Effective Methods and Strategies of Developing the Reading Skill

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ABSTRACT
This paper intends to fulfill the needs of the students in their reading. Students need to know and use different methods of reading which provide for making sense of their reading skill and how to tackle it in the most effective way throughout their studies. So different effective reading methods and strategies are described in this paper. By using these methods and strategies, they can easily find the information from the text.

KEYWORDS: improve, develop, strategies, ways.

INTRODUCTION
Reading is likely to be the major way to gather information and it is a very valuable skill to enhance and develop students' general language skills at university or collage. For students, it is important to recognize that reading may be the demanding work they do at university or college and huge volume of reading will be required to pass a course. After they studied the secondary education, they have difficulties in higher education. In Myanmar, Grade 11 English text book and prescribed English text books at universities are completely different in reading activities. For Myanmar students, they lack of vocabulary, background knowledge and critical reading. There are many methods and strategies to develop reading skill. Among them, skimming, scanning, inferring, predicting, concluding and generalising are the most effective methods and finding the main idea, distinguishing general statements from specific details and distinguishing fact from opinion are the most useful strategies to enhance the students' reading skill.

METHODS
A. Skimming
Skimming is a specific method to quick and efficient reading. It is rapid style used mainly to establish what a text is about before deciding where to read. Normally the reader does not know exactly what he is looking for when skimming reading material. Therefore, the reader can use skimming in three ways.

➢ The first way is sampling. It takes the form of reading parts of the material rapidly in order to form an impression of the whole. It concentrates on the first sentence of each paragraph because this is where the key information in each paragraph is most likely to be. Therefore, the reader can use sampling as a substitute for reading when time is short or to assess the level of difficulty of material or to decide whether or not to read and to help in the selection of material.

➢ The second way is locating. It is a vertical reading. But the eyes are continually drawn over the right the material is printed horizontally from left to right. Headings, words in bold type orin italics and words which begin with capital letters all help to attract the attention of the brain. The reader can use locating to find specific information or in using dictionaries and handbooks or in reading classified advertisements in newspaper.

➢ The third way is previewing. It is a combination of the find two techniques and uses both first sentence of paragraphs and peripheral vision to identify the salient points. The reader can use previewing to gain an overview and see that pattern of organization of material or as a mean of defining purposes in reading or in assessing the relevance of material to his immediate needs.

B. Scanning
Scanning is a kind of skimming to see if a particular point is presented in the text or to locate it. The key to scanning is to decide exactly what kind of information the reader is looking for and where to find it. The reader can use scanning to search for some specific information such as a definition, the name of a person or a place, someone's biography or a telephone directory.

C. Inferring
Inferring gives a logical guess based on facts or evidence presented using prior knowledge to help the reader understand the deeper meaning of a text. If a student meets a word that he cannot interpret by sentence structure and word structure, he consults a dictionary. Vocabulary has traditionally been the major component in a teaching programme. But too much attention to vocabulary can have a harmful effect on the students' reading habit. Every time he uses a dictionary, he would slow down his reading speed and his own thought processes will beinterrupted. Actually, the reader does not always use a dictionary. To avoid using a dictionary, he should use all his senses when he reads.

When he really gets into what he is reading, he sometimes almost tastes, smells, and feels the physical sensations he would actually have if he was in that situation. If someone interrupts his reading, he gets "lost" in the book. Therefore,

he should imagine the situation about which he is reading, and he should infer things the author does not express in the text. He needs to infer why things happen, why characters behave the way they do, and how characters are feeling. Moreover, he should create images and inferences based on what the author tells him.

The imaging and inferring thinking process is the perfect complement to the summarizing and concluding thinking process. In order to summarise and conclude, he should usually read part-to-whole-synthesising word meanings into sentence meaning, sentence meanings into paragraph meanings, and so forth. However, he should usually read whole-to-part in order to image and infer. Therefore, he should use his background knowledge and he needs to understand the sections and paragraphs to image and infer events or features not stated in sentences. Moreover, he needs to understand the sentences to image and infer details not given in those sentences.

D. Predicting, Concluding, and Generalising
There are three ways of getting more meaning from their reading. They are predicting, concluding, and generalizing.
1. Before they take any predictions, conclusions, or generalization, they should make sure understand the main idea and all the detail of the passages.
2. Check the meanings of any words that they are unsure of, in a dictionary and make certain that know how they are being used in their reading.
3. Make their judgments talking all the information into account. Do not focus on a few details and forget the others and keep the total picture in mind.

Predicting Outcomes
Some situations give the readers enough clues so that the reader can predict what it to happen next is likely. When someone sits home all days, takes no exercise, eats chocolate cake, the reader can reasonably predict that that person will gain weight. They cannot predict whether the person will be happy, get sick of cake or be able to pay the electric bill. But they can predict fairly safely that the person will gain weight because eating more calories than are burned almost always leads to that result.

Similarly, reading often describes a sequence of events that has an outcome they can predict. If they follow the events or information, they can tell what is going to happen as a result.

How to Predict
Predicting is figuring out what will happen next based on what was happened before. To predict accurately,
1. Look for the logic of the action. What is the sequence of events? Do any of the events fit a usual pattern? Is the sequence of events leading in any direction?
2. Look at the personalities and attitudes of the people described. Based on the way they think, feel, and act, can they tell what they may do next? look at the overall story. What will happen as a result of all these events?

