NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

COURSE CODE: PED 112

COURSE TITLE:
READING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD & PRIMARY EDUCATION

PED 112

READING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD & PRIMARY EDUCATION

Course Developer & Writer: **ADEOSUN, A. Oyenike, Ph.D.**
Department of Arts & Social Sciences Education,
Faculty of Education
University of Lagos.

COURSE INTRODUCTION

Some years ago, majority of children started school at the age of five or six years, though this varies from country to country and depends on the laws concerning the age at which school attendance became mandatory. Nigeria was one of those countries until preschool first became a trend especially among the elites and later formally incorporated into the nation's educational policy and structure. Prior to that time, children spent their days at home in the company of their mothers and their siblings. With the need, these days and in many cases, for mothers as well as fathers to work in order to enable the family to survive economically, the norms no longer hold. Today, children do start attending some organized setting outside the home from a few months onwards. These settings range from nursery, to playgroups, daycare, or preschool classes, but what they all have in common is that the child to adult ratio is considerably greater than in the home and that the employed personnel are salaried workers rather than a family caregiver. These conditions are often less than optimal for young children's growth and development, especially language. As much depends on how the adults in these organised settings understand their role in meeting the developmental needs – physical, emotional and intellectual – of the children in their care, it is imperative that they are exposed to effective and adequate training in child care and children issues. Apart from a safe and interesting environment, the young child needs opportunities for sustained interaction with an adult who is willing and able to respond to the child's interests and especially language development, as well as to help him or her to build on and extend them through talk and shared activity. This course, PED 112 is developed from the above perspective.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The years from birth through age five are a time of extraordinary growth and change and teaching and interacting with children within this range is an awesome experience. Preschool teachers and child care providers have both the wonderful opportunity and the important responsibility to teach and nurture young children. They do play an important role in ensuring every child develops the basic knowledge, understanding, and interests they need to reach the goal of being successful learners, readers, and writers. The three-module course is designed to expose early caregivers and preschool and other teachers to the fundamentals of reading instruction at the preschool and lower primary school levels. It explores the importance of reading in language development and academic achievement of pre-schoolers; it exposes students to the theories that underlie the choice of approaches, methods, techniques and instructional resources needed to develop the reading and academic skills of pre-schoolers and primary level pupils. All young children deserve experiences that will help them to achieve this goal. This course also draws from scientifically based research about what can be done to help children to develop their language abilities, increase their knowledge, become familiar with books and other printed materials, learn letters and sounds, and recognize numbers. Many strategies that can be used for teaching these skills are included as well as examples of ways to create an

environment in the preschool classrooms that will nurture children's reading ability and their zest for learning.

COURSE AIMS: The aim of this course is to expose undergraduates to the fundamentals of reading instruction starting from the preschool level and prepare them sufficiently to develop the reading skills of young children.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key theories related to reading skills development.
2. Determine and use a range of reading strategies, resources and experiences for teaching reading at the preschool and primary school level.
3. Analyse the benefits and drawbacks of various reading instructional strategies, and effectively select those that can aid the reading skills and language development of pupils.
4. Develop skills in how to implement coherent, goal orientated lessons and lesson sequences that are designed to engage their pupils at any given reading level.
5. Select appropriate strategies and reading materials for evaluating pupils' attainment of reading skills.

WORKING THROUGH THE COURSE

You are required to spend a lot of time and commitment to studying the course material, including the references. The content of this self-instructional material is comprehensive, well-illustrated and thus, easy to read. You are also advised to avail yourself of the opportunity of the tutorial sessions at the study centres where you will benefit from clarifications from your course facilitators, and the interaction with your colleagues.

COURSE MATERIALS: You will be provided with the following materials:

a) A Course Guide
b) Study Units

COURSE OUTLINE

MODULE	UNIT	FOCUS/SUB-THEMES
1. The Language Skills	1. The Four Language Skills	• Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing • Connecting the four skills: their Interrelationships
	2. The Nature & Importance of Reading	• The nature of reading • Core Characteristics of reading • Reading and other language skills • Factors that affect reading
2. Reading in Early	3. Language Development in Early Years	• Importance of Language in Early Childhood • Language Development processes

Childhood	**4.** Theories of Language Development and their Implication for Developing Reading Skills	• Behavioural Theory • The Linguistic Theory • Interactionist Theory • Social Learning Theory • Brain Research • Implication of the theories to reading skills development
	5. Reading Skills Development	• Stages of Reading Development • Emergent/Early Literacy Skills
	6. Emergent Literacy Strategies	• Phonics instruction • Read Aloud • Vocabulary development in early years • Picture reading • Dialogic reading • Uses of Formal Reading Instruction
	7. Reading Environment in Early Childhood	• The home • The School • Home-school connections in reading
3. Reading at the Primary School Level	**8.** Nature of Reading at Primary School	• Goals of teaching reading • Models of reading process • Reading Problems at the Primary Grade
	9. Reading fluency and Reading Comprehension	• Reading Fluency • Strategies for Developing fluency • Reading Comprehension • Connection between reading fluency and comprehension • Factors that affect reading fluency/comprehension
	10. Reading / Comprehension strategies	• Pre-reading Strategies • During-reading Strategies • Post-reading Strategies
	11. Approaches, Methods & Techniques of teaching reading	• Historical overview of approaches • Review of methods of teaching reading • Reading Instruction Strategies
	12. Teaching Pupils to Comprehend	• Components of Comprehension Instruction • Strategies for Teaching Comprehension
	13. Reading in Content Areas	• Analysing the features of a text • Teaching/Reading different text forms
	14. The Reading Classroom	• Classroom environment that promote reading skills • Classroom materials • Classroom library • School library • Equipment • Accommodation, Furnishing and Lightening • Discipline • Teachers' Roles
	15. Reading Skills Assessment	• Nature of reading assessment • Reading Assessment modes • Comprehension Assessment Strategies

TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCES

- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Beller, S. (2008). *Fostering language acquisition in daycare settings: What does the research tell us?* Working Papers in Early Childhood Development. The Hague: Bernard van Leer Foundation.
- Bloom, L. (1993). The transition from infancy to language. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Brindley, S. (1994). Teaching English. New York: Routledge.
- Brock, A. & Rankin C. (2008). Communication, Language and Literacy from Birth to Five. *SAGE Publications Ltd*
- Buckley, B. (2003). The Children's Communication Skills – From Birth to Five Years. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Bygate, M. (1991). Speaking. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cameron, L. (2005). Teaching English to young learners. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carter, R., & Nunan, D. (Eds.). (2001). The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (2001).Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language, 2nd ed. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Cunningham, A. E., & Stanovich, K. E. (1998). What Reading does for the Mind. American Educator,8 (15).
- Dale, P.S. (1976). *Language development: Structure and function*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Daniels, H., Ed. (1996). An introduction to Vygotsky. London, Routledge.
- Davies, P., & Pearse, E. (2002). Success in English Teaching. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Doughty, C., & Long, M. (Eds.) (2003). *The handbook of second language acquisition*. Maldin, Oxford, Melbourne, and Berlin: Blackwell.
- Dubin, F., & Olshtain, E. (1977). Facilitating Language Learning: A Guidebook for the ESL/EFL Teacher. N.Y: McGrow: Hill International Book Company.
- Eskey, D. (2005). Reading in a Second Language. In E. Hinkel (Ed), Handbook of research on second language teaching and learning (pp. 563-580). Mahvah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Harmer, J. (2001). The Practice of English Language Teaching. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Hedge, T. (1985). Using Readers in Language Teaching. London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
- Hedge, T. (2003). Teaching & learning in the language Classroom. UK: OUP.
- Larsen-Feeman, D. (2000). Techniques and Principals in Language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nelson, K. (1996). Language in cognitive development: The emergence of the mediated mind. New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. (2003). Practical English Language Teaching. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Sage, R. (2006) Supporting Language and Communication: A Guide for School Support Staff. London: PCP.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

- Wells, G. (1985). Language development in the pre-school years. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Wells, G. (1986). The meaning makers: Children learning language and using language to learn. Portsmouth, NH, Heinemann.

PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

Dates for prompt completion and submission of your Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs) and attendance of tutorials will be reflected in your course materials. You should remember to submit all assignments at the stipulated date and time. You should work according to schedule and do not lag behind in your work!

ASSIGNMENT FILE

You will find details of work you are to submit to your tutor for marking in your assignment file. The marks you obtain for your assignments will count towards the final mark you obtain in this course. Further information on assignments is in the Assignment File itself and in the assessment section of this Course Guide. Each unit of this course has at least one assignment. These assignments are meant to help you understand the course and assess your progress.

ASSESSMENT

There are three aspects to the assessment for this course. The first is the Self-Assessment Exercises in each unit. The second is made up of the Tutor-Marked Assignments you submit to your course facilitator, and the third is the end of course examination. You are advised to do all the self-assessment exercises with all sincerity as that will assist you greatly. In tackling the assignments, you are expected to apply the information and techniques gathered from the course. The Tutor-Marked Assignments must be submitted to your tutor/facilitator for formal assessment in accordance with the deadlines stated in the presentation schedule and the assignment file. The work you submit to your tutor for assessment will account for 30% of the total course score. At the end of the course, you will sit for a final or end of course examination of about two hours duration. This examination will form 70% of the total score for the course.

TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

The TMA is a continuous assessment component of your course. It accounts for 30% of the total score. You are required to submit at least four (4) TMAs before you are allowed to sit for the end of course examination. The TMAs would be given to you by your facilitator, and would be returned to you after they have been graded.

Assignment questions for the units in this course are contained in the assignment file. You will be able to complete your assignment from the information and materials contained in your study units and references. However, it is desirable to demonstrate that you have read and researched into other references; this will give you a wider view point and a deeper understanding of the course.

Also, ensure that each assignment is submitted to your facilitator before the deadline in the presentation schedule and assignment file. If for any reason you cannot complete your work on time, contact your facilitator before the assignment is due; to discuss the possibility of extension. Extension sought after the due date, will not be granted.

FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

The end of course examination for this course will be two hours, and will account for 70% of the total course score. The questions will be fashioned after the self-assessment exercises and the tutor- marked assignments that you have previously encountered during your course. All areas of the course will be examined. Utilise the time between the last unit and the commencement of your examination to revise the whole course. You might find it useful to review your self-assessments, TMAs, and comments on them before the examination. The end of course examination covers information from all parts of the course material. The time for the examination is not fixed, but you will be given adequate notice of the examination.

COURSE MARKING SCHEME

Assessment Marks

Assignment 1- 4

The best three of the four assignments will be rated based on 10% each, making a total of 30% of the course marks. End of course examination 70% of overall course marks. Total l00%.

COURSE OVERVIEW

The table below brings the units, the number of weeks you should take to complete them, and the assignments that will follow them.

Unit	Title of work	Weekly Activity	No. of assessment at the end of the course
	Introduction to the Course Guide	1	
Module 1			
1.	The Four Language Skills	2	Assessment 1
2.	The Nature & Importance of Reading	4	Assessment 2
Module 2			
3.	Language Development in Early Years	2	Assessment 3
4.	Theories of Language Development and their implication for developing reading skills	4	Assessment 4
5.	Reading in Early Childhood	3	Assessment 5
6.	Emergent Literacy strategies	4	Assessment 6
7.	Reading Environment in Early Childhood	3	Assessment 7
Module 3			
8.	Nature of Reading at Primary School	3	Assessment 8
9.	Reading fluency and Reading Comprehension	2	Assessment 9

10.	Reading / Comprehension strategies	2	Assessment 10
11.	Approaches, Methods & Techniques of teaching reading	2	Assessment 11
12.	Teaching Pupils to Comprehend	4	Assessment 12
13.	Reading in Content Areas	3	Assessment 13
14.	The Reading Classroom	3	Assessment 14
15.	Reading Skills Assessment	2	Assessment 15

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE

1. In distance learning, the study units replace the university lectures. This is one of the great advantages of distance learning; you can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suit you. Realise the fact that you are reading the lecture instead of listening to the lecturer. In the same way, a lecturer may assign you some reading materials, while the study units will suggest additional materials and books for your further reading. You are provided exercises to attempt at appropriate points in each unit, just as a lecturer might give feedback questions/exercises in a classroom situation.
2. Each of the study units follows a common format. The first part is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit, which tells you the content of the unit, and how a particular unit is integrated with other units, and the course as a whole. Next to this is a set of learning objectives. These objectives state the tasks you should be able to accomplish by the time you have completed the unit. These learning objectives are therefore, meant to guide your study. The moment a unit is finished, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If this is made a habit, you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course.
3. The main content of the unit treats the topic of the unit. It is here you will learn the ideas, concepts and skills that make up the topic.
4. The following is a practical strategy for working through the course: If you run into any trouble, telephone your tutor or visit the study centre nearest to you. Remember, your tutor's job is to help you. When you need assistance, do not hesitate to ask your tutor to provide it.
    a. Read this course guide thoroughly; this is your first assignment!
    b. Organise a study schedule; design a 'course overview' to guide you through the course. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Important pieces of information like details of your tutorials, and the date of the first day of the semester are available at the centre. You need to gather all the information into one place, such as your diary or a wall calendar. Decide on whatever method you choose, and write in your own dates and schedule of work for each unit.
    c. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything to stay faithful to it. The major reason why students fail is that they lag behind in their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please, let your tutor know before it is too late for help.
    d. Turn to unit 1, and read the instruction and the objectives of the unit.

e. Assemble the study materials. You will need your references and the unit you are studying at any point in time.
f. As you work through the unit, you will know what sources to consult for further information.
g. Visit your study centre whenever you need up-to-date information.
h. Before the relevant due dates (about 4 weeks before due dates), visit your study centre for your next required assignment. Keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignments carefully. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the examination. Submit all assignments when due.
i. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you are not sure about any of the objectives, you can move to the next unit. Study unit by unit through the course, and try to space your study so that you can keep to the schedule.
j. When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting the next unit. Keep to your schedule. When the assignment is returned, pay particular attention to tutor's comments, both on the tutor-marked assignment form and also the written comments on the ordinary assignments.
k. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit), and the course objectives (listed in the course guide).

FACILITATORS/TUTOR AND TUTORIALS

There are 14 hours of tutorial provided in support of this course. You will be notified of the dates, times and venue of these tutorials, as well as the name, and phone number of your facilitator, as soon as you are fixed in a tutorial group.

Your tutor or facilitator will mark and comment on your assignments. He/She keeps a close watch on your progress, so as to render necessary assistance when required. You submit your tutor-marked assignments to your tutor before the scheduled date. They will be marked by your tutor, and returned to you as soon as possible.

Do not hesitate to contact your facilitator by telephone, or e-mail, and discuss your problems for necessary assistance. The following might be circumstances in which you would find help necessary. Contact your facilitator if:

- You do not understand any part of the study units of the assigned readings.
- You have difficulty with the self-assessment exercises.
- You have a question or problem with an assignment or with the grading of an assignment.

You should try your best to attend the tutorials. This is the only chance for a face-to-face contact with your course facilitator, and to ask questions which are answered instantly. You can raise any problem encountered in the course of your study. To derive maximum benefit from course tutorials, prepare a list of questions before the tutorial session. You will learn a lot by your active participation in the discussion.

SUMMARY

This course exposes you to the fundamentals, methods, strategies and resources of reading instruction at the preschool and lower primary school levels; through many strategies that can be used for teaching reading skills as well as examples of ways to create an environment in the preschool classrooms that will nurture children's reading ability and their zest for learning. By the time you complete this course, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key theories related to reading skills development.
- Determine and use a range of reading strategies, resources and experiences for teaching reading at the preschool and primary school level.
- Analyse the benefits and drawbacks of various reading instructional strategies, and effectively select those that can aid the reading skills and language development of pupils.
- Develop skills in how to implement coherent, goal orientated lessons and lesson sequences that are designed to engage their pupils at any given reading level.
- Select appropriate strategies and reading materials for evaluating pupils' attainment of reading skills.
- Discuss the steps you would take to develop in the children, the ability to comprehend and infer.
- Design school programmes that will facilitate the teaching of reading skill.

CONCLUSION

We wish you success in this course! We also hope you will be able to appreciate the fact that reading is a key to continued success in school, and in the larger society. It is our hope that this course will challenge you to contribute positively to making children able to read efficiently.

MODULE 1: THE LANGUAGE SKILLS

UNIT 1: The Four Language Skills

1.1 Introduction

Language development involves four fundamental and interactive abilities: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The skills are related to each other by two parameters of the mode of communication (oral or written) and the direction of communication (receiving or producing message). Based on these parameters, listening and speaking are referred to as oral skills, while reading and writing are referred to as literacy skills. Speaking and writing are productive while listening and reading are receptive. In this unit, it is important to give a brief description of the skills and establish the interrelatedness and interconnectedness between and among them. It should be noted that the effective acquisition of one skill invariably leads to an effective development of another and that the skills all work together to ensure that individual's level of language use and communication are achieved.

1.2 Objectives: At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

a) Discuss each of the four language skills
b) Differentiate between the skills
c) Explain their interrelatedness
d) List the micro-skills related to each of the skills
e) Enumerate the importance of the skills in early childhood development

1.3 Main Content

Listening is a receptive skill in the oral mode. Listening involves hearing and understanding what we hear. It involves identifying the sounds of speech and processing them into words and sentences. When we listen, we use our ears to receive individual sounds (letters, stress, rhythm and pauses) and we use our brain to convert these into messages that are meaningful to us. We are often faced with two listening situations- interactive and non-interactive. Interactive listening situations include face-to-face conversations and telephone calls, in which we are alternately listening

and speaking, and in which we have a chance to ask for clarification, repetition, or slower speech from the conversing partner. Some non-interactive listening situations are listening to the radio, TV, films, lectures, or sermons. In such situations we do not usually have the opportunity to ask for clarification, or request for slower speech or repetition. In our first language, we have all the skills and background knowledge we need to understand what we hear, so we are often unaware of how complex a process listening is; making it a seemingly natural process. However, in second language situation, a number of micro-skills are important for effective listening. Some of these include: sound discrimination, recognition of stress, tone and rhythm patterns, knowledge of vocabulary, word-order patterns, basic syntactic and grammatical patterns, and a host other sub-skills which added to the complexity of listening skill, most especially in second language context.

Listening in any language requires focus and attention but listening in a second language requires even greater focus. It is a skill that some people need to work at harder than others. People who have difficulty concentrating are typically poor listeners.

Babies learn this skill by listening to people who already know how to speak the language; adults do the same in learning a second language. The speakers may or may not include native speakers. For practice, you can listen to live or recorded voices. The most important thing is to listen to a variety of voices in the target language as often as you can.

To become a fluent speaker, one needs to develop strong listening skills. Listening not only helps you understand what people are saying to you, it also helps you to speak clearly to other people. It helps you learn how to pronounce words properly, how to use intonation, and where to place stress in words and sentences. This makes your speech easier for other people listening to you to understand. This is why listening is intricately connected to speaking.

Speaking is the productive skill in the oral mode; the delivery of language through the mouth. To speak, we create sounds using many parts of our body, including the lungs, vocal tract, vocal chords, tongue, teeth and lips. This vocalized form of language usually requires at least one listener. When two or more people speak or talk to each other, the conversation is called a ‘dialogue’, in which speech flow naturally from one person to another. Speaking can also be planned and rehearsed, as in the delivery of a speech or presentation.

Speaking, like the other skills, is more complicated than it seems at first and involves more than just pronouncing words. Humans are faced with three kinds of speaking situations- interactive, partially interactive and non-interactive. Interactive speaking situations include face-to-face conversations and telephone calls, in which we are alternately listening and speaking, and in which we have a chance to ask for

clarification, repetition, or slower speech from our conversation partner. Some speaking situations are partially interactive, such as when giving a speech to a live audience, where the convention is that the audience does not interrupt the speech. The speaker nevertheless can see the audience and judge from the expressions on their faces and body language whether or not he or she is being understood. Some few speaking situations may be totally non-interactive, such as when recording a speech for a radio broadcast, for example, a live/recorded broadcast by the President of the nation. Speaking can also be formal or informal; informal speaking is typically used with family and friends, or people one knows well or is familiar with, while formal speaking occurs in business or academic situations, or when meeting people for the first time.

Sub-skills of speaking include the ability to pronounce words distinctly, use of stress and intonation patterns, use of correct forms of words and in correct order, appropriate choice of vocabulary and register, clarifying between main ideas and supporting details, and infusing logic into one's speech. While speech seems easy in first language, looking at these sub-skills emphasize why speaking has to be specially taught in learning second or other language(s).

Reading is the receptive skill in the written mode. Though it can develop independently of listening and speaking skills, but often develops along with them, especially in societies with a highly-developed literacy tradition. Reading is the process of looking at a series of written/printed symbols (letters, numbers, punctuation marks and spaces, and sketches/pictures) and getting meaning from them. When we read, we use our eyes to receive symbols and we use our brain to convert them into words, sentences and paragraphs that communicate something to us. Reading can help build vocabulary that helps listening comprehension at the later stages, particularly. Since reading is the focus of this course, it shall be extensively discussed in subsequent sections.

Writing is the process of using symbols (letters of the alphabet, punctuation and spaces) to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form. It is the productive skill in the written mode. It, too, is more complicated than it seems at first, and often seems to be the hardest of the skills, even for native speakers of a language, since it involves not just a graphic representation of speech, but the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way. A writer may write for personal enjoyment or use, or for an audience of one person or more. The audience may be known (targeted) or unknown. Taking notes while studying is an example of writing for one's self. Blogging (which is common now due to the influence of the Internet) is an example of writing for an unknown audience. A letter or an e-mail to a friend is an example of writing for a targeted audience. As with speaking, it is important to consider one's audience when writing. There are many different styles of writing, from informal to formal. Effective writing commands the following abilities as sub-skills: correct use of orthography, use of correct forms of words and in correct order,

appropriate choice of vocabulary, appropriate use of style to suit audience, coherent and logical presentation of ideas, etc. All these emphasized the complexity of writing and the technicality of its teaching.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FOUR SKILLS

While for the purposes of teaching and learning, the four language skills are often treated as separate skills, in actual language use it is not so easy to separate the skills, as in most cases, the development of one skill is often immediately preceded or followed by or even go hand-in-hand with the other skill. In essence, as far as language learning is concerned, all skills do reinforce one another.

Oral language is one of the most important assets that humans have – the ability to communicate with one another allows us to learn and share complex ideas. First language acquisition starts with listening. A child uses the ears as a medium to receive lots of linguistic inputs, namely, sounds, vocabulary and grammar. She learns to make distinctions between different sounds used in language. As the child grows, she starts to use the input and change it into speech (output). Therefore, it can be said that listening and speaking are closely related. If the child is deaf, she cannot acquire language. Reading and writing are also very closely related. For the child to be able to write, she needs to learn the relationship between the sounds and letters.

There are two broad categories of skill that makes up oral language- vocabulary (knowing the meaning of words) and grammar (knowing how words go together to form phrases and sentences). Oral language is learned primarily through interacting with other people who are expert users of the language, especially through conversation; children learn through meaningful conversation with adults. Oral language is the most powerful system the young child brings to initial experiences with the reading process; it sets the stage for learning to read. Children with well-developed vocabulary will decode or sound out a word more easily because they have stronger phonological awareness and will quickly recognise word with its meaning. Also, strong vocabulary knowledge impacts positively on the development of cognitive ability to develop comprehension and fluency in reading. Therefore beginning readers will need a strong foundation in oral language skills so that they can become effective and efficient readers. The synergy between listening and speaking has also been established. In most speech acts such as conversations, telephone discussions, meetings and even lectures, an individual often alternate roles between speaker and listener. Reading and Writing are often grouped together as literacy skills; this is because reading affects writing and writing affects reading. It has been established through several researches that when children read extensively they become better writers. Reading a variety of genres helps children learn text structures and language that they can then transfer to their own writing. In addition, reading provides young people with prior knowledge that they can use in developing their stories/writings. One of the primary reasons that we read is to learn. Especially while we are still in school, a major portion of what we know comes from the texts we

read. Since writing is the act of transmitting knowledge in print, we must have information to share before we can write it. Therefore reading plays a major role in writing. At the same time practice in writing helps children build their reading skills. This is especially true for younger children who are working to develop phonemic awareness and phonics skills. Phonemic awareness develops as children read and write new words. Similarly, phonics skills or the ability to link sounds together to construct words are reinforced when children read and write the same words. For older children, practice in the process of writing their own texts helps them analyse the pieces that they read. They can apply their knowledge about the ways that they chose to use particular language, text structure or content to better understand a professional author's construction of his or her texts.

This is why the whole-language theoreticians strongly hold that all aspects of language interrelate and intertwine. They therefore recommend that pupils should be given the opportunity to simultaneously use all language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in meaningful, functional, and cooperative activities to aid overall language development.

1.4 Conclusion

While the skills are often taught separately in second language situation, one must recognise that in actual language use, the skills are often used in aid of one another. Also underlying the four language skills is the thinking skill which pervades all language use and functions. Although oral language is foundational to literacy development, the two also develop concurrently. What children learn from listening and talking contributes to their ability to read and write and vice versa.

1.5 Summary

The unit explores the four language skills, their core characteristics and relationships. It further emphasized that all the four language skills are important for effective communication and academic learning as none can be rated as more significant/important than the other. A preschool teacher should always look at ways she can effectively and equally develop all the skills in the children in order to promote a balanced language development, thinking process and academic achievement.

1.6 Self-Assessment Questions

a) Why are listening and speaking referred to as oral skills?
b) Why are listening and reading called receptive skills?
c) List the micro-skills involved in each of the skills.
d) What is the relationship between listening, speaking, reading and writing?

1.7 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Enumerate and discuss the specific ways in which the four language skills are important in early childhood development.

1.8 References/Further Reading

- Brindley, S. (1994). Teaching English. New York: Routledge.
- Cameron, L. (2005). Teaching English to young learners. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carter, R., & Nunan, D. (Eds.). (2001). The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (1991).Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language, 2nd ed. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Larsen-Feeman, D. (2000).Techniques and Principals in Language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nunan, D. (2003). Practical English Language Teaching. New York: McGraw-Hill.

UNIT 2: THE NATURE & IMPORTANCE OF READING

2.1 Introduction

Learning to read accurately, with fluency, good comprehension and stamina is a crucial set of skills for school and later life success. That is why the early years of primary education are devoted to teaching children to read using effective and proven methods to ensure that all children are reading at grade level. However, a teacher cannot effectively help pupils develop their reading skill without first understanding the nature of reading and the processes involved. This unit focuses on the nature of reading, the benefits accrued to reading and the relationship between reading and other language skills, as well as factors that affect reading skills development.

2.2 Objectives: At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

a) Describe reading as a language skill.
b) Discuss the importance and characteristics of reading.
c) Describe the processes involved in reading
d) List and discuss the sub-skills involved in reading
e) Describe the relationship between reading and other language skills.
f) Enumerate the factors that can affect effective reading skill development

2.3 Main Content

NATURE OF READING

In modern society, the development of reading skills serves as the primary foundation for all school- based learning. From a learning perspective, reading is connected to different cognitive processes. Learning to read is one of the most important of all developmental tasks, because school success is predicated on reading success. Learning to read (and write) can create dramatic differences in the lives of children and can later expose them to the accumulated understanding of the world. On the

other hand, those who do not read well find their opportunities for academic and occupational including life success severely limited.

There are many reasons why we read. It is through reading that we can access important information needed, and understand instructions given. Reading also serves as a source of entertainment, or to attain new skills. Reading is of great social significance because it pertains to the issues of literacy and lifelong learning. Reading to children from infancy has a positive influence on all the variables of development whether the evidence of it is directly visible or not. Reading is a significant aid in brain development and is instrumental in forming a foundation on which to build a child's educational career.

Reading, combined with writing is referred to as literacy; hence exploring the benefits of literacy can as well serve for reading. Written language allows us to preserve information – ideas, plans, reports and instructions – in a permanent form that can be accessed at different times and places, by oneself as well as others, without it having to be committed to the individual's memory, hence written text is a form of 'artificial' and permanent memory. You retrieve the information by simply 'reading' it. Written texts also help in making available the knowledge accumulated in the different academic disciplines that provides the foundation of school learning and access to higher education, books, magazines, Internet web pages, art media, and instruction manuals, all of which allow each of us to develop interests and acquire expertise in areas of our own choosing and to share our interests with others. Contemporary societies could not survive without a literate population and individual members are at a disadvantage if they cannot participate in the various transactions that are mediated by written text.

Reading is described in many ways by different people. Some describe it as a thinking (cognitive) process. Others say it is the reconstruction and interpretation of meanings behind printed symbols. Still others say it is the process of understanding written language. Hill (1979) briefly defines reading as what the reader does to get the meaning she needs from contextual resources. Reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning (Nunan, 2003). The ability to read requires that the reader draw information from a text and combine it with information and expectations that the reader already has.

Alderson (2000) states that reading is built from two components: word recognition and comprehension. These two components gained through reading will foster learners' language competence. Parry (2000) also puts reading in two basic elements of a reader and text, and that the interaction between the two is normally a silent mental activity in which individuals draw on their own perception as they negotiate the material before them.

Reading is regarded as the most complex of human functions; it is much more that sounding out words. Readers encounter language that is created by individuals that may have distance in time and space. The system of decoding takes place simultaneously in the brain; the brain learns, making new connections constantly and expanding its system. For a matured reader, this complex activity is accomplished simultaneously and at lightning speed; proficient readers glide through this process largely unconsciously. The complex nature of the skill requires critical and creative thinking processes to pull together a number of interrelated sources of information.

Hedge (2003) writes the goals of learners' in a reading process as:

- The ability to read a wide range of texts.
- Building knowledge of language which will facilitate reading ability.
- Building schematic knowledge.
- The ability to adapt the reading style according to reading purpose (skimming, scanning).
- Developing an awareness of the structure of written texts in English.
- Taking a critical stance to the contexts of the texts.

Reading therefore is the result of many sub-skills that are built upon one another. To read effectively, the reader has to:

- Establish a relationship between sounds and symbols (associate the meaning of the words with written symbols).
- Recognize the vocabulary used.
- Pick out key words, such as those identifying topics and main ideas.
- Figure out the meaning of the words, including unfamiliar vocabulary, from the (written) context.
- Recognize grammatical word classes: noun, adjective, etc.
- Detect sentence constituents, such as subject, verb, object, prepositions, etc.
- Recognize basic syntactic patterns.
- Reconstruct and infer situations, goals and participants.
- Use both knowledge of the world and lexical and grammatical cohesive devices to make inferences, predict outcomes, and infer links and connections among the parts of the text.
- Get the main point or the most important information.
- Distinguish the main idea from the supporting details.
- Adjust reading strategies to different reading purposes, such as skimming for main ideas or studying in-depth.

A critical look at the sub-skills connotes that reading is composed of two main processes: decoding and comprehension. These two processes are independent of one another, but both are necessary for effective literacy. Decoding involves being able to connect the letter strings to the corresponding units of speech that they represent in

order to make sense of print. Comprehension involves higher-order cognitive and linguistic reasoning, including intelligence, vocabulary, and syntax, which allow children to gain meaning from what they read (comprehension is comprehensively discussed in subsequent sections).

Despite these sub-skills, reading is a holistic act. In other words, performing the sub-skills one at a time does not constitute reading. As said earlier, the sub-skills are used simultaneously and at lightning speed as adult (matured) readers glide through this process largely unconsciously. It however takes a while for children to achieve such level of reading proficiency though the process can be hastened with effective strategies, conducive environment and adequate as well as relevant resources. The point being made here however is that reading can be said to take place only when the parts are put together in a smooth, integrated performance.

CORE CHARACTERISTICS OF READING

A. Reading is not just a basic skill.

Many people think of reading as a skill that is taught once and for all in the first few years of school. Seen this way, reading is a simple process: readers figure out how to pronounce each word in a text and then automatically comprehend the meaning of the words, as they do with their everyday spoken language. This is a wrong understanding of reading. Reading is a continuously developing skill whose goal is lifelong readers who can read critically any subject. It requires constant practice, development and refinement. It is not learned all at once; it improves through practice which is the basis for success in all the content areas. For nearly all adults, the act of reading has become an unconscious activity, its processes stored in a type of memory called implicit or unconscious memory. However, in the early stages, every step was a conscious process that had to be learned. Eventually, with a great deal of practice, reading gradually becomes a seamless, automatic activity carried out by the brain without conscious awareness. Teachers can be a tremendous resource in developing this process.

B. Reading is a complex process.

Reading is not merely a receptive process of picking up information from the page in a word-by-word manner. Rather it is a complex cognitive process in which the reader, through interaction with the text, constructs meaning. In identifying and making sense of the words being read, readers employ orthographic and contextual information, together with the knowledge and expectations they bring to the reading episode. In other words, reading involves the use of some mental processes; evoking voices, memories, knowledge, and experiences from previous times and other places to decode the printed symbols. It is a complex interaction between the text and the reader which is shaped by the reader's prior knowledge, experiences, attitude, and language community (which is culturally and socially situated). In addition, the

reading process requires creativity and critical analysis. During reading, the reader relates dynamically with the text as she tries to elicit the meaning, using various kinds of knowledge - linguistic, systematic and schematic knowledge. Sometimes, she struggles trying to relate what is being read to her existing knowledge and understanding. In doing this, she might have stumbled over unfamiliar words and try to interpret them from the context.

While experienced readers read, they generate a mental representation of the text, which serves as an evolving framework for understanding subsequent parts of the text. As they read further, they test this evolving meaning and monitor their understanding, paying attention to inconsistencies that arise as they interact with the text. If they notice that they are losing the meaning as they read, they draw on a variety of strategies to readjust their understandings. Often times, they have an internal conversation with the author, silently agreeing or disagreeing with what is being read. They come to texts with purposes that guide their reading, taking a stance toward the text and responding to the ideas that take shape in the conversation between the text and the self. All these mental processes seem automatic for an experienced reader, but for an emergent reader, the struggle makes reading a difficult skill to develop.

C. Reading is problem solving.

Reading is essentially a problem-solving task. Comprehending what is read requires effort, planning, self-monitoring, strategy selection, and reflection. When reading a text, a mental representation of the text is created by the reader, which describes how the reader understands the text; in fact multiple levels of representation are involved in making meaning. The reader works to make sense of a text not just from the words and sentences on the page but also from the ideas, memories, and knowledge evoked by those words and sentences. Although at first glance reading may seem to be passive, solitary, and simple, it is in truth active, populated by a rich mix of voices and views—those of the author, of the reader, and of others the reader has heard, read about, and otherwise encountered in her life. Knowledge is not just used to situate a text; it is used in all phases of reading, from thinking about a text before reading to evaluating its central theme or arguing during or after reading. Readers continually look for connections between the ideas in the text and their prior knowledge. Prior knowledge can in this way help readers draw inferences about an author's intentions and beliefs and can serve as a basis for acquiring knowledge. Pupils who approach reading as a problem solving activity take an active and strategic approach to reading, and are metacognitively aware of how well they understand what they read, that is, they keep track of their reading-thinking process.

D. Fluent reading is not the same as decoding.

Skilful reading does require readers to carry out certain tasks in a fairly automatic manner. Decoding skills—quick word recognition and ready knowledge of relevant vocabulary, for example—are essential to successful reading. However, they are by no means sufficient, especially when texts are complex or challenging. Yet many discussions about struggling readers confuse decoding with fluency. Fluency derives from the reader's ability not just to decode or identify individual words but also to quickly process larger language units. Fluency, like other dimensions of reading, varies according to the text at hand. When readers are unfamiliar with the particular language structures and features of a text, their language-processing ability breaks down. This means, for example, that teachers cannot assume that pupils who fluently read narrative or literary texts will be equally fluent with expository texts. Fluency begins to develop when pupils have frequent opportunities to read texts that are easy for them. Multiple re-readings of more difficult texts help expand a reader's fluency. Also, fluency grows as readers have opportunities, support, and encouragement to read a wide range of text types about a wide range of topics.

E. Reading is situationally bounded.

A person who understands one type of text is not necessarily proficient at reading all types of texts. A good reader of a motorcycle repair manual can make sense of directions that might stump an English literature professor, but may not be able to comprehend a chemistry text. And a chemistry teacher may feel completely insecure when trying to understand some history texts on a colleague's course reading list. In other words, reading is influenced by situational factors, among them the experiences readers have had with particular kinds of texts and reading for particular purposes. And just as proficient readers do not necessarily read all texts with equal ease or success, a poor or struggling reader will not necessarily have a hard time with all texts.

F. Proficient readers share some key characteristics.

Researches emphasize different characteristics of good or proficient reader. Researches on reading have agreed on a set of key habits of proficient readers. Good readers are known to possess the following characteristics. They are:

- mentally engaged,
- motivated to read and to learn,
- socially active around reading tasks,
- strategic in monitoring the interactive processes that assist comprehension such as setting goals that shape their reading processes, monitoring their emerging understanding of a text, and coordinating a variety of comprehension strategies to control the reading process.

READING IN RELATION TO OTHER LANGUAGE SKILLS

The interconnectedness of the skills of language cannot be overemphasized. The skills work together in a language system that help us to categorise, abstract, define and store our experiences, therefore, gaining facility in one or more of these skills enhances the development of the other. In any language, reading is a vital skill to master if you are going to become proficient in all aspects of it. Reading brings so much to the reader, from grammar and vocabulary to a basic understanding of how the language works. Its relationship with other language skills as enumerated below:

a) Reading and Listening

There is intimate relationship between listening and reading, both are receptive skills and involve information processing, and therefore share many attributes. Listening and reading involve comprehension, interpretation and evaluation. As such, they involve similar thinking processes for information collection. Decoding oral symbols (listening) involves only one level of abstraction, moving from the sound to the experience on which it is based. Decoding written symbols (reading) involves two levels of abstraction, at least for beginning readers. It requires going from the written symbol to the oral word that it represents and then further back to the experience for which it stands. Therefore, working on listening skills is good for developing readiness for reading skills, since listening requires many of the same mental processes as reading but involves a different level of decoding. Experts have described both listening and reading as demanding "thinking in the sound-symbol-understanding process". This implies that both skills involve similar mental processes triggered by visual and auditory stimuli and there are two principles of information processing that operate in both skills: cue sampling and message reconstruction.

There are several evidences that showed that reading and listening are connected. Development in spoken language influences development of reading and vice-versa; i.e. there is a form of reciprocity between the two skills. This means that as skills in some aspect of oral language increase, they help development in reading, and as a person improves his reading skills, that improvement seems to enhance further improvement in listening. This seems to be a continuing spiral. For example, phonemic awareness (noticing the individual sounds in word) seems to help with comprehension of the spoken language. Knowledge of spelling patterns also helps to improve pronunciation and listening. Print experience is related to knowledge of grammar and print experience also seems to help learners acquire spoken language forms, for example, function words, such as conjunctions, prepositions and articles. Adding a word to the children's listening vocabularies increases the chance that they will be able to interpret its meaning when encountered in reading. Also, most reading difficulties reside in phonological language difficulties; poor readers tend also to have poor speech perception and phonological deficits in both spoken and written language.

While there are general similarities between listening and reading, it is in exploring the differences that some insight can be gained into how best to use listening in a reading skill development. There are several important differences between reading and listening. These are:

1. In reading, there is a written code which must be translated into a verbal code which in turn must be processed as information: whereas, in listening, auditory stimuli are already present in a somewhat familiar verbal code.
2. Listeners often have the advantage of watching the speaker's gestures and facial expressions and hearing the intonation of voice. This adds the aspect of viewing to the listening. Readers must glean these gestures and intonation from punctuation; which may not be sufficient to have full understanding of what is being read.
3. In listening, the listener may have to adjust to a speaker's dialect before he can understand the verbal code; this is not a problem for the reader.
4. Listening requires more intense concentration than reading because it is usually not possible to go back and re-listen to the exact words again, even if the speaker tries to repeat them (unless in a recorded discourse). A listener relies solely on his memory, but a reader can re-read at will. When listening to someone reading aloud or talking, the meaning of the words is determined by the speakers pace. This is one reason reading to children should be clear and at a pace where they can think about and understand the meaning.
5. The listener is also not in control of the rate of presentation and may miss information that is presented too rapidly to absorb. With written stimuli, a reader can set her own pace, depending on the purpose of the reading and he can adapt his rate to the difficulty or unfamiliarity of the message he is processing. However, because a spoken message is on-going, a listener cannot.
6. A listener cannot skim or preview the message he is to hear to discover if it suits his purpose; he must expose himself to the entire message, whereas a reader can selectively concentrate on those sections of text which are most suited to his purposes.
7. Listening also involves understanding all sorts of reductions of sounds and blending of words. There are false starts (I, I, uh uh . . .) and hesitations (Uhm, like . . .) to be dealt with. Listeners give back cues (Uh-huh, Really?) and gestures (e.g. nodding of head) to show they are listening and understanding. Spoken language also is “looser” or relaxed than written language; Speakers use a lot of pronouns (it, that), string together clauses with conjunctions (and, but, so) rather than use subordinate clauses (while, because), and rely partly on gestures and body language to get our points across.
8. When pupils read, cognates (words that are similar in two languages) help understanding, but while cognates may look alike on the page, their sounds may be quite different and they may be less useful while listening.
9. The brain constructs the message differently for reading and listening. Listening causes the brain to immediately process the information because sounds don’t last

long. This may cause the message not to be interpreted as quickly. More details are usually remembered when reading.

