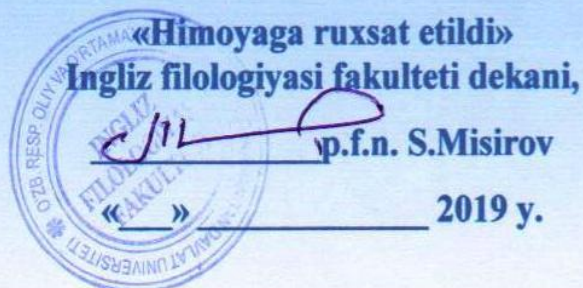


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NAMANGAN DAVLAT UNIVERSITETI



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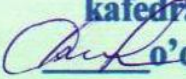
**“TEACHING THE BRAIN TO READ: STRATEGIES FOR
IMPROVING FLUENCY, VOCABULARY AND
COMPREHENSION”**

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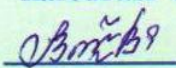
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TEACHING THE BRAIN TO READ: STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING
FLUENCY, VOCABULARY, AND COMPREHENSION

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INTRODUCTION

Actuality of the theme: Actuality of the theme: The importance and influence of English in today are gaining a higher speed in the world as well as in Uzbekistan. The main factors for this phenomenon include expanding communication with the world after gaining the independence and increasing speed and scope of information exchange in the global village. The dominant position in the internet space by the language of the published content is firmly held by English, which is a strong motivation to learn English for those who wish to promote their global competences. As it was mentioned since the declaration of independence the importance of the English language has been increasing in all aspects of Uzbek people's life. Currently, in the Republic of Uzbekistan great attention is given to the radical reorganization of the educational system that will give an opportunity to raise it to the level of modern standards. President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed a decree "On Uzbekistan's Development Strategy ". The document has approved Uzbekistan's Five-Area Development Strategy for 2017-2021 which was developed following comprehensive study of topical issues, analysis of the current legislation, law enforcement practices, the best international practices, and following public discussion. The Strategy is to be implemented in five stages, each of which provides for approval of a separate annual State program in accordance with a declared name of the year.

Five priority areas of Uzbekistan's Development strategy for 2017-2021:

- Priority areas for improving the system of state and public construction
- Priority areas for ensuring the rule of law and further reforming the judicial system
- Priority areas of economic development and liberalization
- Priority areas of development of the social sphere
- Priority areas in the field of security, inter-ethnic harmony and religious tolerance, and implementation of balanced, mutually beneficial and constructive foreign policy

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. M. Mirziyoyev's report in extended meeting of Ministers legal office on January 16, 2017, "The Results of socio-economic development of the country in the 2016 and the intended economic program for the most important priority areas are devoted to in 2017," was emphasized that "Education and science education in the implementation of the state policy about the youth - new modern methods of teaching and the introduction of information technology in the education sector as well as the implementation of the tasks for the future of youth, is strategically important for society and the country's future" . Besides that the President Shavkat Mirziyoyev on January 12 signed a decree "On creation of the commission for the development of publication and distribution of books, and promoting reading." The text of the document is published by UzA.

The decree underscores a number of problems related to promoting reading among the population, especially the youth.

First of all, the document noted that it is not being done enough in terms of publishing of quality education, science, literary books, and hence such books are not delivered to educational institutions, and the best works of national and world literature are not being translated.

Books are not supplied at affordable prices to the regions, the system of online book ordering and use of e- books are not satisfactory.

For the preparation of proposals to correct deficiencies and promote reading among the population a working group headed by the Prime Minister and small working groups have been formed to work out programs of measures aimed at improving the system of publication and distribution of books, promoting of book reading. The actuality of our theme is also closely connected those ideas. Because every specialist of foreign language teaching must know that the reading is one of the important skills to teach.

Aim of the theme: English has become an important language in the world. Teachers from second language learning countries are creating innovative

methodologies to teach the language in the classroom effectively. To substantiate the statement, Pollock stated that teachers now rejoice multiplicity and open the doors of public schools to all children, despite their culture, socio-economic status or ability. As classroom set-ups have been changed, curriculum has been expanded to meet all students' needs and teachers are striving to help their students in their classroom to learn and develop their language learning process. It is believed that in order to be successful teachers, they need to incorporate different learning tools keeping in mind the effective teaching methods that are already in use. Acquiring English language has become a predominant factor for a nations' development as well as an individual's development. To improve the communicative skills of the learners, innovative teaching methodologies should be used or introduced to make the learning process interesting. Creativity is a prime factor of any student to develop her/ her lateral thinking in terms of learning a language. An English learning classroom should be created using interesting teaching methodologies to mesmerize and encourage student's to learn the second language explicitly and implicitly. Second language acquisition has proved that child and adult learners have innate linguistic knowledge in a developmental sequence.

The following questions were addressed in this paper:

1. What are the strategies for improving fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension?
2. What can Teachers do to Improve Reading Comprehension

The object and subject of the theme: The participants in this study were 16 students (see Table 3.1) purposively selected from the EFL students' from the English philology faculty: foreign language and literature. They were enrolled in the English III course during the second semester of the 2019 academic year.

Significance of the theme: Reading is one of the four necessary important language skills for those learning English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL), for academic success, and for professional development. Namangan Stateuniversity EFL students need to read textbooks, articles, or magazines written

in English to acquire knowledge and gather information for both their careers and their academic studies. The ability to comprehend expository texts which make up the bulk of their foreign language reading materials is, therefore, very important for all of them.

Several causes have been identified in regard to the Namangan state university EFL students' poor English reading problem. These include:

- a lack of reading resources,
- a lack of strong reading culture,
- a lack of reading strategy knowledge, and teachers' use of unsuccessful teaching methods

Though teachers commonly recognize that a lack of reading strategy knowledge accounts, to a large extent, for EFL students' poor reading ability, instruction to train the students to be aware of and effectively use reading strategies rarely happens during big English reading classes in our universities. It seems that our teachers of English assume that their students know reading strategies and thus can use them to read English text effectively. Therefore, the teachers just assign the reading materials, have the students read, and then assess their reading comprehension performance. The poor teaching method like this can lead to students' failure in reading comprehension.

As stated by Ekwall and Shanker, more than 90 percent of learners' reading failures could or should be blamed on poor teaching. This is in line with the observational studies by Durkin and Pressley and Wharton-McDonald which found that teachers regularly assigned reading tasks to their students and then tested their reading comprehension, but rarely taught the reading strategies needed by their students.

To address this problem, an effective reading strategy instruction must be urgently carried out to promote all university EFL students' reading ability. Research has shown that reading strategies can be effectively taught to EFL students to help them comprehend English expository texts

The content of the theme: This work consists of introduction, three chapters, conclusion, appendices and references, all three chapters include two subchapters.

Study Method: In the present study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to investigate the strategies for improving fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The tools for collecting quantitative data used in this study included pre-and postreading comprehension tests and a survey questionnaire. A semi-structured interview was used to collect the qualitative data.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION. TEACHING THE BRAIN TO READ: FACTORS THAT AFFECT L2 COMPREHENSION

How does the brain learn to read? How do we teach reading to a group of different brains or to a specific type of brain? Reading is an artificial process and was never part of the brain's original design. As reading is a man-made process, what parts of the brain are involved?

1.1 What is Reading Comprehension?

Reading is a complex, purposeful, interactive, comprehending, flexible activity that takes considerable time and resources to develop. Reading is rapid, which means that readers should maintain flow of information at a sufficient rate to make connections and inferences vital to comprehension. The reader has a purpose for reading, whether it is for entertainment, information, or research. Reading for a purpose provides motivation - an important aspect of being a good reader. It is an interactive activity - the reader makes use of information from his/her background knowledge as well as information from the printed page; reading is also interactive in the sense that many skills work together simultaneously in the process. The reader typically expects to understand what s/he is reading. Reading is flexible, meaning that the reader employs a range of strategies to read efficiently. Finally, reading develops gradually; the reader does not become fluent suddenly, or immediately following a reading development course.

Comprehension is recognized as an acquired skill that is focused on the understanding of input. Oxford English Dictionary defines comprehension as "the action or fact of comprehending with the mind; understanding; ... grasping with the mind, power of receiving and containing ideas." identifies comprehension as "the process of receiving language; listening or reading; input".¹

Comprehension is the ability to take in information, analyze it in its respective segments, and come up with an understanding of the input in a cohesive and accurate manner. Well-developed comprehension abilities involve

¹ Anderson, R.C. & Pearson, P.D. (1984). A schema-theoretic view of basic processes in reading. In P.D. Pearson, R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, & P. Mosenthal (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research*. New York: Longman.

interactive strategy use to come up with a meaningful understanding of the input. Therefore, comprehension may not be exclusively devoted to input alone; it may also affect the fluency of a learner's output. Fluency, the amalgamation of competence (one's underlying knowledge) and performance (one's overt, external actions or behaviors) can be identified as an aspect of comprehension, as it can transfer comprehensible information to other aspects of language proficiency such as writing and speaking with little attention effort.² Above all, comprehension can be identified as an interactive, strategic process which, when fully developed, results in reading fluency. Types of Comprehension several different views have sought to accurately define L2 reading comprehension. A thorough literature review reveals that it is clear that there is no one kind of comprehension when it comes to reading. Brantmeier claims that there "is not one true comprehension, but a range of comprehension".³ Day and Park, on the other hand, discuss reading comprehension in terms of several different types. In their research, they classify reading comprehension into six different modes of comprehension that can work together in parallel and/or in a linear fashion:

- Literal comprehension is described as the "understanding of the straightforward meaning of the text".⁴ This means that any answers to questions coming from a text would be explicitly outlined in the reading. An example of this would be discovering specific vocabulary items and/or their meanings within a text;
- Reorganization occurs when readers must find various pieces of information from a reading and combine them for additional understanding. In this way, readers still use literal comprehension, but

²Baumann, J.F., Kame'enui, E.J., & Ash, G. (2003). Research on vocabulary instruction: Voltaire redux. In J. Flood, D. Lapp, J.R. Squire, & J. Jenson (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English Language Arts* (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

³Beck, I.L., McKeown, M.G., & McCaslin, E.S. (1983). All contexts are not created equal. *Elementary School Journal*, 83.

⁴Beck, I.L., McKeown, M.G., & Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction*. New York: Guilford Press.

it is applied to several areas of text in order to answer more specific questions related to the text;⁵

- Inference requires learners to go a step beyond literal understanding and to combine and use their own knowledge in order to come up with answers to implicitly stated information;⁶
- Prediction combines a reader's prior knowledge with his or her understanding of a passage in order to guess as to what happens next; each answer, however, must be supported by the text in order to be valid;
- Evaluation requires a learner to have a general knowledge of the topic under examination and an understanding of the reading material in order to give judgment or opinion about the text;
- Personal response is an open-ended type of comprehension used by readers in order to provide their feelings about the topic. In order to have a valid answer, they need to have reasoned their feelings in relation to the text.⁷ When used in parallel with each other, these types of comprehension work very well as an overall approach to many different aspects of reading. However, each classification has its own weaknesses: Literal comprehension cannot account for abstract information such as tone and irony; reorganization is simply an extension of this, being literal in its own right; and evaluation, prediction, personal experience, and inference are not possible without an adequate knowledge of the subject matter, in both parsing word for word and in depth contextually as a whole. To add to this, none of these types of comprehension accounts for cultural factors, which can be problematic when attempting to look at L2 reading patterns across

⁵Blachowicz, C.L.Z. & Fisher, P. (2004) Building vocabulary in remedial settings: Focus on word relatedness. *Perspectives*, 30, 1. The International Dyslexia Association

⁶(Day & Park, 2005), page 62 Chall, J.s. & Jacobs, V. A. (2003). Poor children's fourth-grade slump. *American Educator*, spring, 2003. American Federation of Teachers

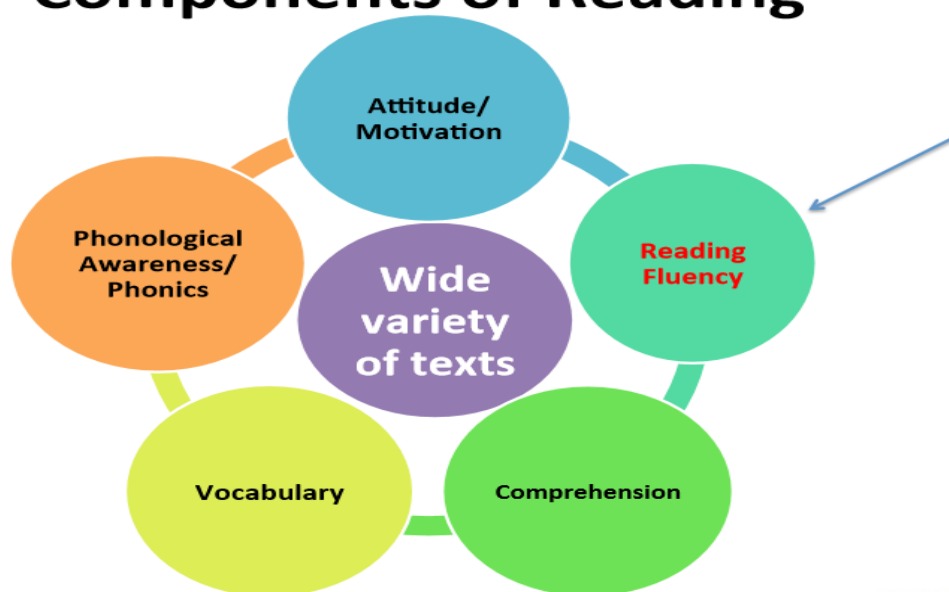
⁷Ebbers, S.M. (2004). Vocabulary through morphemes: Suffixes, prefixes and roots for intermediate grades. Longmont, CO: Sopris West Graves, M. (2000). A vocabulary program to complement and bolster a middle-grade comprehension program. In B. Taylor, M.

various cultures. For instance, how can different cultures read the same passage and gain different interpretations of the text? This is an important question that must be taken seriously when trying to identify the weaknesses of contemporary language teaching in culturally diverse classrooms.

