

TEACHING READING

Questions for Reflection

- What are some of the major issues and concepts in pedagogical research that are related to teaching reading?
- How can the processing of written language (reading) be classified into microskills, macroskills, and types of classroom reading performance?
- What are some principles to follow in designing reading comprehension tasks and activities?
- What are some key strategies for successful reading comprehension?
- What are some guidelines for evaluating the success of reading tasks, activities, and lessons?
- What are some basic principles and formats for assessing reading ability?

The written word surrounds us daily—at times enlightening, amusing, and heart-warming, at other times mystifying, depressing, and saddening. At every turn, we who are members of a literate society are dependent on a couple of dozen or so letters and a sprinkling of other written symbols for significant, even life-and-death, matters in our lives. How do we teach second language learners to master this written code? What do we teach them? What are the issues?

As you read this chapter, keep in mind that once again, interactive, integrated approaches to language teaching emphasize the interrelationship of skills. Reading ability will be developed best in association with writing, listening, and speaking activities. Even in those courses that may be labeled “reading,” your goals will be best achieved by capitalizing on the connection between reading and other modes of performance, especially the reading-writing relationship. So, we focus here on reading as a component of general second language proficiency, but ultimately reading must be considered only in the perspective of the whole picture of interactive language teaching.

RESEARCH ON READING IN A SECOND LANGUAGE

By the 1970s, research on reading one’s L1 had been flourishing for a couple of decades as solutions were being sought to why some children were not successfully learning to read. But research on reading in an L2 was almost nonexistent.

Then, with Goodman's (1970) seminal article, "Reading: A Psycholinguistic Guessing Game" and other subsequent work, L2 specialists began to tackle the unique issues and questions facing second language reading pedagogy. A glance now through almost five decades of research reveals some significant findings that will affect you and your approach to teaching reading skills. Some of the highlights are reviewed here.

1. Bottom-Up and Top-Down Processing

Led by Goodman's (1970) work, the distinction between bottom-up and top-down processing became a cornerstone of reading methodology for years to come (Eskey, 2005). In *bottom-up processing*, readers must first recognize a multiplicity of linguistic signals (letters, morphemes, syllables, words, phrases, grammatical cues, discourse markers) and use their linguistic data-processing mechanisms to impose some sort of order on these signals. These **data-driven** operations obviously require a sophisticated knowledge of the language itself. From among all the perceived data, the reader selects the signals that make some sense, that cohere, that "mean."

Virtually all reading involves a risk—a guessing game, in Goodman's words—because readers must, through a puzzle-solving process, infer meanings, decide what to retain and not to retain, and move on. This is where a complementary method of processing written text is imperative: *top-down*, or **conceptually driven processing** in which we draw on our own intelligence and experience to understand a text. Nuttal (1996, pp. 16–17) compares bottom-up processes with the image of a scientist with a magnifying glass or microscope examining all the minute details of some phenomenon, while top-down processing is like taking an eagle's-eye view of a landscape below. Such a picture reminds us that field-independent and field-sensitive cognitive styles are analogous to bottom-up and top-down processing, respectively.

A half-century ago, perhaps, reading specialists might have argued that the best way to teach reading is through bottom-up methodology: teach symbols, grapheme–phoneme correspondences, syllables, and lexical recognition first, then comprehension would be derived from the sum of the parts. More recent research on teaching reading (Hedgcock & Ferris, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2011, 2014; Anderson, 2014) has shown that a combination of top-down and bottom-up processing, or what has come to be called *interactive reading*, is almost always a primary ingredient in successful teaching methodology because both processes are important. "In practice, a reader continually shifts from one focus to another, now adopting a top-down approach to predict probable meaning, then moving to the bottom-up approach to check whether that is really what the writer says" (Nuttall, 1996, p. 17).



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Consider a specific example of how a reader shifts from top-down to bottom-up processing. For example, when you see a newspaper article and make a decision to read it, what processes, exactly, do you go through to make that decision? Then, once you're reading it, suppose you misread something or don't understand a segment, what psycholinguistic strategies do you adopt for better comprehension? How might you teach those strategies?

2. Schema Theory and Background Knowledge

How do readers construct meaning? How do they decide what to hold on to, and having made that decision, how do they infer a writer's message? These are the sorts of questions addressed by what has come to be known as **schema theory**, the hallmark of which is that a text does not by itself carry meaning (Anderson, 2004; Grabe, 2004, 2009; Eskey, 2005). The reader brings information, knowledge, emotion, experience, and culture—that is, schemata (plural)—to the printed word. Schema theory is not a new construct. Four decades ago, Clarke and Silberstein (1977) captured the essence of schema theory:

Research has shown that reading is only incidentally visual. More information is contributed by the reader than by the print on the page. That is, readers understand what they read because they are able to take the stimulus beyond its graphic representation and assign it membership to an appropriate group of concepts already stored in their memories. . . . Skill in reading depends on the efficient interaction between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world (pp. 136–37).



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

It has been said that readers bring more information from the brain to the page than from the page to the brain. What are some examples of this phenomenon? When you're reading a menu in a restaurant, how do you use this two-way communication? How would you help students to become aware of this interaction?

A good example of the role of schemata in reading is found in the following anecdote:

A fifteen-year-old boy got up the nerve one day to try out for the school chorus, despite the potential ridicule from his classmates. His audition time made him a good fifteen minutes late to the next class. His hall permit clutched nervously in hand, he nevertheless tried surreptitiously to slip into his seat, but his entrance didn't go unnoticed.

"And where were you?" bellowed the teacher.

Caught off guard by the sudden attention, a red-faced Harold replied meekly, "Oh, uh, er, somewhere between tenor and bass, sir."

A full understanding of this story and its humorous punch line requires that the reader intuitively know something about **content** and **formal schemata**. Content schemata include what we know about people, the world, culture, and the universe, while formal schemata consist of our knowledge about language and discourse structure (Grabe & Stoller, 2014).

For the above anecdote, these *content* schemata are a prerequisite to understanding its humor:

- Fifteen-year-old boys might be embarrassed about singing in a choir.
- Hall permits allow students to be outside a classroom during the class hour.
- Teenagers often find it embarrassing to be singled out in a class.
- Choral vocal parts, e.g., *tenor* and *bass*.
- Fifteen-year-old boys' voices are often "breaking."

Formal schemata also reveal some implied connections:

- The chorus tryout was the cause of potential ridicule.
- The audition occurred just before the class period.
- Continuing to "clutch" the permit means he did not give it to the teacher.
- The teacher did indeed notice his entry.
- The teacher's question referred to location, not a musical part.

The widespread acceptance of schema theory by reading researchers has not gone unchallenged. Nassaji (2002) provided an alternative view of the role of background knowledge, appealing to connectionist models of memory. In Nassaji's view, background knowledge is not "pre-stored," but "rather it emerges in the context of the task, and is relatively unstructured as opposed to the highly structured knowledge representations suggested by . . . schema theory" (p. 453). In this "construction-integration" model, the learner is seen to play a more active role in constructing meaning, while reading, than is proposed by schema theory.

3. Teaching Strategic Reading

One of the questions that have been asked about teaching reading has been the extent to which learners will learn to read better in a laissez-faire

atmosphere of enriched surroundings than in an instructed sequence of direct attention to the strategies of efficient reading. Most experts in reading research side with the latter (Anderson, 1999, 2004; Grabe, 2004, 2009; Eskey, 2005) and cite research in support of their conclusion. A viable theory of instructed second language acquisition can hardly be sustainable without a solid component of strategic competence.

One of the ongoing themes among researchers and teachers of foreign languages is the tension between what in the last chapter we referred to as direct and indirect approaches to teaching language skills. This continuum of possibilities is highlighted in debates over conscious and subconscious acquisition, explicit and implicit learning, and focal and peripheral processing. Instruction should, of course, provide an optimal mix of each, but Anderson (1999, 2004, 2014; Grabe & Stoller, 2014) advocated a healthy dose of strategy-based instruction, including metacognitive strategies of self-planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's own reading processes. Grabe (2004) stressed the coordinated use of multiple strategies *while* students are reading. Eskey (2005) reminds us of research on pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading, and follow-up strategies for reading, to be discussed later in this chapter.

