CHAPTER – 5

STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING READING SKILLS

1. Skills and strategies

During the 1970s, when it first dotted the reading landscape, the term strategies signified a form of mental processing that deviated from traditional skills-based reading. However, any distinctions between skills and strategies that seemed apparent then have begun to fade, leaving many to wonder where skills end and strategies begin… The same procedures (e.g., finding the main idea) can fit under both the skills and strategy categories. The appropriate label rests on whether the reader consciously evokes the procedure or is simply functioning in a typical, automatic way (Alexander & Jetton, 2000, p. 295-6). A skill is a strategy that has become automatic. The goal of explicit strategy instruction is to move readers from conscious control of reading strategies to unconscious use of reading skills. (Anderson, 2009)

Strategies are cognitive processes that are open to conscious reflection but that help on their way to becoming skills. Their perspective allows some room for distinguishing skills and strategies, and it recognizes that some strategies can be controlled as conscious applications for the understanding of difficult texts. At the same time, it intentionally blurs the distinction between skills and strategies in situations where strategies are neither consciously applied processes, not intended to be consciously applied (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008).

Paris, Wasik, and Turnes (1991) provide a good definition of reading skills:

Skills refer to informational processing techniques that are
automatic, whether at the level of recognizing grapheme-phoneme correspondence or summarizing a story. Skills are applied to a text unconsciously for many reasons including expertise, repeated practice, compliance with directions, luck, and naïve use.

The many automatized processes in word recognition can be seen as skills, including phonological processing, orthographic processing, and lexical access (though at initial learning, much of the processing of letter-to-sound correspondences and word recognition is conscious). Other reading skills include the automatized processing of syntactic parsing and semantic proposition formation. Skills may be automatic for fluent readers, but they were first developed through active attention and conscious processing while learning, in most cases by solving problems to achieve tasks, or registering of new information with the support of knowledgeable others. Conscious attention is needed for the first registration of new information. That information later becomes available from memory when the input is repeated and practiced (Ellis, 2005).

“Strategies are commonly defined more simply as processes that are consciously controlled by reader to solve reading problems” (William Grabe, *Reading in a Second Language*, p. 222). However, this interpretation does not adequately capture what the fluent reader does while reading. First, it should be evident on reflection that many “skills” were originally learned explicitly as processes to address problems. To take obvious examples, anyone who has learned to drive a car or ride a bicycle as an adult knows that automatic skills begin as highly focused attentional process. In that case of reading, even decoding does not start with automaticity, but with attentional resources
actively engaged in problem solving by beginning reader. Anyone moving into a situation that involves learning a new language knows that even the most basic knowledge resources require active attention up to some point at which the processing becomes less demanding.

Second, processes that are generally labeled as strategies are often employed in an unconscious way. For example most fluent readers have had the experience of reading an article, then being asked by a friend or student what a word in the article means, and only then realizing that a ready definition is not available even though the word seemed to have no impact on text comprehension or on our attention. Good reader also applies many word-analysis strategies unconsciously as part of the fluent-reader repertoire. Similarly, readers often mentally summarize a prior section of a text before moving on without any specific conscious intention to do so. Good readers often also evaluate the text and the author without specifically intending to do so.

Third, strategies are often applied in combinations because those combinations have been reasonably successful thousands of times in the reader’s past experiences. These combinations (e.g., previewing, predicting, skipping words, inferencing, skimming ahead, rereading a sentence, mentally summarizing) become default habits of good readers, not consciously intended goals. The more conscious attentional level arises typically when the default combinations and initial strategic responses do not seen to work for some reason and the reader becomes aware of a problem. One could then say that metacognitive awareness and control of strategic options begin to play a role. (Bialystok, 2002).
1.1. Metacognition and strategies

Metacognition refers to the knowledge and control that we have over our cognitive process. With respect to reading, it is common to talk about metacognitive awareness (what we know) and metacognitive regulation or control (knowing when, where, and how to use strategies). On a general level, metacognition involves awareness and control of planning, monitoring, repairing, revising, summarizing, and evaluating. Essentially, we learn awareness of our comprehension processing. More specifically, we learn strategies that support our comprehension (our awareness of strategies) and we learn how to carry out these strategies effectively (our control of strategies) (Baker, 2008). It is useful to note that the term metalinguistic awareness is commonly used with metacognition, or instead of metacognition. Metalinguistic awareness is best thought of as that subset of metacognition that deals specifically with linguistic knowledge (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005).

Strategies have often been defined on two levels: cognitive and metacognitive. Cognitive strategies have commonly been described as strategies that a reader is trained to use, such as guessing from context, noting discourse organization, recognizing a transition phrase, skipping a word, identifying a known word part, forming a question about an author, or identifying a main idea. Metacognitive strategies have been described as strategies that require and explicit awareness of reading itself and that most strongly support the goals of reading. For example, learning to monitor comprehension might be considered a “metacognitive strategy” in that it requires a conscious recognition of miscomprehension or a need to maintain comprehension. Similarly, intentional repairs to
comprehension or strategies with the intention to learn information from texts more effectively are often seen as “metacognitive strategies.”

Monitoring comprehension or repairing miscomprehension however, are not themselves specific strategies (e.g., Baker 2002). Instead, a number of specific strategies can be used to monitor comprehension or repair miscomprehension (e.g., checking a factual statement, rethinking a prior inference, noticing a discourse signal, recognizing the organization of a text segment, making anew prediction, rereading the prior sentence) Pressley , 2002). What is being applied to a text is a heightened level of metacognitive awareness of text comprehension.

This type of metacognition might be better considered in terms of Bialystok’s distinctions involving metacognitive awareness and metacognitive control (Baker, 2008) as two resources for understanding and using strategies rather proposing distinct types of metacognitive (as opposed to cognitive) strategies. Following the logic of this explanation, there are no metacognitive strategies. Rather, there are levels of metacognitive awareness that can consciously direct strategy use to support reader goals (and reader goals themselves are open to varying levels of metacognitive awareness).

When we raise text-comprehension processes to a level of metacognitive awareness before and during reading, we may consciously carry out any of a set of metacognitively aware processes.