Understanding text, learning from it, and enjoying reading are the ultimate goals of learning to read. Fundamental skills such as vocabulary and fluency are important building blocks of reading and reading comprehension.

Knowing how to read words has ultimately little value if the student is unable to construct meaning from text. Ultimately, reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning by coordinating a number of complex processes that include word reading, word and world knowledge, and fluency.⁸ Good readers read with fluency. They move smoothly through text, effortlessly and accurately translating sound/spellings to words and linking words with their meanings. But good readers do more than read words. They understand that the words they read work together to create meaning that is, good readers read with comprehension. Good readers are strategic readers who think about what they read, develop specific reading strategies and skills, and learn to apply these strategies and skills as a way to get meaning from a variety of text types.

Components of Reading



⁸(McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009; Cornoldi & Oakhill, 2013; Rasinski, Blachowicz, & Lems, 2012)

In broad terms, comprehension is the ability of readers to get meaning from text. How does this happen? By asking adult good readers to think aloud as they read, researchers have determined that these readers actively coordinate a number of conscious processes before, during, and after reading.⁹ Good readers are aware of how their reading is going and why. They know, for example, when a text is difficult to read because it contains many new ideas and when it is difficult to read because it is poorly written. They are adept at using their prior knowledge as they read to make predictions about what might happen next and to understand ideas as they encounter them.¹⁰

Reading is a highly strategic process during which readers are constantly constructing meaning using a variety of strategies, such as activating background knowledge, monitoring and clarifying, making predictions, drawing inferences, asking questions and summarizing. Strategies are used in combination to solve problems, to think about text and to check understanding. Consequently, teaching comprehension strategies should focus on thinking,¹¹ problem solving, monitoring, and understanding. "Being strategic is not a skill that can be taught by drill; it is a method of approaching reading and reading instruction. Much more is required than knowing a strategy; becoming strategic calls for coordinating individual strategies. This coordinating involves altering, adjusting, modifying, testing, and shifting tactics as is fitting, until a reading comprehension problem is solved."¹² Reading strategically is higher order thinking. It involves transforming information and ideas. For example, summarizing requires evaluating and synthesizing information; making predictions involves combining facts and ideas and making inferences to formulate a type of hypothesis; making connections necessitates making generalizing; and clarifying require identifying problems and developing solutions. Good readers are often selective, focusing their attention on

⁹Meaningful differences. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

¹⁰Juel, C. & Deffes, R. (2004) Making words stick. What Research Says About Reading, 61, 6. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: Alexandria, VA.

¹¹Stahl, S.A. (2003) how words are learned incrementally over multiple exposures. American Educator, Spring 2003.

¹²(Trabasso and Bouchard, 2002, p. 186)

the parts of the text that are most appropriate to their goals. Effective readers go beyond the literal meaning of text, interpreting what they read by filtering ideas in the text through their prior knowledge. Such interpretations often include an evaluation of the quality of the ideas in the text. Often, such associations are carried out intentionally by thinking about how the ideas in the text seem vaguely familiar and then recalling where similar ideas were presented or encountered. Readers also make predictions and form hypotheses about what will happen next, or what ideas the text will advance. In addition, readers continuously evaluate these predictions and hypotheses and revise them as the reading warrants. As they read, good readers vary their reading speed, sometimes skimming and sometimes rereading a section of text that is especially relevant to the reading goals. As they encounter new ideas during reading, they update their prior knowledge. Good readers make conscious inferences, such as determining the author's intentions for writing the text, clarifying the meaning of unknown words, and filling in information if they perceive gaps in an argument. They create mental images. If, for example, they are reading fiction, they create mental pictures of settings and characters. Good readers are strategic!

1.2. What are Comprehension Strategies?

Comprehension strategies are conscious or intentional plans that people use in order to achieve a goal and are used deliberately to make sense of text.¹³ Readers use strategies consciously to make sense of the text, remember critical ideas and integrate new learning into existing schema or prior knowledge. Students need to learn how to use strategies independently, to recognize and solve problems, and to delve deeper into text to make connections and inferences.

Reading strategies are not the same as instructional strategies. The goal of instructional strategies is to teach students how to make sense of text. Instructional strategies are the plans used by the teacher to teach comprehension. They include but are not limited to explicit explanation, modeling, pre-teaching, organizing learning and scaffolding. Strategies laid out in this chapter emphasize teaching and student engagement. Obviously, there is an interaction between both reading and instructional strategies.

Often the terms comprehension strategies, skills, and activities are used interchangeably. Comprehension strategies are used consciously by the reader to monitor and check understanding, to clarify confusion, and to process text. Strategies are situational and are used intentionally by readers.¹⁴ In contrast, once skills are learned, they are used unconsciously, i.e. decoding words or breaking words into syllables. Skills are also the tools readers use to organize the structure of text, e.g., main idea and supporting details, compare and contrast, sequencing, etc. Activities such as charts¹⁵ or terms such as “click and clunk” and “get the gist” are not comprehension strategies themselves but instructional devices to encourage students to use comprehension strategies as they read. Props such as strategy character puppets may catch children’s interest but they may also take students’ attention away from the strategies themselves.

¹³ (Steinagel, L.O.(2005). The effects of reading and reading strategy training on lower proficiency level second language learners. Ph.D. dissertation. Brigham Young University.

¹⁴(McEwan, 2004) page 164. Pearson and Camperell (1985),p42

¹⁵(McEwan, 2004), (p. 339) Vocabulary learning and the child with learning disabilities.Perspectives, 30, 1.The International Dyslexia Association.

In contrast, skills are applied automatically rather than deliberately and yield a high level of performance with minimal effort.¹⁶ Learning skills requires practice in order to become automatic. Decoding is a skill that when it becomes automatic results in fluent reading. Readers read most words without ever thinking about the sounds and spellings. Similarly, fluency is a skill that develops over time, allowing readers to access text with automatically so they can focus their mental efforts on making sense of what is being read. Simply put, comprehension strategies are the cognitive processes and procedures that readers bring to the content of reading; comprehension skills are the procedures they use to grasp the organizational structure of the text. Readers employ various comprehension strategies before, during, and after an initial reading of a text. Comprehension skills, however, are best employed as readers reread a text and do close reading. Why is it important to provide students with instruction in comprehension skills? The most persuasive answer is given by Pearson and Camperell: When we identify a variable, including a text structure variable, that looks like it might make a difference in comprehension, we ought to adopt a frontal assault strategy when considering its instructional power to teach about it systematically and make certain students have a chance to practice it. Research states that the ability to identify and use text structure can make a difference in students' text comprehension: Good readers are able to use structure, whereas poor readers are not.¹⁷ Therefore, teaching students the skills necessary to use text structure is another way to improve their reading comprehension.

A very practical way to understand both the distinction between strategies and skills and their interaction is to think about the sport of basketball. Players practice different types of shots - three-point plays, hook shots and dunks; they work on different types of dribbling from pull back to crossover to behind the back. All of these skills become automatic with practice, just as reading skills become automatic. . But skills are not sufficient to win the game. Players also learn

¹⁶ (Afflerbach et. al, 2008; Dewitz et al. 2009), p25

¹⁷(Meyer, Brandt, & Bluth, 2006), p52. Vocabulary learning and the child with learning disabilities. Perspectives, 30, 1. The International Dyslexia Association.

to play strategically by looking at where players are positioned, where a shot can be made, and which shot makes the most sense. Reading the court and players is key to knowing which play to make. The same is true with reading. The foundational skills of reading are necessary but not sufficient. Skills must work in partnership with strategies. Skills are used automatically; strategies are used thoughtfully and intentionally. Like basketball shots, main idea, sequencing, compare and contrast and other reading skills need to be learned and practiced. They are foundational skills that enable the reader to use comprehension strategies effectively. For example, understanding the concept of main idea underlies summarizing.

Effective readers are constantly monitoring their understanding, assessing their understanding, and identifying when comprehension breaks down. They are metacognitive aware or in control of their own thinking throughout their reading. Luke compares this metacognitive or self-regulatory behavior to a foreman who oversees – monitors – all the parts of a project. When the project is moving along smoothly; there is no need for intervention. Depending upon the problem, the foreman may need to stop the project to take some action. And this is exactly what proficient readers do. When reading comprehension is moving along smoothly, skilled readers do not need to stop. However, when reading challenging or complex text, these same readers recognize when comprehension is interrupted, identify the cause or problem like unfamiliar words or confusing referents or inconsistent ideas, and use strategies to clarify and resolve the problems. They also use strategies such as predicting and making connections to increase engagement and promote deeper meaning.

Novice and struggling readers seem to lack awareness of thinking about what is and is not making sense as they read. They are often unaware of when they do not understand what they are reading. This is painfully evident when a struggling reader turns two pages instead of one and continues on the wrong page even though it does not make sense. They often are focused so much on reading the words that they cannot think about how the words connect to create meaning. Good readers, on the other hand, are aware of when their comprehension breaks down or if

they are confused by the text and have “fix up” strategies to resolve their problems. They also know that it is okay to ask for help from others.

Activating Prior Knowledge Background or prior knowledge comes from life experiences, either real or vicarious.¹⁸ Often people presume that background knowledge comes just from actual experiences, but it is often acquired through reading, movies, discussion, or any number of other indirect means, all of which can increase background knowledge. In fact, reading is one of the most important ways that people build prior knowledge. Prior knowledge is the sum of all the knowledge that readers have acquired, experienced, and stored in memory or schema. Schema theory proposes that knowledge is organized in a network of structures called schemata. Readers not only have schemata for ideas and experiences but for text structures such as fiction and nonfiction. When readers activate their schema (their prior knowledge) they link to this network of information. As readers interact with a text, they continually relate what they are reading to their prior life and reading experiences. Readers’ interest in what they are reading influences the links they continue to build in their schema which is one reason why motivation increases comprehension.

The relationship between prior knowledge and reading is obviously reciprocal. Prior knowledge enhances comprehension by enabling readers to comprehend text better, to make connections, to predict, and to develop inferences as they are reading. As readers learn more from reading, they are also expanding their knowledge, which is then stored in memory and connected to schemata, which are activated at a later time as background or prior knowledge.

Activating background for proficient readers happens quite naturally as they preview a text before reading, browsing through the text, reflecting on the author, and noting information in the book jacket or other visuals. What do I already know about this topic or type of text? What have I experienced or read about this topic?