In sum, processing aural stimuli in a listening situation is indeed different from processing written stimuli, and these differences should be taken into account when using listening in the development of reading skills. First, with the myriad of listening/reading materials published today, reading teachers must be ready to evaluate the effectiveness of such materials before use. In addition, they should be armed with knowledge about the utility of using training in specific and general listening skills as a method of improving reading skills. And, finally, they should have some ideas as to how to incorporate listening activities into a reading programme.

b) Reading and Speaking

There is an increasingly high relationship between reading and speaking skills and this is more emphasized in the area of vocabulary development. Vocabulary knowledge is an indispensable and overriding factor for effective communication. There is no doubt that people who develop large reading vocabularies tend to develop large speaking vocabularies. Indeed, reading power relies on continuous improvement in vocabulary knowledge that provides communication. The importance of word knowledge, which facilitates speaking skills, has been a major resource in the development of reading skills. Therefore fostering improvement in word knowledge through wide reading has the potential for fostering improvement in speaking skills.

It is a known fact that lack of vocabulary makes learners stumble and hesitant in speaking, because words precede communication. In language learning hesitations/weakness in speaking can be overcome by encouraging learners to read widely. Teachers should also engage their pupils in worthwhile activities, such as providing appropriate and interesting reading texts in order to enable them to communicate what they have read.

Pupils who read a lot outside the classroom are better both at grasping the context and building their vocabulary which are basic elements to advance speaking skills. A broad span of vocabulary knowledge makes learners precise and articulate in communication. 'The more reading one does, the more one will increase one's exposure to vocabulary that doesn't usually make its way into the spoken language. Learners will improve their speaking competence if they have better vocabulary knowledge which they can get through reading. Encouraging learners to read will lead them guessing the meanings of words, of phrases from the context, and the more they read the more they will understand the meanings of sentences and concepts. Reading habit enables learners to understand a context effortlessly; even if they do not know meanings of some words in the text. Learners comprehend the foreign language if they advance their ability of guessing the meanings of words from context which will promote their speaking performance. Having good vocabulary

knowledge is one of the essential components to gain fluency in speaking performance. Learners have the opportunity to find sentences and phrases used in daily conversation in dramas, plays and dialogues because they are all based on one person talking to another. Some studies have shown that using authentic texts has a positive effect on learning the target language by developing communicative competence (Peacock, 1997). All these above cited arguments support the belief that integrating speaking and reading skills strengthen pupils' understanding of the reading material, reveals any problem they have understanding a text, and, most importantly, lets them apply the information they have read into authentic speaking practice that improves their fluency.

One of the most practical and fruitful ways to improve speaking skill is to enjoy reading. Extensive reading helps second language learners to develop their ability to understand implied meaning of words and makes learners capable of expressing their ideas, feelings, and emotions. Reading not only introduces learners to a greater extent of language and contexts, but also helps learners in building up grammar skills. Teachers can help beginners in selecting material by choosing to read simple short stories. Pupils can also select reading material on their own – beginners can read picture dictionaries, grammar books with examples, and especially short phrases which are used to continue communication.

c) **Reading and Writing**

Reading and writing are complementary skills and both intersect in natural ways when literate persons are actively using reading and writing to learn. There is no point in writing something if there is no one to read it, and there is nothing to read if something has not been written. Both are written language skills, making use of visual symbols that represent both spoken words and the experiences behind the words. When writing, people are more likely to use words that they recognize and believe that they understand well in their reading materials. There is a reason that children learn to read before they write and it is not necessarily that it is the easier discipline. It is because reading teaches the language learner so many aspects that will then become useful in writing. Without reading, a writer would not know how and where to use words and the way sentences are formed. Without reading, a writer would be virtually powerless; even if they had the tools (the letters and words) they need, for they would not have the knowledge to put it into practice.

Constructivist theory asserts that writing and reading are both meaning-making activities. When people write and read, meaning is continually in a state of developing; the mind anticipates, looks back, and forms momentary impressions that change and grow as meaning develops. Because writing and reading involve the development of meaning, both are conceptualized as composing activities in the sense that both involve planning, generating and revising meaning. From this perspective, some scholars speak of the writer as a reader and the reader as a writer. According to Smith (1983) reading like a writer allows one to actually become a writer. When

reading like a writer, in addition to making meaning of the text, the reader takes in and learns from the author's style, use of conventions, etc. When reading like a writer, the reader uses the author's text as a model for texts that he or she will eventually write.

During the development of a piece of writing, the writer always does a certain amount of reading. In addition, writers often try to place themselves in the shoes of their audience (the readers), in order to check the comprehensibility of their presentation from the readers' perspective. In a similar manner, the reader has also been considered a writer in that the reader's mind races ahead to anticipate and create not only the message, but also the structure and presentational style of a text; words are thought of as well as ideas, in ways in which they might appear. Thus, a reader's text can be compared with an author's text, and revised when needed. This sense of writing as reading provides a sense of personal engagement to the reading experience.

Tierney & Pearson (1983) argued that both readers and writers compose meaning. They described the essential characteristics of the effective composing process: planning, drafting, aligning, revising, and monitoring. They also saw these acts of composing as involving continuous, recurring, and recursive transactions among readers and writers, their respective inner selves, and their perceptions of each other's goals and desires.

Both reading and writing were also considered similar composing activities in that writers and readers use similar kinds of knowledge in the act of making their meanings: knowledge about language, knowledge about content, knowledge about genre conventions, knowledge about organization and structure, knowledge of pragmatics (understanding the author's purpose for having written the piece, or their own purposes for having taken up that act of writing or reading), and knowledge about interaction (especially between reader and author).

Simply knowing that reading and writing are intimately connected processes isn't enough. In order to help children develop these two essential skills, parents and teachers need to apply this knowledge when working with them.

According to recommendations from the major English/Language Arts professional organizations, reading instruction is most effective when intertwined with writing instruction and vice versa. Research has found that when children read extensively they become better writers. Reading a variety of genres helps children learn text structures and language that they can then transfer to their own writing. In addition, reading provides young people with prior knowledge that they can use in their stories/writings. At the same time practice in writing helps children build their reading skills. This is especially true for younger children who are working to develop phonemic awareness and phonics skills. Phonemic awareness (the understanding that words are developed from sounds) develops as children read and write new words.

Similarly, phonics skills or the ability to link sounds together to construct words are reinforced when children read and write the same words. For older children practice in the process of writing their own texts helps them analyse the pieces that they read. They can apply their knowledge about the ways that they chose to use particular language, text structure or content to better understand an author's construction of his or her texts.

When approached as similar, related composing processes rather than as isolated skills and behaviours, writing and reading can influence and support the development of reading, writing, and thinking (Squire, 1983). Writers incorporate what they have learned about language, structure and style from the texts they have encountered as readers. They also reflect on their knowledge of texts they have read and experiences they have had as a way of generating and synthesizing ideas for writing. In becoming familiar with and gaining experience in writing and reading texts even first graders can "develop a sense of authorship that helps them in either composing process. When pupils write, they build on and extend the literacy learning that they need to be successful readers. They transfer their growing understandings from their reading to their writing and vice versa. Writing supports pupils to learn to read by providing opportunities to:

- Highlight letter forms, letter sequences, and letter clusters
- Switch between different levels of information in the print – letters build up into words, words into phrases, phrases into sentences, and sentences into paragraphs in a text
- Use their reading knowledge to build understanding of writing, for example, articulating their writing to identify the individual sounds and then relate them to letters that they recognise.
- Self-monitor their writing by using writing strategies that reinforce similar reading strategies.

Teachers can draw on the reciprocal nature of reading and writing to help pupils strengthen their knowledge and skills. When pupils are writing, encourage them to articulate words slowly. Use prompts that encourage them to notice what they already know from their reading.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT READING

In order to become a fluent reader, certain pre-reading skills need to be mastered, but emergent readers do not all learn these skills in the same way and at the same rate. A small percentage of children learn to read on their own with no formal instruction before they enter kindergarten, though this depends on the literacy context and environment such children are exposed to at home. Others learn to read fairly quickly once exposed to instruction. However, too many children struggle throughout their school careers, never learning to read well enough to comprehend what they are

reading. This may be due to a number of factors: biological deficits, cognitive factors, instructional factors, socioeconomic and second-language factors, and early language development.

Brain researches have shown extensively the impact of the brain structure and functions in reading. Some sections of the brain, e.g. the parieto-temporal system, Bocca's area and the occipitotemporal system are linked to the processes of analyzing words, linking sounds to letters and automatic decoding respectively. Those with reading disabilities demonstrate a pattern of underactivity in this area of the brain. Biological (or neurobiological) deficits can manifest in form of a brain disorder, for example, Dyslexia**.** Dyslexia is a specific reading and/or learning disability due to a defect in the brain's processing of graphic symbols, i.e. it alters the way the brain processes written material. Such is typically characterized by difficulties in word recognition, spelling and decoding which affect reading comprehension. Such children are slow at learning sets of data, experience phonology problems, have auditory impairment and low **c**oncentration span. Sometimes, adverse pregnancy or labour events can cause severe learning and/or reading problems. Auditory and/or memory processing difficulties are additional causes of reading problems. Genetic factors have also been implicated in some reading disabilities. Hearing or visual impairment, verbal memory problems, and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are other risk factors. Developmental differences of the brain associated with learning disabilities are thought to be influenced by genetic factors.

Cognitive factors also affect reading ability and especially reading comprehension. Such factors include: **Background knowledge** - in an effort to comprehend a text, pupils rely on their background knowledge to link what they already know to the text they are reading. Background knowledge includes both a reader's real-world experiences and literary knowledge. Drawing parallels between background knowledge and texts helps pupils become active readers, improving their reading comprehension. **Vocabulary**- whether or not pupils have mastered vocabulary skills affects their reading comprehension. Pupils must be able to comprehend a familiar word and its relationship with other words within a text. Mastering vocabulary includes recognizing a word's part of speech, definition, useful context clues, and how it functions in a sentence. These vocabulary strategies can help improve comprehension. **Fluency**- reading with fluency allows pupils to retain information with accuracy, expression and increased speed. The ability to read fluently develops through reading practice. As pupils become fluent readers, they will spend less time trying to decipher the meaning of words and more time considering the overall meaning of the sentences. Over time, fluent readers will develop the ability to insightfully respond to a text. **Active Reading**- beginning readers often rely on skilled readers to guide them through a text. However, as readers develop, they will be able to monitor their own reading comprehension. Pupils can actively guide their own reading by targeting comprehension problems as they occur. Pupils can troubleshoot comprehension problems by recalling what they read, asking themselves questions or

evaluating the text. **Critical Thinking**- pupils can actively respond to a text more efficiently when they possess critical thinking skills. As pupils read, they can determine the main idea and supporting details, the sequence of events and the overall structure of the text. Pupils will also be able to identify literary devices and their effect on the text. Having critical thinking skills help to deepen a student's comprehension of a text, resulting in a positive reading experience.

Generally, factors owing to lack of mastery of what has been taught, faulty methods of teaching, teacher personality, and narrowness of experimental background may affect the learning process of any pupil. For instructional factors, if the instruction provided by the school is ineffective or inefficient, a child's progress in learning to read will likely be impeded. Without a thorough understanding of the processes involved in reading, it is difficult to design an effective reading curriculum or methods for teaching. Many teachers assigned to teach reading have had little instruction in the theoretical and biological underpinnings of the reading process. Teachers' abilities to identify the individual needs of their pupils and adjust their instruction accordingly often determine whether a particular programme will be effective. When poor instruction occurs consistently, especially in the first year of school, many pupils are likely to fall behind. Even if pupils are exposed to adequate instruction in subsequent years, there is evidence that poor instruction in first grade has long-term effects because several studies have documented that the poor first-grade reader continues to be a poor reader.

Home factors include the number of people in a family, parents' level of education, financial position, and attitude towards education, cultural/child rearing practices at home as well as the socioeconomic status of parents. Socioeconomic status (SES) is most commonly indexed by a combination of education, occupation, and income, but a major determinant of the relationship between SES and reading ability is measured in terms of reading-related experiences, such as the home literacy environment, degree of early print exposure, and quality of early schooling. Failure to read well is more common among poor children and non-native speakers of English. Sometimes, children are better readers in their first language than in a second language. Low socioeconomic status (SES) also appears to play a role in reading achievement; low-SES children tend to go to inferior schools where there are fewer educational opportunities. Also, unlike parents in middle-income homes, many low-SES parents provide fewer opportunities for informal literacy learning, in terms of visits to the library, joint book reading, playing with print and independent reading.

Finally, researches have shown that there is a close relationship between reading and language. In some children, inability to achieve reading proficiency seems to be attributed to a lack of exposure to language patterns and literacy-based interactions and materials during their early years. Some children are raised in a language impoverished environment where they are seldom read or talked to and too much time is spent passively viewing television or playing video games. This environment

develops receptive/listening skills but not the language skills that will be more important when the child begins formal reading instruction.

2.4 Conclusion

The complex nature of reading have far-reaching effect on the classroom practices of the preschool teacher and therefore consciously emphasize the need for the preschool teachers to be professionally trained and experienced in delivering excellent reading instruction. Such teachers will not only recognise the stages involved in reading development as well as the factors that affect reading, but also understand and exploit the several essential ways in which the reading process can be initiated and developed.

2.5 Summary

The unit had exposed you to the complex nature of reading, its characteristics and factors that can inhibit effective reading. Such factors include biological, cognitive, instructional and environmental/home factors and must be considered in developing effective reading programmes for preschools and primary school pupils. The relationship between reading and other language skills was also extensively discussed. We have also made some references to the connection between language development and reading. It is therefore imperative we examine the components of language development and its implication for the promotion of early or emergent literacy.

2.6 Self-Assessment Questions

a) What is reading?
b) What processes are involved in reading?
c) List the sub-skills that are involved in reading process.
d) What benefits are derivable from being able to read effectively?
e) What factors can inhibit effective reading?
f) Briefly summarize the relationships between reading and other language skills.

2.7 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Why do we call reading a complex process? Discuss. What factors could affect the effective development of this process?

2.8 References/Further Reading

- Bygate, M. (1991). Speaking. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (2001). Teaching English as a second/foreign language. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.
- Cunningham, A. E., & Stanovich, K. E. (1998). What Reading does for the Mind. American Educator,8 (15).
- Davies, P., & Pearse, E. (2002). Success in English Teaching. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

- Dubin, F., & Olshtain, E. (1977). Facilitating Language Learning: A Guidebook for the ESL/EFL Teacher. N.Y: McGrow: Hill International Book Company.
- Eskey, D. (2005). Reading in a Second Language. In E. Hinkel (Ed), Handbook of research on second language teaching and learning (pp. 563-580). Mahvah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Harmer, J. (2001). The Practice of English Language Teaching. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Hedge, T. (1985). Using Readers in Language Teaching. London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
- Hedge, T. (2003). Teaching & learning in the language Classroom. UK: OUP.

MODULE 2: READING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

UNIT 3: LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY YEARS

3.1 Introduction

This unit focuses on why language is so crucial in young children's development. Effective language use gives babies and children power to have a say in what they want and need. To encourage their language development, early years practitioners need to optimise children's speaking and listening opportunities through everyday conversation and practical activities. Modelling language through meaningful communication is the key. This chapter offers knowledge and understanding of how, why and what to promote for optimum language learning situations.

3.2 Objectives: At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

a) Examine the importance of language in general
b) Discuss the importance of language for children and in children's development.
c) Explain the process of language development in children

3.3 Main Content:

IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Language is the most powerful tool in the development of any human being. It is undeniably the greatest asset we possess. A good grasp of language is synonymous with a sound ability to think. According to Vygotsky (1986), language and thought are inseparable. Language plays a major role in supporting children's process of identity formation and in helping them understand where they fit in their environment. The acquisition of language therefore is essential not only to children's cognitive development, but also to their social development and wellbeing.

Language is not only a domain of human knowledge, it is the essential condition of knowing, the process by which experience becomes knowledge. When children learn language, they are not simply engaging in one kind of learning among many; rather,

they are learning the foundation of learning itself. Children learn language not only in home and neighbourhood but also in school; and with new modes of language development come new forms of knowledge, that is, educational knowledge as distinct from what we call common sense. The process of language development is still a continuous learning process, one that goes on from birth, through infancy and childhood, and on through adolescence into adult life.

Language is an extremely important way of interacting with the people around us. We use language to let others know how we feel, what we need, and to ask questions. Through language we can connect with other people and make sense of our experiences. Communication skills are so important to children; without language and speech, they can't let others know what they want and need, and what's important to them. However, there's another reason why communicating is so critical to a growing child's development; there are a lot of evidence suggesting that having a good command of language goes hand-in-hand with the ability to imagine and think up new ideas. As a parent, teacher, or other type of caregiver, one shapes a child's language development to reflect the identity, values, and experiences of the family and community. Therefore, caregivers/teachers must create a warm and comfortable environment in which children can grow to learn the complexities of language. The communication skills that the child learns early in life will be the foundation for his or her communication abilities for the future. Strong language skills are an asset that will promote a lifetime of effective communication. As caregivers and teachers, we play an important role in helping children learn to communicate with others, and, eventually, to read and write.

The early years are recognised as the foundation years for children's development. In particular, the first six years are crucial for young children in developing their first language and cultural identity, and it is during these early years that children build up their knowledge of the world around them. For children from language backgrounds other than English, the language or languages of the home that have been used since birth are the basis for developing meaningful relationships and learning about meaningful communication and interaction.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

Language development refers to how the child understands, organizes, speaks and uses words and this can be divided into two categories: receptive language and expressive language. The term receptive language refers to how well your child understands what is said to him. Way before a child can verbally answer a question; he can show that he understands you by following a simple direction or pointing to a specific object. Usually a child can follow simple directions and run to find an object, well before he will start using words. Expressive language on the other hand refers to your child's ability to express or communicate his thoughts and needs to others.

In early childhood setting, children's development is seen to span six phases and language and communication contributes to all six areas. These include:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication, language and literacy
- Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Creative development

Language is also important for learning and understanding. There have been several theories about how young children acquire language. Young children acquire language through significant others by interaction in their immediate environment, through responding to sounds, sentences and experiences expressed by their parents, family and other people around them. They begin by absorbing, listening and then imitating and practising. Their responses are reinforced by the significant others and patterns begin to emerge as they try so hard to make sense of what is happening around them. Gradually they learn to reproduce sounds and words and establish an understanding of how language works, the structure and grammatical sense of putting these sounds and words together. It is generally believe that humans have an inbuilt language acquisition device (LAD) that enables this process to occur.

Given minimum exposure to language, every child will acquire a sophisticated symbol system to serve its communicative needs. Children gain understanding about their own particular language and culture, but also knowledge and comprehension of the world around them. From the very moment they are born children are introduced to the language of their parents. They cry to attract attention and use this as a form of communication with their parents. They have different cries for different purposes and needs and parents respond by meeting these needs and by talking to their baby. They make eye contact, gestures, sounds and gurglings in responding to their parents' talk and so become communicators.

In early years parents (and significant others) support the baby's attempts at sounds and words, through prompting and repeating, modelling appropriate language, providing words and extending the baby's communication, offering them back in enhanced full sentences. Children listen avidly – collecting sounds and trialling these themselves. As they get older babies gain more control over language use. They begin with vowels sounds, babbling and imitating language. Later, they will start pointing to things around them and they are actually requesting the adult to supply the name of the object or person. They also will add intonation to help communicate to the adult what they need and soak up the words supplied. First words are usually labels for objects, others are communicative like "bye-bye" and "uh oh." Some single words are used to convey a whole sentence. These words are called holophrases- whole phrases which are full of meaning, because they are self-contained. The child's word for water or drink may be used as a holophrase meaning, "I am very thirsty and need a drink of

water." As they progress from one word to two words, they omit words and talk in short phrases- telegraphic fashion. Here, extraneous words were omitted and only the most important words were selected to communicate the meaning. Telegraphic speech in children performs the same function as holophrases. Most often telegraphic speech involves the pattern of noun/verb or noun/verb/object. Examples include: more apple; dog sleep; and mama go. Language seems to expand dramatically after the telegraphic stage. Two-year-olds, for example, often learn two to three new words each day. They begin to apply the rules of tenses as they gradually acquire them, most of the time incorrectly. As children learn these rules they tend to make errors because they over-regularize the rules; the errors actually represent progress because the child is thinking about the structure of the language. They are not only acquiring more vocabulary they are also learning about concepts and trying to make sense of their world. Language acquisition continues rapidly throughout the preschool period with children revising simple sentence structures to form questions and make commands.

Throughout life our receptive vocabularies, spoken or written language we understand, tend to be greater than the language we produce. We use contextual and gestural cues to help us understand the meanings of new words even though they might not be part of our spoken or expressive vocabularies. Thus vocabulary can continue to increase over a lifetime. While vocabulary continues to increase, most children have acquired control over most constructions by age ten.

There is a lot involved in this acquisition of language. Young children have to produce the sounds, learn the words and their meanings and put them together in a correct sentence structure. They also have to acquire the factors involved in social interaction; the social rules that affect the choices of language – the vocabulary; grammatical constructions; pronunciation; accent and dialect.

Language develops in three areas: speech sounds, words or vocabulary, sentence structure or grammar. Children learn at different rates in each area.

(a) Speech sounds

A baby learns a lot about the sounds of language in his first year. From the day he is born he can hear almost any speech sound. As early as 5 months old, the baby already understands some new words. From the age of six months on, he will try to communicate and start initiating exchanges. In his first six months of life, he will start gesturing when he cries, babbling and playing by making sounds. By the end of the first year, the baby will pay special attention to sounds that are important in the language or languages that significant adults speak. He will ignore sounds that are not used in their language. By the time the baby is one year old, he should also be babbling, making sounds that begin with a consonant and a vowel. He will later repeat these syllables heard, (for example, ‘bababa’ and ‘mamama’). These are the foundation for the first real words that your baby will say.

By the end of his first year, the baby will start to master the basics of language. He will say his first words as he becomes more curious, as he develops his senses and is able to move around freely. He may not say his first words correctly, but a stranger should be able to understand half of what he says at age 2, and all of what he says at age 4.

(b) Vocabulary skills

Babies' vocabulary skills develop very quickly. Babies can understand some words as early as 5 months and will say their first word between 10 and 12 months. A child's vocabulary usually includes about 50 words at 18 months, 100 words at 20 months and 14,000 words at 6 years.

(c) Sentence structure and grammar

The child will begin to put two, then three and more words together into short sentences at approximately 24 months of age. He will start to make complex sentences some time before age 2 and will have learned this skill by age 4. He can learn some of the letters of the alphabet and the sounds that go with those letters before he begins kindergarten. This will help him learn to read. One child might make a lot of speech errors but have a large vocabulary. Another child might speak clearly but have trouble understanding what people say.

In addition, Wells (1986) constructed five stages of language development, focusing on the function, meaning and structure of young children's early language acquisition, According to him; children will progress through all these stages, but may have different rates of achievement according to their own personal development.

STAGE	**FUNCTION** *What children try to do with their language*	**MEANING** *The states, events and relationship children talk about*	**STRUCTURE** *The way in which language is put together: grammar*
1.	Gain attention; direct attention to object or event to get what they want; make basic statements; make requests.	Naming things, connecting objects and people i.e. mummy's car. Much meaning conveyed by intonation	Single words -that convey whole meaning- look, more, there, want; Name & operator- e.g. look bird
2.	Asking questions, mainly where	Naming and classifying; constantly asking 'wassat' (what's that) changing locations- people coming/going, getting up/down	Interrogative pronoun: where book'; Basic sentences of noun and verb 'car gone, baby drink' Possession through apostrophe begins: Jack's chair; Teddy's sweeties
3.	Explosion of questions, often through intonation 'play, mummy?	Talk about actions which change object acted upon: 'You dry hands'; Use verbs like 'listen' &	Sentence structure now: subject + verb + object + addition: 'You dry hands'

		'know' Referring to events in past and sometimes in the future; On-going actions: 'Me doing it'; 'Mark still in bed'; Enquire state of actions such as if something is finished Talk about things changing	'A man dig down there ' Use of auxiliary verbs: 'I am going' Preposition + article + noun: 'in the cupboard'
4.	Complex sentence use Make a range of requests 'Shall I do it? Can I have that? Make and ask for explanations. The 'why' question appears	Now conveys a wide range of complex meanings Use of abstract psychological verbs such as 'know'; Expressing thinking and understanding; Express meaning indirectly: Can I have?' replaces 'Give me' Expressing meaning appropriately in context	Can I have one? He doesn't want one? No longer need intonation to convey meaning. Now able to use auxiliary verbs: do; can; will References through sentence: 'I want the pen Grandad gave me'; 'I know you're there'
5.	Can now: - give information - ask and answer varied questions - request directly and indirectly - suggest - offer - state and ask about own and other people's intentions, - express feelings and attitudes	Hypothetical and conditional statements: 'If you do that, I will . . .' Refer to past and future times specifically: 'after tea' Formulate conditions for something to happen: 'You've got to switch that on first' Talk about state of affairs Make estimations	Questions of what, when and what does it mean Invert subject and verb in 'When is she coming?' Can create complex sentences of several clauses Now greater flexibility in sentences; not just adding to length of sentence but can now structure meaning economically. More cohesive in language use.

Source: Adapted from Wells (1986)

By the end of the last stage, a child's language is firmly in place with a vocabulary of several thousand words. It is evident that the opportunity to hear and use language for a wide range of purposes, audiences and contexts directly affects the rate and expertise of children's future language development. All children will be learning their first or additional language in the same way and will go through the same processes and phases irrespective of the targeted language. What is important to remember is though they all follow similar patterns of development, the age and rate at which they develop may differ. This can be influenced by a number of factors:

- Home environment and the time spent with carers who talk to children
- The number of language-rich experiences
- The learning of two languages simultaneously
- State of children's emotional well-being
- Intellectual development resulting from both environmental and genetic factors.
- Physical health and whether children have any hearing, visual or speech impairments.

- Premature birth, which may account for some language delay.

Of the factors, a child's environment is the most critical component to language development. An environment free of abuse and excess stress frees the brain to create the necessary language connections. In such an environment, adults need to provide a language-rich, nurturing world in which attentive caregivers encourage a child's language efforts, however primitive. When we understand how language develops, we are in a better position to promote that development. By first ensuring that every child has a safe, secure environment and then by providing appropriate materials and activities to facilitate language development, teachers can maximize each child's innate potential.

Understanding of the process of language development in young children by implication requires parents, caregivers, and teachers who:

- Know that a child's capacity for learning is not determined at birth and there is a great deal they can do about it.
- Respect and build upon the home language and culture of the child are aware that there are many informal and enjoyable ways that language and literacy skills can be developed at home and in pre-school settings.
- Provide opportunities for children to use what they know about language and literacy in order to help them transfer what they know to new situations.
- Take time to listen and respond to children; talk *to* and *with* children not *at* them and engage children in extended conversations about events, storybooks, and a variety of other print media, as well as explain things to children.
- Use sophisticated and unusual words in their everyday talk with children, when it is appropriate to the conversation.
- Recognize that interesting concepts and vocabulary do not emerge from a vacuum and, thus, make sure to provide interesting content to think and talk about.
- Involve children in trips to local points of interest and talk with them about what they see and do.
- Establish a habit of raising and responding to children's questions about things that occur in the home environment or at trips to local points of interest.
- Provide time for reading to children and talking with them about what is read.
- Share a variety of types of literature, including lots of informational books to stimulate conversations about ideas and concepts beyond everyday experiences.
- Make books accessible for children to return to on their own to "pretend read" – a child's personal re-enactment of the read-aloud experience.

3.4 Conclusion

For language development, the newborn's brain is pre-wired to pay attention to all language sounds. Yet the family environment plays a critical role in the infant's language and brain development. Over the first few months of life, infants learn to

pay particular attention to the special sounds of their own cultures and languages. Their brains are shaped by the language culture they are born into, preparing them to learn the words, behaviors, rules, and strategies that they will need to succeed. The brain images that accompany these changes in the ability to respond to speech sounds suggest that the needed pathways for relevant speech sounds have been cultivated and have expanded. Pathways for sounds that are not heard in the infant's culture have been pruned back, or diminished. Thus, experience activates the pathways and synapses in the developing infant's brain.

3.5 Summary

The unit has examined the processes of language development in children, and its relationship to subsequent development and learning in life. The roles of adults and environment in the process were also emphasized.

3.6 Self-Assessment Questions

a) Briefly describe the three areas in which children develop language in early years.
b) List the factors that may affect children's language development.
c) What are the stages of language development?

3.7 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Why is language crucial to young children's development?

3.8 References/Further Reading

- Beller, S. (2008). *Fostering language acquisition in daycare settings: What does the research tell us?* Working Papers in Early Childhood Development. The Hague: Bernard van Leer Foundation.
- Bloom, L. (1993). The transition from infancy to language. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Bloom, L. (1998). Language acquisition in its developmental context. In W. Damon (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Volume 2: Cognition, perception, and language* (pp. 309-370). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Dale, P.S. (1976). *Language development: Structure and function*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Doughty, C., & Long, M. (Eds.) (2003). *The handbook of second language acquisition*. Maldin, Oxford, Melbourne, and Berlin: Blackwell.
- Wells, G. (1985). Language development in the pre-school years. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Wells, G. (1986). The meaning makers: Children learning language and using language to learn. Portsmouth, NH, Heinemann.

UNIT 4: THEORIES OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Introduction

The current knowledge about language development includes a large amount of theory, research, and debate from a variety of fields. These include linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, medicine, computers, biology, neurology, speech and language pathology, and education. However, there are three general theories that have been developed to explain language learning: behavioural, linguistic, and interactional. These theories help us think about language development from different points of view. However, the shortcomings of these theories illustrate that language is not easily explained. This unit explores especially the language development theories that have been of significant implication to the development of reading skills.

4.2 Objectives: At the end of this unit, you should:

a) Describe the different theories of language development in children.
b) Articulate the implications of the theories to language learning and reading development.

4.3 Main Content

BEHAVIOURAL THEORY OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT (THE LEARNING PERSPECTIVE)

Behavioural theory focuses on environmental influences on language acquisition. The theory, proposed by B. F. Skinner suggests that language (which is primarily spoken) is learned through operant conditioning (association, reinforcement and imitation) and therefore develops as a result of habit formation. To the behaviourists, language

learning is a mechanical process leading learners to habit formation whose underlying scheme is the conditioned reflex. It argues that children imitate what they see and hear, and that children learn from punishment and reinforcement. Skinner argued that children learn language based on behaviourist reinforcement principles by associating words with meanings. Correct utterances are positively reinforced when the child realizes the communicative value of words and phrases. For example, when the child says 'cheese' and the mother gives her some as a result, the child will find this outcome rewarding, and is motivated to say the word again and again (knowing that a positive response would come from the mother), therefore enhancing the child's language development. When children speak the language of their parents they are rewarded and become more skilful. They grow in their ability to respond in a manner that responds to the environmental stimuli given by his parents. This shapes a child's language more than knowledge of rules. Further, competence in the rules of language is not as important as the ability to speak it; speaking is what makes language real. Knowledge (of language) is a mental state and the structure of a language doesn't make it a language; it is the function of speaking words that makes a language a language.

Behaviourists believe language is something that can be observed and measured. The need to use language is stimulated and language is uttered in response to stimuli. Also, children learn words by associating sounds with objects, actions, and events. They also learn words and syntax by imitating others. Adults enable children to learn words and syntax by reinforcing correct speech.

This perspective agrees with the nurture side of the nature-nurture debate. While most would agree that a language-rich environment helps children achieve success in communication, the behaviourists approach has been criticized for not taking into account the many and varied influences on a child's language learning. Critics of this idea argue that a behaviourist explanation of language development is inadequate. They maintain several arguments that:

- Imitation and conditioning is known to kill creativity, which is one of the key features of language.
- Stimulus-Response learning cannot account for the rapid rate at which children acquire language.
- There are an infinite number of sentences in a language. All these sentences cannot be learned by imitation.
- Children make errors, such as over-regularizing verbs. For example, a child may say *John <u>hurted</u> me*, incorrectly adding the usual past tense suffix *-ed* to *hurt*. Errors like these can't result from imitation, since most adults (unless in second language situation) generally use correct verb forms.
- Children acquire language skills even though adults do not consistently correct their syntax.

THE LINGUISTIC APPROACH TO LANGUAGE LEARNING (NATIVIST PERSPECTIVE)

Nativists argue that children have an inborn desire to make sense of the world, that is, to gain knowledge. With their natural drive to attend to the spoken word and sort out meanings, children can use language as a way to make sense of their world; hence, language becomes a unique human accomplishment. The main theorist associated with this perspective is Noam Chomsky.

Chomsky proposed that all humans have a **Language Acquisition Device** (LAD) - a language centre in the brain serving as the source of language or an innate mechanism or process that allows children to acquire and develop language skills. The LAD contains knowledge of grammatical rules common to all languages; that is to say that we are born with a set of rules about language in our heads which he refers to as the 'Universal Grammar'. The Universal Grammar is the basis upon which all human languages build. To him, children do not simply copy the language that they hear around them. They deduce rules from it, which they can then use to produce sentences that they have never heard before. They do not learn a repertoire of phrases and sayings, as the behaviourists believe, but a grammar that generates an infinite number of new sentences. When the child begins to listen to his parents, he will unconsciously recognise which kind of a language he is dealing with - and he will set his grammar to the correct one. He contends that at birth, the child has a certain number of hypotheses, which he or she then matches with what is happening around him. The child knows intuitively that there are some words that behave like verbs, nouns, etc. and that there is a limited set of possibilities as to their ordering within the phrase. This set of language learning tools, provided at birth, is referred to by Chomsky as the **Language Acquisition Device.** The LAD also allows children to understand the rules of whatever language they are listening to.

According to this view, the Universal Grammar makes children receptive to the common features of all languages. Because of this hard-wired background in grammar, children easily pick up a language when they are exposed to its particular grammar. This line of thinking saw language as a structure that was innate or native to a child who held within himself the knowledge of language rules.

Chomsky supported the innate human capacity to acquire language skills from the following observations:

- The stages of language development occur at about the same ages in most children, even though different children experience very different environments.
- Children’s language development follows a similar pattern across cultures.
- There are also similar patterns of development across many languages, e.g., subject-object, word order, etc.
- Children generally acquire language skills quickly and effortlessly.

- Deaf children who have not been exposed to a language may make up their own language. These new languages resemble each other in sentence structure, even when they are created in different cultures.

Chomsky's theory implies that, there is little doubt that the basic structure of language and the principles that determine the form and interpretation of sentences in any human language are in large part innate. He emphasizes that if a child is placed in an impoverished environment, innate abilities simply do not develop, mature and flourish. According to him, a stimulating environment is required to enable natural curiosity, intelligence and creativity to develop and to enable our biological capacities to unfold.

Chomsky also differentiates between competence and performance in language use. Performance is what people actually say, which is often ungrammatical, whereas competence is what they instinctively know about the syntax of their language - and this is more or less equated with the Universal Grammar. Chomsky concentrates upon this aspect of language (competence) and ignores the things that people actually say (performance). The problem here is that he relies upon people's intuitions as to what is right or wrong - but it is not at all clear that people will all make the same judgements, or that their judgements actually reflect the way people really do use the language. This is one of the premises upon which Chomsky's views were later criticized.

Also, Chomsky reduces language to its grammar and regard meaning as secondary. This is not acceptable to critics as some utterances are found to be grammatically correct but actually meaningless.

In addition, his disregard for meaning, and by implication the social situation in which language is normally produced, renders insignificant the situation in which the child learns his first language. Some aspects of children's grammatical language development take years, and therefore appear to be largely dependent on interaction with the environment. Also, differing language environments have effects on development.

THE INTERACTIONIST THEORY OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Proposed by Lev Vygotsky, Social interactionist theory is an explanation of language development emphasizing the role of social interaction between the developing child and linguistically knowledgeable adults. This approach is a compromise between the behaviourist and linguistic approaches; contending that language development is both biological and social. While researchers who see language development through this lens also agree that language has structure, they believe the environment plays an important role in shaping that structure. Proponents of the theory argue that children need more than a desire to speak, more than an inborn LAD, and more than a model to imitate but in addition, the need to interact with others; in other words, language

learning is influenced by the desire of children to communicate with others. Language also goes beyond verbal utterances but includes the non-verbal actions that exhibit an understanding of meaning. Such non-verbal social behaviours often achieve the same effect as words. For example, a look or tone of voice can extract a reaction that is the same as when language alone is used.

Vygotsky is best known for being an educational psychologist with a sociocultural theory. This theory suggests that social interaction leads to continuous step-by-step changes in children's thought and behaviour that can vary greatly from culture to culture (Vygotsky, 1979). He suggests that children's development depends on interaction with people and the tools that the culture provides to help form their own view of the world. He further emphasized the role of 'imitative learning' where children imitate or copy from adults and by implication that children need to have exposure to environments that can allow them imitation for further development. It is therefore, important for teachers to provide adequate exposure for children through time spent, methodology and instructional materials used in teaching reading during the emergent stages of reading development.

With emphasis on his 'Zone of Proximal Development' (which he characterized as the means whereby what a child can do with assistance now, can be done independently by her in subsequent attempts), Vygotsky argues that a child can, through the help of an adult or more capable child, perform at a higher level than he or she can independently. The process of learning to read should thus be supported by caring and supportive individuals (in this context are teachers). By implication, the theory enables teachers to know what children are able to achieve through the use of a mediator and thus they should utilize suitable methods for example; discovery, child-centred, and all those that can involve a child in the learning situation. Furthermore, teachers need to use variety of instructional materials that can enable children develop important reading skills as supportive and useful mediator.

Vygotsky further elaborates on the importance of play in children's learning situations and argues that play leads to development. Following this perspective, teachers need to provide young children many opportunities to play. Through play and imagination a child's conceptual abilities are enhanced. Therefore, teachers should use of play as a method of teaching reading. Through play children can develop the fundamentals required for proper development of reading skills.

In some important respects, Piaget and Vygotsky held similar views about children's intellectual development, notably about the active and constructive nature of children's understanding of the world. However, they differed on three important points. First, whereas Piaget believed that children's early development resulted from their action on the material world, Vygotsky saw development as resulting from children's participation in social activities. Second, while Piaget sought for universal characteristics of development, Vygotsky recognized the importance of the children's

specific social and cultural environments for the ways in which they develop. And third, whereas Piaget treated language development as depending on prior cognitive development, Vygotsky saw it as the driving force of social as well as intellectual development (Bruner 1996).

Over the last quarter of a century, it has been Vygotsky's theory of learning and development that has gradually been recognized as providing the most helpful basis for rethinking the principles on which early education should be based. It is therefore important to further highlight some of the central features of his theory.

a. Human behavior and cultural development take place in joint productive activity that is mediated by artifacts, both material and symbolic.

b. Language is the most important artifact – the "tool of tools". It enables coordination of joint activity, consideration of past events and plans for the future, and representations of understanding.

c. Activity always takes place within a social/cultural context

d. Learning is an active and constructive process; it involves a triple transformation: of the learner's repertoire for action, of the artifacts used, and of the goals and organization of the activity.

e. The development of individual intelligence and personal identity occurs through appropriation of the culture's resources in the course of participation in joint activity. Since activities vary across cultures, so do the competences that children and adults develop.

f. Knowledge is constructed through solving problems that arise in joint activity in the present; knowledge is only meaningful and useful when it is used as a tool for further activity.

g. Learning is greatly facilitated by guidance and assistance that is pitched in the learner's "zone of proximal development". (Halliday 1975).

Finally, Vygotsky's theory made it clear that children's significant others play a critical role in their early development by making cultural resources available to them and by assisting them in making them their own. This is seen in some contexts at home, but it remains equally true of children's learning and development in the time they spend at school.

SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Social learning theory explains that children imitate the words and language patterns they hear by watching and listening to the models, caregivers, and family members in their life (Bandura, 1989).

In social learning theory, also called observational learning, Bandura postulated that human learning is a continuous reciprocal interaction of cognitive, behavioural, and environmental factors. This theory focuses on behaviour modelling in which a child observes and then imitates the behaviour of adults or other children around him or her. Social learning theory further states that learning can occur through the simple process of observing and then imitating others' activities. Thus, social environment can play an important role in teaching learners a second language. The socio-cognitive view is the result of converging the social ideas with the cognitive ones, and it holds that learning occurs when the social and cognitive variables are engaged in this process. Social learning theory proposes that social life and psychological life interact as part of learning, so that learning cannot be considered a purely individual activity. Rather, it is situated in social institutions, social groups and social class. Personality, cognitive and social factors interact dynamically to create identity, expectancy, self-esteem, efficacy and ultimately, performance. Within this context, second language learners could learn a language in a better manner if they are left to employ their cognitive capability along with their social interactions. This view is underpinned by the social aspect of constructivism claiming that knowledge is socially constructed.