1.1.1. Metacognitive processes for comprehension

- Set (or reset) reading goals.
- Expect to build a coherent interpretation of a text and establish the main ideas of a text.
• Make inferences as necessary in line with our goals.
• Monitor comprehension to maintain a coherent interpretation and awareness of main ideas.
• Recognize when we are losing coherence of interpretation or the reading output does not march our reader goals.
• Summarize the main ideas of a text.
• Engage various strategies to help repair an incoherent interpretation.
• Evaluate the reading input in various ways beyond simple understanding.

In many cases (e.g. during fluent reading), we do not always focus consciously on these processes. When we do consciously pay attention to these processes, we do so to varying degrees of focus. When we consciously change our level of attention and act on these processes, we engage strategies more or less effectively. All the above processes are not metacognitive strategies themselves, but processes that can be supported by many different strategies, depending on reader goals and the level of a reader’s awareness. With difficult texts, a wide variety of specific strategies can be used to keep this matching of strategies, goals, and reader awareness on track (Hudson, 2007).

We do not believe that skills and strategies are so obviously distinct in many reading situations. It is not possible to make a simple list of skills and a contrasting list of strategies with the assumption that these lists must be different. Similarly, there are no metacognitive as distinct from strategies. It is possible to engage in monitoring of comprehension in very active ways, in particular while trying to learn new information. But for these purposes, metacognition about comprehension represents what we know about strategies and how to use them effectively.
This view of skills, strategies and metacognitive awareness is clearly represented in several current discussions of reading strategies and metacognitive processing (Hudson, 2007). The result is that reading researchers and teachers should talk about strategies, how they can best be taught, and how students can become more strategic readers.

### 1.2. Metalinguistic awareness and strategic reading

Word recognition and lexical access benefit from various levels of awareness – phonological, orthographic, morphological, syntactic, and semantic. Text comprehension benefits from all of the above levels of awareness and also from discourse awareness and pragmatic awareness. When reading new information, challenging information, or information for complex and difficult tasks, strategic awareness comes strongly into play. In this way, being a strategic reader not only involves knowledge of and control over reading strategies but also the abilities to reflect on and manipulate all levels of language knowledge. This growing knowledge and control over metalinguistic awareness develops gradually over many years, and for many readers will never be fully realized. These are the resources, along with content knowledge and metacognitive problem solving skills that leads to expertise in various disciplines and expertise is an end goal that is only variably realized.

QAR stands for Question – Answer - Response. In this approach, teachers train students to answer questions on (a) directly available information; (b) information to be inferred; and (c) information drawing on background knowledge. Students develop an awareness of how to relate text information to the types of questions posed. As students become aware of how to respond effectively to different types of questions, they practice
generating their own questions, thereby developing their comprehension-monitoring abilities and their understanding of how to respond to questions (Duke & Pearson, 2002) note that the approach is effective with younger learners but needs further research with other groups of learners.

DRTA stands for Directed Reading and Thinking Activities. In this approach, students relate background knowledge to the text, determine goals for reading, and then engage in predicting activities at set stopping points throughout the text. The predicting practice develops monitoring process and the discussion of predictions promotes main-idea comprehension and text-evaluation abilities. DRTA draws on empirical research, which demonstrates the effectiveness of predicting, clarifying, monitoring, and evaluating strategies, and so it has indirect but powerful support for its instructional activities (Trabasso & Bouchard, 2002).

1.3. **Reciprocal teaching**

Reciprocal teaching was the first multiple-strategy instructional approach that demonstrated significant improvement with a standardized measure of comprehension. Research in the 1980s and early 1990s showed that group of children trained to use four strategies (forming questions, predicting upcoming information, clarifying information, and forming summaries) performed better than control students on general reading-comprehension measures (Palincsar, 2003). Rosenshine and Meister (1994) reviewed 16 studies involving reciprocal teaching and found improvements across first through eighth grades. Strong improvements were found consistently in sixth grade and above, with mixed results below sixth grade. In 11 additional studies reviewed by Trabasso and Bouchard (2002), similar consistent improvements were found. Over all, this approach to
strategy instruction has received consistently strong support from a wide range of research studies. The biggest limitation of reciprocal teaching is that it is designed only for use with reading groups rather than a whole class.

1.4. Collaborative Strategic Reading

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) is a promising approach to combined-strategies instruction that draws on both reciprocal teaching and cooperative learning, and that has been used with both L1 and L2 students. Students working in groups are taught to activate prior knowledge, make predictions, monitor comprehension difficulties, clarify information, restate important ideas, summarize the text, and form appropriate questions about the text. Group work is organized around cooperative learning principles with each student in a group assigned a responsibility for the task. It also incorporates whole-class teaching and interactions. This approach is particularly interesting from an L2 standpoint because it is effective with struggling reader, including language-minority students (Klingner & Vaughn, 2004).

In two key studies, Klingner and Vaughn (2000; Klinger, Vaughn, & Schumm, 1998) demonstrated that CSR provided positive support for student learning and students made significant improvements in different aspects of reading abilities. In their 1996 study, Klingner and Vaughn trained 85 diverse fourth-grade students in CSR and set up a control group of 56 students. The students who were trained in CSR made significant gains in reading comprehension than the control group. In the 2000 study, they trained 37 fifth grade bilingual students in CSR over a four week science unit (approximately seven hours of instruction overall) and studied how these students helped each other using strategies to support their comprehension. Almost all the instructional time involved on-
task interactions around content comprehension, and the students made significant gains in vocabulary from pre-test to post-test. These two studies, combined with their 1996 study in which seventh- and eighth-grade ESL students were trained in a version of Reciprocal Teaching (later to become CSR), suggest that CSR has strong potential to support reading-comprehension development among L2 students and is appropriate for content-based learning as well.

1.5. **Self Explanation Reading Training**

Self Explanation Reading Training (SERT) is a recent effort by cognitive psychologists interested in discourse processing to examine the contributions of strategy training to reading comprehension. The method used in SERT instruction asks students to explain their understanding of a text and what makes it possible for them to understand the text well. This process is designed to encourage active student engagement and meta-cognitive awareness in developing comprehension skills (Mcnamara, 2007). A core set of strategies in the initial focus on instruction—comprehension monitoring, paraphrasing, elaboration, predicting, and bridging (synthesizing information). After three hours of initial training, these strategies are then employed regularly by students to enhance comprehension. A small number of studies have demonstrated some success with this approach for university and high school students. However, large-scale empirical studies are needed.