¹⁸ (Knuth and James, 2001), (Marzano, 2004) page 64

Making conscious what is already known helps the reader link new information with what is already known – make connections, increase the ability to make inferences, improve recall of content, view and reconcile conflicting information, interpret text and absorb new information.¹⁹ For students with limited background knowledge, it may be necessary to help them build background prior to reading.²⁰

When reading fiction, readers may activate prior knowledge by browsing the text to use one or more of the following browsing activities to activate background knowledge.

- Think about what you know about the author.
- Identify the type of selection, e.g., fiction vs non-fiction.
- Identify the genre, e.g., fantasy vs. realistic fiction.
- Notice interesting words, text, or illustrations.
- Obtain a general idea of what a selection is about.
- Get a general idea of setting and characters in a fictional story.

When reading informational text, readers may move beyond browse to skimming the text for specific information and organization. Skimming is defined as “the rapid reading of text to get a sense of text structure, organization and gist” focusing on chapter previews, headings, bolded type, titles, and marginal glosses.²¹

- Notice anything interesting including text features.
- Identify the structure of the text.
- Set a general idea of what a selection is about.
- Notice problem words, text or confusing illustrations or particularly surprising information.
- Decide what one expects or wants to learn from the text.

¹⁹ (Kujawa and Huske, 2005; Pressley, 2004) Juel, C. & Deffes, R. (2004) Making words stick. What Research Says About Reading, 61, 6. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: Alexandria, VA.

²⁰ (Stevens, 2000; Hayes and Tierney, 2003) Stanovich, K.E. (1986). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. Reading Research Quarterly, 21.

²¹ Greene, J. F. (1999) Morphemes for meaning. Longmont, CO: Sopris West

- Obtain a general idea of what an expository selection is about by reading title, headings, subheadings, and first sentences of paragraphs.
- Raise wonderings and questions.

Browsing and skimming should be turned into questions to help students take ownership of the strategy. For example, students might ask: How does this connect to what I already know? How is this going to help me learn more about the topic? Why am I reading this? How is this relevant to what I am studying or researching? While activating prior knowledge is clearly a pre-reading strategy, readers should revisit after reading what they identified during browsing or skimming. This involves combining new information with prior knowledge to update one's schema and, if necessary, reconciling information in the text with what one already knows and revising prior knowledge based on the new information.

While background knowledge is usually activated prior to reading a selection, background knowledge should be used throughout the reading process to deepen understanding, organize information, and facilitate recall.

Making Connections Directly connected to activating prior knowledge is making connections. Results of analyses by the National Reading Panel suggest that comprehension is enhanced when readers actively connect ideas in print to their own knowledge and experiences. Making connections helps deepen understanding and the retention of content and helps students appreciate the “power of thinking about their own schema or background”. Readers connect ideas within the text, connect ideas to what has been read in the past, and connect ideas to personal experiences. These have been framed as text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections.²² Making connections to self, text, and world allows readers to think about how the information in the text fits in with and expands foundational knowledge or existing schema.

²²(Keene and Zimmerman, 2007; Harvey and Goudvis, 2009), p 56, 98

Making connections is one of the most accessible strategies to help students understand what they read. Keene and Zimmerman in 1997 suggested that students be taught three basic types of connections.²³

1. Text-to-Self connections that the reader makes between what is in the text and the reader's own personal experiences.
2. Text-to-World connections that the reader makes to what they know about the world.
3. Text-to-Text connections that the reader makes to other things they have read

All too often students make connections that are fairly simplistic, for example, I can connect with this character because he lives in a city, just like I do. While this is a legitimate text-to-self connection, students need to be encouraged to think deeper, beyond literal and superficial connections. They need to add details and make inferences when they make connections. For example, if this character lives in the city, then maybe he lives in the same type of apartment that I do. If he does, then maybe he has to share a room with his brother because city apartments can be small.

Young children's connections during shared reading, for example, can be superficial and tend to move conversation away from the text as they begin to "relate their own narrative." With effective teacher modeling and feedback, students begin to be more precise in their connections to the text.

Making connections while reading informational text requires readers to identify new content and to connect it to what they already know and may involve one or more of the following activities:

- Identifying new information and connecting it with one's background knowledge
- Explaining similarities between new information in the text and what one already knows
- Reconciling information in the text that contradicts what one already knows

²³(Keene & Zimmerman, 2005, Miller, 2002) page 133

- Forming questions about what one still does not know and rechecking the text for the information
- Using additional sources to add to or to check or confirm information
- Combining sources to organize new information

Predicting, confirming predictions and making predictions motivates and engages readers, provides direction for reading and leads to deeper thinking about text.²⁴ Predictions are not wild guesses. They involve making inferences, using information in the text and prior knowledge to anticipate what will happen next. For example, while reading Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*,

“That night Max wore his wolf suit and made mischief of one kind and another...”

the teacher prompts the students to make a prediction... Max is in a monster suit and he's chasing after his dog with a fork in his hand. This might be a good place for us to stop and make a prediction. What can we predict that might happen next with Max?

(Students)- He is chasing the dog with a fork so he might hurt the dog. We get in trouble at home when we run around like that. I bet Max's mom is going to be mad at him.

As readers continue through the selection, predictions can be confirmed or verified, updated or revised based on new information or not confirmed or not verified. Notice the use of the terms “confirmed” or “verified” and “not confirmed” or not “verified” rather than “right” or “wrong”. The reality is that predictions are similar to conjectures and when not born out should result in new learning. Therefore, even after reading, students should reflect on their predictions.

To continue the example,

- **(Teacher)** now, can we confirm the prediction that Max was going to maybe hurt the dog and get into trouble?

²⁴Dale, E., & O'Rourke, J. (1986). *Vocabulary building*. Columbus, OH: Zaner-Bloser.

- **(Students)** He didn't do anything to the dog but he did get in trouble. It's kind of a timeout but I don't think his mom was that mad since she brought him some dinner to his room.
- **(teacher)** That was a good confirmation. Max did get in trouble but you could tell his mom was not very mad because she brought him dinner.
- **(student)** But he didn't hurt the dog.
- **(teacher)** That's right, we can't confirm that part of our prediction but we learned that sometimes the illustrations don't always give us the best clues for our predictions.

Students need to learn to do the following to make thoughtful predictions:

- Identify clues in the text and one's background knowledge to support a prediction
- Decide when to make a prediction based on a turning point or other point in a story
- Confirm or verify predictions during and after reading
- Make and evaluate alternative predictions
- Review predictions and thinking about why they were or were not confirmed or verified

When the process of predicting and confirming predictions is first being introduced and practiced by students; it is helpful to record predictions to be sure they are revisited. For example, as we make predictions today, I am going to write them down so we can revisit them to see which predictions were confirmed and which were not confirmed in the story. Older students can take responsibility for writing down their own predictions on sticky notes as they read and post them on the appropriate page. This provides an opportunity for students to self-regulate strategy use and when shared with other students, provide a model for others. Confirming also requires students to reread and to check an author clue which supports close reading.

Questions should focus on the characters and their motivation, reactions, and relationship to other characters; questions related to the setting and its impact on

the characters and situation; and questions related to important events and their outcome. Questions may also focus on clarification within the text while others might explore the deeper meaning of the story. Modeling different types of questions helps students build understanding of why to ask questions, when to ask questions, and what types of questions to ask. For example:

- Asking questions about characters and events that can be answered by finding explicit information in the text, questions that begin with who, where or what.
- Asking questions about important points in the story that go beyond merely facts with questions that begin with how or why. For example: Why did the prince decide to ignore the witch's threat?
- Asking questions that can only be answered by making inferences from the text. For example: I wonder how her brother felt after she said that.
- Asking questions about genre, style, and author's purpose.
- Asking open-ended questions that lead to discussion and clarification of ideas.

For example: What do you think the character meant when she said . . . ?

- *Asking questions that go beyond the text and lead to more reading or research. For example: I still wonder what could be done to make seeds grow faster.*
- *Asking questions that monitor and check understanding. For example: What isn't making sense here? What is causing my confusion? How do these ideas fit together?*
- *Returning to questions during and after reading to discuss possible answers and revisiting the text to check for clues.*
- *Readers may raise questions about the author's technique, its theme, and its relationship to other books by the same or other authors, such as: How is this book like other books by this author? Or: Why did*

the author start telling the story in the third person and then switch to the first person?

When the process of predicting and confirming predictions is first being introduced and practiced by students; it is helpful to record predictions to be sure they are revisited. For example,

As we make predictions today, I am going to write them down so we can revisit them to see which predictions were confirmed and which were not confirmed in the story. Older students can take responsibility for writing down their own predictions on sticky notes as they read and post them on the appropriate page. This provides an opportunity for students to self-regulate strategy use and when shared with other students, provide a model for others. Confirming also requires students to reread and to check an author clue which supports close reading.

Asking questions and finding answers Harvey and Goudvis explain that “Questions open the doors to understanding.”²⁵ Generating questions about the text propels the reader forward. Asking questions gives students reasons for reading and engages them with the text, two essential behaviors of skilled readers. Generating questions and determining answers give readers a means of checking their understanding of the information stated in or implied by the author and are also a vehicle for finding evidence in the text to support answers, a key behavior in the Common Core State Standards. They help readers clarify confusion, spur them on to investigate further and are proof that they are thinking about what they are reading as they interact with the text.²⁶ In addition, unanswered questions encourage students to read beyond the text and motivate them to do research in search of answers.

When reading fiction, sometimes there really is no answer to a question or the question itself is unimportant for understanding the story. For example, while

²⁵National Institute for Literacy. (2001). *Put reading first: The research building blocks for teaching children to read*. Jessup, MD: National Institute for Literacy

²⁶Chall, J.S., & Jacobs, V.A. (1983). Writing and reading in the elementary grades: Developmental trends among low-SES children. *Language Arts*, 60 (5).

reading a story about a dog, (which was pictured with floppy ears and long hair that covered his eyes), a student asked, I want to know what kind of dog it is. After reading, the teacher asked if there were any questions that were not answered by the author. The student who asked the question raised his hand and told the class, The author didn't answer my question but it really doesn't matter anymore because the important part of the story is about how the boy and the dog became best friends. The teacher explained that not all questions are answered in the text. While some unanswered questions can be answered by sources other than the book, sometimes there may not be an answer to a question, such as what happened after the story ended. Those questions remain in the reader's mind unless answered by the reader's imagination.

It is important to distinguish analysis questions from those that occur in response to the literature. In responding to literature, readers' questions emerge from their engagement with the narrative. They might wonder what happens to the characters during and after the narrative. Reader response questions are products of their "living through" experience. They often precede a prediction about what the characters may do or how the plot will take a turn. Teachers need to model and prompt students to ask questions that focus on the aesthetic experience, especially with the first reading. A revisit to the text to look at the writer's craft or author's purpose is appropriate, but it changes the reader's stance to one of analysis. The strategy of question-asking from an aesthetic stance should reflect the natural musings of a reader immersed in the world co-created by reader and author.

One way to encourage students to do this when reading fiction is to frame questions as wondering. Wondering is a natural response to reading and helps the reader to enjoy and understand the text better or prepare them for what will happen next in a narrative. Often the wondering leads the reader to make inferences. For example, returning to *Where the Wild Things Are*, the teacher might model with a think-aloud: I wonder what made Max act so wild. Maybe he was tired of being inside the house or maybe he was just bored and wanted to use his imagination and pretend he was a real monster.

Informational text demands close attention by the reader. Students who have poor comprehension of informational text often are unable to recall information or to answer questions about the text and need support to develop good questioning skills. According to Chen et al, students should learn to use the basic five W questions (who, what where, when and why) and the one H question (how). Early in the process, students often focus on asking factual questions that usually can be answered in the text: Who invented the automobile? What is the largest planet? Where do armadillos live? When was Lincoln born? Ultimately, students should be generating questions that focus on problems

- *(How can cars run on electricity?)*,
- **Causal** *(Why are African elephants in danger of becoming extinct?), conditional (If, we don't drive as many cars, then will smog disappear)?*
- **Temporal** *(How long can people live on the space station without adverse effects?)*.

Breaking the strategy down into manageable pieces can help students build understanding of why to ask questions, when to ask questions, and what to ask. While readers generate questions about the characters, setting, plot, and other elements of story grammar, they should also be asking questions

- that can be answered by finding explicit information in the text, questions that begin with what, where, or who
- about important points in the text that go beyond merely facts with questions that begin with how or why,
- about something one wants to know and it with the teacher's support,
- that can only be answered by making inferences from the text,
- about genre, style, and author's purpose,
- that are open-ended and lead to discussion and clarification of ideas, such as what did the author,
- that go beyond the text and lead to more reading and research

- That monitor and check understanding. For example: What isn't making sense here? What is causing my confusion?

