

READING TO LEARN

“The things I want to know are in books : my best friend is the man who'll get me a book I have not read”.

—Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865).

Reading is an essential part of language instruction at every level because it supports learning in multiple ways. Reading remains effective and supports student learning if they adopt and bear in mind the following points :

1. Reading has to be carried with a clear purpose.
2. Silent reading should be preferred to other modes of reading.
3. Reading should be carried on phrase wise rather than word wise.
4. Only important bits of information should be concentrated upon, while skimming the rest and skipping the irrelevant parts.
5. Different reading tasks should be taken up with varying speeds and strategies.
6. Information is to be perceived in the target language rather than mentally translate.
7. It is important to guess the meaning of new and difficult words from the context or ignore them.
8. Background knowledge and information are linked to understand the text.

While reading to learn, the students need to follow the following four basic steps :

1. Figuring out the purpose for reading :

- Activating the background knowledge of the topic, in order to predict or anticipate content and identify appropriate reading strategies.

2. Sorting out relevant and irrelevant :

- Attending to the parts of the text that are relevant to the identified purpose and ignoring the rest. This selectivity enables students to focus on specific items in the input and reduces the amount of information they have to hold in short-term memory.

3. Selecting appropriate strategies :

- Selecting appropriate strategies and using them flexibly and interactively. Students' comprehension improves and their confidence increases when they use top-down (concept or meaning driven approach) and bottom-up (data or text driven approach) skills simultaneously to construct meaning.

4. Checking comprehension :

- Self-monitoring while reading and when the reading task is completed. Monitoring comprehension helps students detect inconsistencies and comprehension failures, helping them learn to use alternate strategies.

READING BEYOND THE TEXTBOOK

Going beyond the textbook means identifying the resources necessary for introducing the material students need to grapple with, and to support them in their efforts. It is important to remember, that going “Beyond Textbooks” does not have to mean abandoning books, nor texts. It is rather a philosophy of teaching and

learning that transcends text books to strengthen support for communities of teachers, facilitate teaching and learning, and improve student growth and achievement. This comprehensive approach begins with a “shoulder to shoulder”, rather than “top-down” curriculum development process.

Stambaugh & Trank (2010) put forward the idea that in our modern information age, textbooks are no longer sufficient for conveying information in a timely and interesting manner, as most textbooks, by their traditional nature, are very institutionalized and resistant to change. Additionally, the long shelf life of the average textbook means that the audience it is written for may be significantly different than the audience that uses the book several years later (Teten, 2010). Therefore, it is imperative that teachers find new methods of instruction that utilize a variety of resources. For example, according to **Foley & McPhee**, (2008) research regarding science pedagogy suggests that textbooks fail to provide the hands-on, inquiry-based learning that is necessary to master scientific concepts.

The textbook has been one of the centerpieces of education. Earlier, many textbooks were written in a monotonous manner and were very dry. With many child-friendly reforms in place in varied boards of education, textbooks are becoming more and more interesting. In addition, they are encouraging discussion and active learning activities. Moreover, it is very important to encourage students to read and learn beyond the textbook. This will prepare them well to have a comprehensive knowledge about different topics. It is hopeful that in near future more and more textbooks will become digitalized with more audiovisual inputs which will make learning even more joyful. Accordingly, reading beyond the text book is to bring about a transition from textbooks into the world of digital content delivery. With digital educational tablets becoming more and more a reality, students will be able to store excellent reference books/excerpts and also browse the internet, in order to learn about and have greater insights on topics. Students will then be better equipped to deal with the complexities and challenges of world situations with greater depth and sensitivity.

When students read and learn beyond the textbook, learning becomes even more **interesting** and **motivating**. Students will develop a greater understanding and appreciation of topics when they *learn and read beyond the textbook*. They will also have a much more comprehensive knowledge about topics. It will also empower them with good research skills and also deepen their critical thinking skills. Furthermore, it will encourage them to read up further to do innovative assignments and projects.

Loud/Oral Reading

Loud reading is talking out loud to read it. This type of reading goes on when you are on the top of your voice. It helps especially the beginning readers, in oral expression in a smooth and effortless manner. Oral reading is spoken rather than written. Oral reading is one of the techniques for improving word identification skills. It is a critical component that is required for successful reading comprehension. As the goal of language education is to create autonomous learners, the single most

important activity of building required for children's eventual success in reading is reading aloud (Anderson, et al 1985).