1.5.1. **Direct explanation**

Direct explanation represents an early and ongoing approach to strategies instruction that teaches students how to use strategies in order to comprehend a text better, though no specific subset of strategies is highlighted over others. The approach
makes explicit the process by which fluent readers engage in text comprehension, using direct modeling of reading strategies by teachers through thinking aloud while reading to students (Duffy, 2002). Individual strategies are explained to students; then the teacher models strategy use by thinking aloud while reading a passage. Students are reminded of the key strategies and asked to use them in their own reading. Lessons conclude with explicit reflection on strategy use. Research directly supports this approach to explicit instruction in comprehension strategies (Dole Brown, & Trathen, 1996), Research on Transitional Strategies Instruction provides additional support for this approach (Williams, 2002).

“In read-aloud, the student is making use of strategies (e.g., predicting, checking, summarizing, guessing meaning, and using background knowledge) that the teacher had previously modeled for the class” (Grabe, p.235). This reading by a student provides the means for the teacher and other students to then comment on strategies that could be used. The reading strategies used by the teacher and students in their read-alouds are reinforced on a wall poster that lists major reading strategies already introduced.

1.6. Building awareness of discourse structure

It appears that any sort of systematic attention to clues that reveal how the authors attempt to relate ideas to one another or any sort of systematic attempt to impose structure on a text, especially in some sort visual re-representation of the relationship among key ideas, facilitates comprehension as well as both short-term and long-term memory for the text.

It is well established that reading comprehension depends on a reader’s awareness of how discourse is structured. Good readers are tuned to the ways that information is
organized and to the signaling mechanisms that provide the cues to this organization. Good readers are able to identify the main or topic sentences as they appear in a text and are sensitive to text structure that help identify when and where to find main idea sentences. Good readers recognize when new topics are introduced, how they are maintained through pronouns and other anaphoric cues, and when there is a topic shift, or when new themes or concepts are introduced. They are able to recognize the vocabulary that signals maintenance or shifts in discourse information as well as lexical forms that commonly identify specific organizational patterns in texts (e.g., Cause-effect, comparison-contract, problem-solution).

Discourse-structure awareness is often associated with a reading strategy or set of strategies (e.g., recognizing main ideas, inferring connections among parts of a text, recognizing organizational patterns in texts, identifying typical genre features of a text). This awareness includes knowledge of strategies to apply in order to interpret discourse-level patterns of organizations. Greater meta-linguistic awareness allows good reader to use strategies effectively in combination to work through challenging texts and reflect consciously on how the discourse provides support for specific interpretations of the text information.

A key goal for reading instruction becomes how to raise a learner’s level of discourse-structure awareness and how to guide learners in applying this awareness for more effective comprehension. Research on discourse analysis and language comprehension has increasingly demonstrated that discourse awareness and discourse structure instruction has a strong impact on reading comprehension (Jiang & Grabe, 2007).
1.6.1. Structure in texts: How texts signal discourse structure

Research on discourse structure has demonstrated that texts convey a considerable amount of discourse information at multiple levels. This information helps readers build coherent representations of texts. Good readers are able to recognize key ideas at higher levels in the text hierarchy. Moreover, top-level structural information, or rhetorical macro-propositions, influence comprehension and recall. Better students recognize and use top-level structuring to assist their recall and comprehension.

The ability of readers to recognize discourse structure and make use of this text-level structure as part of reading comprehension is supported by a number of linguistic systems interacting with comprehension processing. The linguistic systems include cohesive signaling, information structuring, lexical signaling, anaphoric signaling, topic-continuity systems, and text coherence (Meyer & Poon, 2001).

1.6.2. Cohesion

Cohesion refers to surface-level signals that reflect the discourse organization of the text and the intended purposes of the writer. These signals include repetition, synonymy, hyponymy (superordinate-subordinate relations), paraphrase, anaphora, transition markers, substitution, ellipsis, parallelism, and other lexical relations that link parts of the text. Despite the fact that cohesion is not coherence, it is nonetheless true that cohesive structuring in texts (the surface-level signals) represents the linguistic signaling that is meant to reflect the semantic intentions of the writer (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). While it is possible to demonstrate that surface signaling could be misleading in contrived texts, or that coherence does not always require surface signaling, it is
nonetheless true that texts are generally intended to obey Grice’s cooperative principle as much as spoken interaction is.

Efforts by Halliday and Hasan (1989) to describe cohesive harmony, and attempts to use this approach to other researchers in the 1990s, have indicated that cohesive harmony in texts is a useful tool for discourse-structure analysis, one that helps explain differences in language comprehension and production (Spiegel, 1992). Lexical relations in this framework are still a major source of discourse-structure signaling, though these relations are more constrained in cohesive harmony (limited to clearly definable lexical relations such as synonymy, hyponymy, etc., rather than the vaguer notion of collocation). Overall, there are a number of research studies and analytic extension with respect to cohesive harmony, which suggest that it is an effective framework for understanding how discourse systems direct a reader’s coherent interpretation of a text. This evidence argues that the surface structure of texts correlates strongly with underlying textual coherence and that coherence is, in part, generated from the text itself.

1.6.3. Information structuring

The surface linguistic form of texts provides a number of additional supportive signaling systems that alert the reader to the flow of information structure (e.g., grammatical metaphor), differentiate more important from less important information, and signal new information from previously given or readily inferable information (Finegan, 2008). For this reason, research that examines the influence of given and new information in texts, and the various thematic, foregrounding, and transition devices demonstrate that information structuring plays a major role in directing the coherent reconstruction of ideas for the reader.
For example, given and new relations give preference to given information at the beginning of sentences and new information toward the end of sentences. Research has shown that the given new relation, as a preferred way to organize texts, leads to improved comprehension and recall (Beck et al., 1991)

1.7. Strategies to Develop Reading

Reading needs to be developed from a very early age. If reading becomes a habit there is nothing like it. As reading is done for obtaining information and for pleasure it becomes an automatic exercise with many people. Nevertheless to make children read in their second language, here English, we need to develop strategies to motivate them to read.

At the outset, mechanics of Reading should be taught. This will train in increasing the speed of reading. There are 3 rules to be followed:

1. There should not be any muscular articulation. The lips should be closed with tongue in place.

2. Word for word reading should be avoided, but meaningful group of words or phrases should be taken.

3. The head should be still, while the eyes move from left to right.

These three aspects of reading will help in improving the visual perception of words and phrases and in rapid identification of sentences along with recognition of their meaning.