4. Extensive Reading

On the other hand, there is a place for extensive reading of longer texts with little or no conscious strategic intervention. Researchers agree that, at least for academic purposes, extensive reading is a key to student gains in reading ability, linguistic competence, vocabulary, spelling, and writing (Day & Bamford, 1998; Elley, 2001; Grabe & Stoller, 2014). Further, Green and Oxford (1995) found that reading for pleasure and reading without looking up all the unknown words were both highly correlated with overall language proficiency.

This research suggests that instructional programs in reading should give consideration to the teaching of extensive reading. It does not suggest, of course, that focused approaches to specific strategies for intensive reading ought to be abandoned, but strengthens the notion that an extensive reading component in conjunction with other focused reading instruction is highly warranted.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

How would you teach students at an intermediate to advanced level to engage in efficient extensive reading? What steps or stages might you go through in helping learners to sustain reading beyond a few minutes? What are some useful strategies that *you* have found useful that you might pass on to your students?

5. Reading Rate, Fluency, and Automaticity

Paralleling the research on other language skills, fluency, or reading rate, has drawn the attention of some research. In L1 reading, fluency and reading rate have long been a concern (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Grabe, 2004), and recently more research has appeared supporting the essential role of fluency and reading rate in L2 learning (Grabe, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2014). Anderson (2014, p. 172) further notes that “fluency is a combination of both reading rate and reading *comprehension*.” He goes on to suggest strategies of skimming, scanning, predicting, and identifying main ideas as approaches to increasing fluency, or what might also be described as *automaticity*.

6. Focus on Vocabulary

In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in the role of vocabulary knowledge on the acquisition of reading skills (Nation, 2003, 2005; Read, 2004; Grabe & Stoller, 2014), with findings that support a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and later reading ability. Principles and classroom practices in teaching vocabulary will be taken up in further detail in Chapter 19 of this book.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

For many decades L2 pedagogy has advocated teaching vocabulary *in context*. What does this mean? If an L2 learner tells you he or she is spending many hours as day memorizing definitions of words, how would you respond? What alternative strategies for word acquisition could you suggest?

7. The Role of Affect and Culture

It's readily apparent from just a cursory survey of research on second language acquisition that affective factors play major roles in ultimate success. Just as language ego, self-esteem, empathy, and motivation undergird the acquisition of spoken discourse, reading is subject to variability within the affective domain. The “love” of reading has propelled many a learner to successful acquisition of reading skills. Instruction has been found to be effective when students' self-esteem is high (Dole, Brown, & Trathen, 1996). The autonomy gained through the learning of reading strategies has been shown to be a powerful motivator (Bamford & Day, 1998), not to mention the affective power of reading itself. Similarly, culture plays an active role in motivating and rewarding people for literacy. We cannot simply assume that cognitive factors alone will account for the eventual success of second language readers (Fitzgerald, 1994).

8. Second Language Literacy

As L2 materials and methods continue to apply both bottom-up and top-down models of reading to programs and curricula, one particularly challenging focus of effort for researchers and teachers has been literacy-level teaching of adults (Devine & Eskey, 2004; August et al., 2006; Ediger, 2014). A significant number of immigrants arriving in various nonnative countries and cultures are nonliterate in their native languages, posing special issues in the teaching of an L2. What are sometimes referred to as “skills-based” (bottom-up) and “strategies-based” (top-down) approaches are both used in adult literacy training. For more information on this specialized field, a particularly good reference is Ediger’s (2014) synopsis of research and practice in teaching literacy.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

A significant number of adult L2 learners are *not* literate in their L1, for a variety of circumstantial reasons. How would you feel if you had no reading ability in your L1 and now needed to learn to read in an L2? Overwhelmed? Discouraged? How would a teacher provide both emotional and practical support to such a student?

Aside from the five major issues touched on above, a multitude of other topics are grist for current researchers’ mills:

- the role of cognition in reading
- the role of automaticity in word recognition
- reading as sociocultural practice
- effective techniques for activating schemata
- relationships of reading to writing

And the list goes on. At this stage in your professional career when you are learning to teach, rather than immersing you in oceans of research data, it is perhaps more important to lay some basic foundations for the development of an effective teaching approach, which we now turn to.

GENRES OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE

In Chapters 15 and 16 we looked at types of spoken language so that you could identify the kinds of language your listening and speaking techniques should include. Here, we do the same for types, or **genres**, of reading and writing.

In our highly literate society, there are literally hundreds of different types of written texts, a much larger variety than found in spoken texts. Each of the types listed below represents, or is an example of, a *genre* of written language.

Each has certain rules or conventions for its manifestation, and we are thus able immediately to identify a genre and to know what to look for within the text. Consider the following nonexhaustive list:

Genres of Written Language

- nonfiction: reports, editorials, essays, articles, reference (dictionaries, etc.)
- fiction: novels, short stories, jokes, drama, poetry
- letters: personal, business
- electronic: e-mails, tweets, blog posts
- greeting cards
- diaries, journals
- memos (e.g., interoffice memos)
- messages (e.g., phone messages)
- announcements
- newspaper “journalese” reports
- academic writing: short answer test responses, reports, papers, theses, books
- forms, applications
- questionnaires
- directions
- labels
- signs
- recipes
- bills (and other financial statements)
- maps
- manuals
- menus
- schedules (e.g., transportation tables)
- advertisements: commercial, personal
- invitations
- directories (e.g., telephone, yellow pages)
- comic strips, cartoons

And you could no doubt name a few more! It's interesting that every literate adult knows the distinctive features of each of these genres. You can immediately distinguish a menu from a map, an interoffice memo from a telephone message, and a bill from an invitation—well, yes, some bills are “invitations” to pay up!

When you encounter one of the above, you usually know what your purpose is in reading it, and therefore you know what to select and what not to select for short- and long-term memory—in other words, you bring various *schemata* to bear on the message that you have chosen to retain. What would happen if you didn't know some of these differences? That is what your students may encounter when they read an L2, so part of your job as a teacher is to enlighten your students on features of these genres and to help them to develop strategies for extracting necessary meaning from each.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Consider several of the genres listed above: memos, directions (for assembling a furniture item), recipes, and e-mails. What are the distinctive features of each? What specifically are the *linguistic* features? What grammatical and discourse features might you teach within any one of these genres?

CHARACTERISTICS OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE

There are quite a number of salient and relevant differences between spoken and written language. Students already literate in their native languages will, of course, be familiar with the broad, basic characteristics of written language; however, some characteristics of English writing, especially certain rhetorical conventions, may be so different from the students' native language that reading efforts are blocked. The characteristics listed below will also be of some help for you in doing the following:

- diagnosing certain reading difficulties arising from the idiosyncrasies of written language,
- pointing your techniques toward specific objectives, and
- reminding students of some of the advantages of written language over spoken.

1. Permanence

Spoken language is fleeting. Once you speak a sentence, it vanishes (unless there is a tape recorder around). The hearer, therefore, is called upon to make immediate perceptions and immediate storage. Written language is permanent (or as permanent as paper and computer files are!), and therefore the reader has an opportunity to return again and again, if necessary, to a word or phrase or sentence, or even a whole text.

2. Processing Time

A corollary to the above is the processing *time* that the reader gains. Many reading contexts allow readers to read at their own rate, especially reading for

pleasure (armchair book reading, newspaper reading, etc.). They aren't forced into following the rate of delivery, as in spoken language, and so somewhat "slower" readers are not always at a disadvantage, especially when they are in complete control of the amount of time needed to read a text.

However, there are notable contexts in which an *optimal* reading rate becomes significant. Academic reading assignments usually presuppose the ability to comprehend material within required or scheduled time constraints (Grabe & Stoller, 2014). Tests and other assessments are often timed, requiring a reader to complete a task within a specified period of time. Learners studying in an L2 can feel frustrated by what they feel is an extremely slow rate of reading or the necessity to reread a text multiple times in order to achieve comprehension. In reading for occupational purposes, similar time constraints may pose challenges for an L2 reader.