Drawing Conclusions
A next step in thinking about a reading selection can be to make a judgment about what happened. After hearing a story about a quarrel between two people that they know, they may conclude that one was right and the other at fault. Or after watching news story about the drug in their town,

they may conclude that something should be done about it. That is, they fit all the information together in a pattern. And then from the pattern they can draw a conclusion. Drawing conclusions is what a jury does. After hearing all the evidence in the case _ the full story as presented by both sides _ the jury looks at the overall pattern of details. Then it concludes guilty or not guilty. If a jury jumps to a conclusion by not listening to all the evidence or does not try to make sense of the overall pattern, it is not doing its job right. And it may come to a very mistaken conclusion.

In the same way, they should make conclusions only when they add up all the evidence from the reading and see the pattern that it makes. If there is not enough evidence to see a clear pattern, they might be better not to come to any conclusion.

How to Draw Conclusion
Concluding is looking at the overall pattern of ideas and details and making a judgment about the pattern. To conclude accurately,
1. Ask them what kind of judgment they want to make. Do they want to decide what the cause is? Whether something is good or bad? Whether someone is guilty? Whether something needs to be done?
2. Gather all the details and groups of details that will help they judge. Do these details fit together in some pattern that helps them with the judgment? Are there any clues that are particularly important in making a judgment? Does the writer tell these details in a certain pattern to help point them at a certain judgment?
3. Look at the overall picture described in the reading. Does the overall picture point them at one side or another?
4. Before they make a final judgment, decide whether there is enough evidence to come a reasonably certain conclusion. If they think that evidence is not enough, what kind of evidence would help them decide? What difference would that evidence make? They can always say that they are unsure about their conclusions.

Generalizing
Generalizing helps the readers take the truths that they find in the reading to cases beyond those mentioned in the selection. They relate the ideas of one piece to the broader experience of life. In generalizing, they make a broader meaning from the ideas that they discover in their reading. When they hear how someone that they know got into trouble, for example, they may generalize from his experience. They may think that he is not very different from them. If trouble could happen to him, it could happen to them. So they may try to avoid doing the things that he did that led to the trouble.

In the same way, when they read a story, they may find what is discussed is not different from other situations that they know of. So they try to generalize – to apply the reading to the other situations.

How to Generalise
Generalising is coming to a more general rule or idea that goes beyond that situation described in the reading. To generalize reasonably,
1. Predict the results and carefully come to conclusions about the situation as described in the reading. What important meanings does this reading offer?

2. Think about these results or conclusions might apply to other situations. What other situations are similar to the one described in the reading? In what ways are these situations similar? In what ways are they not similar?

3. do not go too far beyond the information or kind of situation described in the Reading. Do not stretch the generalization too far.

4. Be careful to state their generalization to allow exceptions. Words like "probably, usually, might, and often" help them not to overstate their point. Avoid words like "always, never, absolutely, must, and certainly".

STRATEGIES
A. Finding the Main Idea
The main idea is the point of the paragraph. It is the most important thought about the topic. To figure out the main idea, ask themselves this question: What is being said about the person, thing, or idea (the topic)? The author can locate the main idea in different places within a paragraph. The main idea is usually a sentence, and it is usually the first sentence. The writer then uses the rest of the paragraph to support the main idea.

B. Distinguishing General Statements from Specific Details
General statements usually contain main ideas, and specific details are usually explanations and examples that support the general statements. Therefore, general statements are more important to comprehension. Very often they are introduced by signal words such as "in general, above all, in conclusion, and it can be seen that". Readers should learn to direct their attention to these signal words. They should also learn to identify expressions of probability, frequency, and quantity that indicate different level of generality. Some of these can be shown in the following table.

Different Levels of Generality

Probability	Frequency	Quantity	
certain	always	all	100%
probable	usually	most	
likely	often	many	
possible	sometimes	some	
unlikely	rarely	few	
impossible	never	no	0%

Source: Mei-yun (1989)

C. Distinguishing Fact from Opinion
Facts and opinions are often uttered in the same breath; the terms have a huge difference in their meanings. Whether a statement is a fact or an opinion depends on the validity of the statement. While a fact refers to the something true or real, this is backed by evidence, documentation, etc. On the other hand, opinion is what a person believes or thinks about something.

The key difference between fact and opinion on the following grounds:

1. The fact is described as the statement that can be verified or proved to be true. Opinion is an expression of judgment or belief about something. Fact relies on observation or research while opinion is based on assumption.

2. The fact is an objective reality whereas opinion is a subjective statement.

3. Facts can be verified with the help of evidence or statistics. On the contrary, opinion is not supported by any evidence.

4. Facts explain what actually happened. Unlike an opinion, that represents a perception about something.

5. One important feature of the fact is that it is universal and does not differ from person to person. As against this, every human being has a different opinion on a particular subject and so, it varies from one person to another.

6. Facts are shown with unbiased words; however, opinion is expressed with biased words.

7. Facts can change anybody's opinion, but vice versa is not possible.

8. Facts are real information and so it cannot be challenged or debated, but if we talk about opinions, they can debate.

CONCLUSION
Students usually do not get full marks in reading test. Students have to read long reading passages, answer the various types of questions, and time is limited at the university level. If the teachers practise the students these different methods and strategies in the classroom, they can tackle the difficulties of reading tasks given for the communicative classroom. After they have these effective reading methods and strategies taught, they improve a lot in the reading skill.

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