The English teacher should provide or suggest reading of a list of simplifies novels, biographies and books with questions to find out names of characters, places, nature of the story etc. This means introducing them to books meant for intensive reading and extensive reading.
Intensive Reading is a strategy to make pupils do a detailed study of the material. The Extensive Reading materials helps in making them read fast, skip and skim only the essential, and arrive at the gist of the matter. Skimming and Scanning are two very important devices that ought to be taught to the students.

1.8. **Teacher’s Role**

In case the teacher feels that the class cannot carry out an activity efficiently, then a more ‘definitive’ version may be given by the teacher. The words can be expanded into short phrases so that it gives more support to learners.

For many years, different aspects of English grammar like determiners (any, some). Modals (may, can, ought to) or tenses (present continuous or past perfect) were assessed through single sentences. Such isolated single sentences provided no context to test the students’ ability to recognize or produce correct grammatical forms. Moreover, the items did not test the students’ ability to use language to express meanings, attitude, emotions, etc. But such discrete items focus on the learner’s attention on a particular aspect of grammar and make it possible for the learner to score marks in examinations. Integrated items, on the other hand, provide a situation / context in which different grammatical aspects are tested at one go.

1.9. **The skills and strategies of reading with suitable examples**

The skills and strategies of reading we hope to develop in our students may be stated broadly as follows:

- Skills involving flexibility of technique: variations in reading rate, skimming, scanning, study reading etc.
Skills of using non-textual information: that is, information that is strictly not part of the text itself: reference apparatus, graphic conventions, illustrations and diagrams.

Word-attack skills: recognizing the letters of the alphabet and reading groups of letters as words, understanding the meaning of words by using morphology, contextual clues or a dictionary.

Text-attack skills: interpreting the text as a whole using all the clues available including cohesion and rhetorical structure.

1.10. The criteria for selecting vocabulary items selected for teaching English

Vocabulary items are selected based on principles of frequency availability, teach ability and coverage.

1.11. The advantages of using visual material for listening comprehension tests

Listening comprehension tests using visual material are easy to construct, easy to score, reliable and marking is objective.

Listening comprehension tests are concerned with communications understanding specific details, sequencing of happenings, etc.

1.12. Difference between ‘creative reading’ and ‘critical reading’

Critical:

Critical reading requires making judgments with regard to a text. The reader may judge the accuracy of facts, the validity of conclusions drawn, or the effectiveness of the author’s style. The reader may not like the way the author has begun a piece of writing, put sentences together, and used language. For instance, a writer may use very flowery language to create an atmosphere, or s/he may write ‘tongue in cheek’.
Critical reading also requires giving reasons for the judgment and stating the
criteria used in making it, commenting on the views expressed in the passage and the
appropriateness and effectiveness of the treatment of those ideas.

Creative:

Creative reading calls for the generation of new ideas, insights, applications and
approaches. It requires invention, prediction, and use of the imagination. Conclusion or
generalization based on a reading text and suggesting related examples are exercises in
creative reading. Composing orally, drawing, and writing stories with the same pattern or
same words as in those that one has read are also exercises in creative reading.

1.13. Efficient reading

Reading is a complex skill. It involves certain cognitive skills associated with
different types of reading activity. When students acquire these skills they become
efficient readers.

Efficient reading involves the following characteristics:

- Reading is purposeful, i.e., there is always a reason for reading. It suggests what
  strategy or technique of reading we need to employ to satisfy our needs.
- Reading is selective. That is, the type of reading you do or the way you read a text
  varies according to your purpose in reading. First the reader selects the kind of
text he/she would be interested in reading. Secondly, he selects the minimum
clues in the text to arrive at its meaning.
- Reading speed. It depends on content and purpose.
- Reading is silent: Reading aloud is a specialized skill used, for example, by actors
  and news readers but seldom by the general reader.
• Reader is text-based. It seldom involves the mere decoding of individual sentences isolated from the context.

• Reading involves complex cognitive skills. Readers make predictions and inferences.

• Effective reading also involves chunking of information that the well-developed schema makes possible.

• Reading is based on comprehension. Understanding meaning is integral to reading.

1.14. Reading Comprehension

Although word recognition, decoding, and fluency are building blocks of effective reading, the ability to comprehend text is the ultimate goal of reading instruction. Comprehension is a prerequisite for acquiring content knowledge and expressing ideas and opinions through discussion and writing (benchmarkeducation.com, 2014).

Comprehension is evident when readers can:

• Interpret and evaluate events, dialogue, ideas and information

• Connect information to what they already know

• Adjust current knowledge to include new ideas or look at those ideas in a different way

• Determine and remember the most important points in the reading

• Read between the lines to understand underlying meanings

Comprehension strategies work together like a finely tuned machine. The reader begins to construct meaning by selecting and previewing the text. During reading, comprehension builds through predicting, inferring, synthesizing, and seeking answers to
questions that arise. After reading, deeper meaning is constructed through reviewing, rereading portions of the text, discussion, and thoughtful reflection. During each of these phases, the reader relates the text to his own life experiences.

Comprehension is powerful because the ability to construct meaning comes from the mind of the reader. Therefore, specific comprehension, instruction – modeling during read-alouds and share the reading, targeted mini lessons, and varied opportunities for practice during small groups and independent reading – is crucial to development of strategic effective readers.

1.15. Types of Comprehension strategies

There are six main types of comprehension strategies (Harvey and Goudvis; 2000):

1.15.1. Make Connections

Readers connect the topic or information to what they already know about themselves, about other texts, and about the world.

1.15.2. Ask Questions

Readers ask themselves questions about the text, their reactions to it, and the author’s purpose for writing it.

1.15.3. Visualize

Readers make the printed word real and concrete by creating a movie of the text in their minds.

1.15.4. Determine text importance

Readers distinguish between:
• what’s essential versus what’s interesting
• facts and opinion
• compare and contrast ideas or information
• discern themes, opinions or perspectives
• pinpoint problems and solutions
• name steps in a process
• locate information that answers specific questions
• summarize

1.15.5. Make Inferences

Readers merge text clues with their prior knowledge and determine answers to questions that lead to conclusions about underlying themes or ideas.