Visualizing creates mental images or visualizing personalizes reading and engages the reader directly with the text.²⁷ Visualization is not just a retelling of the specific words in the text. When students read Arnold Lobel's words, "toad sits by his garden and waits" and are asked to visualize, they close their eyes and typically create a "literal picture": I see the toad sitting in his garden. Teachers should help students to use visualization to interpret and make inferences while they are reading. The images of a character, situations, or settings may change over time as the author adds new information. In addition, readers use their senses to create these visualizations how the character might feel or look like or how the setting conjures up certain smells, feelings, and sounds. Keeping this in mind, an effective think aloud might be: I can just see Toad sitting there. He's getting impatient because his seeds aren't growing like Frog said they would. He probably isn't very happy since nothing is happening. When I visualize Toad, I can tell how he feels.

Students may start with literal pictures but should be encouraged to move beyond that by interpreting feelings and sensory elements and visualizing

- A "literal picture" of the character, setting or situation
- With the senses (smell, hear, touch in addition to what the reader sees) to expand the mental image and to infer beyond the text
- Using background knowledge to infer beyond the text

Although visualization is more often thought of when reading narrative texts, visualization or constructing mental images is an effective strategy for students to use for comprehending complex informational text. Visualizing passages can help students organize and remember information as well as to recognize when information is incomplete or inconsistent.²⁸

²⁷Hart, B. & Risley, T.R. (1995). Meaningful differences. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

²⁸National Institute for Literacy. (2001). Put reading first: The research building blocks for teaching children to read. Jessup, MD: National Institute for Literacy

For example, in a process-explanation structure, which explains how something works or is built, a student can visualize the process, which helps with information retention as well as the identification of confusing or inadequate information in the text. Visualization also involves both making connections and inferring.²⁹ In another situation, a group of students were reading about different sources of energy, wind being one of the sources. The text referred to “wind farms.” At first the thought of a wind farm, it made no sense when they visualized a traditional farm with crops growing in rows. When one student suggested that they think about the turbines as crops, they were able to visualize long rows of wind turbines, neatly laid out like crops on a farm. The students then inferred that a “wind farm was an enormous area of land with wind turbines planted or erected in long straight rows.”

Unlike fiction, there is less room for interpretation when visualizing nonfiction. It may be helpful to:

- Visualize a segment of text using author
- Create a time line
- Visualize beyond the words in the text
- Make diagram of a complex process.
- Illustrate a concept or draw a map.
- Aggregate information and chart it
- Visualize the main idea of the text details

Summarizing The National Reading Panel analyses found that summarizing increases engagement by focusing on the main ideas rather than the details. Summarizing requires students to process the text by omitting irrelevant information and generalizing ideas various several examples. In order to summarize, students must pay more attention to the text while they read or reread it. This also results in increased engagement. Summarizing helps students understand the structure of the text. Summarizing narrative text involves focusing on the story elements. Effective readers do not wait until the end of a text to summarize but

²⁹ (Harvey and Goudvis, 2009), page 43.

rather create a series of summary statements as they are reading to check understanding and build meaning. Students need to learn what these logical points are, for example, the end of an episode. Summarizing informational text, like fiction, involves identifying the gist, the main thesis, the key idea(s) or main point(s) of what was read. Creating a summary for informational text is often very challenging for students, since there is a tendency to include details, not just the main ideas.

For younger students, summarizing begins by talking about or retelling what they remember about the story. Sequence cards, story maps, and other graphic organizers offer the scaffolding needed for students to summarize text. For example, in kindergarten, students might use sequence cards to retell the events in terms of what happened first, next and last. By first grade they identify and use basic story elements to retell the story. Second graders can learn to summarize the plot in chronological order by using a graphic organizer. The literature on teaching summarizing contains a range of activities, many of which do not result in the development of good summaries. For example, having students continuously add to a summary that one student started, only teaches students that “more is better” when conciseness should be the focus. The goal of instruction should be moving students toward identifying the central ideas as stated in the text or in their own words. The following is a continuum of skills leading to summarizing. Summarizing is a complex skill and takes years to develop. Young children have difficulty with the skills necessary to summarize. They delete information but don’t combine or condense details. Learning to paraphrase precedes their ability to begin combining and condensing. This continuum can be helpful for the scaffolding students need to become more proficient in summarizing.

- Retelling anything remembered.
- Retelling (paraphrasing) in one’s own words.
- Retelling ideas in sequence.
- Summarizing the main idea and details.

- Recognizing convenient or necessary spots for summing up, not just at the end of every paragraph but at the end of chapters and key story events.
- Summing up the most important information concisely by creating a gist statement.
- Using inferences to summarize.³⁰

All these strategies should be employed throughout the reading process. As students become proficient using strategies and engage with each other to discuss problems, they need to appreciate that what is a problem for one student may not be a problem for another. An unknown word for one student may be a familiar one to another. Students may come up with different visualizations or connections based on their own personal experiences. Strategy instruction helps students understand that interpretations of text can and should vary across readers. While there may not be one “right” answer to a question or different strategies might be used to solve a problem, students should always be encouraged to discuss the problems, share solutions and respect different interpretations of stories.

³⁰Stahl, S.A. (1999). *Vocabulary Development*. Newton Upper Falls, MA: Brookline Books.

CHAPTER II: DEVELOPMENT MODEL SOF READING: FLUENCY, VOCABULARY AND COMPREHENSION

Good readers read with fluency. They move smoothly through text, effortlessly and accurately translating sound/spellings to words and linking words with their meanings. But good readers do more than read words. They understand that the words they read work together to create meaning - that is, good readers read with comprehension. Good readers are strategic readers who think about what they read, develop specific reading strategies and skills, and learn to apply these strategies and skills as a way to get meaning from a variety of text types

Why is it important?

Fluency is the bridge between

word recognition and comprehension



When it comes to the study of English language, reading has usually been at the center of debates among teachers and researchers. Therefore, an attempt will be made to define reading as a communicative process by following certain relevant descriptive frameworks in this area. There are three main "models" being proposed to explain the nature of foreign learning to read:

1. **bottom-up** processing model, which is so called because it focuses on developing the basic skill of matching sounds with letters, syllables, and words written on a page;
2. **top-down** processing model, which focuses on the background knowledge that a reader uses to comprehend a text; and
3. **"Interactive"** model which incorporates both top-down and bottom-up processing models and regards text processing as a non-linear, constantly

developing phenomenon where both the former explanations constantly react and influence one another.³¹ Current reading research claims that L1 and L2 readers use a similar cognitive process when they read³². Therefore, in this part, all the three reading models will be described

Bottom-up Reading Model

This reading model is developed by Gough who claims that reading is a process of decoding letter-by-letter. After readers begin to decode the letters of word level and syntactic features of text, they can build their textual meaning. They read texts by ways of focusing on linguistic forms at the level of word and sentence. As familiarities with the words increase, the readers will automatically recognize the words. This helps them to read fluently. On top of this, comprehension is produced when readers decode the letter, encode the sound and then construct the meaning from the text.

Though this model is convincing, researchers still do not vehemently support it, pointing out that the spelling-sound correspondence is complex and unpredictable. They argue that this process of reading causes slow and laborious reading because of short-term memory overload, and readers' easily forgetting what they have read at the end of the reading.³³ According to Day and Bamford, if a reader cannot keep a sentence long enough in the short-term memory, comprehension will be less satisfactory. Therefore, readers may remember only isolated facts but cannot integrate them into a cohesive understanding. Another limitation of this model is that the information contained at this level cannot interact with the higher level information .

Though the bottom-up reading process has been criticized as having covered only unilateral aspects of the reading process, it still has a great deal of contribution to reading research.³⁴ Hsueh-chao and Nation (2000) investigated the

³¹Graves, & P. van den Broek (Eds.), Reading for meaning: Fostering comprehension in the middle grades. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

³²Eskey, 2005; Grabe, 2004; Nunan, 1999; O'Donnell and Wood, 2004

³³Adams, 1990; Nunan, 1992, 1999; Nuttall, 1996;

³⁴(Adams, 1990; Alderson, 2000; Lipson and Cooper, 2002; National Reading Panel, 2000).³⁴ Hsueh-chao and Nation (2000)

effect of the density of unknown words on reading comprehension, using a narrative text and 66 English native speakers attending a pre-university English course in an English speaking country as participants. The findings were that about 98% coverage of vocabulary seemed to be necessary for learners to gain adequate comprehension. About the threshold issue, the results also suggest that comprehension would be difficult if the threshold level was below 80% vocabulary coverage. If the learner had high a level of vocabulary, he/she would not need to depend on background knowledge and reading skills. However, no skills or background knowledge could help if the learner's vocabulary coverage was below 80%. Their conclusion was that vocabulary knowledge was an important component in reading. The more unknown words there are, the less comprehension occurs. In addition, Hsueh-chao and Nation suggested that a broad knowledge of grammar, background knowledge and reading skills also had contribution to text comprehension. The roles of the bottom-up skills or ability in vocabulary, grammar, background knowledge, and reading skills are also crucial in L2 reading comprehension³⁵. On the whole, L1 and L2 reading research showed that bottom-up reading processing is still vital for reading comprehension.

Top-down Reading Model

This model is contrasted with the bottom-up model, because it emphasizes “from brain to text”³⁶. According to this model, what readers bring to text is more important than what the text brings. The main characteristic of this model is that the reader relies more on existing knowledge and makes minimal use of written information.³⁷ Readers' predictions and background knowledge play a significant role in their reading. In this process, readers read in a cyclical process, making guesses about the message of the text and checking the text for confirming or rejecting cues, based on personal schemata and contextual clues. While reading, they fit the text information into their existing knowledge structure.

³⁵Haynes and Baker, 1993; Hunt and Beglar, 2005; Park, 2004

³⁶ (Eskey, 2005, p. 564)

³⁷ (Hayes, 1991; Smith, 2004)

The top-down reading model has a great deal of influence on both L1 and L2 teaching, especially in promoting readers' prediction, guessing from context, and getting the main idea.

Interactive Reading Model

However, some researchers suggested that during the reading process, comprehension is more complex than the two models would predict. They argued that comprehension is achieved through the interaction of both the bottom-up and top down processes. Therefore, a balanced view between language and reasoning process has been advocated by most L2 reading researchers.³⁸ While reading, readers actively combine their bottom-up processes, for example, the ability to decode and recognize words and grammatical forms with their top-down processes, such as using background knowledge to predict and confirm meaning and, therefore, comprehension is the result of meaning construction, not just transmission of the graphic information to the reader's mind. The interactive reading model is seen as similar in both first language (L1) and second language (L2) contexts. Readers interact with the text to create its meaning as their mental processes work together at different levels³⁹. The level of reader's comprehension of the text is determined by how well the reader variables (interest level in the text, reading purposes, knowledge of the topic, target language abilities, awareness of the reading process, and level of willingness to take risks) interact with the text variables (text type, text structure, and vocabulary).

³⁸ Carrell, 1988, 1991; Eskey and Grabe, 1988; Eskey, 2005; Grabe, 2004; Sarcella and Oxford, 1992

³⁹ Carrell, Devine and Eskey, 1988; Rumelhart, 1977

2.1 Difference between text reading fluency and reading comprehension

Theoretical account about the role of text reading fluency in reading comprehension involves limited cognitive capacity.⁴⁰ Reading words with accuracy and speed lifts cognitive constraints, allowing cognitive resources (e.g., working memory and attention) to be used for higher order meaning construction. That is, text reading fluency “unglues” the child from decoding. Recent studies have shown that text reading fluency, although highly related, is a separate construct from word reading fluency⁴¹ and text reading fluency was predicted not only by word reading fluency, but also by oral language comprehension (listening comprehension here after), especially after children reached a certain level of word reading proficiency. These results are in line with Stanovich, Cunningham, and Feeman (1984)’s finding that first-grade children read the same words more rapidly in context (i.e., coherent paragraph) than out of context (i.e., random, incoherent paragraph), and this difference was more pronounced at the end of school year than the beginning of the year.