Teachers are therefore called on to help learners to achieve a fluency rate that will enable them to function adequately within their various contexts. Classroom lessons in reading must account for those contexts and place appropriate emphasis on whatever optimal reading rates are deemed necessary.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

What might determine "necessary" reading rates? Some have claimed that L2 readers ought to strive for 250–300 words per minute as an ultimate goal. Do you agree? What are some of the varied *contexts* or *genres* of reading that might lead you to consider lower or higher rates as optimal? Do levels of ability (beginning, intermediate, advanced) make a difference in the goals you set for students?

3. Distance

The written word allows messages to be sent across two dimensions: physical distance and temporal distance. The pedagogical significance of this fact centers on interpretation. The task of the reader is to interpret language that was written in some other place at some other time with only the written words themselves as contextual clues. Readers can't confront an author and say, "Now, what exactly did you mean by that?" Nor can they transport themselves back through a time machine and "see" the surrounding context, as we can in face-to-face conversations. This sometimes decontextualized nature of writing is one thing that makes reading difficult.

4. Orthography

In spoken language, most languages have phonemes, stress, rhythm, juncture, intonation, pauses, volume, voice quality settings, and nonverbal cues, all

of which enhance the message. In writing we have graphemes—that's it! Yes, sometimes punctuation, pictures, graphics, or charts lend a helping hand. And, yes, a writer can describe the aforementioned phonological cues, as in, "With loud, rasping grunts, punctuated by roars of pain, he slowly dragged himself out of the line of enemy fire." But these written symbols stand alone as the one set of signals that the reader must perceive. Because of the frequent ambiguity that is present in a good deal of writing, readers must do their best to infer, to interpret, and to "read between the lines."

In spite of its reputation for being "irregular," English orthography is highly predictable from its spoken counterpart, especially when one considers morphological information as well. Yet, even for literate learners of English, our spelling system presents difficulties, especially for those whose native languages have quite different systems (Nassaji, 2014). On the other hand, most of the irregularity in English manifests itself in high-frequency words (*of, to, have, do, done, was*, etc.). So, should orthographic processing be an issue in teaching reading? Yes, according to Nassaji (2014, p. 13), who concludes that "limited knowledge of orthographic representations may negatively affect L2 readers' word recognition processes and reading comprehension."



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Among native English speakers, there are "poor" spellers here and there. Why is that? Do you think of English is a "difficult" language to learn, orthographically? How important is it for learners who are literate in their L1 to be explicitly taught English spelling patterns? Or should they just be left to "pick up" spelling rules?

5. Complexity

You might be tempted to say that writing is more complex than speech, but in reality, that would be difficult to demonstrate. Writing and speech represent different modes of complexity, and the most salient difference is in the nature of clauses. Spoken language tends to have shorter clauses connected by more coordinate conjunctions, while writing has longer clauses and more subordination. The shorter clauses are often a factor of the redundancy we build into speech (repeating subjects and verbs for clarity). Look at the following pair:

- a. Because of the frequent ambiguity that therefore is present in a good deal of writing, readers must do their best to infer, to interpret, and to "read between the lines."
- b. There's frequent ambiguity in a lot of writing. And so, readers have to infer a lot. They also have to interpret what they read. And sometimes they have to "read between the lines."

The cognitive complexity of version (a), the written version, is no greater than version (b), the spoken version. But structurally, four sentences were used in version (b) to replace the one long sentence (with two clauses) of version (a).

Readers—especially second language readers who may be quite adept in the spoken language—have to retool their cognitive perceptors in order to extract meaning from the written code. The linguistic differences between speech and writing are another major contributing cause to difficulty.

6. Vocabulary

It is true that written English typically utilizes a greater variety of lexical items than spoken conversational English. In our everyday give and take with family, friends, and colleagues, vocabulary is limited. Because writing allows the writer more processing time, because of a desire to be precise in writing, and simply because of the formal conventions of writing (see #7 below), lower-frequency words often appear. Such words can present stumbling blocks to learners. However, because the meaning of a good many unknown words can be predicted from their context, and because sometimes the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph is nevertheless still clear, learners should refrain from the frequent use of a bilingual dictionary.

7. Formality

Writing is quite frequently more formal than speech. What do we mean by that? Formality refers to prescribed *forms* that certain written messages must adhere to. The reason that you can both recognize a menu and decide what to eat fairly quickly is that menus conform to certain conventions. Things are categorized (appetizers, salads, entrees, desserts, etc.) in logical order and subcategorized (all seafood dishes are listed together); exotic or creative names for dishes are usually defined; prices are given for each item; and the menu isn't so long that it overwhelms you.

We have **rhetorical**, or organizational, formality in essay writing that demands a writer's conformity to conventions like paragraph topics. There is usually a logical order for, say, comparing and contrasting something; opening and closing an essay, and a preference for nonredundancy and subordination of clauses, and more. Until a reader is familiar with the formal features of a written text, some difficulty in interpretation may ensue.

MICRO- AND MACROSKILLS FOR READING COMPREHENSION

Below is an adaptation of the models of micro- and macroskills offered in the previous two chapters—a breakdown of what L2 learners need to do to become efficient readers.

Micro- and Macroskills for Reading Comprehension

Microskills

1. Discriminate among the distinctive graphemes and orthographic patterns of English.
2. Retain chunks of language of different lengths in short-term memory.
3. Comprehend written language at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose.
4. Recognize a core of words, and interpret word order patterns and their significance.
5. Recognize grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc.), systems (e.g., tense, agreement, pluralization), patterns, rules, and elliptical forms.
6. Recognize that a particular meaning may be expressed in different grammatical forms.

Macroskills

7. Recognize cohesive devices in written discourse and their role in signaling the relationship between and among clauses.
8. Recognize the rhetorical forms of written discourse and their significance for interpretation.
9. Recognize the communicative functions of written texts, according to form and purpose.
10. Infer context that is not explicit by using background knowledge.
11. Infer links and connections between events, ideas, etc., deduce causes and effects, and detect such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.
12. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings.
13. Detect culturally specific references and interpret them in a context of the appropriate cultural schemata.
14. Develop and use a battery of reading strategies such as scanning and skimming, detecting discourse markers, guessing the meaning of words from context, and activating schemata for the interpretation of texts.

STRATEGIES FOR READING COMPREHENSION

For most second language learners who are already literate in a previous language, reading comprehension is primarily a matter of developing appropriate, efficient comprehension strategies. Some strategies are related to bottom-up

procedures, and others enhance the top-down processes. Following are ten such strategies, each of which can be practically applied to your classroom techniques.

1. Identify the Purpose in Reading

How many times have you been told to read something, yet you didn't know why you were being asked to read it? You did only a mediocre job of retaining what you "read" and perhaps were rather slow in the process. Efficient reading consists of clearly identifying the purpose in reading something. By doing so, you know what you're looking for and can weed out potential distracting information. Whenever you are teaching a reading technique, make sure students know their purpose in reading something.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

How would you make sure your students have a purpose in reading an assigned passage? Would you simply tell them? Or ask them, after a quick skim of the passage, what purposes they might have or derive in reading it? How would you help your students connect the principle of identifying purpose to schema theory, discussed above?

2. Use Graphemic Rules and Patterns to Aid in Bottom-Up Decoding

At the beginning levels of learning English, one of the difficulties students encounter in learning to read is making the correspondences between spoken and written English. In many cases, learners have become acquainted with oral language and have some difficulty learning English spelling conventions. They may need hints and explanations about certain English orthographic rules and peculiarities. While you can often assume that one-to-one grapheme-phoneme correspondences will be acquired with ease, other relationships might prove difficult. Consider how you might provide hints and pointers on such patterns as these:

- "short" vowel sound in VC patterns (*bat, him, leg, wish*, etc.)
- "long" vowel sound in VCe (final silent *e*) patterns (*late, time, bite*, etc.)
- "long" vowel sound in VV patterns (*seat, coat*, etc.)
- distinguishing "hard" *c* and *g* from "soft" *c* and *g* (*cat* vs. *city*, *game* vs. *gem*, etc.)

These and a multitude of other *phonics* approaches to reading can prove useful for learners at the beginning level and especially useful for teaching children and nonliterate adults.