Since the theory emphasizes the principle of situated learning in which learning is said to require social interaction and collaboration, it could be related with Chomsky and Vygotsky's theories which emphasize the interaction with the environment in the child's language development. Lave & Wenger, (1991) argued that learning normally occurs in a function of the actions, context and culture in which it occurs and that social interaction is a critical component of situated learning in which learners become involved in a community of practice which embodies certain beliefs and behaviours to be acquired.

Applying this in the field of reading, it would enable teachers to understand that it is very important to use methods that are interactive in nature so as to advance collaborative social interaction within learners especially in the struggle to improve and develop reading skills.

BRAIN RESEARCH

New advances in brain research have allowed scientists to understand how the physiology of the brain enables human beings to learn language. It appears that the brain is most plastic, or flexible, in young children. This plasticity is connected to a critical period for learning language easily. This critical period makes it easiest to acquire language before age eight or nine, when the ability begins to shut down.

A typically developing child tends to achieve language fluency around age three. However, children who live in an environment characterized by trauma, neglect, stress, or abuse may experience abnormal physical changes in the structure of the brain which interfere with normal language acquisition. Levels of stress hormones

such as cortisol are increased. In some abused or neglected children vital areas of the brain appear like black holes-dark, undeveloped, and inactive.

All languages are composed of phonemes, the smallest units of sound-consonants and vowels. Phonemes combine to form the smallest meaningful units of language, or morphemes. Therefore, it is necessary for the brain to distinguish the phonemes of a given language in order for a child to differentiate the sounds of his or her native language. This differentiation is accomplished by neurons in the auditory cortex. During the first year of life, when the infant hears the same phoneme repeatedly, a cluster of neurons becomes wired to respond to that phoneme. Subsequently, when the ear carries that particular phoneme to the brain, the assigned neuron cluster automatically fires. This process forms a brain map for the sound of the language or languages spoken in an infant's environment. By the end of the first year, a child will differentiate those phonemes which have been assigned to neural clusters but will not identify unused phonemes such as those used in other languages. Connections used the most are retained while unused connections are eliminated.

IMPLICATIONS OF THEORIES TO READING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Focusing on beginning readers, the various theories converged that children need to be exposed to rich stimulating environment that can enable them develop language which in turn will help them to acquire all the necessary reading skills before they go to school. For example, a home in which parents or caregivers spare time to converse, tell stories, and sing songs and share rhymes and riddles with their young children is important because children would have had exposure with oral/ verbal communication and thus would have developed adequate skills that can enhance their reading development. This teaches us that for language to develop, a lot need to be done in the child's social, physical and psychological environment and thus calls for teachers to utilize methods that encourage discovery and exploration experiences, use of verbal communication in most of their teaching than more of writing. In so doing, beginning readers will acquire important skills that will help them to develop proper reading.

It is proven by researches that rapidly developing children experience both a greater amount of interaction with adults and also a greater proportion of conversational episodes that respond to and extend the child's initiations. As a result, it is difficult to determine whether it is the quality of adult-child interaction or sheer quantity that is facilitative of children's language development. The answer seems to be that while quantity is certainly beneficial, there is an additional benefit to the child when adults tend not only to engage in frequent interaction but also to respond to the child's contributions in ways that extend - or help the child to extend - the topic in which he or she is interested. One important result is that the child is likely to acquire a larger vocabulary and, this is a significant predictor of reading development and later academic success in school. However, there seem to be important consequences that are particularly attributable to the quality of talk, as previously defined. First, the child

who is treated as an interesting conversational partner and whose contributions are taken up and extended by his or her interlocutor is likely to gain greater confidence in his or her own ability to contribute to collaborative meaning making and, second, he or she is likely to become more knowledgeable about the topics that are discussed.

Brain research has shown us that circuits in the brain are set up for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to emerge naturally into *speaking* the language they hear spoken around them. It is not necessary to teach them. But learning to read and write must be converted by young children in this language module of the brain by hearing and seeing language in its spoken and written forms. In other words, speaking is natural but reading and writing are not. Young children can either emerge into reading and writing naturally if the circumstances are right or have to be taught, or both.

Whatever their home environment, however, all children successfully learn to talk before they begin their formal education. That is not to deny the very considerable differences between children in their rate of language development but, unless they are physically or mentally impaired, by five years of age, all children are able to engage in spoken interaction with their caregivers about matters of shared importance. This is a very remarkable achievement and one that would not be possible without the active contribution of their caregivers.

4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, Language development is a complex and a unique human quality that no theory is as yet able to completely explain. The nature vs. nurture debate extends to the topic of language acquisition. Today, most researchers acknowledge that both nature and nurture play a role in language acquisition. Many drawbacks exist to the language teacher when attempting to use current research and theory in functional practice. An obvious drawback is that there are likely too many theories to choose from. Having a wide selection of options often obscures the availability of the best option. Also, because so much of the theories exist as explanations of hidden processes, they tend to be so general that teaching assumptions don't apply across categories of language or from individual to individual. That no one language acquisition theory has been settled upon indicates that no one method of language can currently be deemed best.

4.5 Summary

We have explored the process of language development in children as well as the theories that interpreted the process. Behaviourism focuses on observable language behaviour, emphasizes language learning through imitation of parents and by conditioning/reinforcement and that language is developed through training not maturation. The Nativist promotes Language Acquisition Device (LAD)**,** which is a biologically based, innate module for picking up language needs only to be triggered

by verbal input from the environment. Within the LAD is a Universal Grammar, which contains all the basic rules (grammar) that underlie all human languages. Social learning theory emphasizes imitation and modelling while the interactionists is a compromise between the behaviourist and linguistic approaches and argued that language development is both biological and social. The foray of brain research in language acquisition and its contributions were also examined.

4.6 Self-Assessment Questions

a) What is LAD? Explain how LAD works in language development.
b) What are the major arguments against LAD in language development?
c) Discuss the major arguments against the Behaviourist Theory,
d) Enumerate the common features in Jean Piaget's and Leo Vygosky's theories?
e) In what ways is the Interractionist Theory related to Social Learning Theory? What are their unique contributions?

4.7 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Give a full discussion of the theories of language development and explore the implication of each to the development of reading skills.

4.8 References/Further Reading

- Bandura, A. (1977) *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Brock, A. & Rankin C. (2008) Communication, Language and Literacy from Birth to Five. *SAGE Publications Ltd*
- Buckley, B. (2003) The Children's Communication Skills – From Birth to Five Years. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Sage, R. (2006) Supporting Language and Communication: A Guide for School Support Staff. London: PCP.
- Daniels, H., Ed. (1996). An introduction to Vygotsky. London, Routledge.
- Nelson, K. (1996). Language in cognitive development: The emergence of the mediated mind. New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

UNIT 5: READING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Introduction

The ideal time to expose children to reading is during babyhood. Many researchers consistently demonstrate that the more children know about language and literacy before they arrive at school, the better equipped they are to succeed in reading. To enable appropriate support in reading programmes, it is important that parents and teachers of young children must understand the normal pattern of reading development. The unit focuses on the stages of reading development and the skills exhibited by readers at each level. In addition, early literacy skills that contribute significantly to later reading achievement are also discussed.

5.2 Objectives. By the end of the units, you should be able to:

a) Explain the importance of exposing children early to reading activities.
b) Describe extensively the stages of reading Summarize the emergent literacy skills.
c) Relate the characteristics of each reading stage with the children around you.
d) Differentiate between ‘learning to read’ and ‘reading to learn’.
e) Differentiate between Alphabetic Principle and Phonemic Awareness.
f) Discuss the implications of the phases on children’s reading readiness.

5.3 Main Content

STAGES/PHASES OF READING DEVELOPMENT

Beginning reading is the solid foundation on which almost all subsequent learning takes place and all children need this foundation. Reading skills develop in sequences and educators need to help children progress along those sequences. They need to be mastered systematically from one stage to another and they begin to develop during the first months and years of life. Children’s experiences with speech and literacy can begin to form a basis for their future reading success. There are five stages of reading

development. They are the emerging pre-reader, novice reader, decoding reader, fluent comprehending reader, and the expert reader. It is normal that children will move through these different stages at different rates.

Emerging pre-reader (Pre-reading Stage)

The emerging pre-reader stage, also known as the stage of reading readiness, happens when a young child sits and listens to someone read to them. Emerging reading takes many years of language experience, along with the increase of both conceptual and social development. To show that this process starts early in a child's life is the fact that children typically produce their first few words before their first birthday. This emerging pre-reader stage usually lasts for the first five years of a child's life. During the emerging pre-reader stage (ages 3 through 5), children will often 'read' books, stories and pictures. They will tell the story as they have memorized it and turn the pages appropriately. They call what they are doing 'reading' since they typically don't yet understand that their parents or caregivers are decoding written words. To them, they are doing what they think their parents or caregivers are doing when reciting the story. At the preschool, the responsibility of the teacher at this is to encourage reading interest with enjoyable experiences and activities, with an emphasis on oral expression. _e principal goal at this stage is to ensure that the learner is socially, mentally, emotionally and physically ready to learn to read. Spatial development is important at this stage. _e pupil is taught to recognize spaces between words and the descending order of the lines in a text. He or she learns to read from left to right usually. Oral expression is also the focus of instruction, and the development of sight vocabulary which is taught using sentences, signs, labels, etc. Simple ideas are expressed and organized in order to create sentences. The formation of words, starting with consonants, and the recognition of rhymes by word endings are all taught. Examples of children's activities include telling stories, drawing pictures, analysing pictures and paintings, and using pictures and songs to arrive at a list of words.

Novice reader (Beginning reading stage)

The next step in the learning to read process is the novice reading stage also known as selective association. This begins with the child learning to decode print and understanding the meaning of what has been decoded. To do this, the child must first figure out the Alphabetic principle and master it in only a few years. Most children know that the words on a page in a book mean something, but do not readily understand how the letters code the meaning. They know that these words are made of the sounds of their particular language, and that letters convey these sounds. Novice readers learn to hear and manipulate the smaller sounds into syllables and words. If a child is able to master this skill, called phonological awareness, it is one of the best predictors of his success in learning to read. One way that children can be taught to become more aware of sounds within words is through nursery rhymes that enhance the child's ability to hear and divide the structure of words and some games in which

the sounds in a word are either clapped, written or danced to a beat. A novice reader will also memorize the most common letter patterns in their own language. It is also in this stage that children will develop a vocabulary of words that is between 2,500 to 5,000 words. Children's vocabularies continue to grow as they enter elementary school, since they will continue to learn new words at a rate of about seven words per day.

At this stage of development, the learner must acquire an ability to recognize the letters of the alphabet, but not to memorize them. This is accomplished by varying the types of techniques used to teach the alphabet. The modern approach is that children learn the alphabet in a literature context. Alphabets can also be taught using jingles, melodies and rhythms. Teachers should promote pupil motivation constantly from the start of a reading programme as pupils react willingly to the text when they are motivated.

Teachers are also encouraged to provide models for the children. This means that the teacher performs an action, or expresses a thought, that the class imitates. A child can read a poem, imitating the pronunciation and expression a teacher used while reading the poem. Or, a pupil can be a model and teach the class a small lesson or activity that he or she has learned. When pupils are the models, it encourages self-empowerment. This shows that at this stage in reading the strategy is to just practice, practice, practice or read, read more, and read again.

Decoding reader (Stage of developing reading fluency)

The transition from the novice reader stage to the decoding stage is marked by the absence of painful pronunciations and in its place the sounds of a smoother, more confident reader. In this phase of learning to read, the reader adds at least 3,000 words to what they can decode. It is essential that during this stage, if a reader is going to become fluent, she needs to acquire a sufficient repertoire of the letter-patterns and vowel-pairs that help to make up words that go beyond the basic level. The faster a child can see that the word ‘together’ is "to-ge-ther", the faster the reader will become a more fluent reader. As children move forward with their reading skills, they learn a great deal about what is really inside a word; the stem, roots, prefixes and suffixes that make up morphemes of the language. Decoding readers become exposed to many types of morphemes such as prefixes and suffixes, and it is when they learn to read these as together with root words that their reading and their understanding will speed up dramatically. Being able to read at a fluent level is not only about how fast a child can read, but it is matter of being able to utilize all the special knowledge that they have about a word—its letters, letter patterns, meanings, grammatical functions, roots, and endings—fast enough that they have time to think and comprehend what they are seeing. The point of becoming a proficient reader is to fluently read and comprehend what had just been read. Decoding readers are just beginning to understand and learn

how to use their expanding knowledge of language and their growing powers of inference to figure out what they are really reading.

At the beginning of this stage a child often devote so much mental capacity to the process of decoding that they will lack comprehension of the meaning of the words being read. This is most likely if the text being read is at or above their skill level. It is nevertheless an important stage because decoding practice allows the child to improve their decoding skills with the ultimate goal of becoming automatic over time. Though comprehension may be poor at this stage, it is nevertheless an important step towards comprehension. As the skill of decoding improves and the more automatic it becomes, the more the child has mental capacity to devote to comprehension. Therefore, understanding of what is being read increases.

It is also in the decoding phase that the child learns to go beyond what is actually written in the story to get the underlying meaning of what the story is really about. In the decoding stage a child also learns that if a sentence or paragraph is not understood, re-reading it a second or third time may be necessary in order to fully understand the passage. Knowing when a text needs to be re-read is a very important skill and can improve comprehension greatly.

The school can assist in developing this stage by exposing pupils to very diverse materials such as travel brochures, pictures, stamps from countries around the world, washing directions on clothes labels, puzzles, food boxes, riddles, plays, carefully selected newspapers, comic strips, drawings, pictures and children's publications. It is very important, therefore, to make sure that the materials challenge the pupils and are relevant to the lessons, and that they continue to instil self- confidence, appeal to the children and can also introduce new interests and ideas by building on current interests.

Fluent, comprehending reader (Increased Reading ability and interest)

At this stage, children shift from learning to read, to reading to learn and they build up a substantial background of knowledge of spelling. It is during this time in a reader's development that teachers and parents can be tricked by fluent-sounding reading into thinking that a child understands everything that he or she is reading. As the content of what they are able to read becomes more demanding, good readers will develop knowledge of figurative language which helps them to discover new meanings in the text. This will assist them to understand the meaning of what they are reading beyond what is written on the page. The comprehension process grows while reading books where children learn how to connect prior knowledge, predict good or bad consequences, draw inferences from every danger-filled corner, monitor gaps in their understanding, and interpret how each new clue, revelation, or added piece of knowledge changes what they know. In learning these new skills, they learn to unravel the layers of meaning in a word, a phrase or a thought.

There are two ways in which increasing fluency can be supported-- explicit instruction in comprehension by the teacher and the child's own desire to read. Also, engaging in conversation about what they are reading allows the beginning reader to ask critical questions, facilitating a better understanding of the central meaning.

At the end of this stage, before the reader becomes an expert reader, many processes have started to become automatic. This increasing automaticity frees up cognitive resources so that the reader can reflect on meaning. With the decoding process almost automatic by this point, the brain learns to integrate more metaphorical, inferential, analogical, background and experiential knowledge.

Generally, a child will go through these stages in three to five years, provided that they are ready to learn, and that there are no differences between the language of the child and the language of instruction. In the latter case, the process may take longer, because the child is acquiring another language as well as learning how to read in that language.

Many of the tools needed to be a fluent reader have been learned at this point in development, so concentration is placed on motivating pupils to read for enjoyment and encouraging children to make reading a habit. Supplementary materials for individual reading activities or free voluntary reading should be made available. The children should be encouraged to make class books in addition added to the supplementary materials. As pupils are able to read faster and with more understanding, ample materials should therefore be available in the classroom library and/or the school library for the children to choose from. If there are no libraries, as is the case in most rural primary schools, teachers can build up box libraries over time. Examples of children's activities include word dig where pupils can pretend to be archaeologists and dig for 'roots' and words within other words, storytelling, book reviews, etc.

Expert reader (Enhanced and refined reading stage)

The final stage in learning to read is the expert stage. When a reader is at this stage of reading, it usually only takes them one second to read almost any word.

At this stage, pupils learn how to (a) identify the main ideas in a text and (b) how to analyse and apply the information that they have learned from a text. They are able to develop arguments and support those arguments based on information in the text, other sources of information or previous knowledge. There should be more emphasis on non-fiction materials, such as diagrams, maps and encyclopaedias. The ultimate goal is for pupils to be able to read a text and comprehend its meaning. It is expected that pupils will have a facility with words that aid in communication.

The degree to which expert reading will change over the course of an adult's life depends on what a person reads and how much he/she reads. As a person matures, life experiences as well as the cognitive process of reading text shapes reading comprehension. It is this interpretive response that adds depth to reading and will often take the reader in a new direction from where the author intended.

EMERGENT LITERACY SKILLS

By the time they are pre-schoolers, children are fully engaged in emerging into early literacy—listening, speaking, and their own experimental reading and writing—especially if the adults around them support their literacy efforts by providing materials and activities for them to progress. For children who receive little support in this regard, their drive to communicate and emerge into early literacy may not progress as smoothly and becoming literate may take additional effort or a longer time for them..

Emergent literacy skills are terms used to describe the skills acquired in early childhood that prepare the children to have the greatest benefit from formal reading instruction when they enter school. These emergent literacy skills have been shown to have a high correlation with later reading ability. Researches have shown that reading is typically acquired relatively predictably by children who have normal or above-average language skills and have had early experiences/exposure to literacy, thereby fostering their motivation to read. Emergent literacy behaviours include:

- Listening to stories
- Discussing stories
- Making up stories
- Pretending to read
- Holding a book right side up
- Retelling a familiar story
- Turning the pages at the right time

In this section, we shall discuss emergent literacy skills that appear to be highly predictive factors for reading ability. To the fluent reader, these skills may seem so common-sense as not to be worthy of mention, but they are very critical. If ignored, the child is put at risk and may have the difficult task of decoding print. Note that the focus on literacy (and not only reading) skills is based on the connection between reading and writing, both of which constitute literacy activities and researches encourage that both skills should be taught together.

a) **Knowledge about Books/ Print Awareness**

It is easy to forget that young children do not necessarily know what a book is or how it is used. As we read to children, they learn how to hold a book and that it is opened at the beginning; how to recognize the parts of a book (e.g. front and back covers, top

and bottom). Children also must learn that in English, a book is read from left to right and from top to bottom. They must learn that learn that a book has a title, was written by an author, and has illustrations that were drawn by an illustrator and that it is print, not pictures, that is being read. We take this latter skill for granted, but given the vivid and colourful illustrations in children's books, it is easy to see why children might think the pictures are being read. This skill is also referred to as *print awareness* which is summarised as understanding the features of books and print.

As part of learning, children begin to develop the very important concept that meaning is conveyed through words; that printed words are separated by spaces; and that some words in print look longer (because they have more letters) than other words. Lyster (1999) explains that children develop an important awareness of the correspondences between the spoken and written language by listening to the sounds compiling a word, starting with the first sounds in words and being exposed to the letters as well as the words they are part of. They see that, like spoken language, printed language carries messages and is a source of both enjoyment and information. By implication, children who have not had the opportunity of shared reading activities or exposure to many kinds of print materials before formal reading instruction may find it hard to understand that the 'funny-looking' black symbols on paper are actually letters, words and sentences that are said when they are read out loud. These children will be at a higher risk of becoming poor readers or experiencing reading difficulties when the actual process of reading is introduced.

Some children become aware of print long before they enter school. They see print all around them, on signs and billboards, in alphabet books and storybooks, and in labels, magazines, and newspapers. Seeing print and observing adults' reactions to print do help children recognize its various forms.

However, understanding how print works does not emerge magically and unaided. This understanding comes about through the active intervention of adults and other children who point out letters, words, and other features of the print that surrounds children. It is when children are read to regularly, when they play with letters and engage in word games, and later, when they receive formal reading instruction, that they begin to understand how the system of print functions.

As they participate in interactive reading with adults, children learn further about books – authors' and illustrators' names, titles, tables of content, page numbers, and so forth. They also learn about book handling – how to turn pages, how to find the top and bottom on a page, how to identify the front and back cover of a book, and so forth.

(b) Alphabet knowledge

Another skill appropriate to preschool include recognizing alphabets - naming upper and lower case letters and beginning to associate letters with the sounds they make.

English is an alphabetic language. Thousands of words are derived from a base alphabet of 26 letters. A predictive factor for learning to read is the fast and accurate skill of naming and recognizing the alphabets. Although many children are able to recite the alphabet song, letter knowledge goes beyond singing the song. Children must also be able to recognize the letters in many contexts—within words, handwritten or typed, in different fonts, and so on. But accuracy of recognition alone is not enough. The speed at which they can reliably name individual letters appears to be the determining factor. Why are letter recognition and naming such good predictors of later reading success? The names of most letters are closely related to their sounds. As children learn to name the letters, they are beginning to learn their sounds as well. This leads to what is called the **alphabetic principle,** which is the understanding that letters have corresponding sounds that make words when combined.

Beginning readers should gain the understanding that words are composed of individual letters and that these letters correspond to sounds. This is because reading comprehension and other higher-order reading activities depend on strong word recognition skills. These skills include phonological decoding; implying that, to read words, a reader must first see a word and then access its meaning in memory. But to do this, the reader must do the following:

- Translate a word into its phonological counterpart, (e.g., the word rat is translated into the individual phonemes (/r/, /a/, and /t/).
- Remember the correct sequence of sounds.
- Blend the sounds together.
- Search his or her memory for a real word that matches the string of sounds (/r/, /a/, and /t/).

Skilful readers do this so automatically and rapidly that it looks like the natural reading of whole words and not the sequential translation of letters into sounds and sounds into words. Mastering the prerequisites for word recognition may be enough for many children to make the link between the written word and its meaning with little guidance. For some children, however, more explicit teaching of word recognition is necessary.

(c) Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is one of the building blocks of a strong foundation for reading development. A phoneme is a sound unit in language. For example, a word “apple”,

there are three distinct sound "chunks" to pronounce this word—"a", "puh" and "l". Each of these sounds is a phoneme. Phonemic awareness is not only an understanding that these sound units exist, but also the recognition that they make up words. We are able to read unfamiliar words because we use our knowledge of phonemes to sound out the word. Very young readers do not know to do this. Therefore they must be taught phonemes. In order to help children transition between saying and reading phonemes, kindergarten teachers and parents should instruct children by connecting letters and phonemes. They should present written letters and teach the child the different ways that the letter is pronounced. Through this sort of instruction children become aware not only of the different sounds in the English language, but also they begin to understand that specific letters represent specific sounds.

In addition to phonemic awareness, they must be taught phonics. Phonics involves the ability to link sounds to letters and to use these to construct words. While it is helpful for children to be aware of particular phonemes and their letter representations, this knowledge is not enough for them to be able read. They need to be able to put letters and phonemes together to create words.

(d) Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness refers to the ability to manipulate the sounds that make up language, independent of meaning. In preschool, children benefit from:

- learning to recognize rhyming words
- listening for syllables within words
- learning to recognize beginning sounds in words
- matching those sounds to letters

According to Burns & Snow (1999), phonetic awareness is more likely to develop in those who have varied language experiences including word play activities such as rhyming and singing activities. Phonological awareness is one linguistic form that is necessary for children in developing reading abilities. This implies that phonological processing is the use of information about the sound structure of language in interpreting written input. A child should however learn to recognise, differentiate and use phonological input to interpret and process the information required.

Phonics is best taught systematically. Parents and teachers should begin by helping children sound out individual letters and then blending these letters into a word. For instance, if a child is learning to read the word 'bat' the adult working with her should first help her figure out what sound each letter makes—"buh" a" "t". Then she should be encouraged to link these sounds together to make the word. Often young children have many words in their verbal vocabularies that they have not learned to read. When they are assisted in sounding out and blending the sounds together to create the

word, they quickly identify the word and are able to make a connection between the oral and print version of it.

Once children have become comfortable sounding out individual letters, they should be taught to read letters in “chunks”. This is where instruction in sound units like “th” and “st” comes in. Also, they should be encouraged to use entire words that they already know to help them read a new word. For example, a child may know how to read the word “car”. When he comes to the word “scar” his teacher should point out that “car” is a part of this word and that he can use it to help him figure out how to pronounce this new word.

IMPLICATION FOR READING READINESS

At the initial stage, readiness encompasses the skills that young children usually obtain before they can profit from formal reading instruction.

It is really valuable to develop all the required crucial skills that can prepare children before the process of actual reading is introduced (i.e. building a foundation for reading). Parents through their daily experiences with children can help them develop high-quality communication skills through correct use of language since language has been observed as a key to support reading development.

To promote emergent literacy at preschool level, a number of pathways are given: Seek out good children's literature; choose literature with strong story lines and good poetry as well as factual books and interesting magazines; make the literature available to children and read, read, read; make up different endings, play with the words, and encourage children to retell the stories and act them out; make simple props and costumes for the acting out; supply poster board characters; and encourage questions- by encouraging questions, teachers promote language.

5.4 Conclusion

The preschool years are the natural time for young children to develop early literacy skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As researchers learn more about the processes of reading and writing, they realize that the earlier adults can support young children in their natural development of literacy skills, the more successful children of every culture will later be in their ability to read and write in the elementary school years. As noted by the International Reading Association (IRA) that although reading and writing abilities continue to develop throughout the life span, the early years, from birth through age eight, are the most important period for literacy development.

5.5 Summary

Emergent literacy skills or pre-reading skills are based on the premise that literacy is a continuum of abilities that children develop as they learn to use symbols to represent aspects of reality. Thus a 3-year-old who is pretending to read, holding a book right side up, retelling the familiar story, and turning the pages at roughly the right time is

demonstrating a fairly high level of emergent literacy skill. Reading skills develop in sequences and educators need to help children progress along those sequences. Reading skills needs to be mastered systematically from one stage to another and they begin to develop during first months and years of life. Children's experiences with speech and literacy can begin to form a basis for their future reading success. The ideal time to begin sharing books with children is during babyhood. Many researchers consistently demonstrate that the more children know about language and literacy before they arrive at school, the better equipped they are to succeed in reading. To enable appropriate support in reading programmes, it is important that parents and teachers of young children must understand the normal pattern of reading development.

5.6 Self-Assessment Questions

a) Briefly summarize the importance of exposing children early to reading activities.
b) Differentiate between 'learning to read' and 'reading to learn'.
c) Differentiate between Alphabetic Principle and Phonemic Awareness.
d) What is phonological awareness?

5.7 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Summarise the characteristics of each reading stage. How can parents and teachers ensure smooth transition from one stage to another?

5.8 References/Further Reading

- Hall, N. (1987). The emergence of literacy. Portsmouth, NH, Heinemann Educational Books.
- Hart, B. and T. R. Risley (1999). The social world of children learning to talk. Baltimore, Paul H. Brookes.
- Pressley, M. (2001). Effective beginning reading instruction. Chicago, IL: National Reading Conference.
- Taylor, D. (1998). Family literacy: Young children learning to read and write. NH: Portsmouth, Heinemann.
- Teale, W. H. and E. Sulzby, Eds. (1986). Emergent literacy: Writing and reading. Norwood, N.J., Ablex.
- Wells, J. and L. Hart-Hewins (1990). Real books for reading: Learning to read with children's literature Portsmouth, NH, Heinemann.

UNIT 6: EMERGENT LITERACY STRATEGIES

6.1 Introduction

It has been discussed in the previous section how emergent literacy helps in the development of reading (literacy) skills and aid academic achievement in later years. Early childhood education can play an essential role in preparing young children for later success in school. Children who have an opportunity to develop basic foundational skills in language and literacy in preschool enter kindergarten ready to learn to read and write. Essential to any preschool programme is effective instruction in language development. Children need explicit instruction in English vocabulary, as well as opportunities to hear and speak the language throughout the day, among many other strategies.

6.2 Objectives: at the end of this unit, you should be able to:

a) Describe the different techniques of early reading skills of children.
b) Examine the relationships among the different strategies.
c) Explain the roles of the pre-school teachers in implementing the strategies.
d) Summarise ways of ensuring smooth transition from home to school in developing reading skills.

6.3 Main Content

Children are often developmentally ready to read at age 3-4. Emphasizing the importance of effective reading strategies right from the first day of school, the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (2005) posits that:

- Learning to read is a crucial educational step.
- The first school year is critical for learning to read.

- Reading success underpins overall school success in the later years.
- Children who do not learn to read during first grade will end up far behind their peers by the end of the year and face a difficult task trying to catch up.
- Children with reading problems need help early because remediation after the early grades is mostly ineffective.

Acquisition of reading skills is integrated across different developmental areas which are cognitive, emotional, social and instructional factors. Central to all these factors is what makes it possible for children to develop strategies to promote vocabulary, other language skills and basic knowledge about the world.

Early exposures lead children to naturally develop into the stage of 'emergent literacy' by the time they first go to school. This begins with love for books and being enthusiastic about reading. Through modelling and scaffolding by teachers and parents, children learn to recognize words automatically. Thus the strategies for promoting these are discussed subsequently.

PHONICS INSTRUCTION

At the emergent literacy level, phonics instruction is kept simple and often informal. Parents and early care givers are encouraged to talk to children (from infancy), putting the sounds of the English language into their brain. A child's brain is properly wired to learn to talk back to adults. Over time his speaking vocabulary grows to thousands of words. The more an adult talks, sings, and reads to the child, the bigger his speaking vocabulary will become. Here is the surprise: children's brains are not automatically wired for reading. The child needs adult's help to become a successful reader. Learning how to read begins when the child's ears are ready. There are several things one can do to get the child's ears ready. Teach him how to rhyme by playing rhyming games, or reading rhyming poems to him, or play games.

Teach the child alphabet letter names and sounds. This is the beginning of phonics. Phonics is learning what letters and letter combinations "say." It is an essential part of learning how to read. When the child learns letter sounds, teach her to "blend" them together to "sound out" new words. Knowledge of phonics will help him to read many words that follow phonic rules. The best way to incorporate phonics is to find a short reading selection that has a lot of "sh" words, for example, and read those words to him. Ask the child to say some words beginning with the "sh" sound. Then teach him to read the short selection. Continue teaching phonics by finding other short reading selections, each highlighting one of the letter combinations from the phonic list.

Children acquire sensitivity to different sounds in a specific order, although stages tend to overlap. Children can learn about phonemes or sounds more or less informally by learning to name letters and by recognising which phoneme is critical in the name. Many alphabet books, for example, contain the letter name accompanied by pictures

of objects whose names begin with the critical sound, such as D, for example a dog, deer or doctor. When parents stress the initial sounds in these words while reading with their children, they are teaching awareness of initial phonemes or shared phonemes across words. Since children who have difficulty with phonological awareness can develop reading difficulties, parents might help to prevent these difficulties by exposing children to a wide variety of literacy materials and helping them become aware of the relationship between letters and sounds.

In addition to being aware of sounds, children also need to recognise the role that alphabet letters play and that letters have different sounds. It is easier to learn these letter–sound relationships once children know at least some alphabet letters and are able to recognise words that start with the same phoneme. Phonics instruction can be informally stressed during reading aloud or shared reading with children.

In teaching phonics, teachers/caregivers should:

1. Make phonological awareness instruction explicit. Use conspicuous strategies and make phonemes prominent to pupils by modelling specific sounds and asking pupils to reproduce the sounds.
2. Ease into the complexities of phonological awareness. Begin with easy words and progress to more difficult ones.
3. Provide support and assistance. The following research-based instructional sequence summarizes the kind of scaffolding beginning readers need: (a) model the sound or the strategy for making the sound; (b) have pupils use the strategy to produce the sound; (c) repeat steps (a) and (b) using several sounds for each type and level of difficulty; (d) prompt pupils to use the strategy during guided practice; (e) use steps (a) through (d) to introduce more difficult examples.
4. Develop a sequence and schedule, tailored to each child's needs, for opportunities to apply and develop facility with sounds. Give this schedule top priority among all classroom activities.
5. Books with predictable and patterned text can play a significant role in helping children develop and expand print awareness. Predictable and patterned books, as the names implies, are composed of repetitive or predictable text, for example:

    - Two rats live in a hole.
    - Two rats play together at night.
    - Two rats run after each other.
    - Two rats pick little pieces of food.
    - Two rats too tired to play.

As they hear and participate in the reading of the simple stories found in predictable and patterned books, children become familiar with how print looks on a page. They develop book awareness and book-handling skills, and begin to become aware of print

features such as capital letters, punctuation marks, word boundaries, and differences in word lengths.

READ ALOUD/SHARED BOOKREADING

Research shows that reading aloud is the best way to give children the tools they'll need to become good readers, listeners, and pupils. Reading together is also a special time for parents/teachers to bond with children. They can snuggle next to adults as they share stories, laugh at silly characters, and root for heroes.

Reading aloud to children or shared bookreading has been linked to young children's emergent literacy ability, which can be defined as the skills or knowledge that children develop before learning the more conventional skills of reading and writing which affect children's later success in reading.

During shared bookreading, children learn to recognise letters understand that print represents the spoken word, and learn how to hold a book, turn the page and start at the beginning. Shared bookreading is also associated with learning print concepts and exposing children to the written language register, which is different from spoken language, as well as story structures (e.g. stories have a beginning, middle and end) and literacy conventions such as syntax and grammar which are essential for understanding texts.

Shared reading has been seen to help both acquisition of phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge. To read words, children need to know the rules for translating print into meaningful sounds. For example, preschoolers' sensitivity to alliteration and rhyme at age 4-5 is said to contribute to progress in reading and spelling at age 6–7. Children's knowledge of nursery rhymes at age 3–4 is also said to relate to detecting alliteration and rhyme at ages 4–7. Many parents naturally promote awareness of sound patterns by emphasising rhyming words and patterns when reading to a child. When children do well at detecting and manipulating syllables, rhymes and phonemes, they tend to learn more quickly to read.

An added dimension of reading aloud is that it involves parents and other important adults to the child in a focused interaction. Early parent–child relationships influence children's engagement in literacy activities. Mothers with securely attached children tend to more frequently provide a rich and interactive way of reading to their children than mothers of insecurely attached children. Children not only acquire knowledge about narratives but also learn about their own personal narrative when sharing a book with an adult, something that is important for their self-esteem.

Bookreading can also play an important role in wake and sleep patterns by making bookreading part of bedtime routines. On then affective benefits, sharing books with children can help them learn about peer relationships, coping strategies, building self-esteem and general world knowledge.

Reading aloud likely promotes joint attention, which has many potential benefits related to reading, such as enhancing receptive language by asking children to point, touch or show during bookreading or expressive language by asking children questions about the text. One can make the most out of reading aloud with the following hints:

- Read slowly, with expression. Try using different voices for different characters.
- Follow words with your finger as you read. Your children will see that words are read from left to right.
- Point to pictures and say the names of objects and colours. Let children repeat the names.
- Talk about the book as you read. Ask children to describe pictures, repeat phrases used in the story, and predict what will happen next.
- Remember to have fun! The more fun children have reading aloud, the more they will love books and want to read them.

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Though vocabulary development plays a critical role in young children learning to read, it remains one of the most difficult skills to teach. Young children learn new vocabulary with great agility and speed, but their learning is dependent on the range of words they are exposed to. Teachers can naturally facilitate children's vocabulary learning using a variety of strategies, including making purposeful strategic conversation and posing thoughtful questions and scaffolding children's language using rich and varied language activities. Below are several ways you can promote vocabulary development.

Children require multiple exposures to words in order to develop a rich understanding of their meaning and use. Teachers should make a point of introducing interesting new words for children to learn into each classroom activity. There are several ways vocabulary instruction can be promoted at preschool level. Presenting vocabulary thematically helps children make associations between words and scaffolds pupils' learning. Read-alouds that include explanations of targeted vocabulary can support word learning. Also, dramatic play organized around a carefully chosen theme can also be used. In vocabulary instruction, teachers should:

- Use words that are familiar to children to predispose them to learn useful words
- Talk and give meaningful feedback to the children
- Present words in meaningful context/theme
- Create conversations that support children's use of unfamiliar words
- Ask open-ended questions as a means of stimulating conversation.

Open-ended questions give more opportunity to talk and provide the teacher the opportunity to give meaningful feedback that scaffolds children's language. Although,

open-ended questions can promote children's talking, the specific information asked influences the quality and content of language of children's responses.

Teachers are encouraged to use purposeful strategic conversation in teaching vocabulary. In this process, teachers introduce vocabulary words during a book reading experience and then systematically and thoughtfully continue to provide opportunities for children to use those words in meaningful contexts and other activities overtime. These can be done during read aloud, centre time and morning message.

During read aloud, teacher selects vocabulary that (a) help support the current unit theme (b) are unfamiliar to the pupils and (c) are critical to the children's comprehension of the story. These words are strategically introduced into conversations and questions, and as a result are also part of children's responses. The teacher can then explicitly provide a meaningful definition of the word(s) and ask questions that help children understand the word(s) within the context of the story.

Centre time constitutes small thematic focused groups (e.g. dramatic lay area, science centre, writing centre, etc.). Using the small groups, teachers have the opportunity to focus on individual child's comments, provide meaningful feedback to children's responses and promote dialogue that builds vocabulary. Teacher does so by circulating from centre to centre and working with small groups of children at a time, rather than the whole class.

Morning message is a letter or note written to the children before they arrive for instruction or while they are present, that provides insight into content of instruction and upcoming events in the class. Such messages are given to particular child (children) to read in class. Morning messages promote emergent literacy development through opportunism to decode, read for meaning and use reading strategies such as prediction. It is used to identify letters, words, features of print, additional or new vocabulary and practice with vocabulary.

PICTURE BOOK READING

The term picture book usually refers to picture storybooks, books that have simple plots and contain, on average, about 200 words. Michel (2003) has a vivid description and significance of picture books. According to her, picture book evokes images of brightly coloured, beautifully illustrated books that beg to be read. No matter what our age, most of us still enjoy reading them because of their vibrant pictures, rich and evocative language, and poignant and meaningful themes. Picture books speak to us in the same way photographs do. They touch our emotions, delight our senses, appeal to our whimsy, and bring back memories of our childhood. Picture books invite us to curl up and read them.

A useful distinction can be made between an *illustrated book* and a picture book. Most children's books are illustrated, but not all illustrated children's books are picture books, because to be a picture book, the book must provide a balance between the pictures and text so that neither of them is completely effective without the other. In illustrated books, simple drawings are placed periodically in the text, often as chapter openers. A child could read and understand the entire story without these illustrations. Conversely, in the vast majority of picture books for young children, both the words and the pictures are "read," and the pictures extend, clarify, complement, or take the place of words. Picture books for young children possess the following five features according to Sutherland (1997):

- Present the story line in a brief and straightforward manner
- Contain a limited number of concepts
- Include concepts that children can comprehend
- Provide text that is written in a direct, simple style
- Provide illustrations that complement the text

Picture books embody at least three stories: the one told by the words, the one implied by the pictures, and the one that results from the combination of the other two. As a result of the interdependence of the words and pictures, both children and the adults who share books with them tend to view picture books differently from other types of printed material, as they flip back and forth among the pages and search in the illustrations to confirm details mentioned in the text.

Children's experience with books plays an important role. Many children enter school with thousands of hours of experience with books. Their homes contain hundreds of picture books. They see their parents and brothers and sisters reading for pleasure. Other children enter school with less or no exposure to picture books especially those from less literate homes and their parents and siblings are not readers.

Picture book reading provides children with many of the skills that are necessary for school readiness: vocabulary, sound structure, the meaning of print, the structure of stories and language, sustained attention, the pleasure of learning, and on and on. It is important to read frequently with your preschooler. Children who are read to three times per week or more do much better in later development than children who are read to less than three times per week. It is important to begin reading to your child at an early age. By nine months of age, infants can appreciate books that are interesting to touch or that make sounds.

Beyond literacy development, through experiences with picture books young children can develop socially, personally, intellectually, culturally, and aesthetically. Books enable the newly socialized child to explore interpersonal relationships and human motives. Picture books communicate self-acceptance, and they model coping strategies for children who are just learning to deal with powerful emotions. Through picture books, children meet families, settings, and cultures that are in some ways

similar and in some ways different from their own. As a result, picture books contribute to the child's cultural identity and multicultural awareness. Furthermore, because the picture book is both illustrated and written, it simultaneously supports aesthetic development and growth in literacy. For all of these reasons, children's literature has an important role to play in children's learning and lives.

Some picture books are without texts (words). Wordless picture books are just what they sound like—books without words (or sometimes with minimal words) that tell a story through pictures. Because they don't rely on words to express their stories, wordless picture books can be used to develop important literacy skills, such as:

- Detecting sequence
- Identifying details
- Noting cause and effect relationships
- Making judgments
- Determining main ideas
- Making inferences

Using wordless picture books allows those who are learning a new language to express themselves through the pictures of a book without having to read words.
Sharing wordless picture books with parents who are English language learners creates exciting language learning conversations that will help them develop English speaking skills. Pictures act as a stimulus for building conversations. Finding the story through the pictures involves both listening and speaking skills. It also gives parents the opportunity to express their personal thoughts and feelings and to use their imaginations. Parents can consider new ideas and life scenarios different from their own. This may involve comparing and contrasting new cultural values or systems with parents' home culture. While most wordless picture books are designed to tell a story, there are also concept picture books, which focus on a specific topic such as the alphabet, numbers or colours. Both types of wordless picture books are useful in reading skill programme.