Furthermore, the relation of text reading fluency to reading comprehension changed over time⁴². In the beginning phase of reading development when decoding is the primary focus of development, word reading fluency and text reading fluency largely overlapped such that word reading fluency strongly influenced reading comprehension whereas text reading fluency did not make an independent contribution to reading comprehension. At a later phase, text reading fluency made an independent contribution to reading comprehension over and above word reading fluency and listening comprehension. For children learning to read in an opaque orthography, English, an independent contribution of text reading fluency was observed as early as in grade 2 and also in grade 4.⁴³ For children learning to read in a relatively transparent orthography, Korean, an independent contribution of text reading fluency was observed for younger children,

⁴⁰ (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Samuels, 2006)

⁴¹ (Wagner et al., 2011, 2012, 2014; Kim & Wagner, in press; but see Schwanenflugel et al., 2006)

⁴² (Kim et al., 2012, 2014; Kim & Wagner, in press)

⁴³ (Kim et al., 2012), (Kim & Wagner, in press; Jenkins et al., 2003; Klaua & Guthrie, 2008)

kindergartners, in a cross-sectional study. The finding in Korean raises an important question about text reading fluency, namely, whether the developmental progression pattern observed in English⁴⁴ is generalizable to languages with a transparent orthography. Theoretically, the pattern of developmental progression is expected to be similar across opaque and transparent orthographies - as children develop word reading skills, their cognitive resources can be allocated to meaning construction, and children's ability to process meaning (i.e., listening comprehension) is expected to be related to text reading fluency. Although opaque and transparent orthographies differ in terms of duration of 'word' reading acquisition,⁴⁵ the overall pattern of developmental relations of word reading fluency, listening comprehension, text reading fluency, and reading comprehension might be similar.

The hypothesis that text reading fluency involves meaning comprehension to some extent⁴⁶ is supported by two lines of studies. First, studies suggest that reading comprehension makes an independent contribution to text reading fluency after accounting for word reading fluency, and word reading fluency and decoding fluency for children.⁴⁷ These results have been taken to suggest that text reading fluency and reading comprehension have a bidirectional relation. The second line of studies has shown that 'listening' comprehension is related to text reading fluency after accounting for word reading fluency⁴⁸. Together, these studies indicate that text comprehension (listening comprehension and reading comprehension) is indeed involved in text reading fluency. However, what is unclear is whether 'reading' vs. 'listening' comprehension matters in relation to text reading fluency after accounting for each other. Previous studies of reading comprehension to text reading fluency did not account for listening

⁴⁴Wagner et al., 2011, 2012; Kim & Wagner, in press)

⁴⁵(Frost, Katz, & Benton, 1987; Seymour, Aro, & Erskine, 2003)

⁴⁶(Jenkins et al., 2003; Stanovich et al., 1984; Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001)

⁴⁷(Hudson, Torgesen, Lane, & Turner, 2012)

⁴⁸(Wagner et al., 2011, 2012, 2014; Kim & Wagner, in press)

comprehension⁴⁹ and those of listening comprehension to text reading fluency did not account for reading comprehension⁵⁰.

In the present study, we addressed this gap in the literature by investigating

- the relations of word reading fluency and listening comprehension to text reading fluency, and their relations to reading comprehension, and
- the relation of reading comprehension to text reading fluency after accounting for word reading fluency and listening comprehension.

One critical question in understanding text reading fluency as a construct is what differentiates text reading fluency from word reading fluency. That is, what makes accuracy and speed of reading words in connected text distinguished from accuracy and speed of reading context-free words? One way to examine this question is investigating how unique component emergent literacy skills differ for word reading fluency vs. text reading fluency. If text reading fluency is a distinctive construct from word reading fluency, various emergent literacy skills would be somewhat differentially related to word reading fluency vs. text reading fluency. According to the Ehri's model of word reading development, text reading fluency is a direct outcome of word reading fluency, which, in turn, is the outcome of word reading accuracy.

Given that the foundational skill for text reading fluency is word reading fluency,⁵¹ the influence of emergent literacy skills² (e.g., phonological awareness, orthographic awareness, morphological awareness, letter name knowledge, vocabulary, and rapid automatized naming) on word reading fluency vs. text reading fluency should be largely shared, particularly during the beginning phase of reading development. However, there might be unique emergent literacy skills that relate to text reading fluency over and above word reading fluency. In particular, orthographic awareness (knowledge of patterns of letters and word specific orthographic representation, might play a unique role in text reading fluency because readers, including developing readers, process words

⁴⁹ (Baker et al., 2011; Jenkins et al., 2003; Hudson et al., 2012)

⁵⁰ (Wagner et al., 2011, 2012, 2014; Kim & Wagner, in press)

⁵¹ (Hudson, Torgesen, Lane, & Turner, 2012)

parafoveally⁵². Therefore, the ability to recognize multi-letter units beyond one-on-one mapping (i.e., orthographic awareness or forming orthographic codes) might facilitate word reading in connected texts. In fact, Barker, Torgesen, and Wagner found that orthographic awareness was more strongly related to text reading fluency than to word reading fluency. To examine this hypothesis, the following emergent literacy skills were included in the present study as predictors of word reading fluency and text reading fluency: phonological awareness, orthographic awareness, morphological awareness, letter name knowledge, rapid automatized naming, and vocabulary. These emergent literacy skills were selected based on evidence about their relations to word reading in English and Korean.⁵³ These emergent literacy skills were assessed at time 1 while word reading fluency and text reading fluency were assessed at both earlier (time 1) and later timepoints (time 2). This allowed us to investigate how emergent literacy skills are similarly or differentially related to word reading fluency and text reading fluency at an earlier phase and a later phase of reading development.

Another question about text reading fluency as a construct involves what differentiates text reading fluency from reading comprehension. Semantic processes were hypothesized to be involved in text reading fluency,⁵⁴ and evidence indeed suggests that text reading fluency is a function of not only word reading but also text comprehension.⁵⁵ Then, what comprehension processes are involved in text reading fluency vs. reading comprehension? According to, two processes are involved in information processing:

- automatic activation of semantically related memory is fast and does not use attentional capacity, and
- Slow-acting attention mechanism, on the other hand, responds to a preceding context and costs limited-capacity cognitive processor.

⁵²Plummer & Rayner, 2012; Rayner, Pollatsek, Ashby, & Clifton, 2012

⁵³Adams, 1990; Cho & McBride-Chang, 2005; Cho, McBride-Chang, & Park, 2008; Compton, DeFries, & Olson, 2001; Kim, 2007, 2011; NICHD, 2000; Ouellette, 2006; Ricketts, Snowling, & Bishop, 2007; Schatschneider, Fletcher, Francis, Carlson, & Foorman, 2004; Wang, Ko, & Choi, 2009

⁵⁴(Jenkins et al., 2003; Perfetti, 1999)

⁵⁵(Hudson et al., 2012; Jenkins et al., 2003; Wagner et al., 2011, 2012, 2014; Nation & Snowling, 1998)

Similarly, the verbal efficiency theory hypothesizes that variation in automatic semantic activation, and conscious and/or unconscious prediction processes influence reading efficiency. Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesize that automatic processes related to semantic network would be implicated in text reading fluency whereas higher order cognitive processes that might require slow-acting attention would be uniquely implicated in reading comprehension. In as much as vocabulary captures semantic activation and related processes, vocabulary is expected to be involved in text reading fluency. Grammatical knowledge may also be involved in text reading fluency because morpho-syntactic knowledge is essential to encoding meaning. In fact, in the verbal efficiency model, quality of lexical representation includes network of meanings such as vocabulary and morpho-syntactic processes.⁵⁶ In addition, individual differences in working memory are likely to influence text reading fluency to allow holding linguistic information temporarily.

Whereas some semantic activation and prediction processes might be involved in text reading fluency,⁵⁷ reading comprehension is likely to rely on slow-acting attention mechanism such as higher order cognitive processes. Reading comprehension requires constructing the situation model (Kintsch, 1988) which involves a deep level of meaning processing such as evaluating initial propositions, making inferences across propositions, and integrating them with prior knowledge.⁵⁸ Therefore, higher order cognitive skills such as theory of mind, inference-making, and comprehension monitoring are candidate processes unique to text comprehension.⁵⁹ Note that theory of mind, typically defined as one's representation of others' mental state,⁶⁰ has been studied extensively particularly in relation to syntactic aspects of oral language and autism spectrum.⁶¹ Theory of

⁵⁶ (Perfetti, 2007; Perfetti & Stafura, 2014)

⁵⁷ (Jenkins et al., 2003; see semantic activation in reading in priming studies such as Hohenstein, Laubrock, & Kliegl, 2010)

⁵⁸ (Graesser, Singer, & Trabasso, 1994; Kintsch, 1988; Perfetti, Landi, & Oakhill, 2007)

⁵⁹ (Cain, 2007; Cain, Oakhill, & Bryant, 2004; Kim, 2015; Kim & Phillips, 2014; Oakhill, Cain, & Bryant, 2003; Tompkins, Guo, & Justice, 2012)

⁶⁰ (de Villiers, 2000; de Villiers & Pyers, 2002; Slade & Ruffman, 2005)

⁶¹ (Baron-Cohen, Tager-Flusberg, & Cohen, 1999; de Villiers & Pyers, 2002; Johnston, Miller, & Tallal, 2001; Slade & Ruffman, 2005)

mind is included in the present study because it captures complex cognition such as making inferences about other's thoughts or emotions, which is an important aspect of text comprehension. However, evidence about the role of theory of mind in text comprehension is mixed. Theory of mind was independently related to narrative story comprehension for English-speaking kindergartners after accounting for inhibitory control, vocabulary, and comprehension monitoring, and for Korean-speaking kindergartners after accounting for working memory, grammatical knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehension monitoring. In a study with English-only children and English learners in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade, theory of mind was related to comprehending fables after accounting for vocabulary and metacognitive language, all measured in English. In contrast, in a study with Chilean kindergartners, theory of mind was not related to comprehension of wordless picture book and story recall after accounting for working memory, vocabulary, inhibitory control, attention, inference, and comprehension monitoring. In addition to higher order cognitive skills, grammatical knowledge was hypothesized to be related to reading comprehension because grammatical knowledge, particularly the ability to repair grammatical errors, has been hypothesized to play a key role in integrating propositions and establishing coherence in text comprehension. Indeed, evidence from English-speaking children has provided support for this hypothesis.⁶²

⁶² (Strasser & del Rio, 2014), (Perfetti, 2007, Perfetti & Stafura, 2014), (Cain, 2007)

2.2. Activities for teaching and improving vocabulary

Vocabulary teaching and learning is a constant challenge for teachers as well as students because historically there has been minimal focus on vocabulary instruction in the ESL classroom. Due to this, an increased emphasis on vocabulary development is crucial for the English language learner in the process of language learning. According to Colorado the average native English speaker enters nursery school knowing at least 5,000 words while the average English language learner may know 5,000 words in his/ her native language but only a few words in English. The reality is that native speakers continue to learn new words while English language learners face the double challenge of building that foundation and closing that language gap. Graves (2000, as cited in Taylor, 1990) defines vocabulary as the entire stock of words belonging to a branch of knowledge or known by an individual. He also states that the lexicon of a language is its vocabulary, which includes words and expressions. Krashen extends Graves' definition further by stating that lexicon organizes the mental vocabulary in a speaker's mind. An individual's mental lexicon is that person's knowledge of vocabulary. Miller states that vocabulary is a set of words that are the basic building blocks used in the generation and understanding of sentences. According to Gardener vocabulary is not only confined to the meaning of words but also includes how vocabulary in a language is structured: how people use and store words and how they learn words and the relationship between words, phrases, categories of words and phrases Cummins states that there are different types of vocabulary:

Reading vocabulary

This refers to all the words an individual can recognize when reading a text.

Listening vocabulary

It refers to all the words an individual can recognize when listening to speech.

Writing vocabulary

This includes all the words an individual can employ in writing.

Speaking vocabulary

This refers to all the words an individual can use in speech. Lexicon also refers to a reference book containing an alphabetical list of words with information about them and can also refer to the mental faculty or power of vocal communication. According to McCarthy the role that mental lexicon plays in speech perception and production is a major topic in the field of psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics. Celce-Murcia and Larsen Freeman (1999) define lexicon as a mental inventory of words and a productive word derivational process. They also state that lexicon does not only comprise of single words but also of word compounds and multi-word phrases. According to Celce-Murcia and Larsen Freeman (1999) lexical units function at three levels: the level of the individual word, word compounds and co-occurrences and conventional multi-word phrases. Nations and Waring, on the other hand, classify vocabulary into three categories: high frequency words, general academic words and technical or specialized words.