3. Use Efficient Silent Reading Techniques for Improving Fluency

If you are teaching beginning level students, this particular strategy will not apply because they are still struggling with the control of a limited vocabulary and grammatical patterns. Your intermediate-to-advanced level students need not be speed readers, but you can help them increase reading rate and comprehension efficiency by teaching a few silent reading rules:

- You don't need to "pronounce" each word to yourself.
- Try to visually perceive more than one word at a time, preferably phrases.
- Unless a word is absolutely crucial to global understanding, skip over it and try to infer its meaning from its context.

Aside from these fundamental guidelines, which if followed can help learners to be efficient readers, reading speed is usually not much of an issue for all but the most advanced learners. Academic reading, for example, is something most learners manage to accomplish by allocating whatever time they personally need in order to complete the material. If your students can read 250 to 300 words per minute, further concern over speed may not be necessary.

4. Skim the Text for Main Ideas

Perhaps the two most valuable reading strategies for learners (as well as native speakers) are skimming and scanning. **Skimming** consists of quickly running one's eyes across a whole text (such as an essay, article, or chapter) for its gist. Skimming gives readers the advantage of being able to predict the purpose of the passage, the main topic, or message, and possibly some of the developing or supporting ideas. This gives them a head start as they embark on more focused reading. You can train students to skim passages by giving them, say, thirty seconds to look through a few pages of material, close their books, and then tell you what they learned.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Skimming may not be a familiar process for some students. Beyond just giving them 30 seconds to skim a passage, what are some *specific steps* you can go through to teach skimming? What do learners look for? How do they avoid just retaining only a blur of jumbled ideas?

5. Scan the Text for Specific Information

The second in the most valuable category is **scanning**, or quickly searching for some particular piece or pieces of information in a text. Scanning exercises may ask students to look for names or dates, to find a definition of a key concept, or to list a certain number of supporting details. The purpose of scanning is to extract specific information without reading through the whole text. For academic

English, scanning is absolutely essential. In vocational or general English, scanning is important in dealing with genres like schedules, manuals, or forms.

6. Use Semantic Mapping or Clustering

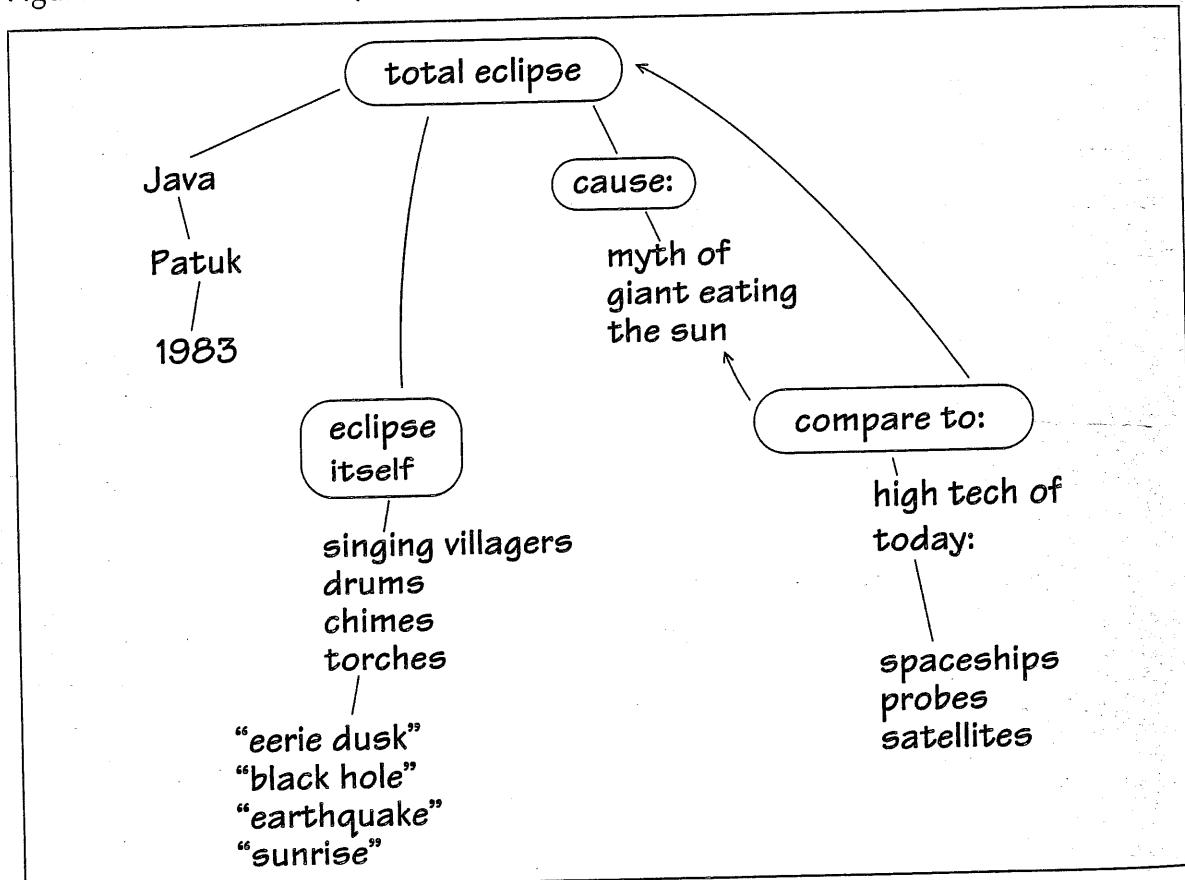
Readers can easily be overwhelmed by a long string of ideas or events. The strategy of **semantic mapping**, or grouping ideas into meaningful clusters, helps the reader to provide some order to the chaos. Making such semantic maps can be done individually, but they make for a productive group work technique as students collectively induce order and hierarchy to a passage. Early drafts of these maps can be quite messy—which is perfectly acceptable. Figure 17.1, for example, shows a first attempt by a small group of students to draw a semantic map of an article by Rick Gore called “Between Fire and Ice: The Planets,” an article about a total solar eclipse as seen through the eyes of villagers in Patuk, Java.

7. Guess When You Aren’t Certain

This is an extremely broad category. Learners can use guessing to their advantage to

- guess the meaning of a word
- guess a grammatical relationship (e.g., a pronoun reference)

Figure 17.1 Semantic map



- guess a discourse relationship
- infer implied meaning (“between the lines”)
- guess about a cultural reference
- guess content messages.

Now, you of course don’t want to encourage your learners to become haphazard readers! They should utilize all their skills and put forth as much effort as possible to be on target with their hypotheses. But the point here is that reading is, after all, a guessing game of sorts, and the sooner learners understand this game, the better off they are. The key to successful guessing is to make it reasonably *accurate*.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Guessing may be a very unfamiliar process for many learners, especially those whose education and upbringing have stressed accuracy and the avoidance of error. How might you ease your students into the process of guessing meanings? Are there some guessing games you could introduce that would help them to lose their inhibitions about risk-taking?

You can help learners to become accurate guessers by encouraging them to use effective *compensation* strategies in which they fill gaps in their competence by intelligent attempts to use whatever clues are available to them. Language-based clues include word analysis, word associations, and textual structure. Nonlinguistic clues come from context, situation, and other schemata.

8. Analyze Vocabulary

One way for learners to make guessing pay off when they don’t immediately recognize a word is to analyze it in terms of what they know about it. Several techniques are useful here:



GUIDELINES FOR HELPING LEARNERS TO EMPLOY WORD ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

- Look for prefixes (*co-*, *inter-*, *un-*, etc.) that may give clues.
- Look for suffixes (*-tion*, *-tive*, *-ally*, etc.) that may indicate what part of speech it is.
- Look for roots that are familiar (e.g., *intervening* may be a word a student doesn’t know, but recognizing that the root *ven* comes from Latin “to come” would yield the meaning “to come in between”).

- Look for grammatical contexts that may signal information.
- Look at the semantic context (topic) for clues.