1.15.6. Synthesize

Readers combine no information with existing knowledge to form original ideas, new lines of thinking, or new creations.

Students quickly grasp how to make connections, ask questions, and visualize. However, they often struggle with the way to identify what is most important in the text, identify clues and evidence to make inferences, and combine information into new thoughts. All these strategies should be modeled in isolation many times so that students get a firm grasp of what the strategy is, and how it helps them comprehend text.

However, students must understand that good readers use a variety of these strategies every time they read. Simply knowing the individual strategies is not enough, nor is it enough to know them in isolation. Students must know when and how to collectively use these strategies.
1.16. Teaching Strategies

Modeling through think-alouds is the best way to teach all comprehension strategies. By thinking aloud, teachers show students what good readers do. Think-alouds can be used during small-group reading to review or re-teach a previously modeled strategy.

According to Wilhelm (2001) a think-aloud is a way to

- create a record of the strategy of decision-making process in going through text
- report everything the reader notices, does, sees, feels, asks and understands as he reads
- talk about the reading strategies being uses within the content being read

1.16.1. Steps to prepare for think-alouds

- Decide on a strategy to model
- Choose a short text or section of a text
- Read the text before taking it to class.
- Mark locations where you will stop and model the strategy
- Name the strategy and explain the focus of your think-alouds
- Read the text aloud to students and think aloud at the designated points
- Ask students to highlight words and phrases that show evidence of your thinking
- Reinforce think alouds with follow-up lessons in the same text or with others (benchmarkeducation.com, 2014).
1.16.2. Steps to conduct Think-alouds

Wilhelm (2001) suggests the following steps for teachers to conduct think-alouds:

- The teacher models the think-aloud while he reads aloud, and the students listen
- The teacher thinks aloud during shared reading, and the students help out
- Students think aloud during shared reading, and the teacher and other students monitor and help
- The teacher or students think aloud during shared reading while writing at the same time on an overhead for others to see
- Students think aloud in small-group reading, and the teacher monitors and helps
- Students individually think aloud during independent reading and note it down in writing. Then they compare their thoughts with others.

Some examples of language prompts for different strategies are:

1.16.3. Make connections

This reminds me of a time when I …

I know about this topic because I …

The setting of this book is just like…

This book is something like…

What’s going on in this book is just like what’s happening in…

1.16.4. Ask questions

Before I read this text, I wonder about…

While I’m reading I try to figure out…

After I read, I ask myself…

What is going to happen next?
Why did the author put that part in there?

I have questions about this part because it doesn’t make sense. I need to make sure I read it right. If I reread and fix a mixtake, that might answer my question.

1.16.5. Visualize

The author gives me a picture in my mind when he or she describes I can really see what the author talks about when he or she…. I can draw a picture of what the author describes

1.16.6. Determine text importance

I know these parts of the story are important because they match my purpose for reading, which is…

I think the author’s opinion about ----- is ----- because…

This text uses the (cause/effect, problem/solution, description, compare/contrast, sequence/steps in a process) text structure. Let me use a graphic organizer to help me understand it

I see lots of information right here. I need to identify which parts are important and which parts are just interesting

All these ideas are important, but I think some are more important than others. I need to determine which ideas are the most important

1.16.7. Make inferences

The author says this, but means…

If I read between the lines, the author tells me that…

The clues to prove my inference are…
From the clues or information the author gives, I can conclude that…

I think that --------- will happen next because the author says…

(benchmarkeducation.com, 2014)

1.16.8. Synthesize

This story or passage is really about…. My views on this area……

I first thought --------- about the topic. Now I think…

I’ve read a lot of information. Let me stop and think about this for a minute

My judgment of this information is…

From this information, I can generalize that…

1.17. Revisit

Revisit the same text to model more than one strategy. For example, on Monday, use a text to model ‘what’s important versus what’s interesting’. On Tuesday, use the text to model how to identify big ideas. On Wednesday, use the big ideas to summarize and synthesize.

1.18. Extend

Extend the text as a reader-reponse activity. For example, on Monday, use a text as a shared reading lesson to model how cause-and-effect relationships help determine text importance. On Tuesday, extend thinking: map the cause-and-effect relationships onto graphic organizers, synthesize big ideas, and draw conclusions.

1.19. Preview the book

Hold up the book. Ask: What do you see in the photograph on the cover? What do you think the girl is doing? What kind of plant is shown on the cover?
Look at the title page. Ask: What do you think these children are doing? What things are the children using as they work with the plants?

Preview the photographs in the book, reinforcing the language used in the text. (benchmarkededucation.com, 2014).

1.20. **Guide students to identify the second implied main idea**

Ask students to select the most important details and use those as clues and evidences to find the main idea. If students need additional modeling and think-alouds, complete the remainder of the graphic organizer together. If they seem to understand the concept, allow them to complete the graphic organizer in small groups, pairs, or individually. Monitor their work and provide guidance as necessary. Allow time for students to share their recorded information.

1.21. **Techniques for concentrating and Remembering**

Students who are impulsive in their actions often find it difficult to concentrate for any length of time. Likewise, students who are passive in their approach to learning – those who are not actively engaged and thinking about what they are reading – often fail to get involved with the material enough to concentrate for long periods of time. Their concentration can be improved by the following ways:

1.21.1. **Improve their attitude**

Make students understand that some subjects they will encounter in college may not be of high interest to them. Not only that, some subjects may not seem relevant to their field of study. But they must maintain a positive attitude however, and realize there is a job to be done. To get their degree, they must pass all the courses, not just the ones they like.
1.21.2. Attend to the task

Concentration is a must for successful reading. Yet many distractions may be encountered which lessen their ability to stick to the task and concentrate for long periods of time. A good idea is to ask them keep a ‘distraction list’ of times they were interrupted from concentrating on their reading. Tell them to track their most distracting reasons and help themselves to come out of them.

Tell them that concentration is improved if you study when you are the most alert, least tired and in good physical condition. During the scheduled breaks, make them get up from their desk and walk around or do something physical for about ten minutes (blogspot.com, 2011).

1.21.3. Establish a purpose

If they first establish a purpose for reading, they will then have a reason for thinking as well as for completing the reading assignment. Purpose helps focus their attention and improve their concentration. Direct them to write out some questions that pertain to the subject matter they are about to read. For instance, what specifically do they want to know or need to know about that subject. By pre-selecting questions to answer, they become active participants in the learning/reading process.