Academic comprehension improves when students know the meaning of words. Words are the building blocks of communication. When students have a great vocabulary, the latter can improve all areas of communication, namely speaking, listening, reading and writing. Current models of reading in the English for Academic Purposes ESL class room consider vocabulary knowledge an important source of variation in reading comprehension, because it affects higher level language processes such as grammatical processing, construction of schemata and text models. When students have a higher academic vocabulary development, they can tolerate a small proportion of unknown words in a text without disruption of comprehension and can even infer the meaning of those words from rich contexts.

English language learners who experience slow vocabulary development are less able to comprehend text at grade level. Such students are likely to perform poorly when assessed in various areas and are at risk of being diagnosed as learning disabled. I am cognizant of the fact that vocabulary acquisition, semantic development and growth of word knowledge are currently being studied in several

interesting ways, hence the research that is presented here is to complement and augment these studies by introducing effective vocabulary teaching strategies in the English for academic purposes ESL classroom that will expedite the vocabulary development in ELLs.

Without some knowledge of vocabulary, neither language production nor language comprehension would be possible. Thus the growth of vocabulary knowledge is one of the essential pre-requisites for language acquisition and this growth of vocabulary knowledge can only be possible when teachers employ effective vocabulary teaching and learning strategies which are the objectives of this research thesis.

With the large deficits in second -language vocabulary of ELLs, it is crucial that students in the English for academic purposes classroom to first have a semantic understanding of what academic vocabulary is before they even learn it. It is helpful to keep in mind several general principles that facilitate acquisition of new vocabulary.

- Teach new words in the context of a meaningful subject-matter lesson and facilitate student discussion that requires students to use the new word .
- Ensure that students hear the correct pronunciation of the word and practice saying it aloud. Hearing the syllable structure and stress pattern of the word facilitates its storage in memory.
- Teach word parts – root words, base words, prefixes, and suffixes that students will encounter frequently.
- Teach words in related clusters to help students understand how words are related and interrelated.
- Identify examples/applications and nonexamples/nonapplications related to the meaning of the new word.
- Help students connect new vocabulary to something with which they are already familiar.

- Create opportunities for students to paraphrase the definition of a new term so that they can identify the main idea associated with the term and recognize specific bits of information that clarify its broader, more general core idea.
- Offer students the opportunity to acquire new vocabulary using a variety of learning modalities or formats that actively engage them in the learning process.

After you have strategically selected vocabulary words for instruction and determined the appropriate instructional goals for chosen terms, it is time to identify instructional strategies that align with these goals. The activities suggested below Same Word, Different Subject (Marinak et al., 1997)

1. Explain to students that each school subject consists of technical vocabulary words and specialized words. Technical words are those that usually have only one meaning and are discussed in only one subject. For example:

English – verb, gerund biology – mitosis mathematics – rhombus

2. Tell students that specialized vocabulary words are those that are used in different subjects and usually have different meanings in each subject. For example, the word division could be used differently in history, mathematics, and science classes.

3. Have students identify and discuss other specialized vocabulary words. Create a class list that can be added to regularly as new words are encountered and discussed. employ a variety of formats to address the goals of vocabulary instruction

Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy

1. Ask students to identify two words they believe everyone should learn that are related to specific topics the group is studying.
2. Have students write their words on the board.
3. Ask students to present their words to the group by defining them, explaining why the group should learn them, and telling where the words were found.

4. Moderate a discussion through which the class reduces the list to a predetermined number of most important words by eliminating words already known by many. The final list becomes the focus of vocabulary activities for the next few days.

Scavenger Hunt

1. Give students a list of essential vocabulary they must know for a unit they are studying.

2. Organize students into small groups – usually three or four students per group.

3. Provide student groups with time to search for the new words using reference books, newspapers, magazines, websites, and other appropriate resources at school and at home. Instruct students to collect examples of the words, copy sentences that use the words, collect or draw pictures of the words, and build models or examples of the words. Assign point values for each of these methods of illustrating the vocabulary words, for example:

8 points for building a model representing the word
5 points for finding a newspaper/magazine article that uses the word
2 points for finding a book about the word or illustration that describes the word

You may also wish to award bonus points for groups that find a representation for all vocabulary words on the list.

4. Allow groups to meet each day for a few minutes to plan a strategy for gathering the representations of their words and assess how they are progressing in their collection efforts. Tell groups to keep their progress and findings secret; they are competing with the other groups for points.

5. Create posters on which vocabulary words are written (one word per poster). On the day that the items/examples are due, give groups a few minutes to organize their objects in piles by the words written on the posters. Show each word poster and have students, group by group, share what they have brought to represent that word. Briefly record their ideas on each word poster. Post these posters on the wall.

6. Next, have groups sort their items by type. For example, put books about the topics in one pile, pictures in another pile, and models in yet another pile.

7. As the unit is taught, students can refer to the posters to review these essential vocabulary words. The teacher may also ask students to use the list of scavenger hunt words

Keyword Method

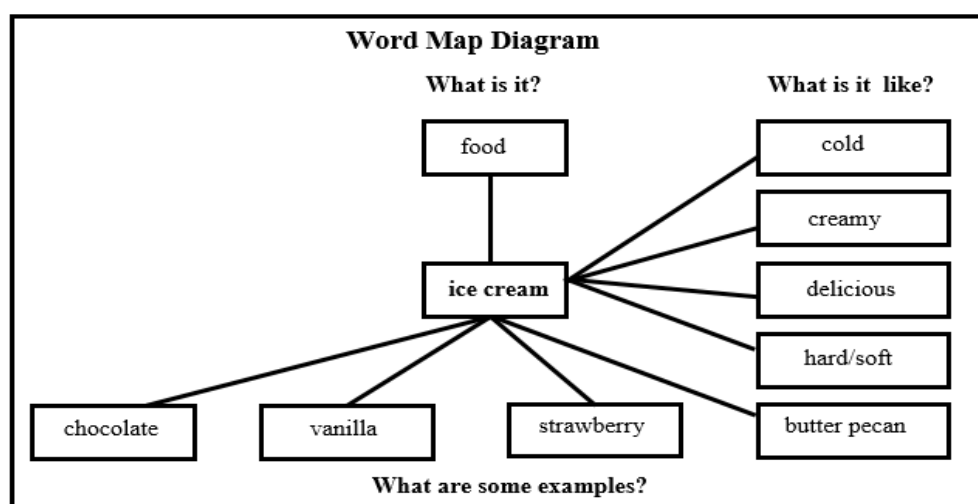
Using the keyword method, the student is taught to construct a visual image that connects the vocabulary word being taught with a familiar, concrete word that is similar auditorially and shares some common feature.

- Give students a new vocabulary word and share its meaning with them. (Example: carlin, which means “old woman”).
- Ask them to identify a familiar word that is acoustically similar to carlin (example: the keyword “car”)
- Have students visualize or draw the image of an old woman driving a car.

When asked to recall the meaning of carlin, the student will retrieve car because of its acoustic similarity to carlin, and then recall the visual image of the meaning of carlin.⁶³

Word Map

The word map technique is useful for helping students develop a general concept of definition. It focuses on three questions, “What is it?,” “What is it like?,” and “What are some examples?” to make students aware of the types of information that make up a “definition” and how that information is organized.

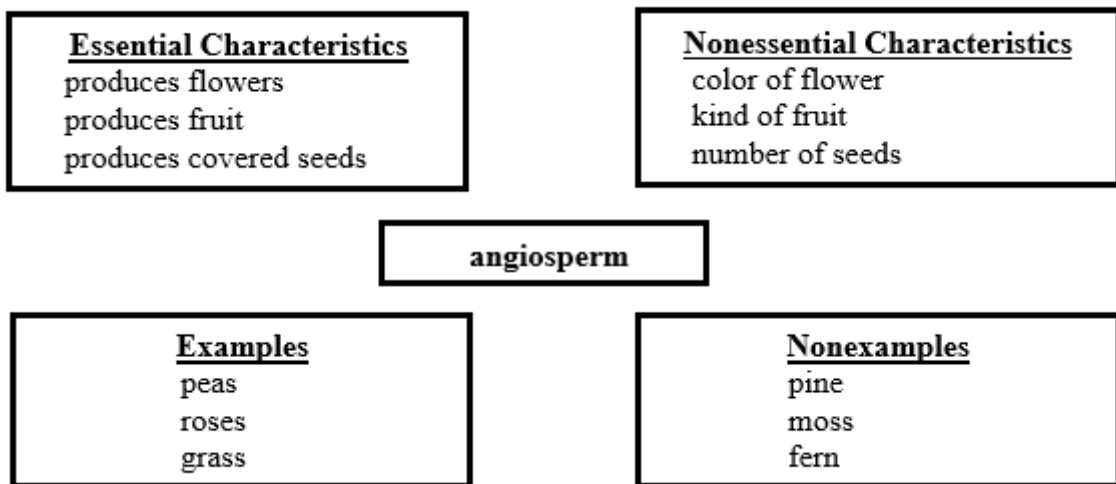


⁶³example from Pressley, Levin, & McDaniel, 1987, cited in Baumann & Kameenui, 1991

Frayer Model

This organizer helps students select and organize information related to a key concept by focusing their attention on relevant details. Students learn to differentiate between essential and nonessential characteristics, as well as identify examples and nonexamples of the concept.

- Instruct students to put a key vocabulary word in the center box.
- Ask students to list essential characteristics of the word in the upper left-hand box.
- Have student's list nonessential characteristics of the word in the upper right-hand box.
- Tell students to list examples of the word in the lower left-hand box.
- Finally, encourage students to enumerate non-examples of the word in the lower righthand box.



A teacher's thoughtful consideration of the content, purpose, and methodology related to vocabulary instruction is critical to the academic achievement of students who struggle to learn, understand, recall, and use new vocabulary meaningfully. The strategies shared in this Considerations Packet provide the means by which teachers can help at-risk students expand their general vocabularies and attach meaning to technical words. These skills are critical to academic success in all content areas.

CHAPTER III: EFFECTIVE VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION STRATEGIES AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Why is vocabulary instruction important? Vocabulary is one of five core components of reading instruction that are essential to successfully teach children how to read. These core components include phonemic awareness, phonics and word study, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Vocabulary knowledge is important because it encompasses all the words we must know to access our background knowledge, express our ideas and communicate effectively, and learn about new concepts. “Vocabulary is the glue that holds stories, ideas and content together... making comprehension accessible for children.”⁶⁴ Students’ word knowledge is linked strongly to academic success because students who have large vocabularies can understand new ideas and concepts more quickly than students with limited vocabularies. The high correlation in the research literature of word knowledge with reading comprehension indicates that if students do not adequately and steadily grow their vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension will be affected.⁶⁵

There is a tremendous need for more vocabulary instruction at all grade levels by all teachers. The number of words that students need to learn is exceedingly large; on average students should add 2,000 to 3,000 new words a year to their reading vocabularies.⁶⁶ For some categories of students, there are significant obstacles to developing sufficient vocabulary to be successful in school:

- Students with limited or no knowledge of English. Literate English (English used in textbooks and printed material) is different from spoken or conversational English. This can present challenges as these students try to make sense of the English they read, especially at the middle and high school levels.

⁶⁴Worthy, J. and Broaddus, K. (2002). Fluency beyond the primary grades: From group performance to silent, independent reading. *The Reading Teacher*, 55(4): 334-43.

⁶⁵Wager, W. and Wager, S. (1985). Presenting questions, processing responses, and providing feedback in CAI. *Journal of Instructional Development*, 8(4): 2-8.

⁶⁶Weaver, C.A., III, and Kintsch, W. (1991). Expository text. In R. Barr, M.L., Kamil, P. Mosenthal, and P.D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (pp.230-245). New York: Longman.

- Students who do not read outside of school. The amount of time spent reading and the amount read are important. For example, a student who reads 21 minutes per day outside of school reads almost 2 million words per year. A student who reads less than a minute per day outside of school reads only 8,000 to 21,000 words per year.