9. Distinguish Between Literal and Implied Meanings

This requires the application of sophisticated top-down processing skills. The fact that not all language can be interpreted appropriately by attending to its literal, syntactic surface structure makes special demands on readers. Implied meaning usually has to be derived from processing *pragmatic* information, as in the following examples:

- (1) Bill walked into the frigid classroom and immediately noticed Bob, sitting by the open window, with a heavy sweatshirt on.
“Brrr!” he exclaimed, simultaneously eyeing Bob and the open windows. “It’s sure cold in here, Bob.”
Bob glanced up from his book and growled, “Oh, all right, I’ll close the window.”
- (2) The policeman held up his hand and stopped the car.
- (3) Mary heard the ice cream man coming down the street. She remembered her birthday money and rushed into the house . . .
(Rumelhart, 1977, p. 265)



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

In each of the above three examples, what is the *implied* information? How would you help your students to recognize (1) indirect requests that are made without forming a question, (2) the effect of the policeman’s hand signal, and (3) what the reader *thinks* will happen next. This final example has a surprise ending: “. . . and locked the door!”

10. Capitalize on Discourse Markers to Process Relationships

Many discourse markers in English signal relationships among ideas as expressed through phrases, clauses, and sentences. A clear comprehension of such markers can greatly enhance learners’ reading efficiency. Table 17.1 enumerates almost one hundred of these markers with which learners of intermediate proficiency levels ought to be thoroughly familiar.

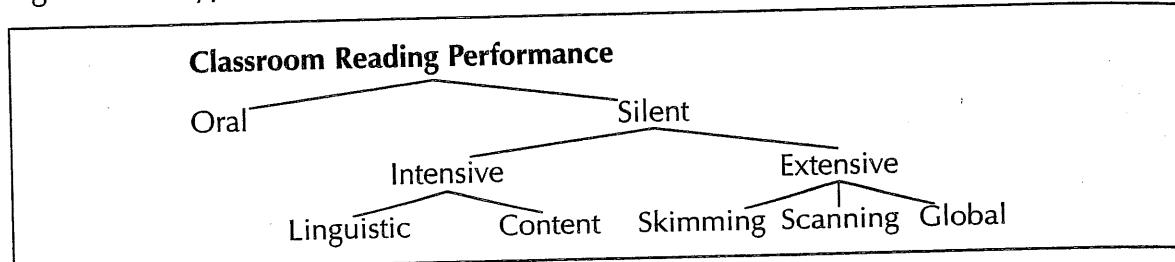
Table 17.1 Types of discourse markers (Mackay, 1987, p. 254)

Notional category/meaning	Marker
1. <i>Enumerative</i> . Introduce in order in which points are to be made or the time sequence in which actions or processes took place.	first(ly), second(ly), third(ly), one, two, three / a, b, c, next, then, finally, last(ly), in the first / second place, for one thing / for another thing, to begin with, subsequently, eventually, finally, in the end, to conclude
2. <i>Additive</i>	
2.1 Reinforcing. Introduces a reinforcement or confirmation of what has preceded.	again, then again, also, moreover, furthermore, in addition, above all, what is more
2.2 Similarity. Introduces a statement of similarity with what has preceded.	equally, likewise, similarly, correspondingly, in the same way
2.3 Transition. Introduces a new stage in the sequence of presentation of information.	now, well, incidentally, by the way, O.K., fine
3. <i>Logical Sequence</i>	
3.1 Summative. Introduces a summary of what has preceded.	so; so far, altogether, overall, then, thus, therefore, in short, to sum up, to conclude, to summarize
3.2 Resultative. Introduces an expression of the result or consequence of what preceded (and includes inductive and deductive acts).	so, as a result, consequently, hence, now, therefore, thus, as a consequence, in consequence
4. <i>Explicative</i> . Introduces an explanation or reformulation of what preceded.	namely, in other words, that is to say, better, rather, by (this) we mean
5. <i>Illustrative</i> . Introduces an illustration or example of what preceded.	for example, for instance
6. <i>Contrastive</i>	
6.1 Replacive. Introduces an alternative to what preceded.	alternatively, (or) again, (or) rather, (but) then, on the other hand
6.2 Antithetic. Introduces information in opposition to what preceded.	conversely, instead, then, on the contrary, by contrast, on the other hand
6.3 Concessive. Introduces information that is unexpected in view of what preceded.	anyway, anyhow, however, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, still, though, yet, for all that, in spite of (that), at the same time, all the same

TYPES OF CLASSROOM READING PERFORMANCE

Different kinds of reading performance in the language classroom are derived more from the variety of texts (refer to the list earlier in this chapter) to which you can expose students than from the variety of overt types of performance. Consider the types of performance depicted in Figure 17.2.

Figure 17.2. Types of classroom reading performance



1. Oral and Silent Reading

Occasionally, you will have reason to ask a student to read orally. At the beginning and intermediate levels, oral reading provides some *advantages* as well as disadvantages. Consider the following:

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Oral reading serves as an evaluative check on bottom-up processing skills. 2. It doubles as a pronunciation check. 3. It adds some extra student participation if you want to highlight a certain short segment of a reading passage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Oral reading is not a very authentic language activity. 2. While one student is reading, others can easily lose attention (or, if they are reading in turns, be silently rehearsing the next paragraph!). 3. It may have the outward appearance of student participation when in reality it is mere recitation.

For advanced levels, usually only advantage (3) can be gained by reading orally. As a rule of thumb, you want to use oral reading to serve at least one of the above purposes. On the other hand, the *disadvantages* of too much oral reading also need to be considered when asking students to read aloud.

Silent reading, on the other hand, is essential in order for learners to gain any speed in the process. For extensive reading, explained below, speed is usually an important factor. For intensive reading, learning to read silently may be of less importance, but still remains an ultimate goal.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

When learners are reading on their own, what is the advantage of silent reading? Can you *teach* students to read silently? Or is this a skill they have to pick up with advancing proficiency? What is the advantage—or is there one—of helping students to read without “moving their lips” as they read?

2. Intensive and Extensive Reading

Silent reading may be subcategorized into intensive and extensive reading. **Intensive reading**, analogous to intensive listening (described in Chapter 16), is usually a classroom-oriented activity in which students focus on the linguistic or semantic details of a passage. Intensive reading often calls students’ attention to grammatical forms, discourse markers, and other surface structure details for the purpose of understanding literal meaning, implications, rhetorical relationships, and the like.

As a “zoom lens” strategy for taking a closer look at a text, intensive reading also may be a content-related reading strategy initiated because of subject-matter comprehension difficulty. A complex cognitive concept may be “trapped” inside the words of a sentence or paragraph, and a good reader will then very slowly and methodically extract meaning.

Extensive reading is carried out to achieve a general understanding of a usually somewhat longer text (for example, books, long articles, essays). Most extensive reading is performed outside class time. Pleasure reading is often extensive. Technical, scientific, and professional reading can, under certain special circumstances, be extensive when one is striving for global or general meaning from longer passages.

The advantages of extensive reading were discussed in the first section of the chapter. By stimulating reading for enjoyment or reading where all concepts, names, dates, and other details need not be retained, students gain an appreciation for the affective and cognitive window of reading: an entrée into new worlds. Extensive reading can sometimes help learners get away from their tendency to overanalyze or look up words they don’t know, and read for understanding as “engaged” readers (Anderson, 2014).

PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING READING SKILLS

1. In an Integrated Course, Include a Focus on Reading Skills

L2 learners who are literate in their own language are sometimes left to their own devices when it comes to learning reading skills. It’s easy for teachers to assume that our students will learn good reading simply by absorption

through generous offerings of both intensive and extensive reading opportunities. In reality, there is much to be gained by a strategic focus on reading skills within lessons that cover other skills. Virtually all course materials include the written word, so students are *reading*, even if their reading is incidental to other tasks. But even in those incidental reading moments, you can inject focal moments in which students attend to reading.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Look at the lesson represented in Figure 17.4 toward the end of this chapter. Identify as many reading skills that are *directly* focused on and that *indirectly* require reading abilities. How appropriate, in this lesson, is it to allow those incidental reading skills to be simply assumed—without focusing specifically on them?

2. Offer Reading on Relevant, Interesting, Motivating Topics

What do you think makes for interesting and relevant reading for your students? Of the long list of texts at the beginning of this chapter, how many will your students encounter in “real life”? Use those texts. What are your students’ goals in learning to read English? Focus on those goals. Choose material that is *relevant* to those goals.

