

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

READING SKILL – A KEY TO SELF LEARNING

¹K. KALAVATHI, ² Dr. A CHANDRAN

¹Head mistress, GHSS Sennaur, Coimbatore

²Professor of English, Adhitya Institute of Technology, Kurumbapalayam
Coimbatore

ABSTRACT

With Reading skill, a starting point, a student's journey towards gathering knowledge gets branched out into different fields. Though it is a long-neglected skill, its importance is felt in recent years. Proficiency in language learning is impossible without this skill. It is an essential foundation for the student's academic achievement. As the full-fledged education is synonymous with self-learning, Reading offers the necessary backup. This article presents the significance and different types of reading. It includes the outcome of good reading and the values of self-learning.

Keywords: Reading skill - self-learning - loud reading - silent reading - comprehension.

INTRODUCTION

Reading skill is a passive skill like listening. Yet it is a little complicated, as it is the coordination of physical, intellectual and emotional aspects. The student must be thorough with letters and its corresponding sounds and its meaning. It demands higher attention as one should understand the writer's ideas keeping abreast with their thought process. As W.S. Gray says "Reading is a form of experience, reading brings us in contact with the minds of great authors, with the written account of their experiences, their recorded lives and the advancements made by them in various fields". Reading is the best tool in the education scenario as it widens the scope of deciphering and interpreting the content.

Self-Learning- The ultimate purpose of learning

Self-learning is the ultimate aim of education. Classroom learning and self-learning are parallel processes. Peer group study is confined to time and place but self-learning has no constraints. Self-learning makes the learner self-expressive and independent. The qualitative improvement of this self-learning is due to the enhancement of Listening and Reading. Wide range of Reading prepares the learner to be a wholesome student tuning up the faculties. Reading has high level impact on self-learning which develops the student's originality and language skill. Once the student is adept at language skill the language could be handled at ease poised with emotions. Reading, the basis of self-learning must be effective as it is not only for communication but also for comprehension. 'Effective reading includes not only a literal comprehension of an author's word, but also an interpretation of his mood, tone, feeling and attitude' -(De chant and Smith, 1977, P.237).

Loud reading and Silent reading

Loud reading and Silent reading are the two variants and both serves different purposes. Loud reading promotes one's self-confidence, pronunciation, ability of grouping words according to pause and intonation. "The real-life purpose of reading aloud to others is convey information to them, to entertain them or to share a good story that they do not have" (Zintz and Maggaut, 1989, P.425). Whereas silent reading intensifies one's concentration and preferable in higher classes, as the speed of comprehending differs from person to person. This Silent reading is the basic requirement of library use. Silent reading widens the area of one's vocabulary and exposes different types of sentence constructions. This leads to the enrichment of one's language skill coupled with the knowledge delivered by the text.

Skimming and Scanning

Silent reading involves two sub skills Skimming and Scanning. "Skimming is a reading skill which demands top most speeds. It is a method quickly gathering information from the printed page" (G.C.Ahuja and Paramila Ahuja ,1987,p.69). Skimming enables one to go through the content superficially to have a basic idea of what is being given in the text and Scanning helps the one to search for the information from the written material. 'In scanning reader runs his eyes down the page with the purpose of finding an answer to a specific question' (De Chant and Smith,1977, P.284). These two modes quicken the process of reading and helps to identify the specified notions as well.

Reading for comprehension

Reading is mainly for understanding and comprehending. The National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) defined comprehension as the "intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed between the reader and text". This comprehension is realised in three stages as Gray (1967) says, "Reading the lines, Reading between the lines and Reading beyond the lines". The first one, Reading the Lines is based on understanding what is being given. The next level, Reading Between Lines refers to understanding the hidden meaning of the ideas conveyed. The third level, Reading Beyond Lines is linking the given ideas to reader's prior knowledge about the content.

Reading skill- A high demand at school level

Developing Reading skill at school level is essential. It is the basis of self-learning which is on top level demand in higher classes. This skill improves the learner's ability ranging from recognition of alphabets, words, sentences to interpretation of the concept. It allows the learner to have free flow of thought, knowledge transfer and message transmission. The art of streamlining the thought process acquired by the Reading skill nullifies the student's exertion. Yet Reading skill is solely based on the student's flair, it becomes self-taught and cannot be imbibed. Non-detailed studies are formulated to make use of this skill. Unless it is habituated, students feel reading, a boredom. "Reading is a skill, which responds to practice. Continuous and systemic

practice results in the improvement of reading rate” (G.C.Ahuja and Paramila Ahuja ,1987,p.15).

Reading for language acquisition

Reading is very useful in language learning especially in foreign language learning. Recognising words, understanding and assimilating the content depends on the quality of reading. Learning language is stressful when the student lacks the ability of reading and it becomes pleasurable, when he assimilates the skill. Since its output cannot be evaluated, the vital importance of this skill is getting ignored.

CONCLUSION

Reading skill indeed a linguistic skill is developed by practice. In current scenario, reading loses its potentiality as the visualisation has stronger impact. As this visualisation comes to the learner’s immediate vicinity, Reading is pushed back to a greater distance. Since the higher level of reading could grasp the inner meaning, get connected to the emotions of the encoder, the learner could unfurl his imagination through the encoder’s description. Imagination is the unique feature of mankind with which literary works are created. Science sans imagination is not possible as fabricating any device needs technical knowledge for its working and imagination for its design. Reading develops one’s learning skill, the academic endeavours and aesthetic sense and artistic perception. Once the learner understands education is not only for hoarding knowledge, pleasurable experience but also for powerful insight and nourishment of faculties, he could throw everyone out of gear.

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