

**The Teaching of Reading Comprehension And Overcoming of
Reading Difficulties Under The Psychological Aspects**

V. Jelsia Jabamani

Research Scholar

Department of Educational Technology

Bharathidasan University

Tiruchirappalli-620 024

Dr. S. Senthilnathan

Assistant Professor

Department of Educational Technology

Bharathidasan University

Tiruchirappalli

India

Abstract:

Reading is a skill which is regarded as one of the key requirements of the Common Core State Standards for all students who must be able to comprehend texts of steadily increasing complexity as they progress through School level. Moreover, reading is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols in order to construct or derive meaning (i.e.,) reading comprehension. Among the LSRW skills, reading is considered as a basic life skill, which is also the cornerstone for a learner's success in school, and, indeed, throughout life. By the time the students complete the core standards, they must be able to read and comprehend independently as well as proficiently the various complex texts commonly found in Higher Education and in future careers. On the other side, for most of the students of English, reading

comprehension is more than a problem. Difficulties with reading comprehension have many implications at school. In particular, problems understanding texts interfere with studying and as well as learning from text. In this backdrop, the present paper focuses on some of the typical reading comprehension difficulties.

Key words: Reading, Comprehension, Difficulties, Remedies, English Language Skills

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an imperative skill that provides a fundamental way for individuals to exchange information. Research suggests that one of the best ways to help students increase their language proficiency is to encourage them to read extensively. It is also a means by which much of the knowledge presented in school is learned. Thus, reading becomes the academic area most often associated with academic failure. Reading is a complex process that requires numerous skills for its mastery. It draws upon multiple cognitive and linguistic domains in complex ways. Consequently, identifying the skills as well as the difficulties that lead to success in reading is extremely important.

READING DIFFICULTIES: NATURE AND CONCEPT

Reading difficulties are observed among students with learning disabilities (LD) more than any other problems. It is the most prevalent type of academic difficulty for students with learning disabilities. It is estimated that as many as 90% of students with learning disabilities have reading difficulties, and even the low estimates are approximately 60% (Bender, 2001). Researchers, clinicians and educators would agree that, among learning disorders, reading disorders have a significant impact on educational achievement throughout life. Broadly, there are two forms of reading disorder: difficulties with decoding (dyslexia) and difficulties with comprehension (Cain, 2010; Hulme & Snowling, 2009). The following problems may prevent a learning disabled child from learning to read (Kirk, Gallagher & Anastaiow).

- Faulty auditory perception without hearing impairment
- Slow auditory or visual processing

- Inability to distinguish or separate the sounds of spoken words
- Lack of knowledge of the purpose of reading
- Failure to attend to critical aspects of the word, sentence, or paragraph
- Failure to understand that letters represent units of speech

Problems with the reading process are prevalent among students identified as having learning disabilities. However, the specific problems that they have in reading vary as much as the many components of the reading process (Hardman et al., 2005). These difficulties include, but are not limited to oral reading, reading comprehension, word recognition skills, and reading habits.

READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES

Students with learning disabilities often have difficulties with reading comprehension (Gersten, et.al1998). These children often lack the skills required for understanding text and have poor word-analysis skills (Hunt & Marshall, 2005). Reading comprehension refers to a student's ability to understand what he or she is reading. Some students with reading comprehension difficulties are able to read a passage so fluently that might assume they are highly proficient readers. However, when they are asked questions about what they have read, they have little or no understanding of the words. Students with this problem sometimes are referred to as word callers (Friend, 2005).

It is always necessary to assess not only decoding but also the ability to understand what is being decoded. According to Salvia and Ysseldyke (1998), there are six different types of reading comprehension skills:

- ✓ **Literal comprehension:** The student reads the paragraph or story and is then asked questions based on it.
- ✓ **Inferential comprehension:** The student reads a paragraph or story and must interpret what has been read.
- ✓ **Listening comprehension:** The student is read a paragraph or story by the examiner and is then asked questions about what the examiner has read.