1.22. Eliminate emotional stress

In addition to the ‘distraction list’, ask them to prepare a ‘blame list’. This is a list of all the people, situations, circumstances etc., that they blame for their avoidance behavior. Their blame list can be a benefit in getting them to face their problems squarely. The world today is highly complex, technocratic, and impersonal. It is no wonder students feel emotionally stressed and drained at times. If a students finds
himself in the middle of a brief depression or emotional upheaval, tell them to do something physical or any activity that is not mind taxing.

Advise them to maintain a positive attitude, avoid negative people and influences, stay active in the learning process without being hyperactive about it, keep a list of distractions to help them eliminate some impulsive behavior, choose carefully the time and place to study, and try physical activity to burn off stress and to maintain an alert mind.

1.23. **Reading of Study Skills in Science**

Being able to read effectively means more than just being able to understand what is written on the page.

1.24. **Reading for different subjects**

Different reading strategies are needed for different subject disciplines, and even for different kinds of writing within the same subject. Subjects in the humanities and social sciences often require fairly rapid reading of large amounts of information. Reading for these subjects requires you know where to look for the information you need, and to use contents and index pages very closely (scribd.com, 2012).

1.25. **Reading from different angles**

Different passages can be given for the same topic from different angles. This means that you need to ‘get a feel’ for what is written rather than knowing all the details. Be selective about what you read depending on your purpose and interest.

1.26. **Closer reading**

Science subjects tend to require slower and closer reading of smaller amounts of text. Generally, you will need to work through what is written in close detail, making sure
you understand the different steps. For most subjects, you need to change between
different reading strategies.

1.27. Reading for any subject

Be selective. You are not expected to read books from cover to cover.

Change strategy. You need to develop skills in changing from one kind of
reading to another, depending on how useful the information is for your purposes.

Use the index pages at the end of a book. Find the exact pages for what you need.

Read from paper. Avoid reading for long periods from computer screens if using
the internet: print out an electronic copy in a font that suits you.

Set targets. It is easy to lose focus when reading. Set yourself targets to complete
a reading task, with clear objectives for what you want to achieve.

Focus. Jot down a list of questions before you read and as you go along. This will
improve your attention - and save you from getting side-tracked.

1.28. Reading for different purposes

For all subjects, you will need to know how to change quickly from one kind of reading
to another.

Browsing

Looking over a text to see how it ‘feels’, whether it appears to be the right kind of book,
what it contains that might be of use, getting a general feel of the contents. You often
take in more information when browsing than you may think at the time.

Checking

Looking in the contents or index to see whether the book contains specific information
that you know you want - or which looks useful.
Focusing in

Allowing yourself to read more closely when you spot something that looks more useful. It is also important to notice when the text is less useful, and to return to browsing.

Fact-finding

Looking for specific facts and data.

Background

This is additional reading, which gives you a sense of the bigger picture. Select texts that are general and which you find inviting or easy to read. Read these selectively and at your own pace. This is best undertaken in vacations if possible.

1.29. Reading for understanding

The main purpose of reading is to understand - not to get through text at speed for the sake of it. Comprehension is increased if:

- You are clear about what you are looking for.
- You discuss your reading with others. Each person is likely to make sense of different aspects, and you can pool your ideas.
- You read something that gives you a general overview first. For complex ideas, choose the easiest book first and work up to more complex texts.
- You keep active. Set yourself targets and jot down questions to answer. If the book is yours, underline key points, use highlighter pens selectively, write summaries in the margin. This prevents you from ‘drifting off’ or simply reading the same text over and over without taking it in.
- Read in short bursts of up to twenty minutes, then take a few minutes break before starting again.
• Make notes of key points as you go along. This can create natural breaks every few minutes in your reading that can help maintain attention.

• Change reading speed. Often, reading faster can help memory of what you are reading, so it makes more sense. Browse quickly and focus in more slowly only where needed.

1.30. **Change the text**

Many people read less efficiently because they are not aware that their eyes have preferences for reading different fonts and colours. Where possible:

• Have your eyes tested regularly.

Check whether you read more efficiently with larger text.

• Experiment reading text printed on different coloured papers or using different coloured filters or lens over the text.

• If you have access to texts through the computer, experiment with different font styles and sizes and different colour backgrounds and text.

• See whether you read more easily in bright rooms, with certain kinds of light or in dim lighting (scribd.com, 2012).

1.31. **The Process, purposes and pedagogy of reading**

People have one agenda when they read a work for the first time, and very different ones, when they reread. Developing a strong interpretation requires being very conscious of all of these processes and changes in reading, understanding individual responses better by comparing them with others, and thus seeing multiple interpretive possibilities. In a sense, by comparing readings at both the first reading and re-reading
stages, students come to understand which points are most compelling and persuasive--
and which are idiosyncratic and/or poorly based on text.

Direct the students to choose the easiest book first and work up to more complex
texts. They should read something that gives them a general overview first.

To keep the reading class active, set targets and jot down questions to answer. If
the book belongs to them ask them to underline key points, use highlighter pens
selectively, write summaries in the margin etc. This prevents them from drifting off or
simply reading the same text over and over without taking it in.

Tell the students to read in short bursts of up to twenty minutes, then take a few
minutes break before starting again. Making notes of key points as they go along can
create natural breaks every few minutes in their reading that can help maintain attention.

Often, reading faster can help memory of what they are reading, so it makes
more sense. Instruct them to browse quickly and focus in more slowly only where
needed.

Change the text. Many people read less efficiently because they are not aware
that their eyes have preferences for reading different fonts and colours.

Where possible:
Have your eyes tested regularly.
Check whether you read more efficiently with larger text.
Experiment reading text printed on different coloured papers or using different coloured
filters or lens over the text.
If you have access to texts through the computer, experiment with different font styles
and sizes and different colour backgrounds and text.
See whether you read more easily in bright rooms, with certain kinds of light or in dim lighting (scribd.com, 2012).