One approach to reading instruction is to have students create their *own* material for reading (see Chapter 3 for a description of the Language Experience Approach). Other approaches in which learners are given *choices* in selecting reading material offer the potential of increasing their *investment*. Carefully sequenced readings and instructional strategies that are *success-oriented* give further personal involvement in the process. Further, readings that help learners to form their respective *identities* should help to bolster their sense of *agency*.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

What are some genres or topics that might help a student to understand his or her *identity*? If students read a passage about someone else’s personal struggle with adjusting to a new culture, feeling ostracized or inferior in the L2 culture, what kinds of questions or discussion topics might you plan for pre-, while-, and post-reading?

3. Balance Authenticity and Readability in Choosing Texts

By now, the importance of authentic language should be more than clear. But in teaching reading, one issue that has invited some controversy is the

advisability of what are called “simplified texts,” in which an otherwise authentic text is edited to keep language within the proficiency level of a set of students. In order for you to make a decision on this issue, it is important to distinguish between (a) simple texts and (b) simplified texts and to understand sources of complexity in reading material.

Authentic simple texts can either be devised or located in the real world. From ads to labels to reports to essays, texts are available that are grammatically and lexically simple. Simplifying an existing potential reading selection may not be necessary. Yet if simplification must be done, it is important to preserve the natural redundancy, humor, wit, and other captivating features of the original material.

Second, you might ask yourself what “simplicity” is and then determine if a so-called simplified text is really simpler than its original. Sometimes simplified texts remove so much natural redundancy that they actually become difficult. And what you perceive as textual complexity may be more a product of background schemata than of linguistic complexity. Take another look at the list of characteristics of written language earlier in this chapter and you will no doubt see what it is that makes a text difficult. In light of those criteria, is a simplified text really simpler? The answer may be “no.” Richard Day and Julian Bamford (1998, p. 53), in warning against “the cult of authenticity and the myth of simplification,” contended that our CLT approach has overemphasized the need for so-called authenticity, and that there is indeed a place for simplified texts in reading instruction.

Nuttall (1996) offered three criteria for choosing reading texts for students:

- a. *suitability* of content: material that students will find interesting, enjoyable, challenging, and appropriate for their goals in learning English
- b. *exploitability*: a text that facilitates the achievement of certain language and content goals, that is exploitable for instructional tasks and techniques, and that is integratable with other skills (listening, speaking, writing)
- c. *readability*: a text with lexical and structural difficulty that will challenge students without overwhelming them.

4. Encourage the Development of Reading Strategies

Already in this chapter, ten different reading strategies have been discussed. To what extent are you encouraging your students to use all these strategies?

5. Include Both Bottom-Up and Top-Down Techniques

In our craze for communicative, authentic language activity in the classroom, we sometimes forget that learners can indeed benefit from studying the fundamentals. Make sure that you give enough classroom time to focusing on the building blocks of written language, geared appropriately for each level.

6. Follow the “SQ3R” Sequence

One effective series of procedures for approaching a reading text has come to be labeled the **SQ3R** technique, a process consisting of the following five steps:

SQ3R Processes

1. **Survey:** Skim the text for an overview of main ideas.
2. **Question:** The reader asks questions about what he or she wishes to get out of the text.
3. **Read:** Read the text while looking for answers to the previously formulated questions.
4. **Recite:** Reprocess the salient points of the text through oral or written language.
5. **Review:** Assess the importance of what one has just read and incorporate it into long-term associations.

This series of techniques, of course, may not fit all classes and contexts, but it serves as a general guide for a reading class.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

In L2 classes you have taken, do you recall following the SQ3R sequence in your lessons? Have you tried this sequence in your own teaching or lesson planning? How rigidly would you adhere to the sequence—that is, what variations might you employ in approaching a reading text?

7. Design Pre-Reading, While-Reading, and Post-Reading Phases

It's tempting, especially at intermediate and advanced levels, to tell students, "Okay now, class, read the next two pages silently." No introduction, no hints on anything special to do while reading, and nary a thought about something to follow the silent reading period. A good rubric to keep in mind for teaching reading is the following three-part framework:



TIPS FOR TEACHING READING

1. **Before you read:** Spend some time introducing a topic, encouraging skimming, scanning, predicting, and activating schemata. Students can bring the best of their knowledge and skills to a text when they have been given a chance to "ease into" the passage.
2. **While you read:** Not all reading is simply extensive or global reading. There may be certain facts or rhetorical devices that students should take note of while they read. Give students a

sense of purpose for reading rather than just reading because you ordered it.

3. **After you read:** Comprehension questions are just one form of activity appropriate for post-reading. Also consider vocabulary study, identifying the author's purpose, discussing the author's line of reasoning, examining grammatical structures, or steering students toward a follow-up writing exercise.

8. Build Ongoing (Informal) Assessment into Your Techniques

Because reading, like listening comprehension, is totally unobservable (we have to infer comprehension from other behavior), it is as important in reading as it is in listening to be able to accurately assess students' comprehension and development of skills. Consider some of the following overt responses (modeled after the list in Chapter 15 for listening) that indicate comprehension:



OVERT RESPONSES THAT INDICATE COMPREHENSION

1. doing—the reader responds physically to a command.
2. choosing—the reader selects from alternatives posed orally or in writing.
3. transferring—the reader summarizes orally what is read
4. answering—the reader answers questions about the passage
5. condensing—the reader outlines or takes notes on a passage
6. extending—the reader provides an ending to a story
7. duplicating—the reader translates the message into the native language or copies it (beginning level, for very short passages only)
8. modeling—the reader puts together a toy, for example, after reading directions for assembly
9. conversing—the reader engages in a conversation that indicates appropriate processing of information



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

The above nine modes offer observable responses that can be informally assessed in the classroom as you teach. For some of the responses, you can fairly easily determine success or comprehension. Others are more "slippery." How would you determine whether responses to numbers 3, 5, and 9 show expected levels of comprehension?

sense of purpose for reading rather than just reading because you ordered it.

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TWO READING LESSONS

On pages 415-421 are excerpts from two different textbooks designed to teach reading skills. In both cases, of course, the other three skills (listening, speaking, writing) are implied in the unfolding of the lesson.

The first excerpt (Figure 17.3) is for a high beginning level of learners, on the topic of fast and healthy foods (Saslow & Ascher, 2011). The lesson gives a pre-reading focus on vocabulary, then, while-reading, guessing word meanings from context, followed by post-reading exercises on inference, note taking, and discussion. This is part of a general-skills textbook.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

What is your overall assessment of the effectiveness of this excerpt (Figure 17.3 on fast and healthy foods) for high beginners? How effectively are the objectives accomplished (vocabulary in adjective forms, understanding from context, and discussing healthy food)? If you were given this lesson to teach, what would you add (or delete) in order to accomplish the objectives? Are the exercises following the reading itself an effective way to process the reading?

The second excerpt (Figure 17.4) is for students at a high-intermediate level preparing for academic reading in English (Böttcher, 2014, pp. 139–146). The topic is laughter and the brain, and objectives focus on main idea, connotations, antonyms, dictionary use, note taking, and critical thinking, among others. The genre, feature writing in a magazine or newspaper, manifests more complexity in discourse structure, vocabulary, and cognition than the first lesson. A number of the principles and strategies cited in this chapter are included. Notice especially the exercise on critical thinking, which requires inference and creativity.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

What is your overall assessment of the effectiveness of this excerpt (Figure 17.4 on laughter and the brain) for advanced students learning English for academic purposes? How effectively are the objectives accomplished? If you were given this lesson to teach, what would you add (or delete) in order to accomplish the objectives? In the critical thinking exercise and the next writing activity, what would you add or change?

Figure 17.3 Fast and healthy foods

LESSON **4** **GOAL** **Discuss food and health**

BEFORE YOU READ

A ^{2:31} **Vocabulary** • *Adjectives to describe the healthfulness of food* Read and listen. Then listen again and repeat.

healthy / healthful is good for you	sweet contains a lot of sugar
unhealthy / unhealthful is bad for you	high-calorie can make you fat or overweight
fatty / high-fat contains a lot of oil	low-calorie is not going to make you fat
salty contains a lot of salt	

B ^{2:32} **Warm-up** Do you like to eat at fast-food restaurants? Is it possible to get healthy food there? Use the Vocabulary.