- ✓ **Critical comprehension:** The student reads a paragraph or story and then analyzes, evaluates, or makes judgments about what he or she has read.
- ✓ **Affective comprehension:** The student reads a paragraph or story, and the examiner evaluates his or her emotional responses to the text.
- ✓ **Lexical comprehension:** The student reads a paragraph or story, and the examiner assesses his or her knowledge of vocabulary words.

Some of the common reading comprehension problems of children with LD:

- **Difficulties recalling basic facts** - unable to answer specific questions about a passage, such as “What was the dog’s name in the story?”
- **Difficulties recalling sequence** - unable to recite the sequence of the story that was read
- **Difficulties recalling the main theme** -unable to recall the main topic of the story

When evaluating a child for reading comprehension, it is important to find answers to the following questions:

- Does the student guess at answers to the questions presented?
- Does the student show unwillingness to read or make attempts at reading?
- Does the student skip unknown words?
- Does the student disregard punctuation?
- Does the student exhibit inattention to the story line?
- Does the student exhibit a negative attitude toward reading?
- Does the student express difficulty attacking unknown words?

POOR READING HABITS

Children with reading difficulties often have poor reading habits. It is critical to be aware of these actions when watching students read on a daily basis. Gargiulo (2004) lists some behaviors that are exhibited by children with poor reading habits as given below:

- tension movements
- frowning
- fidgeting
- using a high-pitched tone of voice
- insecurity
- refusing to read
- crying
- attempting to distract the teacher

- loses place
- losing place frequently
- lateral head movements
- jerking head
- Holds material close

The table below places the Reading Strategies into three levels, ranging from the lower order literal type to the higher order evaluative type

Level	Reading Strategy	Description
Evaluative	Synthesizing	Piecing information together as the student read a text, to keep track of what is happening
	Determining Importance	Prioritizing most important information from phrase, sentence, paragraph, chapter or whole text.
	Summarizing & Paraphrasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reducing larger texts to focus on important elements ▪ Re-stating/re-writing text in own words using key words to capture main focus
	Self-Questioning	Providing a framework for active learning as students engage with the text to find answers.
Inferential	Connecting	Connecting prior knowledge to new information.
	Comparing	Thinking more specifically about connections.

	Inferring	Taking information from a text and creating their own interpretations beyond the literal level.
	Predicting	Based on clues in text (pictures, subtitles, etc.)
Literal	Creating Images	Creating sensory images to assist with overall comprehension of a text
	Skimming	Glancing quickly through material to gain an overall view of text
	Scanning	Glancing through a text to locate specific details, e.g. names, dates etc.
	Self-Questioning	Providing a framework for active learning as students engage with the text to find answers

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN READING ABILITY

There are large individual differences in how well people read. Some adults can read only 150 words a minute whereas others can read 400 words a minute or more. Differences in comprehension ability can be just as large. Good readers not only understand the literal facts in a passage, but they also make the appropriate inferences, attend to how the passage is organized, and appreciate the author's tone and style. By contrast, poor readers may read an entire passage without understanding or retaining even the main point. The major difference lies in how fast and how accurately people can read. Because reading is a complex cognitive skill that draws on many component processes and resources, any of the component processes has the potential for being a source of individual differences in reading ability. There are some factors that do and do not account for the range of reading ability differences that might be encountered in a typical school or University classroom.

Word recognition skills contribute to overall reading ability. Poor readers are slower and less efficient at recognizing written words, slower at accessing word meanings from memory, and less skilled at deriving phonology from print. However, the relationship between word recognition skills and reading ability is much stronger for young readers than it is for adults. For example, the speed with which readers can access word meanings from memory accounts for only about 10 per cent of the variance in reading ability found in a typical university classroom, and is more related to reading fluency than to reading comprehension.