1.32. Categorizing reading courses

Bloor (1985) has suggested an alternative approach to the consideration of reading courses: categorizing them according to the philosophies adopted by the writers. In proposing this, Bloor acknowledges that individual books usually incorporate more than one of the underlying philosophies, usually combined with skills/strategies practice. Four main approaches have been identified: psychological, linguistic, content-orientated and pedagogically-oriented:

1.32.1. Psychological

This focuses on what takes place in the mind of the individual reader. Such courses endeavour to practice the process involved in reading, by means of exercises, often at two levels: the first is at the level of ‘simple word recognition’, while the second is at the level of ‘interpretation’. Books following this approach are: University of Malaya (1980-81), Morrow (1980), and Moore (1979-80).

1.32.2. Linguistic

This focuses on the words and sentences of the text. ‘The assumption is that if learners can handle linguistic features of the text efficiently, reading ability will be improved’. This approach is often present in a number of activities in many reading books. Overt grammatical exercises are included in books such as Sim and Laufer-Dvorkin (1982) and Glendinning and Holmstrom (1992).
1.32.3. **Content-orientated**

This approach is based on the view that if readers have, or are given, a specific purpose for their reading, efficiency will be improved. For example, the learner may be required to extract specific information from the text by means of pre-reading questions or tasks, as in Kaplan and Shaw (1983), Davies and Whitney (1984), and Holschuh and Kelley (1988). It is also assumed that if there are reading passages on topics related to students’ specific areas of interest, their interest and involvement in reading will be stimulated. This is the basis for a number of books including a wide range of extract from different disciplines, and topics that might have an international appeal, e.g. ‘the individual and society’, ‘food for thought’, ‘pollution’, ‘language’, ‘academic success’, etc.

1.32.4. **Pedagogically-oriented**

This approach is exemplified by ‘those courses where learning theories are the prime motivation for the design of the total course rather than the design of individual exercises’ (Bloor 1985). Self-access materials, from which students make their own choices and work at their own pace, exemplify this approach, with sets of reading cards as an example (Jolly 1982; and SRA reading laboratory for NS).

Bloor points out that it is almost impossible to evaluate these four approaches as there are so many variables, a major one being the students’ freedom of choice in reading. How far” the learner is interested in the content of the reading passage would distort any results one might obtain.”
1.33. Reading for information

The reading purpose is clearly fundamental to all reading in EAP. In an important article, Johns and Davies (1983) maintain that in EAP a text is a ‘vehicle for information’ not a ‘linguistic object’. They propose a methodology for studying written texts so that the focus is on the information in them. This involves the notion of topic-types, or conceptual frameworks, e.g. physical structure, process, characteristics, by which texts can be graded: from simple information structures to the more complex. An integral part of the approach is small group work involved in puzzling out the meaning of the text.

Many reading skills books focus on reading for information; in doing so, they often give practice to various strategies, e.g. scanning, skimming, seeking the main idea, prediction (e.g. Jordan 1980; Wallace 1980).

1.34. Reading speed

As students need to read extensively as well as intensively, it is important that they are able to do so in the most efficient way possible. Efficiency is coupled with speed of reading, and it was noted in Chapter 3 that many students read slowly. It is for the reason that some reading courses include practice material aimed at increasing reading speed and comprehension rate.

It should be noted that there are two diametrically opposed points of view regarding reading speed. One is that because students have difficulties with reading comprehension, probably linked to a narrow range of vocabulary, they will naturally read slowly, and any attempt to increase reading speed before improving reading comprehension is misguided. The other point of view is that by improving reading speed, the student is able to see longer stretches of language with each fixation of the eyes and
thus more easily contextualize unknown vocabulary and be able to achieve general understanding.

One well-tried method of increasing reading speed (Fry 1963a, 1963b) is for students to note the time they take to read a passage in words per minute (wpm) (see also Wallace 1980), and then to answer comprehension questions- often true/false or multiple-choice, noting their score. This information is then recorded in a progress chart (e.g. Abdulaziz and Stover 1989). Fry used reading passages divided into topics on public health and diseases: these were based on authentic language, simplified to a 2000-word vocabulary level. Morrow (1980) used extracts from the New Scientist as the basis for recognition, structuring and interpretation exercises, and also for reading speed and comprehension practice.

Mosback and Mosback (1976) is devoted to giving practice in faster reading, with the material organized into topics. The speed reading technique is the same as Fry’s, but the practice that follows is more extensive, consisting not only of comprehension exercises (‘Ideas’), but also vocabulary (synonyms), paragraph topics and summary completion.

A useful analysis of, and commentary on, ways to improve reading speed is contained in Nuttall (1996); suggestions for preliminary exercises are made by Grellet (1981).

1.35. Reading comprehension and vocabulary

In reading their subject textbooks, students frequently meet unknown words and phrases. Hewings (1990) takes the example of texts concerned with theoretical model building in economics. She points out that various straightforward study skills techniques
can help in different ways. For example, scanning headings and sub-headings, and skimming through text, can give an overview and set the scene. Using the index to a book and finding a word’s initial occurrence could often lead to finding a definition or explanation. Failing that, the existence of suitable glossaries or subject dictionaries could be brought to the students’ attention.

Bramki and Willliams (1994) are concerned with strategies to help students use context clues to puzzle out the meaning of newly-introduced specialist vocabulary. They first analyzed instances of intentional lexical familiarization in an economics textbook and discovered that the most frequent categories, in descending order, were: exemplification, explanation, definition (these three together accounting for almost 90 per cent of all instances), stipulation, synonym and non-verbal illustration. They then proposed strategies ‘for capitalizing on familiarizations deliberately implanted in text by the author, so that the reader can work out for himself the meanings of the terms concerned’.

Initially, the teacher marks up a text-term, signaling and familiarization—with colored pens on the OHP, or by underlining, boxing, etc. on texts for photocopying or duplication. This is to raise the students’ awareness. The next stage is to mark up only one or two of the three elements in each case, with the students completing the marking up. The third stage is for an asterisk only to be placed in the margin where familiarization occurs, and the students work in pairs to mark up the text themselves.

1.36. Introspect and discuss

A list is given of the main reading strategies, skills and sub-skills. Which ones do you think would be the most difficult for students? Why?
1.37. Teaching/learning vocabulary

1.37.1. Grids

An unusual vocabulary practice book exists in which the vocabulary is presented in semantic field tablets and collacational grids, as described above (Rudzka et al.1981). The words are shown in use in texts and sample sentences, and practice is given in a variety of exercises: blank-fill, synonyms, differences/similarities, extended writing, etc.

