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Writing Project 2

Reading is seen as mainly used in two different ways, for pleasure or for education. Rosenblatt calls this the efferent/aesthetic continuum. This continuum explains the main differences between texts and how we read them. Depending on what we have to read, we will have to read it differently. There are times in which we read strictly to enjoy ourselves and other times when we have to follow instructions. Many authors have described various reading terms that we constantly use. As we progress through our education level, the complexity of the texts we have to read steadily increase. From there we are taught various reading tactics, such as function and feature strategies (Haas and Flower), to help us understand everything better. Most of the time, we are doing these various reading strategies subconsciously. From here, we were to take part in a reading experiment that would help us understand these subconscious strategies in a metacognitive manner. Two texts had to be read, but with different strategies. The first one had to be read in our own way, but the second had to use the reading strategies that we have learned.

Some of these strategies include the function/feature strategies, efferent/aesthetic continuum, public/private sense of meaning, and content strategies. Each of these terms have been created by authors Rosenblatt, Just & Carpenter, Tierney & Pearson, and Haas & Flower. Each of these terms mean something slightly different. The function/features strategies can be explained simply as using what is on the lines to understand the text. The efferent/aesthetic

continuum says that there are two general types of readings, ones that you read to learn, and others that you read to enjoy. The public/private sense of meaning is synonymous with the denotative and connotative definitions of words/phrases. Lastly, content strategies are a common way for anyone to understand what a sentence/series of sentences means by either questioning, interpreting, or summarizing what the text was. Knowing these strategies, we went on to the reading experiment.

For this reading experiment, two very different texts were chosen to analyze. The first was the short story, *The Library of Babel*, by Jorge Luis Borges. This piece of fiction was described in an alternate universe, where an infinite amount of books are held. Most of the books are not even readable in the narrator's language. He spends his entire life in search of one book, only to pass away before ever finding it. The second was a Computer Science Lab sheet. It was about creating a giant sorting algorithm to sort hundreds of thousands of baby names. Both of these are very different, from the actual content that is in them and how us students would read them. *The Library of Babel* is an example of an aesthetic end of the efferent/aesthetic continuum (Rosenblatt) and the Computer Science Lab Sheet is an example of an efferent end of the efferent/aesthetic continuum. Because of their different continuums, different reading strategies are used for them.

I constantly gazed (Just and Carpenter) on the various terms and instructions on the Lab Sheet. The lab sheet contained various forms of vocabulary that had a private sense of meaning (Rosenblatt). To many, the content in the lab sheet would make little to no sense. The sheet contained words such as dataclasses, booleans, data structures, and many more. Most people outside this field would likely not understand the private meaning, but only the public meaning.

While the instructions were clear, many forms of content strategies (Haas and Flower) were used to fully grasp what to do; there were many summaries, interpretations, and questions for the packet. Even prior to reading, I had been planning (Tierny and Pearson) on which parts to focus more on based on my strengths. The lab sheet contained a step by step instructions on how to do specific parts of the lab in order to continue forward. Some of these instructions stated to include certain files and exclude others, to follow official Python3 guidelines, and to name the program and file in a certain way.

In stark contrast, *The Library of Babel* used completely different types of reading strategies. While reading the text and like the lab sheet, I gazed (Just and Carpenter) on the main points of the reading and had to constantly exercise my recall performance (Just and Carpenter). The text itself was a difficult one to fully grasp. It was only after many, many cases of sentence wrap-up (Just and Carpenter) was I able to actually understand what was happening. After many instances of sentence wrap-up, I was able to use different forms of content strategies (Haas and Flower). I constantly questioned what exactly was happening to the narrator, I constantly had to go back and summarize what I had just read, and while reading, I had to interpret anything and everything.

Although the lab sheet and short story were very different, they did share a few similarities, which can be used across nearly every piece of text. They both used content strategies (Haas and Flower). This term is used whenever a reader “questions, interprets, or summarizes to understand what a text is about”. These various strategies have helped me understand texts in this class and will likely continue to help me in future classes. More specifically, I have learned that many of the things I have been doing subconsciously actually

have a name, which is quite interesting. Prior to this, I never knew that whenever I would use the generic parts of a text to understand it, it would be called function/feature strategies, coined together by authors Haas and Flower. I also realized that my recall performance is on the better side, due to my memory. Authors Just and Carpenter describe this as being able to summarize what they have just read strictly from memory. I can infer that many upperclassmen that have previously taken this course already know of these strategies which put them in better places. Knowing these various reading strategies will likely help me better understand texts and passages that I get later in the years of RIT.

Sources

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