In preschool classrooms, examples of picture book reading class are illustrated below.

Example 1—Focus on the story line. Help children to determine the story the pictures convey by asking questions, such as:

- What is the title of the story or book? Does it give you a clue to what the story might be about? *(Ask before reading)*
- How do the pictures tell the story?
- What is the theme or main idea of the story?
- How does the story start *(beginning)*? What happens next *(middle)*? How does the story end?
- Did the title tell you what the story or book was about? *(Ask after reading)*

Example 2—Focus on drawing out conversations around the meaning of the story. This encourages children to look for the meaning of the story as they connect it to their own life experiences. Conversations support the development and use of new vocabulary words, the development of language learning skills, grammar, pronunciation, word building and other important parts of language development. Encourage children to:

- Talk about and build on the story idea.
- Explore the pictures to find clues about each part of the story.
- Use vocabulary based on what the story is about and connect new words to their life experiences.
- Connect the main idea or theme of the story to their prior knowledge— For example, how does this remind you of other things you and your family have experienced? Does your family have a daily routine like the family in the story?

DIALOGIC READING

Dialogic reading involves children and adults having a conversation about a book. When most adults share a book with a preschooler, they read and the child listens. In dialogic reading, the adult helps the child become the teller of the story. The adult becomes the listener, the questioner, the audience for the child. It is based on the theory that practice in using language, feedback regarding language, and appropriately scaffolded adult-child interactions in the context of picture book reading facilitate young children's language development. The argument is that no one can learn to read just by listening to someone else read and that children learn most from books when they are actively involved.

In Dialogic Reading, children are encouraged to become the teller of the story over time. The role of the adult is to prompt the child with questions, expand the child's verbalizations, and praise the child's efforts to tell the story and label objects within the book. The adult furthermore increases the standards for the child's verbalizations over time, that is, the adult continually encourages the child to say just a little more than the child would naturally; this scaffolding is thought to lead to more rapid development in the child's language skills than would occur spontaneously.

The fundamental reading techniques in dialogic reading are the PEER and CROWD sequence. PEER is a short description of interaction between a child and the adult. The adult:

- **Prompts** the child to say something about the book: this can be done by asking *"what"* questions. Ask children to name objects pictured in the book; also ask children simple questions about the story. If the child begins to talk about a part of the story or a picture on the page, follow his/her interests and encourage him/her to talk more. The child is more likely to enjoy reading with adults if they are sensitive and responsive to his/her interests. Praise the child's attempts to talk

about the book. Both general and specific praises are encouraging to the child. In addition, follow the child's answers to questions with further, related questions. For example, if the child is able to label an object in the book, ask questions about attributes of the object.

- **Evaluates** the child's response. Praise the child's correct responses and offer alternative labels or answers for clearly incorrect responses. Sometimes the questions asked of children are difficult for them to answer initially. A child's inability to answer a question provides a good teaching opportunity. Corrections should be given to children in a way that is constructive and sensitive to their efforts to talk about the book.
- **Expands** the child's response by rephrasing and adding information to it. When the child says something about the book, repeat it and add a few more words to the child's verbalization. Then, have the child imitate what you have said. For example if the child says, "Big dog," the adult might say, "Yes, the big dog is red. Can you say that?"
- **Repeats** the prompt to make sure the child has learned from the expansion. Repeating what the child says serves to reinforce the child's verbalization, letting the child know that she is correct.

Except for the first reading of a book to children, PEER sequences should occur on nearly every page. Sometimes teacher can read the written words on the page and then prompt the child to say something. For many books, teacher should do less and less reading of the written words in the book each time she read it; and leave more to the child.

CROWD refers to the five types of questions asked by adults when engaging in dialogic reading with children. These question types are as follows:

(a) Completion prompts

These are fill-in-the-blank questions; you leave a blank at the end of a sentence and get the child to fill it in. These are typically used in books with rhyme or books with repetitive phases. For example, 'the glossy white cat is a little plump but not too ____,' letting the child fill in the blank with the word *fat*. Completion prompts provide children with information about the structure of language that is critical to later reading.

(b) Recall prompts

These are questions about what happened in a book a child has already read. They require the child to remember aspects of the book. For example, you might say, "Can you tell me what happened to the little boy in this story?" Recall prompts help children in understanding story plot and in describing sequences of events. Recall prompts can be used not only at the end of a book, but also at the beginning of a book when a child has been read that book before.

(c) Open-ended prompts

These are statements that encourage the child to respond to the book in his or her own words. They often focus on the pictures in books. They work best for books that have rich, detailed illustrations. For example, while looking at a page in a book that the child is familiar with, you might say, "Tell me what's happening in this picture." Open-ended prompts help children increase their expressive fluency and attend to detail.

(d) Wh- prompts

These prompts usually begin with what, where, when, why, and how questions. Like open-ended prompts, wh- prompts focus on the pictures in books. For example, you might say, "What's the name of this?" while pointing to an object in the book. Wh- questions teach children new vocabulary.

(e) Distancing prompts

These are questions that require the child to relate the pictures or words in the book they are reading to experiences outside the book. For example, while looking at a book with a picture of animals on a farm, you might say something like, "Remember when we went to the animal park last week. Which of these animals did we see there?" Distancing prompts help children form a bridge between books and the real world, as well as helping with verbal fluency, conversational abilities, and narrative skills. Distancing prompts and recall prompts are more difficult for children than completion, open-ended, and wh-prompts. Frequent use of distancing and recall prompts should be limited to four- and five-year-olds.

One important goal of dialogic reading is that children enjoy the shared reading experience. Children will enjoy dialogic reading more than traditional reading as long as you mix-up your prompts with straight reading, vary what you do from reading to reading, and follow the child's interest. Also, reading is more interesting when adults take a game-like, turn-taking approach to using the techniques. For example, children seem to enjoy when the adult reads one page, and the child "reads" the next page. If the child appears to be getting tired of the reading, read a few pages without questions or put the book aside for a later time. Virtually all children's books are appropriate for dialogic reading. The best books have rich detailed pictures, clear illustrations, relatively little text, and an engaging story or are interesting to your child. Always follow your child's interest when sharing books with children and don't push children with more prompts than they can happily handle.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE STRATEGIES IN FORMAL INSTRUCTIONS

a) Design instruction that focuses on all of the foundational literacy skills.

Activities that promote early reading skills in preschool include interactive storybook reading, 'pretend' reading, games and activities that help children identify the letters of the alphabet, and other interactive experiences with language and print through poems, nursery rhymes and songs. The emphasis should be on instruction that helps children understand the relationship between spoken language and print. Preschool children develop literacy skills in a social environment through language-rich activities. Teachers should spend time each day reading books aloud to their pupils, which helps with reading comprehension, letter recognition and print awareness. In addition to this, teachers can host puppet shows and talk about favourite books and stories. Preschool children can create journals to practice beginning printing, such as writing their names, and fill other pages with drawings. Teachers should also have a reading center where children can pick out picture books they enjoy and spend quiet time perusing them.

b) Recognize that many literacy skills can transfer across languages.

A child who has developed early literacy skills in his or her first language will find it easier to develop those same skills in English. Parents who are not proficient in English should be encouraged to help prepare their children for learning to read by using the home language to teach rhymes and songs, play word games and share storybooks. Teachers can support parent-child reading by sending home books in the child's home language. This makes the first language (L1) texts available to parents, and it lets them know that the teacher considers reading to children in the home language to be important.

c) **Help improve auditory skills by teaching alphabet letter sounds**

In order to read, every child must know the sounds of the alphabet letters. He must be able to recall them quickly - he sees the letter and says the sound without hesitation. Test your pupil's knowledge of alphabet letter sounds, help her create her own Alphabet Book and teach the alphabets. You can also teach alphabet letters and letter sounds by using an Alphabet Chart with pictures.

d) **Develop phonemic awareness.**

One of the most important steps in teaching reading is associating a spoken sound with a letter or letter-pair. This process is known as phonemic awareness. There are 44 speech sounds created by the 26 letters in English, and each sound must be taught along with its letter(s) counterpart. Focus on a single letter/sound at a time. Avoid confusion and build a solid foundation by working at a steady pace through all of the speech sounds. Give real life examples of each speech sound; use games similar to those used when teaching the alphabet, that combine critical thinking on the part of the child in order to determine sound/letter correlations.

e) **Teach the pupils to read using explicit phonics.**

Traditionally, children are taught to recognize a word based on its size, the first and last letters, and the general sound. This method of teaching is known as implicit phonics - working from the largest piece down. However, studies have shown that readable vocabulary dramatically increases (from 900 words to 30,000 words by primary three) when taught in through explicit phonics-- breaking each word into the smallest parts, and building them up into a full word. Help the children to begin reading by having them sound-out each individual letter without looking at the overall word first. Don't move onto explicit phonics until the children have developed adequate phonemic awareness.

f) **Have the child practice decoding.**

Classically known as 'sounding out' words, decoding is when a child reads a word by making the sounds of each individual letter, rather than trying to read the whole word at once. Reading is broken up into two primary parts: decoding/reading a word, and comprehending its meaning. Don't expect the child to recognize and comprehend words just yet; have them focus on decoding and sounding out word parts. Decoding aloud is typically easier for the child to learn how to say the word. Have them break it into parts with clapping if necessary. Do not be rigid in how the child pronounces the sounds. Regional accents and weak auditory skills make it hard for children to say most sounds in an academically correct way. Accept a reasonable effort. Recognize that learning sounds is only an intermediate step to learning to read, it is not the goal.

g) **Teach the child the alphabet.**

When the child has developed word awareness, begin breaking down words into individual letters. Although the alphabet song is the most classic means of teaching the alphabet, you can be more creative. Explain each of the letters with their name, but don't worry about trying to incorporate the sounds the letters make yet. Teach lower case letters first. Capital letters account for only five percent of all letters in writing English. Lower case letters are far more important in developing reading skills.

h) **Help the child improve auditory skills by teaching how to rhyme**

Knowing how to rhyme will help the child read word-families such as rat, cat, sat, pat, and mat. Some words don't look the same but they rhyme, e.g. ache, cake, steak. Rhyming teaches phonemic awareness and letter recognition, in addition to the most basic English words. Read nursery rhymes to the child, and then eventually make lists of easy-to-read rhymes such as cap, flap, map, pap and tap. The child will begin to see the patterns of sounds that are made when certain letters are combined. Rhymes are best taught by playing games.

i) **Read to the child on a regular basis.**

Practice makes perfect. In order to get children interested in reading, you should be reading to them on a regular basis. This should start right at home and continue through their school years. Read books at levels that they would be able to be interested in, understand and be able to read later.

j) **Ask interactive questions.**

Even before the child learns to read, they can learn reading comprehension. As you read stories to them aloud, ask them questions about the characters or the plot. For a toddler, ask simple recall questions; for example, 'Do you see the flower? What is colour is it?' The questions can escalate in difficulty as the reading level does. Also help to teach your critical thinking skills by asking open-ended questions about stories. This may not be feasible until the child is at least four or five years old.

k) **Make books easily accessible.**

It's no good if you have books around, but located in places that the child can't easily take them. Keep books low to the ground and in typical play-areas so that the child begins to associate them with play activities.

l) **Set a good example**

Show the child that reading is interesting and worthwhile by reading on your own. Spend a minimum of ten minutes a day reading when she is around, so that she sees you enjoying the activity on your own. Even if you're not an avid reader, find something to read - a magazine, the newspaper, or even a cookbook. Soon the child will become interested in reading on her own, simply as a result of seeing you doing it. Include the child in your reading time. If you're reading something child-friendly, tell her about what you're reading. Accompany this by pointing to words on the page to help them connect the lines on the page with the sounds that form words

m) **Do not worry about grammar.**

Preschoolers, kindergartners, and first graders are very concrete in the way they think and cannot handle complicated concepts. By age four, most English speaking children already have an excellent grasp of grammar and in due time, they will learn all the formal grammatical rules. At this point, you need to concentrate only on the mechanical skill of reading; that is learning to decode new words and incorporating them in memory to build fluency.

n) **Build up an archive of sight words.**

Certain words in the English vocabulary are spoken often, but don't follow the typical phonics rules. These words are easier to memorize by shape association than by sound, and are therefore known as 'sight words.' Some sight words include 'they,' 'she', 'an,' 'said,' and 'the.' The complete list of sight words, called the Dolch list, can be found online.

o) **Increasing difficultly: Begin giving the child complete stories.**

Some children are able to read by the time they get to school. This is an opportunity to build on the reading skills already acquired at home. Expose the child to whole stories, which can be few paragraphs or pages. The most important thing is that such text should be a simple narrative with beginning and end, so that the child will wholly experience the text. Help the children to read these whole stories by encouraging explicit phonics use, and recognizing vocabulary. As their word recognition increases, they'll be able to more fully understand story plots and meanings. Allow them to decode the pictures - image and word association is a helpful aspect of building vocabulary.

p) **Have the child describe the story to you.**

After every reading session, have the child describe what the story was about to you. Try to get her to be detailed, but don't expect an elaborate response. An easy and fun way to help encourage this is to use puppets that represent characters in the story, so the child can describe it to you through them.

q) **Ask questions about the stories.**

Similar to when you were reading stories to the child, ask the child questions about what she has just read each time she reads. At first it will be difficult for them to think critically about meanings of words and the build-up of character development and plot but over time they will develop the necessary skills to answer questions. Make a list of questions that the child can read; her ability to read and understand the provided questions is nearly as helpful as answering the questions themselves.

r) **Incorporate writing in with the reading.**

Reading is a necessary precursor to writing; hence as the child develops reading skills have her practice writing as well. Children learn to read faster and easier if they learn to write at the same time. The motor memory of the letters, listening to their sounds and seeing them in writing will reinforce new learning. So, teach the child to write letters and words. You'll notice an enhanced reading ability as the child learns to spell by decoding and sounding out words. Work slowly though, and don't expect perfection.

s) **Continue reading to the child.**

Just as you taught the child the joy of reading before they knew how, you should continue to promote reading by reading to and with them on a daily basis. Children develop a stronger phonemic awareness when they can see words as you read them, rather than struggling to do both at the same time themselves.

t) **Have the child read aloud to you.**

You will have a better idea of the child's reading ability when she reads out loud, and she will be forced to slow down her reading to correctly sound out words. Avoid stopping the child to correct her while reading though, as doing so can interrupt her train of thought and make comprehending what she is reading more difficult. Reading out loud doesn't have to be limited to stories; whenever you are around words, have the child sound them out to you. Road signs are a great example of something the child sees on a daily basis, and can practice reading out loud to you.

6.4 Conclusion

Today, researches have shown us how reading (and writing) can develop naturally in a continuum from infancy onward as young children make sense of their world through playful explorations. We have also been exposed to how children's brains take in this information, extracting their own rules from it to help them learn, as well as how teachers and the other adults around children can build on children's own ideas to help them develop the skills necessary for reading. Such research has changed our minds forever about the way children develop and how we can best support their growth. We now know, for instance, that reading and writing are outgrowths of the same communication urge that drives children to express themselves orally. We also know that given the proper tools and adult support can be exposed to early reading.

6.5 Summary

The strategies of reading skills development explored have significantly emphasized one thing, you teach reading by reading- read to the children, read with them and encourage reading by them. It has been proven by researches that the frequency with which children were read to during the pre-school years strongly predicted not only their knowledge of literacy on entry to school but also their overall academic attainment five years later, at age ten. The benefits of reading to, with and by children are many. First, from listening to stories read aloud, children become familiar with the cadences of written language and the generic structure of stories and other types of text. They also increase their vocabularies in domains that are rarely the subject of everyday talk. And, equally important, they learn that books are a source of interest and enjoyment that can introduce them to real as well as imaginary objects, places and events that they do not encounter in their immediate environment. In all these ways,

the practice of reading to children in the early years enlarges their experience in ways that prepare them to make the most of the instruction they will receive in school.

6.6 Self-Assessment Questions

a. Describe the different techniques of early reading skills of children.
b. In what ways can vocabulary teaching aid reading development?
c. Differentiate between reading to, reading with and reading by the children.
d. Explain and compare PEER and CROWD.
e. Differentiate between read aloud and dialogic reading.
f. What are the advantages of picture reading?
g. How do the home and school work together in implementing the strategies?

6.7 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Do a summary of the different emergent literacy strategies explore in this unit**.**

6.8 References/Further Reading

- Adams, M.J. (1990) *Beginning to read. Cambridge*, MA: MIT Press.
- Ezell H.K. & Justice L. M. (2005) *Shared storybook reading*. Baltimore, MD: Brooks Publishing.
- Lonigan, C.J. (2004) Emergent literacy skills and family literacy. In: Wasik B.H. (Ed.) *Handbook of family literacy.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates; pp. 57–82.
- Arnold, D. S. and Whitehurst, G. S. (1994). Accelerating language development through picture-book reading: a summary of dialogic reading and its effects. In Dickensen, D. K. (Ed*.), Bridges to literacy, children, families and schools* (pp. 103-128). Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- McGee, L. M. and Morrow, L. M. (2005). *Teaching Literacy in the kindergarten*. New York: Guilford.
- Meek, M. (1982). *Learning to read*. London: Bodley Head.

UNIT 7: READING ENVIRONMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

7.1 Introduction

Instructional environments have a powerful impact on children's growth in reading. Though discussions on instructional environments often focus on classroom environments, researches have always emphasized the importance supportive home environments and more significantly, the kind of connection that exists between the home and the school environments. To prepare children for reading instruction in the early grades, it is best that they are exposed to high quality language and literacy environments in their homes, daycare centres and preschools. This unit examines the interrelationships between the home and school environments in the acquisition and development of reading skills.

7.2 Objectives. By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

a) Describe the features of a supportive home environment.
b) Articulate the different home experiences that can enhance reading skills.
c) Give a comprehensive features of an effective reading classroom
d) Explore, with examples, the expected relationships that should be between the home and school in developing reading skills.

7.3 Main Content

It is well documented that children entering elementary school differ in their language use, pre-reading, and early numeracy skills and that these differences are often maintained at later ages. Some children on entering school and beginning formal reading instruction are much more successful than other children. What makes the difference? Some of the key factors responsible for such differences include:

- Parental attitudes and aspirations
- Parental education level

- Home learning environment
- Family socio-economic status and other family characteristics
- Child's and parent's literacy practices and activities (quality and frequency)
- Child's characteristics and personal qualities
- Pre-school and school influences (including home-school links)
- School and community influences

The above factors can be grossly categorized into home and school environments. Many times the reason for the differences can be traced to the children's literacy development in the early years before they begin formal schooling.

THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

Parents are a child's first educator. A child's family and home environment has a strong impact on his/her language and literacy development and educational achievement. This impact is stronger during the child's early years but continues throughout their school years. Many background variables that constitute the family and home environment -- socio-economic status, level of parental education, family size, parental attitudes and behaviour, parents' involvement in home learning activities -- are crucial to children's achievement and can overcome the influences of other factors.

However, the impact of each of the variables varies. Many studies have shown that what the family does to promote literacy is more important to a child's school success than how much money the family makes or how much education the parents have. According to Chall, et al (1990), the home can provide a strong literacy environment if parents provide literacy experiences for their children by reading to them, buying books, teaching them to read, and expressing high educational expectations for them.

Specifically parental involvement with reading activities at home has significant positive influences not only on reading achievement, language comprehension and expressive language skills, but also on pupils' interest in reading, attitudes towards reading and attentiveness in the classroom.

Other types of family behaviours related to intellectual developments and schools include parental commitment to language development in the form of providing good language models, enlarging the child's vocabulary and emphasizing correctness of usage; and parental provision for learning in the home and beyond in the form of providing a place for the child to read and do homework, establishing set times for home works providing books and magazines, taking the child to museums and libraries and being a model reading and respects for scholarship.

A child's ability to learn to read, known as reading readiness begins in infancy, as the child begins attending to the speech signals in their environment and begins producing spoken language. Children make some use of all the material that they are presented

with, including every perception, concept and word that they come in contact with; thus the environment in which a child develops affects the child's ability to learn to read. The amount of time that a child spends together with parents or other important caregivers while listening to them read is a good predictor of the level of reading that the child will attain later in life. As a child sits with a caregiver, looking at pictures and listening to stories, he or she will slowly learn that all the different lines on each page make different symbols and then that together these symbols refer to words.

Thus, the ideal process of what is called emergent or early literacy begins in the relationship between hearing spoken language, seeing written language and feeling loved. The positive feeling that arises from spending time with books in a loving context provides a strong foundation and intrinsic motivation for the long and cognitively challenging process of learning to read. Jeffree & Skeffington (1980) also found out that, children who seem to have very little difficulty in school have usually had a great deal of help from their parents before they began school. It meant that those parents have played with their children a lot and without knowing it have laid the foundation for reading and writing. They further elaborated that reading picture books, bed time stories, every night playing with alphabet bricks by parents with children, helps them to develop their vocabulary. In addition, those funny rhymes, riddles and songs recited by parents and grandparents to children from babyhood, could also provide excellent practice in listening to sounds which skills later help them to learn to read.

In addition, parents encouragement through appreciation, motivation such as buying simple gifts- reading charts, letter books- and even saying thank you to a child after every struggle as they practice reading is very important to developing children's reading skills.

While researches have established the need for parents to support their children's reading skills development and overall academic success, in what specific dimensions can the home be supportive?

1. **Create a home environment that supports literacy.** A literate home means more than just having books and writing materials on hand. To be effective, parents need to plan for how these materials will be used. According to experts, the best approach is to set up a specific family reading area. This sends children a dual message: (a) reading is an important value in this family and (b) everyone in the family—no matter their age—reads. In setting up a family literacy area, parents need to consider three things: (i) where the area should be located, (iii) what materials should be housed there, and (iii) how the materials can best be used.

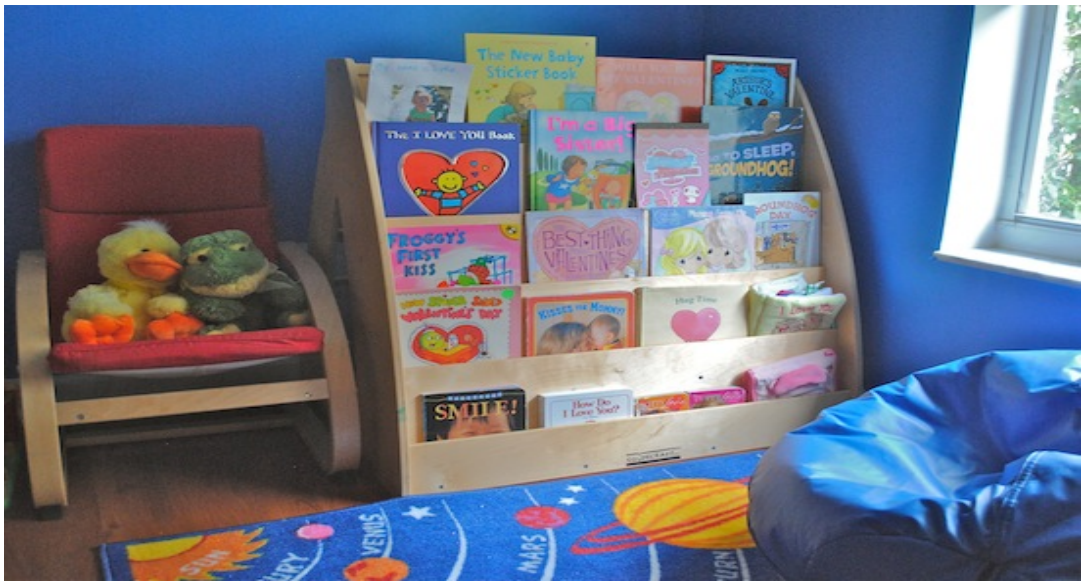
   Any place in the home can serve as a reading area. Ideally, it will be a space that is comfortable and well lit. If the room can be made comfortable with cushions,

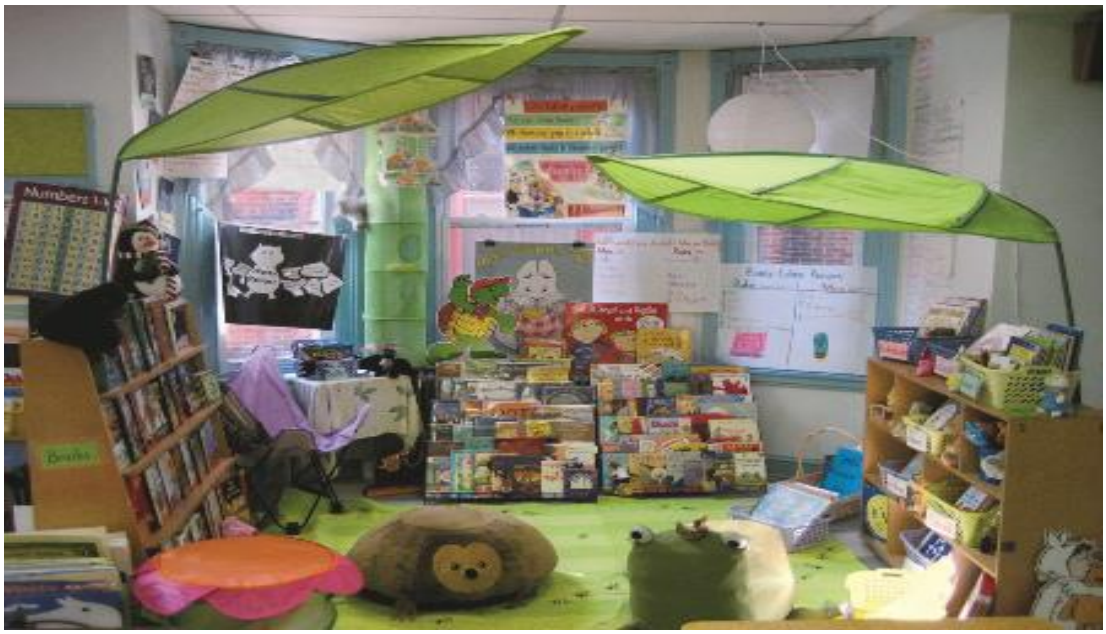
beanbag chairs, and pillows. The room should also have space for family members' preferred reading styles—be it nestled on a couch, lying on the floor, or sitting at a table. The reading area should be available to all family members at all time. Anytime someone has an urge to read, he/she should be able to go here for a leisurely reading experience. This means that books need to be accessible to young children, so they can get to them independently.

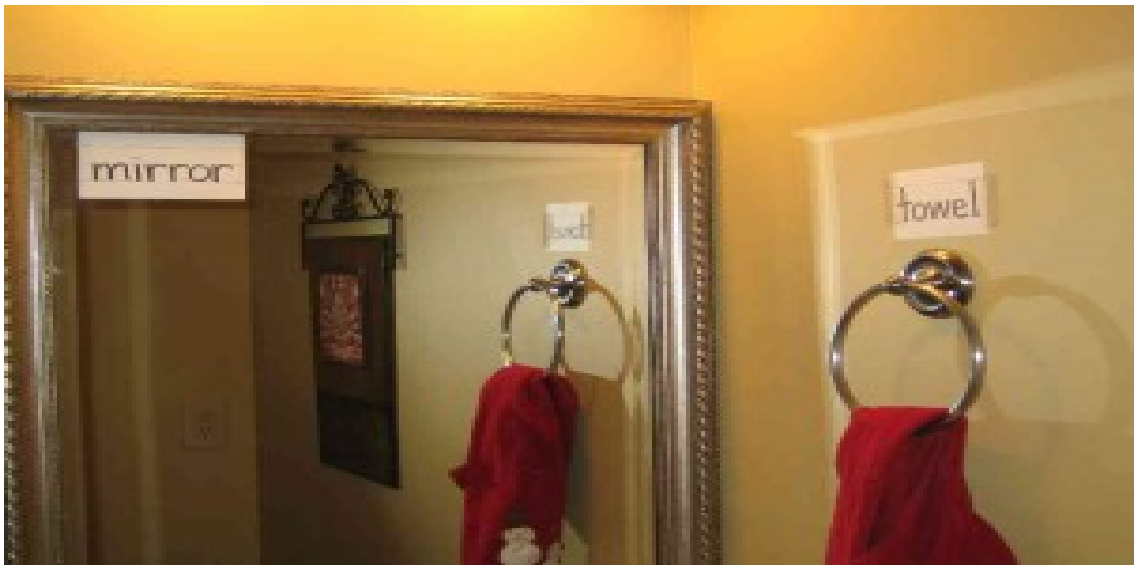
A literate home needs books—lots and lots of them. Young children need access to a variety of books-- *storybooks*, especially ones with wordplay and predictable phrases, *wordless books* where the parent and child can supply their own text, *nonfiction* and *fiction*, *ABC books* and *informational stories*. It is recommended that parents build a permanent library, so that children can go back to favourites again and again. Family trips to the public library can augment the collection with exciting, new titles. In addition, *magazines, newspapers, encyclopaedias, an atlas, the Bible,* and even *comic books* are all appropriate. The point is that everyone has something they will be eager to read.

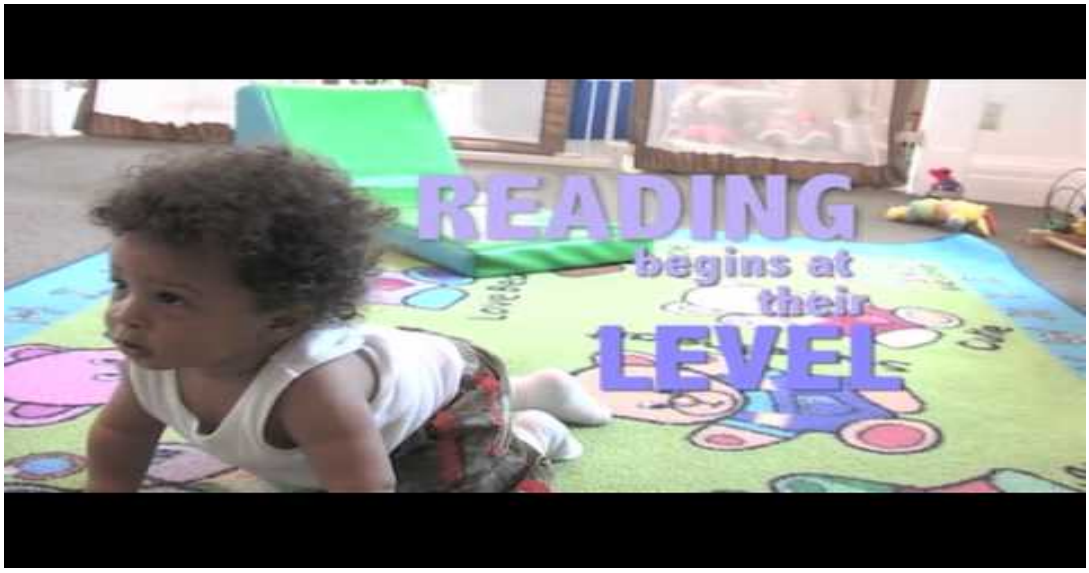
Alphabet letters will likewise support children's literacy. It's important that parents have different types of letters that children can move around, such as magnetic letters for the refrigerator and foam letters for the bathtub. It's also good to have alphabet blocks and puzzles, letter-shaped cookie cutters, letter stamps, and stickers. Children love writing their name; these materials give them the opportunity to do so over and over again.

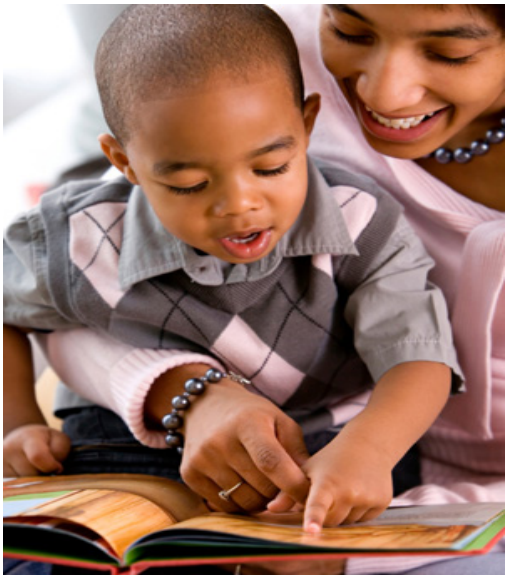
Audio and visual recordings related to beginning reading and writing also have their place in the home. Concept videos and DVDs that feature rhyming and children's books on tape or CD can be sourced. Also provide and play word games such as Scrabble Junior, Boggle, ABC Bingo, Word Concentration, etc. Tell jokes, riddles and limericks. Examples of family literacy areas and experiences are illustrated below (Source: Internet):

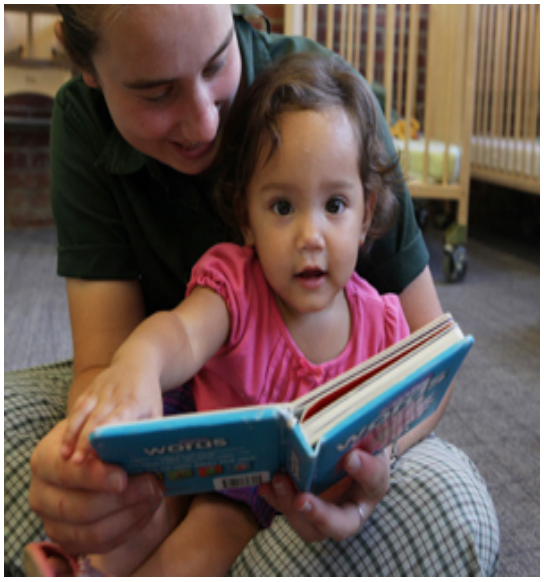





mirror
towel


READING
begins at
their
LEVEL





2. **Encourage reading for pleasure**. Parents should share vocabulary, quotes, characters, and the story with children; compare similarities and differences between their books and the books the children are reading. Talk to the children about how their own parents read to them or told them stories.

3. **Tell lots of family stories**. As much as possible, tell the children a story about when you were little or tell them a story about something that happened at work that day. Leave off the ending and let them provide an ending. Ask lots of questions when the child tells you a story. Ask them to identify the beginning, middle, and end or climax of the story.

4. **Read aloud to children**. Reading to children, even for a few minutes each day, prepares them to read and encourages a positive attitude toward reading. Children who are read to at home learn to read more easily, have a higher vocabulary, and are more likely to develop a love for reading than those who are not read to on a regular basis. In reading, talk about the pictures; make predictions about a story and see if they come true. Read aloud a chapter-book before bed. Encourage the child to read aloud to younger siblings, cousins, neighbours, even stuffed animals. Also encourage the child to imagine or share stories from pictures in magazines, newspapers or family photographs. Listen to the child's retellings and expand them. Encourage them to add more detail. Imagine and develop the story together.

5. **Be reading role models.** Most children want to be like their parents; their lifelong habits start to form at the earliest ages, often by mimicking older members of the family. If they see parents reading daily—both for function and for pleasure—they will more likely become avid readers themselves. If children see parents visiting libraries and checking out books, giving and receiving books as gifts, and borrowing and loaning books to friends, they will know their parents place a high value on reading. Seeing that their parents value reading in this way sends children the message that reading is an important activity.

6. **Create a family reading time** when everyone congregates in this area to read together. It doesn't have to be a lengthy amount of time as long as it is a daily commitment. For many families, the best time seems to be in the evening after dinner. In addition to, or in lieu of reading together, families may wish to use this time for storytelling or sharing family history. In some cultures, oral traditions are the main form of literacy. Oral language forms a strong foundation for reading and can be encouraged in the same way as reading together.

7. **Limit television, computers, and video games**. Education experts have always warned about the harmful effects of too much television watching. The rise in popularity of the Internet and computer and video games only adds to the distractions pulling children away from more literary pursuits. While excellent educational programmes and software exist, consumption of electronic media

must be kept in check by parents. Limit children's television and computer use to make time for other activities.

Though having a literate home develops in young children a love for reading and writing, but Rasinski and Fredericks (1981) concludes that a literate home environment doesn't teach children how to read; rather, it provides children with opportunities to enjoy reading and discover the many ways it can be used to enrich the experiences in their lives. Families don't have to invest a lot of money in materials to have a literate home; they do, however, have to invest their time and involvement.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

The classroom climate established by the teacher can have a major impact on pupil's motivation and attitudes towards learning. The type of classroom climate generally considered to best facilitate pupils learning is one that is purposeful, task oriented, relaxed, warm and supportive and has a sense of order (Kyriacou, 1997). He further revealed that the classroom must feature accessible print that support children's daily reading and writing whereby each classroom has a sizeable library of children's books, with featured authors and books available in groupings.

In addition to the above, each classroom uses charts, poems, lists and big books for instruction and their wall include displays of children's work. Such a literate environment functions as a support system for children by providing resources and prompts that celebrate and encourage literate behaviours. School and classroom environments must contain signs or labels that could be read aloud to children thus improving their reading skills such as library, head teachers office, bathrooms, kitchen and others. In other words the general physical environment of the school contributes highly to the success or failure of learners in their reading performance.

Test, Carlson, King, and Bender (2012) suggested four elements of effective reading classroom. According to them, the physical arrangement and organization of a classroom can be powerful and supportive of effective literacy instruction. Literate environments should motivate pupils and emphasize the importance of speaking, reading, and writing. Creating a literate classroom environment where pupils feel well, productive, energized, and safe requires design knowledge, therefore teachers are encouraged to:

- Create a well-organized library of books of various levels and genres, which should have a minimum ratio of 10 books per pupil.
- Provide pupils with other print resources, such as magazines, newspapers, recipes, signs, menus, etc.
- Set up areas with pillows or cozy chairs where pupils can enjoy reading.
- Use the walls- display labels, word walls, anchor charts, posters, and student work that will be used and referred to by your pupils.
- Set up areas for literacy centers or stations. Organize materials in colourful bins that make usage and clean up easy.

- Provide pupils with a wide range of engaging materials to promote reading and writing. Some materials may include colourful markers or pens, letter tiles, magnets, puppets, learning mats, or games.
- Arrange a large rug to serve as a place for the class to gather, read, and learn together away from their desks.
- Incorporate technology. If available, consider using iPads, e-readers, computers, or active whiteboards as tools for motivating pupils about literacy. (References: Reutzel & Clark, 2011; Roskos & Neuman, 2011; The Access Center, 2007).

Apart from the physical environment, there is need to create a social environment through balanced literacy programme designed to help all pupils learn to read and write effectively. Such should support academic growth through positive social interactions and peer learning support. For example, teachers are encouraged to construct activities for sharing time, read aloud, small-group reading instruction, whole group instruction, blocks, dramatic play, computers, and arts and crafts. Positive social interaction can lead to personal growth, self-worth, personal responsibility, cognitive development, and academic achievement. (Mignano & Weinstein, 2007).

In addition, preschool teachers are advised to establish effective routines. Fenlon, McNabb, & Pidlypchak (2010) states that to make the most of literacy instruction, a framework should be used as an efficient planning tool for the teacher and a daily routine should be established that allows for predictability for the pupils. The literacy practices in a daily routine should include print concepts, familiar or self-selected reading, word/letter work and vocabulary development, guided or structured shared reading including instruction in reading strategies, text comprehension, interactive read aloud, shared reading, spelling, guided reading, literacy stations/centers and writing for authentic purposes. The following is a list of suggestions for a daily literacy routine.

As part of daily routines, it is suggested that pupils need at least 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction per day in order for sufficient student reading development, and that this instruction must be dense, that is, systematically delivering explicit teacher directions; scaffolding over time; and differentiated across the classroom.