Research has demonstrated that when teachers constantly monitor the progress of the students for instructional decision-making purposes, students achieve more, teacher decision-making improves and students tend to be more aware of their performance. Monitoring student progress in reading can be motivating to the students and useful in setting instructional goals, Reading aloud contributes young learner's language development (Jim Trelease, 2001). According to Elley (1989), reading aloud also facilitates increase in vocabulary, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, expressive ability, verbal fluency, writing ability, enhanced emotional intelligence, or even learning interests among the students.

Reading aloud develops the habit of self-correction easily and effectively. As more than one sense is used while reading aloud, the children are more likely to retain it. So, reading it out loud invokes both, your vision and hearing senses. Concentration and motivational levels are also amplified with loud reading. In addition to this, the power of imagination shoots up with loud reading.

Reading aloud should be carried on slowly and steadily with appropriate dramatic effects. Reading should be carried on with and for pleasure. Variety in texts chosen to read aloud brings in spice of life.

Aims of reading aloud are :

- To read with expression.
- To read with correct pronunciation.
- To prepare for effective silent reading.
- To test student's knowledge of words, phrases and sentences.

Process of Oral Reading

- Teacher gives model reading of selected material (age appropriate book or story) to train auditory nerves of students. For beginning readers, picture story books with interesting storyline but simple text are the first choice. For older readers, appealing series books or chapter books are very helpful.
- Students observe and listen to the teacher.
- Students read/imitate teacher first.
- Students continue to read later with speed and accuracy.
- In between teacher questions to ensure understanding while reading.
- Teacher checks posture of students while reading.
- Teacher verifies the accuracy in expression during reading.

Rewards of Read Aloud

Read aloud sessions should be incorporated into the routine of the children. It is a great way to improve their literacy level.

- (a) Reading aloud creates a bond with reading when teachers and parents spend quality time with the children. They feel loved, important, and thus improve their self-esteem, so that they can read out aloud in class with confidence.

- (b) Reading aloud improves the vocabulary of the children. By reading text aloud, the children will learn new words that they come across. When necessary, they refer dictionary and improve their performance.
- (c) Reading aloud helps in better writing. It may create interest in literature to become a prolific writer. It is a known fact that better readers become better writers.
- (d) Reading aloud improves listening skills as reading and listening are carried by the same person.

Advantages of Oral Reading	Limitations of Oral Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow model reading of teacher/ imitate teacher. • Skill of speech develops. • Pronunciation errors are corrected. • Trains eyes, ears, mouth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No training for meaning. • No good help for extensive reading. • Not allowed in public places/in libraries. • Pronunciation drill is essential before loud reading. • Well trained teachers are required.

To conclude, reading aloud is a valuable asset of instruction, a capital of which the teacher should make the most profitable use. The teacher, who can do justice to a story, approaches in the power the rhapsodist (the epic poem adapted for recitation). There are two essential features of what a teacher can do to improve the oral reading capacities of students. They are provision of ample opportunities for practice and guidance and instant feedback to the students. This should preferably be followed with sustained silent reading as according to **Jim Trelease** (2006) reading aloud and silent reading are natural partners when we are making effort to make our children autonomous learners. This inculcates free reading habits among the children.

SILENT READING

Silent reading is also called as independent reading. Silent reading is reading without pronouncing words out loud. The reader reads silently. It is reading to oneself. It is more on reading inside the head. It is claimed that **Saint Ambrose** (337 AD) invented silent reading. The basic requirement for silent reading is that the reader should know the basic structures, *i.e.* recognition of the words, understanding the meaning, and pronouncing correctly.

According to research studies, the students who were given time to read silently and understand their topics had far better grades than the other students. Independent reading promoted good achievements in higher academic education. Silent reading facilitated mastery of language and subject knowledge. Therefore, stress should be on silent reading.

Salient Features of Silent Reading

- Loud reading is usually followed by silent reading.
- Silent reading uses only vision and produces no sound.

- During silent reading there should be no whispering.
- Silent reading should not involve any kind of murmuring.
- There should be no lip movement during silent reading.
- There is no necessity to make a long pause at punctuation marks.
- Eye span is usually high depending on the speed of reading.
- Eye movements run horizontally to vertical to diagonal while reading.
- Conducive environment is an important factor in promoting silent reading.

Aims of Silent Reading

- To read without sound/movement with minimum fatigue.
- To read with :
 - Appropriate speed.
 - Complete accuracy.
 - Ultimate ease.
 - Maximum fluency.
 - Utmost understanding / comprehension.
- To expand vocabulary and gain confidence in public speech.
- To gather information from various sources of information.
- To read for pleasure and grow intellectually.