The idea of using grids in vocabulary teaching is also discussed by Stieglitz (1983). He refers to ‘semantic feature analysis’ rather than ‘semantic field’, and gives examples of food, animals, oral communication and positive feelings. Harvey (1983) uses grids in a wider sense, involving the students in devising the grid, deciding on categories and discussing the allocation of words to slots.

1.37.1.1. Some advantages

- Organizing a system makes it less daunting for the student than a ‘make a list of all vocabulary relating to basketball’ approach. It’s also more fun.
- Students (as well as teachers and linguists) like playing with words.
- It seems likely that people generally find the use of grids and matrices psychologically satisfying.
- It lends itself very easily to pair and group work.
- Grids are very easy to construct; handouts can be used, or the grids can be done on the board.
- The systems can be used for personal reference and added to; it encourages the organization of study skills.
• It provides excellent material for a number of exploitation and consolidation exercises. It increases variety.

• As a system it is adaptable to various levels and skills (P. D. Harvey, 1983)

1.37.1.2. Uses

Grids of this sort can be used in a large number of ways, either before or after contextualization. They can be exploited to help students see different elements and categories in vocabulary, and they lend themselves to a variety of consolidation exercises. For example: cloze exercises, blank filling, guessing games, spelling discussion and comparison of word formation, collocation, synonyms, etc. reference for reading or writing tasks, either intensive or extensive comprehension and memory activities.

1.38. Word networks

The semantic grouping of words lends itself to the organization of vocabulary teaching/learning into thematic webs or word networks. This is a visual approach to vocabulary presentation that can help students to associate words, remember them and extend the network themselves. These networks are used by Ellis and Sinclair (1989) as sensitizing activities for extending vocabulary.

Jordan (1990) also uses thematic webs for presenting vocabulary: In devising such networks, use can be made of various visual elements, e.g. circles, ovals or boxes; size of lettering: capitals or lower case; underlining; solid lines or broken; etc.

In spite of the above emphasis on the advantages of learning vocabulary in semantic groupings, word networks and the like, at times it is necessary to keep an open mind on the most beneficial approach for our students. One small-scale experiment in the
USA. (Tinkham 1993) found that ‘new words… are learned most easily if they are not grouped for presentation in prefabricated semantic clusters’. This, naturally, raises questions about the nature of the research and the students. However, it is possible to imagine students being confused by a number of similar or related words being presented for learning at the same time.

1.39. Context

After looking at various approaches for using context to assist in determining meaning, Kruse (1979) proposes a systematic strategy for learning vocabulary development skills. The basic aims are to teach word building skills and guessing word meanings from context clues. There is a progression from word building (suffixes, prefixes, roots) to definition clues (parentheses and footnotes, synonyms and antonyms) and then to inference clues, which require higher levels of analytical skills and practice (example, summary, experience).

Practice in inferring meaning from context is central to a number of course books aimed at developing reading skills, and supplementary practice books in vocabulary development (e.g. Sim and Laufer-Dvorkin, 1984). Typically, such practice books are organized according to topic or theme and begin with a reading passage in which the vocabulary for practice is contextualized. Exercises then follow, for example, on synonyms, matching phrases, blank-fill, comprehension, similar/confused words, word families, word building and grammatical featured.

Dunmore (1989) categorizes the sixteen different exercise formats presented into four basic types:
• The learner is required to match a given synonym with a word (presumed to be unknown) appearing in a text.

• The learner is required to complete a blank space with a suitable word.

• The learner discovers meaning by using contextual clues (basic awareness training).

• The learner discovers meaning by exposure to various features of text.

Dunmore concludes that there are two major criticisms of the exercise types: The first casts doubt on the ability of the exercises to achieve their aim; the second suggests that they promote an incomplete, if not misleading, view of lexical meaning.

Dunmore’s evaluation highlights the need for exercise types which teach rather than test the use of the strategies needed for readers to be successful in discovering the meaning of unknown words. He then refers teachers and writers of teaching materials to two guidelines for the creation of exercises which display a more systematic approach – Clarke and Nation (1980), who, in a sensitizing activity, provides a similar list of types of relation between the word and the context:

• **Equivalence**: a synonym is mentioned in the text.

  Contrast: the word means the contrary of another word or expression gives in the text.

• **Cause**: the meaning of the word can be guessed because it is the cause of something described in the text.

• **Consequence**: the word describes or appears in the description of the consequence of something. If the cause is known, it may be possible to guess what the consequence is.

• **Purpose**: the word applies to an object whose purpose is described in the text.
• **Explanation/illustration:** the meaning of the word is explained or an example is given.

• **Generalization/specification:** the word is just one specific instance of a more general thing or idea mentioned in the text, or, on the contrary, after a number of specific examples have been given, a generalization is made.

A useful overview of appropriate exercise types for practicing inference from context is contained in Nuttall (1996).

The main concerns of vocabulary teaching since 1980 have been summarised by Carter and McCarthy (1988) (based on a paper given by D. Brown at RELC, Singapore) –‘seven Cs and a G’:

• **Collocation**

• **Clines** (scales expressed diagrammatically)

• **Clusters** (similar to Halliday’s ‘sets’, i.e. words linked conceptually without recourse to meaning)

• **Cloze procedures** (which reinforce clusters and collocations)

• **Context** (using, e.g. definition, word analysis, inference)

• **Consultation** (using dictionaries, etc.)

• **Cards** (keeping a card index of new vocabulary)

• **Guessing** (a skill to be learned).

• **Concordancing**

In recent years, computer data corpuses have enabled lexicographers and researchers to have access to concordances, i.e. lists of words together with a list of the contexts in which each word occurs.
1.40. **Recommended background reading**

There are a number of articles and books by experienced textbook writers that discuss the relative merits of different approaches to materials design and writing. The books and articles look at materials from the point of view of evaluation of the finished product as well as being useful for guidance for production. Aspects such as motivation, creativity, exercise typology, sequencing and grading, and various other criteria, are considered.

1.40.1. **The need**

A fairly wide range of books is now available to cater for most general study skill situations. The need is more likely to be for material that is directly related to the students’ immediate or predicted needs. If the students can see a close connection between the content of the material and their study need/wants, then there will be a strong motivating force for language learning. Such material is most likely to be subject – specific.