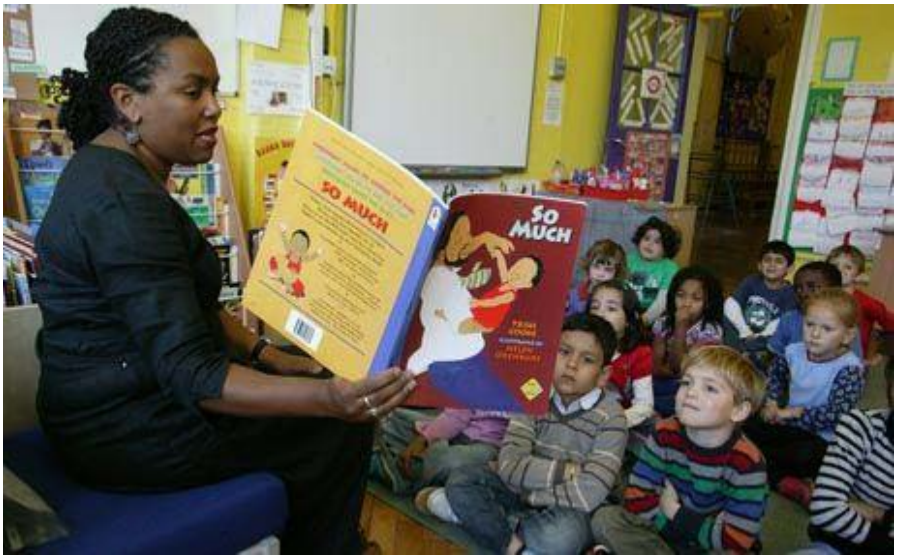
The last element is the establishment of effective grouping practices. According to Reif and Heimburge (2007) a literacy classroom involves a mix of grouping formats. It is important for teachers to choose the format that is most beneficial to the instruction or student practice taking place. Pupils should have the opportunity to work collaboratively with the teacher and their classmates in interactive literacy centers. Literacy centers provide pupils with opportunities to enhance their

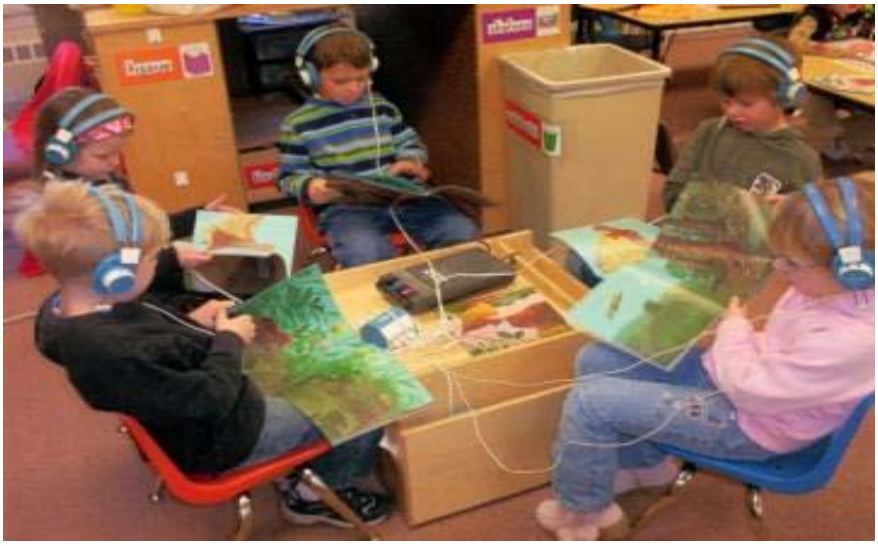
collaborative learning skills while teachers focus lessons on guided reading instruction and extension activities. Some tasks in the literacy classroom may require whole-group instruction while other tasks are fit for the literacy centers or one-on-one guided instruction. The teacher will play a critical role in facilitating the instruction of each.

The following are some strategies and suggestions from Reif and Heimburge (2007) to help structure interactive literacy centers and grouping practices in the classroom:

- Make use of pupils various learning styles
- Include manipulative-based activities within groups, such as pocket charts to build words, tape recorders, dry erase boards, reading games, sequence cards, etc.
- Include open discussion within groups such as, literacy groups, represented by the levelled reading groups.
- Flexible grouping is considered an effective practice for enhancing the knowledge and skills of pupils without the negative social consequences associated with more permanent reading groups.

On the whole, and apart from the provision of resources and materials, the key to a supportive classroom environment is a teacher who is willing to establish a caring relationship with each student, learn about a student's individual needs and strengths, and provide the support and encouragement each student needs to be a successful learner. Below are illustrations of some literacy supportive classroom.





Classroom Literate Environments; Source: Christenson, S. L., & Sheridan, S. M. (2001)

HOME- SCHOOL CONNECTION

Emphasis on the home-school relationships is based on the premise that ways in which pupils use their time and what learning opportunities and supports they receive outside of school highly influence their reading progress and performance in school. Both parents and teachers have an important role to play in children's learning; their roles do not replace but rather complement and reinforce one another, thus providing the student with a consistent message about reading and learning. Christenson & Sheridan (2001) gives for defining features of a constructive parent-teacher relationship as:

- A ***student-focused*** philosophy wherein the teacher and parent cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate to enhance learning opportunities, educational progress and school success for the student in four domains: academic, social, emotional and behavioural.
- A belief in ***shared responsibility*** for educating and socializing children---both the teacher and parent are essential and provide resources for children's reading and learning progress in school. There are no prescribed roles or activities for the family or teacher relative to the student; rather, options for active, realistic participation are created.
- An emphasis on the quality of the interface and ongoing connection between the parent and the teacher. Creating a ***constructive relationship*** (how the family and the teacher work together in meaningful ways) to execute their respective roles in promoting the reading success of the child is most important.
- A ***preventive, solution-oriented*** focus, one where the family and teacher strive to create conditions that encourage and support reading and student engagement.

In interpreting these philosophies, examples of what families do to facilitate learning and thereby foster pupils' school success include:

- ✓ Encouraging and discussing leisure reading.
- ✓ Monitoring and joint analysis of television viewing.
- ✓ Showing interest in children's academic and personal growth.
- ✓ Engaging in frequent dialogue with children.
- ✓ Encouraging children's academic pursuits.
- ✓ Setting clear and consistent limits.
- ✓ Monitoring consistently how time is spent.
- ✓ Communicating regularly with school personnel.
- ✓ Attending and participating in school functions.
- ✓ Displaying parental warmth and nurturance toward the child.
- ✓ Providing quality reading materials and math experiences.
- ✓ Modelling learning by reading and using math in daily life.
- ✓ Reading with children.
- ✓ Believing children's effort, not luck, will result in learning.
- ✓ Orienting a child's attention to learning opportunities.

These activities are summarized in four dimensions by Christenson & Sheridan (2001).

CORRELATE	INDICATORS	RATIONALE
Structure	• Priority given to schoolwork, reading, and learning. • Consistent monitoring of how time is spent. • Authoritative parenting style. • Developing a reflective problem-solving style. • Availability of learning materials and a place for study. • Delay of immediate gratification to accomplish long-term goals. • Routine for completing home tasks. • Communicate regularly with school personnel. • Attendance at school functions. • Parental knowledge of child's current schoolwork and strengths and weaknesses in learning.	Pupils' success in school is facilitated when families and schools provide a consistent pattern of events & age appropriate monitoring & supervision. Pupils perform better in school when they understand their schedule of daily activities, directions for schoolwork, rules for behaviour
Support	• Parental responsibility to assist children as learners. • Encouragement and discussion of leisure reading. • Modelling learning by reading and using math. • Positive emotional interactions. • Responsiveness to child's developmental needs/skills. • Expression of affection.	Student progress is facilitated when adults give frequent verbal support and praise; provide the youth with regular, explicit feedback; talk directly to youth about schoolwork and activities; and teach problem solving and negotiation skills. It is what adults do on an on-going basis to help youth learn and achieve.
Expectations	• Expectations for child success. • Use of effort and ability attributions. • Interest in and established standards for children's schoolwork	Student success in school is facilitated when parents and teachers clearly state expectations for performance, set specific goals and standards for desired behaviour and performance, discuss expectations, emphasize children's effort when completing tasks, and ensure that children understand the consequences for not meeting expectations.
Enriching Environment	• Frequent dialogue. • Informed conversations about everyday events. • Opportunities for good language habits. • Orienting children's attention to	Student success at school is enhanced when pupils experience cooperative, accepting environments; and encouragement, praise and involvement from key adults. Continuity in relationships

	learning opportunities. • Reading with children. • Monitoring and joint analysis of television. • Enriching learning experiences.	and interactions between adults at home and at school will greatly influence the degree of academic achievement.

Teachers increase the probability of family involvement when they value each role and help parents see the importance or benefits of different roles. These factors help parents and teachers develop a common language about conditions that enhance student success. The factors also reinforce the importance of both home and school.

7.4 Conclusion

Family involvement is considered essential to any child's success as a reader. Research has shown that by talking, singing, and reading to children, parents are turning on brain cells that are essential for a healthy child. Parents can build reading skills by interacting with their children. By encouraging babies and young children to communicate, parents are laying the foundation for later reading success. Parents and other family members need to be involved in children's reading throughout their school years. Schools recognize the importance of parent involvement in pupils' progress and are increasingly encouraging parents to play a more active role.

7.5 Summary

There are a range of activities that parents undertake with pre-school children which have a positive effect on their development in that they engage and stretch the child's mind. For example, reading with the child, teaching songs and nursery rhymes, painting and drawing, playing with letters and numbers, visiting the library, teaching the alphabet and numbers, taking children on visits and creating regular opportunities for them to play with their friends at home, were all associated with higher intellectual and social/behavioural scores. These activities could also be viewed as 'protective' factors in reducing the incidence of special educational needs because children whose parents engaged regularly in home learning activities were less likely to be at risk for special educational needs. Schools and teachers alone seldom help pupils achieve their full academic potential. This is a fact of child development as pupils' personal investment in and interest for learning, for example, is influenced by parental messages. Parents and teachers working as partners is a way of thinking about how to create constructive connections between them. Forming connections implies developing an intentional and on-going relationship between teachers and parents that is designed to enhance children's reading and learning, and to address the obstacles that impede it.

7.5 Self-Assessment Questions

a) What are the features of a supportive home environment?
b) In what specific ways can the parents support children acquisition and development of reading skills?

c) What are the effective physical features of an effective reading classroom?
d) Apart from physical facilities, in what ways can the teacher promote reading development?

7.5 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Explore, with examples, the expected relationships that should be between the home and school in developing reading skills.

7.6 References/Further Reading

- Canter, L., & Canter, M. (1991). *Parents on your side: A comprehensive parent involvement program for teachers.* Santa Monica, CA: Lee Cater & Associates.
- Christenson, S. L., & Sheridan, S. M. (2001). *School and families: Creating essential connections for learning.* NY: Guilford Press.
- Clark, C and Hawkins, L (2010). *Young People's Reading: The importance of the home environment and family support*. National Literacy Trust.
- Fenlon, A., McNabb, J., & Pidlypchak, H. (2010). Developing meaningful literacy routines for students with multiple disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 43(1), 42-48.
- Jeffree, D.M. & Skeffington, M. (1980) *Let Me Read*. Human Horizons Series. London: Souvenir Press Ltd
- Kyriacou, C. (1997) *Effective Teaching in Schools*, 2nd edn. Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes.
- Mignano, A., & Weinstein, C. (2007). *Elementary Classroom Management Lesson from Research and Practice*, New York, NY: McGraw Hill Companies, Inc.
- Rasinski, T.V. & Fredericks, A.D. (1991). The second best advice for parents. *The Reading Teacher*, 44, 6, 438-439.
- Reif, S. D., & Heimburge, J. A. (2007). *How to reach and teach all children through balanced literacy*: User-friendly strategies, tools, activities, and ready-to-use materials. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Reutzal, D. R., & Clark, S. (2011). Organizing literacy classrooms for effective instruction: A survival guide. *The Reading Teacher*, 65(2), 96-109.
- Roskos, K., & Neuman, S. B. (2011). The classroom environment: First, last, and always. *The Reading Teacher*, 65(2), 110-114.
- Test, A., Carlson, C., King, D., & and Bender, S. (2012) *Creating a Literate Classroom Environment.* Retrieved from www.iup.edu/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=142995
- The Access Center. (2007). Literacy-rich environments. Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/article/21825

MODULE 3: READING AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL

UNIT 8: NATURE OF READING AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL

8.1 Introduction

The ability to read and to comprehend what is written, has been severally established to be critical to success in any educational system. There is nowhere this assertion is played out more than the primary school system. While at the pre-primary level, pupils are exposed to the rudiments of the reading skill, it is at the primary school level that reading is taken up as a serious business as pupils must not only learn to read, they must be able to read to learn other school subjects and many more materials that are essential for their overall development and life success. This section therefore dwells on the essentials of reading at the primary school level.

8.2 Objectives: At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

a) Clearly articulate the goals of teaching reading at the primary school level.
b) Differentiate between learning to read and reading to learn.
c) Identify the reading problems/difficulties face by primary school pupils and take necessary steps to address them.
d) Differentiate between intensive and extensive reading and develop steps to promote each.

8.3 Main Content

- **GOALS OF TEACHING READING**

Reading at the primary school level is called the Developing phase of the reading continuum (Saskatchewan, 2002). At this level, learners knows that reading is a process of constructing meaning; that reading can be done for different reasons or purposes and they use a variety of strategies. The following are the expected characteristics of learners at this stage.

- Learners read for a variety of purposes
- They relate previous experience and knowledge to what is read
- They visualize what is being read

- They predict and confirms content, events, and outcomes
- They make and confirm inferences
- They draw conclusions
- They question and adjust strategy when meaning is unclear
- They recognize cause and effect
- They find main ideas and specific information
- They use a combination of contextual, structural, and graphophonic clues
- They use other supports (e.g. dictionary) to confirm meaning
- They recognize multiple meaning of words including antonyms, synonyms, and homonyms
- They adjust silent and oral reading rate
- They self-select a variety of reading materials using certain criteria
- They use self-correction strategies during independent reading
- They compare texts by various authors
- They recognize similarities and differences among experiences, lifestyles, and cultures represented in texts
- They make use of phrasing and expression in oral reading

These characteristics imply pupils need to be exposed to a balanced reading programme. Such should focus on the critical elements of reading instruction which include strategies for reading comprehension, for building meaning using the cues and conventions of language and reading fluency, all delivered through an integrated programme. This is needed to achieve the overall goal of reading instruction, which is to create independent readers. Independent readers are those who are constantly monitoring their understanding of the text as they read it. They are always predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing, connecting, and evaluating as they read, essentially engaging in a dialogue with the author and themselves in their minds.

In addition, since nowadays our understanding of the act of reading has been broadened to include the visual and thinking skills necessary to acquire information from digital video, hand-held data assistants, computers, or other technological learning environments (Hobbs, 2005; Messaris, 2005). Add to this broadened definition of reading the idea that the visual and thinking skills needed for acquiring information today are situated in and shaped by increasingly diverse social or cultural settings found in schools, homes, communities, or ethnic groups (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). As a result, the term reading is currently interpreted far more broadly and encompasses the learning of a complex set of skills and knowledge that allows individuals to understand visual and print-based information.

The goal of reading instruction, then, is to empower readers to learn, grow, and participate in a vibrant and quickly changing information-based world. Any reading programme should therefore:

- Enhance communication skills of pupils.
- Create and develop new interests in pupils.
- Produce pupils who continue to learn, even outside the institutional setting.

- Produce pupils who are self-confident.
- Produce pupils who are able to acknowledge and respect differences in cultures, religions, beliefs, values and interests

At the primary school level, and especially around the second or third year, pupils begin the transition from learning to read to reading to learn. In the process, they open their minds to a flood of critical information across disciplines. And to incorporate this new knowledge, pupils must have mastered the basics of reading and achieved automaticity, that is their reading skills have developed to a point of automaticity where they no longer need to use their working memory to facilitate the task of reading, and they can use that memory for things like interpretation, comprehension and creative thinking. Achieving automaticity in reading is essential not only to becoming effective readers, but also to becoming effective all-around learners. To accomplish these tasks of being independent, empowered readers as well as effectively read to learn, they need to be exposed to effective reading strategies.

This overall goal informs the consideration for what should be the component of an effective reading instruction. According to Sanders & Rivers (1996), the quality of instruction provided by the teacher is the single most significant determiner of a child's reading achievement once he or she enters school. It is therefore proposed that high-quality reading instruction should include:

- Reading and writing *to, with*, and *by* children.
- Making use of captioned television to aid in reading practice at home.
- Encouraging the viewing of educational television programming and use of the Internet to increase world knowledge.
- Modeling comprehension strategies and encouraging children and teachers to talk about texts to improve comprehension.
- Connecting literature study to content learning in other curriculum areas, i.e., science, math, and history.
- Creating print-rich, well-organized, and highly interactive classroom environments.
- Providing systematic, explicit, and sustained skill and strategy instruction in each of the essential curriculum components of reading instruction. The essential curriculum component being oral language development, concepts of printed language, letter name knowledge and production, sight word recognition, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing/spelling (Burns, Snow, & Griffin, 1999). Though it is assumed that some of these components should have been addressed at the preschool level, the primary school teacher should ensure that these skills/components are well mastered by the pupils.

- **MODELS OF READING PROCESS**

Reading basically involves transforming a text, which is a graphic representation, into thought, or meaning. It used to be thought that this was simply a matter of combining letters into words, words into sentences and sentences into meanings. However, over the last thirty years, psychologists and linguists, using a variety of experimental techniques, have discovered that things are much more complex. Several models of the reading process have been put forward to account for the experimental findings. A key element in explaining reading is the amount to which what the brain already knows affects perception of what is being read (top-down processing). This idea was initially thought to be in contrast to earlier ideas that reading was a linear progression from page to understanding (bottom-up processing), but newer research seems to indicate that both elements play important parts in reading.

Comprehending a text is complex process. This process analysed in three models which include bottom-up, top-down and interactive processing.

Bottom up model

This model is referred to as the bottom-up because it considers the reading process as a text driven decoding process wherein the sole role of a reader is to reconstruct meaning embedded in the smallest units of text, that is reading begins with the smallest units in language the letter and works up to the largest unit the overall meaning is achieved. It emphasizes the recognition of words, and considers comprehension as information obtained solely from the text. The model views the reader as always starting at the bottom & ends with the identification of letters and working up through words and sentences until the meaning of texts is understood. In this model, the pronunciation of words unfolds or gives access to the meaning of a word. Using this as the bottom step of the ladder, in longer word patterns, pronunciation is still the key to understanding text. Advocates of this model, with a heavy emphasis on decoding skills, tend to follow a structured skill in isolation approach to teaching reading. This method follows a process whereby pupils learn letter-by-letter and word-by-word. Some steps in this process include mastery of letter/sound relationships, single-letter sounds, blends, and sight words. The use of resources with a controlled vocabulary becomes very important in this approach.

The text is viewed as a chain of isolated words, each of which is to be deciphered individually; meaning is built up for a text from the smallest textual units at the bottom including letters and words to larger units at the top with phrases, clauses and links.

The theory hypothesizes that learning to read progresses from children learning the parts of language (letters) to understanding whole text (meaning). Much like solving a jigsaw puzzle, bottom-up models of the reading process say that the reading puzzle is solved by beginning with an examination of each piece of the puzzle and then putting pieces together to make a picture. Gough (1972) described reading as a sequential or serial mental process. Readers, according to him, begin by translating the parts of

written language (letters) into speech sounds, then piece the sounds together to form individual words, then piece the words together to arrive at an understanding of the author's written message.

Teachers who believe that bottom-up theories often teach sub-skills first: they begin instruction by introducing letter names and letter sounds, progress to pronouncing whole words, then show pupils ways of connecting word meanings to comprehend texts.

Although bottom-up theories of the reading process explain the decoding part of the reading process rather well, there is certainly more to reading than decoding. To become readers, pupils must compare their knowledge and background experiences to the text in order to understand the author's message. An important shortcoming of this model lies in its inadequacy which underestimates the contribution of the reader being responsible for prediction and processing information. On the other hand, it is worth adding that the bottom-up model is satisfactory when we are taught vocabulary and an organization of a text but this gives us no assurance that the reader will be able to process the codes-words both rapidly and accurately when reading. It should also be emphasized that L2 readers are frequently panicked by unknown words in the text, so they stop reading to look new words up, thereby interrupting the normal speed and act of the reading process. In classroom application, bottom-up exercises include:

- Grammatical Skills - basic grammar awareness will, of course, help in reading comprehension, but decoding skills should also include learning cohesive devices (substitution, elipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion).
- Vocabulary Development - with the introduction of schema theory, vocabulary acquisition is now seen to involve deeper understanding of words and their contexts, and should thus be taught with an eye to quality, not quantity of learned words.

Top down model

The top down model, on the other hand, views the reader as beginning with meaning and sampling of information sources in the text. The reader then makes connections with his/her own experiences to construct meaning. The model relates to an extension of the language acquisition process, and views the process of reading as predictions confirmed by inspecting the text, and comprehension is obtained by reorganizing the meaning given to the reading. This model, originally theorized by Goodman in the 1970s, indicates that we read only to construct meaning from what we read, viewing reading as a communication process between writer and reader much like communication between speakers and listeners. Taking the theory a step further, Goodman felt that the bottom of the pyramid in reading is language learned in the context of experience. Children come to the task of figuring out a word with the meaning already in their heads. This knowledge will be used to bring meaning to the

text to be read. The reader gets down to the individual words, cluster, or letter level only as a last resort.

While bottom-up placed emphasis on the structure of the text, this model takes the opposite position that highlights readers' interests, world knowledge and reading skills-strategies as the driving force behind reading comprehension. According to Goodman, readers are perceived as active participants who make predictions and process information.

Recent research in the area of learned vocabulary prior to school experience would tend to substantiate this theory. If children enter school with a limited vocabulary (usually due to few experiences early in life), they are handicapped when it comes to learning to read. On the other hand, if children have a rich vocabulary learned from varied experiences, they are able to create meaning by associating their experiences with language in the reading process. As they read, they are constantly guessing or predicting what a word might be. Teachers who have adopted this particular philosophical point of view strive to use children's prior knowledge to help them eliminate words that do not fit the context. Predictable texts become extremely important so pupils can make use of language structure and meaningful content. Classroom application of the top-down model is seen in:

- Schema Activation - by building background knowledge, we can increase pupils' understanding of texts. Cultural and experiential knowledge gaps can create the impression of a language barrier, when it is simply that the pupil lacks the appropriate schema.
- Pre-reading exercises, realia in the classroom, bit-by-bit exposure to text, visual representations, semantic mapping, sub/super-ordination, and comparisons with previous knowledge are all ways to create understanding of the concept before the language.

Numerous reading studies have recently revealed that it is really a disputable issue to adopt either of the reading models. In case of the top-down strategy, there is the notion that the reader has an inadequate amount of knowledge for many texts as regards a reading topic and cannot generate predictions. It was argued that even though a skilled reader can make predictions, it takes him much longer than it would to recognise the words, phrases or links between the sentences or paragraphs (Stanovich 1986). Top-down model is also said to be perfect only for skilled and fluent EFL/ESL reader for whom perception and decoding have already become automatic and that it cannot be recommended for the less proficient or developing reader who might be, as generally accepted, more interested in developing grammatical skills such as cohesive devices and vocabulary recognition (Eskey 2005). In addition, it was noted that we cannot rely entirely on guessing meanings of words from context because our suppositions may be repeatedly incorrect. Taking one step further, Cobb (1999) seems to agree with this argument by adding that word

knowledge appears to be a key ingredient and an important contributor to second language academic reading success.

A commonly known and interesting explanation of the reading process which can be understood either as a distinction or a complementary combination is presented by Nuttall (1996) where she draws our attention to the fact that the above-mentioned models may be treated by readers as a whole. She stresses that sometimes one model predominates over the other, but there are no doubts that both are needed to fully comprehend the text.

Interactive model

The interactive model views reading as involving both the bottom- up and top-down models, and the process of reading comprehension as the interaction of the reader and the text, depending on the particular situation. To overcome the problems the readers may encounter while reading in second language and to properly achieve fluency and accuracy in reading , an effective solution would be created if foreign language readers relied on a symbiosis of top-down and bottom –up strategies. Hence, the interactive process assumes that skills acquired at different levels of language competence are best interactively available to process and interpret the written discourse. As Eskey (2005) claims, fluent reading entails both skilful decoding and relating information to prior knowledge. It seems therefore reasonable to add that readers become good decoders and interpreters of texts gradually but surely only when they are familiar with both lower- level processes (translation of written code or morphological processing) and higher –level processes (including activation of schemata or influence of attitude, motivation and reader interest).

No matter the context in which reading takes place, the nature of the reading process changes as children mature. Specific processes may vary among individuals and according to purpose. During the early stages of reading the identification of words demands greater concentration. As readers progress they should be able to use their ability to interpret written language for a variety of purposes. In order to attain this level of competence readers must use appropriate strategies before, during, and after reading, such as applying schema, or integrating new information with prior knowledge, and engaging in meta-cognitive or self- monitoring procedures.

READING PROBLEMS AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL

At the primary school level, pupils do exhibit some reading difficulties. Difficulties in reading typically involve difficulty with one or more of the following: decoding, reading rate, reading fluency, or reading comprehension.

Decoding: Difficulty with decoding is marked by having not acquired the phoneme-grapheme mapping concept. One specific disability characterized by poor decoding is dyslexia, defined as brain-based type of learning disability that specifically impairs a person's ability to read. These individuals typically read at levels significantly lower than expected despite having normal intelligence. It can also be inherited in some

families, and studies have identified a number of genes that may predispose an individual to developing dyslexia. Although the symptoms vary from person to person, common characteristics among people with dyslexia are difficulty with spelling, phonological processing (the manipulation of sounds), and/or rapid visual-verbal responding.

Reading rate: Individuals with reading rate difficulties tend to have accurate word recognition and normal comprehension abilities, but the reading speed is below grade level. Strategies such as guided reading, silent reading and modelled reading may help improve a reader's reading rate.

Reading fluency: Individuals with reading fluency difficulties fail to maintain a fluid, smooth pace when reading. Strategies used for overcoming reading rate difficulties are also useful in addressing reading fluency issues.

Reading comprehension: Individuals with reading comprehension difficulties are commonly described as poor comprehenders. They have normal decoding skills as well as a fluid rate of reading, but have difficulty comprehending text when read. Numerous problems can occur for the reader at the comprehension level. Understanding how the words come together in each sentence can be a challenge. On the other hand, the pupil may understand each word and even each sentence, but fail to understand the relationships between the sentences and the meaning of the text as a whole. Further, the stumbling block may not be sufficient reading ability to understand more familiar genres of text, but rather, the pupil may only falter when faced with challenging, knowledge demanding text. The reader may lack the requisite knowledge. More importantly, the pupil may lack the reading strategies necessary to overcome such challenges.

Increasing vocabulary knowledge, listening skills and teaching basic comprehension techniques may help facilitate better reading comprehension. It is also clear that many readers lack sufficient reading abilities and knowledge to understand the genre of texts that pervade their classroom lives. World knowledge is particularly helpful to understanding text genres such as narratives or novels. But pupils need domain-specific knowledge to understand their textbook material. Domain knowledge refers to knowledge about the topic of the text such as knowledge about science, history, or about specific topics, such as cell mitosis, heat exchange, or World War II. Textbook materials, in particular, tend to be challenging for most pupils because they often lack sufficient domain knowledge. Textbooks contain unfamiliar words, unfamiliar concepts, and have structures particularly germane to instructional textbooks.

In addition, textbooks tend to have numerous cohesion gaps, posing additional hurdles for many pupils. Cohesion gaps occur when there is little conceptual overlap or explicit connections between sentences. Cohesion gaps force readers to access knowledge to make connections between sentences. Critically, making these connections requires both general and domain knowledge. Thus, the challenges posed by poorly written text are compounded for pupils with less knowledge about the domain.

8.4 Conclusion

The balance between top-down, and bottom-up processing, though identified as complimentary, is still somewhat nebulous. Therefore, much of the recommended teaching practice based on these theories still centre around exercises that isolate and improve top--down and bottom-up skills.

8.5 Summary

The unit emphasizes that the goal of reading at the primary school is comprehension and reading to learn. In achieving the goal, reading teachers need to be exposed to the different models and strategies of reading. While there are two contending models of reading, it is concluded that none is sufficient enough to account, on its own, for the complex nature of reading which results in the propagation of the interactive model of reading.

8.6 Self-Assessment Questions

a) What are the goals of teaching reading in the second language classroom?
b) Which of the reading models would you recommend to your pupils and why?
c) Explain the interactive model of teaching reading.
d) Identify two strategies supported by research findings which enable readers to interpret text.
e) List some of the characteristics based on cognitive view reflecting the current view of reading.
f) Identify the reading problems/difficulties face by primary school pupils and take necessary steps to address them.
g) Differentiate between intensive and extensive reading and develop steps to promote each.

8.7 Tutor-Marked Assignment

(a) Explore extensively the relationships between the bottom-up and top-down models of reading. Explain how each builds on the inadequacies of the other.

8.8 References/Further Reading

Nuttall, C. (1996). Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language. London: Heinemann Educational.

Eskey, D. (2005). Reading in a Second Language. In E. Hinkel (Ed), Handbook of research on second language teaching and learning. Mahvah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

LaBerge, D., & Samuels, S. J. (1974). Towards a theory of automatic information processing in reading. *Cognitive Psychology, 62*, 293-323.

Stanovich, K.E. (1986). “Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences in individual differences in the acquisition of literacy.” *Reading Research Quarterly*, 21, 360 – 407.

UNIT 9: READING FLUENCY AND READING COMPREHENSION

9.1 Introduction

There are five essential components of reading which are: phonemic awareness (the knowledge and manipulation of sounds in spoken words), phonics (the relationship between written and spoken letters and sounds), reading fluency, including oral reading skills (the ability to read with accuracy, and with appropriate rate, expression, and phrasing), vocabulary development (the knowledge of words, their definitions, and context), and reading comprehension (the understanding of meaning in text). The process of going through these components is often very lengthy and laborious, especially for a second language learner of English. Such process must be cemented into place before the focus of reading changes from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" which is where the skills of reading fluency and comprehension are very critical. The enjoyment of reading comes from comprehension and not decoding words and children who love to read have good comprehension skills. This unit therefore focuses on promoting reading fluency and comprehension.

9.2 **Objectives:** at the end of this unit, pupils should be able to:

a) Describe the sub-skills of reading fluency
b) Determine the role of fluency in reading
c) Articulate the relationship between fluency and comprehension.
d) Calculate the reading fluency rate of pupils in your class
e) Identify the elements of reading comprehension.
f) Discuss the factors that affect reading fluency and reading comprehension
g) Develop steps to address the comprehension factors.

9.3 Main Content

READING FLUENCY

At the most basic level, fluency is the speed, accuracy and expression that a person uses when reading a text. *The Literacy Dictionary: The Vocabulary of Reading and Writing*, defines fluency as "freedom from word identification problems that might hinder comprehension" (Harris and Hodges, 1995). To Pikulski & Chard (2003), reading fluency refers to rapid, efficient, accurate word recognition skills that permit a reader to construct the meaning of text. It is also manifested in accurate, rapid, expressive oral reading and is applied during, and makes possible, silent reading comprehension. Fluency has been one of five critical components necessary for successful reading, but it is the most overlooked aspects. This is because it is usually measured through oral reading, and many do not consider it important to silent, independent reading. However, fluency plays an important role in a reader's ability to comprehend texts

A fluent reader has the ability to read smoothly, with intonation and expression, and at the same speed one would uses when talking. It is multifaceted because it involves a reader's ability to use multiple skills simultaneously- a reader must be able to efficiently decode and comprehend the individual words, phrases and sentences that he encounters; when he must stop at each word and spend time trying to pronounce it or determine its meaning.

Fluency is inextricably tied to decoding and reading comprehension. It serves as the bridge between decoding and comprehension. On one level fluency reflects a reader's ability to decode the words in a text. If he is able to quickly and accurately move through the words on the page, his decoding skills are automatic. This means that the reader should be able to accurately comprehend the text. This is not always the case though. Prosody plays a very important role in reading comprehension. A reader may be able to efficiently decode words without really understanding what they mean because he is not engaging with the text on an emotional and personal level. When he reads with appropriate expression and is able to recognize and replicate the writer's phrasing comprehension will follow. Expression allows the reader to make more the complex cognitive connections necessary for true reading comprehension.

Fluency is tied to decoding abilities as it fluctuates based on the difficulty and complexity of the text a person is reading. While each reader has a general fluency rate it will increase if he is reading a text that is well below his independent reading level or will decrease when reading one well above.

Fluency is seen to have serious impact on reading ability. Focus on fluency in the elementary years is important to development of reading ability in young children. Fluency has the greatest impact on reading comprehension. Children with high fluency rates tend to read more and remember more of what they read because they

are able to expend less cognitive energy on decoding individual words and integrating new information from texts into their knowledge banks. Fluency also has positive effects on word recognition skills- children exposed to reading programmes with a focus on fluency have shown greater gains in their abilities to efficiently recognize words than those not receiving instruction with a fluency component.

During the reading process, there is an interplay between the reader's pre-existing knowledge and the written content. Fluent reading is an active process in which the reader calls on experience, language, and prior knowledge to anticipate and understand the author's written language. Thus, readers both bring meaning to print and take meaning from print.

Fluency is defined by three components: speed, accuracy and prosody, though the most standard measure for determining fluency is one that primarily assesses speed and accuracy. A child reads a novel at grade level appropriate passage for sixty-seconds. As she reads the teacher notes the number of words read correctly. This number is then divided by the amount of time that the pupil reads for (60 seconds). The resulting number is the child's fluency rate. This rate is used to determine if the pupil is reading on grade level. While this formula does not indicate prosody, the assessor can also determine it by examining the same sixty-second reading session. By taping the child reading, the teacher can go back and listen to the recording focusing on how appropriately she phrases her reading and uses expression. The role of fluency in reading is briefly summarized below.

Apart from its connection with comprehension, Keith Stanovich (1986) emphasized the importance of reading fluency by indicating a reciprocal relationship between fluency and the amount of reading in which a reader engages. Readers who have achieved some fluency are more likely to engage in more extensive amounts of reading than readers who lack fluency. The latter would find reading difficult and laborious. However, Stanovich goes on to point out that as a result of engaging in extensive amounts of reading, readers grow in all those skills that contribute to fluency and in fluency itself. Non-fluent readers who avoid reading fall further and further behind.

Just as a car needs fuel to run, comprehension is largely fuelled by fluency. Allowing a budding young reader to ignore fluency does much more harm than good because it's basically allowing them to practice bad reading. One way teachers have tried to avoid this is by taking a simplistic approach to improving fluency. And that is to simply "read, read, and read some more." The basic premise behind this strategy is that the more pupils read, the more likely fluency will develop on its own. The problem with this is that there are struggling readers that for a variety of reasons haven't progressed beyond decoding skills. These readers need guidance to move forward with fluency.

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING FLUENCY

Recent research studies have identified strategies that are most likely to improve reading fluency. One such strategy is **Modelled Reading**. Here teachers or parents "model" proper reading by reading aloud to their pupils. This way they can hear what "good reading" sounds like in terms of pacing connected text and proper expression. Comprehension increases because the pupils can focus on content before they read the passage on their own. The process of reading aloud to students needs to be supplemented with procedures which actually engage students in interaction with text, but reading aloud does provide them with a model of how to pace reading in connected text and how to infuse expression. Taped or computer modeled reading is also a viable way to provide fluency support. Reading aloud stimulates listening skills. It helps to familiarize pupils with the language of books and patterns. It builds listening skills and provides examples (models) for children in pronunciation and expression. It is a good idea to incorporate fiction as well as non-fiction texts. The intonation and tone used by the teacher should be appropriate to the text being read.

Shared reading follows the same format as reading aloud, only the teacher reads the text with the pupils. The reading includes pupils identifying key words, either by circling or underlining the words and phrases that they know. This practice is continued on numerous occasions, until the learner can read more and more of the text independently. This may be done individually, with the pupil using a tape recorder with the story being read by the teacher on the cassette. This can also be classified as an independent reading activity.

In **Paired Reading** children work in pairs and assist each other in reading and comprehending the text. This activity must be guided by the teacher by giving the pair questions to answer based on the text information. It may be beneficial to have older (but still close in age) learners work with the younger ones. This opportunity is provided in multi-grade classes.

Repeated Reading of (Familiar) Text is perhaps the most frequently documented approach to improving fluency (Rashotte and Torgesen, 1985) and has been associated with improved outcomes for young students. This likely reflects the application of the theory that fluent reading is promoted by frequent opportunities to practice in familiar text and to increased exposure to words.

Independent (Wide) Reading can lead to substantial gains in improving reading fluency. Not only is sustained silent reading an important part of reading instruction in school, but also the amount of outside reading has a big impact on reading success. The idea is that in order to become fluent readers, pupils have to read a lot. Teachers and parents have the job of making sure that pupils actually want to read and experience the joys of the written word. Adams (1990) concluded: "If we want children to read well, we must find a way to induce them to read lots. Children should

be given as much opportunity and encouragement as possible to practice their reading. Beyond the basics, children's reading facility, as well as their vocabulary and conceptual growth, depends strongly on the amount of text they read. Independent reading good opportunity for pupils to utilize a learning centre. If there is a learning centre in the classroom, the pupils may go to that area and select a reading activity of their choice, and begin reading and working on comprehension exercises. If it is time for leisurely reading, then the pupils may want to bring in an appropriate book from home once a week or once a month to read during independent reading (otherwise, the books can come from the school library). Learners can also make and exchange reading materials. This builds their home libraries and thereby encourages reading at home, and also provides an opportunity for pupils to share what is learned.

Coached or Assisted Reading is also recommended. Controlling the difficulty of texts and providing feedback for words missed during reading seem to be associated with improved rate and accuracy for those students developing fluent reading. Advancing students through progressively difficult text based on their performance seems to enhance their overall fluency as does correction and feedback for words read incorrectly. Providing students with opportunities to read widely and targeting specific elements of fluency building, such as progressively difficult text with corrective feedback, appear to contribute to improved fluency (Kuhn and Stahl, 2000).

Chunking Texts is another approach to fluency building, which involves providing struggling readers with text in which meaningful groups or words or phrases are signaled for the reader as a means of improving fluency and comprehension (Young and Bowers, 1995). Research reveals that different amounts of text presented in repeated reading do not seem to change the outcome. However, control of the amount of text presented may be beneficial for students who are experiencing difficulty with reading accuracy as it may force them to focus on the words for a longer period of time (Cohen, 1988).

Word Reading Practice is also a recommended strategy based on the theoretical descriptions of fluency. The importance of individual word reading automaticity seem to have practical implications for fluency building. Studies in which teachers had students practice reading lists of words that they were later encounter in connected texts consistently resulted in increased fluency though there was no concomitant increase in comprehension.

While fluency alone will not guarantee strong reading comprehension skills, it is absolutely a necessary component. Not only is fluency important to oral reading, but successful silent reading requires fluent reading as well. Regardless of the method, without adequate levels of fluency the tedious process of decoding words draws attention away from understanding. The clear relationship between the amount pupils read, reading fluency, and reading comprehension should be all the encouragement

we need as teachers and parents to help pupils see reading as an exciting avenue for exploring their world.

READING COMPREHENSION

As readers are actively engaged with the text; they think about many things as they read to comprehend the text. For example, they do the following:

- Activate prior knowledge
- Examine the text to uncover its organization
- Make predictions
- Connect to their own experiences
- Create mental images
- Draw inferences
- Notice symbols and other literary devices
- Monitor their understanding

The ultimate goal of reading is to understand what has been read which in essence, is comprehension. Reading comprehension can be defined as the level of understanding of a passage or text. It is a process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text, and the stance the reader takes in relationship to the text. It involves a complex process that includes many skills and strategies, from recognizing individual words to forming a coherent and cohesive mental model of a text. Effective reading comprehension is the culmination of mastering vocabulary, phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension skills (Dougherty-Stahl, 2004). Elements of Reading Comprehension include:

- Identifying and summarizing the main idea
- Comparing and contrasting
- Identifying supporting facts and details
- Making inferences and drawing conclusions
- Predicting outcomes
- Recognizing fact and opinion
- Recognizing realism versus fantasy
- Identifying cause and effect
- Recognizing sequence of events
- Identifying story elements such as main characters, settings, plot, conflict, and resolution
- Identifying the author’s purpose and point of view
- Interpreting literary devices such as imagery, symbolism ,and metaphors

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING FLUENCY AND READING COMPREHENSION

A direct relationship is assumed between fluency and reading comprehension. Though comprehension is not guaranteed with fluency, but it is difficult without fluency. If a reader has to frequently stop to figure out unknown words, most likely the reader will not remember or understand much of what is read. Often pupils skilled in comprehension read faster than pupils with poor reading comprehension. Fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time, whereas less fluent readers must focus their attention on figuring out the words, leaving them little attention for understanding the text. When fluency improves, readers can focus their attention on comprehension and understand more of what is read.

The automaticity theory (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Samuels & Flor, 1997) and the verbal efficiency theory (Perfetti, 1985, 1999) both highlight the harmful effects of inefficient fluency skills on comprehension. According them, beginning readers first concentrate on word reading and gradually shift their attention to what they read and understand. LeBerge and Samuels (1974) argued that, based on information-processing theory and their research, human beings are single-channel processors; that is, we can attend to only one thing at a time. We are able to do more than one thing at a time if we alternate our attention between two or more activities or if one of the activities is so well learned that it can be performed automatically. They pointed out that reading requires *at least* two activities—1) word identification or decoding and 2) comprehension or the construction of the meaning of text. In order for reading to proceed efficiently and effectively, the reader cannot focus attention on both of the processes. The non-fluent reader can, as do many beginning readers who have not yet developed automatic decoding skills, alternate attention between the two processes. Constructing meaning—which involves putting words into meaningful thought units, making inferences, relating information being derived from the text with background knowledge, and responding critically to the meaning that is constructed — always requires attention. For readers who must alternate between attending to the decoding of words and the construction of meaning, reading is a slow, laborious, inefficient ineffective and often punishing process. If the limited attention and cognitive capacity is drained by the processing of decoding words little or no capacity is available for the attention-demanding process of constructing and responding to the meaning of a text. In other words, a non-fluent reader puts a large amount of effort into decoding words. By the time such a reader finishes a sentence, he or she may forget what the sentence was even about. Comprehension is blocked because the process of decoding takes so much time and effort the short-term memory can't grasp the fragmented input of information. By contrast, a fluent reader reads in smooth and continuous phrases and the brain can retain and comprehend what is read. Therefore, automaticity of decoding fluency is essential for high levels of reading achievement.