Procedure/Steps

- Teacher discusses the aims of silent reading its benefits.
- Time is allocated for reading approximately 10 to 20 minutes a day.
- Appropriate and varied texts/materials are chosen for silent reading, as not all students in the same grade read at the same level.
- Teacher asks the students to read silently preferably with self reading records.
- Teacher moves around the class and supervises.
- Teacher encourages to adhere to self-monitoring.
- Teacher later asks few simple/direct questions to ensure comprehension on the text read.
- Teacher may ask students to summarize the read part.
- The entire procedure is carried on within the specified boundaries of time and content.

Uses of Silent Reading

Silent reading is different from oral reading, as it involves students reading solely to themselves. This kind of reading is quite beneficial to both, the teachers and the students.

More benefits of silent reading are as given under :

- **Silent reading provides deeper insight** as the reader understands better of whatever he/she is reading. This is largely because the meaning of the text is more important to silent readers normally and hence they absorb the text content quickly.
- **Silent reading is more effective** as there are no delays that are linked to the vocalization of difficult words. Actually, vocalization limits and reduces the speed at which oral readers read their materials, an issue that does not affect those who silently read.
- **Silent reading avoids distraction** as accent problem is lacking. Silent reading is the most appropriate option where the students are encouraged to read at a pace that is comfortable to them.

Advantages of Silent Reading	Limitations of Silent Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saves time. • Saves energy. • Initiates self education and deep study. • Helps in later life. • Sometimes uninteresting. • Helps to read in public places/ libraries. • Enables to attend and concentrate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No help for juniors/beginners. • No check on pronunciation. • No check if real reading is going on (pretention of reading). • It cannot understand some passage, difficult then.

It is necessary that silent reading should be carried on as a sustained school-based recreational activity, so that students learn to read by reading constantly.

INTENSIVE READING

Intensive reading is reading with specific learning aims and tasks (Brown, 2007). Intensive reading is looking intensively **inside** the text. It calls attention to grammatical forms, discourse markers, and other surface structure details for the purpose of understanding literal meaning, implications, rhetorical relationship, and the like. The analogy to intensive reading can be treated as a “zoom lens” strategy. It is rather a slow and careful reading of a small amount of difficult text. Intensive reading occurs when the learner is focused on the language study, rather than the text. It lays stress on mastery of words, hence develops active vocabulary.

Intensive reading is reading for detailed meaning, developing reading skills in vocabulary and grammar knowledge. The learner may be answering comprehension questions, learning new vocabulary, studying the grammar and expressions in the text, translating the passage (sometimes called ‘careful reading/in-depth reading’).

Intensive Reading – Aims

- To build more language knowledge, rather than simply practice the skill of reading.

- To enable the students to speak correctly.
- To improve and extend the knowledge.
- To increase active vocabulary.
- To read for details and extract specific information on particular topics.

Intensive reading focuses on :

Area	Explanation
Comprehension	Understanding literal and implied meaning, drawing inferences, reacting and reflecting.
Regular and irregular sound-spelling relations	Phonemes and phonemic awareness.
Vocabulary	High frequency and low frequency words, guessing from contexts, dictionary reference, time limit and word limit.
Grammar	High and low frequency grammar items.
Cohesion	Reference words and substitutes, comparisons, lexical cohesions
Genre features	Communicative effect and purpose of the text.
Strategies	Prediction, skimming and scanning, exploratory reading, critical reading.

Before beginning intensive reading, an introduction on the passage/text selected for reading is given. This is followed with an advanced explanation of new words, phrases, antonyms and synonyms; and grammar items that are beyond the reading ability of the student. Questions are raised for comprehension (for meaning, for vocabulary). The teacher mainly acts as an organizer, observer, and prompter.

Advantages	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It provides base to study structure, vocabulary and idioms. • Increases active vocabulary-possibly the fastest way to build vocabulary. • Helps in learning grammar contextually. • Explains meaning contextually. • Improves power of expression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large amount of time is spent on reading a small amount of text. • Procedure is long and uninteresting - by its nature it is a slow process and takes lot of time. • No systematic grammar teaching - reading material with a lot of new vocabulary and grammar is a sluggish and tiring process. • Rarely gives joy and pleasure to the students. • Too much emphasis on language. • Learner cannot become confident and fluent reader.

School textbooks, short texts, poetry, comprehension exercises are good examples of intensive reading. They allow the learners to practice vocabulary and grammatical structures. They also support to develop various language skills and to check the reading comprehension. Thus, intensive reading tends to focus on details and to serve functions that reach far beyond the apparent purpose of reading.

