**Teaching Reading**

**Introduction** Reading is an essential component of what people do everyday. It is an important skill that learners need to develop; it is the means through which they can independently learn more about the target language and improve their mastery of that language.

**1. Definition**

Reading is a receptive skill by which students acquire knowledge through being exposed to the written text.

Reading comprehension is an important skill for navigating the textual world around us. It is a complex process that calls for the interplay of different textual, sensory, linguistic, cognitive, experiential and emotional factors. More formally, reading comprehension was
defined as “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through
interaction and involvement with written language” (Snow, 2002, p. 11). Reading involves
three interrelated elements: the reader, the text, and the activity or reading task, all situated into a broader sociocultural context.

**2. Why do we Teach Reading?**

Students read for many reasons: many read for their careers, for pleasure or for study purposes.

Reading is useful for many purposes:

- Any exposure to the English language is good for students’ acquisition of the language, especially if the text is interesting and engaging.

- Reading texts provide also a good model for writing.

- Reading provides opportunities to study the language: vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and the way we construct sentences and paragraphs.

- Good reading texts can also introduce new topics, stimulate discussion, excite imagination and be the springboard for fascinating lessons.

**3. Approaches to Reading**

**a- The Bottom up Approach**

**Bottom-up reading strategies begin with letter-sound correspondences (the bottom) to achieve comprehension (the top), starting with letters and sounds, building to morpheme and word recognition, and then gradually moving to grammatical structure identification, sentences, and longer texts. T**his model refers to a single-direction part-to-whole processing of a written or printed text.

**b- Top down Approach**

Top-down reading strategy is characterized as a reading procedure or psycholinguistics guessing game. Top-down reading strategies emphasize the importance of schemata, or prior experiences and background knowledge, in understanding a text.

**c- Interactive Approach**

It recognises the interaction of the bottom up and top down processes simultaneously throughout the reading process. The reader engages with the text and uses two types of knowledge: linguistic (as a result of bottom-up processing) and schematic knowledge (through top down processing).

**4. Types of Reading**

**a- Intensive reading:** means that readers take a text, study it line by line, and refer every moment to the dictionary. The main aim is to comprehend thoroughly the printed text. The focus is placed on the language and content.

**b- Extensive reading:** is rapid reading which does not pay too much attention to language and which aims at comprehending the meaning of the text.

**5. What are the principles behind the teaching of reading?**

Harmer ([Citation2008](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2093493)) lists six principles of teaching reading:

1. **Reading is not a passive skill:** reading is an active occupation. Therefore, readers should understand the meanings of words, see pictures, understand the arguments and take a position to agree or not. If students do not do these things while reading, then they are only scratching the surface of the text, and there will a tendency of forgetting.

2. **Students need to be engaged with what they are doing:** students should be engaged with the reading text. This helps them to be actively interested in what they are doing and benefit much from it.

3. **Students should be encouraged to respond to the context of a reading text, not just to the language:** the main purpose of practicing reading is to let students get the meaning and the message of the text. Thus, we must give students a chance to respond to the meaning and message of texts.

**4. Prediction is a major factor in reading:** books converse, photographs, contents, and titles give us hints of what is in the book before we read a single word. Our brain begins predicting what we are going to read. We build expectations and the active process of reading takes place. Therefore, teachers should give hints to their students so that they can predict what is going to be read.

**5. Match the task to the topic:** once students are given a reading text to read an appropriate task should be designed. The right kind of questions and other useful activities that engage students must be ready. Unnecessary and inappropriate questions could make an interesting text boring and unattractive.

**6. Good teacher exploits reading text to the full:** any reading text is full of sentences, words, ideas, descriptions, etc. It does not make sense to get students to read it and then drop it to move on to something else. Good teachers integrate the reading text into interesting class sequences using the topic for discussion and further tasks, using the language for study and later activation.

**6. PDP model for designing a reading lesson**

A reading lesson is based on the PDP model (Pre-reading, during reading, post reading)**.** Each stage includes some steps and activities

**Pre-reading stage**: it is the initial stage where the teacher drives students to the text. (Teaching vocabulary, activating schemata, etc.)

**During reading:** the stage where students read the text silently and answer the questions.

**Post reading:** the stage where students link what they read to their personal life. (writing tasks)