Perfetti (1999) also suggested that when readers focus attention heavily on decoding accurately, less attention is available for comprehension. However, when decoding

becomes automatic, requiring little attention, more attention may be allocated for comprehending a text.

According to Hudson et al. (2005), each aspect of fluency has a clear connection to reading comprehension. For example, inaccurate word reading can lead to misinterpretations of the story, poor automaticity can strain the reader's ability to construct ongoing interpretation of the story, and poor prosody can lead to confusion through inappropriate groupings of words or the inappropriate use of expression. It can then be concluded that if reading can occur automatically, without too much focus on the decoding process, then improved comprehension will be the result.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT READING COMPREHENSION

Many factors affect a child's ability to comprehend text. While word identification is a process that results in a fairly exact outcome, the process of comprehending text is not so exact. Different readers will interpret an author's message in different ways. Comprehension is affected by the reader's knowledge of the topic, knowledge of language structures, knowledge of text structures and genres, knowledge of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, their reasoning abilities, the type or genre of text (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, poetry), the amount of reading done, students' motivation, and their level of engagement.

National Reading Panel, (2000) classified the factors as reader and text factors. Reader factors include the background knowledge that readers bring to the reading process as well as the strategies they use while reading and their motivation and engagement during reading. Text factors include the author's ideas, the words the author uses to express those ideas, and how the ideas are organized and presented. Both reader factors and text factors affect comprehension. The next table presents an overview of the two comprehension factors (reader and text).

Type	Factor	Role in Comprehension
Reader	Background Knowledge	Pupils activate their world and literary knowledge to link what they know to what they're reading.
	Vocabulary	Pupils recognize the meaning of familiar words and apply word-learning strategies to understand what they're reading.
	Fluency	Pupils have adequate cognitive resources available to understand what they're reading when they read fluently.
	Comprehension Strategies	Pupils actively direct their reading, monitor their understanding, and troubleshoot problems when they occur.
	Comprehension Skills	Pupils automatically note details that support main ideas, sequence ideas, and use other skills.
	Motivation	Motivated pupils are more engaged in reading, more confident, and more likely to comprehend successfully.
Text	Genres	Genres have unique characteristics, and pupils' knowledge of them provides a scaffold for comprehension.

	Text Structures	Pupils recognize the important ideas more easily when they understand the patterns that authors use to organize text.
	Text Features	Pupils apply their knowledge of the conventions and literary devices used in texts to deepen their understanding.

These factors are discussed below:

Automaticity of Decoding

One of the best predictors of a child's ability to comprehend print is his or her ability to decode print. If a student is not fluent in word recognition, he/she is thinking about the sounds of the individual letters and letter combinations rather than using that energy to make sense of the text being read. In contrast, because a fluent reader dedicates little capacity to word recognition, most of his/her capacity is available for comprehension. There is a rich literature showing the contribution of accurate word recognition to reading comprehension and enjoyment (Kuhn and Stahl 5). In fact, well-developed word recognition skills in the primary years predict good comprehension in the later elementary grades. However, even though skilled decoding is necessary, it is by no means sufficient for skilled comprehension. Some children can read smoothly and with expression and not understand. Others may struggle mightily with decoding but still somehow get the gist. Some children can read with automaticity and even with expression but still have limited comprehension. Children must be taught to monitor their comprehension and to know how and when to introduce effective strategies to support comprehension.

Vocabulary Development and Background Knowledge

Good comprehenders generally have good vocabularies. And beyond that, there is evidence that teaching students' vocabulary, in fact, increases their comprehension abilities (Pressley 2002, 293). Although vocabulary can be taught, most vocabulary words are learned through reading. That is why people who read a great deal generally have large vocabularies. Prior knowledge affects comprehension. The more one already knows, the more one comprehends, and the more one comprehends, the more one learns new knowledge to enable comprehension of an even broader array of topics and texts (Fielding and Pearson 1994). Children who arrive at Primary One with a rich background of experiences and vocabulary are advantaged in both listening and reading comprehension. Along with the ability to decode print, the child's level of listening comprehension is very predictive of potential reading comprehension level. Listening comprehension relies heavily on both vocabulary and background knowledge.

Extensive Reading

The more reading a reader does, the more reading comprehension should improve. It is important during independent reading that teachers try to ensure that all children are

actually reading and not “faking it.” Books should be at the child’s appropriate independent reading level. If they are too hard, the child will generally become frustrated and give up. If they are too easy, the child may be bored. Either way, engagement is affected. **The Matthew Effect** refers to the fact that good readers tend to read much more than weak readers. Thus, strong readers tend to become stronger and weak readers, reading less, make minimal progress.

Rereading

Teachers should encourage children to reread texts. Research suggests that rereading leads to greater fluency and improved comprehension. When all children in a classroom—or an entire school—have their own book boxes or bags, more reading and rereading generally occurs. Whenever it is independent reading time, or whenever they have “just finished” and have “nothing to do,” it is time to take a book out of the book boxes/bag. These books are read and reread. Struggling readers, who are often seen thumbing through book bins or shelves looking for a book to read, are now engaged in reading and rereading.

Silent Reading versus Oral Reading

Children need opportunities to read both silently and orally. Beginning readers often sub-vocalize when they read, which generally supports comprehension. Comprehension is also enhanced when children read in pairs, discuss their reading, and receive feedback from an adult or a peer. It is important that the teacher monitor to make sure that one child does not do all the reading.

Quality of the reading material

Reading comprehension is also affected by the quality of the reading material. Some writers are better writers than others, and some writers produce more complex reading material than others. Text that is well organized and clear is called "considerate text," and text that is poorly organized and difficult to understand can be called "inconsiderate text." The more inconsiderate the text, the more work will be required of a reader to comprehend the text. Readers who do not have the background, abilities, or motivation to overcome the barriers presented in inconsiderate text will have more difficulty comprehending these types of texts. Pupils who had trouble learning to decode and recognize words often will have difficulty with reading comprehension. Pupils who struggle with decoding rarely have a chance to interact with more difficult text and often learn to dislike reading. As a result, these pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop the language skills and strategies necessary for becoming proficient readers. Overall, readers with poorly developed language skills and strategies will not have the tools to take advantage of the obvious structures and comprehension cues that are part of considerate text nor will they have the extra tools needed to overcome the barriers of inconsiderate text.

Quality of Instruction

The type of instruction that a pupil receives will also affect reading comprehension. Strategies for improving reading comprehension must be taught directly by teachers. Simply providing opportunities or requiring for children to read will not teach many pupils the comprehension strategies they need to be proficient readers. These need to be taught directly as pupils learn to read simple sentences and this direct instruction need to continue in different forms throughout a pupil's elementary and secondary school experience.

9.4 Conclusion

Reading competence has many faces, and should be firmly grounded in reading fluently and effective comprehension. The nature of the reading process alters as pupils mature. In the early stages of reading, word identification requires a reader's concentration. Eventually, however, readers are able to use their ability to interpret written language for pleasure, appreciation, knowledge acquisition, and functional purposes. Proficient, fluent readers locate materials and ideas that enable them to fulfil particular purposes, which may be to follow directions, to complete job applications, or to appreciate literary texts. In addition, fluent readers adjust their reading style as they move from narrative to expository content. Finally, they read with various types of understanding - literal, affective, interpretive, critical, and creative. Ensuring that pupils are able to achieve all these levels of reading should be the ultimate goal of any reading programme at the primary school level.

9.5 Summary

The ability to read is crucial for a pupil’s success both in and out of school. Effective reading instruction is necessary for success in reading. In the classroom, it needs to be recognized that knowing how to read is much more than being able to identify the words on a page; it is being able to understand what is being communicated as well. Thoughtful attention to fluency can have a positive impact on reading comprehension. The ability to read fluently can increase reading comprehension, and by focusing on fluency instruction, educators can impact reading achievement.

9.6 Self-Assessment Questions

a) Describe Reading Fluency. What are its components?
b) Discuss the strategies for developing fluency?
c) What is Reading Comprehension? List its components.
d) Justify the relationship between Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension

9.7 Tutor-Marked Assignment

What are text factors and reader factors in comprehension? In what ways can reader factors and text factors affects fluency and comprehension?

9.8 References/Further Reading

Carter, V. E (2000). New Approaches to Literacy Learning, A Guide for Teacher Educators, UNESCO, France.

Flood, J., Jensen, J., M.,Lapp,,D., Squire,,J.,(1991).Handbook of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts. New York. Macmillan Publishing Company,

National Reading Panel (2000). Fluency. In *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for instruction.* Bethesda, MD: National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

LaBerge, D., & Samuels, S. J. (1974). Toward a theory of automatic information processing in reading. *Cognitive Psychology, 62*, 293-323.

Perfetti, 1985, Perfetti, C. A., (1985). *Reading ability.* New York: Oxford University Press

UNIT 10: READING/COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

10.1 Introduction

This unit involves the detailed description of the reading strategies used by proficient readers. In the course of reading, proficient readers do apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features. They unconsciously use all of the strategies on a regular basis to make sense from the written word. Using the strategies is a high form of critical and creative thinking and is necessary to interpret the written word Learners who learn about reading strategies can use the knowledge to become fluent and skilled, to monitor and make efficient their own reading, and to teach skills and strategies to others.

10.2 Objectives: at the end of this unit you should be able to:

a. Examine the different reading strategies used by the proficient reader.
b. Develop effective reading strategies for your own use
c. Use your understanding of reading strategies to develop an effective reading programmes for primary school pupils.

10.3 Main Content

Reading/ Comprehension strategies are the cognitive and metacognitive strategies readers use to strategies accomplish the goal of comprehension. Cognitive strategies are mental processes involved in achieving something, while metacognitive strategies are the mental processes that help us think about and check how we are going in completing the task. In reading, both do overlap. Cognitive strategies assist in understanding what is being read, while metacognitive strategies allow individuals to monitor and assess their ongoing performance in understanding what is being read.

Comprehension strategies are deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify the reader's efforts to decode text, understand words, and construct meanings of text. They are conscious plans — sets of steps that good readers use to make sense of text. They are essential, not only to successful comprehension, but to overcoming reading problems and becoming a better reader. Though reading strategies are as varied as the readers, they cannot be trained in isolation of each other or in contexts separate from the target content.

Reading strategies are often broadly categorized into three: Pre-reading strategies, during reading strategies and post (after) reading strategies. At any of these stages, proficient readers exploit a lot of metacognitive processes to aid their understanding. Metacognition can be defined as 'thinking about thinking'. Good readers use metacognitive strategies to think about and have control over their reading. Before reading, they might clarify their purpose for reading and preview the text. During reading, they might monitor their understanding, adjusting their reading speed to fit the difficulty of the text and "fixing" any comprehension problems they have. After reading, they check their understanding of what they read.

PRE-READING OR BEFORE READING STRATEGIES

Before Reading Strategies consist of those strategies that a pupil learns to use to get ready to read a text selection. These strategies help the reader get an idea of what the author might be trying to say, how the information might be useful, and to create a mental set that might be useful for taking in and storing information. These strategies could include previewing headings, surveying pictures, reading introductions and summaries, creating a pre-reading outline, creating questions that might need to be answered, making predictions that need to be confirmed, etc. Some strategies are discussed below.

Searching: this is where readers search the information systems for clues to meaning. They use the graphophonic system to sample the letters in the words, the semantic to activate their background knowledge, and the syntactic to use the grammar system of the English language.

Scanning allows you to locate quickly a single fact, date, name, or word in a text without trying to read or understand the rest of the piece. You may need that fact or word later to respond to a question or to add a specific detail to something you are writing. In scanning,

- Knowing your text well is important. Make a prediction about where in a chapter you might find the word, name, fact, term, or date.
- Note how the information is arranged on a page. Will headings, diagrams, or boxed or highlighted items guide you? Is information arranged alphabetically or numerically as it might be in a telephone book or glossary?

- Move your eyes vertically or diagonally down the page, letting them dart quickly from side to side and keeping in mind the exact type of information that you want. Look for other closely associated words that might steer you towards the detail for which you are looking.

Previewing involves examining the style of the writing, title and subtitles, and photos and their captions

Predicting. This is based upon a sampling of information after which, the reader makes educated guesses about what comes next in the text. In predicting, the reader considers what the style, title and subtitles, and photos tell him about the writing, what he already knows about the subject and guesses what the text is going to say. Learners use information from graphics, text and experiences to anticipate what will be read/viewed/heard and to actively adjust comprehension while reading/ viewing/listening. The prediction strategy involves thinking about what might be coming next in the text. Predictions are more useful and more common when reading narrative texts than when reading science texts though they indicate to the pupil to think ahead and more globally while reading. Example of predicting questions/statements are:

- What do I think will happen next?
- What words/images do I expect to see or hear in this text?
- What might happen next? Why do I/you think that? What helped me make that prediction?
- Were my predictions accurate? How did I confirm my predictions?
- Have I read/seen/heard about this topic anywhere else?

Brainstorming involves making a list of everything you already know about the topic as well as a list of everything you would like to know about the topic.

WHILE READING OR DURING READING STRATEGIES

During Reading Strategies consist of those strategies that pupils learn to use while they are reading a text selection. These strategies help the reader focus on how to determine what the author is actually trying to say and to match the information with what the pupil already knows. These strategies should be influenced by the Before Reading Strategies because pupils should be using or keeping in mind the previews, outlines, questions, predictions, etc. that were generated before actual reading and then using this information to digest what they are reading. Some During Reading Strategies include questioning, predicting, visualizing, paraphrasing, elaborating (i.e., comparing what is read to what is known), changing reading rate, re-reading, etc. Some are discussed below.

Skimming*:* is a strategy employed obtaining a quick overview of a text. The reader may be looking for something quite specific; may want to get a general idea before putting effort into close reading; may have already read the text thoroughly, and be

wanting to recall the main points. When you SKIM, you read quickly to get the main idea of a paragraph, page, chapter, or article, and a few (but not all) of the details. Skimming allows you to read quickly to get a general sense of a text so that you can decide whether it has useful information for you. You may also skim to get a key idea. After skimming a piece, you might decide that you want or need to read it in greater depth. In skimming, the reader:

- Reads the opening paragraph and the conclusion carefully.
- Reads the first and last sentence of each remaining paragraph to gain some idea of the main points.
- Looks for words and phrases that act as sign posts to the main ideas or messages in the text, or that are clues to anything specific you might be looking for.
- Uses a marker pen to mark out any items that you want to re-read, or refer to later.
- Moves his eyes horizontally (and quickly).

Making connections: Comprehension increases when pupils make a connection to the text. Good readers retrieve background knowledge and experiences from their long term memory to help them understand what they are reading. Sharing connections with each other helps build schema and enhance engagement. Pupils build, change and revise their schema as they read and think about the new facts ideas, and concepts. It is important that readers understand how their connections are contributing to their understanding of the text. Connections help pupils consider how this new knowledge in short term memory can be stored in long term memory for future use. Three different kinds of connections good readers use are text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world.

- Text-to-self connections connect readers with the text via their own personal experiences.
- Text-to-text connections connect readers with the text in relation to another text.
- Text to world connections connect readers with the text in relation to something occurring in the world.

Using Context Clues. Readers often guess the meaning of a word by its context especially if they do not understand a word. They look at how it is used in a text, examine the words around it, and try to guess its meaning from these clues. Effective readers use their knowledge about words and text structures, and their prior knowledge about a subject, to help figure out unfamiliar words and concepts in new contexts.

Visualizing. Visualizing text, i.e. creating mental images, is a crucial skill for pupils because if they can get the picture, often they've got the concept. When we read a text, the writer relies upon us to create pictures in our minds. These pictures, along with our other senses and emotions, help us to understand what we are reading. Taking the words of the text and combining them with the reader's background

knowledge allows readers to create meaningful images that enhance understanding and make the story come alive. Mental images allow the reader to feel as though they are right there in the story. When pupils don't get those pictures in their heads, the teacher may need to think aloud and talk them through the ideas in the text, explaining the pictures that come to mind. Visualization can help pupils to focus, remember, and apply their learning in new and creative situations. It is an invaluable skill in subjects such as Math, Science, and Design & Technology, where understanding spatial relationships can be a key to solving complex problems. Visualizing promotes comprehension of the ideas in written texts by forming pictures in the mind from the words on the page. Learners create a mental image from a text read/viewed/heard. Visualizing brings the text to life, engages the imagination and uses all of the senses. Example questions/statements include:

- What are the pictures I/you have in my/your head as I/you read/view/ listen to this text?
- Can I/you describe the picture or image you made while you read/ heard that part?
- How did the pictures in my/your head help me/you to understand the text?

Teaching pupils to visualize or create sensory images in the mind helps them to transform words into higher-level concepts. In order to visualize text, pupils must understand the concepts of *seen text* and *unseen text*. Seen text involves everything they can see on the page: words, diagrams, pictures, special typographical features. Unseen text draws on their background knowledge and experiences, and their word knowledge as they come across unfamiliar vocabulary. Visualization helps build upon from (schema) prior knowledge and textual skills; may include visual, auditory and other sensory as well as emotional connections; gives depth and dimension to the reading and engages the reader to make the text more memorable

Making inferences. An inference is the ability to connect what is in the text with what is in the mind to create an educated guess. Making inferences from words that are read or spoken is a key comprehension skill. Pupils may miss vital information if they fail to make appropriate inferences. Inferences helps draw meaning from text – through explicit details and implicit clues and connect prior knowledge and experiences to the text in order to make good guesses about what is happening, may have happened, or will happen in the future. Bridging inferences is the process of linking ideas and understanding the relations between separate sentences in the text. Deep comprehension requires more than merely interpreting individual sentences; the reader must also be able to integrate individual sentence meanings into a coherent text level representation. Making inferences is critical to text comprehension because texts normally do not (or cannot) state all of the relevant information. Therefore, to successfully comprehend a text, the reader must generate inferences to fill in "missing" information and build a coherent mental model that incorporates information in the text.

Monitoring. During the reading of the text, the pupil checks understanding of the text by paraphrasing the author's words; monitors comprehension by using context clues to figure out new words and by using images, inference, and prediction; and integrates new concepts with existing knowledge and continually reviews the purposes of reading. The proficient reader constantly is asking, "Does this make sense; do I know what I am reading?" When the meaning seems to break down, the reader stops, goes back and rereads until it does make sense. Learners stop and think about the text and know what to do when meaning is disrupted. Comprehension monitoring is the process of being aware of understanding. Pupils who are good at monitoring their comprehension know when they understand what they read and when they do not. They have strategies to "fix" problems in their understanding as the problems arise. In effect, the process of comprehension monitoring falls out of using effective reading strategies because to use a strategy the readers must be at least somewhat aware of their level of understanding. And, ideally, a reader's awareness of low understanding can often lead to the use of reading strategies to repair understanding. Usually, comprehension monitoring does not manifest in self-explanations, but when it does, the reader may say "I don't understand what that means," or, "I see what that means now."

Example questions/statements include:

- Is this making sense?
- What have I/you learned?
- Should I/you slow down? Speed up?
- Do I need to re-read/view/listen?
- What can help me/you fill in the missing information?
- What does this word mean?
- What can I use to help me understand what I'm/you're reading/hearing?

Pupils may use several comprehension monitoring strategies to:

- Identify where the difficulty occurs
- Identify what the difficulty is
- Restate the difficult sentence or passage in their own words
- Look back through the text
- Look forward in the text for information that might help them to resolve the difficulty

Self-Questioning: is the active communication between the author and the reader. Self-Questioning improves attention, provides a purpose for reading and helps the reader interact with the author. This process of inquiry promotes active thinking and helps readers make connections between what they are reading and what they already know. Good readers generate their own questions, versus teachers providing the questions. Readers ask questions that relate to their own background knowledge and

interests. Their level of engagement increases and they feel successful when they find the answer. Self-Questioning should help the reader to:

- Clarify and review what has happened so far
- Clarify confusion when comprehension breaks down
- Clarify new vocabulary words
- Understand character traits and feelings
- Formulate “I wonder” questions and search for answers

Repairing. When this strategy is used, it is a two-fold process. First there is the awareness by the reader that an error has been made (monitoring), and secondly, the reader uses a variety of fix-up strategies to repair comprehension and continue the process of constructing meaning.

Making Notes. Notes help readers to monitor their understanding and help writers and speakers to organize information and clarify their thinking. Note making provides strategies for remembering what one reads and serve as a tool for summarizing information and ideas, making connections, and seeing patterns and trends in course-related materials. Through note making, pupils will:

- Read course-related materials, analyze content and remember important information and concepts.
- Learn a strategy for studying for a test, researching, or generating content for a writing task.
- Be able to identify important information and details from a text.

AFTER READING OR POST READING STRATEGIES

After-Reading Strategies consist of those strategies that pupils learn to use when they have completed reading a text selection. These strategies are used to help the pupil "look back" and think about the message of the text and determine the intended or possible meanings that might be important. These strategies are used to follow up and confirm what was learned (e.g., answer questions or confirm predictions) from the use of before and during reading strategies. However, After-Reading Strategies also help the reader to focus on determining what the big, critical, or overall idea of the author's message was and how it might be used before moving on to performance tasks or other learning tasks. Some of these strategies are highlighted below.

Questioning: a strategy for reviewing what you have learned by asking certain questions. Learners pose and answer questions that clarify meaning and promote deeper understanding of the text. Questions can be generated by the learner, a peer or the teacher. By generating questions, pupils become aware of whether they can answer the questions and if they understand what they are reading. Pupils learn to ask themselves questions that require them to combine information from different segments of text. Example of questions/statements include:

- What in the text helped me/you know that?
- How is this text making me/you feel? Why is that?
- When you read/viewed/ listened to that text did it remind me/you of anything I/you know about? Why did it remind me/you of that?
- What did the composer of the text mean by …?
- Whose point of view is this? What points of view are missing?

Paraphrasing is the process of restating the text in different words, or in the reader's own words. It doesn't go beyond the information in the text, so it's not an explanation of the text. In the reading strategy literature, paraphrasing is often not recognized as an effective strategy. However, it is an important part of the explanation because many readers often paraphrase the sentence to begin an explanation Paraphrases are important because they help the reader, particularly less skilled readers, to better understand the explicit information contained in the words and sentences of a text. Thus, paraphrasing can help the less skilled reader improve the basic understanding of the text, or text-base level understanding Paraphrases also act as a jump start for self-explanations. Essentially, the act of paraphrasing externalizes the reader's understanding. This process can force the reader to fill in conceptual gaps and facilitates the activation of relevant concepts that are necessary to generate inferences.

Summarizing: Learners identify and accumulate the most important ideas and restate them in their own words. Example questions/statements include:

- What things will help me/you summarize this text – list, mind map, note-taking, annotations, etc.?
- What are the main ideas and significant details from the reading/ viewing/listening?
- If you were to tell another person about the text read/viewed/heard in a few sentences, what would you tell them?
- What is the main theme? How is it connected to the world beyond the text?
- In what significant ways does this text relate to/elaborate on the topic that you have been investigating?

10.4 Conclusion

The implications of these strategies for instruction are clear. We must provide explicit instruction about both skills and strategies. Some struggling readers may need to be taught specific strategies for visual and auditory discrimination so they know what to attend to, how to process it, and why it is necessary to disassemble and reassemble language sounds and word parts. In the same way, beginning readers may need to learn specific strategies to decode words and comprehend text. Teaching these kinds of reading strategies explicitly helps children understand what they are doing and why it is important—two crucial features of learning that may escape children who are given daily worksheets to practice the skills without the cognitive explanations. Thus,

basic skills of reading benefit from being taught as strategies initially, but the goal is fluent, proficient, automatic recognition of letters, phonemes, and words over time.

10.5 Summary

Teachers need to provide pupils with explicit instruction of comprehension strategies, focusing on the explanation of the strategy and why it is helpful/necessary for comprehension? Note that some of these strategies could be used in all three categories. For example, questioning could be listed in the before, during, and after reading categories. Summarization could be listed as both during and after reading strategies. Teachers also need to provide examples to assist this explanation and wherever possible make connections to pupils' background knowledge and prior learning. In addition, teachers should model the strategies. The goal is to ensure that pupils know the strategies and the process for using them. Ultimately, pupils develop a range of strategies that they can use as needed when they are reading on their own.

10.6 Self-Assessment Questions

a. List and discuss the reading strategies used by proficient readers to aid their comprehension.
b. Categorise the reading strategies according to each reading stage.

10.7 Tutor-Marked assignment

Develop a classroom reading instruction based on three comprehension strategies spanning pre-, during- and post-reading phases.

10.8 References

Carter, V. E (2000). New Approaches to Literacy Learning, A Guide for Teacher Educators, UNESCO, France.

Flood, J., Jensen, J., M.,Lapp,,D., Squire,,J.,(1991).Handbook of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts. New York. Macmillan Publishing Company,

Harris, T. L., & Hodges, R.E. (1995). The Literacy Dictionary: The Vocabulary of Reading and Writing. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association,

Kamil, M.L.; Mosenthal, P.B.; Pearson, P.D., eds. (2000). Handbook of reading research, vol. 3. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Monahan, J., & Hinson, B. (1998) New Directions in Reading Instruction. Newark, Delaware. International Reading Association,

Pikulski, J.J. & D.J. Chard (2003).Fluency: the bridge from decoding to reading comprehension. Current Research in Reading/Language Arts. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Ruddel1, R. B., Ruddell, M.R, & Singer, H. (1998). Theoretical Models And Processes of Reading. Fourth Edition. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

Schoenbach, Ruth et al. (1999). Reading for understanding: a guide to improving reading in middle and high school classrooms. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Unit 11: **APPROACHES, METHODS & TECHNIQUES OF TEACHING READING**

11.1 Introduction

Focus on language development of children have resulted in the recommendation of variety of approaches that can be employed in the teaching of reading. However, due to the complex nature of reading, non of the approaches/methods can be said to be self-sufficient as each builds on the weakness of the other. Reading teachers need a comprehensive understanding of the methods and approaches, in order to determine what bests their pupils as well as the reading purpose. However, the most effective approach is a balanced one, which includes the strengths of all recommended approaches and methods. A balanced reading programme uses literature to teach skills and focuses on reading for meaning integrated with direct instruction in skill development for decoding and comprehension.

11.2 Objectives: at the end of this unit, you should be able to:

a) Have an updated knowledge of approaches and methods to teaching reading over the years.
b) Give examples of different strategies for teaching reading
c) Discuss and implement the strategies for promoting different reading skills.

11.3 Main Content

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF APPROACHES TO READING

Reading experts advocated various approaches over the years that were believed to be the best methods for teaching children how to read. During the 1930s and 1940s, emphasis was placed on reading to gain meaning, using the 'look and say' method. In the 1960s and 1970s, the emphasis changed to skill development, which implied using tools, such as phonetics and other word decoding skills in teaching reading. The early 1980s introduced the whole language approach, with its focus on reading for meaning; and integrating the four components of language with literature: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The basic belief in this approach was that children can learn to read as naturally as they learn to speak; they will learn to read from exposure

to reading skills using literature without direct instruction in specific isolated reading skills. It advocated, instead, the use of indirect instruction, where phonetics and sight vocabulary are taught through literature.

Today teaching reading encompasses the integration of the four components of language (reading, speaking, writing and listening) into other subjects of the curriculum, therefore, connections are made between disciplines, such as science and language arts, and taught through conceptual themes.

Also, the contemporary view of reading is that the pupil is an active learner, who interacts with new information based on his/her previous knowledge and experiences. He/she builds own knowledge base by deriving meanings from information, connecting new concepts and skills to what is already known. Therefore, teaching should place emphasis on helping pupils learn how to draw on their experiences and previous knowledge in order to construct meaning. Children begin learning about the world using themselves and their culture as a reference point (speaking their language, learning about their culture, using images that physically reflect the children's identities, etc.). It is important that they have a point of reference in order to have a clear understanding of their culture and identity. As they develop a sense of pride and understanding of who they are, they are better able to understand and appreciate other cultures, which is one of the main goals of reading.

Apart from the above, researches have also focus on reading instruction as a balanced programme, which incorporates the strengths of all recommended approaches and methods. A balanced reading programme uses literature to teach skills and focuses on reading for meaning, integrating direct instruction with skill development for decoding and comprehension.

Within the balanced programme, though it is emphasized that phonetics can be useful when incorporated, it should not share equal emphasis with reading comprehension. The purpose of phonetics and other decoding strategies is to create additional means for improving reading comprehension and help learners understand the meaning of what they read. Phonetics should not be viewed as skill pupils learn before using and interacting with authentic literature, but rather is taught within the context of reading and writing (Irwin, 1967). Skill instruction should also be mixed in reading and writing activities, and not presented as a separate activity. Language and vocabulary knowledge also play an important role in a balanced reading method. Teachers are encouraged to should seek to improve children's vocabularies through experience and this can be done not only by using existing interests, but also by creating new. Children are to learn sight vocabulary in context rather than in isolation, while teachers use word lists in order to compare and contrast, classify words or use tags and signs as a context for teaching sight vocabulary. Learners may also learn vocabulary in activities such as games and dramatizations that stimulate the imagination, and make reference to children's experiences.

From these reviews, perspectives of reading and reading instruction is can be said to have benefited from various inputs which has resulted in the use of various methods and strategies.

REVIEW OF METHODS OF TEACHING READING

In unit 6, a number of strategies for teaching children how to learn to read were discussed. These include phonics instruction, vocabulary instruction, reading aloud, picture reading, dialogic reading, etc. Though these were captioned under emergent reading strategies, their use and relevance also extends to the primary school level. In addition to these, a number of strategies would further be discussed.

The Look and Say Method

This is a direct opposite to the phonics instruction. With the 'look and say' method children learn to recognize whole words or sentences rather than individual sounds. The pupils look at a word which the teacher sounds, and in turn repeat the sound of the word. Flashcards with individual words written on them are used for this method and often accompanied with a related picture. It is also recommended with this method, teachers should use whole short sentences rather than individual words- write a short sentence representing the picture displayed, say the sentence and ask the child to repeat it while pointing and looking at each individual word as she repeats what you said. By making word cards teacher can create different sentences again and again and can use each word card first to learn individual words and then laying the word cards together to form sentences.

The Language Experience Approach

The language experience approach supports children's concept development and vocabulary growth while offering many opportunities for meaningful reading and writing activities through the use of personal experiences and oral language. The approach is based on the view that children's experiences can be talked about and recorded (written down) by the teacher, and should form part of the reading material. The teacher records children's thoughts using their language, with the teacher and children reading during recording. Repeated reading enables children to identify words and to read on their own. The method actually uses pupils' own words to help them read. The pupil may draw a picture of Dad in the car. In that case the teacher writes underneath the drawing; *Dad is in the car*. The teacher continues to collect drawings made by the pupils and write a short sentence underneath each drawing. When enough pictures have been collected, the teacher makes them into a book for the pupils to read again and again. Teacher often writes underneath the drawing a description each pupil gives for the drawing. This way the pupil will remember much better what is written. The teacher first writes every word and sentence, and slowly the pupils will begin to trace over the words until finally they will write the words and sentences all alone.

The language experience approach is viewed as the most practical and most sensible approach for meeting the reading needs of children of linguistically diverse environments (Smith and Johnson, 1980). One of the key advantages of the language experience approach is that the written language presented to the children uses vocabulary, sentence patterns and situations that are familiar to the children, and is based on the children's experience. Durkin (1978) points out that the experience approach, among other things, is capable of motivating children to want to learn to read, demonstrating the relationship between spoken and written forms of language, and demonstrating the values of written language in preserving information, ideas and feelings; and DeHaven (1983) asserts that "children's experiences provide the content for listening, speaking, writing and reading activities... the teacher serves as the scribe..." Through experience, readers become capable of predicting the words they encounter. The ability to make such predictions is based on the intuitive knowledge of the way sentences are constructed. However, such predictions are only efficient if the sentences conform to natural and familiar patterns, such as the ones produced through the experience approach. Phonics teaching may be incorporated into the language experience approach through activities which call children's attention to sounds of similar letters and letter combinations.

The Context Support Method

When pupils are just learning to read it is important to choose books that really interest them. If boys like cars, choose a book with pictures and simple words about cars. This will keep their interest and they will enjoy learning with you. If girls like dolls, teacher should obtain a book with doll pictures and simple words. Again it will encourage enthusiasm because they are actually looking at something they can relate to. Some books are especially written to support this method of learning. One finds a longer sentence on one side of the page while the other side has a single word or maybe two to three words for the pupils to read. The teacher will read the longer sentence while your pupil reads the simpler version. This method is often combined with other methods.

Whole Language Approach

The emphasis of this approach is on teaching through well- designed language programme. This means that learning is a natural part of normal language development and that children should learn to read in ways very similar to the ways in which they learn to listen and talk. In this approach children are actively engaged in acquiring a lot about the meaning of print and gradually come to use print just as they do spoken language. The approach encourages teachers to have children write frequently and thus learn to write coherent sentences, paragraphs, and passages simply by reading. The children read words and sentences in wholes not as letter sounds which are emphasizing on the gestalt of reading. Advocates of this approach sometimes refer to it as the top-down process as it focuses on the readers whose minds are not blank, but bring information based on past experience with language and their world to the act of reading. Fluent readers bring more information to the

written text than the text itself provides. Because of this, readers do not give close attention to the word and parts, but use their past experience to predict meaning as they read. In whole language, teachers use connected print to introduce reading to children; children are encouraged to memorize words as whole units; they do hands-on activities such as writing in journals, and analysing words in context, and using pictures, for meaning. Whole language has its strengths in developing children to begin to write early. They are involved in connected print, and they are using personal language skills making the process of reading more interesting. The weakness of whole language methods is that some children never get a good foundation in phonics hence, they are unable to decode unfamiliar words.

Shared Reading Strategy

In this method, a teacher introduces a book to a class or group of children, reads a text to and later, with them, and concludes with some sort of activity based on the story read. The teacher's main focus is put on in short instructional detours', to new words, rhymes, punctuation marks, sounds and blends all in the context of the story. Shared reading could be one of the best approaches of teaching reading because it creates a close relationship between a child and the teacher whereby the child gains a lot of support, encouragement from the teacher. Through teacher- child reading a book together, a child acquires knowledge through many ways; such as book and print awareness, functions of print and listening comprehension as he or she copies or imitates the teacher. In Vygotskian style, the teacher provides the 'scaffolding' at the onset, but gradually withdraws as children become familiar with the language of the book. A lot of incidental learning goes on during the process of sharing the book between the teacher and children, new vocabulary, letter sound relations prediction skills and new sentence structures.

Guided Silent Reading

Guided silent reading is one of the main teaching techniques used at all levels of school from new entrants through to form two classes. The basis of guided reading is a teacher and a child or group of children reading a story together silently with periodic discussion). The text is introduced to the reader who is then 'guided' through it during the reading session. Guiding can consist asking a series of questions and getting the children to answer by reading silently through or referring to the text and reading sections aloud, and then discussing their answers with the group. It can also take place between the children and the teacher. Guided silent reading could benefit children who do not concentrate on reading texts when alone. Through this, their attention is focused on what is to be read and as they ask questions about which has been read, they come to comprehend the text.

READING INSTRUCTION STRATEGIES

Techniques (or strategies) of teaching help pupils become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension. Effective instruction is

usually based on teachers' identification and utilization of the reading (comprehension) strategies often applied by proficient readers. Such include direct explanation, modelling, guided practice, and application/utilization (during direct instruction) of the reading strategies used by proficient readers (discussed in Unit 10), which include making predictions, drawing conclusions, making inferences, monitoring and clarifying, asking questions, connecting events to prior knowledge, visualizing, and summarizing.

These strategies have the potential to provide access to knowledge that is removed from personal experience and allow readers to understand and recall more of what they read. Comprehension skills should be taught and applied before, during, and after reading takes place. Instruction in comprehension can help pupils understand and remember what they have read, as well as communicate to others what they have read. A primary method of teaching reading comprehension is modeling reading comprehension skills, a technique that accelerates the improvement of reading comprehension. Teachers must model effective comprehension strategies. Bukowiecki (2007) asserts that teachers must model and directly teach pupils specific strategies that will enable them not only to understand the meaning of individual words, but also to comprehend the meaning of the entire text. The teaching strategies are extensively discussed in Unit 12.

11.4 **Conclusion**

Reading comprehension instruction is guided by certain principles; the instruction is systematic in that it is structured, connected, scaffolded, and informative. Structured instruction is characterized by lessons that organize and group new knowledge and skills into segments that can be sequentially presented in a clear manner. Connected instruction is characterized by lessons that show the learner connections between the segments and what is already known. Scaffolded lessons are characterized by instruction in which the teacher provides to pupils, early in the learning process, a significant amount of support in the form of modelling, prompts, direct explanations, and targeted questions. Then as pupils begin to acquire the targeted objective, direct teacher supports are reduced, and the major responsibilities for learning is transferred to the pupil. Informative instruction is characterized by lessons in which the teacher explains the purposes and expected outcomes and requirements for learning and when and how that newly learned information will be useful. Reading comprehension instruction must also be intensive. Intensive reading instruction means that sufficient time, used wisely and with high pupil engagement, is provided direct instruction for pupils to master the reading skills and strategies they need. Reading comprehension instruction should involve authentic reading at all stages. Authentic reading involves incorporating a variety of real reading materials, such as books, magazines, and newspapers into the instructional process.

11.5 Summary

Historically, there has been controversy surrounding the most appropriate way of teaching children to read. Despite the search for one "best method" it is evident that there is no consensus of opinion. The argument centers around how to begin, when to begin, what instructional materials to use and how to organize classes for reading instruction. Many experiments have been conducted, materials developed and approaches tried by linguists, teachers and researchers concerned with problems of teaching, particularly to the linguistically diverse (Smith and Johnson, 1980).

11.6 Self-Assessment Questions

a. What are reading instruction strategies?
b. Why is it important for the teacher to explicitly model comprehension strategies to their pupils?
c. In what ways can reading fluency be promoted?

11.7 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Give an overview of the approaches and methods to teaching reading over the years.

11.8 References/Further Reading

Dörnyei, Z. (2001). Motivational strategies in the language classroom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ellis, R. (1994). The study of second language acquisition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Faerch, C., & Kasper, G. (1986). The role of comprehension in second language learning. Applied Linguistics, 7, 257-274. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/applin/7.3.257

Krashen, S. (1982). Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisi- tion. New York: Pergamon,

Pearson, P. D., & Fielding, L. (1991). Comprehension instruction. In R. Bar, et al (eds.) Handbook of Reading Research. vols. 2815-860. New York: Longman.

Shanahan, T. (2006). Relations among oral language, reading and writing development. In MacArthur, A. C., Graham, S., & Fitzgerald, J. Handbook of writing research. The Guidford Press.

UNIT 12: TEACHING PUPILS TO COMPREHEND

12.1 Introduction

Comprehension is the ultimate goal of any reading event. 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. Comprehension is achieved when the learners are exposed effectively to curriculum essentials; which includes oral language development, concepts of printed language, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development and fluency, among others. While these are the focus of reading instruction right from emergent literacy level, pupils need to be exposed to teacher-directed instruction in comprehension strategies. Primary school pupils benefit enormously when teachers construct strategy lessons that help to make the comprehension process visible. This is the focus of this unit.

12.2 Objectives: At the end of this unit, students should be able to:

a) Explain in details what comprehension instruction entails
b) Articulate clearly the different strategies that can be used in teaching pupils how to construct meaning from reading.
c) Highlight and implement strategies for teaching comprehension at pre-reading, reading and post-reading stages.
d) Explicitly describe each reading strategy and when to use it.
e) Model each comprehension strategy in action.
f) Involve their pupils in the collaborative use of the strategies.
g) Lead the pupils in guided practice using the strategies.
h) Develop classroom instruction to provide independent practice using the strategies.

12.3 Main Content

COMPONENTS OF COMPREHENSION INSTRUCTION

Sanders & Rivers (1996) summarized the component of high-quality reading instruction as:

- Reading and writing *to*, *with*, and *by* children
- Making use of captioned television to aid in reading practice at home
- Encouraging the viewing of educational television programming and use of the Internet to increase world knowledge
- Modeling comprehension strategies and encouraging children and teachers to talk about texts to improve comprehension
- Connecting literature study to content learning in other curriculum areas, i.e., science, math, and history
- Creating print-rich, well-organized, and highly interactive classroom environments
- Providing systematic, explicit, and sustained skill and strategy instruction in each of the essential curriculum components of reading instruction

These components of quality instruction is mostly interpreted through very direct and explicit instruction. Direct instruction involves describing the purpose of the strategy, the potential benefits, and the steps of the strategy; modelling (thinking aloud) the behavioural and cognitive steps/actions involved in using the strategy; leading verbal practice and elaboration of the key information and steps related to the strategy; providing guided and controlled practice of the strategy with detailed feedback from the teacher and/or knowledgeable peers; and gradually moving to more independent and advanced practice of the strategy with feedback from the teacher and/or knowledgeable peers. It is expected that before using direct instruction, teachers should think about reading strategies that they might use before reading, during-reading, and after reading. These strategies have been discussed in the preceding unit.