EXTENSIVE READING

Extensive reading is rapid reading of large quantities of material or longer reading for general understanding (Carrell and Carson, (1997)). It is also called as free voluntary reading. It is an approach to language learning, including foreign language learning, by means of large amount of reading. The main aim of extensive reading is to build learners' reading skill by encouraging them to read more. It is 'reading for gist' by skipping unknown words. This is in fact a supplement to intensive reading.

According to Sussar and Robb (1990), the key features of extensive reading are reading of large quantities of material or long texts; for global or general understanding; with intention of obtaining pleasure from the text. Moreover, the immediate aim of this method tends to be directly related to reading with increased fluency and speed.

The most important thing about choosing materials for extensive reading is that they are at least 98% comprehensible to the students. There should be little new vocabulary and grammar. The idea behind extensive reading is that a lot of reading of interesting material that is slightly below, at, or barely above the full comprehension level of the reader will foster improved language skills. The material should be varied in subject matter and character, so that the interest for reading is sustained.

Extensive reading is the way languages are learned. Most often, students do extensive reading. It has the following features :

- Extensive reading is reading rapidly.
- Extensive reading is reading longer passages / texts.
- Extensive reading is independent reading.
- Extensive reading is reading silently.
- Extensive reading is supplemented by the library reading/reference reading.

Purposes of Extensive Reading

- The main aim of extensive reading is to build reader confidence and enjoyment. The students choose their own reading material and are not compelled to finish uninteresting materials. Reading material is normally for pleasure, information or general understanding; reading is its own reward with few or no follow-up exercises after reading; reading is individual and silent. Reading speed is usually faster when students read materials they can easily understand.
- For obtaining general information, extensive reading is carried on.

- Extensive reading is taken up as a pleasure reading. It relaxes the reader by giving lot of enjoyment.
- To emphasize on the subject matter while reading extensively.
- Extensive reading serves the purpose of keeping the learners' self study active.
- Extensive reading is such a type of reading that may be done anywhere and at anytime.
- Extensive reading ultimately leads to good reading habits.

The following types of text materials are helpful in extensive reading—

- Non detailed texts
- Stories
- Autobiographies
- Newspapers
- Humorous stories
- Novels and plays
- Jokes, and other forms of light reading materials
- Novels
- Biographies
- Narrations
- Comics
- Tales and fables
- Short articles in the newspapers and magazines

Teachers can have diverse options like penguin readers, classics, comics, history books, science books. The teacher mainly acts as a promoter, persuader, organizer and supervisor.

Objectives of Extensive Reading

The main objectives of extensive reading are -

- to read quickly,
- to read silently,
- to understand the gist,
- to increase passive vocabulary,
- to develop taste for the language, and
- to inculcate the habit of reading.

Advantages of Extensive Reading

- Extensive reading can provide massive comprehensible input to the students.
- It enhances the general language competence of the learners.
- It emphasizes and utilizes the previously learned vocabulary and knowledge.
- Extensive reading helps in assimilation of ideas.
- Reading extensively leads to improvement in writing.
- Extensive reading facilitates the development of prediction skills.
- It keeps entire class busy and active.

- Extensive reading introduces to a new world of vocabulary.
- It gives scope for high transfer of learning, which is further helpful in library reference and research.
- Extensive reading paves way for individual method of study and self education.
- It increases motivation and builds confidence among the students.
- It creates a positive attitude towards reading and language learning. Makes the learners independent readers and more effective language users.
- This method of reading provides all the benefits that lead to comprehension and fluency.
- It may lead to lifelong reading habits with fun and enjoyment.

Limitations of Extensive Reading

Using extensive reading in a classroom is, by nature, a difficult thing to do. Different students are at different reading speeds. Their knowledge level in vocabulary also varies. It needs effective planning that everyone is necessarily reading the same or some varied texts at the same time.

COMPARING INTENSIVE AND EXTENSIVE READINGS

Intensive Reading	Extensive Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For in depth comprehension • For specific information • Enhances knowledge • Language study emphasized/linguistic items learnt • It lays stress on mastery of words/active vocabulary develops, prefers dictionary use • Teachers play active role • Generally done in class room • Leads to good speech habits • Focus is on a narrower area • e.g. Short texts/school texts/poetry/comprehension exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer passages read • For general information • Reading for pleasure, and reading silently • Subject matter emphasized • Helps students to develop reading fluency • Active vocabulary passed to passive vocabulary; discourages the overuse of dictionary • Learners self study active • May be done anywhere, anytime • Leads to good reading habits • Focus is on a larger area • e.g. Non detailed texts/novels/stories/biographies/autobiographies/narrations/newspaper