- Students with reading and learning disabilities. Weaknesses in phonemic awareness, phonics, and word analysis skills prohibit students from reading grade-level content material and the rich opportunity this offers for encountering new, content-related words that can only be found in written English.

- Students who enter school with limited vocabulary knowledge. At first-grade, high-performing students know about twice as many words as low-performing students, but that differential gets magnified each year, resulting in high-performing 12th grade students knowing about four times as many words as the lowperforming 12th graders. To overcome these obstacles, teachers need to engage the best kinds of vocabulary instruction and use technology that accommodates and supports that instruction.

3.1. The connection between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension

One of the oldest findings in educational research is the strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Word knowledge is crucial to reading comprehension and determines how well students will be able to comprehend the texts they read in middle and high school. Comprehension is far more than recognizing words and remembering their meanings. However, if a student does not know the meanings of a sufficient proportion of the words in the text, comprehension is impossible. Vocabulary experts agree that adequate reading comprehension depends on a person already knowing between 90 and 95 percent of the words in a text. Knowing at least 90 percent of the words enables the reader to get the main idea from the reading and guess correctly what many of the unfamiliar words mean, which will help them learn new words. Readers who do not recognize at least 90 percent of the words will not only have difficulty comprehending the text, but they will miss out on the opportunity to learn new words.

Differences between good and poor readers

Before entering school, word learning takes place through listening to those around us. Most of the words children hear that are spoken in school are words they already know, so the source for learning new words shifts to written context (from reading). Because written text does not offer features of oral language such as intonation, body language, and shared physical surroundings, it is more difficult to learn new words from reading.⁶⁷

Students vary widely in the word knowledge they bring to school. Their socioeconomic backgrounds and the language use in their homes and communities can significantly influence opportunities to expand their vocabularies. Some students have limited vocabulary knowledge as a result of a language-based learning disability. Good oral vocabulary (words we use in speaking and listening)

⁶⁷Beck, I.L., McKeown, M.G., & McCaslin, E.S. (1983). All contexts are not created equal. *Elementary School Journal*, 83.

is linked directly to later success in reading, and students who have more vocabulary knowledge in kindergarten become better readers than those who have limited vocabulary.⁶⁸

There is a significant gap in the vocabulary knowledge that some students bring to the primary grades, and that gap widens as students progress through the grades. Students who lack adequate vocabulary have difficulty getting meaning from what they read, so they read less because they find reading difficult. As a result, they learn fewer words because they are not reading widely enough to encounter and learn new words. On the other hand, students with well-developed vocabularies read more, which improves their reading skill, and they learn more words. Weak decoding skills (phonemic awareness, phonics and word study, fluency) also contribute to the gap between how much good and poor readers will read and encounter new vocabulary. Over time, poor readers fall further behind. Keith Stanovich (1986) termed this situation the “Matthew Effect” with “rich get richer, poor get poorer” consequences.

Unfortunately, research has shown that this gap continues to grow wider as students move past third grade. Jeanne Chall (1983) coined the term “fourth-grade slump” to describe the drop-off between third and fourth grade in literacy development that many teachers report.

The effect of weak decoding and fluency skills on reading and vocabulary development

A major reason for the “fourth-grade slump” may be a lack of fluency and automaticity (quick and accurate recognition, or decoding, of words and phrases). Lack of fluency tends to result ultimately in children reading less and avoiding more difficult materials.⁶⁹ This has a major effect on their ability to develop new vocabulary. Research as a whole suggests that the differences in children’s word knowledge are due largely to differences in the amount of text to which they are exposed (Stahl, 1999) and that students need to read gradually more difficult

⁶⁸ (National Institute for Literacy, 2001)

⁶⁹Chall, J.s. & Jacobs, V. A. (2003). Poor children’s fourth-grade slump. American Educator, spring, 2003. American Federation of Teachers

materials to improve vocabulary. Children with reading problems read less and vocabulary knowledge suffers. Without reading more challenging text, they cannot learn the vocabulary they need to be able to read further challenging text.

Indirect Vocabulary Instruction

Wide reading: The more you read the more vocabulary you learn

The amount of students' reading is strongly related to their vocabulary knowledge. Students learn new words by encountering them in text, either through their own reading or by being read to. Increasing the opportunities for such encounters improves students' vocabulary knowledge, which in turn improves their ability to read more complex text. "In short, the single most important thing you can do to improve students' vocabulary is to get them to read more."⁷⁰ Students should read different types of text at different levels, including text that is simple and enjoyable, and some that is challenging. As noted above, students will not be able to comprehend text that has too many unfamiliar words (more than 10%); on the other hand, students will not encounter many new words if they read text that is below grade level.

Listening to reading aloud can be just as good a source of word meanings as reading, especially for students with learning disabilities. Stahl, Richek and Vandevier (1991) found that sixth-grade children learned word meanings from a read aloud at the same rate that children typically learned words from written context. They suggest that listening to stories can be a rich source of word learning, and listening may substitute for some of the reading that children with learning disabilities do not do

Multiple exposures to words

The growth of word knowledge is slow and incremental, requiring multiple exposures to words.⁷¹ This does not mean simply repeating the word and a definition or synonym, but seeing the word in different contexts. How are words

⁷⁰Stanovich, K.E. (1986). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 21.

⁷¹Hirsch, E.D. (2003). Reading comprehension requires knowledge – of words and the world: Scientific insights into the fourth-grade slump and the nation's stagnant comprehension scores. *American Educator*, spring, 2003. American Federation of Teachers

learned incrementally over multiple exposures? Every time we encounter a word in context, we remember something about the word. As we encounter a word repeatedly, more and more information accumulates about that word until we have a vague notion of what it means. As we get more information we are able to define that word. “Vocabulary knowledge seems to grow gradually moving from the first meaningful exposure to a word to a full and flexible knowledge”.

It is helpful for students to understand how they gradually learn words. Teachers should encourage students to actively construct links between new information and previously known information about a word. Being active and cognizant of this process will result in better memory about new words. Dale and O’Rourke (1986) proposed a model of four levels of word knowledge. This model should be shared with students so they can be more metacognitive (thinking about thinking) and metalinguistic (thinking about the structure of words) when learning new words:

1. I never saw it before
2. I’ve heard of it, but I don’t know what it means
3. I recognize it in context – it has something to do with...
4. I know it

Students can use the chart⁷² as a way to become more aware of the new words they encounter.

When a student really knows a word, he knows more than the word’s definition. He also knows how that word functions in different contexts. Knowledge of a word includes knowing how it sounds, how it is written, how it is used as a part of speech, and its multiple meanings.⁷³ Stahl (2003) makes the distinction between definitional knowledge (similar to that included in a dictionary definition), and contextual knowledge (understanding how a word’s meaning adapts to different contexts). In order to fully learn a word and its connotations, a student needs multiple exposures to the word in different reading contexts.

⁷² (Appendix I)

⁷³Juel, C. & Deffes, R. (2004) Making words stick. What Research Says About Reading, 61, 6. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: Alexandria, VA.

Provide direct, explicit instruction in specific words

Although it is impossible to specifically teach all of the new words students must learn each year (between 2,000 to 3,000), it is useful to provide direct instruction in some words. This includes pre-teaching key vocabulary prior to reading a selection. It is estimated that students can be taught explicitly some 400 words per year in school.⁷⁴ Teachers must remember that direct instruction of specific words is only one component of effective vocabulary instruction.

What words should the teacher choose for direct instruction? Teachers should focus on words that are important to the text, useful to know in many situations and that are uncommon in everyday language but recurrent in books. The following guide was adapted from J.D. Cooper and used in the Texas Reading Academy.⁷⁵

Selecting Vocabulary Words

- Before instruction, preview the text, even when using text that has pre-selected vocabulary words.
- Read the passage and identify vocabulary words you think students will find unfamiliar. Ask yourself: “How difficult is this passage to understand?”
- Select words that are important to understanding the text.
- List words you predict will be challenging for your students. You may not be able to teach all of these words. Research supports teaching only a few words before reading.
- Determine which words are adequately defined in the text. Some may be defined by direct definition and others through context. Expand on these words after reading, rather than directly teaching them before reading.
- Identify words students may know based on their prefixes, suffixes and base or root words. If structural elements help students determine words’ meanings, don’t teach them directly.

⁷⁴Beck, I.L., McKeown, M.G., & Kucan, L. (2002). Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction. New York: Guilford Press.

⁷⁵ Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts, 2002

- Consider students' prior knowledge. Words can be discussed as you activate and build prior knowledge. Words can also be extended.

- Determine the importance of the word. Ask yourself: "Does the word appear again and again? Is the word important to comprehending the passage? Will knowledge of the word help in other content areas?"

- Remember, words taught before students read include:

- ✓ Words that will be frequently encountered in other texts and content areas. o Words that are important to understanding the main ideas.
- ✓ Words that are not a part of your student' prior knowledge.
- ✓ Words unlikely to be learned independently through the use of context and/or structural analysis. ⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Adapted from Cooper, J.D. (1997). Literacy: Helping children construct meaning (3rd ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin

3.2. Use of context to determine word meaning

Once specific words are chosen, the vocabulary instruction must be analytical and substantial for words to “really stick”.⁷⁷ Teachers must provide clear explanations and examples of the meanings of these words in various contexts, and provide students with opportunities to discuss, analyze, and use the words. Simply looking up a definition in a dictionary is not enough. Have students rewrite definitions in their own words, provide examples of situations where the word could be used, supply synonyms (and antonyms when possible) and create sentences using the word that clearly show the meaning. Sometimes it is useful to have students use more than one new word in a single sentence because it forces them to look for relations among words. This kind of direct vocabulary instruction is particularly important for students with learning disabilities.⁷⁸

Direct instruction of specific words can include teaching the multiple meanings of some words, different word associations (such as antonyms and synonyms), and word concepts (such as related concept words and categories of words).

Analyzing word structure: Teaching word parts

When students encounter unknown words they can use knowledge of word parts (root words, suffixes and prefixes) to help determine the meaning. This is especially true when reading content textbooks because these texts often contain many words that are derived from the same word parts.

For example, the Greek root “bio” (meaning “life, living organisms”) reappears again and again in a typical middle school life science textbook (e.g., biology, biologist, biosphere, biodegradable, biochemical, biofuel, and biohazard). Another example is the prefix “mono” (meaning “one, alone, single”). If students are familiar with the meaning of the prefix mono, the prefix “poly” (meaning “many”), and the base word “theism” (meaning “belief in the existence of a god or

⁷⁷Juel, C. & Deffes, R. (2004) Making words stick. What Research Says About Reading, 61, 6. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: Alexandria, VA.

⁷⁸ And

gods”), they can determine that the difference between “monotheism” and “polytheism” is the difference between believing in only one god or many gods.

Structural analysis of a word draws the student’s attention to the individual units of meaning in the word, also known as morphemes. A free morpheme, or root word, can stand alone (e.g., cut), while a bound morpheme needs to be attached to another morpheme (e.g., ing, un), and two free morphemes can combine to form a compound word (e.g., airplane).⁷⁹

In the beginning stages of reading, rapid and automatic word analysis is essential for developing decoding and fluency skills; at this level, the purpose of word analysis is to identify (sound out) the word. The focus of word analysis for vocabulary is on the meaningful parts of a word to help determine its overall meaning. Some students may not realize that they can use their knowledge about how to divide words into parts to figure out word meanings. There are numerous sources for lists of common root words and affixes (suffixes and prefixes); an internet search can produce useful examples. Two publications to consult for how to teach word parts are “Morphemes for Meaning” by Jane Greene, and “Vocabulary through Morphemes” by Susan Ebbers (both are published by Sopris West, www.sopriswest.com).

It is important to note that struggling readers and students with learning disabilities in particular may be lacking in word analysis skills or the ability to readily learn and apply these skills. This often is part of the reason why they have difficulty reading.

Good readers often use context clues to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words, if they are available in the text. They can locate other words and phrases in a passage that give clues about what an unknown word means. Struggling readers who do not do this should be given direct instruction in how to effectively look for clues or definitions. For example, part of the “Click and Clunk” strategy⁸⁰ teaches

⁷⁹ (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2004), Reading comprehension strategies.