READING

Get Smart! Eating on the go

We know a daily diet of fast food can be bad for us. But fast food is quick and easy, and when we're on the go, it's sometimes a necessary choice. So here are some tips for fast-food fans:

- **Choose the chicken.** Have chicken rather than red meat. When in doubt, order the grilled chicken—not the fried.
- **Go light on the sauce.** Mayo, salad dressings, and other sauces are loaded with calories. Cut down on them, or cut them out altogether!
- **Fill up on veggies.** Ask for tomato, lettuce, onion, or other veggies on your sandwich. These low-calorie choices can help you avoid fries and other high-calorie options.
- **Go for the regular size, not the extra-large.** Super-size portions can super-size YOU.
- **Skip the sides entirely.** Eating a burger by itself is often enough. If you need a side order of something, consider a fruit cup or a side salad, instead of those fatty, salty french fries. Most fast-food restaurants offer those healthy options now.
- **Finally, treat yourself.** When you just have to have something sweet, opt for some delicious low-fat frozen yogurt or fruit ices rather than ice cream or cookies. You won't miss the calories a bit!

Eating on the go

Home

Get more "veggies."

Cut down on mayo.

Skip the fries.

Get a side salad.

Source: fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

46 UNIT 4

Figure 17.3 Fast and healthy foods (*Continued*)

A Understand from context Find the following words and phrases in the Reading and match them with their meanings. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, use the words to write your own sentences.

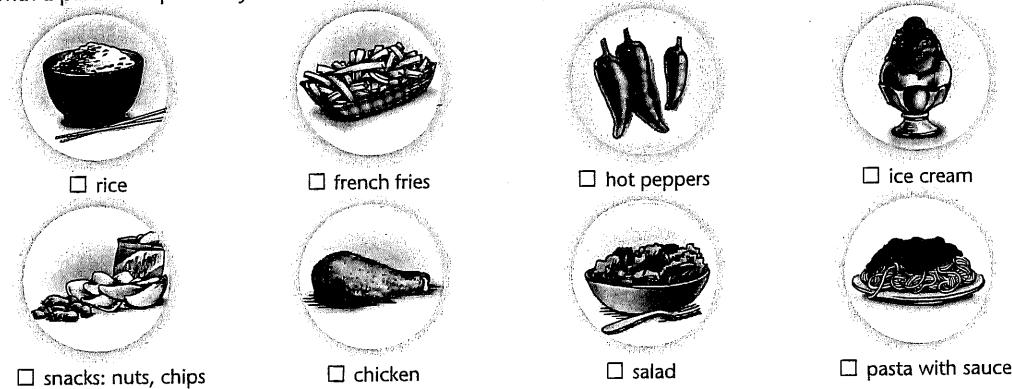
- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1 "veggies" | a the amount you eat at one time |
| 2 "side order" | b not choose |
| 3 "go for" | c vegetables |
| 4 "skip" or "avoid" | d choice |
| 5 "portion" | e something you eat with your main course |
| 6 "option" | f choose |

B Infer information Which tips on the website can help you cut down on calories? fat? salt? sugar? Explain how.

On your ActiveBook Self-Study Disk:
Extra Reading Comprehension Questions

NOW YOU CAN Discuss food and health

A Frame your ideas Write a ✓ next to the foods you think are healthy. Write an X next to the foods you think are not. Then discuss your answers with a partner. Explain why some of the foods are unhealthy.



French fries are not healthy.
They're too fatty. ☺☺

I agree. ☺☺

B Notepadding List other foods and drinks you think are good for you and bad for you.

Healthy foods	Unhealthy foods
oranges	salty foods, like potato chips

C Discussion Now discuss food and health with your class. Suggest healthy eating tips. Use your lists.

Text-mining (optional)
Underline more language in the Reading on page 46 to use in the Discussion. For example:

"Have ___ rather than ___."

Be sure to recycle this language.

Categories of foods
grains
seafood
dairy products
vegetables

Adjectives
healthy / unhealthy
good / bad for you
high-calorie / low-calorie
fatty / salty / sweet / spicy

Verbs
skip / avoid / cut out
go light on / cut down on
fill up on

Figure 17.4 Laughter and the brain

READING TWO: Laughter and the Brain

A Warm-Up
List the ways you think laughter is beneficial. Share your answers with the class.

B Reading Strategy

Predicting Type of Text from the Title

Predicting is a very important pre-reading skill. When you **predict**, you make a guess about something based on the information you have. Predicting helps prepare the reader for the reading experience that is to come. The title of a text can often help you predict the type of text. At the same time it helps you to imagine the situation for which the text was written or prepared.

Look at the title of the reading. Do you think the text contains mostly facts or opinions? Discuss your answer with a partner.

Now read the text to find out if your prediction was correct.

Laughter and the Brain
By Eric H. Chudler

1 Laughter . . . it's fun . . . it's funny . . . but why do we do it? What part of the brain is responsible for laughter and **humor**? There are not many answers to these questions because there have not been very many experiments on laughter. Part of the reason for this is that laughter is not a big medical problem.

2 A paper published in the journal *Nature* (vol. 391, page 650, 1998) called "Electric Current Stimulates Laughter" has provided a bit more information about how the brain is involved with laughter. The paper discussed the case of a 16-year-old girl named "A.K." who was having surgery to control seizures¹ due to epilepsy.² During surgery, the doctors electrically stimulated³

(continued on next page)

¹ **seizures:** brief periods when someone is unconscious and cannot control the movements of his/her body

² **epilepsy:** a medical condition in the brain that can make someone become unconscious or unable to control his/her movements for a short time

³ **electrically stimulated:** used the power carried by wires to get a muscle or group of muscles to move

Neurology: *The Brain* 139

Figure 17.4 Laughter and the brain (Continued)

A.K.'s cerebral cortex to map her brain.⁴ Mapping of the brain is done to determine the function of different brain areas and to make sure that brain tissue that will be removed does not have an important function.

3 The doctors found that A.K. always laughed when they stimulated a small 2 cm by 2 cm area on her left superior frontal gyrus (part of the frontal lobe of the brain). This brain area is part of the supplementary motor area.⁵ Each time her brain was stimulated, A.K. laughed and said that something was funny. The thing that she said caused her to laugh was different each time. A.K. laughed first, then made up a story that was funny to her. Most people first know what is funny, then they laugh.

4 The authors of the paper believe that the area of the brain that caused laughter in A.K. is part of several different brain areas which are important for:

- the emotions produced by a funny situation (emotional part of humor)
- the "getting it" part of a joke (cognitive, thinking part of humor)
- moving the muscles of the face to smile (motor part of humor).

5 The physiological study of laughter has its own name: "gelotology." Research has shown that laughing is more than just a person's voice and movement. Laughter requires the coordination of many muscles throughout the body. Laughter also:

- increases blood pressure
- increases heart rate
- changes breathing
- reduces levels of certain hormones.⁶
- provides a boost to the immune system.⁷

6 Can laughter improve health? It may be a good way for people to relax because muscle tension is reduced after laughing. There are some cases when a good deep laugh may help people with breathing problems. Perhaps laughing can also help heart patients by giving the heart a bit of a workout. Some hospitals even have their own "humor rooms," "comedy carts," and clown kids in attempts to speed a patient's recovery and boost morale.

⁴map her brain: to make a visual representation of her brain
⁵supplementary motor area: a part of the brain that helps control movement
⁶hormones: substances produced by your body that influence its growth, development, and condition
⁷immune system: the system by which the body protects itself against disease

Figure 17.4 Laughter and the brain (Continued)

COMPREHENSION

A Main Ideas

Write the number of the paragraph that matches each main idea from the reading.

1. Paragraph ___ is about how people's health might improve faster from laughter.

B Close Reading

Complete the sentences by matching a sentence beginning on the left with its ending on the right.

1. In an article called "Electric Current Stimulates Laughter"	c. that every time they stimulated a small area of their patient's brain, she laughed.
--	--

VOCABULARY

A Connotations

Some words have **feelings** connected to them depending on how they are used in a sentence. These feelings, or **connotations**, can be **positive** (good or useful) or **negative** (bad or harmful).

Look at each word. Find it in the reading. Decide whether it has a **Positive** or **Negative** meaning. Check the appropriate box. Discuss your answers with a partner.

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
----------	----------

1. humor

B Antonyms

Underline the antonym (the word that has the opposite meaning) of the word in bold. Compare your answers with a partner.