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION

Comprehension strategy instruction helps pupils become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension. A reading comprehension skill is a developed ability to construct meaning effectively, immediately, and effortlessly with little conscious attention. A reading comprehension strategy is defined as an overt process consciously selected and used by a reader to aid the process of constructing meaning more effectively and efficiently. Once a pupil uses a strategy effectively, immediately and effortlessly with little conscious attention to construct meaning, it becomes a reading skill. Most planning for comprehension instruction is targeted at teaching comprehension strategies and then developing practice activities that help the pupil become skilled in the use of the strategy so that it is unconsciously selected and used in a variety of situations. Reading comprehension are broadly divided into three stages and they include:

1. Preparing for and activating comprehension: Pre-reading strategies.
2. Constructing comprehension: During-reading strategies
3. Extending comprehension: Post-reading strategies

These stages are focused on specific strategies as highlighted below.

1. Activating Comprehension through pre-Reading Strategies

Pre-reading strategies actively involve pupils in the themes, concepts, and vocabulary of the text before they even pick up the article, textbook passage, or piece of literature. Effective pre-reading strategies is used to stimulate pupils' prior knowledge about a topic; when pupils' background knowledge about a topic or a related topic is pushed to the forefront of their minds, it is easier to make connections between what they are learning from the text and what they already know, make predictions about what will happen next, and organize what they read into the mental file folders that already exist in their brains. A number of comprehension instruction strategies that can be used at the pre-reading stage are discussed below:

a. Graphic and Semantic organizers

Also known by different names, such as maps, webs, graphs, charts, frames, or clusters, Graphic Organizers are used as information processing tools to illustrate concepts and relationships between concepts in a text. They do help readers focus on concepts and how they are related to other concepts. Graphic organizers help pupils read and understand textbooks and picture books. Before beginning reading, pupils start by stating what they know on a chart, either individually or as a class, what they already know and what they want to know or learn from the text they are going to read. Specifically, Graphic Organizers helps to set a purpose for their reading, and to focus on text structure. They also provide pupils with tools they can use to examine and show relationships in a text as well as help pupils write well-organized summaries of a text.

Examples of graphic organizers include Venn-Diagrams (used to compare or contrast information from two sources), Storyboard/Chain of Events (used to order or sequence events within a text), Story Map (used to chart story structure- fiction and non-fiction) and Cause/Effect (used to illustrate the cause and effects told within a text).

b. ***K-W-L Chart.***

The K-W-L chart is a staple in most reading-focused classrooms, from Kindergarten through high school. KWL stands for determining pupils' *"What I Know"*, *"What I Want to Learn"*, and reviewing *"What I Have Learned"*. The K-W-L procedures help pupils learn to activate their background knowledge and to set purposes for reading. The simple, three-column chart is a way to (i) bring pupils' prior knowledge about a topic to the forefront of their minds, (ii) identify questions that they may find answer to while reading the text, thereby establishing a purpose for reading and building

motivation to read, and (iii) organize the information learned while reading. ". The following chart shows the steps in each part of the procedure:

What I Know	What I Want To Learn	What I Learned
Pupils discuss what they already know about a topic/text they plan to read. The teacher encourages the pupils to list ideas and concepts related to the topic, then ask them to organize their ideas into broad categories.	Pupils discuss what they want to learn from reading the text and write down specific questions that they think may be answered in the text	After reading the text, pupils discuss what they learned from it. They then write what they learned and answers the pupil-generated questions about the topics that were addressed in the text

In using the strategies, the teacher encourages the pupils to list ideas and concepts related to the text/topic they intend to read, then asks them to organize their ideas into broad categories. As they confirm the information in the *Know* column of the chart, pupils relate new information gained from their reading to knowledge they already have. As they generate questions for the *Want* column, they learn to set their own purposes for reading. Further, because they are reading to answer their own questions, pupils are more likely actively to monitor their comprehension. By putting information in their own words for the *Learned* column, pupils better understand what they know and what they do not know. Proceeding through these steps reinforces pupils' learning from text, involves them in doing what proficient readers do, and teaches them about their own reading processes.

The benefits of a K-W-L chart are far-reaching. Giving pupils the opportunity to think about what they know upfront and to hear what their classmates know brings prior knowledge to the surface and fosters connections between old and new information. The chance to ask questions and wonder aloud about other information establishes a purpose and builds motivation for reading. The record of specific information they have learned not only supports the content but also reinforces the purposes of reading generally. Finally, the categorization process helps pupils organize the information they have read and is fantastic practice for pupils learning to write more clearly and logically.

c. ***List-Group-Label.***

Similar to the KWL chart, the List-Group-Label strategy gives pupils a forum for accessing prior knowledge before reading a text. The steps involve:

i. **List:** Teacher determines a word or phrase that connects to the reading content that pupils are somewhat familiar with. For example, prior to reading a passage on agriculture, the teacher might ask pupils to list words they associate with planting crops.
ii. **Group:** Teacher pairs or groups pupils and ask them to combine their individual lists. While they do this, they should create categories for similar words on everyone's lists and group their words into these categories.

iii. **Label:** Pupils should determine an appropriate label for each group they have created. The teacher, by previewing pupils' charts, would obtain a sense of pupils' levels of understanding, various misconceptions and prior experiences with the issue that could serve as instructional hooks.

d. ***Anticipation Guide.***

An Anticipation Guide provides a structured forum for pupils to think carefully about a text's key themes or concepts before they actually read the text. Pupils mark whether they agree or disagree with a series of statements and discuss their position with their classmates. As a result, while reading, pupils are more likely to compare what they already think to the themes or concepts expressed in the text. In a sense, an Anticipation Guide helps pupils see reading as a form of conversation. The procedure for Anticipation Guide is summarized thus:

- Teacher identifies the major themes or concepts in the text that the pupils will be reading; focusing especially on experiences and perspectives held by the pupils that will be supported or challenged by the reading.
- Teacher creates statements that will provoke discussion. A few statements will suffice, no more than ten should be used, and five or fewer is preferable.
- Prior to reading, teacher presents the guide on the overhead or gives pupils a copy; and asks them to reflect on their beliefs about the statements.
- The class engages in a discussion about pupils' responses; teacher is careful to neither affirm nor deny pupils' positions
- The class reads the text.
- After reading the text, teacher leads discussion on how pupils' stances were either strengthened or challenged as a result of how the themes or concepts were approached in the text.

Anticipation Guide serves to engage pupils to actively think about the text they are about to read, and encourage them to make a personal connection with the text so that they can integrate new knowledge with their background experience and prior knowledge.

e. ***Probable Passage.***

The technique engages pupils in contextual study of vocabulary before reading a passage. The exercise asks pupils to work collaboratively to place some (about 10-15) key terms, phrases, or proper nouns from the piece they will read into various categories (Problem, Setting, Causes, People, Solutions, and Unknown Words for expository texts while categories for short story could be Setting, Characters, Problem, Outcomes, and Unknown Words) - as determined by the teacher. Some of the terms should be familiar to pupils while others should be new. Then, pupils must use a certain number of the terms to create a 'gist statement' that summarizes what

they predict the reading will be about. In a final step, pupils note questions they have based on unfamiliar words or questions that arose as part of writing the gist statement in the "To Discover" section. This multi-step process helps pupils engage in several metacognitive strategies used by proficient readers- accessing prior knowledge, focusing on key vocabulary, forming visual pictures about what will be discussed in the text, and predicting what the text will be about.

f. ***Character Quotes***.

This pre-reading strategy pulls pupils into predicting the perspectives, personalities, and behaviour of a character or characters they will soon meet in the reading. This strategy can be used to introduce characters in fictional literature or to start discussions about historical figures. To use, the teacher:

- Previews the selection or unit to identify key pieces of information about a character or historical figure.
- Then, pinpoint and select quotations by or about the character that are interesting enough to generate discussion.
- Organize pupils into groups of three or four. Give each group a different quotation to consider. Each group must generate as many words as it can that might describe the character based on the person's quote.
- Finally, each group should predict what they might learn as they read more about this character or historical figure, recording its predictions and returning to them to evaluate accuracy while reading.

g. ***Semantic mapping.***

Teachers may choose to present the information using semantic mapping. The key word or phrase is put on the board, and the children and the teacher develop categories and subcategories of related words. Pupils may add to the map as they read. Take note that the subcategories answer the questions Where? When? Why? What? How? Pupils will predict the information that they believe will be in the text. Then they read the text and compare their predictions with the information actually contained in the text. This active form of processing enhances the development of effective comprehension strategies.

h. Directed Reading and Thinking Activity (DRTA)[2]

This procedure focuses on reading as a thinking process. Its intent is to teach children to make predictions throughout reading. Before reading, the teacher asks pupils to form a purpose for reading and to make predictions about the content of the story to be read. During reading, the teacher stops pupils at strategic points in the story to ask pupils to make additional predictions and to verify, reject, or modify their purposes and predictions. After reading, the teacher asks pupils to find and read aloud any part of the text that supports their predictions. Pupils must use the text to explain their reasoning and to prove the accuracy-or inaccuracy-of their predictions. Often teachers have pupils use charts to record their predictions and information from the text that proves the prediction's accuracy.

2. Constructing Comprehension: During-Reading Strategies

During the reading process, pupils should be required to continually practice and apply the comprehension strategies that good readers employ almost subconsciously. When pupils engage in these during-reading strategies, a teacher also gets a view into the thought processes of his or her pupils, as their "thinking" become visible in classroom discussion. During reading, the teacher may:

- Remind pupils to use comprehension strategies as they read and to monitor their understanding.
- Ask questions that keep pupils on track and focus their attention on main ideas and important points in the text.
- Focus attention on parts in a text that require pupils to make inferences.
- Call on pupils to summarize key sections or events.
- Encourage pupils to return to any predictions they have made before reading; to see if they are confirmed by the text.

Below are some common methods of during-reading strategies that encourage active reading skills and help pupils make sense of a text.

a. ***Coding Text.***

Coding text involves teaching pupils a method of margin marking that helps them practice the metacognitive processes that happen naturally for independent readers. Teacher teaches the pupils to place a question mark next to an underlined statement they don't understand, an exclamation mark next to something that surprised them, and a double-headed arrow and brief statement next to something that prompts them to make a connection to something they already are familiar with. If the book belongs to the school, pupils can use small *post-it* notes to meet the same objective. Teacher needs not require pupils to use all of the margin marks in a particular text, but instead should choose a few active reading skills and corresponding marks for pupils to employ during the reading, based on particular aspects of the text. The Coding Text strategy can be applied to all content areas and a variety of texts, and it is a highly effective during-reading strategy to help pupils engage in metacognitive comprehension strategies.

b. ***Pupil-to-Pupil Conversation***.

Traditionally classroom discussion during or after reading often involves teachers posing comprehension questions and pupils responding (or not) in a form of verbal Ping-Pong, which does little to build comprehension. In this strategy, pupils are encouraged to talk with their peers about the reading while they are reading, and they need to be taught a structure for doing so. Such conversations should focus beyond plot development, sequence of events, or key concepts, but also to include predicting what will happen next, asking questions, making connections, etc. The following

strategies will help pupils construct meaning with their peers while reading by using comprehension strategies in a discussion.

- **Say Something.** This strategy builds in frequent but brief pupil-to-pupil conversations while reading. Following teacher's directions, pupils stop after every stanza, paragraph, section, or set number of pages to engage in structured dialogue about what they are reading, to clear up any confusion before moving on, and to break the habit of reading without stopping to think. When implementing this strategy, pupils can work in pairs or small groups; either one person reads each section aloud, then "says something" to the group which others then respond to, or all pupils can read silently and a designated person start the *Say Something* process.
- **Save the Last Word for Me.** This technique helps pupils see how the meaning of any piece of reading is recreated by the reader. While reading, pupils select three to four key statements or passages from the text that are particularly interesting or meaningful to them. They write these statements directly from the text on one side of their note cards, and then their reactions (a connection to something in their own life, a statement about why they think the passage is important, a summary, etc.) on the other side of the cards. In groups, a pupil reads one of his direct quotations to his peers, and other pupils in the group then respond to it. The author of the card reads his own reaction from the back of his card—or stating a fresh view, if hearing the others has altered his interpretation. He decides for himself whether to stick with his interpretation or, free of others' criticism and judgment, to revise it.

c. ***Re-Reading***.

Independent readers often stop to reread sentences and passages that don't initially make sense. When we reread, we move at a slower pace, reflect on what we have read, and in our effort to make meaning of the text, flip back a page or two to see where else that vocabulary word was mentioned. To help pupils see the value of re-reading, teacher may assign them a short passage and ask them to read it three times. After each reading, he asks them to rate their level of understanding of the text on a scale of one to ten. Afterwards, teacher debriefs with pupils, asking them to share their comprehension levels and why they think they increased from the first to the third reading.

d. ***Story Mapping.***

A Story Map is essentially a graphic organizer that helps pupils note and track the essential elements in a narrative while reading. In its traditional form, the Story Mapping approach is most applicable to an English class where pupils are learning about the basic elements of a story's format (Setting, Characters, Mood, Events, Resolution, and Theme). These "maps" are simply graphic organizers that help pupils actively process a sequence of events or actions described in either narrative or expository text, something that struggling readers would tend to gloss over.

e. Questioning the Author

This strategy is the key to unlocking the author's intent and combining it with the reader's own background knowledge. Good readers hear the author's voice speaking through the story. The message weaves through the plot, setting, and characters and triggers and emotional response from the reader. The message may be about life, society or human nature. The reader's own experience or values help clarify the Author's Message. Authors also write for purpose, which is different from the message. Authors write to inform, entertain, persuade and explain or instruct. It is important to understand that author's message:

- Is the universal statement or "feel" when you read the text.
- Triggers an emotional response from the reader.
- Is the common theme throughout the text.
- Is also connected to reader's background knowledge and values.

Questioning the Author involves discussion, strategy instruction, and self-explanation. It encourages pupils to reflect on what the author of a text is trying to say so as to build a mental representation from that information. Teacher and pupils work collaboratively, reading to resolve confusion and to understand the meaning of the text. Focusing on a segment of text, the pupils respond to teacher questions such as the following:

- What is the author trying to say?
- What does the author mean by this?
- Why is the author saying this?
- What is the author getting at?

Through modelling, the teacher helps pupils to understand that some parts of a text can cause confusion and hinder comprehension. The teacher then discusses with pupils what they can do when comprehension problems occur. Pupils learn to "grapple" with text by emulating the teacher's questioning techniques.

3. Extending Comprehension using Post-Reading Strategies

After reading the text, the pupil summarizes what has been read by retelling the plot of the story or the main idea of the text and applies ideas in the text to other situations. Various techniques or practices may be used to organize information after reading the text. It is advised that diverse activities be used to allow pupils to express what they have read. Pupils could return to their semantic map to include new ideas that they learned after having read the text. Pupils could, for example, write summaries, give oral presentations or act out the text in the form of a play. The pupils may use other methods of organizing the text, such as:

- **Description** - of the setting or characters
- **Narration** - writing a narrative about their reflections on the story that relates to their experiences
- **Cause and effect** - a chart may be developed to show why certain characters performed the way they did in the story and the pupils look for the consequences of those actions taken by the characters

- **Compare and contrast** where pupils see the similarities between two subjects/characters/stories
- **Problem and solution** - identification of the problem in the story
- **Story structure and sequence** - putting the story line in order of events, or in sequence.

These are good exercises for facilitating comprehension, as they enable pupils to practise thinking about the story in connected parts, as opposed to a series of short thoughts. After reading, the teacher may:

- Guide discussion of the reading.
- Ask pupils to recall and tell in their own words the important parts of a text.
- Offer pupils opportunities to respond to the reading in various ways, including through writing, dramatic play, music, readers' theatre, videos, debate, or pantomime.

These can be done through several strategies which include:

a. Scales

Scales are essentially the post-reading form of Anticipation Guide. Scales also provide pupils with opportunities to articulate an opinion based on the themes, events, or concepts of a text. The purpose is to help pupils reflect on a text and engage in discussion with their peers afterwards.

b. ***Very Important Points (VIPs)***

This techniques holds pupils accountable for picking out the key concepts in a passage by having pupils share their notes on the ideas after the class has read a text. The strategy is similar to the *Save the Last Word for Me* discussed earlier. In **VIPs;**

- While pupils read, they write questions on sticky-notes about what they have read. In addition, teacher encourages pupils to mark the three most important points of the text.
- Then, as a post-reading activity, put pupils into groups of three or four and have them discuss the answers to their questions or why they chose to mark a point as very important. It is critical to have pupils justify what they have answered or marked as important.

c. Summarizing

Summarizing involves taking out important information or the main points in the text. This activity can and should be combined with sequencing activities. For example, the teacher introduces a story and the pupils read it silently to see how the plot develops. The teacher guides the pupils to develop a story frame and instructs the class in writing one or two sentence summaries for a small portion of the text. Teacher asks the pupils to look for the most important ideas that help them know about the problem or the solution, state the important ideas in their own words and combine the ideas into one or two sentences. On the second reading of the text, the pupils will be assisted in determining the most important ideas, and how to combine these ideas and

summarize them. After short summaries have been written, the children may cut them out on small slips of paper and mix them, then they rearrange the slips of paper in order, in the sequence of the story. Children can make their own summary strips from other texts as they become more familiar with the process.

d. Note-taking.

Once pupils have mastered the ability to extract the main ideas from a text, they may begin to develop note-taking skills. Note-taking skills involve pupils writing down the important elements from a text they are reading. The teacher may want to begin this activity orally, in order to better monitor the success of the children. Teacher begins by stating a short informative paragraph, the pupils then orally try to find the main ideas, the teacher increases the amount of information bit by bit until the pupils are able to take notes from a short text (such as a short story).

Other Strategies. These strategies can be used at any point during comprehension instruction, and in combination with other strategies. They include:

e. Answering questions

The Question-Answer Relationship strategy (QAR) encourages pupils to learn how to answer questions better. Pupils are asked to indicate whether the information they used to answer questions about the text was explicitly stated in the text, or was implied in the text, or entirely from the pupil's own background knowledge. Questions can be effective because they:

- Give pupils a purpose for reading
- Focus pupils' attention on what they are to learn
- Help pupils to think actively as they read
- Encourage pupils to monitor their comprehension
- Help pupils to review content and relate what they have learned to what they already know

There are four different categories of questions that can be answered in a text:

- Questions whose answers are ‘right there’ - questions found right in the text that ask pupils to find the one right answer located in one place as a word or a sentence in the passage.
- Questions that require pupils to ‘think and search’- Questions based on the recall of facts that can be found directly in the text. Answers are typically found in more than one place, thus requiring pupils to "think" and "search" through the passage to find the answer.
- Questions that require pupils to use what they already know, with what they have learned from reading the text. Pupil's must understand the text and relate it to their prior knowledge before answering the question.
- Questions that are answered based on a pupils’ prior knowledge and experiences. Reading the text may not be helpful to them when answering this type of question.

f. Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal Teaching is best described as a dialogue between the teacher and pupils. Reciprocal means simply that each person involved in the dialogue acts in response to the others. The dialogue focuses on a segment of a text the group is reading and is structured by the use of four comprehension strategies- asking questions, clarifying difficult words and ideas, summarizing what has been read, and predicting what might come next.

The teacher first models and explains how to apply a comprehension strategy, then gradually turns over the activity to the pupils. As the pupils become more competent, the teacher requires their participation at increasingly more challenging levels.

Reciprocal Teaching provides pupils with opportunities to observe the value of applying strategies in their reading. In addition, it allows the teacher to identify problems individual pupils might have in using strategies and to provide instruction that is geared to individual needs.

g. Transactional Strategy Instruction

Transactional Strategy Instruction (TSI) is a procedure that involves teaching pupils to construct meaning as they read by emulating good readers' use of comprehension strategies. TSI helps pupils (1) set goals and plan for reading, (2) use background knowledge and text cues to construct meaning during reading, (3) monitor comprehension, (4) solve problems encountered during reading, and (5) evaluate progress. To accomplish these tasks, pupils are taught to use a set of reading strategies. The strategy typically includes:

- predicting based on prior-knowledge activation,
- generating and asking questions,
- clarifying,
- visualizing,
- relating background knowledge to text content, and
- summarizing.

Instruction occurs in small-group settings, with the strategies used as vehicles to coordinate dialogue about text as pupils read aloud. In their groups, pupils are encouraged to relate a text to their background knowledge, to summarize text, to describe any mental images they make during reading, and to predict what might happen next in the text. As pupils read aloud, they engage in and exchange individual interpretations of and responses to the reading.

h. The I-Chart Procedure

The I-Chart Procedure is a technique that promotes critical thinking by encouraging pupils to apply reading strategies to learn from content-area texts.

The procedure is organized into three phases: planning, interacting, and integrating & evaluating. Pupils begin the planning phase by using content-area texts to identify a topic of study. They then generate questions they want to answer as they read. Next, they construct a large chart, similar to the following, on which to record information as they gather it. They complete the planning phase by collecting materials about the topic. In the interacting phase, pupils record their background knowledge of the topic, as well as other information they might gather. In addition, the teacher elicits and records relevant pupil questions. Finally, the pupils read and discuss, with teacher guidance, the sources of information.

In the final phase, integrating and evaluating, pupils make summaries for each question on the chart, incorporating information they have gathered. Next, they compare their summaries with background knowledge, clarify statements as necessary, and discuss new knowledge they have acquired. Finally, they locate new information to address any unanswered questions and report their findings to the group.

In this procedure, the teacher directs and models the phases of the procedure. Gradually, however, the teacher releases responsibility for managing the procedure to pupils. The goal is for the reader to satisfactorily apply these comprehension strategies independently.

i. SQ4R strategy

The SQ4R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review, Reflect) is a procedure made up of four elements: **survey** the title, headings, subheadings, maps, pictures, sidebars, bold or italic print, etc. Turn the title, headings, and captions into **questions**. Read the passage to answer questions. **Recite** the answers to their questions to summarize the passage. **Review** the passage to remember the main idea and important information and details. **Reflect** on the passage and process to check that they understand the text, and to generate additional questions.

j. Voluntary and recreational reading.

Many children, particularly in rural areas, do not choose reading as a source of information or as a recreational activity. In order to enhance literacy, projects and programmes involving voluntary reading should be developed in schools and public libraries, by making available a variety of reading materials that reflect the children's interests. If schools have no libraries, then teachers may want to begin by creating libraries using boxes. Box libraries can begin by collecting the few books a school has access to, and little by little adding more books to the box as they become available. The goal is to eventually have enough books to start a library. The box should be neatly decorated or made to look appealing to the children so that they want to use the

books or contribute books to the library. This will motivate learners, foster the self-selection of materials by pupils and instil a sense of pride in building their library. Teachers and pupils can also write and display materials. Parents, friends and relatives should be encouraged to give books to children as gifts, whenever possible.

12.4 Conclusion

If pupils have not developed good 'pre-reading strategies', a teacher needs to ensure content learning by introducing a reading selection to pupils, walking pupils through the text, helping the pupils get ready to read through the use of advance organizers, or creating pre-reading outlines. In the same vein, a teacher should compensate for the fact that pupils have not developed good During-Reading Strategies by developing reading guides and outlines that need to be completed during reading, requiring pupils to ask and answer questions, creating summaries as they read. In addition, when a teacher reviews a reading selection, leads a discussion on what was important about the author's message, helps pupils summarize or "look back" at what was read, provides a post-organizer, or asks pupils to complete a study guide over what was learned from reading text, the teacher is compensating for the fact that pupils have not developed good Post-reading strategies. Teachers will need to continue to lead pupils in these types of reading activities to ensure content area learning occurs until pupils have been taught to fluently use the strategies. Teacher's use of reading prompts and activities does not necessarily lead pupils to develop and use these strategies independently without direct and explicit instruction. This is why it is important to directly teach and provide practice that gradually requires pupils to use the strategies.

12.5 Summary

Reading comprehension skills and strategies should be taught at all levels of reading development. Teachers at every grade level and every subject area should always be planning how reading assignments will help pupils develop and practice skills and strategies. Pupils need teachers to teach and draw attention to appropriate strategy use in textbooks, especially in content areas where there are many reading demands (e.g., language, social studies, and often science). Though there are many ways to teach a child to read there is not one single reading comprehension checklist that works best for every child. Plus reading is not a simple activity. In fact it is one of the most complex cognitive activities that a human being can perform. Therefore it is incumbent upon those working with children to use multiple methods of reading instruction. Different children will need different types and levels of support. Even individual children will need to have instruction varied as they reach particular reading milestones. It is important to know each child well and to use strategies that fit her individual learning style(s), interests and needs, but focusing on all three of the pillars of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics and reading comprehension. Children respond differently to different approaches. It is advantageous, therefore, to develop a

method based on many methods in order to reach all children and strengthen different aspects of learning.

12.6 Self-Assessment Questions

a. What are the effective strategies for teaching Reading Comprehension?
b. Explain in details what comprehension instruction entails
c. Briefly discuss how to use modelling in teaching comprehension strategies.
d. How do you encourage collaboration in comprehension instruction?
e. What is guided practice? How do you use in comprehension classroom?
f. What is independent practice? How to you use in comprehension instruction?

12.7 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Use a short story text of your choice to develop some strategies for teaching comprehension at pre-reading, reading and post-reading stages.

12.8 References/Further Reading

Almasi, J.F (2003). Teaching strategic processes in Reading. New York: Guilford Press.

Beck, I.L., M.G. McKeown, R.L. Hamilton, and L. Kucan. (1997). *Questioning the Author: An Approach for Enhancing Student Engagement with Text.* IRA,

Carson, B. S & B. Baxendell, B. (2003) "Consistent, Coherent, Creative:The 3 C's of Graphic Organizers." Teaching Exceptional Children, Jan/Feb.

Beers, K (2003) When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. p. 101.

Duke, N. K. & Pearson, P. D. (2002) 'Effective practices for developing reading comprehension' in Farstrup, A. E. & Samuels, S. J. (eds.) *What research has to say about reading instruction* (3rd edition) pp. 205–242, IRA, Newark,

Janzen, J. (2003). Teaching Strategic Reading. In J.C. Richards, W. A. Renadaya (Eds.), Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice (PP. 287-294). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Langer, J. A. (1986). Children Reading and Writing: Structures and Strategies. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

N'Namdi, A. K. (2005). Guide to Teaching Reading at the Primary School Level. *UNESCO*

Nuttall, C. (1996) Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language . London: Heinemann Educational.

Stanovisch, K.E. (1986). "Matthew effects in reading : Some consequences in individual diff e rences in the acquisition of literacy." *Reading Research Quarterly*, 21, 360 – 407.

Schwartz, S &, and Maxine B.(1995). *Retelling, Relating, Reflecting: Beyond the 3R's,* Irwin Publishing.

Davey, B. "Think Aloud: Modeling the Cognitive Processes of Reading Comprehension." *The Journal of Reading.* Vol.27(1): 44-47.

Hoyt, Linda. *Revisit, Reflect, Retell.* Heinemann, 1998.

McLaughlin, Maureen. *Guided Comprehension in the Primary Grades.* IRA, 2003.

Miller, Debbie. *Reading with Meaning: Teaching Comprehension in the Primary Grades.* Stenhouse Publishers, 2002.

Palincsar, A. S., and A.L. Brown. "Reciprocal Teaching of Comprehension-Fostering and Comprehension-Monitoring Activities." *Cognition and Instruction* 1: 117-175.

Pressley, Michael. "What Should Comprehension Instruction Be the Instruction Of?" *Handbook of Reading Research, Volume III.* Michael H. Kamil, Peter B. Mosenthal, P. David Pearson and Rebecca Barr (eds.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000: 545-561.

UNIT 13: **READING IN CONTENT AREAS**

13.1 Introduction

As the learners progress through school, they are asked to read increasingly complex informational and graphical texts in their courses. The ability to understand and use the information in these texts is key to a pupil's success in learning. Successful pupils have a repertoire of strategies to draw upon, and know how to use them in different contexts. Struggling pupils need explicit teaching of reading strategies to become better readers. One of the teacher's responsibilities will be to teach pupils how to learn from a textbook—or other form of reading material—that is replete with structural and organizational elements that either enhance comprehension (if used properly) or simply provide more confusing texts on a page. Pupils who can understand text structures, meaning of chapter titles, section headings and subheadings, bolded vocabulary, figures, captions, and keys, are much more able to access the information in a text.

13.2 Objectives: at the end of this unit, you should:

a. Possess adequate knowledge of different text structures, including characteristics and special features.
b. Have an understanding of the different types of text that learners may be exposed to, especially in subject matter areas.
c. Demonstrate a vast knowledge of different strategies that can be used to teach different text structures.
d. Demonstrate an ability to guide pupils through their reading/comprehension of different text structures.

13.3 Main Content

ANALYSING THE FEATURES OF A TEXT

A well-designed textbook uses a variety of graphical and text features to organize the main ideas, illustrate key concepts, highlight important details, and point to

supporting information. When features recur in predictable patterns, they help the reader to find information and make connections. Readers who understand how to use these features spend less time unlocking the text, and have more energy to concentrate on the content. To prepare pupils to comprehend a text with the help of text structures, teachers should show them the purpose of text structures. For example, the purpose of the chapter title in a social studies, science, or math book is to illustrate the main idea of what pupils are about to read. In contrast, the purpose of a chapter title in a novel is usually to engage the reader and entice them to keep reading. In addition to teaching pupils to notice the physical features of a text, teachers might teach pupils to recognize patterns of writing that are often contained in textbooks or other pieces of reading. Discussed below are various patterns used in writing.

a) Generalization/Principle Text Structure

Information is arranged into general statements with supporting examples. The pattern may be general-to-specific or specific-to-general. Generalizations may appear at the beginning or the end of a report, essay, summary, or article. Webs, process charts, and pyramid charts help to record the causal sequence that leads to a specific outcome. Signal Words include; *additionally, always, because of, clearly, for example, furthermore, generally, however, in conclusion, in fact, never, represents, seldom, therefore, typically*, etc. To understand this feature in a text, pupils should be supported in asking and answering the following questions:

- What generalization is the author making?
- What facts, examples, statistics or reasons are used to support the generalization?
- Do the details appear in a logical order?
- Do the details support or explain the generalization?
- Why did the author choose this organizational pattern?

b) **Chronological Sequence**:

Such texts give a chronological list of events or actions. Details are arranged in the order in which they happen. This is often used in incident reports, biographies, news articles, procedure, instructions, or steps in a process. Visual organizers which include timelines, flowcharts, and sequence charts, help to understand this feature in a text. Signal words include *after, before, during, first, finally, following, immediately, initially, next, now, preceding, second, soon, then, third, today, until, when*. To understand this feature, pupils should be supported in asking and answering the following questions:

- What sequence of events is being described?
- What are the major incidents or events?
- How are the incidents or events related?
- What happened first, second, third, etc.?
- How is the pattern revealed in the text?
- Why did the author choose this organizational pattern?

c) Compare/Contrast

In such texts, details are arranged to show the similarities and differences between/among two or more things (e.g. ideas, issues, concepts, topics, events, places). This pattern is used in almost all types of writing. Venn diagrams, graphs and cause/effect charts are used to illustrate the comparison. Signal words also include: *although, as well as, but, common to, compared with, either, different from, however, instead of, like, opposed to, same, similarly, similar to, unlike, yet.* Pupils should be guided to use these questions:

- What is being compared?
- What is the basis for the comparison?
- What characteristics do they have in common?
- In what ways are the items different?
- Did the author make a conclusion about the comparison?
- How is the comparison organized?
- Why did the author choose this organizational pattern?

d) Spatial Order

Information and ideas are arranged in an order related to the geographic or spatial location (e.g., left to right, top to bottom, and foreground to background). This pattern is often used in descriptions, maps, diagrams and drawings to help to record spatial details. Signal words include *above, across from, among, behind, beside, below, down, in front of, between, left, to the right/left, near, on top of, over, up, in the middle of, underneath*. To understand this feature in a text, pupils should be supported in asking and answering the following questions:

- What specific person, place, thing or event is described?
- What details are given?
- How do the details relate to the subject?
- Does the description help you to visualize the subject?
- Why is the description important?
- Why did the author choose this organizational pattern?

e) **Cause/Effect**:

An explanation of various causes and their corresponding effects. Details are arranged to link a result with a series of events, showing a logical relationship between a cause and one or more effects (e.g. describe the cause first and then explain the effects, or describe the effect first and then explain the possible causes). It is sometimes called a problem/solution order or process order, and may be used in explanations, descriptions, procedures, process reports, and opinion writing. Cause-and-effect charts and fishbone diagrams can be used to illustrate the relationships. Signal words include *as a result of, because, begins with, causes, consequently, due to, effects of, how, if…then, in order to, leads to, next, since so, so that, therefore, when…then.* To understand this feature, pupils should be supported in asking and answering the following questions:

- What process, event or subject is being explained?
- What is/are the cause(s)?
- What is/are the effect(s)?
- What are the specific steps in the process?
- What is the outcome, product or end result?
- How does it work or what does it do?
- How are the causes and effects related? Is the relationship logical?
- Why did the author choose this organizational pattern?

f) **Episode Pattern**

This text structure discusses the 'who, what, when, where, how, and why' of an event. Those elements are indicated by the following questions:

- What event is being explained or described?
- What is the setting where the event occurs?
- Who are the major figures or characters that play a part in this event?
- What are the specific incidents or events that occur? In what order do they happen?
- What caused this event?
- What effects has this event had on the people involved?
- What effects has this event had on society in general?

TEACHING/READING DIFFERENT TEXT FORMS

Teaching pupils to recognize particular text structures has an immense impact on their reading comprehension. These patterns help pupils comprehend what is most important in a text, see connections between ideas, and later apply these same text structures to their own writing. Effective literacy teachers use explicit instruction and graphic organizers to teach text structures to pupils. Graphic organizers are visual depictions of ideas and their relationships to one another. They help pupils see how ideas are organized within a text or concept. Learners can then apply this structure to their own ideas. Learners are thus better able to understand relationships between complex ideas or to arrange information to facilitate retention and recall. Through practice in reading texts and mapping the ideas with a graphic organizer, the pupils will become very familiar with text structures. Engaging with reading and writing in this active manner will lead to longer and deeper memory of the content of the writing as well.

A. Informational Texts

Informational text forms (such as explanations, reports, news articles, magazine articles and instructions) are written to communicate information about a specific subject, topic, event or process. These texts use vocabulary, special design elements, and organizational patterns to express ideas clearly and make them easier to read.

Some of the features of informational texts are headings, subheadings, questions, introductions, summaries, overviews, and illustrations. These work together to draw readers into the text at different levels. For example, in a magazine article, a heading is meant to grab one's attention and give an idea of what the article is about, while the accompanying photographs and captions might add information not included in the body of the article.

Many informational texts are divided into sections or chapters, and are organized internally in ways that add meaning, For example, by sequence, chronology, cause/effect, comparison/contrast, classification, description, or definition. For example, news articles use a special organizational pattern called the *inverted pyramid* to answer the 5WH questions (*who, what, when, where, why and how*), and present the facts and supporting details in order of importance. Some informational texts use visual elements (such as *typeface, size of type, colour, margin notes, photographs and diagrams*) to emphasize important words and concepts. Words such as *then, next, while, beside,* and *following* are often used to indicate a time or spatial relationship.

How pupils read informational text will depend on the purpose for reading. To find specific information in a textbook, one might refer to the table of contents to decide where to start reading, examine the headings and subheadings, and then skim through the section looking for key words and phrases related to the topic. Once the appropriate section is located, a closer reading will help to find the information and supporting details.

Support from Teachers

Teachers should provide pupils with an advance organizer to guide them as they read a particular text. This might be a series of prompts related to the reading task.

Before reading, teachers should help pupils to connect new content and ideas to their prior knowledge by encouraging them to think about what they already know about the topic or the type of reading material. Specifically, teachers should:

- Ask pupils to **brainstorm** related ideas, concepts and vocabulary, **recall** previous experiences and feelings related to the subject, recall what they have learned about the topic, or **list questions** they might have about the topic.
- Provide pupils with related experiences, discussion topics, readings, or background information to **increase background knowledge**.
- Pose questions to pupils before they read, to help them **determine a purpose** for reading.
- Invite pupils to ask questions about the content.
- Model (using a think aloud) how to **predict** the content based on the features of text, specialized vocabulary, illustrations, introductory information or personal experiences. **Skim**, **scan** and **sample** the text to make informed predictions.

- **Identify** and pre-teach unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts that may appear in the text.

During reading, teachers should help pupils to connect the information and ideas in the text to what they already know as they monitor their understanding. This means recognizing when confusion occurs and identifying strategies that help to regain meaning. Specifically, teachers should;

- Have pupils describe and model the different reading strategies they might use, such as **predicting**, **questioning**, **activating prior knowledge**, **inferring**, **monitoring**, **adjusting**, **re-reading**, and **decoding**.
- Model (using a think aloud) strategies for pausing and thinking about the text. Encourage pupils to **chunk** the text, **read**, **pause**, **think** and **ask questions** or **make notes** about the sections of text.
- Demonstrate how to **use a graphic organizer** to **categorize** and select main ideas, important details, and questions as they read. For example, comparison charts, T-charts, or Venn diagrams can help pupils to identify the ideas being compared and how they are similar and different.
- Invite pupils to **visualize** the concepts as they read. Have partners share and compare the visualizations.
- Provide pupils with **focus** questions, such as the following:
    - What are the main ideas?
    - How has the writer organized them?
    - How does the writer support the main ideas?
    - What is the writers' viewpoint?
    - Is this a useful source of information?

After reading, teachers should help pupils to **consolidate** and **extend** their understanding of the content. Specifically, they should;

- Ask partners to **restate** or **paraphrase** what they have read, and **note similarities and differences** in the retelling.
- Model how to **summarize** the reading selection (using a think aloud) by identifying the essence of the text, choosing the most important information, and organizing the information to convey the **key ideas** of the selection.
- Have pupils suggest possible diagrams or **graphic organizers** to illustrate connections among the topics, main ideas, supporting details, and prior knowledge.
- Review the process that pupils used for reading informational text, including strategies for before, during and after reading

B. Graphical Texts

Graphical text forms (such as diagrams, photographs, drawings, sketches, graphs, schedules, maps, charts, tables, timelines, and tables) are intended to communicate

information in a concise format and illustrate how one piece of information is related to another. Sometimes a complicated idea or concept can be communicated more easily through a chart, graph, diagram or illustration. Many informational texts include graphics to supplement the main ideas and provide clues to the important concepts in the text. Some of the features of graphical texts include:

- Print features (such as typeface and size of type, bullets, titles, headings, subheading, italics, labels, and captions).
- Organizational features (such as tables of contents, legends, keys, pronunciation guides, labels and captions).
- Design features (such as colour, shape, line, placement, balance, and focal point, and images).
- Organizational patterns (such as sequential, categorical, and explanatory).

Graphical texts use these features in different ways to effectively present information in a condensed format. For example, a chart or table may illustrate key information and show how pieces of information relate to each other. A table uses columns and rows to organize the information and may include a title that describes the main idea or subject, and a caption to explain the purpose of the table. The information in a table can be read horizontally and vertically. An example of a common table format is a calendar that uses columns to show the days of the week, and rows to show the dates. Tables are often used in Mathematics, Science and Geography to help the reader quickly grasp key information (such as number patterns, pollution indexes, or city populations).

Many of the strategies for reading informational and literary texts can also be used effectively to read graphical texts.

Support from Teachers

Teachers should also provide pupils with an advance organizer to guide them as they read a particular text. This might be a series of prompts to guide them through the reading task.

Before reading, teachers need to help pupils to connect new content and ideas to their prior knowledge by encouraging them to think about what they already know about the topic or the type of graphical text. Specifically, they should;

- Ask pupils to **brainstorm** related ideas, concepts and vocabulary, **recall** previous experiences and feelings related to the subject, recall what they have learned about the topic, or **list questions** they might have about the topic.
- Provide pupils with related experiences, discussion topics, readings, or background information to **increase background knowledge**.
- Pose questions to pupils before they read, to help them **determine a purpose** for reading.

- Invite pupils to ask questions about the graphics purpose and the information in it.
- Model (using a "think aloud") how to **predict** the content based on the features of the graphic, specialized language, related written information, or personal experiences. **Skim**, **scan** and **sample** the graphical text to make informed predictions.
- **Identify** and pre-teach unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts that appear in the graphical text.