⁸⁰Hart, B. & Risley, T.R. (1995). Meaningful differences. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

students to follow these steps when they come across a word they do not know (described as a “clunk”):

1. *Reread the sentence with the clunk. Look for key words.*
2. *Reread the sentence without the clunk. What word makes sense?*
3. *Reread the sentence before and after the clunk. Look for clues.*

The clues may be any of the following types of information embedded in the text: definition, restatement, example, comparison or contrast, description, synonym or antonym. Expository, non-fiction text (e.g., school textbooks) tends to offer more context clues than narrative story text. One suggestion to help students become more aware of using context is to provide them with the terms “rich context” (has a lot of clues to figure out a word) and “lean context” (not much there to help figure out a word).

It is important to point out that not all contexts are helpful. Contexts vary in their helpfulness of how much information they provide a reader. Sometimes the context provides a direct explanation of the meaning of a new word:

Example: *Up to this point we have been referring to the process in which light energy is used to make food simply as the food-making process. But this important process has its own special name: photosynthesis. (In this example, the meaning of photosynthesis is stated directly in the previous sentence.)*

Example: *Prince Henry started a school for sea captains. These captains were taught the science of navigation. That is, they were taught how to figure out a ship’s location and the direction and distance that it travels. (In this example, the meaning of navigation is stated directly in the next sentence.)*

Sometimes the context provides some information about a new word, but not enough for the student to be certain of its meaning:

Example: *In order to gain active immunity to a disease, one of two things must occur – either you come down with the disease, or you receive a vaccination. (In this example, the student may guess that a vaccination has something to do with preventing disease, but not enough information is provided to discern the full meaning of the word.)*

Example: *Cartier found the mouth of a large river, which he named the St. Lawrence River. He sailed up this river until he came to a rapid. Ships cannot pass across a rapid. Disappointed, Cartier had to turn back. (In this example, the student may guess that a rapid is something in a river that prohibits a ship from passing, but not enough information is provided to identify specifically what is impeding the ship's progress.)*

Finally, sometimes the context can actually lead to a misunderstanding, referred to as a “misdirective”:⁸¹

Example: *Sandra had won the dance contest, and the audience's cheers brought her to the stage for an encore. “Every step she takes is so perfect and graceful,” Ginny said grudgingly as she watched Sandra dance.⁸² (In this example, the context might lead the reader to believe that Ginny liked or admired Sandra's dancing, when in fact grudge means “a feeling of resentment or ill will”.)*

Students need to learn an alternative strategy if the context is nondirective or misdirective, most likely going to a source that provides information about words, such as a dictionary.

Teach how to effectively use a dictionary

For many years, the practice of having students look up words, write down definitions, and memorize those definitions was the main strategy teachers used to teach vocabulary. We now know that having students follow this practice is one of the least effective strategies. In fact, there is a great deal of research showing that children cannot use conventional definitions to learn words.⁸³ That does not mean that students should not use dictionaries; however, their use should be limited and students must be taught how to use a dictionary and choose the right definition.

⁸¹ Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2002 Teach how to effectively use a dictionary

⁸² Beck, I.L., McKeown, M.G., & Kucan, L. (2002). Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction. New York: Guilford Press.

⁸³ Stanovich, K.E. (1986). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. Reading Research Quarterly, 21.

Students need explicit instruction in how to use what they find in a dictionary entry so they are able to transfer that information into something useful. Students may be confused by different meanings for the same word, or the wording in a dictionary entry may be too difficult to read or understand. The following suggestions were adapted from the Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts:⁸⁴

To choose the right definition, the student must:

- Use background knowledge about the content in the text
- Have a sense of the grammatical use in the text
- Read and understand each definition

As noted earlier, to remember the meaning of a new word, it is better for students to reword the definition in their own words, to identify synonyms and antonyms for the word, to use the word in their own meaningful sentence, and to recognize that the word may be used differently in other contexts.

Struggling readers and students with learning disabilities in particular have difficulty using a dictionary. The process is slow and labored; often making the time it takes to look up a word frustrating and not worth the effort. These students tend to have a poor sense of the order of the letters in the alphabet, and they have significant difficulty “skimming” down a list of words that are visually similar. Once they locate the word, they tend to be overloaded with the amount of information and reading level of the words in the entry. For non-readers, the task is impossible.

The key thing to remember about using a dictionary is that research supports combining both the definitions of new words with the context in which the words are used.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts (2002)

⁸⁵ And

CONCLUSION

The current study includes some interesting contributions to the field of Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. It involves every student's facing problem with ever increasing demand to read and read well.

I, as a teacher and as well as a student emphasise the importance of teaching reading as a process and that strategy instruction have been found to effect students' appreciation of reading as the process, the aim of this is to comprehend what is read. Although, the basic objective of comprehension in instruction should be student possession of the strategies and skills, knowing when comprehension breaks down and how to address the problem and fix them properly. Teaching students in usage based on a repertoire of comprehension strategies and skills can ensure to set them safely on the correct path to become the lifelong readers. So many opportunities to read independently allow the students to begin to coordinate those strategies they have obtained; to adjust, modify, or switch the strategies and skills till they can be able to make sense of the particular text. The higher order of thinking of strategic readers also can enhance one's reading experience and response to literature and informational text. And once the students take aim of the process, they can take it one step further they take what they know, apply it to the unknown, and become creative minds who possibly can be able to assess problems from the convenient state of knowing that they have the skills and can acquire the knowledge they need to tackle any obstacle that they might face.

Teachers of English can be in assistance in the academic language development of the students much more effectively by providing them with the main topics of the curriculum, the content of specific vocabulary and sentence structures related to what they learn in class. When teachers provide content exact vocabulary, students may have the chance to practice a fresh academic language through reading activity, writing and listening to it. Through personal experience during my work at school, I found out that the number of my students became discouraged, because they believed that they were not making progress in their

reading as well as vocabulary where they repeatedly compared themselves to native speakers of the English language.

Comprehension of text can be difficult for the most EFL learning student's especially for those with medium and low proficiency in levels. It is a critical factor that becomes increasingly more important as a student progresses through university years and have their own places in the occupational world. Reading strategies for comprehending text, especially the text structure reading strategy, need to be introduced early so that a strong foundation is established to better ensure academic achievement and success for students of all abilities. Based on the results found in the present study, the followings are the implications for reading instruction in the Namangan State University EFL setting.

First, Namangan State University's EFL teachers who teach English reading comprehension should consider teaching the text structure reading strategy to students with either medium or low proficiency. In such doing, they will develop focusing much more on the low proficiency students than on the medium ones. The instruction of the strategy should be started with a well and clear structured text, varying from sequence, compare/contrast, and cause/effect respectively.

Second of all, at a university levels, more e-based programs for teaching text structure reading strategy and expository text structures should be well developed and integrated to every regular Foundation in English courses. The development of such programs, authentic texts from various sources such as online newspapers and magazines should be used. The findings from this study made it clear that the students opted reading the authentic texts, although, to some of them, it was somewhat difficult because of the vocabulary used in the texts. To avoid this discouragement factors, reading based level of text should be carefully calculated in order to make sure that the text is appropriate for the students' proficiency stage.

Lastly, since fluency, vocabulary and comprehension strategies are beneficial for helping EFL students with low proficiency to develop their reading comprehension.

Teachers should always take into consideration the materials, strategies and procedures that motivate struggling readers in their effort to become fluent readers. More often than not, fluency development depends less on any one particular repetitive reading intervention, but more on creative, caring innovative teachers who make students' repetitive reading experiences and participation in reading classes, engaging and fun.

GLOSSARY

Accuracy: the ability to decode words without errors. Automaticity: decoding words proficiently well to not have to think about it (Samuels, 2002; Stanovich, 1991)

Choral reading: reading out loud all together Comprehension: taking meaning from text.

Independent reading level: can be read with 95-99% accuracy Instructional reading level: can be read with 90–94% accuracy Phonemes: the individual units of sound in a language

Phonics: the connection between sounds and letters Phonological awareness: the ability to hear the different sounds of speech. Prosody: appropriate expression, intonation and phrasing in reading thus demonstrating understanding of text.⁸⁶

Reading fluency: reading accurately and automatically, with appropriate expression.

Vocabulary: acquisition of words for communication.

⁸⁶ Young & Rasinski, 2009, Schreiber, 1991

Lesson plan

Teacher: _____

Level of the students: _____

Group: _____

Time: _____

Comprehension: Story Mapping

Objective: The students will identify key parts of the text's content.

Materials:

- Reading material at the students' instructional reading level
- One piece of paper for each student
- Markers

Lesson: This activity begins after students have already read through a story or passage at their instructional level. Then,

- a. Discuss what happened in the story or reading passage and the students' reaction to it. Discuss the setting, names of the characters, the story problem, and the solution.
- b. After reading the entire book/passage, give each student a piece of paper.
- c. Have the students fold the paper in half lengthwise, then twice widthwise, to make eight symmetrical rectangles.
- d. In the first rectangle, have the students write the title and author of the story.
- e. In the following rectangles, have the students write/draw the characters, setting, plot, and solution. A story element may take more than one rectangle.

Adaptations:

To emphasize particular story elements, highlight one element per day, having the students write/draw the characters one day, the plot another, story problem on another day, etc.

Have students create their own versions of the stories by creating and publishing larger books.

Compare these story maps with story maps from similar stories (e.g., if the story is a folktale, compare it to other folktales) or stories by the same author in order to compare and contrast story elements.

For English language learners, review any unfamiliar vocabulary. Stop at intervals throughout the activity to review story elements and to reinforce comprehension.

Appendix A: Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) Reading Survey

Date..... Age.....

I am in.....

1st course 2nd course 3rd course

I am a

boy girl

1. My friends think I am.....

- a) a very good reader
- b) a good reader
- c) an ok reader
- d) a poor reader

2. Reading a book is something I like to do

- a) never
- b) not very often
- c) sometimes
- d) often

3. I read.....

- a) not as well as my friends
- b) about the same as my friends
- c) a little better than my friends
- d) a lot better than my friends

4. My best friends think reading is.....

- a) really fun
- b) fun
- c) OK to do
- d) no fun at all

5. When I come to a word I don't know, I can.....

- a) almost always figure it out
- b) sometimes figure it out
- c) almost never figure it out

- d) never figure it out*
6. *I tell my friends about good books I read.....*
- a) I never do this*
 - b) I almost never do this*
 - c) I do this some of the time*
 - d) I do this a lot*
7. *When I am reading by myself, I understand*
- a) almost everything I read*
 - b) some of what I read*
 - c) almost none of what I read*
 - d) none of what I read*
8. *People who read a lot are.....*
- a) very interesting*
 - b) interesting*
 - c) not very interesting*
 - d) boring*
9. *I am.....*
- a) a poor reader*
 - b) an OK reader*
 - c) a good reader*
 - d) a very good reader*
10. *I think libraries are.....*
- a) a great place to spend time*
 - b) an interesting place to spend time*
 - c) an ok place to spend time*
 - d) a boring place to spend time*
11. *I worry about what other kids think about my reading.....*
- a) every day*
 - b) almost every day*
 - c) once in a while*

- d) *never*
12. *Knowing how to read well is.....*
- a) *not very important*
 - b) *sort of important*
 - c) *important*
 - d) *very important*
13. *When my teacher asks me a question about what I have read, I.....*
- a) *can never think of an answer*
 - b) *have trouble thinking of answer*
 - c) *sometimes think of an answer*
 - d) *always think of an answer*
14. *I think reading is.....*
- a) *a boring way to spend time*
 - b) *an ok way to spend time*
 - c) *an interesting way to spend time*
 - d) *a great way to spend time*
15. *Reading is*
- a) *very easy for me*
 - b) *kind of easy for me*
 - c) *kind of hard for me*
 - d) *very hard for me*
16. *When I grow up I will spend.....*
- a) *none of my time reading*
 - b) *very little of my time reading*
 - c) *some of my time reading*
 - d) *a lot of my time reading*
17. *When I am in a group talking about stories, I*
- a) *almost never talk about my ideas*
 - b) *sometimes talk about my ideas*

c) almost always talk about my ideas

d) always talk about my ideas

18. *I would like for my teacher to read books out loud to the class*

.....

a) every day

b) almost every day

c) once in a while

d) never

19. *When I read out loud I am a.....*

a) poor reader

b) ok reader

c) good reader

d) very good reader

20. *When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel.....*

a) very happy

b) sort of happy

c) sort of unhappy

d) unhappy

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