1. humor funniness seriousness comedy

Figure 17.4 Laughter and the brain (*Continued*)**C Using the Dictionary**

Read the dictionary entry for the phrasal verb *make up*.

make (something) up *phr. v.* 1 to invent a story or explanation to deceive someone 2 to produce a new story, song, game, etc. 3 to work at times when you don't usually work because you have not done enough work at some other time

Read each sentence. Decide which meaning of the verb is being used. Write the number of the appropriate meaning.

- _____ a. In the "humor rooms" at hospitals, volunteers **make up** funny stories to get patients to laugh.

NOTE-TAKING: Categorizing

Look at the notes about details from the reading. Decide if each detail is about "laughter" or "the brain" and list each in the correct category.

- a small 2 cm by 2 cm area can be stimulated and cause laughter
- boosts morale
- can be mapped to determine the function of different brain areas
- caused by something funny
- coordinates muscle movements needed to laugh
- helps patients feel more optimistic
- may help breathing problems and heart patients
- may help people recover faster
- more than just a person's voice and movement
- not a medical problem
- reduces muscle tension

Figure 17.4 Laughter and the brain (*Continued*)

CRITICAL THINKING

Discuss the questions in a small group. Be prepared to share your ideas with the class.

1. In paragraph 3, the doctors found that A.K. laughed when they stimulated a small area of her brain and then she made up a funny story to explain her laughter, which is the opposite of how laughter usually occurs. What did this discovery suggest?
2. How has the study of laughter affected the treatment of patients in some hospitals?
3. Why do you think laughter might help people recover faster?
4. Sitcoms are popular around the world. Why do you think these types of television shows are so popular and attract people of all ages and cultures?

AFTER YOU READ

WRITING ACTIVITY

Choose one of the topics and write a paragraph about it. Use at least five of the words and phrases you studied in the chapter.

1. Do you think "humor rooms" and "comedy carts" would be possible in hospitals in your country? Why or why not?
2. Who is the funniest person you know? What makes them so funny?
3. The actor Charlie Chaplin said: "A day without laughter is a day wasted." Do you agree with this quote? Give reasons and examples to support your opinion.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

In this chapter you learned to:

- Scan a text to answer a question in the title
- Predict the type of text from the title
- Understand and use the prefix *un-*
- Determine whether a word has a positive or negative meaning
- Identify parts of speech
- Understand and use synonyms and antonyms
- Use dictionary entries to learn different meanings of a phrasal verb
- Categorize notes

What can you do well?

What do you need to practice more?

ASSESSING READING

The classic principles of classroom assessment apply to your attempts to assess reading comprehension: be specific about which micro- or macroskill(s) you are assessing; identify the genre of written communication that is being evaluated; and choose carefully among the range of possibilities from simply perceiving letters or words all the way to extensive reading. In addition, for assessing reading, some attention should be given to the highly strategic nature of reading comprehension by accounting for which of the many strategies for reading are being examined. Finally, reading assessment implies differentiating bottom-up from top-down tasks, as well as focus on form versus focus on meaning.

In your efforts to design tests at any one or combination of these levels and categories, consider the following taxonomy of tasks (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). These are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to provide an overview of some possibilities.



ITEM TYPES FOR ASSESSING READING

- 1. Perceptive reading** (recognition of symbols, letters, words)
 - reading aloud
 - copying (reproduce in writing)
 - multiple choice recognition (including true-false and fill-in-the-blank)
 - picture cued identification
- 2. Selective reading** (focus on morphology, grammar, lexicon)
 - multiple-choice grammar/vocabulary tasks
 - contextualized multiple-choice (within a short paragraph)
 - sentence-level cloze tasks
 - matching tasks
 - grammar/vocabulary editing tasks (multiple choice)
 - picture-cued tasks (Ss choose among graphic representations)
 - gap-filling tasks (e.g., sentence completion)
- 3. Interactive reading**
 - discourse-level cloze tasks (requiring knowledge of discourse)
 - reading + comprehension questions
 - short answer responses to reading
 - discourse editing tasks (multiple choice)
 - scanning
 - reordering sequences of sentences
 - responding to charts, maps, graphs, diagrams

4. Extensive reading

- skimming
- summarizing
- responding to reading through short essays
- note taking, marginal notes, highlighting
- outlining



This chapter should serve as an overview of information on the teaching of reading, giving you a grasp of some issues surrounding this challenging task, and a sense of how to go about designing effective tasks and activities. Of further importance is the reading-writing *connection*, the second half of which we turn to in Chapter 18.

FOR THE TEACHER: ACTIVITIES (A) & DISCUSSION (D)

Note: For each of the “Classroom Connections” in this chapter, you may wish to turn them into individual or pair-work discussion questions.

1. **(A)** Find four or five different samples of types (genres) of written language (see pp. 395–396), such as a memo, a newspaper article, a questionnaire, a menu, or a set of directions, and give one each to pairs. Each pair’s task is to cite examples of *bottom-up* and *top-down* processing of written material. Ask pairs to report findings to the whole class.
2. **(A)** Ask small groups to think of a funny anecdote or joke (or you might supply each group with a short joke to read), and have one volunteer tell one to their group. Then, direct them to identify examples of *content* and *formal schemata* in the anecdote. Have them report findings back to the class.
3. **(D)** Review the meaning of *skimming* and *scanning*. Ask your students to volunteer examples of the two processes. What purposes does each serve? What suggestions do they have for hints they would give to a learner who doesn’t know how to skim a passage?
4. **(A)** Ten reading *strategies* are discussed on pages 401–408. Direct pairs to look at the textbook lesson reprinted in Figure 17.3 beginning on page 415, and (a) note which strategies are being encouraged in each activity, and (b) think of other activities that would fill any gaps.
5. **(A)** Review with the class the purpose of *semantic mapping* (page 404). Ask pairs to skim the reading selection “Laughter and the brain” in Figure 17.4 and to draw a semantic map of it. Then, have pairs compare their maps with others in the class and talk about why they drew theirs the way they did.

6. (D) Ask your students to look at the lesson represented in Figure 17.4 on “Laughter and the brain” and use the micro- and macroskills listed on page 401 to analyze which of these skills is being touched on in the lesson, and where. Ask students to volunteer responses as you jot them down on the board.
7. (A) Ask small groups to look at the textbook lesson on fast food (Figure 17.3) and to critique it in terms of its adherence to principles of teaching *interactive reading*. What changes would they recommend and why? Have them share their conclusions with the rest of the class. If time permits, ask the groups to outline some additional tasks to include in this lesson to a specified group of advanced beginning students. Have them share those ideas with the rest of the class.
8. (D) Ask your class to skim the textbook lesson reprinted in Figure 17.4 at the end of the chapter. Then ask them to evaluate the lesson on the basis of (a) opportunities for learners to acquire strategies of reading and (b) the eight principles for designing interactive techniques (pp. 408–413).

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. (2011). *Teaching and researching reading* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Pearson Longman.

Hedgcock, J., & Ferris, D. (2009). *Teaching readers of English: Students, texts, and contexts*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Nuttall, C. (1996). *Teaching reading skills in a foreign language* (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Heinemann.

These three teacher reference books offer comprehensive treatments of research issues and classroom practice in teaching reading skills, with extensive bibliographic references.

Eskey, D. (2005). Reading in a second language. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 563–579). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. (2014). Teaching reading for academic purposes. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. Brinton, & M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (4th ed., pp. 189–205). Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning.

For a more concise overview of the teaching of reading and supporting research, these two chapter/article length pieces are excellent sources to consult.

Nation, I. S. P. (2005). Teaching and learning vocabulary. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 581–595). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Read, J. (2004). Research in teaching vocabulary. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 24, 146–161.

These two articles survey issues in vocabulary acquisition and teaching, with useful bibliographic references.

Ediger, A. (2014). Teaching second/foreign language literacy to school-age learners. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. Brinton, & M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (4th ed., pp. 154–169). Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning.

This chapter provides an overview of issues and practices in teaching literacy to L2 learners.

Alderson, J. C. (2000). *Assessing reading*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Read, J. (2000). *Assessing vocabulary*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

These two volumes in a series on language assessment report on research, issues, theoretical foundations, and practical applications in their respective areas.