During reading, help pupils to connect the information and ideas in the graphical text to what they already know as they monitor their understanding; recognizing when confusion occurs and identifying strategies that help to regain meaning. Specifically, teachers should:

- Have pupils describe and model the different reading strategies they might use, such as predicting, questioning, **activating prior knowledge**, **inferencing**, **reading slowly**, and **rereading.**
- Model (using a "think aloud") strategies for pausing and thinking about the text. Encourage pupils to examine parts of the text, **read**, **pause, think,** and **ask questions** or **make notes** about how this information relates to other parts of the text.
- Demonstrate how to **paraphrase** the information presented.
- Invite pupils to **organize** the information in a different way. Ask pupils to share and compare their interpretations.
- Provide pupils with **focus** questions such as:
    - What is the purpose of this graphic?
    - What information is provided?
    - Is all important information included? What information is missing?
    - How is the information organized?
    - How does this information relate to what you already know about the topic?
    - Is this a useful source of information?

After reading, teachers need to help pupils to **consolidate** and **extend** their understanding of the content. Specifically, they should;

- Ask partners to **restate** or **paraphrase** what they have read and to **note similarities and differences** in rephrasing.
- Model (using a "think aloud") how to **make connections** between prior knowledge and what the text is saying.
- Have pupils suggest possible ways to **check the accuracy and reliability** of the information presented.
- Review the process that pupils used for reading graphical texts, including strategies for before, during and after reading

C. Literary Texts

Literary texts (such as stories, descriptions, essays, biographies, dialogues, novels, scripts, and poems) are written to entertain, provide insights, or communicate a writer's ideas and viewpoints. Literary texts are sometimes incorporated into informational text forms.

Literary texts come in a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, with many forms and genres. Each uses language and literary elements in particular ways to communicate something significant. Some of the elements of fiction are characters, plot, setting, theme, perspective or point-of-view taken by the narrator, style, language, and structure. Dramas, apart from use of dialogues, use many of the same elements as novels and short stories, but may include special features such as stage directions, acts and scenes, and notations. Poems use elements such as structure, rhythm, rhyme, imagery and figurative language to communicate an idea, feeling or image. Non-fiction literary texts include biographies and essays. Biographies often tell the story of their subject through narrative elements. Elements of biography include setting (how it influences the events in the person's life), characterization of the subject (representation of the subject's character and motives), theme, accuracy, structure (time sequence), illustrations, graphic features, structural patterns, and organizational features (table of contents, index, and references). Essays might be persuasive, personal, or descriptive but often use the same elements to communicate a significant idea or viewpoint. These elements include thesis, introduction, body, conclusion, arguments, and evidence.
Many of the strategies used for reading informational and graphical texts can be used effectively to read literary texts.

Support from teachers

Before reading, teachers should help pupils to connect new content and ideas with their prior knowledge by encouraging them to think about what they already know about the topic or the type of reading material. Specifically, they should;

- Ask pupils to **brainstorm** related ideas and themes, **recall** previous experiences and feelings related to the subject or theme, or **list questions** they might have about the topic.
- Provide pupils with related experiences, discussion topics, readings, or background information to **increase background knowledge** about the form, author or subject.
- Pose questions to pupils before they read, to help them **determine a purpose** for reading.
- Invite pupils to ask questions about the story or subject.
- Model (using a think-aloud) how to **predict** the content based on the text features, specialized vocabulary, illustrations, introductory information, or personal experiences. **Skim**, **scan** and **sample** the text to make informed predictions.

- **Identify** and pre-teach unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts that appear in the text.

During reading, teachers should help pupils to connect the information and ideas in the text with what they already know as they monitor their understanding. Specifically, they need to;

- Have pupils describe and model the different reading strategies they might use, such as **predicting**, **questioning, activating prior knowledge**, **inferencing**, **monitoring**, **adjusting**, **rereading**, and **decoding**.
- Model (using a "think-aloud") strategies for pausing and thinking about the text. For example, demonstrate how to **pause**, **think**, and create *thinkmarks* (quick comments, questions, personal connections or interesting phrases) as you read. They should encourage pupils write a sentence at intervals while reading the text.
- Demonstrate how to **use a graphic organizer** to select and organize main ideas, important details, and questions as one reads. For example, timelines, story maps, flow charts, or thought webs can help pupils identify and track the main ideas or events and make connections.
- Invite pupils to **visualize** the concepts as they read. Have partners share and compare their images.
- Provide pupils with focus questions to help them **make inferences** and read between the lines. For example:
    - What details are included?
    - Why did the author tell you that?
    - What details have been left out?
    - Why didn't the author tell you this?

After reading, teachers should help pupils to **consolidate** and **extend** their understanding of the content. Specifically, they should;

- Ask partners to **retell** or **paraphrase** what they have read, and to **note similarities and differences** in the retellings.
- Model (using a "think-aloud") how to **summarize** a narrative by identifying the theme, main characters, setting and events, then **organize** the information to show how the characters, setting and plot develop throughout the story.
- Have pupils **suggest** possible diagrams or graphic organizers to illustrate connections among the topic, main ideas, supporting details, and prior knowledge.
- Review the process that pupils used for reading literary texts, including strategies for before, during and after reading.

Since narrative texts are most frequently used in teaching reading at the primary school level, below are some examples of specific procedures that can be used to help pupils improve their comprehension of narrative texts.

Retelling: Retelling involves having pupils orally reconstruct a story that they have read. Retelling requires pupils to activate their knowledge of how stories work and apply it to the new reading. As part of retelling, pupils engage in ordering and

summarizing information and in making inferences. The teacher can use retelling as a way to assess how well pupils comprehend a story, then use this information to help pupils develop a deeper understanding of what they have read.

Story Maps: Story maps are visual representations of the elements that make up a narrative. The purpose of a story map is to help pupils focus on the important elements of narratives-theme, characters, settings, problems, plot events, and resolution-and on the relationship among those elements. As with retellings, the teacher uses explicit instruction to introduce the procedure, explaining why story maps are useful, then modelling the procedure, giving the pupils opportunities to practice, and providing feedback.

Story Frames: Similar to story maps, story frames are visual representations that focus pupils' attention on the structure of a story and on how the content of the story fits its structure. Pupils use story frames as a way to activate their background knowledge of the elements of story structure and thus to organize and learn new information from a story. Simple story frames require pupils to provide basic information about the sequence of events in a story. More complex frames might involve having pupils supply more detailed information by summarizing sequences of actions or events, or providing factual information to explain problems or motivations. The activity encourages pupils to interact with each other, asking questions, seeking clarifications, and sharing evaluations. Again, as with story maps, the procedure can be simplified for use with younger pupils.

13.4 Conclusion

Reading comprehension involves the extraction of meaning from written language and it would generally be agreed that comprehension is the ultimate goal of teaching children to read independently. However, meeting every pupil’s needs in learning to read in today’s increasingly diverse classroom environments can be complex and challenging. Children’s ability to flourish from reading instruction can be influenced by any number of factors, including physical, emotional, behavioral, and intellectual disabilities; differences between the language of instruction and pupils’ primary language, as with English Language Learners (ELL); access to print materials in the home; parenting styles; previous schooling experiences; cultural differences; economic strata; and more. The only way to provide solid instruction that meets the needs of learners is to pursue what is called “differentiating instruction” (Gregory & Chapman, 2002; Tomlinson, 1999). Excellent teachers provide instruction that is responsive to the specific needs of every child. Teachers will need to know how to implement teaching interventions using multiple instructional strategies.

13.5 Summary

The unit exposed teachers to the different text structures pupils might come across right from their primary school development of reading skills, since they need to read

also in content areas to aid their learning. The specific features of each texts were discussed, as well as examples of strategies that can be used in teaching them. Emphasis is on direct instruction, frequent support from teachers, frequent practice, effective modelling and collaboration among pupils and between teacher and pupils.

11.6 Self-Assessment Questions

a) What is generalization/principle text structure?
b) Discuss, with examples, the different patterns of writing that are often contained in textbooks or other pieces of writing.
c) Differentiate between compare and contrast text structure and cause and effect text structure.
d) How do you determine the features of the different texts pupils are exposed to?
e) What is the relationship between Episode Pattern Structure and Literary texts?
f) What is the importance of teacher's support in teaching the different texts?
g) Summarise, on the whole the specific supports needed from teachers in comprehending all text types.
h) Note all the terms written in bold and write a brief description about them.

11.7 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Using any of the primary school texts/reading materials as example, discuss the strategies that can be used to help students comprehend the text.

11.8 References/Further Reading

Allen, J. (2004) Tools for Teaching Content Literacy. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Beers, K (2003) When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. p. 101.

Daniels, H. and S. Zemelman (2004). Subjects Matter: Every Teacher's Guide to Content-Area Reading. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Duke, N. K. & Pearson, P. D. (2002) 'Effective practices for developing reading comprehension' in Farstrup, A. E. & Samuels, S. J. (eds.) *What research has to say about reading instruction* (3rd edition) pp. 205–242, IRA, Newark, DE.

Hoyt, *L. (2009) Revisit, Reflect, Retell.* Heinemann.

McLaughlin, M. & Beth Allen, M (2009) *Guided Comprehension in Grades 3–8*, 2009, International Reading Association

Unit 14: THE READING CLASSROOM

14.1 Introduction

The classroom environment is of utmost importance to motivate children, and to encourage and accelerate their progress in reading. It should be an environment that provides opportunities for the integration of literacy with other areas of the curriculum, and with all aspects of the language arts, namely: reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing. Both social and physical factors are important for creating an appropriate environment for success in literacy acquisition and development. The unit explores the components of a reading classroom, focusing on appropriate physical arrangement of furniture, material selection, and the attractive, informative appearance of the classroom that contribute to teaching and learning.

14.2 Objectives: By the end of the unit, you should be able to:

a. Identify factors which are important for creating a suitable environment for success in reading skills acquisition and development;
b. Determine the purpose of establishing a library in the classroom;
c. Identify the kinds of materials you would include in the classroom library for primary school pupils;
d. Develop teacher-made materials appropriate for use in the classroom.

14.3 Main Content

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT THAT PROMOTE READING SKILLS

The classroom environment is one of the key elements in enhancing children's progress in learning to read. Reading classrooms are often called literacy-rich environment. Literacy-rich environments have a significant impact on what goes on in the classroom and set the stage for interactions with a wide variety of genres. It should be an environment that provides opportunities for the integration of literacy with other areas of the curriculum and with all aspects of language: reading, speaking, writing, viewing and listening– through print & digital media. Both social and physical factors are important for creating an appropriate environment for success in reading achievement and development. There should be ample opportunity for pupils to interact with their peers, and study texts; the teacher must understand the functions of reading and writing. A literacy-rich environment is not only important for early literacy but supports content-specific learning as well.

A relaxed, yet structured ambiance is important in the classroom. Pupils should feel comfortable in order to be able to concentrate on their studies. When possible, the pupils should take part in the decoration of the classroom, which should reflect the most recent lesson and samples of all children's work. The images on the walls should reflect the images of the children, their culture, their heritage and their customs. This helps children to visualize their participation in literacy and as a result feel more compelled to learn about other cultures. When possible, learning centres should be established to provide children with the opportunity to work independently or in small groups. Learning centres are area or classrooms designated for reading, writing, speaking and listening activities.

A literacy-rich environment does more than provide visual exposure to print. It also provides opportunities for meaningful interaction with it. A well-prepared literacy-rich environment invites children's active engagement in at least two different modalities - visual and verbal. As expressed by Edwards and Willis (2000), "it is natural for young children to seek to master and use many alternative 'literacies,' or avenues of symbolic representation offered by their culture, such as drawing, painting, gesture, construction, dramatic play, and words". Children should be engaged in, not only seeing and using print, but also using songs, chants, dramas, dances, and games as different expressions of literacy.

In addition, children should have several opportunities to engage in a variety of reading and writing activities. While some pupils are working in groups and others working individually. Pupils explore books of various genres not just in the library or during reading times, but also in science, math, and social studies. Teachers should engage in language and literacy activities in all elements of instruction. Conversations abound in which teachers elicit language from pupils and ask them to transcribe that

language. Teachers also facilitate language and literacy exploration with games and activities that pupils can use one-to-one, independently, or with peers. Finally, teachers should demonstrate their own participation in language and literacy through modelling its use continually throughout the day. Teachers can demonstrate writing on the board by recording what children share in class discussions.

The room arrangement should encourage repeated opportunities to interact with literacy materials and activities to practice skills that pupils are learning (Gunn, Simmons, & Kameenui, 1995). Through repeated practice with materials and activities, skills become more automatic and pupils are given ample opportunities to integrate new and old information. Combining opportunities for independent exploration and peer interaction with teacher instruction enhances and builds upon skills.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

The intentional selection and use of materials is central to the development of the reading. Teachers ensure that pupils have access to a variety of resources by providing many choices; they should connect literacy to all elements of classroom life. Teachers alternate books in the classroom library to maintain pupil's interest and expose them to various genres and ideas, both fiction and nonfiction literature. Classrooms include miscellaneous literacy materials that are used in everyday life further demonstrate how literacy is used and applicable to their daily lives (Goodman, Bird, & Goodman, 1991).

Children should be provided with all the books and materials they need to interest and stimulate the urge to read. Materials should include a variety of narrative and expository books of varying levels of difficulty, and those which meet the interest of the individuals, and the selections made by the children. There should be a variety of texts, such as newspaper articles, stories, local proverbs, book maps, jokes, riddles, recipes, poetry, street signs, clothing tags (cleaning directions) posters, and song lyrics written by teachers and children, and which can be sung to familiar tunes. Where possible, creative work in writing and art should reflect all areas of the curriculum, and the use of local materials should be encouraged. Depending on pupil level and the content area, a reading classroom should include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Alphabet displays
- Anchor charts – teacher-made and co-created with pupils
- Bulletin boards
- Chalk board or dry erase board
- Classroom libraries that include a variety of genres and text types
- Computers
- Content posters

- Current events board to highlight certain positive things going on in the community and in the world.
- Dictionaries
- Display of pupil work
- Displays of books & information
- Duty list. Pupils share responsibilities for classroom management. This enables the children to practise responsibility and learn leadership skills, and helps the teacher's classroom management.
- Globe (and/or world map) enables pupils should be able to see where they live and their relationship to other countries. These are necessary for teaching about other cultures and geography.
- Health bulletin, a poster, either developed by health officials or the teacher, to inform pupils about healthy eating habits or to encourage positive health behaviours in pupils.
- Labels
- Literacy workstations
- Monthly calendar of the current year.
- Phone books
- Plenty of opportunity to read, write, listen, and speak
- Printed directions
- Signs
- Weather Chart to enable pupils to monitor the changes in the weather daily.
- Word walls
- Writing centers

One of the main problems in many rural areas is the lack of reading materials. Many schools also lack financial resources and cannot afford the materials. When this is so, it is difficult to create an effective learning environment, as all pupils should be provided with all the books and materials they need to create interest and stimulate the desire to read.

Where there is a lack of reading materials, the teacher should improvise and create as many of the materials as possible. The materials may be very basic, such as very short stories, perhaps used only in small groups at a time, if there is a lack of copying facilities. The teacher can have radio time in the class for five minutes each day and one child reads the news. Another possibility is to make a television using a cardboard to make the frame and cedar cloth to make the screen. The teacher may write a story or may use pictures to generate discussions and various class activities.

Pupils can also participate in the creation of classroom materials. A lesson in writing stories or poetry writing, after editing, can become a part of the permanent collection of materials of the classroom. There can also be an exchange of materials between classrooms. For example, pupils in higher grades could write stories for the younger pupils, or children in the same grades or pupils at the same level of reading

comprehension can exchange texts by class. This enables the teacher to develop a library without the burden of having to create all the classroom texts and at the same time gives the pupils a chance to feel responsible for their learning, help others, contribute to the classroom environment and develop a positive attitude towards learning.

CLASSROOM LIBRARY

Pupils need access to interesting books and materials – both in print and online. When pupils are provided with well-designed classroom libraries, they interact more with books, spend more time reading, exhibit more positive attitudes toward reading, and exhibit higher levels of reading achievement (NAEP, 2002). Additionally, classroom libraries support balanced literacy instruction. Teachers can provide instruction in literacy skills and content-specific reading skills; however, if pupils are not provided with access to interesting books that they *want* to read and *can* read with success, they will never reach their full literacy potential (Gambrell, Malloy, & Mazzoni, 2007).

The classroom library with a catchy phrase promoting reading is an invitation to readers, and should be a focal area of the room. Chairs and a table should be provided to accommodate different forms of activities while sitting. Where possible, open-faced book shelves are desirable. Young readers need many types of books - stories, informational books, poetry, alphabet, counting, concept and wordless picture books or drama created by the children or the teacher.

Literature oriented displays, such as posters, bulletin boards, flannel boards and taped stories encourage reading, and should be in the classroom library. The selection of materials for the classroom library will be dependent on the reading levels of children, their areas of interest, and their curricular needs.

Books in the classroom collection should be shelved according to category, and classified by colour coding according to type. They should be placed together on a shelf, and labelled with the colour coded sticker beside the label.

In terms of sourcing, Parent Teachers' Associations (PTAs) can request donation of books, magazines, and newspapers from publishers. Local organizations which are affiliated to international bodies can request donation of books for the school in the community. Children, teachers and parents can be trained to write for publications, and the books and stories form a part of the collection for the reading corner. Each class can publish a newspaper each term, with articles compiled by parents, children and teachers.

SCHOOL LIBRARY

The school library is a room on the school compound where books, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, cassettes, videos, tape recorders, computer programmes, CD-

ROM records, and other media are kept and made available for daily use. The library is an essential component of educational process, and the books and other materials serve to promote learning with emphasis on reading among pupils and members of staff. Chairs and tables should be provided to accommodate different activities.

If pupils are to become independent, knowledgeable thinkers, their reading habits must be fostered by a variety of reading materials which are readily available. Library gives readers the opportunity to make their own selection based on levels, needs and interests. Additionally, a library which is equipped with a variety of materials including prints, non-print, electronic media and network access helps to support the quality of instruction in all areas of the curriculum including the area of (reading) literacy.

If the school library is to serve the purposes intended, then its contents for reading should include materials to satisfy the needs and interests of readers of different levels. The stock must include materials which are appropriate to encourage reading for pleasure, and for information including research. Also to engage in activities using materials to foster listening, speaking reading, writing and viewing in various areas of the curriculum. Efforts should be made to encourage borrowing, and caring, and to prompt the return of books.

The administration of the library can be arranged by assigning a teacher to undergo a brief period of training to operate a school library. In order to establish a school library, funds should be made available from the school's budget for the purchase of stocks. *Books* can be obtained on loan from central libraries through the book mobile service. The school library can be of benefit to other members of the community, and books can be solicited through community efforts.

EQUIPMENT

Learning is accelerated when audio-visual equipment accompany the teacher's presentation. Very often these gadgets provide aid to independent learning by children. A tape recorder is very helpful for listening activities, such as oral reading, taping and listening to folk tales or songs. The teacher is able to tape stories to help pupils who need guidance as they read independently. It also provides the children with an opportunity to hear music or the voices of different people, other than the teacher.

When available, television, radio and a computer are assets for stimulating viewing and listening skills. They enable teachers to make use of the interaction of text, sound and visual texts at the same time. Television can be beneficial for many teacher-led and pupil-led activities. Television and radio sets enhance viewing, and listening to educational programmes. Additionally, teachers need to use multimedia presentations (the interaction of text, sound, video or graphics) whenever possible.

In this technological age, the use of the computer can improve the creativity and knowledge base of both teachers and children. Computer stations are unique learning areas in classrooms, providing opportunities for children to acquire knowledge about literacy socially. The computer station should be a focal area in the classroom, which encourages children to engage in a variety of creative and imaginative activities, including printing children's work, book jackets and classroom information. Where schools are connected to the internet, this facilitates research, discussions and e-mail exchanges.

In the absence of computers, pupils still have the opportunity to create these materials by hand and even perhaps learn a new skill or develop an old one. Some examples include making their own book covers or using objects found in nature to design and create frames for their published stories, poems, plays, songs, etc. Pupils may also be taught how to recycle paper to use for other assignments or for presentations. This encourages the habit of recycling and teaches the pupils a skill.

ACCOMMODATION, FURNISHING AND LIGHTING

Careful attention to the physical classroom design is essential to the success of teaching and learning. Classroom space must be adequate to accommodate each pupil comfortably when writing and engaging in whole class instruction. Additional space must be made available for small-group activities, and to facilitate freedom of movement.

Sufficient chairs or benches, and adequate space at the table or desk must be provided to avoid discomfort. Adequate space must also be provided to accommodate the table and chair for use by the teacher, and additional space for conferencing.

Seating arrangements can be in ***Two Semi-Circles*** which makes it easy for the teacher to be closer to everyone (instead of having rows going further and further away from the teacher). This is particularly useful for larger classes of about 30 or 40 pupils. The teacher may want to alternate where the board is used or alternate the seating arrangement from time to time so that each pupil gets a chance to be near the teacher. The classroom can be arranged as ***Learning Centres*** where pupils are grouped grouped in 3s or 4s up to 10 and assigned to specific activities. This grouping helps allow teachers to promote cooperative learning (in group projects and assignments).

However, there are many schools without sufficient desks and chairs. In this situation, teachers should try to and the most comfortable seating arrangement possible to accommodate the pupils. In cultures where the children sit on the floor or on stones, there should be ample space for the pupils to sit comfortably. What is most important is that children should be reasonably comfortable when they are in class. Otherwise, when they are uncomfortable, they tend to be more disruptive, there is an increase in disciplinary problems and very little learning takes place.

It is recommended that the teacher move about the room during the lesson in order to keep the attention of all the pupils in the classroom and not just of those sitting close to the teacher. The pupils should be seated in such a way that the teacher has access to each child and can walk about the room freely during the lesson.

Lighting is very important, adequate natural light or electric light is required throughout the school day. If the lighting is weak, it may cause problems for some pupils and even the teacher. Doorways and windows should be clear of any obstacles that may block the light.

DISCIPLINE

One of the major challenges of teachers is classroom management and managing discipline. Children misbehave for different reasons. Some want attention, either from the teacher or their classmates, so they distract the class to get an audience. Examples include making noises and using inappropriate language. Some children want to be the boss – of themselves, the other pupils and/or the teacher. They want everything done their way. Generally these pupils do not comply with class rules and will argue and challenge teachers until they get their way (Albert, 1995). Sometimes they want revenge for being hurt or embarrassed by either a classmate or a teacher. When children feel incapable of living up to their expectations, their parents' expectations, or the teacher's, sometimes they may act to divert attention away from the (reading) problem, and change the focus to something else.

Discipline is a particularly difficult problem when children are not provided with the necessary materials for lessons and class sizes are very large. It is recommended that the disruptive child be engaged in the learning process. Various intervening techniques should be used when a child begins to disrupt the classroom environment and a clear set of consequences established – that the children must accept – if the intervention does not work. It must be kept in mind that using writing and reading exercises as punishment is counterproductive; it teaches the children that reading and writing are punishments (e.g. writing 'I will not talk' 100 times on the board) and not a source of pleasure. Children should not be punished with literary exercises, because they start to associate literacy with something negative. Instead, children should accept the consequences of their actions with (non-pleasurable) activities that are nevertheless instructive.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The role of the teacher is to encourage all attempts at reading, writing, and speaking, allowing pupils of varying ability to experience the different function and use of literacy activities. Teacher interactions with pupils build on pupils' knowledge as they develop literacy skills. Teachers use a variety of methods of communicating with pupils by asking questions, labelling objects and experiences with new vocabulary, and offering practice to help pupils remember and generalize new concepts and skills

(Whitehurst, 2003). Teachers should plan activities so that pupils have opportunities to integrate and extend their literacy knowledge by reading aloud, listening to other pupils read aloud, and listening to tape recordings and videotapes in reading corners" (Gunn, Simmons, & Kameenui, 1995). Also, they should teach pupils how to use the materials in their environment to promote interest and use of literacy materials throughout the classroom (Gunn, Simmons, & Kameenui, 1995).

14.4 Conclusion

The reading classroom serves as a means to build the basic skills necessary for literacy development by demonstrating to pupils the function and utility of language in an intentional, purposeful, and intensive way. While many pupils come to school with exposure to literacy in their everyday lives, pupils who may not have access or exposure benefit from the instruction and intensity provided by teachers the school setting. Teachers working to promote the development of reading and comprehension skills in young children can look to the environment as an agent of learning. While literacy objects added to the physical environment can promote literacy behaviours, the role of the social environment should also be considered.

14.5 Summary

Effective conditions encouraged children to explore, to communicate, to interact socially with each other and with adults, to make judgments and to solve problems, all of which are essential to reading skills development. However, literacy-rich environments don’t just happen. They must be carefully planned and maximally exploited. This involves the selection of materials that will facilitate language and literacy opportunities; reflection and thought regarding classroom design; and intentional instruction and facilitation by teachers and other staff (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1999).

14.6 Self-Assessment Questions

a. What are the important components of a reading classroom?
b. Discuss how the social and physical factors of the classroom environment can affect literacy acquisition and development.
c. Construct a catchy phrase promoting reading which a teacher could use to encourage the use of the classroom library.
d. What literary materials would you place in the classroom library to satisfy the needs of young readers?
e. Relate a folktale which would be appropriate for taping and adding to the classroom library collection to be used by children in the primary grades.
f. Describe some signs which would be helpful in promoting reading in a Primary 3 classroom.
g. Write a joke, riddle, a local proverb and a local recipe to be used in reading by primary grade pupils.

14.7 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Design and label a diagram to illustrate how you would arrange the classroom to accommodate Learning centres and a classroom library.

14.8 References/Further Reading

Britsch, S.J. & Meier, D.R. (1999). Building a literacy community: The role of literacy and social practice in early childhood programs. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 26(4), 209-215.

Edwards, C.P. & Willis, L.M. (2000). Integrating visual and verbal literacies in the early childhood classroom. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 27(4), 259-265.

Gambrell, L.B. Malloy, J.A., & Mazzoni, S.A. (2007). Evidence-based practices for comprehensive literacy instruction. In L. Gambrell, L.M. Morrow, & M. Pressley (Eds.), Best Practices in Literacy Instruction, 3rd edition (pp. 11-29). New York: Guilford Press.

Robinson, R.D., McKenna, M.C. and Wedman, J.M. (2000). *Issues and trends in literacy education* (2nd edition). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Roskos, K. & Neuman, S. (1994). Play settings as literacy environments: Their effects on children's literacy behaviors. In D.F. Lancy (Ed.), *Children's Emergent Literacy*, Westport, CT: Praeger, pp. 251-264.

Hutinger, Bell, Beard, Bond, Johanson, and Terry *() Final Report: The Early Childhood Emergent Literacy Technology Research Study*.

UNIT 15: READING SKILLS ASSESSMENT

15.1 Introduction

If children in the primary grades are to achieve literacy learning, the process of gathering data in order to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of children, must be integrated into the classroom decision-making. Also, teachers must become more adept in carrying out the process, and utilizing information gathered, to modify instruction where necessary.

15.2 **Objectives**. By the end of the unit, you should be able to:

a) identify the different kinds of classroom-based assessment for reading in the primary grades;
b) develop reading inventories, and checklists, appropriate for specific grades in the primary school;
c) be aware that some aspects of the assessment process should be on-going to facilitate knowledge of the development of children' progress.

15.3 Main Content

NATURE OF READING ASSESSMENT

Assessment is a tool that measures a learner's knowledge and ability. In reading programme, it shows the areas in the where learners have weaknesses and strengths, and how well they are able to extract information and analyze what they are reading. The overall goal of assessment is to guide what is taught in the classroom (Carter, 2000). Teachers base instruction on what proves to be effective in their teaching and eliminate the parts that are ineffective. If a class performs poorly when assessed, that means either that the instruction was not effective or that the form of assessment used does not correspond with the way the lesson was taught. In either case, the teacher must make the necessary adjustments so that the students can understand the information.

Reading assessment refers to the observations, record keeping, and ongoing performance tests that a teacher uses to gather information about each pupil's reading progress (Flippo, 2003). Classroom assessment should be broadly interpreted to allow examination of pupils' reading *processes* as well as the *products* they create. The goal of reading assessment should be to provide sufficient information for teachers to make decisions about "next steps" for pupils in their reading skills development, and for the selection of effective, evidence-based teaching strategies. Excellent reading assessment and careful analyses of data are necessary for effective reading instruction and require that teachers know how to use a variety of assessment skills and strategies such as the following ((McKenna & Stahl, 2003; Reutzel & Cooter, 2007)).

- Determining what children *can do,* not just what they *cannot do*
- Understanding the multiple purposes for which assessment strategies may be used (i.e., screening, diagnosis, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments)
- Using assessment data to inform the selection of reading instructional strategies
- Gaining insight into the processes pupils use when reading and writing, not just the final products of their reading and writing
- Documenting children's reading growth and development over time in relation to established benchmarks or standards
- Examining the entire context (the school, the home, and the classroom) of a child's opportunities to learn to read
- Developing a year-long assessment plan for multiple assessment strategies
- Integrating reading assessment data gathering into ongoing reading instruction and practice
- Using computers and electronic technology to collect, store, organize, and analyze assessment data

When planning for reading assessment, teachers may need to consider the purposes for the test(s), testing conditions, and time needed to collect and, most especially, to analyze the data to shape, adapt, and inform later teaching. Effective reading teachers think about how to infuse their data gathering into instruction so as to minimize the amount of time taken from teaching. They also plan how to use informal data-gathering strategies during whole-group, small-group, and individual instruction. Teachers will need to be aware that assessment procedures should be based on identified goals, the programme established for literacy learning, including the integration in other areas of the curriculum, and pupil assessment of themselves. Some aspects of assessment procedures must also be on-going, as "on-off' measures will not facilitate knowledge of the development of children' progress.

READING ASSESSMENT MODES

Classroom based assessment for literacy learning includes the following:

- Observations
- Questioning and interviewing
- Sampling pupil work through portfolios

- Listening to oral reading tapes
- Utilizing surveys, inventories and checklists
- Self-assessment by children - Learning Logs.
- Teacher-devised Tests

Observations

Observing pupils is one of the most accessible forms of assessment for a teacher. Observation for assessment purposes involves more than examining classroom behaviour. Teachers observe learners every day in a more formal classroom setting, and out of class casually interacting and playing with peers. When a teacher observes a pupil, he or she is looking at what interests the child. The teacher is able to know how the child interacts with peers and adults, and how the child interacts with learning. If a child has a change in behaviour or begins to demonstrate unusual behaviour, the teacher can immediately note the difference and try to address any possibility of a problem.

During classroom observations, teachers look for answers to specific questions, note many attributes of individual working styles, and observe what children can do individually and collectively. As children work in the various contexts of the classroom, teachers gain insight into their knowledge and strategies. Teachers cannot document all observations, but noting some can facilitate reflection, and the sharing of information with children, parents, the principal, and the grade teacher.

There are many ways to document observations, such as noting what kinds of books the children select, observing a log of daily activities, listening to conversations about current affairs or observing students before, during and after a lesson. Teachers may find it useful to create their own checklists and surveys that specifically address the behaviour that they would like to observe.

In developing class observation checklist, the teacher determines what behaviour he or she is looking for in a particular lesson. For example, below are a list of behaviours observed during a reading lesson:

- Participates in class discussion
- Makes predictions about the reading
- Confirms or refutes past predictions
- Uses the reading to justify predictions
- Reads fluently (smoothly)
- Uses the context of the sentence to determine the meaning of a word
- Is able to summarize the reading in his or her own words
- Is able to work with others on comprehension problems

The frequency of the observed behavior can be rated as *'Always, Sometimes, Rarely, or Never'*.

On the other hand, teachers may decide to use an observation record that allows for more notes to be taken about what the teacher observes. This may be useful when a teacher is observing an individual child or a small group of children.

Portfolio assessment

Portfolio assessment is a compilation of reading and writing samples collected over a period of weeks or months. It is a folder that contains a collection of materials that document children's development in reading and writing. These samples are analyzed for growth in and challenges to reading development.

Using writing to assess reading reflects the recognition of reading and writing as being interdependent. Apart from documenting the personal growth of a learner, portfolio assessment is beneficial in allowing learners themselves participate in the assessment. However, this will require some guidance, especially with very young pupils. Portfolio assessment allows the pupils to treat learning as a process, a continuum. They are able to see how concepts are linked to one another and develop into larger concepts, or how we use skills and information from one lesson and apply it to another. They can trace their development in reading ability and use reading in a variety of contexts.

Portfolio assessment must consist of a variety of samples- summaries of what has been read, literature logs, journal entries, a list of books read and speeches, assignments from written, oral and listening activities, because all are used to assess reading. Teachers and learners look for differences in writing, more elaborate ways of communicating, either orally or written, and evidence of improved comprehension (higher grades, more correct answers, the ability to write accurate summaries, etc.). The samples of children's work of all kinds complement teachers' observations, and provide a guide to the developmental stages of the learner. Samples offer concrete evidence of what children are doing and thinking. Analysis of the samples helps teachers to determine the new challenges for each learner, as well as guiding the teacher's instruction. Some assessment questions will be general, used for all students, while others will concentrate on the needs of a particular pupil.

Questioning and Interviewing

Questioning and interviewing involve teacher/pupil interaction in the classroom. Questioning denotes the interaction between teacher and children which occurs in the classroom. It is a dialogue between the teacher and pupils about the text being read. Generally, questioning takes place during the class time. It involves a teacher or a pupil asking another pupil to summarize a text; it involves pupils asking each other questions about the text to determine the meaning, to predict meaning, and to clarify unclear vocabulary and concepts. The teacher or a pupil may ask questions pertaining to the lesson. These questions usually refer to a text that has just been read, or a film or play that has just been watched, or a poem just listened to.

Interviewing (and sometime questionnaire) is a more structured interaction between the teacher and an individual pupil. Interviews provide information on children's attitudes toward, and understanding of, the reading process. The teacher may ask the pupil questions about what material has been read, to make predictions, summarize, etc.

Questioning and interviewing encourage the teacher to interact with the learners, to talk to them and encourage them to respond and participate in classroom discussions. It gives learners the opportunity to discuss what they think about a text and practise expressing themselves clearly.

Testing

Testing is intended to be used as a diagnostic tool - to show areas in which learners are strong, and/or areas in which they need improvement. It is used to show teachers what areas of instruction are strong, and what areas of instruction need strengthening. Testing alone, however, cannot accurately measure a learner's performance, it must be supplemented with other forms of assessment. Too often teachers rely solely on testing in general as a means to determine understanding, when in some cases it may simply determine a child's test-taking skills. Standard tests tend to emphasize low-level skills, factual knowledge, memorization of procedures and skills. These aspects of performance are necessary, but by no means provide an assessment of critical thinking skills.

As mentioned earlier, the forms of assessment should be a direct reflection of instruction in the classroom. The skills that are practised during the lesson should be the skills tested, and the information taught in the lesson should be the only information evaluated. It is to the advantage of the teacher to design tests that correspond to the needs of the learners. The teacher is better able to set questions that correspond to what was taught in a lesson, the skills practised and the students' interests. However, it is a very delicate process and rules must be followed in order to develop a well-made test.

Self-assessment

Pupils are taught to assess and evaluate their work and progress in order to take responsibility for their learning. Pupils are taught strategies to learn a concept. They must next appropriately apply these strategies. In order to evaluate whether or not they have correctly applied these strategies, they must have a self-evaluation guidelines provided by the teacher. In addition, reading journals or diaries are recommended ways of allowing pupils to express their thoughts and reflections, and note their challenges and successes (Carter, 2000). Before actively engaging in self-evaluation, a pupil should set personal academic goals. A goal is an end that a person tries to reach. Goals enable learners to set personal standards so they can determine their progress. Goals also motivate learners to put extra time and effort into their work, and make use of strategies that help them learn (Latham, 1990).

COMPREHENSION ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

- **Informal Reading Inventories (IRIs)**

The purpose of Informal Reading Inventories (IRIs) is to allow teachers to listen to children's oral readings to identify the use of strategies in both decoding and comprehension. IRIs often involve

- miscue analysis/running records
- anecdotal notes (e.g., the child gives up easily)
- retellings/questioning
- graded word lists

Informal Reading Inventories provide useful information to pupils about their progress, to parents about achievement and skills that need improvement, and to teachers about appropriate instruction and texts to provide.

- **Retellings**

Retelling is considered a recall of what the child remembers from reading or Retellings indicate what the child remembers, what he deems important, how the child organizes and sequences information, how he makes sense of the text and what personal connections the child makes. Practice in retellings improves comprehension, grasp of story concept, critical thinking, and oral language development. Note that retellings must also be taught, not merely assessed.

- **Cloze**

The cloze is a very effective way to teach reading comprehension strategies. A cloze may also be used to determine the child's reading level. Cloze passages are written texts from which words or letters have been deleted. When completing a cloze, children practice using effective strategies. The following points describe how to create a cloze:

- Select a short passage (up to ten sentences).
- Leave the first and last sentences intact.
- Keep the blank spaces (deletions) the same length. Delete structure words (pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions) if the focus is syntax or grammar.
- Delete content words (e.g., nouns, verbs, and adjectives), if the focus is semantics—meaning.
- A traditional cloze has every fifth word deleted.
- To use as an assessment tool, have each child independently complete the cloze.

The research indicates that if 40–60 percent of the blanks are filled with the same word as was deleted, the text is within the reader's instructional level (Rhodes and Shanklin 190). However, what is more important to consider is whether the chosen words make sense in the context of both the sentence and the passage. If synonyms are accepted, then a rate of 70–80 percent correct indicates an instructional level, and over 85 percent, an independent level. To use as an instructional tool, have children complete the cloze in pairs or groups. The real strength of this activity is that it

involves children in discussion. Children have to debate (defend or justify) their word choices.

- **Answering Questions**

The purpose in asking questions is to teach children to analyze questions in order to effectively respond. Responses may also be analyzed as to the types of questions to which children can successfully respond (e.g., literal versus inferential).

- **The Arts**

Children's personal responses through the arts (i.e., plays, Readers' Theater, art) also reveal levels of reading comprehension.

- **Group Discussions**

Group discussions (e.g., book clubs, book talks) are probably the best way to examine reading comprehension. Listening to children's talk reveals what level of comprehension and involvement was evident in the reading.

- **Think-Alouds**

In think-alouds, readers verbalize their thoughts before, during, and after reading. Think-alouds reveal how children are using strategies in action. Think-alouds may be a spontaneous response to reading (e.g., "He is so silly!"). They may also be elicited by the teacher (e.g., "What are you thinking?").

15.4 Conclusion

No form of assessment used alone should be the basis of evaluation; all forms of assessment need to be supplemented with various types of assessment. Effective teachers use a variety of assessment tools for multiple purposes, and then translate their pupil data into effective teaching plans. Positive assessment should also satisfy the learning objectives. Assessment must accommodate individual cultural differences. Children living in rural and local areas will have a different relationship with reading and comprehension. Teachers need to avoid labelling children as slow learners or failures when they are actually in transition, learning a new language. The reading process in some cases may need to focus on language development. This is applicable especially to the second language situation we have in Nigeria. A child must be able to speak the language of the school, before reading the language of the school.

15.5 Summary

The purpose of using assessment is to determine if learning objectives (and lesson objectives) are being met. Forms of assessment should be based on, and reflect, what is taught in the classroom. The forms of assessment must be as varied as the lessons and relevant to the lessons, while addressing the different learning styles. The assessment of lessons must correspond to what were taught and be as varied in form as the lessons. The teacher is not the only person who participates in assessment. Learners also evaluate their performance in school. However, teacher guidance is still needed to help pupils learn how to assess their own work and recognize progress.

15.5 Self-Assessment Questions

a. What are the purposes of assessment
b. Briefly summarize the different assessment modes discussed in this unit.
c. Which of these modes do you think is best for reading?
d. How does an effective teacher make use of assessment scores?
e. What is a cloze? How can it be used in reading assessment?
f. How can we use assessment as a diagnostic tool?

15.6 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Identify and discuss the different kinds of classroom-based assessment strategies for reading in the primary grades;

15.7 References and further reading

Caldwell, J.S. 2002. *Reading assessment: a primer for teachers and tutors*. New York, NY: Guilford.

Carter, V. E. 2000. *New Approaches to Literacy Learning: A Guide for Teacher*

Corno, L. and Randi, J. 1997. Motivation, volition, and collaborative innovation in classroom literacy. In: J. T. Guthrie and A. Wig&eld (eds), *Reading Engagement: Motivating Readers through Integrated Instruction*. Newark, Del., International Reading Association, pp. 51-67.

Guthrie, J. T. and McCann, A. D. 1997. Characteristics of classrooms that promote motivations and strategies for learning. In: J. T. Guthrie and A. Wig&eld (eds), *Reading Engagement: Motivating Readers through Integrated Instruction*. Newark, Del., International Reading Association, pp. 102-27.

N'Namdi, A. Kemba (2005). Guide to Teaching Reading at the Primary School Level. *UNESCO*

Spache, G. 1963. *Toward Better Reading*. Champaign, Ill., Garrard Publishing Co.
Turner, J. C. 1999. Strategies for engaging literacy learners. In: J. T. Guthrie and A.

Wig&eld (eds), *Reading Engagement: Motivating Readers through Integrated Instruction*, Newark, Del., International Reading Association, pp.183-204.