reading has become diversified. Now reader may read from a book, from internet website, from mobile, from tablet, from laptop, computer or from various other sources. Reader must pay attention to his or her sitting postures.

### ❖ Deciding When to Read

Due to invention of various latest ICT devices, reader may not only read a book but also may read from internet website, e-books, e-magazines, e-journals, e-papers any time, any place. Reader must ponder when to read for effective reading and comprehension. We use to read e-mails, whats app messages, face book posts and advertisements all around us intentionally or unintentionally. Reader may read content while journey or travelling, before sleeping, in the silence of early morning, in offices, at homes, at markets or any other places. But for the proper concentration and comprehension, reader must select proper time and proper place for reading. Reader should schedule a routine time to read regularly.

Some other points to be pondered to improve and ameliorate reading skills are as under—

- Reader should consult library and pick up various reference books, magazines and news papers etc to develop regular reading habit.
- Reader should read the text carefully and comprehensively.
- Reader should read comprehensively.
- Reader should integrate and correlate knowledge and information in the text with his or her previous knowledge.
- Reader should have a flexibility and multiplicity in reading style and method, based the nature, importance and purpose of the matter.
- Readers should always try to enrich their linguistic competence *i.e.* ability to identify the components of the writing system, vocabulary, discourse ability, and sociolinguistic capability etc.

- Preparation of systematic plan of action for reading.
- Verifying the prediction.
- Selection of important text to understand.
- Rereading to check comprehension.

Some quotations regarding reading strategy are given here under—

- *“Some read to think, these are rare; some to write, these are common; some to talk, and these are the great majority. The first page of an author not infrequently suffices all the purposes of this latter class, of whom it has been said, they treat books, as some do lords, inform themselves of their titles, and then boast of an intimate acquaintance.”* —Colton
- *“Reading should be in proportion to thinking, and thinking in proportion to reading.”* —Emmons
- *“To read without reflecting, is like eating without digesting.”* —Burke
- *“Read much, but not many works.”* —Sir W. Hamilton
- *“One must be rich in thought and character to owe nothing to books, though preparation is necessary to profitable reading; and the less reading is better than more: book-struck men are of all readers least wise, however knowing or learned.”* —A.B. Akott
- *“When I take up a book I have read before I know what to expect; and the satisfaction is not lessened by being anticipated, I shake hands with and look the old tried and valued friend in the face, compare notes, and chat the hour away.”* —Hazlitt
- *“Every reader if he has a strong mind, reads himself into the book, and amalgamates his thoughts with those of the author.”* —Goethe
- *“The mind should be accustomed to make wise reflections, and draw curious conclusions as it goes along; the habit of which made Pliny the Younger affirm that he never read a book so bad but he drew some profit from it.”* —Sterne
- *“Resolve to edge in a little reading every day, if it is but a single sentence. If you gain fifteen minutes a day, it will make itself felt at the end of the year.”* —H. Mann
- *“There are three classes of readers: some enjoy without judgment; others judge without enjoyment; and some there are who judge while they enjoy, and enjoy while they judge. The latter class reproduces the work of art on which it is engaged. Its numbers are very small.”* —Goethe
- *“Never read a book through merely because you have begun it.”* —Witherspoon
- *“In science, read, by preference, the newest works; in literature the oldest. The classic literature is always modern. New books revive and redecorate old ideas; old books suggest and invigorate new ideas.”* —Bulwer
- *“A page digested is better than a volume hurriedly read.”* —Macaulay
- *“We may read, and read, and read again, and still find something new, something to please, and something to instruct.”* —Hardls
- *“Multifarious reading weakens the mind more than doing nothing, for it becomes a necessity, at last, like smoking: and is an excuse for the mind*

to lie dormant whilst thought is poured in, and runs through, a clear stream over unproductive gravel, on which not even mosses grow. It is the idlest of all idleness, and leaves more of impotency than any other."

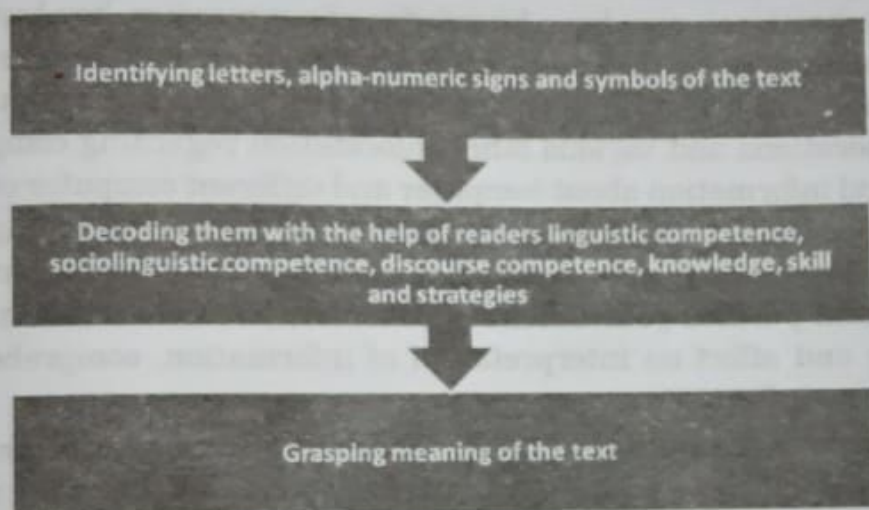
— F.W. Robertson.