Two mechanisms have been proposed to account for why poor readers have difficulty with the integration processes of reading: working memory capacity, and background knowledge. According to working memory theories of reading ability, poor readers are at a disadvantage at all of the processes that require the integration of newly encountered information with information encountered earlier in the text because they have less capacity to keep the earlier information active in temporary storage. According to knowledge-based theories of reading ability, poor readers are at a disadvantage at all of the processes that require the integration of newly encountered information with information that must be retrieved from long-term memory, either because they have less background knowledge of the topic being read, and/or because they have less ability to access that knowledge when required. The existence of individual differences in reading ability has far-reaching educational implications. Because reading is the major medium for acquiring knowledge and skills, poor readers will experience difficulty not only in a literature class, but in classes as diverse as history, economics, and science, as well.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The process of comprehension begins before one starts to ‘read’ and continues even after the ‘reading’ is finished. Good readers use pre-reading strategies like previewing the text and use post-reading strategies like summarizing in addition to the many strategies they use to make meaning during ‘reading’ itself. By dividing instruction into pre-reading, during reading and post-reading, teachers can design activities for each stage that will improve student’s

comprehension and also provide opportunities for teachers to demonstrate strategies that readers can use at each stage (Pardo, 2004). Strategies should be introduced and mastered individually. However, over a period of time the child should develop a repertoire of strategies which they can independently draw on when reading. For this reason, comprehension strategies should be developed from the earliest levels of the primary school across a range of genres and modalities (both print and digital). Children need opportunities to practice and consolidate these strategies in a cross curricular manner. A variety of fiction and non-fiction texts including picture books can be used for strategy instruction through which overcoming of Reading comprehension difficulties can be done.

References:

- Alex Granzin. (n.d.). Traumatized Learning: The Emotional Consequences of Protracted Reading Difficulties. Print.
- Chao Zhang. (2010). The Teaching of Reading Comprehension under the Psychology Schemata Theory. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, Vol. 1, No. 4(July 2010), 457-459,. doi:10.4304/jltr.1.4.457-459. Print.
- Characteristics of Children with Learning Disabilities. (2013). *National Association of Special Education Teachers NASET | Characteristics of Children with Learning Disabilities 1 NASET LD Report #3*. Print.
- Charles Perfetti, A., Smelser, N. J., & Baltes, P. B. (2001). Reading Skills. *International encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences*, (pp. 12800-12805)
- Charles Perfetti, Joseph Stafura, & Suzanne Adlof. (n.d.). Reading Comprehension and Reading Comprehension Problems:A Word-to-Text Integration Perspective. Print.
- Chiu, M. M., McBride-Chang, C., & Lin, D. (2011). Ecological, Psychological, and Cognitive Components of Reading Difficulties: Testing the Component Model of Reading in Fourth Graders Across 38 Countries. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 45(5), 391-405. doi:10.1177/0022219411431241. Print.
- Gustavo Hernández López, María Magdalena Cass Zubiría, & Guadalupe Vázquez Granados. (n.d.). *Ten suggestions for solving reading problems in English*. University of Colima.
- Handbook of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts. (2013). doi:10.4324/9780203839713. Print.
- Joyclin Shermila. (2006). *A study of the skills of Reading Comprehension in English developed by students of Std IX in the schools in Tuticorin district*. Print.
- Keith Rayner, & Erik D. Reichle. (n.d.). Models of the Reading Process. Print.
- Margaret J Snowling, & Charles Hulme. (n.d.). Annual Research Review: The nature and classification of reading disorders – a commentary on proposals for DSM-5.
- Reading Difficulties. (2005). *NCSALL Seminar Guide*. Print.

- Samantha Hornerya, Marjorie Seaton, & Danielle Tracey. (2014). Enhancing reading skills and reading self-concept of children with reading difficulties: Adopting a dual approach intervention. *Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology*, 14, 131-143. Print.
- Sonali Nag, & Margaret J. Snowling. (2013). Children's reading development: learning about sounds, symbols and cross-modal mappings. *Children's Reading Development*.
- Woolley, G. (2011). *Reading comprehension: Assisting children with learning difficulties*. Dordrecht, LA: Springer. Print.