- "Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention."
- Bacon
- "Deep versed in books, but shallow in himself."
- Milton
- "Read, and refine your appetite; learn to live upon instruction; feast your mind and mortify your flesh; read, and take your nourishment in at your eyes, shut up your mouth, and chew the cud of understanding."
- Congreve
- "Think as well as read, and when you read. Yield not your minds to the passive impressions which others may make upon them. Hear what they have to say; but examine it, weigh it, and judge for yourselves. This will enable you to make a right use of books to use them as helpers, not as guides to your understanding; as counselors, not as dictators of what you are to think and believe."
- Tryon Edwards
- "Some read books only with a view to find fault, while others read only to be taught: the former are like venomous spiders, extracting a poisonous quality, where the latter, like the bees, sip out a sweet and profitable juice."
- L' Estrange
- "The foundation of knowledge must be laid by reading. General principles must be had from books, which, however, must be brought to the test of real life. In conversation you never get a system. What is said upon a subject is to be gathered from a hundred people. The parts of a truth, which a man gets thus, are at such a distance from each other, that he never attains to a full view."
- Johnson
- "It is well to read everything of something, and something of everything."
- Brougham
- "There are four kinds of readers. The first is like the hour-glass; and their reading being as the sand, it runs in and runs out, and leaves not a vestige behind. A second is like the sponge, which imbibes everything, and returns it in nearly the same state, only a little dirtier. A third is like a jelly-bag, allowing all that is pure to pass away, and retaining only the refuse and dregs. And the fourth is like the slaves in the diamond mines of Golconda, who, casting aside all that is worthless, retain only pure gems."
- Coleridge
- "Get a habit, a passion for reading; not flying from book to book, with the squeamish caprice of a literary epicure; but read systematically, closely, thoughtfully, analyzing every subject as you go along, and laying it up carefully and safely in your memory. It is only by this mode that your information will be at the same time extensive, accurate, and useful."
- W. Wirt

- "The pleasure of reading without application is a dangerous pleasure. Useless books we should lay aside, and make all possible good use of those from which we may reap some fruit." —Foster
- "You may glean knowledge by reading, but you must separate the chaff from the wheat by thinking. Much reading, like a too great repletion, stops up, through a course of diverse, sometimes contrary opinions, the access of a nearer, newer, and quicker invention of your own." —Shorn

## Mechanism for Reading

Reading mechanism is a complex process which involves various steps and sub steps. Main steps in this process are as follows—



### A. Identifying Letters, Alpha-numeric Signs and Symbols of the Text

As per the ability, language skill, and previous knowledge, reader has to recognize and identify letters, alpha-numeric signs and symbols of the particular language. Reader must ponder special attention to signs of punctuations for proper grasping of the sense. Rate of identifying these letters, alpha-numeric signs and symbols is varying person to person and situation to situation.

### B. Decoding the Alpha-numeric Signs and Symbols

Next step is to decode these identified letters, alpha-numeric signs and symbols with the help of readers linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, knowledge, skill and strategies.

### C. Grasping Meaning of the Text

After proper decoding of the letters or alpha-numeric signs and symbols, reader becomes able to comprehend or grasp the meaning of the text properly. Reader may select the important or unimportant content after grasping properly.

## Schema Theory of Reading

Education is considered to be a lifelong, continuous process of learning. We live in this world and perceives various, sounds, things, persons, animals, birds,

events, and other objects. All these perceptions and experiences are stored with us in small units of information and knowledge. This stored information and knowledge is called schema (singular).

Cognitive psychologists or psycholinguists introduced the concept of schema to comprehend various factors which affect comprehension process. According to this concept, all knowledge is managed into small units or schemata (singular—schema). Schemata are amalgam of accumulated information and knowledge about different concepts, events, actions, sequences of actions and events, objects, persons, place, things, attributes, their mutual relationships.

Everyone have schemata for everything long before commencing formal education in schools. These schemata are ameliorated, purified, verified and developed as one receives new experiences.

For example is presented here. Just think about your schema for computer. Within this schema you may have knowledge about monitor, key board, mouse, central processing unit, different software, meaning and different uses of computer, historical background or developmental journey of computer during different generations and various other information regarding computer. Your knowledge and information about computer and different computer courses may be ever developed with the new experiences and new courses regarding computer. And in this way, every new reading, experience or information develops, ameliorates and purifies your schema. Schemata are converted into theories about reality and affect on interpretation of information, comprehension and grasping of new information.

In the words of **Rumelhart** (1980), "*Schemata can represent knowledge at all levels—from ideologies and cultural truths to knowledge about the meaning of a particular word, to knowledge about what patterns of excitations are associated with what letters of the alphabet. We have schemata to represent all levels of our experience, at all levels of abstraction. Finally, our schemata are our knowledge...*"

There are various models on cognitive processing for example—LaBerge-Samuels Model of Automatic Information Processing, which stresses on internal aspects of attention; Rumelhart's Interactive Model; Stanovich' interactive-compensatory model; and Rosenblatt's Transactional model etc.

### **Schema theory of reading represents—**

1. Schema is affected with the text we read.
2. Schema affect on the comprehension of the text.
3. Reading and new knowledge about things change our schema.
4. Reading and new information ameliorate and verify our schema.
5. Reading also verifies our stored information or schema.
6. Reading justifies our schema and amends it if necessary.
7. Reading is affected by the schema or information previously acquired.
8. Schema also contributes in selecting the text to be read as per interest or need of the readers.
9. Schema prepares a background for new knowledge and information.
10. Schema is a kind of previous knowledge to be associated with new lesson to be taught or learnt.

## University Questions

### Long Answer Type Questions

1. What do you mean by reading? Point out various strategies for effective reading.
2. Define the term reading. Discuss in detail mechanism for reading.
3. What do you mean by schema theory of reading? Explain.

### Short Answer Type Questions

1. What do you mean by strategies for effective reading?
2. Briefly discuss about mechanism for reading.
3. What do you mean by schema theory of reading?

